Standardising English

Norms and Margins in the History of the English Language

Linda Pillière, Wilfrid Andrieu,
Valérie Kerfelec and Diana Lewis

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This path-breaking study of the standardisation of English goes well beyond the traditional prescriptivism versus descriptivism debate. It argues that the way norms are established and enforced is the result of a complex network of social factors and cannot be explained simply by appeals to power and hegemony. It brings together insights from leading researchers to re-centre the discussion on linguistic communities and language users. It examines the philosophy underlying the urge to standardise language and takes a closer look at both well-known and lesser-known historical dictionaries, grammars and usage guides, demonstrating that they cannot be simply labelled as 'prescriptivist'. Drawing on rich empirical data and case studies, it shows how the norm continues to function in society, influencing and affecting language users even today.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi - 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107191051

DOI: 10.1017/9781108120470

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data
Names: Pilliere, Linda, 1958– editor. | Andrieu, Wilfrid, editor. | Kerfelec, Valerie, editor. | Lewis, Diana (Linguist) editor.
Title: Standardising English : norms and margins in the history of the English language / edited by Linda Pilliere, Wilfrid Andrieu, Valerie Kerfelec, Diana Lewis.
Description: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017058240| ISBN 9781107191051 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781316641590 (softcover)
Subjects: LCSH: English language – Standardization | English language – Variation. | English language – Grammar, Historical.
Classification: LCC PE1074.7 .S746 2018 | DDC 428 – dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017058240

ISBN 978-1-107-19105-1 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-316-64159-0 Paperback

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Acknowledgements

This volume emerged out of a three-day conference, ‘Margin(s) and Norm(s) in English Language(s)’, held at Aix-Marseille University in Aix-en-Provence in April 2014. The fruitful discussions that took place over those three days were the driving force behind this collection of essays. The conference was made possible by the generosity of a number of sponsors and institutions. Special thanks are due to the Conseil Régional des Bouches-du-Rhône, the Communauté du Pays d’Aix and Aix-Marseille University for providing funds that enabled us to hold the conference and also to the Lerma Research Centre (Research Centre for the Study of the Anglophone World) at Aix-Marseille University for its moral and financial support.

We are also greatly indebted to the members of the conference advisory board for their invaluable feedback. And we wish to thank the anonymous reviewers of the proposal for their helpful suggestions and constructive remarks.

We thank Stephanie Taylor and Bethany Johnson at Cambridge University Press for their constant help and advice and Gail Naron Chalew for her careful copy-editing. Finally, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to Andrew Winnard, our editor at Cambridge University Press, for his unfailing support and guidance.

Part I

Norms and Margins: Ideology and Concepts

1 Norms and Margins of English

Linda Pillière, Wilfrid Andrieu, Valérie Kerfelec and Diana Lewis

When the editors of the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* decided in 2007 to delete nature words such as *acorn, conker, dandelion, otter* and *willow* to make room for *blog, broadband, chatroom, MP3 player* and *voice-mail*, there was a public outcry. Eight years later, indignation was still being voiced, with a letter of protest signed by well-known writers such as Margaret Atwood, Michael Morpurgo, Andrew Morton and Ruth Padel.[1] Such a reaction is far from being exceptional. Each new edition of a dictionary is hailed by a flurry of articles focusing on which words have been included and which left out. Public interest is just as high in questions relating to punctuation and grammar. Usage guides such as Lynne Truss's *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* have become bestsellers, century-old usage guides such as Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* continue to be re-edited, websites such as *Grammar Girl* grow in popularity and letters to the editor continue to argue over points of usage. While people may not always be sure whether to use the apostrophe or not, or whether it should be *organize* or *organise*, they are certainly not indifferent to such questions. As John Allen (2003, p. 7), the former executive editor of BBC Radio News and author of the 2003 *BBC News Style Guide*, notes, 'Our use, or perceived misuse, of English produces a greater response from our audiences than anything else.' These various examples all illustrate the general public's anxiety and concern over problems of usage and language change. Far from belonging exclusively to the domain of linguistics, language norms are very much part and parcel of everyday life.

Yet exactly how speakers relate to problems of usage, and how they situate themselves in relation to language norms, is rarely investigated. Similarly the relationship between standardisation and norms is often taken as 'given' but rarely analysed. While many excellent analyses look at norm enforcement from a historical perspective, focusing on a specific period (Anderwald 2012; Auer and Gonzälez-Diaz 2005; Gijsbert, Vosters and Vandenbussche 2014), or present prescriptivism as an institutionalised phenomenon (Beal, Nocera and Sturiale 2008; Hickey 2012), or examine the relationship between collective identity, nationalism and prescriptivism (Percy and Davidson 2012), there has been some neglect of the relationships between linguistic norms and language users, be they gatekeepers or not. Moreover, the language user tends to be portrayed as 'subservient' to the norm. Yet language users adopt attitudes to norms: they judge whether a norm is acceptable, and they try to influence norms. This too needs to be taken into account. And if we adopt the position that a model or pattern of behaviour inexorably becomes a standard, then insofar as models and patterns of behaviour are linked to specific times and places, normalisation is no longer a specific event in the teleological process of standardisation, but an ongoing process, liable to change. This volume of essays aims to examine these topics for, in the words of Talbot J. Taylor (1990, p. 141), 'academic linguistics, by excluding the normative character of language from the cocoon of scientific autonomy, prevents itself from connecting up with or even understanding contemporary debates on the important political issues of language, i.e. on those aspects of language which really *matter* to speakers/hearers'.

Our introduction seeks to provide a broad theoretical framework for the various concepts explored by the authors in this volume; to examine the tensions that exist between margin(s), norm(s) and standardisation; and to give an overview of this volume. We start by investigating some basic definitions of standardisation and norms before considering the relationship between norms and prescriptivism. A third section examines the tension between margins and norms, and finally we provide an overview of the chapters in this volume.

1 Standardisation and Normalisation

The terms *standard* and *norm* are often confused, but if we are to tease out the various strands of meaning attached to both, it is important to start with some basic definitions. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a standard variety of language as 'that variety of a spoken or written language of a country or other linguistic area which is generally considered the most correct and acceptable form'. The earliest recorded reference to Standard English is 1836, but the process of standardisation can be dated far earlier (Hickey 2010). The model of standardisation that is most commonly referred to is that of Haugen (1972, p. 252), which identifies four stages: 'The four aspects of language development that we have now isolated as crucial features in taking the step from "dialect" to "language", from vernacular to standard, are as follows: (1) selection of norm, (2) codification of form, (3) elaboration of function, and (4) acceptance by the community.'

These stages are not necessarily successive and may overlap or even be cyclical (Haugen 1987, p. 59; Milroy and Milroy 1999, p. 23). However, representing the process as a series of stages does suggest a fixed chronology. It also shifts the focus away from examining who selects the norm, how the norm is maintained and the motivations behind such language policies (Ager 2001). Milroy and Milroy (1999, p. 22) propose a seven-stage model: selection, acceptance, diffusion, maintenance, elaboration of function, codification and prescription. Unlike Haugen's model, this model introduces prescription as a final stage in the process. We return to the concept of prescriptivism later in this chapter.

Although the motivations are diverse and may vary over time (Watts 2000), standardisation provides a fixed uniform variety through dictionaries and grammars, thus leading to 'maximal variety in function and minimal variation in form' (Haugen 1972, p. 107). Both dictionaries and grammars give credence to the idea that the standard is invariable. They provide fixed forms and fixed meanings.

It is this impression of stability which appeals to the popular imagination, and which explains in part the general outcry when any kind of linguistic change finds its way into public discourse or official publications. Change is seen as threatening the social order, and there is something reassuring about knowing what is 'correct', which explains in part the popularity of usage guides, as they provide clear guidance on what is right and what is wrong.

Correctness in language has long been equated with civilised behaviour; both are codified practices. As Burke (2004, p. 89) notes, 'civilisation implied following a code of behaviour including linguistic behaviour', and the idea that correct language is morally desirable is still present in today's discourse, notably in usage guides (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Chapter 10). Once the standard was seen as the correct variety, all others became 'stigmatised not only in terms of correctness but also in terms which indirectly reflected on the lifestyles, morality and so forth of their speakers' (Fairclough 2001, p. 48). Questions of correctness in language are not simply matters of avoiding a double negative or avoiding *there's* with a plural; 'they are interpreted as reflecting the speaker's intelligence, industry, social worthiness' (Joseph 2006, p. 4).

The title for this volume, *Standardising English*, emphasises that our focus is on standardisation as a continuing process, rather than as a stable, finite point of reference. Indeed, 'the only fully standardised language will always be a dead language as seen at a particular moment in its development' (Bex 2002, p. 26). Standard English is in fact an idealised norm, 'a variety that is never perfectly and consistently realised' (Milroy 2001, p. 543).

Turning now to examine definitions of the term *norm* in the *OED*, we find three definitions. The first is 'that which is a model or a pattern; a type, a standard'. The second sense is 'a standard or pattern of social behaviour that is accepted in or expected of a group', and the third is 'a value used as a reference standard for purposes of comparison'.

For the purposes of this section we focus on the third definition – the idea that a norm, in this case a linguistic norm, can be selected and held up as a reference standard. As a model or pattern, a norm is more or less codified, more or less prestigious. It is an abstraction that emerges in a community, for whose members it may have both positive and negative orientations (see Kostadinova, Chapter 9). If the concepts of *standard* and *norm* are so closely associated in people's minds, it is because a norm forms a natural basis for a standard. However, when a linguistic norm is selected as a standard and used as a yardstick, it becomes a prestige norm and is associated with values of correctness, appropriateness and social status (Bartsch 1985). Joseph (1987) considers the standard to be a 'synecdochic' dialect insofar as one norm or part of the language stands for the 'whole'.

2 The Prescriptivism versus Descriptivism Model

The notion of prescriptivism is closely linked to that of a standard. The *OED* defines *prescriptivism* as 'the practice or advocacy of prescriptive grammar; the belief that the grammar of a language should lay down rules to which usage must conform'. Prescriptivism is, in fact, the interpretation of a norm in the narrowest sense of the word; it is concerned with imposing a specific norm, and it feeds into standard language ideology, the belief in a unified, superior standard variety. As Milroy and Milroy (1999, p. 30) point out, 'the effect of codification and prescription has been to legitimise the norms of formal registers of standard English'; in other words, to legitimise one specific norm.

Prescriptivism has become equated with institutional prescriptivism; that is, with the dicta of recognised language authorities working through formal education and through print publishing. But there is no escaping the fact that the term has come to be used in a narrow, pejorative sense: it carries connotations of 'correctness', of political conservatism, of diktat by the socially influential, of unscholarly prejudice, of suppression of vernaculars. Nowadays it is often associated with mere pedantry and nitpicking. It is a term no doubt used more by its detractors than by presciptivists themselves. In short, the term has had a bad press and has been at the centre of the long-running debate over language norms and the standardising process

This debate has frequently been presented in terms of a binary division, with a sharp line dividing two deeply entrenched camps. On one side of the line we have the descriptivists, those who believe in describing language use 'as it is'. Among the descriptivists are to be found those who maintain that 'grammar rules must ultimately be based on facts about how people speak and write. If they don't have that basis, they have no basis at all' (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, p. 5). Facing them, on the other side of the line, are the prescriptivists, the gatekeepers of the standard variety, those who consider that 'one variety of language has an inherently higher value than others' (Crystal 1997, p. 2). The keyword here is 'inherently', for prescriptivists and descriptivists have fundamentally different views of language.

Prescriptivists tend to reify a language, such as English, as an invariant, structured entity that has an existence of its own independently of its speakers. They are often concerned with 'maintaining standards' by guarding against alterations, which are seen as slippage; with preventing the language, as they perceive it, from deteriorating. They thus aim to control both language variation and language change. Prescriptivists are not necessarily language professionals at all. Motivated by a desire to improve language use, they tend to focus on particular linguistic features. These may include spelling, punctuation or the choice of register, but the lexicon and the use of grammar tend to be their primary concerns. Specific points recur regularly, such as avoiding double negation or the use of the passive. The adage 'never use the passive where you can use the active' (Orwell 1946) has been repeated in many usage guides and is to be found on many websites offering advice to the would-be writer. The problem is, as Pullum (2009) points out, that prescriptivists do not always identify the passive voice consistently: any sentence featuring 'be' has sometimes been identified as 'passive'. The condemnation by the American philologist George Marsh of the passive progressive in *the house is being built* as 'an awkward neologism, which neither convenience, intelligibility, nor syntactical congruity demands' (Marsh 1860, p. 649) is often cited to illustrate prescriptivists' inability to prevent new forms from taking hold and becoming common usage (Milroy 2001, p. 550; Curzan 2014, p. 2).

Descriptivists, by contrast, are mostly linguists and sociolinguists whose fundamental interest is in the nature of language. Their concern is to document languages as fully as possible, in all their geographical and social variety, with the aim of reaching a greater understanding of language as a human attribute. Whether or not any given sample of language belongs to a named or standardised variety has no direct bearing on the descriptive enterprise. Linguists are therefore largely uninterested in boundaries between standard and non-standard language and in issues of 'correctness'. Insofar as they address the matter at all, they tend to deny that any linguistic expression can be incorrect or any variety of language inferior to another. For linguists, it is simply a fact that the linguistic sign is 'arbitrary and value-free' (Milroy and Milroy 1999, p. 87). As Jean Aitchison put it in her 1996 Reith lectures on language, 'no part of language is ever deformed or bad. People who dispute this are like cranks who argue that the world is flat' (Aitchison 1997, p. 4).

Prescriptivists, then, tend to be dismissed by linguists as misguided amateurs, whose understanding of the nature of language is faulty and limited. Since prescriptivists' attempts to halt language change are inevitably unsuccessful, they are frequently mocked for taking a King Canute-like stance against the sea of change. Moreover, prescriptivism is charged with creating language anxiety, promoting prejudice and bigotry, and oppressing non-standard language users. Descriptivists, in contrast, are condemned for their overly liberal attitude and for allowing standards to fall. David Crystal, who has argued that texting has no detrimental effect on spelling, has been labelled ‘an “anything goes” man’ by BBC journalist John Humphrys (2005, p. 333). Jean Aitchison, by openly challenging people’s concerns about the corruption of language, ‘unwittingly banged the linguistic funny bone of Radio 4 regulars, and also some journalists’ (Aitchison 1997, p. xii) and was met with angry comments from many members of the public. Academic linguists who defend the descriptive approach are accused of being ‘permissive, let-it-all-hang-out, anything-any-native-speaker-says-is-swell anarchists’ (McIntyre 2015).

These two views of language look poles apart. Yet the binary opposition oversimplifies what is, in fact, a complex issue. All too often, prescriptivists are presented as if they formed a monolithic, homogeneous group, all sharing exactly the same point of view. In fact, as this volume shows, the attitudes of prescriptivists towards language practices vary; some seek to enforce grammatical rules unquestioningly while others adopt a more nuanced approach.

Critics of prescriptivism tend to focus on a small handful of rules that are to be found in most usage and style guides; rules that stigmatise the use of *ain’t* or double negation, that chastise the use of *hopefully* with the meaning of ‘if all goes well’ and that advise against the use of a split infinitive or the passive voice. Of course, some such rules disappear over time, while new ones are added. But other rules are repeated down the generations and have thus become ‘archetypal usage problems’ that warrant investigation (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Chapter 10).

In recent years there has been a shift away from this binary opposition, from a ‘war that never ends’ (Halpern 1997) to a more balanced approach (Curzan 2014). Steven Pinker (2012) suggests that the descriptivist-prescriptivist opposition is, in fact, a ‘pseudo-controversy, a staple of literary magazines for decades’ and argues that ‘most writers who have given serious thought to language are neither kind of iptivist’. Harder (2012, p. 295) argues for a reconsideration of the ‘classic positivist distinction between normative and descriptive statements’. And Wendy Ayres-Bennett (2016, p. 117) points out that recent studies of English grammars from the heyday of prescriptivism in the eighteenth century have challenged the idea that they can be seen in terms of a simple dichotomy between prescriptive and descriptive.

Attitudes and beliefs regarding prescriptivism need to be contextualised and nuanced. Firstly, the long-held belief that prescriptivists are simply conservative die-hards, fighting a battle they can never win, is far from being the whole picture. Charles Ferguson was among the first to challenge this notion: ‘I cannot see how it can be denied, that prominent individual language planners and powerful language planning institutions have had measurable effects on the spoken and written languages of various communities’ (Ferguson 1996 [1987], p. 305). He suggests that the reluctance among linguists to address the topic at all goes back to Saussure's claim that all attempts to meddle with language are doomed to failure. Prescription can and does play a significant role in shaping a language, and as Anne Curzan (2014, p. 177) argues, it is important that linguists 'account for the power and nature of prescriptivism'. Much in the history of English is missed if its influence is ignored. For example, modern-day spellings of *debt* and *receipt* owe their silent *b* and *p* to prescriptivists who wanted to underline the Latin root of these words. Charlotte Brewer in Chapter 7 shows how James Murray's personal crusade to sound the initial \p\ in words of Greek origin such as *psychology* was not entirely in vain. If prescriptivists are too easily dismissed as being of no interest, then linguists risk overlooking the role they have played in the recent history of English.

The aim of this volume of essays is therefore to move beyond this model of binary opposition, which all too readily simplifies the stances of prescriptivists and descriptivists alike, in order to understand more fully how both concepts relate to the wider issue of establishing and enforcing norms and also to language on the margins. More importantly, the focus on (institutional) prescriptivism obscures the universally, inherently normative nature of language. Prescriptivism, insofar as it involves promoting conformity to particular language usages, is a form of social norm maintenance. In this volume we focus on the idea of prescription as one type of norm-setting, albeit a particular type.

3 Norms and the Linguistic Community

The standard, with its historical pedigree, its stability and its widespread use in education and in the media, both nationally and internationally, naturally gained in prestige, leading to the inevitable downgrading of non-standard varieties, now relegated to the margins. Speakers are free, however, not to adopt the standard. Writers can choose to contest or reject the standard norm by writing in non-standard varieties or by adopting different norms, thus challenging the norm/margin model and the hierarchy that it imposes. Personal letters and diaries especially are not necessarily constrained by the standard written norm (see Le Corre, Chapter 8).

While the standard is fully regulated by grammars and dictionaries, varieties at the margins do not have such rigid conventions. However, these marginal varieties are also norms. The second definition of *norm* that is given by the *OED*, 'a standard or pattern of social behaviour that is accepted in or expected of a group', underlines the importance of the social group. All social groups have their own model(s) or pattern(s), be they professional, social or regional. All languages of whatever variety conform to norms: 'the use of non-standard forms is just as dependent on community norms as the use of standard forms' (Harder 2012, p. 299). Linguistic norms do not, then, exist in isolation, but belong to larger sociocultural models. This approach follows Bartsch's distinction between rules and norms. For Bartsch (1987, p. 4), norms are 'the social reality of correctness notions'. By participating in 'a set of shared norms' (Labov 1972, p. 120), speakers demonstrate that they are members of a particular community. Speakers are of course free to adopt or to reject the shared norms, to identify or to distance themselves from the group. 'One adopts the supposed rules of those groups one perceives to be socially desirable, *to the extent* one wishes to be identified with them' (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985, p. 184; emphasis in original). We saw earlier that the standard norm is clearly identified as having social prestige; Trudgill (1999, p. 124) goes as far as to identify it as a 'purely social dialect'.

By conforming to the linguistic norms of a specific group, language users demonstrate that they belong to it and share its values. Only lengthy participation in a social set can guarantee fluency in its language, so that such fluency is naturally taken for a reliable indicator of a person's social history. English speakers are often remarkably sensitive to even minor deviations from the language of 'their' social group and to the socially indexical features of language, and those who master the 'right' written and spoken forms hold valuable social capital within the group. The most arcane 'usage problem' is ultimately linked to the presentation of a particular social identity, to a boundary drawn between social groups distinguishing outsiders from insiders. As Joseph (2006, p.12) observes, 'The impulse to police the *form* of the language . . . is culturally inseparable from the impulse to police the *borders* of the language', and so the borders of the community. In Frederick J. Newmeyer's (1989, p. 51) words, 'A linguistic norm is a unifying feature of a community: everyone knows it and knowing it sets insiders apart from outsiders.' 'Language anxiety' is not linguistic at all; it is the fear of being taken for an imposter.

Linguistic norms, according to Harder (2012, p. 309), 'work by assigning conventional social signification to what people choose to say (including low prestige to certain forms)'. Harder (p. 304) proposes viewing a linguistic norm as a 'target' in the sociocognitive space of a community.[2] Such a target is the representation of a certain use of language, and speakers, as members of the community, adapt towards the target. According to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985, p. 181) 'the individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behavior so as to resemble those of the group with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished'. Milroy (1980, p. 175), studying language use in Belfast, Northern Ireland, shows that 'the closer an individual's network ties are with his local community, the closer his language approximates to localised vernacular norms'. Norms are therefore constantly being negotiated. Language use and social values are closely connected, and in a culturally diverse society, where several norms are prevalent, a speaker's model of linguistic norms may be more variable. Lepage and Tabouret-Keller (1985, p. 116) go as far as to say that the individual is 'the locus of his language'.

At local levels, unconscious or 'covert' pressures maintain a natural degree of linguistic homogeneity. Such local norms result in what Joseph (1987) calls 'language standards', as distinct from standard languages, which are codified, written languages. But for the wider community, beyond face-to-face interaction, normalisation has to be more explicitly imposed, more consciously respected, and it is these explicit values that are 'present in public discourse about language' (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011, p. 25).

4 Norms and Margins

Norm(s) and margin(s) are interdependent. Variationist studies depend crucially on the use of some standard as a yardstick, typically a standardised language (Meyerhoff and Stanford 2015, p. 8). Variants are identified and measured against such a standard. Non-standard varieties are only marginal in relation to a norm that is considered to be the standard. It would make little sense to talk of 'margins' if there was no norm. Similarly, if there were no varieties on the margins, no norm from which to select the standard, then the standard norm would simply not exist. Moreover, if non-standard varieties did not obey certain norms of their own, they could not be labelled as varieties (Meyerhoff and Stanford 2015, p. 8). This approach to describing (non-standard) varieties, along with the view that a standard language is just one more 'variety' (Trudgill 2002, p. 160), can lead to a reification of named 'varieties' akin to that attributed by prescriptivists to the standard language (Harris 1998).

Normalisation of behaviour is natural to human societies, and language is no exception. As Deborah Cameron (1995, p. 5) points out, the desire to regulate and control language is 'observed to occur in all speech communities to a greater or lesser extent'. A norm would not exist were it not recognised by a group and maintained by a group. A speaker is not 'an incidental user of a linguistic system' but an agent 'in the continual construction and reproduction of that system' (Eckert 2000, p. 43). It also follows that a norm is constantly being negotiated. Norms vary according to time and place, as communities evolve. Forms which were once considered acceptable such as *ain't* can become stigmatised, just as others once frowned upon, such as the split infinitive, now no longer seem so problematic. Received Pronunciation (RP) is recognised as having changed over the centuries (Mugglestone 2003) and as being challenged by new emerging norms such as Estuary English. A norm is always embedded in the sociocultural practices of the time, and the standard, issued from one type of norm, is no exception. However stable the standard may appear to be, it can be challenged by other norms. The influence of marginal varieties on the standard is visible in the lexicon, with the *OED* recently including words such as 'bling' from hip-hop 'chugger' from slang or 'cotch' from Afro-Caribbean.

The potential for variation, for the standard to be modified is ever present, even if such change is limited through social practice. This tension between the standard norm and other norms is evident in the processes of de-standardisation and demotisation. Both processes affect the standard norm, but in different ways. The first implies that 'the established standard language loses its position as the one and only "best language" leading to a value levelling' (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011, p. 28). Demotisation (a term inspired by the German *Demotizierung* and coined by Mattheier 1997) refers to a situation of prestige shift, where a hitherto less prestigious variety comes to be considered the 'best language'. It does not affect the standard ideology as such, but is a change in how particular ways of speaking are evaluated (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011, p. 28).

There is then a constant tension between the standard norm and the margins, between the individual and the community, between one community and another, as each constructs and negotiates norms. By focusing on the nature of norms, we can better appreciate how prescriptivism, overt or covert, is intrinsic to language use.

The essays in this volume move beyond the prescriptive/descriptive dichotomy by building on this notion of norm. They recentre the debate about language on linguistic communities and language users, and they show that multiple, overlapping norms are at work within a society. This includes newer Englishes too, as illustrated in the essays by Gaëlle Le Corre and Sonia Dupuy. If we accept that establishing a norm is a dynamic process, then it becomes easier to envisage a norm not as an endpoint on a scale, but as a scale itself (Beal 2014, p. 90).

5 Overview of the Volume

The volume is organised into three parts, each of which reflects the complexity of norms in language use and contributes to the ongoing debate on the standardisation of language. Part I, 'Norms and Margins: Ideology and Concepts', deals with the notions of margins and norms, descriptivism and prescriptivism. Part II, 'Norms and Margins: A Historical Perspective', revisits traditional figures of authority such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and Samuel Johnson. Part III, 'Norms and Margins: Moving into the Twenty-First Century', shifts the debate towards language users' attitudes to the norm. The inclusion of specific case studies, based on collections of data, highlights the importance of considering the interaction between the individual's linguistic behaviour and the norm, an aspect that has long been neglected in studies of this kind.

Part I continues with two fresh theoretical examinations of the history of prescriptivism and descriptivism. The calling into question of the traditional opposition of the two approaches is a recurring theme through the volume.

In Chapter 2, Sandrine Sorlin suggests that standardisation should be considered from three different perspectives, not the traditional two. The first perspective is the emergence of the standard variety coinciding with a rise in the national consciousness. The normative role of printed texts and the emergence of newspapers and novels, which connected their readers in entirely new ways, contributed to building the nation and imposing a norm. In this context of nation-building, the process of standardisation can be seen as normative, ineluctable and necessary. Through 'Standard English', a people was brought to imagine itself as a nation. In more recent times, attention has been focused on the varieties left on the margins. Influenced by developments in sociology, sociolinguists have emphasised the role played by the standard language in maintaining the socio-economic order and reinforcing the power of the dominant classes. Instead of creating a nation of British citizens speaking a common language, the prestige of the standard language resulted in the humiliation of non-standard English speakers, who were led to see their own language as illegitimate. The end of the twentieth century can indeed be seen as an age of deconstruction of the 'myth' of Standard English by some (socio)linguists, in favour of stigmatised varieties that had been for too long excluded from serious study. In our postmodern (and postcolonial) era, the worth of non-standard dialects has been reasserted. However, as Sorlin points out, this reversal of points of view does not destroy the binary opposition – it simply reverses it – and the author suggests that by envisaging a third stage we can move beyond the basic dichotomy of prescriptivism and descriptivism, acknowledging the role of the individual in language variation. Research in variationist stylistics is increasingly concerned with how the individual uses language variation to construct and manipulate a range of 'personas'. Such an approach aims to do justice to the complexity and heterogeneity of the language of the individual. The recent adoption of dialogic perspectives in the study of the speech of individuals makes it possible to escape the top-down, reductive approach to norms. Developing Coupland's premise that 'people use or enact or perform social styles for a range of symbolic purposes' (2007, p. 3), Sorlin argues in favour of an approach that does justice to the 'complexity and heterogeneity of individual speeches'.

Natalia Guermanova, in Chapter 3, challenges the idea that prescriptivism lacks any theoretical foundation. Drawing on recent work in cognitive sociolinguistics, such as Geeraerts (2003) and Polzenhagen and Dirven (2008), Guermanova examines the role of cultural models in the development of both prescriptivism and the anti-prescriptivist arguments of twentieth-century linguistics. Geeraerts (2003) argues that the Western philosophical tradition has given rise to two mainstream cultural models that co-exist today: one with its roots in Rationalist thought of the Enlightenment, and the other emerging from Romantic-era ideas about the role of language in cultural identity. Guermanova explores the notion that the tension between these two different paradigms underlies the enduring prescriptivist/descriptivist debate: the emphasis of the 'Rationalist' model on the conventionality and hence mouldability of language contrasting with the 'Romantic' view, in which the inseparability of individual, culture and language means that individuals have little control over language. The chapter thus shows how the relationship between the philosophy of language and attitudes to language norms, long overlooked, can profitably be revisited.

Part II, 'Norms and Margins: A Historical Perspective', contains a number of case studies that also call into question the simple opposition between descriptivism and prescriptivism; they seek to reevaluate traditional approaches to codifiers of the English language, underlining the need to examine the enforcement of linguistic norms within the sociocultural context.

Valérie Raby and Wilfrid Andrieu's study in Chapter 4 of Claude Mauger's *French Grammar*, in parallel with seventeenth-century grammars of English, demonstrates that the descriptivist/prescriptivist dichotomy is at best too restrictive and could even be deemed irrelevant when applied to seventeenth-century Western discourse. The authors emphasise the role played by the process of *grammatisation* (Auroux 1994). This process can be defined as the description of languages based on two technologies that are the foundation of meta-linguistic knowledge:the grammar and the dictionary (Auroux 1992, p. 92). Grammatisation establishes a normative meta-linguistic discourse and plays a central role in standardising the language. While most models of standardisation emphasise the socio-historical dimension (Milroy and Milroy 1999), Raby and Andrieu suggest that the notion of a linguistic norm also needs to be examined from a meta-linguistic perspective. Without overlooking the limits of applying the Latin model to vernaculars, the authors shed light on the distinct types of normativity stemming from this single meta-linguistic source and reveal how comparative approaches between vernaculars were rendered possible by the homogeneous grammatical discourse at their disposal, which in turn created the conditions for the production of grammatical knowledge.

Early authoritarian figures such as Swift, Sheridan and Johnson, are traditionally presented as linguistically conservative, motivated by a desire to fix the language. However, Lynda Mugglestone's Chapter 5 on Samuel Johnson reveals that the tension between the individual and the norm is more complex than may at first appear. She examines the cross-currents of prescriptive and descriptive methods in Johnson's work, looking in detail at his engagement both with normativity and uncertainty, with censure and with the flux that a living language must necessarily evince (and that the dictionary maker might, in turn, record). For Lord Chesterfield in 1754, Johnson's forthcoming dictionary was intended to emblematise the end of 'toleration' and of naturalisation too. The time for both was past, he declared; Johnson's work was, in this and other respects, to be firmly distinguished from the 'mere word-books' that in Chesterfield's opinion, previous English lexicographers had produced. Johnson, as the 'Preface' to his published *Dictionary* of 1755 confirms, had indeed engaged with the remit of dictionary making as a means of repulsing 'unwanted foreigners' – even if such engagement would, in reality, prove by no means entirely in alignment with Chesterfield's expectations of prescriptive (and proscriptive) process. Mugglestone's close analysis of loanwords, and more specifically Gallicisms, provides an interesting insight into the eighteenth-century discourse of regulation and demonstrates that Johnson's comments in the *Dictionary* reveal 'an intriguing level of engagement with ideas of assimilation, diffusion and control.' The margins of language, on the threshold of the standard norm, are 'flexible and mobile spaces', and Johnson's treatment of Gallicism is not one of straightforward rejection or banishment from the dictionary.

The meta-discourse of the popular pronouncing dictionaries of the eighteenth century provides another example of the need to go beyond a simple prescriptive/descriptive dichotomy. As Véronique Pouillon explains in Chapter 6, the pronouncing dictionaries offered a specific upper-class pronunciation and were designed to meet the needs of a socially aspiring middle class, desirous to imitate their social superiors. Yet, paradoxically, the orthoepists who wrote the pronouncing dictionaries, such as James Buchanan, William Kenrick, Thomas Sheridan and John Walker, were themselves often on the margins of British upper-class society. So while these orthoepists did contribute to reinforcing a socially established norm and the institution of 'a hierarchy of topolects and sociolects', they also evaluated pronunciations according to more arbitrary and subjective criteria, subscribing to an abstract ideal of language, as an analysis of their meta-discourse reveals.

Charlotte Brewer's study in Chapter 7 of the *Oxford English Dictionary* brings many of the preceding themes together, again highlighting the futility of trying to pursue a clear-cut distinction between descriptivism and prescriptivism. She illustrates the need to be aware of the role that can be played by an individual such as Murray in setting the norm in such an established institution as the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Brewer shows how dictionaries, which set out to describe an existing standard, could easily slip from description to prescription and that their avowedly descriptive aims were impossible to maintain. Selection was unavoidable, as were the constraints of the culture of the time. The 1898 and 1924 definitions are striking in the way in which they reflect the conventions and mores of the period. Moreover, the lexicographers themselves were not averse to adding their own prescriptive remarks to an entry from time to time. It is therefore quite possible to find conflicting motives, and sometimes inconsistencies, in the works of these gatekeepers. Using data from the research project *Examining the OED*, Brewer draws on a systematic analysis of *OED* quotations to reveal the bias that favoured particular literary writers, especially male writers, in earlier editions.

One of the themes running throughout these chapters is the need to avoid simplifying the complex relationship between various levels of norms. This is further illustrated by Gaëlle Le Corre's study in Chapter 8 of soldiers' correspondence during the American Civil War. Drawing on a 170,000-word corpus composed of 354 letters written by 76 privates, corporals and sergeants from Virginia, Le Corre demonstrates that the soldiers' writings were influenced not by one norm or linguistic model, but by three: the standard norm, the religious rhetoric used in sermons and the regional vernacular. The constant tension that can be observed in these letters between the academic prescriptive norm and non-standard variations is therefore not a simple binary one. Nor is the relationship between norms and margins a static opposition; the norm is not fixed, nor is it stable. New norms are formed as societies change and evolve.

In the last chapter (Chapter 9) of Part II, Viktorija Kostadinova examines an early American usage guide that has received little scholarly attention: Josephine Turck Baker's *The Correct Word: How to Use It*. Kostadinova's analysis of the 'errors' listed by Turck Baker reveals the enforcement of various norms from spelling and punctuation to sociocultural considerations. As with earlier gatekeepers analysed in this volume, it becomes apparent that Turck Baker is less prescriptive than has previously been claimed. A careful study of the metalanguage used in the various entries shows that this usage guide is descriptive as well as prescriptive. In addition, some of the entries bear witness to language change happening at the time. In other words, usage guides can be a source of valuable evidence of language change and variation.

The chapters in Part III, 'Norms and Margins: Moving into the Twenty-First Century', present various case studies that illustrate how usage problems are social constructs and how they can provide valuable clues to actual usage. They focus less on the powers that seek to establish the norm and more on those who seek to align with the norm: the general public, copy-editors and writers in general.

The success of usage guides demonstrates that a large section of the public is convinced of the need to get one's language right, to use one variety of language over another. Usage guides first appeared during the final decades of the eighteenth century, and they are still popular today. Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade argues in Chapter 10 that they contribute not to codification but to prescription. Among the reasons suggested for the continuing popularity of usage guides, and for the public's keen interest in the reference standard, are social mobility and social class. While the socio-economic situation in which the early style guides were published was clearly far removed from that of the present day, the desire to be upwardly mobile remains, as does an underlying anxiety as to whether one's own idiolect corresponds to the recognised norm. Tieken-Boon van Ostade shows that usage guides continue to feed the public's basic insecurity about language. The influence of norm-enforcing usage guides today is thus not to be easily dismissed. Public belief in the supreme authority of such guides should, instead, encourage us to examine the effects they have on language use. Tieken-Boon van Ostade explores the various distinctions that can be made between style and usage guides, drawing on a new database specially compiled to analyse usage guides and usage problems. Previous research has tended to focus on what usage and style guides have in common, thus blinding us to the specificity of each individual guide and to the fact that even if each guide belongs to a long tradition it is also firmly anchored in its own socio-historical context. The use of the HUGE database enables Tieken-Boon van Ostade to show how American and British usage guides can differ, motivated by different social and economic changes.

Using an online survey to investigate 11 usage problems, Carmen Ebner in Chapter 11 analyses lay people's understanding of, and reaction to, usage problems such as the dangling participle, the split infinitive and the particle *like*. This rarely explored aspect of the function of usage guides addresses fundamental questions such as the following. How do language users identify correct usage? On what knowledge do they base their judgements? What sort of guidance are they seeking from usage guides and why? It is only when we address these questions that we can understand the power of usage guides and their role in shaping the English language. Ebner's findings underline the variability of acceptability judgements among the British public and enable her to infer which social factors are likely to play a role in determining attitudes to specific forms. Ebner shows how acceptability judgments vary according to age, gender and profession.

Varieties of English which have frequently been relegated to the margins can, over time, become normalised, and this is especially true in the context of New Englishes. The development of New Englishes in diglossic societies seeks to give rise to more stable codifications of those dialects that might at first been seen as on the margins. American English is now accepted as having a standard, as is Australian English, and Chapter 12 by Sonia Dupuy examines the construction *and* recognition of Maori English as a written dialect. She examines literary works by Maori writers to investigate to what extent Maori literature is creating its own norm out of what has for many years been considered as marginalised English.

How far style and usage guides may actually contribute to fixing the written norm and standardising present-day English is explored by Linda Pillière in the final chapter of the volume (Chapter 13). Printing and publishing have long been recognised as playing an important role in the standardisation of the English language, but the average reader is often blissfully unaware of the norms imposed on an author's manuscript before it reaches the shelves of the bookshop. For 'once the book is published, the editor's marks are invisible' (Lerner 2000, p. 198). However, the existence of American English editions of many British novels provides us with concrete evidence of the numerous modifications that are made by editorial teams, all instances of what Deborah Cameron (1995) labels 'verbal hygiene'. Drawing on a corpus of twentieth- and twenty-first century novels and the results of a survey carried out on copy-editing forums, the author focuses on some of the most common changes made by copy-editors to grammatical and syntactic structures, such as the replacement of *which* by *that* in a restrictive relative clause, or the suppression of existential clauses (*there is/there are*). Copy-editors control the gates to the world of print, and they play an important role in regulating the language.

The chapters in this volume all seek to shed new light on the role of published norm-setters in the English language, past and present, and to consider prescriptivism from a balanced perspective. By revisiting traditional figures of authority such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* or Samuel Johnson, the contributors to this volume invite the reader to reconsider some traditional assumptions about prescriptivism and descriptivism. The reasons for establishing or enforcing norms are various, and the reasons why people choose to follow those norms, or to stay on the margins, are just as complex. By focusing on both institutional norms and attitudes to those norms, and by presenting new perspectives on norm-setting, the chapters in this volume will, we hope, encourage further research and vigorous debate in this domain.

NOTES

1. *The Guardian*, 13 January 2015.
2. Usage of the term 'community' or 'speech community' begs many questions. The term is widely used, but rarely defined or justified. It is unsatisfactory, but difficult to avoid. For discussion, see Patrick (2002) and Joseph (2006).

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2 Approaching Norms and Margins on Different Levels: Going beyond the Standard/Non-Standard Divide

Sandrine Sorlin

1 Introduction

Norms and margins, as exemplified in the opposition of Standard versus non-standard English, is studied here from three perspectives with the ultimate aim of transcending the dichotomy that has traditionally opposed one to the other. Adopting a three-level approach to norms and margins – the national, community and individual levels – this chapter first focuses on the historical context of norm-setting in Britain (national level), then offers a literature survey of the deconstruction movement since the 1960s that has denounced the national ideology and promoted non-standard varieties (community speech level) and lastly highlights the recent evolution of variationist sociolinguistic theories from top-down to interactive approaches (local individual level).

The metaphor of the map can serve as an illustration of these three levels: speaking of Standard English from a national perspective implies the adoption of a 1/1,000,000 scale that is bound to leave in the shadow the realities of the field (the numerous dialects that are found in a nation). Embracing the spatio-temporal dimension of the nation, the first section indeed focuses on the construction of a 'United Kingdom' community that needed to 'imagine' itself as a nation where no such conception existed in pre-modern times. Adopting the viewpoint of the 'national norm' embodied by Standard English thus helps us to understand how and why a standard variety came to be 'created' from the seventeenth century onwards and then preserved until today for the sake of the country's 'national identity'. Only by focusing on the historical context that demanded that a unified language be established can one grasp the reasons why linguistic norm-setting became a necessity in the standardisation period and why people were (and are still today) willing to follow normative guides.

The second section focuses on the 'margins', adopting the level of non-standard English dialects. The 'standard norm' is indeed viewed from the perspective of the margins it has created at the level of speech communities, as from the 1960s onwards the marginalising ideology of 'Standard English' came to be deconstructed and the study of non-standard varieties called for. The role of these varieties in the historical construction of Standard English in

Great Britain has been emphasised by a number of linguists (Bex and Watts 1999; Crystal 2004; Milroy 1999, 2002; Watts and Trudgill 2002), making visible what too general a map renders imperceptible. They have deconstructed the ideological myth of the superior standard variety by showing it did not 'invent' a nation so much as it privileged certain individuals – Standard English having, from this more localised point of view, hardly facilitated equal entry and opportunity for all in the modern state. From the 1960s onwards, variationist sociolinguists in Labov's wake have also honoured non-standard varieties by showing that they have the same internal orderliness as the standard variety.

However, this level of perception still seems to miss phenomena that only a close-up map can reveal. The third section thus goes beyond the traditional divide Standard/non-standard English divide (without erasing the linguistic realities they stand for) by opting for a reduction of the analytic scale from the national and collective to the individual level, where linguistic phenomena prove to be much more heterogeneous and context dependent. Sociolinguistic categories usually adopted in sociolinguistics (sex, age, class, etc.) prove to be too broad to give a sufficiently precise picture of what individuals do with language depending on the goal they want to achieve, the image they want to convey and for which effects. Keys to this new 'dialogic' approach are the notions of style and stylisation through the concept of 'performance'. Recent studies (Eckert and Rickford 2001; Coupland 2001, 2007; Auer 2007) show that individual speeches can mix standard and non-standard features depending on the pragmatic goals and effects sought, norms being vulnerable to decontextualisation and reproduction.

2 'Imagining' a Nation, Preserving National Identity

Separating the ways norms have been created from the ways they have been received allows us to pay better tribute to a phenomenon that emerged in the Western world in the late eighteenth century: the construction of the nation-state.[1] Drawing on Anderson's definition of the nation as 'an imagined[2] political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson 2006, p. 6), the English standard/national/official language could be defined as the variety through which a people came to imagine itself as a nation.[3] Viewing norm-setting through this lens helps to explain how 'national norms' came to be established in their particular context of emergence. According to Anderson (2006), the birth of nations in Europe has to be thought of in a context of the demise of 'three fundamental cultural conceptions' that used to shape men's and women's minds:

1. First, the decline of Latin from the sixteenth century on, which was part of a more general decline of religious modes of thought (Anderson 2006, p. 13).

Latin had up to then been the only language that was taught and that could give 'privileged access to ontological truth' (2006, p. 36).

2. Second, the 'political fragmentation' of Western Europe that changed the old conception of space and power, where states were defined by high centres with 'porous and indistinct' borders and sovereignties that 'faded imperceptibly into one another' (2006, p. 19).
3. Third, the replacement of the old 'messianic' time by a new conception of time measured by clocks and calendars that made 'simultaneity' of events thinkable. In 'messianic' time, the past and the future were seen as being part of 'the instantaneous present'.[4]

In this context of fundamental changes, each state had to 'imagine' itself as a nation, which implied, among other things, the establishment of a homogenised language – no sovereign could claim Latin as his own and his alone (p. 41). Language is surely not the only basic component of nation-building; other political and institutional elements intervene in the process. However, language appears to be a powerful glue that sticks people together, offering foundations for a national community.

According to Anderson, the emergence of 'print capitalism' precipitated the change in people's way of apprehending time and the world around them. Two flourishing forms in particular in the eighteenth century became 'the technical means' through which people came to feel they belonged to the same community: the newspaper and the novel. To take the example of daily newspapers, the printed press connected people in entirely new ways, as they became aware that their friends, neighbours or barbershop patrons were all reading 'exact replicas' of the same paper at roughly the same time during the day (2006, p. 35). In addition, through those very newspapers and novels, people came in contact with a standardised variety of language that enabled them to understand each other through print:

> Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community. (Anderson 2006, p. 44)

Printing (introduced in England by Caxton as early as 1476) had revealed the large spelling disparities among writings emerging from different localities. The standardisation of the vernaculars into a unique codified print variety thus served communication and intelligibility.

For a standard to be successfully adopted, it needed to be accepted by a society. In the eighteenth century the conditions surrounding its birth were favourable, in the sense that people recognised their interest in the adoption of a unified variety. If a standardised form of English was sought for and accepted, it was indeed because it responded to the need of the time. As Gellner (2009) argues in *Nations and Nationalism, New Perspectives*, the construction of nations resulted from a modern process of unification that facilitated the setting of an industrial economy. Among the homogenisation processes that made it easier for the new rising economy to settle were those concerning culture and, within culture, language. In the eighteenth century, a standardised form of English was drawn from the language of the newly consolidated urban middle class. Craft professionals, who had perceived the unifying necessity for print English, responded to the national need by publishing grammars and guidebooks that were based on the language of the rising middle class.[5] The grammars and dictionaries of the English language they published, where none existed before, equipped the nation with two instruments that ascertained its linguistic frontiers. But they also served people who aspired to be part of the socio-economic changes of the eighteenth century. Indeed, these tools offered guidance to an increasing number of readers/speakers who aspired to 'belong' to the circle of those whose dialect was the closest to the print form. Publishers clearly perceived public demand: to give only one example, Johnson's dictionary (1755) and Lowth's grammar (1762) owe much of their success to the devotion of a publisher, Robert Dodsley, who had a 'keen eye' on the market.[6]

Lowth's and Johnson's works (together with Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1791) belong to these codifying times that, according to Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011, p. 3) can only be termed 'prescriptive' from an a posteriori twentieth-century perspective. Lowth's grammar is in fact a mixed form that associates reassuring advice (about how to use a grammatical structure or lexical item) with a description of the English language.[7] More importantly, although initially conceived as a 'private' grammar for his son Thomas Henry, Lowth's grammar became the referent grammar that happened to respond to a public demand:

> It is usually overlooked that the grammar served an important function for its readers who, in their desire to climb the social ladder at a time when the early effects of the Industrial Revolution were making themselves felt, needed guidance as to the norm of linguistic correctness – 'polite' usage – that accompanied the new status they aspired to. (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011, p. 2)

As Anderson (2006, p. 145) makes clear, 'from the start, the nation was conceived in language (not in blood)'. Speaking the national standard implied access to citizenship. Aiming at uniformising pronunciation that would be taught to all children in school, the rhetorician Sheridan (1761, p. 36), for instance, wanted to form eloquent citizens for a prestigious nation:

> The consequences of teaching children by one method, and one uniform system of rules, would be a uniformity of pronunciation in all so instructed. Thus might the rising generation, born and bred in different Countries and Counties no longer have a variety of dialects, but as subjects of one King, have one tongue in common.[8]

Sheridan's lectures were attended by huge crowds aspiring to speaking this common language.

From the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, increased social mobility more than ever required that access to proper ways of speaking be facilitated. Teaching Standard English became an absolute necessity in schools. Lindley Murray's grammar (1795) became the key grammar for the following fifty years and marked the evolution towards grammars with no descriptive aspects or general remarks on the functioning of language or the origins of general categories (Rousse and Verrac 1992, p. 355). Normative grammars and guidebooks facilitated the birth of a modern commercial state by targeting specific readerships: as the eighteenth century progressed, they became shorter and shorter, satisfying the demand of readers looking for quick and clear linguistic answers (Lass 1994, p. 482). The colonial and commercial expansion of the British Empire called for a consolidated national identity over and above particular Irish, Scottish or English identities (Watts 2000, p. 45). In this context, the official language became a 'metaphorical standard bearer for British imperial power' (Watts 1999, p. 63). The administrators who were sent to the newly colonised countries were pure products of the public schools that, since the 1870s, had been instrumental in the spreading of Standard English and more particularly a specific accent that came to be known as Received Pronunciation (RP). At the end of the nineteenth century, speaking RP was the surest way to have access to careers in the clergy, in teaching, in the colonial administration or in the army. The Oxbridge public schools produced an elite that became the symbol of national power.

In the nineteenth century, at a time of rising nationalist movements across Europe, it was also felt to be an urgent patriotic necessity to give a history to the English language in order to gather the nation around a common past. Historical knowledge was scarce, and a whole new academic field had to be introduced (Crowley 2003, pp. 30–33). The compilation of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which was dedicated to Queen Victoria in 1897, was another construction work that gave visibility to the richness of the language of the nation (see Mugglestone 2005, p. 109). From the eighteenth century, the standard language, once codified and standardised, has often been construed as essential to the preservation of national cohesion. It has been perceived (and still is) as a sacred safeguard against national disorder. This idea of the national idiom as the cement of national unity is particularly strong in times of national crises. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in a socially split Great Britain it was advocated that only the teaching of a normative language could impart a sense of belonging to non-standard speakers – as defended in the Newbolt report and George Sampson's *English for the English* (see Crowley 2003, pp. 201–202). Even during the Thatcher years (1979–1991), years of high confidence but also of doubt according to Cameron (1995, p. 108) as regards 'what it meant to be British', a return to prescriptive grammar was championed as the only way to give the country its moral certitudes back and as a form of cultural homogeneity that some felt the country was losing.

This (too) brief overview has highlighted the correlations between the need for the codification of a standard language and the birth of a nation (and its entry into the industrial age). At the scale of national time and space, Standard English can be viewed as inextricably linked to the construction of a nation whose linguistic identity needed to be first 'imagined' (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), then enhanced (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and finally preserved (since the birth of a standardised variety to these days). But adopting a national lens through which to look at Standard English inevitably renders indistinct the various Englishes that co-exist in an 'imagined community'. At the level of speech communities that I am now going to analyse, Standard English has less been imagined as a national necessity than a top-down imposition that stigmatised non-standard Englishes. A number of linguists have denounced the fabricated illusion of the ideology of nationhood that tends to present the standard variety as the 'natural' English language that is a homogeneous variety with clearly identifiable origins.

3 The Speech Community Level: Promoting Non-Standard Varieties

At the national level, the ideology of nationhood can be conceived as what gives an identity to subjects – for Althusser (1976, p. 108), ideology is what 'interpellates individuals into subjects'; that is, it both gives individuals an existence as British subjects and ascribes to them a specific place as citizens belonging to a specific nation. In this sense, becoming a subject necessarily also involves *assujettissement* ('subjectivation') through ideological state apparatuses (among which the educational system is the most powerful). In the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, Bex, Milroy, Trudgill and Watts, among others, came to equate the ideological 'creation' of citizens with fabrication or 'false consciousness' (Marx and Engels 1970), rather than invention or 'imagining' as in Anderson's words. For them, presenting Standard English as the language belonging to the whole nation conceals the fact that it was the result of an arbitrary social selection. This false national view is an ideological mythic[9] construction consisting in reversing everything that is culturally and societally related into something ahistorical and 'natural' (Watts 2000, p. 35).

Until the 1980s, historical books of the national language written by eminent linguistic historians such as Sweet, Skeat, Sisam, Wyld, Jespersen or Dobson adopted a linear model, retracing the history of a single variety – that of an elite minority that, after 1550, evolved towards the standard. The dialectal evolutions were restricted to footnotes or rejected altogether as 'vulgar' or 'provincial' (Milroy 1999, p. 31). Milroy shows that works such as Sweet's (1877) placed emphasis on the Anglo-Saxon heritage of the language, presupposing that the Anglo-Saxon dialects (Northumbrian, Anglian, Saxon, Kentish) were undifferentiated before William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066. As the colonists (coming from different regions) did not settle exactly at the same time, for Milroy (2002, p. 19) this hypothesis is 'hardly plausible'. However such a reading gives a clear and unique origin to the 'English language': 'This putative unity suggests a beginning for the "English language" within Britain, as the undifferentiated variety is then identifiable as the beginning of English as a single separate language' (2002, p. 19). Linguistic evolution was perceived as following arborescent genealogical ramifications, which de facto made it impossible to perceive the potential mutual influence of dialects. According to Jonathan Hope, linguists' adoption of the 'single ancestor-dialect hypothesis' was driven less by empirical data than influenced by the metaphor of the 'tree-family' in the scientific theory of biological evolution: just as humans evolved from primates, Standard English evolved in a linear arborescent way from the dialect of the central Midlands propagated by the Chancery (see Hope 2000, p. 49). The tree metaphor also facilitated the enormous work that historians faced: it imposed an order on the complexity of the multiple competing dialectal influences during the Middle English period. As Hope (2000, p. 50) underlines, the 'practicality of this hypothesis assigning clear origins to perfectly identifiable people' should not be underestimated: it had the merit of being 'highly teachable'.

More recent histories have tended to rectify this 'undifferentiated' view and to reassess the role of non-standard dialects in the evolution of Standard English. The plural form enters the title of new histories of the English language, as in *The Stories of English* (Crystal 2004) or *Alternative Histories of English* (Watts and Trudgill 2002). The history of Standard English is now open to debate, as reflected in these titles: *Standard English. The Widening Debate* (Bex and Watts 1999) or *The Development of Standard English. Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts* (Wright 2000). As margins are brought back to centre stage in alternative histories of English, the norm/margin dichotomy is given a new spin: Standard English is no longer represented as the source and other dialects as drawn from it in a hierarchical and linear manner; it is now on

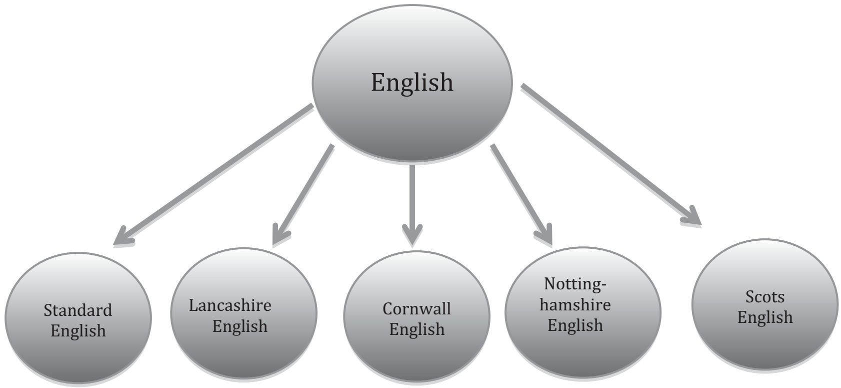

Figure 2.1 A common pool of English (from McWhorter 1998)

a par with other dialects of English, as they all derive from a common linguistic pool of English. Figure 2.1 drawn from McWhorter (1998, p. 26) illustrates the fact that Standard English is no longer to be perceived as the 'purest' variety from which other dialects enfold 'as variations of some sort' (p. 25).

At the level of non-standard English communities, the sovereign language did not have the systematic effect of creating British citizens speaking a common language but rather of humiliating non-standard English speakers who were led to conceive their own dialect as illegitimate:

> 'Standard spoken English' was not accepted nationally but merely amongst a small group and moreover, given that it was so clearly the prerogative of an exclusive group, it tended to make communication more difficult not less so. Rather than being a neutral tool for the purposes of communication between classes it functioned as a clear marker of class difference. Therefore the imposition of 'Standard spoken English' was not experienced by its recipients as a mode of enfranchisement but as a form of denial of their own practice since rather than enabling discourse it often prevented it, as linguists often commented. Once the non-standard speaker heard the 'standard accent' silence fell. (Crowley 2003, p. 208)

Furthermore, individuals' aspiration to learn Standard English in order to climb the social ladder in the eighteenth century (see the previous section) can be reinterpreted in Bourdieusian terms – highlighting the invisible workings of social domination – as part of their unconscious participation in the imposition of a certain social economic order. Speaking the more prestigious variety is to endow oneself with some 'linguistic capital' that can be valued on the sociolinguistic market. The linguistic norms of the English language registered in usage guides are predicated on the ideological assumption that some linguistic capital is more valuable than others. In learning and speaking Standard English, speakers do not simply take a share in the wealth and life of the imagined community but they also unknowingly make themselves accomplices of the dominant structure: their willing but unconscious submission entails an implicit acknowledgement of 'the legitimacy of the hierarchical power relations in the nets of which they are caught' (Bourdieu 1982, p. 39, my translation). The prescriptive grammars of the eighteenth century and the usage guides that have followed until today[10] have their share of responsibility in producing and reproducing the dominant ideology. Indeed, according to Susan Fitzmaurice (2000, p. 197), these usage guides reveal the mechanism of symbolic power that engenders, maintains and even 'aggravates' social inequalities: prescriptivism ensures that the dominant classes are maintained in power unquestioned.

If the lines prove to be fine between 'descriptivism' and 'prescriptivism' in Lowth's 1762 grammar (see the previous section), even at the turn of the twentieth century, the aspiration to descriptivism seemed tinged with prescriptivist tendencies, evincing that a clear distinction between the two cannot be easily drawn. In *Standard English and the Politics of Language*, Crowley (2003) reassesses the ambition of elaborating a norm of pronunciation for scientific purposes by phoneticians like Daniel Jones (1881–1967) or Henry Wyld (1870–1945), for instance, as their discourse highlights contradictions in their endeavour. Jones created his British Received Pronunciation (which he called *Public School Pronunciation*) for pedagogical reasons: to teach Standard British English, an agreement needed to be reached on how to pronounce it.[11] He based British RP on his own pronunciation and on that of 'the majority of the educated Southern English speakers'.[12] Although both Jones and Wyld repeatedly claimed that their codification of a standard pronunciation was nothing but a neutral 'scientific' abstraction, an artificial fiction, their speeches, Crowley argues, were underlain by a rhetoric of scorn and denigration for non-standard dialects' pronunciation. Wyld's neutral stance ('we do not love the one and despise the other: we simply observe and compare them'[13]) is, for instance, denied by his conception of Received Standard English as being 'objectively' a more solid and dignified variety (Crowley 2003, p. 168). In fact, from the sixteenth century on, refinement, elegance and politeness were attributed to a specific cultural and geographical region with a strong social and economic influence: the southeast forming a triangular zone, with London, Oxford and Cambridge as its cardinal points (Crystal 2004, p. 217). From that time on, the transfer of evaluation from the language itself to those speaking it has been a constant feature. Variations came to embody evil as they were associated with the uncivilised, impolite, lower classes that inspired fear and sometimes repulsion.

In the 1960s, at roughly the same time as the imposition of RP Spoken English was loosening its grip (at the BBC, for instance, see Mugglestone 2003), on the other side of the Atlantic, Labov's seminal sociolinguistic work made African American Vernacular English a respectable object of scientific analysis. He showed in *Language in the Inner City* (Labov 1972) that the vernacular was as structured and orderly as Standard American English and so did not suffer from any deficiency that has historically been attributed to its speakers. By importing sociological methods into linguistics, Labov (1966) was also able to establish a judgement-free picture of the social dialect stratification. In Labov's progressive ideology, vernaculars were more naturally authentic than the 'imagined' variety that is imposed from the top. In addition, like other variationist sociolinguists in his tradition, he has adopted the scale of speech communities, which has allowed him to come to terms with the problem of (unpredictable) heterogeneity in individual speeches and to build systematic correlations between a certain social class, sex or age and the average use of certain linguistic variants in a given situation. As Trudgill summarises:

> Labov showed however that the variation is not free. Viewed against the background of the speech community as a whole, the variation was not random but determined by extra-linguistic factors in a quite predictable way. That is, the researcher could not predict on any one occasion whether individuals would say cah or car, but he could show that, if they were of a certain social class, age and sex, they would use one or other variant approximately x per cent of the time on average, in a given situation. The idiolect might appear random, but the speech community was quite predictable. In any case, by means of methods of the type employed by Labov the problem of the heterogeneity of speech communities has been, at least partly, overcome. (Trudgill 1995, p. 28)

Labov's study of non-standard vernaculars as orderly varieties, however, is still based on the idea that the standard embodies a normative language against which vernaculars are to be analysed and compared to as 'deviations'. Although his works do place emphasis on phenomena that had been until then understudied, they still maintain the intact norm/margin binary. The same could be said about linguists' promotion of non-standard varieties against the 'fabricated' dominant ideology: favouring language equality among dialects of English also constitutes an ideological stance – assumed by the linguists in question – that has been denounced by John Honey (1977) in *The Story of Standard English and its Enemies*. Honey accuses linguists such as Trudgill of depriving disadvantaged children of the opportunity to enjoy the privileged social positions to which Standard English would give them access.[14] This confrontation of viewpoints gives rise to a battle of opposite ideologies between two camps that, as Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011, p. 284) underlines, 'refuse to take the other side seriously'.

At the speech community level, Standard English can thus be seen as 'imposed', whether consciously by those who suffered from it or unconsciously by those aspiring to it (in a Bourdieusian perspective). Non-standard varieties have been assessed as regards or in opposition to Standard English, which in the end brings together what the two separate levels presented earlier were supposed to distinguish. The promotion of either the national norm or its margins through communities' varieties maintains the heated ideological debate that neverendingly opposes one to the other. The last section of this chapter aims at transcending these oppositions (which does not mean erasing them as linguistic realities) by adopting the level of the individual that has purposefully been left aside by Labov for the excessive heterogeneity it displays.

4 The Local and Individual Level

McWhorter's figure (Figure 2.1) may give the impression that the different Englishes are self-contained hermetic entities. What it cannot show is that linguistic frontiers are often crossed, perhaps even more so today in late modernity.[15] As Crystal (2004, p. 531) highlights, the frontiers between dialects are much more porous today than earlier. Individuals who may feel they are Standard English speakers can at times adopt what are recognised as non-standard forms and vice versa. I began this chapter by stating that people's conception of time and space radically changed with the advent of print capitalism. Since the second half of the twentieth century, modern telecommunications have accelerated the shrinking of time and space with unprecedented speed, one result of which has been – in strict inversion of the goal and achievement of print capitalism – to expose individuals to multiple varieties of English through the internet but also radio and TV programmes that have opened their door to non-standard varieties. Via mass communication technology, non-standard variants circulate faster than ever, through slogans or ads for instance, and are sometimes taken up by Standard English speakers who, reproducing them in different contexts, tend to erase their social and geographical origins. Coupland (2007, p. 173) mentions for instance the 'global success' of the greeting slogan *wassup* [wæ ss' æ::::] for a Budweiser beer advertising campaign in 2000, which has been enjoyed as a 'cool' vocal term by diverse speakers recontextualising it in playful situations. It was replayed again eight years later as a political ad in Barack Obama's presidential campaign. Serving different purposes, this reexploitation of the item has severed it from a potentially stigmatised origin as specifically African American Vernacular English. Another instance of the 'quotability' or 'transportability' of non-standard forms is the fate of the dialectal TH-fronting in 'bovvered' that became a TV catchphrase after its extensive use by Catherine Tate's rebellious teenager character in her BBC show. The expression was recycled in various and innovative contexts, across the United Kingdom and abroad, by people of various ages, anonymous individuals and celebrities alike. Kylie Minogue is, for instance, said to have declared in *The Sun*, 'I have cancer – Am I bovvered?' (see Coupland 2007, pp. 173–174). The circulation of standard and non-standard variants is thus facilitated by mass communication media that make it possible for non-standard items to break away from their social and geographical origins. The metaphor of the 'map' used in the introduction to this chapter needs here to be abandoned for it gives the impression that ways of speaking are geographically rooted in a static way. The map image cannot do justice to dynamic linguistic importations (American English for instance) recontextualised in the UK context (and vice versa).

In addition, if social classes are still an undeniably resistant reality today, some sociologists (see Lahire 2004, 2011) have empirically shown that Bourdieu's idea of symbolic domination is based on a top-down rigid conception of social structure that seems to better fit a pre-mass-media, modernist industrial age. Nowadays individuals are bound to socialise in a plurality of social worlds throughout their lives. A unified/homogeneous cultural habitus producing a consistent/coherent system of dispositions can only obtain in specific conditions that seem to belong to the past. As Lahire underlines, these conditions can only be met in two particular cases evoked by Emile Durkheim: traditional societies and the boarding school system (Lahire 2011, p. 38). Bourdieu's coherent cultural habitus thus does not seem to be the norm in the field because in a day or throughout a lifetime individuals do not occupy the same positions (as son or daughter, schoolboy or girl, father or mother, husband or wife, lovers, churchgoers, workers or members of an association, etc.): 'any individual body plunged in a plurality of social worlds is subjected to heterogeneous principles of socialisation that can even be contradictory' (2011, p. 50, my translation). Individuals are likely to cross varied social worlds wherein they occupy different positions (2011, p. 60). An actor's disposition can therefore hardly be defined by one single situation. The clean scientific models produced at the level of speech community in variation studies (Labov 1966; Macaulay 1977; Trudgill 1974; Wolfram 1969) tend to be predicated on broad social categories (in terms of social class for instance) that fail to account for how individuals speak in the diverse social worlds they may inhabit. Indeed the main problem with the quantitative patterns of variationist sociolinguistics is that they present linguistic variants as automatic signals of the speaker's social class, which tends to keep the standard/non-standard dichotomy on merely economic (hierarchical) terms. It can hardly be denied that individuals are predisposed to speak in a certain way, given their sociocultural history, but studying variations within pre-defined socio-economic categories is reductive in a way that is now demonstrated.

What enables us to go beyond the direct connection between the linguistic activity of a speaker and her socio-economic place in the hierarchy is the notion of style. Labov (1966) was among the first to use the notion, but he perceived it as a variation on a fixed continuum of social prestige between the more formal and careful speech corresponding to the upper end of the socio-economic level and more casual or unmonitored speech, a product of the lower social strata. It is thus still subordinated to taken-for-granted social variables. In addition, Labov's focus is on intra-individual style rather than interactional contexts. More recently, sociolinguistics – especially through speech accommodation theory (Giles 1973; Giles and Powesland 1975) and the audience design model (Bell 1984) – has taken into account the social motivations and communicative purposes involved in the use of dialect styles in connection with the audience's imagined preferences. But this emphasis on context and audience as determining stylistic choices has ignored an important role played by variation in social practice: the construction of identities or personas. The individual speaker does not merely respond to context, but contributes to the making of it. Researchers (Coupland 2001, 2007; Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994; Rickford and Rickford 2000; Eckert 2001, and others, see Auer 2007) have shown, for instance, how style shifting is a strategy for the performance of the speaker's identity. The notion of 'performativity' (Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994, pp. 263–265; Rickford and Rickford 2000, p. 128) indicates that, depending on the various social scenes the individual encounters, linguistic variations can appear as resources in the performance of identities.

This new perception of variation is predicated on a conception of language as not merely reflecting social categories but as participating in the creation of social meaning: 'The view of variation is expanding, therefore, from marking categories to constituting a more fluid landscape of meaning; from a view of language as reflecting the social to a view of language as also creating the social' (Eckert and Rickford 2001, p. 6). The individual tends to project different personas depending on the presentation of self she wishes to manufacture in order to produce specific pragmatic effects in relation to particular audiences. Coupland's work offers numerous illustrations of how variation can serve the construction of certain personas – rather than merely reflect one speech community – depending on how speakers want to relate to their audiences.[16] He gives among many others the example of a local radio Cardiff DJ named Frank Hennessy speaking in non-standard Cardiff English and known for his celebration of local Cardiff culture. In one of the DJ's shows (informally entitled 'Hark, Hark, the Lark'), Coupland demonstrates that not only does Frank's speech present alternations between non-standard and more or less standard pronunciation of Cardiff English[17] but it also borrows American, southwest England and Cockney features depending on what he is talking about or which song he is introducing. These stylistic variations make him a 'media performer' as he is apt to conjure up an identity (the 'ethnic Cardiff' persona when speaking about Cardiff history to elicit a sense of community) and undermine it the next second, mocking his broad Cardiff accent for the sake of humour. He at times produces the persona of the competent announcer and then parodies it (through the use of 'yeah' in the American DJ style).

In producing and reproducing certain styles, creatively 'borrowing, reworking, and reaccentuating' them (Coupland 2001, pp. 207–210), Frank Hennessy sheds light on how dialects can be re-contextualised in often innovative ways or 'resignified' to use Judith Butler's term in her politics of the performative (Butler 1997, see also Sorlin 2012). But in his mimicking of various styles, the DJ is here more engaged in theatrical performance than in the real creation of personas for himself. Social identity creation becomes more apparent in what Eckert (2001) calls 'group style' or 'individual style' and more specifically what brings one group or individual to align themselves with or distance themselves from other groups/individuals. Her empirical fieldwork shows that given the persona the individual wishes to adopt she will resort to a certain kind of language modelled on the group style with which she wishes to identify. In her observation of pre-adolescents in Northern California for instance, she was able to highlight how style was constructed as a social value on a market among the sixth grade in US schools. In one group of Latino girls that called themselves the 'home girls', she witnessed the rising of what she calls a 'stylistic icon' (Trudy) engaged in the creation of the persona of the liberated rebelled girl, dressed in specific clothes and, like the rest of the group, performing specific linguistic variants – such as the prolonged and low realisation of [æ] before nasals typical of Chicano English where the same variable is raised in Northern California (Eckert 2001, p. 126).

As one ideological state apparatus, school is for Althusser (1976, p. 108) the locus where the national standard language is both created and reproduced. Whether they have adopted or rejected it, or were born into Standard English-speaking families, British pupils have come into contact with the rules of Standard English at school. They have also become highly 'conscious'[18] of the other dialect varieties (and the one they potentially may have been born into, which is bound to have an influence on who they can be and what they can achieve). However, individuals can in some ways 'stylise' themselves free from social constraints in social practice (Coupland 2007, p. 84). The 'recontextualisation' or 'resignification' of dialects must, however, be construed as dependent on the continued existence of the dialect communities if meaning or effect is to be produced. Figure 2.2 illustrates the fact that the individual's social identity can be co-constructed in interactions against a backdrop of sociolinguistic norms – that are associated with diverse degrees of prestige in the collective memories. Dialects (whether standard or non-standard) should thus be studied where they are played out – that is in discourse or interactions – as different discursive frames call for different linguistic forms signalling different social identities.

What Figure 2.2 captures is the possibility for the individual to transcend social and linguistic constraints in discourse or in interactive situations. In specific contexts, the use of non-standard features does not automatically and

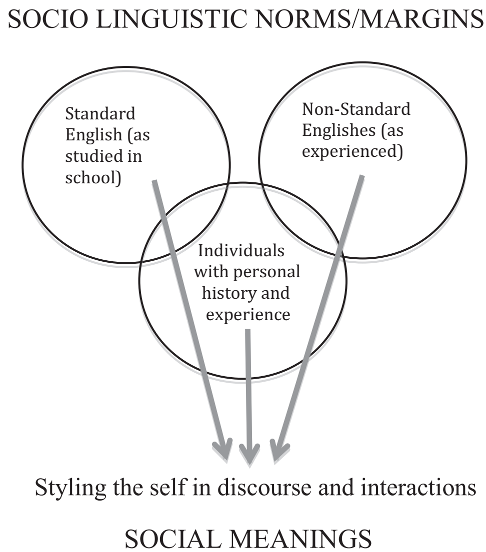

Figure 2.2 Social meanings beyond the standard/non-standard divide

necessarily index a speaker of a certain class living in a certain area; non-standard features can also be used to produce special local effects involving the 'performance' of different selves; the converse is true with Standard English features.

The drawback of adopting the level of the individual is that it makes any neat statistical extrapolations from individual cases all the more difficult. The advantage is that it does justice to the complexity and heterogeneity of individual speaking. For Eckert, the difference between 'particularism' and 'close-up' studies that may yield interesting results lies in the right selection. For her, if the speech community is too broad to be of significance, a good level of study is the place of an individual within a specific 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 2000), by which she means a discursive context that can account for variation not 'in virtue of shared abstract characteristics (e.g. class, gender) or simple co-presence (e.g. neighbourhood, workplace) but in virtue of shared practice' (Eckert 2009, p. 109). Though this approach should be seen as complementary to the speech community approach – the community of practice must itself be grasped within a larger social space and order – the focus on a group of people who engage in the same common task on a regular basis is for her the right locus to analyse social meaning as 'made in the course of local social practice' (p. 111). At this concrete level of situated talks among interacting individuals, the community of practice can begin to explain how people speak when they participate in the social space and how social meaning is linguistically produced. Rather than measuring sociolinguistic change in terms of cause and effect invariants across large urban communities, studies of communities of practice offer more dynamic views of the 'interaction between social and linguistic change' (p. 111).

What all these examples show is that, although conditioned by the constraints of the social structure, an individual can produce, reproduce or subvert certain group norms through diverse stylistic choices. The analysis of stylistic variations in certain discursive frames and genres (Coupland's DJ persona context, for instance) or in specific 'communities of practice' (Eckert's friendship adolescent group) seems to offer a more accurate picture of how social meaning is registered in language.

5 Conclusion

At different levels, norms and margins become relative terms. If homogeneity is what is sought after in Standard English,[19] plurality is the norm at the level of dialectal variations. Heterogeneity is certainly the norm at the individual level. As Crystal points out, the multiplicity of non-standard varieties should not be perceived as a threat to the nation's identity for they do not work at the same level:

> The burgeoning of nonstandard varieties is no threat to the standard. Their function is different. Nonstandard varieties exist in order to express local identities, at a regional level. A standard variety exists to foster intelligibility, at a supra-regional level. In a world where there is an increasing need for international communication the role of a Standard English, whether in its British or American incarnations, remains secure. (Crystal 2004, p. 508)

There is one level missing in Crystal's account here: the 'infra-regional' scale, so to speak, where, in a globalised world, both standard and non-standard forms can be seen as potential resources for the production of different personas in concrete acts of speaking. In a socio-constructionist view of language (Butler 1997; Cameron 1990), 'ways of speaking' are not entirely constrained by who one is or where one was born; they can also be 'ways of creating' the self. Analysing speeches as part of a particular 'non-standard' dialect necessarily puts it in opposition with the standard. Variationist stylistics has thus focused less on speech data than on 'the styling of meaning in social interaction' (Coupland 2007, p. 7) where the individual is studied as 'speaking through the social' rather than the other way round. It studies to what extent these different varieties are incorporated and played with by the individual. Looking at discourse through this lens enables us to push both the standard and non-standard labels to the margins, as a backdrop against which individual styles are performed in particular social scenes.

The recent focus on the individual styling of social meaning in interactive contexts seems to result from a late modern focus on the 'self'. But to come back to Lowth in the eighteenth century, mentioned in the first part of this chapter, and to loop the loop, the grammarian's correspondence as thoroughly studied by Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011) presents interesting linguistic variations depending on who Lowth is writing to or what image of himself he wants to convey (given his high social aspirations). His elimination of certain forms like double negatives, which 'may well be a linguistic consequence of his social advancement' (2011, p. 190) shows that he more or less consciously selected the group norms he wished to align himself with. The performance of the self is hardly a new phenomenon – ancient rhetoric theorised the discursive construction of an orator's image long ago, namely through the concept of 'ethos' for instance. What is new perhaps is that sociolinguistics has started delving more fully into it.

NOTES

1. In this I follow the dominant view among theoreticians of nation and nationalism (Smith 1998, Özkirmli 2010) – another conflicting stance being that 'nations' existed from time immemorial.
2. 'It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 2006, p. 6).
3. What is true of the United Kingdom can hardly apply to all nations, especially those with multilingual settings (e.g. Canada or Switzerland).
4. In this ancient perception, the concept of 'simultaneity' was completely unknown: with the birth of 'homogeneous, empty time' (certainly due to the development of secular science), 'simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar' (Anderson 2006, p. 24).
5. Craft professionals played a crucial role in the production and reproduction of uniform products. Cameron (1995) is certainly right to regard craft professionals as having benefitted the most from standardisation and as having pushed the most for it. As she indicates, Caxton had every reason to welcome the establishment of a unique norm, so that the products he was selling could more easily circulate on the English market (1995, pp. 42–43).
6. Lowth's grammar 'was published at a time when there was a potential demand for precisely the kind of approach Lowth had taken in the grammar, and it became popular not because of "his own high status" but because it happened to be published by a man, Robert Dodsley (1704–1764), who had an excellent keen eye for the demands of the market' (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011, p. 6).
7. Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011, p. 135) underlines the non-prescriptive parts of Lowth's 'normative grammar': 'Closer inspection of the rules in the grammar

proper demonstrates unequivocally a descriptive approach to language. Such rules are often presented very carefully, allowing for different usage depending on medium (speech or writing) or the formality of the utterance.'

8. From *A Dissertation on the Causes of the Difficulties. Which Occur, in Learning the English Tongue. With a Scheme for Publishing an English Grammar and Dictionary, upon a Plan Entirely New* (1761, p. 36) quoted in Crystal (2004, p. 408).
9. According to Watts, the myths of the superiority of the English language and of its perfection were born in a context of power struggle between imperial nations. As the perfection of the language of the nation needed to be maintained, variation came to be perceived as the incarnation of evil: thus 'the myth of the undesirability of change' was born.
10. See H. W. Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926, revised by Gowers in 1965), *Fowler's Modern English Usage* edited by Burchfield in 2004 and lastly *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage: The Classic First Edition*, 2010, edited by David Crystal). Interestingly, in analysing Fowler's method, Crystal highlights the very fine line between description and prescription, thereby going beyond the mythic reputation traditionally granted to the prescriptivist. Ernest Gowers's *Plain Words* (1948; *The Complete Plain Words*, 1954) was re-edited by his great-grand daughter, Rebecca Gowers (2014).
11. I am of course aware that 'Standard English' is not to be equated with RP English, a specifically British phenomenon. They are all the more independent of one another as non-standard English can be spoken in RP and Standard English in non-RP.
12. Jones (1907, p. iv) in Crowley (2003, p. 1410).
13. Wyld (1907, pp. 68–69), in Crowley (2003, p. 147).
14. 'And disadvantages from the existence of what some will doubtless reject as "dictatorship" will be more than compensated for by the confidence [in] which forms carry the most respect, so that the arbitrary privilege enjoyed by professional linguistic scholars like me is extended to the ordinary citizen' (Honey 1997, p. 164).
15. I prefer the term 'late modernity' to 'postmodernity' as it better indicates a late capitalist stage. As Coupland emphasises, 'Modernity was the condition of the so-called "developed world" as it had emerged from the Second World War, quite hierarchically structured through social class and region, with rather rigid gender, race and age norms. Modernity tended to keep people in their allotted places. It generated relatively clear social styles' (Coupland 2007, p. 29).
16. As Coupland indicates, his notion of 'relational self' needs to be understood as audience *and* speaker oriented: 'Both self-identity and audience design are inevitably involved in this, and I have sometimes used the phrase "the relational self" . . . to try to mark the fact that we need to treat identity and audience approaches together' (Coupland 2007, pp. 80–81).
17. For a more precise analysis of Frank Hennessy's utterances and Cardiff dialect in general see Coupland (1988).
18. For Coupland (2007, p. 99), one should not underestimate speakers' level of sociolinguistic awareness: 'But we shouldn't assume that it is only academic "critics" who have the potential for awareness, for achieving critical distance from the social power of language and for achieving social change. The general case against sociolinguistic determinism is that speakers – all of us – are indeed invested with language awareness and a potential to engage critically.'

19. In addition, if every norm has its margins, the margins can themselves generate their own norms. Today's Scottish English has produced its own norms of 'Standard Scottish English', just as 'Standard Singapore English' embodies the central linguistic norms in Singapore, thus illustrating the inevitable uniformising process at different sublevels serving different functions.

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3 Prescriptive Grammar and the Rationalist Cultural Model of Standardisation

Natalia Guermanova

1 Introduction

Until very recently, the prevailing attitude to prescriptivism among linguists was that of overwhelming rejection. Normative grammarians and lexicographers were accused of all sorts of sins – a lack of theoretical basis, professional ignorance, social snobbishness, a subjective approach to standardisation, a mixture of recommendations based on contradicting principles, and so on (Leonard 1929; Poldauf 1948; Leith 1983; Aitchison 1981; Curzan 2014). Moreover, the negative influence of the prescriptive tradition was found not only in educational practices but also in several branches of linguistic research, notably in historical linguistics, where emphasis was traditionally placed on the history of the units and constructions favoured by prescriptive grammars to the detriment of non-standard varieties (Milroy 1999; Watts and Trudgill 2002; Mugglestone 2012).

However, whether this criticism is fully deserved remains to be seen. As recent studies have shown, the negative interpretation of the prescriptive tradition is somewhat stereotypical and simplistic. The very fact that codification of linguistic norms, followed by the prescriptive stage of standardisation, took place, at a certain point in history, in all European countries, shows that it was an important sociocultural phenomenon. Even today prescriptivism is very much alive among ordinary speakers of English, which has led Joan Beal to recognise 'New Prescriptivism' as a significant social trend (Beal 2008). All this gave a stimulus to the rise in scholarly interest in prescriptivism, both as a historical and as a modern phenomenon (Wright 2000; Beal, Nicer and Sturiale 2008; Tieken-Boon van Ostade and van der Wurff 2009; Hickey 2012; Percy and Davidson 2012).

In this study, I propose to look at the prescriptive grammar of the English language from a historical perspective, taking into consideration the cultural context and the intellectual climate of the times, in which British prescriptive grammar tradition emerged and developed, and went through various transformations. I argue that links between prescriptivism and the philosophy of language in Great Britain have been largely overlooked and that prescriptivism needs to be reconsidered in the light of key aspects of changing cultural models over the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

I will be using the concept of cultural models of standardisation (Geeraerts 2003) as a useful tool to categorise and systematise the rich cultural material relevant to the present research and to situate the prescriptive tradition in a wider sociocultural context. It helps to understand the logic underlying prescriptive recommendations and to present them not as an array of ill-assorted strictures, but as a certain system reflecting the values of the Rationalist cultural model. It also helps to understand the wide support given to prescriptive grammar by the British intellectual elite during the Enlightenment, when it was congruent with the dominant Rationalist philosophical tradition. Finally, the concept of cultural models helps us to understand the growing criticism of prescriptive grammar, which, beginning with the nineteenth century, gradually came to be at variance with new intellectual movements reflecting the Romantic cultural model.

2 Cultural Models of Standardisation

The concept of a cultural model has been productively used in cognitive anthropology, social psychology, cognitive linguistics and its recent offspring, cognitive sociolinguistics. The last is a burgeoning field of interdisciplinary research, which strives to incorporate cognitive concepts of categorisation and conceptualisation into more traditional sociolinguistic research, revealing cognitive models underlying sociolinguistic variation, language attitudes and language policies (Kristiansen and Dirven 2008; Geeraerts, Kristiansen and Peirsman 2010; Pütz, Robinson and Reif 2014).

The notion of a cultural model (Holland and Quinn 1987; D'Andrade 1987, 1992; Palmer 1996; Shore 1996; Dirven, Frank and Pütz 2003; Sharifian 2011) is based on that of a cognitive model proposed by Lakoff (1987). In the most general sense, a cultural model has been defined as 'a cognitive schema that is intersubjectively shared by a cultural group' (D'Andrade 1987, p. 112). Cultural models are 'presupposed and taken for granted models of the world' (Holland and Quinn 1987, p. 4), which emerge as a result of common socialisation experience and are 'negotiated by endless social exchanges' (Shore 1996, p. 47). These mental constructs serve as orienting devices, shaping people's conception of reality, their societal beliefs and value systems. They help to process information, form inferences and predictions, make appraisals of self and others and take decisions. Moreover, they are often endowed with directive force and ideological potential.

Among cultural models worked out in cognitive sociolinguistics are the Rationalist and the Romantic models of language standardisation, proposed by Dirk Geeraerts, who has suggested that different language policies and folk attitudes to language variation rely on different cultural models (Geeraerts 2003). These models are fundamental to sociopolitical thought as they are used as guidelines for social actions, underlying ideology-laden decisions in the field of language planning.

The Rationalist model, which in Great Britain emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century and remained prominent throughout the eighteenth century, relies on the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment and reflects, in a simplified form, the philosophical and sociopolitical thought of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, and other influential thinkers of the epoch. The origin of the Romantic model can be traced back to the second part of the eighteenth century. It originated in Germany, where it was gradually shaped over the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in the works by Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Georg Hamann, Wilhelm von Humboldt, August Schlegel, Heymann Steinthal, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and many other philosophers, linguists, politicians and men of letters, who belonged to the vast intellectual movement of Romanticism. In Romanticism the relations between language, thought, nation and man were reconsidered; that new vision made a deep impact on diverse aspects of life, from literary practice to nation building. Gradually, the Romantic Movement spread throughout Europe, its peak occurring in the period from 1800 to 1850.

This is, of course, a rather simplified picture. Though Romanticism is usually, and not without reason, understood to be a reaction against the excessive rationalism of the Enlightenment, in everyday life the dividing line between the Enlightenment and Romanticism was often blurred. Thus, in the second part of the eighteenth century, which is the crucial period for the emergence of the prescriptive tradition, the ideas of the Enlightenment and Romanticism competed in the public mind, producing various blends in the works of philosophers. It is this richness and complexity of sometimes self-contradicting ideas found in the works of individual authors that make the concept of cultural models so helpful. Bringing out the salient features of philosophical and sociopolitical thought, cultural models constitute a good starting point for coming to grips with complicated phenomena of intellectual and sociopolitical life.

The Rationalist model involves such concepts as emancipation, democracy and participation in public life. In this model standard language is seen as a communicatively general and socially neutral medium of communication, which facilitates people's participation in social life and thus becomes the basis of liberal democracy. Consequently, this model sees language variation and multiculturalism as impediments to social progress. Thus, the Rationalist model, which emphasises the practical utility of a standard language, was the foundation for the policy of propagating Standard French at the expense of all other languages and dialects spoken in eighteenth- and nineteenth–century post-revolutionary France. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries rationalist language policies underwent certain transformations, which, however, did not alter the emancipatory and participatory goals of the Rationalist cultural model.

By contrast, within the Romantic model language is seen not so much as a means of communication, but rather as a natural and spontaneous medium of expressing a common *Volksgeist* and the reflection of an ethnically specific world view. Within this model language is more or less equated with culture. Viewed from this perspective, preference for one language or language variety means disparagement of other languages and of the peoples who speak them; standard language is regarded not as a means of social participation, but, quite the contrary, as a means of social exclusion. This model was actively used by the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, which emphasised the Romantic concept of national identity. The Romantic model is still a key notion in the postmodern paradigm, which no longer regards linguistic diversity as an obstacle to social progress since multilingualism and multiculturalism are supposed to express different and often layered identities (Geeraerts 2003, p.52).

It should be emphasised that the Rationalist and Romantic cultural models are not to be equated with the rich and diverse philosophical and linguistic traditions of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. As all cultural models, they have an abstract, general, idealised, even simplistic nature and do not reflect the turns and twists of the complicated history of the emergence, evolution and transformation of ideas which is the concern of linguistic historiography: the epistemological pendulum swings back and forth, making scholars return to formerly discarded hypotheses. The picture is complicated by the mixture of competing principles often found in the works of one and the same writer, the intricate relations between mainstream and peripheral linguistic traditions, the tensions and links between different authors and so on.

It may not be an exaggeration to say that the Rationalist and the Romantic models never actually existed in their pure forms. Indeed, carried to its extreme, the Rationalist model would mean the acceptance of a universal language to the detriment of even the most widely used national languages, while the Romantic model implies that each person is entitled to his own individual language (Geeraerts 2003, p. 44). Obviously, neither policy was realised in actual practice, so that what we actually observe in nation-building, state-building and language policies is a certain compromise between the two models.

The opposition between the Rationalist and Romantic models is important because it touches upon the basic conceptual distinctions relevant for the way people – politicians, educationalists, scholars and laymen – perceive and categorise languages and nations. Characteristically, it corresponds to the difference between the interpretation of nation and ethnicity within the framework of social constructivism, on the one hand, and that of primordialism, on the other. Social constructivists emphasise the somewhat artificial character of nations: ethnic markers and even traditions are invented to suit the needs of the state in order to bring the nation together (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). By contrast, primordialists claim that ethnic identity dates back to prehistoric times, reflecting common beliefs and a common world view, and, once formed, remains fixed. Consequently, primordialists view language as a primary and inalienable property of an ethnos, while constructivists focus on the artificial nature of national languages in general and standard languages in particular (Hobsbawm 1992; Anderson 1983).

In fact, what is at stake here is arguably not so much the cultural models of standardisation, but the Rationalist and Romantic cultural models of language itself as the two models reveal the drastic difference in the way language is conceived. Thus, the notion of cultural models can be applied to cross-cultural studies, where it can be used to explain the difference in the way nations perceive their native tongues, how emotionally or dispassionately they relate to them, whether they perceive them as an important cultural asset, a precious heritage to be valued and cherished, or just a convenient instrument of communication. In fact, the different conceptions of the native tongue are not based on the actual properties of the language, such as the richness of its vocabulary or the complexity of syntactic constructions. Rather, they reflect an ideologically laden attitude: while the adherence to the Romantic (organic, or cultural-value) model places language among the core values of the nation and inspires language loyalty, the Rationalist (instrumental) model does not presuppose a strong emotional link with the language of ancestors (Guermanova 1999).

It has been convincingly argued that the Rationalist and the Romantic cultural models are still effectively employed in discussion of language policies: the former is used to justify the usage of the standard languages and the wide spread of global languages, while the latter, supporting multiculturalism and multilingualism, underlies attempts to preserve and revitalise minority languages (Geeraerts 2003; Polzenhagen and Dirven 2008; Berthele 2008, 2010).

However, the term 'standardisation' is used in linguistic literature not only in relation to status planning: it also covers a wide range of corpus-planning activities; that is, selection and propagation of language forms and constructions that are considered to be the 'right' ones (Haugen 1972, 1983). Until now, the applicability of the Rationalist and Romantic cultural models to the study of language normalisation has not been explored.

In the following paragraphs I set out to address this issue with the aim of showing which of the cultural models (or both) served as the basis for the British prescriptive grammar tradition. Contrary to the widespread belief that prescriptive grammarians were ignorant of contemporary philosophical traditions, I believe that prescriptive grammar did not exist in an intellectual vacuum and propose to reveal the links between the philosophy of language and language standardisation practices. The position advocated here is that in exploring the intellectual history of the past we should not project our current understanding of the subject and our modern theoretical commitments onto past theories and practices. Though our understanding of language as a social and cognitive phenomenon and our attitude to linguistic diversity may differ drastically from those found in the works of the past generations of grammarians, in our analysis of their works we should not judge them by modern standards, but rather try to place them in the wider intellectual and social context of their time.

My objective is to demonstrate that the rise of standardisation practices in the eighteenth century relied on the Rationalist model of language and the philosophy of language it was based on, whereas growing criticism of it in the nineteenth century is due, among other things, to the establishing of the Romantic cultural model of language, which ran counter to standardisation efforts. At an early stage of standardisation, social prestige and decorum were not the only concerns of grammarians and lexicographers (though, of course, one cannot deny that Standard English was used as a means of social mobility for the insecure middle class). Still, the success of standardisation in the eighteenth century should be explained, among other factors, by its links to the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment. In the course of the nineteenth century, with the change in the intellectual climate, prescriptive rules came to be perceived as purely formal and obsolete, and their utility began to be questioned.

3 The Relation of Language to Man and Cognition in the Rationalist Cultural Model

The belief is widespread that prescriptive grammarians ignored the philosophical developments of their time (Leonard 1929; Poldauf 1948; Aitchison 1981). In fact, at least some of the influential prescriptive grammarians and lexicographers, such as, for instance, Lowth or Walker, were well-educated people, competent in linguistic matters, whose works contained innovative ideas alongside keen observations and examples of actual usage (Beal 2007; Chapman 2008; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010).

It is worth noting that even the more theoretically minded authors of the eighteenth century did not look down on prescriptive grammar. Thus, Lord Monboddo (James Burnett), a somewhat extravagant but extremely erudite scholar of the eighteenth century, wrote,

> Language . . . cannot be preserved . . . , without the particular care and attention of those men of art we call grammarians; whom we may despise as much as we please; but if there be not such a set of men in every country, to guard against the abuses and corruptions which popular use will necessarily introduce into every language; and if the youth of rank and fortune are not carefully instructed by such men in the principles of grammar; the language of the country, however perfect it may have been originally, will very soon become unlearned and barbarous. (Monboddo 1774, pp. 493–494)

Table 3.1 *Language and Man*

Rationalist model (instrumental view of language)	Romantic model (organic view of language)
Man has power over language	Language has power over Man
Language is external to Man, it is Man's possession	Language is an internal primordial force, which constitutes Man's identity
Language is a static whole	Language is Man's activity
Language is constructed by Man; it is a result of a voluntary social contract	Language has inner organic laws of its own which determine its evolution
Languages were made up by vulgar ignorant people and must be corrected	Even primitive languages possess a certain cultural value, being poetic, picturesque and vigorous

Ward, the author of a monumental philosophical treatise *An Essay on Grammar applied to the English Language*, had likewise a high regard for practical grammar. In the preface to his book he ardently praised Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*:

> And surely the worthy author . . . has done a very great service to the language, by pointing out the inaccuracies, and by showing, in his very judicious preface, the true source from whence they have sprung. This proves beyond all dispute the necessity of attending to practical grammar in our own language. (Ward 1765, p. ix)

Beattie, the author of an influential universal grammar *The Theory of Language* (Beattie 1788), which was translated into many European languages, went as far as to write a prescriptive manual *Scoticisms, arranged in Alphabetical Order, Designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing* which contained a list of provincialisms to be avoided (Beattie 1787). Thus, in the eighteenth century the gap between universal and practical grammar was not seen as unbridgeable: practical recommendations were thought to be compatible with universal and comparative grammar as they were supposed to be based on general principles of language structure common to all languages (Ward 1765).

The issue of language was prominent in the works of such leading philosophers of the Enlightenment and Romanticism as Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Burke, Hume, Harris, Herder, Hamann, Humboldt, Schlegel, Steinthal, Fichte and others, whose works represented the Rationalist and the Romantic models. The crucial point of divergence was the way the Rationalist and the Romantic models treated the basic concepts of the philosophy of language – that is, the relation of language to Man and to cognition. This is shown in Table 3.1.

In the Rationalist cultural model language is something external to Man. Languages are constructed by Man and based on convention; consequently, as any

Table 3.2 *Language and cognition*

Rationalist model (instrumental view of language)	Romantic model (organic view of language)
Language and thought are separable	Language and thought are inseparable
Language is secondary to thought; it is the mirror of thought	Language possesses a creative potential of its own and shapes the thought
Language should not add anything to the thought so as not to distort it	Language stimulates creative thinking
The discrepancy between language and thought is a fallacy to be remedied	The discrepancy between language and thought is an inherent property of communication

social contract, they can be voluntarily changed and improved. And, moreover, they must necessarily be improved as, having been created by vulgar ignorant people, they reflect an erroneous world view and irrational superstitions.

By contrast, as is shown later, in the Romantic cultural model language is seen as a dynamic phenomenon, its development being determined not by convention, but by inner laws of either a biological or a psychological nature. In either case Man has little control over language, which acquires a somewhat mysterious power over him: language is an internal primordial force that constitutes Man's identity, and, most importantly, it is the locus of ethnic identity. This is why Herder called Man 'a creature of language': without language Man can hardly structure his perceptions and conceive his place in the world. The relation of language to cognition in both cultural models is shown in Table 3.2.

In the eighteenth century, within the Rationalist cultural model, language and thought were seen as more or less separable entities. Thought preceded its verbal expression, so that language was supposed to be, metaphorically speaking, 'the dress of thought'. Thus, in the Lockean empiricist tradition, 'ideas', which both he and his contemporaries saw as the main units of cognition, were believed to be based on sensual impressions and to be designated by language only at the last stage of the cognitive process. Furthermore, in many cases language failed to describe them effectively; as Locke pointed out, it is impossible to explain to a blind man what light or colour is. According to Locke, the role of language is more important in respect to words used to express 'mixed modes', by which he meant words with abstract meaning, such as 'glory' or 'ambition', which combine a number of more basic ideas; that is because once such a word exists, most people learn it before they conceive the complex idea it stands for. Still, according to Locke, 'in the beginning of languages, it was necessary to have the idea before one gave it the name: and so it is still, where, making a new complex idea, one also, by giving it a new name, makes a new word' (Locke [1690] 1836, p. 319).

Berkeley went as far as to claim that it was not only possible, but even preferable to consider things without the veil of words:

> It must be owned that most parts of knowledge have been strangely perplexed and darkened by the abuse of words, and general ways of speech wherein they are delivered. Since therefore words are so apt to impose on the understanding, whatever ideas I consider, I shall endeavour to take them bare and naked into my view, keeping out of my thoughts so far as I am able, those names which long and constant use has so strictly united with them . . . We need only draw the curtain of words, to hold the fairest tree of knowledge, whose fruit is excellent, and within the reach of our hand. (Berkeley 1710, pp. 37–38)

Berkeley's words reveal the distrust of language which was typical of the Enlightenment. This approach can be called 'linguistic scepticism': language is seen as full of imperfections, some of which arise from the misuse of language and can be avoided; but some cannot be remedied, as they spring from the very nature of language itself. This attitude can be traced back to Bacon's 'New Organon', in which he called confusions arising from the faulty use of language 'the idols of the marketplace' (Bacon [1620] 2000, p. 41). The idea was further elaborated by Hobbes, who singled out several types of 'abuse of speech'. They arise in four cases.

> First, when men register their thoughts wrong, by the inconstancy of the signification of their words . . . and so deceive themselves. Secondly, when they use words metaphorically; that is, in other sense than that they are ordained for; and thereby deceive others. Thirdly, when by words they declare that to be their will, which is not. Fourthly, when they use them to grieve one another. (Hobbes 1651, p. 13)

The problem of 'verbal abuse' was of interest to Locke, who saw it as an obstacle on the path to knowledge:

> Were the imperfections of language, as the instrument of knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, a great deal of controversies that make such a noise in the world, would of themselves cease, and the way to knowledge, and, perhaps, peace too, lie a great deal opener than it does. (Locke [1690] 1836, p. 358)

For Locke, the problem lay in the uncertain meaning of many words, especially those denoting mixed modes, which were liable to denote different ideas in different contexts and to different people. His advice was 'to use no word without an idea annexed to it'; 'to have distinct, determinate ideas annexed to words, especially in mixed modes'; 'to apply words . . . to such ideas as common use has annexed them to'; 'use the same word constantly in the same sense'; 'for the ascertaining the signification of words, to declare their meaning . . . first, in simple ideas by synonymous terms or showing . . . secondly, in mixed modes, by definition . . . thirdly, in substances, by showing and defining' (Locke [1690] 1836, pp. 375–384).

4 The Rationalist Cultural Model and Prescriptive Grammar

Thus language came to be regarded with suspicion. This attitude was summed up by Locke in Chapter X of his famous treatise, which he aptly called 'The Abuse of Words' (Locke [1690] 1836). This expression, alongside with its synonym 'the cheat of words', remained in active use during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. This view was fully consistent with the prescriptive tradition, the goal of which was to correct usage and reduce the imperfections of language to a minimum. While lexicographers tackled the problem of lexical definitions, grammarians tried to make grammatical constructions exact replicas of mental concepts.

In doing so, prescriptive authors did not regard actual usage of any social group as their model. Naturally, they criticised the 'vulgar' linguistic habits of the lower classes, but the social and intellectual elite was not immune from their criticism either. The point is explicitly made by Daniel Defoe in his 'Essay on Projects':

> We have seen many great scholars, mere learned men, and graduates in the last degree of study, whose English has been far from polite, full of stiffness and affectation, hard words, and long unusual coupling of syllables and sentences, which sound harsh and untuneable to the ear, and shock the reader both in expression and understanding. (Defoe [1697] 1843, p. 36)

Other writers on linguistic matters took the same critical stance. However, the prescriptive tradition went even further. Prescriptive grammarians were concerned not only with imperfections in the speech of any particular social group, but with the limitations of human language as a semiotic system as well. In this they shared the philosophers' belief that language was secondary to cognition. The fact that the prescriptive tradition saw language as separable from thought and coming after it is evident in the following passage from Blair's rhetoric:

> The words, which a man uses to express his ideas, may be faulty in three respects; they may either not express that idea which the author intends, but some other which only resembles, or is a-kin to it; or, they may express that idea, but not quite fully and completely; or, they may express it, together with something more than he intends. (Blair [1783] 1812, p. 219)

Blair's words testify to the fact that the discrepancy between language and thought was seen as a fallacy which should be remedied, and the aim of the prescriptive tradition was to achieve isomorphism between language and thought. Words were expected to reflect concepts in the human mind, and to do so as precisely as possible. That is why the aim of many, perhaps of the majority of grammar rules was to achieve perfect congruence of language and thought.

In terms of modern semiotics, it means that the prescriptive tradition favoured so-called diagrammatical icons, that is signs that have structural similarity to their referents (Willems and De Cuypere 2008). In modern linguistics iconicity is understood in its broadest sense as the existence of any similarity between a sign and its referent, so that the concept tends to embrace all cases of motivation in language. It is important to note that the referent can be not only a material object, but also a cognitive model: a linguistic unit possesses iconicity if there is some sort of congruity between the name and the object it designates or the mental representation of the latter in the mind. In fact, proponents of iconicity in language claim that it is one of the basic properties of language which has its roots in Man's biological nature and prehuman language (Dressler et al. 1987; Simone 1995; Fischer and Nänny 2001; Willems and De Cuypere 2008).

This semiotic approach led prescriptivists to the following reasoning: if language is the mirror of the mind, then different ideas are to be expressed by different forms, while different forms are to have different meanings. This is, actually, the gist of the first canon of verbal criticism proposed by Campbell:

> When use is divided as to any particular word or phrase, and the expression used by one part hath been preoccupied, or is in any instance susceptible of a different signification, and the expression employed by the other part never admits a different sense, both perspicuity and variety require, that the form of expression, which is in any instance strictly univocal, be preferred. (Campbell [1776] 1858, p. 177)

This principle underlay many prescriptive rules, among them the tendency to differentiate the forms of the preterite and past participle, or strictures censuring the use of 'that' as a relative pronoun. The only problem with using 'that' as a relative pronoun was that it was also used as a conjunction in object clauses and thus was to be avoided in full agreement with Campbell's first canon.

Rules regulating agreement between subject and predicate are another typical example. A modern scholar may be puzzled by the high number of such rules, which, after all, are applicable to a rather limited number of sentences, and might be considered peripheral to the core of English grammar. However, eighteenth–century grammar books gave them full attention. For eighteenth–century grammarians these rules were not formal: they were supposed to convey important semantic nuances. Thus, the disjunctive conjunction 'or' demanded the singular form of the predicate as it expressed an alternative or an opposition between the words it connected. Subjects connected by the conjunction 'and' required the plural form of the predicate ('the king and the queen were happy'), while the conjunction 'with' required the verb in the singular form ('the king with the queen was happy'): the first sentence described the king and queen's mutual happiness, while the second referred only to the king's feelings. The situation was differently conceived, and this was to be reflected in syntactic structures.

One can find many examples which show how language was supposed to convey subtle mental distinctions. Thus, one of the basic principles of iconicity relevant for linguistics is the so-called ‘proximity principle’ (Givon 1995). According to this, the linear distance between linguistic units reflects the conceptual distance between the referents. In the eighteenth century the idea was explicitly formulated by Lord Kames:

> In a complete thought or mental proposition, all the members and parts are mutually related, some slightly, some intimately. To put such a thought into words, it is not sufficient that the component ideas be clearly expressed; it is also necessary, that all the relations contained in the thought be expressed according to their different degrees of intimacy . . . the great nicety in all languages is, to express the various relations that connect the parts of thought. (Kames [1762] 1838, p. 266)

This principle underlay the rules dealing with the use of articles in certain constructions. Thus, in the expression ‘the soul and the body’ Lord Kames recommends using two articles if the objects of thought are viewed as separate entities; however, if their ‘intimate connection’ is to be brought out, this should be made manifest by the use of one article (Kames [1762] 1838, p. 257). Similarly, Murray recommends repeating the article in the following sentence: ‘How immense the difference between the pious and the profane!’ (∗How immense the difference between the pious and profane!) (Murray [1795] 1809, p. 276). ‘The pious’ and ‘the profane’ are conceived as different groups of people, and the repetition of the article is supposed to stress the conceptual distance between them.

Different notions could also be kept apart with the help of a preposition: ‘Death is the common lot of all, of good men and of bad’ (∗Death is the common lot of all, of good men and bad men) (Murray [1795] 1809, p. 276). Murray’s explanation is as follows: ‘the repetition of articles and prepositions is proper, when we intend to point out the objects . . . as distinguished from each other, or in contrast’ (Murray [1795] 1809, p. 276). In other words, such repetitions were recommended when the writer wanted to emphasise the conceptual distance between the concepts.

In the following examples the repetition of the subject was used to emphasise the tense differences and separate different ‘tense zones’ in the sentence. As Murray puts it, conjunctions connect the same moods and tenses; in other cases the subject is to be repeated (Murray [1795] 1809, p. 194). Thus, the following sentences are recommended: ‘He lives temperately, and he has long lived temperately’ (∗He lives temperately, and has long lived temperately); ‘He may return, but he will not continue’ (∗He may return, but will not continue) (Murray [1795] 1809, p. 195).

Besides separating different concepts, syntactic structures could demonstrate their closeness. As Blair put it, ‘the words or members most nearly related, should be placed in the Sentence, as near to each other as possible; so as to make their mutual relation clearly appear' (Blair [1783] 1812, p. 243). This reasoning formed the foundation for the well-known rules concerning the place of adverbs, such as 'only' or 'at least', in the sentence. The typical examples are: 'Theism can be opposed only to polytheism (∗Theism can only be opposed to polytheism) ([1783] 1812, p. 244); 'The Romans understood liberty as well, at least, as we' (∗The Romans understood liberty, at least, as well as we) ([1783] 1812, p. 245). Similar considerations determined recommendations concerning the word order in such constructions as 'a pair of new shoes' (∗a new pair of shoes) (Knowles 1796, p. 74).

Other characteristic examples of the proximity principle in prescriptive grammar were rules regulating agreement between subject and predicate in 'there is/there are', 'either/or' and 'neither/nor' constructions, in which the predicate was to agree with the subject placed closest to it. The proximity principle, along with other considerations, also played a certain role in strictures dealing with the split infinitive and prepositional stranding, as in such constructions closely related words were, metaphorically speaking, 'torn apart' from each other.

Moreover, the desire to achieve isomorphism between language and thought determined the structure of larger textual stretches:

> In the members of a Sentence, where two things are compared or contrasted to each other; where either a resemblance or an opposition is intended to be expressed; some resemblance, in the language and construction, should be preserved. For when things themselves correspond to each other, we naturally expect to find the words corresponding too. (Blair [1783] 1812, pp. 283–284)

Thus, the sentence 'He did not mention Leonora, nor her father's death' is better formulated than 'He did not mention Leonora, nor that her father was dead' (Kames [1762] 1838, p. 258). Even the length of the clauses describing similar phenomena was supposed to be approximately the same ([1762] 1838, p. 262).

The rules just discussed demonstrate how in the age of the Enlightenment grammarians and rhetoricians tried to make verbal expression the exact reflection of the ideas in the mind, and emphasised the secondary role of language in cognitive processes.

5 The Anti-Normative Stance of the Romantic Cultural Model

This approach changed in the age of Romanticism. In developing a historical approach to language, Romanticism placed the question of linguistic evolution at the heart of linguistic studies. This new focus encouraged philosophers to develop general theories about the nature of language, which were to shed light on how and why language changes. This called for a new way of looking at the interrelation of language and thought: language came to be understood as Man's creative activity. Language was no longer seen as an obedient reflection of thought: beginning with Herder language was perceived as a powerful force that not only reflected but also shaped thought and world view. Typically, Romanticists rejected the traditional understanding of language as a 'dress of thought': according to Wordsworth, language was to be seen not as a dress, but as 'an incarnation of thought' ([1810] 1967). It was an entirely new semiotic theory of representational adequacy, which strove to reconsider the Lockean split between word and thing (Haney, 2010, pp. 31–32).

It does not follow, however, that Romanticists supposed language and thought to be identical. They rather believed, in the vein of Hegel's law of the unity and conflict of opposites, that there existed a dialectical contradiction between them. This contradiction created a certain tension, which provided a stimulus for the evolution of language. Whereas the Enlightenment strove to bridge the gap between language and thought, Romanticists thought that this gap was inevitable. Being an integral property of communication, it was not a deficiency, and it was not to be remedied.

The new era saw language as the locus of ethnic identity. The bond between language and ethnicity was thought to be reciprocal: language expresses the spirit of a nation, and, at the same time, forms it: speaking a language means accepting a certain world view. Thus language has a creative potential of its own. This is especially true of the so-called words with an inner form which suggests a certain image to the mind and trigger creative thinking. As a result, language was no longer seen as a result of voluntary human activity. It was a somewhat mysterious force forming the essence of a human being. This view elevated language to a higher status.

Another important change concerned the concept of perspicuity, which was the cardinal virtue of language and text sought in the Enlightenment. It would certainly be an exaggeration to say that perspicuity was the only quality valued in the eighteenth century. Rhetoricians wrote about the importance of vivacity, gracefulness, unity and other aesthetic qualities expected of a writer. However, they invariably began their recommendations with perspicuity: unless the text was perspicuous, nothing else mattered, as the reader or listener did not grasp the message. This point was explicitly made by Blair:

> Perspicuity . . . is the fundamental quality of style; a quality, so essential in any kind of writing, that, for the want of it, nothing can atone. Without this, the richest ornaments of style only glimmer through the dark; and puzzle instead of pleasing the reader. (Blair [1783] 1812, p. 214)

These recommendations were perfectly congruent with contemporary neoclassical literary taste: neoclassical writers pursued the same ideal of clear and elegant style. Neoclassicism valued order, accuracy, precision, measure and decorum. This is why so many writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

Table 3.3 *The concept of perspicuity*

Rationalist model (instrumental view of language)	Romantic model (organic view of language)
Perfect understanding of the other's thought is attainable	Perfect understanding of the other's thought is unattainable
Understanding of the other's thought depends on the exactness of its verbal expression	Understanding of the other's thought depends on many factors, including the previous experience of the recipient, his intellectual abilities and emotional state
Perspicuity is an objective property of the text; it depends on linguistic means used by the author	Perspicuity is a subjective shifting quality, which resides in the recipient's mind

including Pope, Dryden, Swift and Defoe, supported the idea of the Academy, which was to fix the language, although, at the same time, it was to curb their freedom of expression.

For Romanticists, however, perspicuity was no longer the most important quality of a text. Poetry, which became the leading literary genre, valued the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, bringing forth such textual qualities as sublimity, emotiveness, expressiveness and picturesqueness, which had nothing to do with perspicuity.

What is more, the new age emphasised the subjective quality of understanding. Thus, according to Humboldt, any understanding is a kind of misunderstanding, or, rather, a kind of misinterpretation ([1836] 1999). Words do not have fixed meanings, identical for all speakers; they do not passively reflect the thought of the speaker and pass it on to the hearer, but rather activate the hearer's own thought, evoking individual associations and individual memories, thus setting into motion an individual train of thought. Besides, understanding depends on a variety of factors; for example, the amount of attention given to the text, the intellectual capacities of the recipient or his or her emotional state (see Table 3.3).

The prescriptive rhetorical tradition was slow to accept the new interpretation of perspicuity. We find it at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the rhetoric by Whately:

> Perspicuity is a relative quality, and, consequently cannot properly be predicated of any work, without a tacit reference to the class of readers or hearers for whom it is designed. (Whately [1828] 1871, p. 300)

However, even after the appearance of this influential rhetoric, the accent on perspicuity in the prescriptive tradition remained dominant. As a result, the gap between prescription and the intellectual climate of the time deepened.

The crucial difference, then, was in the way prescriptive grammarians and Romanticists saw the interrelation between language and thought. For Romanticists there was no direct one-to-one correspondence between words and concepts. Consequently, isomorphism between language and thought could not be achieved: the discrepancy between language and thought was seen as an inalienable antinomy of human communication, which could not be corrected by Man. It meant that no grammar rules turning linguistic units and constructions into diagrammatical icons could guarantee uniform understanding.

This new vision of language was largely anti-normative. As Hamann put it, 'the purity of language dispossesses it of its wealth; a correctness that is all too rigid, takes away its strength and manhood' ([1762] 2007, p. 67). In this vein August Schlegel, a prominent representative of Romanticism, wrote,

> The desire to fix language with the help of agreements is an impermissible undertaking; it is as if someone demanded that a living organism did not change its structure and the shape of its parts. (Schlegel [1828] 1963, p. 257)

When prescriptive rules lost their theoretical grounding, they began to be regarded as purely formal, even pedantic, and certainly superfluous, which explains, if partially, the critical attitude to the prescriptive tradition in modern linguistics.

6 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the problem of the applicability of the Rationalist and Romantic cultural models to the history of language standardisation. The analysis of prescriptive grammar rules demonstrates that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries normative practices in Great Britain were based exclusively on the Rationalist cultural model, which was congruent with the prevailing philosophical thought of the Enlightenment. By contrast, the Romantic model, which reflected the values of the Romantic era, was largely anti-normative and incompatible with the very idea of prescriptivism. In the course of the nineteenth century the gap between the prescriptive reasoning of grammarians and the changing philosophy of language in Great Britain grew wider, which, along with other social and cultural factors, eventually led to the critical re-evaluation of traditional prescriptive grammars typical of modern linguistics.

The study highlights the links between the prescriptive grammar and the philosophy of language in the age of the Enlightenment. It has been argued that the British prescriptive grammar tradition showed a tendency to recommend grammar constructions that, in terms of modern semiotics, can be described as diagrammatical icons: the ideal language was expected to be a precise reflection of the concepts in the human mind. This approach makes it possible to find certain correspondences between some seemingly unrelated grammar rules, for example, the tendency to preserve the difference between the forms of the preterit and the past participle and recommendations dealing with word order, and to present prescriptive grammar rules not as an array of random and arbitrary strictures, but as a system, consistent with the prevailing philosophical thought of the time.

However, prescriptive argumentation was not limited to the search for isomorphism between language and thought: when studied closely, prescriptive recommendations reveal an interest in neoclassical precepts; for example: classical unities; a reliance on analogies, which manifests a growing awareness of the systemic nature of language; recourse to etymology; and so on. Studying the prescriptive tradition in a broad sociocultural context with a view to tracing different sources of normative reasoning in their interrelation offers a promising line of further research. A cross-cultural approach to prescriptive traditions in different European countries may also yield interesting results, revealing both affinities and culturally specific tendencies in normative argumentation.

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Part II

Norms and Margins: A Historical Perspective

4 Norms and Rules in the History of Grammar: French and English Handbooks in the Seventeenth Century

Valérie Raby and Wilfrid Andrieu

1 Introduction

Although this chapter adopts a historical perspective, it does not address the evolution of the language per se. Our aim is to take a historical approach to language representation, focusing on the grammatical discourse of a number of handbooks. More specifically, we examine the question of the norm in the grammatical discourse of grammars of French and English in the seventeenth century.

The work chosen for the study of the norm and its margins in seventeenth-century grammatical discourse is Claude Mauger's *French Grammar*, 14 editions of which were published during his lifetime between 1651 and 1688. This particular handbook is remarkable in that three distinct metalanguages (French, English and Latin) are used to describe two object languages (French and English). It provides a fine illustration of how the roles played by Latin and the vernaculars in the process of 'grammatisation' of modern languages evolved. An examination of English handbooks of the same period as Mauger's work enables us to take a comparative approach, and to shed light on the notional homogeneity that then characterised grammatical description throughout Europe. The list of works included in the collection can be found in the Annex at the end of the chapter.

It is not clear that the grammars in our collection can be appropriately attributed to either of the traditional categories of 'prescriptive' and 'descriptive'. An examination of these works, and of the grammatical rules they contain, reveals just how problematic it is to claim that an opposition exists between overtly advocated descriptive and prescriptive attitudes. The normative force of grammatical texts is to be found elsewhere.

We propose to adopt the historical perspective of Auroux (1994), in which the cultural process of 'grammatisation' and the correlate notion of Extended Latin Grammar are expounded, hypothesising that it offers a satisfactory and powerful explanatory model for the discussion of the role of metalinguistic discourse in the definition or construction of a standard language.

Our analysis seeks to differentiate three distinct forms of normativity at work in grammatical discourse and argues that normativity is not solely to be found in grammar rules. The norm is thus conceived not as a standard state of language, but as a set of principles defining a form of normativity. In other words, we examine the relationship between the establishing of a linguistic norm, or the setting of a form of standard, and the structure of metalinguistic discourse.

2 Norm, Description, Prescription

Our chapter deals with the relation between grammatical discourse and the constitution of the norm. 'Norms' have become inseparable from 'prescription' within the debate on standardisation (Nevalainen 2014). And in the now classical analysis of Milroy and Milroy (1999), 'prescription' is one of seven stages in the implementation of a standard, along with selection, acceptance, diffusion, maintenance, elaboration of function and codification. Our focus in this chapter is on the prescription and codification stages.[1]

Prescription is rarely seen in a positive light when it is conceived of in the descriptive/prescriptive dichotomy. The contrast between a descriptive approach and a prescriptive one often goes hand in hand with a value judgement,[2] echoing the deeply rooted commonplace that linguists adopt a scientific perspective whereas grammarians only give superficial accounts, when they do not lapse into purism. This opposition between description and prescription is clearly rooted in a specific socio-historical context. It is not a distinction that is necessarily valid or relevant to the period under study here, and there is the danger that by applying it, we will fall into the trap of anachronistically projecting later ideas and concepts onto an earlier historical situation. In other words, is the definition of a linguistic norm systematically associated with prescriptive attitudes? Or can codification be achieved differently, as may have been the case in the national traditions of France and England in the seventeenth century?

3 Grammatisation

3.1 The Notion of Grammatisation

Grammatisation (Auroux 1994) can be defined very roughly as the production of grammar books and dictionaries for specific languages. Auroux considers grammatisation to be the second technological revolution in the language sciences, the first being the invention of writing. If we limit our scope to the Western tradition of the language sciences, we see that from the fifth century AD onwards grammatisation developed from the Graeco-Latin grammatical tradition.

In the case of Europe and its idioms, the Renaissance can be described as a turning point as far as grammatisation is concerned. From late antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages, only a few languages are concerned with grammatisation. The earliest examples are Gaelic in the seventh century, Old Norse in the twelfth century and Provençal in the thirteenth century. But what is remarkable about the Renaissance is the extensiveness and the intensity of the phenomenon (Auroux 1994, p. 81). Such a large-scale production of grammars and dictionaries was made possible by a metalinguistic system of reference inherited from Graeco-Latin antiquity.

3.2 Assessment of the Latin Model

Use of linguistic categories of the Latin model has often been seen as an artificial imposition, as a hindrance to valid descriptions of the vernaculars. For example, Padley (1988), introducing Bullokar's *Pamphlet for Grammar* – the first grammar of English – expresses his view as follows:

> It is the first in a long line of works assuming that what is appropriate to the description of Latin will be equally appropriate to the description of the mother tongue. As a result of this belief English vernacular grammars, in a Latinized framework, were long thought to have little other practical purpose than the inculcation of 'grammar' as such, to ease the way to the student's major task, the acquisition of Latin. (Padley 1988, p. 230).

So, according to Padley, the first grammarians of English *believed* the grammatical categories of Latin would be suitable for their vernacular. This idea should be refined for several reasons. Firstly, we need to consider the respective statuses of English and Latin at the time and secondly the related conception of metalinguistic activity prevailing at the time. In the Renaissance the vernaculars gained credibility because they were used to express the same notions as Latin, just as elegantly and efficiently. Describing a vernacular using the Latin framework is therefore a way of assessing the vernacular's qualities by the yardstick of the Latin language. However, this does not mean that the architects of the grammatisation of modern languages did not question the relevance of the Latin model.[3]

One famous illustration of such questioning is to be found in Wallis's *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* in which he dissociates himself from grammarians like Jonson, Gill or Hexam:

> [o]mnes edim ad Latinae linguae normam hanc nostram Anglicanam nimium exigentes (quo etiam errore laborant fere omnes in aliis modernis linguis tradendis) multa inutilia praecepta de Nominum Casibus, Generibus, et Declinationibus, atque Verborum Temporibus, Modis, et Conjugationibus, de Nominum item et Verborum Regimine, aliisque similibus tradiderunt, quae a lingua nostra sunt prorsus aliena, adeoque confusionem potius et obscuritatem pariunt, quam explicationi inserviunt.

[t]hey all forced English too rigidly into the mould of Latin (a mistake which nearly everyone makes in descriptions of other modern languages too), giving many useless rules about the cases, genders and declensions of nouns, the tenses, moods and conjugations of verbs, the government of nouns and verbs, and other things of that kind, which have no bearing on our language, and which confuse and obscure matters instead of elucidating them (Wallis [1653] 1972, xxv–xxvi).

Following Enkvist (1975, p. 294), Dons (2004, p. 242) suggests that the beginnings of the grammatisation of English can be analysed in terms of a negotiation with the Latin model:

Finally, the method of grammatical analysis at the time consisted in matching the structure of the vernacular to Latin categories, which were considered to be universal. Therefore the beginning of the history of grammar-writing is at the same time the history of the authors' attempts to mould the vernacular after the Latin model – or to free themselves from its yoke.

Dons insists that the Latin system acted as a mould. The same metaphor is used by Kemp, who translated Wallis (whereas Wallis used the Latin term *norma)*. The danger of using the metaphor of the mould is that it may give a one-sided perception of the role of the Latin model as being unsuitable and artificially constraining the vernaculars. However, as we see in Section 3.4, the treatment of case in the grammars of English of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries aptly illustrates how Latin categories were used critically and adapted to the specificities of the vernacular. Moreover, to depict the Latin system as an oppressive model from under whose yoke grammarians needed to escape is to obscure the cohesive effect of the grammatisation based on the Graeco-Latin tradition and the fact that it created the conditions for a cumulative growth in linguistic knowledge.

3.3 *The Notion of Extended Latin Grammar*

The notional homogeneity that characterises the national grammatical traditions in Europe is the direct result of the process of grammatisation. Auroux (1994, p. 82) gives the following representation of the process:

(1) ML1 → GL1
(2) ML2 → GL1
(3) ML1 → GL2
(4) ML2 → GL2
(5) $ML_x \rightarrow GL_{i,j,\ldots,k}$

M stands for metalanguage and G for grammar. MLx refers to the metalanguage of Language x and GLx to the grammar of Language x. (1) corresponds to the original case of a grammar of Latin written in Latin. When this grammar is translated or rewritten into another language, the system of the metalanguage remains identical; thus (2) represents the case of a grammar of Latin written in another language. (3) is the use of the original Latin metalanguage (ML1) to describe language L2. This corresponds to a grammar of the vernacular being written in Latin. Since the Latin metalanguage has been translated (ML2), it can be used to describe language L2. Then, as shown in (4), a grammar of L2 is produced (GL2) using L2. The principle can be applied indefinitely: the metalanguage of language x can be used to write the grammars of a variety of vernaculars.

A theoretical framework is thus constituted in the form of a notional and conceptual network. Of course, this theoretical framework is marginally modified and adapted to the specificities of the vernaculars (as illustrated later), but the metalinguistic cohesion is such that we can refer to an Extended Latin Grammar (which translates as *Grammaire latine étendue*, a phrase coined by Auroux [1992, p. 19]). Thus linguistic descriptions adapted to the systems of the vernaculars are developed at the same time within the *grammatica* and against it. Among the most salient examples are the article and the compound tenses of French, and the tenses and moods of English (Verrac 1985; Michael 1970; Michael 1987; Le Prieult 2016).

3.4 A Unifying Framework

As mentioned, early grammarians should not be seen as lacking insight into the singular properties of the vernacular, or as content with blindly and indiscriminately imposing a set of norms more suitable for Latin. Firstly, some of the grammatical notions developed within the Graeco-Latin tradition are still widely used nowadays (the best example being the parts of speech system, even though modifications or adjustments were made), and secondly, some of these grammarians adopted a critical view of the Latin framework.

From the very first published grammar of English (Bullokar 1586), grammarians identified the inadequacies that existed between the Latin metasystem and the vernacular being studied and adjusted their grammatical descriptions accordingly. A typical example of a critical reading of the Latin categories is grammatical case in English. Bullokar listed five cases, as opposed to six in Latin, as he considered that the ablative is expressed in English by the accusative, with an associated preposition carrying the ablative meaning.

Grammatical case raised two questions: its relevance for the English language and the means of its expression. While a few grammarians argued that English had no case system (Lye 1671, p. 112; Miège 1688, p. 34; Aickin 1693, p. 6), others defended the idea that the syntactic relations conveyed by the Latin case system were expressed by prepositions or articles, which were regarded as *signs of the cases*, as in Wharton (1654).

The application of the Latin model to other areas than the parts of speech was also queried. Coles, for example, reproaches some grammarians for applying to English rules of syllabation and word division that pertain to Latin:

> Dr Wallis observes (in the Præface to his English Grammar) how all the English *Grammarians* have confounded our language by their violent forcing it to the Latin method . . . Because they had met with such and such Rules for the dividing of words in Latin therefore the English must of necessity be just so divided! Those Latin Rules were suited to the Latin pronunciation. And if Latin had been naturally pronounc'd as we pronounce it now, those Rules had been as improper for that language, as they are for ours. (Coles 1674, p. 106)

Coles's criticism is directed not only at the Latin framework but also at pedagogical approaches founded on rules. Rules and definitions are not suited to children, since '[t]heir Judgment is little or none at all, but they are actively capable of imitation, to the wonder of our Natural Historian' (1674, p. 103) and he defends a practice-centred method. The practice of pronunciation is thus articulated around four compilations of words organised in tables. In the fourth table, Coles divides the lists into two columns. In the first column, he offers a reformed spelling of words to indicate how they should be pronounced, the original spelling appearing in the second column. Coles's personal spelling allows him to codify the pronunciation of phonemes, the stress pattern and syllabation. For instance, *plenipotentiarie* should be read *ple-ni-po-tén-sha-rie* and *official* becomes *of-físh-al* (1674, p. 89).

Finally, grammatisation and the major influence of the Graeco-Latin tradition resulted in a uniform metalinguistic network, thus creating favourable conditions for the emergence of contrastive descriptions. This is, of course, evidenced in multilingual handbooks, a well-established tradition in England (Caravolas 1994, pp. 105–106). Mauger's *Grammaire françoise/French Grammar* is particularly relevant in this respect.

3.5 Mauger's Grammar

Mauger was a seventeenth-century French grammarian who taught both French and English, working first in Blois, then in London and occasionally in Paris. His grammar met with success and no fewer than 21 editions were published in England alone between 1653 and 1719, with other editions being sold in France and the Netherlands. His handbook was originally intended for an English-speaking readership, unlike handbooks targeted at foreigners in general. This narrowing of the potential readership had a direct influence on Mauger's work: the parallels and comparisons between French and English in his grammar are more elaborate than in others.

Mauger's grammar deals with a wide range of linguistic topics (phonetics and pronunciation, morphology and the parts of speech), making it unique among other handbooks of the French language published in England in the seventeenth century (Kibbee 1989, pp. 63–74). Furthermore, part of its originality lies in the fact that from the eighth edition on (1676), a complete grammar of English is added and integrated, and the metalinguistic descriptions are multilingual: French, English and Latin are used.

4 Grammar, Norms and the Creation of a Standard

4.1 The Tools of Grammatisation

We saw in Section 3.1 that Auroux (1994) claims that grammatisation is the second technological revolution of the language sciences. A revolution must be understood not as an event but as a long-standing process. Auroux uses the term *technological* because grammars and dictionaries are referred to as *linguistic tools*. Just as the hammer is an extension of the human hand which affects and shapes the movement, a grammar is an extension of a natural language, giving access to a set of rules and altering linguistic practices (Auroux 1994, p. 115). Along with grammar books and dictionaries, other types of work can be thought of as *linguistic tools*, such as didactic dialogues, translations, collections of multilingual lists of words and phrases, remarks on the French language in the seventeenth century, and so on.

4.2 Definition of the Norm and Setting of a Standard

4.2.1 Values Associated with the Language The grammatisation of French and English is justified by claiming that these languages possess the necessary values. Since they are founded on rational principles, they are worthy of use in all circumstances and domains (science, education, etc.) and are characterised by clarity of expression (also a pivotal feature of Wilkins's universal project, cf. Salmon [1988, p. 191]) and elegance.

Butler (1633) explains in his preface that the quality of a language depends on three factors. The first is its antiquity. Butler reminds the reader that Hebrew is the most ancient language, but he considers the Teutonic language, from which English stems, to also be a valid example of antiquity. The second factor is elegance and copiousness. Greek is the yardstick in this case. Since English demonstrates a capacity to expand its lexicon by borrowing, derivation and composition and its elegance has been demonstrated by the works of numerous writers, lawyers and clergy, it possesses both qualities. The last factor is the geographical distribution of the language. Once again, Butler refers to the

Germanic origins of the English language and thus justifies considering English as a great language by pointing to the widespread influence of Germanic languages throughout Europe. (Mauger also emphasises that French is *universally* spoken, meaning that French can be heard in the great majority of courts in Europe.) Butler concludes that the English language sufficiently possesses these qualities to qualify for 'excellencie'. But the transition from concluding that a language exhibits sufficient coherence and qualities to be worthy of interest to reducing it to rules – selecting a variety and setting a norm for that language – is not necessarily so smooth as one might imagine.

The situation in seventeenth-century France shows that the values associated with a linguistic reference model are not self-evident and universally acknowledged. Conflicting positions regarding the definition of these values existed, rendering the definition of a common norm all the more problematic. Recent research has demonstrated that the relations existing between political power and language in the second half of the seventeenth century were complex and that the notion of usage, and the rules defining it, cannot be accounted for simply in terms of a prescriptive attitude, whether the authors be grammarians, *Académiciens* or *remarqueurs* (Kibbee 2014; Merlin-Kajman 1994, 2011; Siouffi 2011, 2013). Moreover, the linguistic norms, by which we mean the systems of rules defining their representation of good usage, are not static but dynamic, relying as they do on multiple authorities, and their definitions are often discussed and amended.

4.2.2 Normativity and Types of Grammars As stated, the collection of grammar handbooks dealt with in this chapter comprises works offering a description of English or French (Mauger's grammar being an exception since he studies both). Furthermore, not all these grammars are intended for the same readership. In Mauger's grammar, for instance, French is treated as a second language, just as English is in Jonson (1640), Howell (1662) and Wallis (1653). Howell (1662) contains a grammar of English as well as a grammar of Spanish. By contrast, Butler's 1633 grammar of English is aimed at native speakers. So the grammars in the collection do not describe the same language and do not necessarily address the same readers or learners.

However, although the target audiences of the books (native vs non-native speakers) are different, there is no noticeable difference in the metalinguistic norm adopted. And the homogeneity is such that it is not rare to find grammarians advocating the suitability of their handbooks for both first- and second-language readers. In his *Grammatica Linguæ Anglicanæ*, published in 1685, Cooper targets the widest audience possible, namely English and foreign readers, and writes in Latin, thus ensuring he can be read in England and elsewhere. Most grammars of French in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including those published in France, target French readers as well as foreigners.

As Howatt and Widdowson ([1984] 2009, p. 4) note, it is not until the end of the eighteenth century that the specificities of second-language teaching began to emerge. In the grammars of our collection, the most conspicuous sign that the readers' mother tongue, or the language with which they are familiar, is taken into account is found in the examples chosen and in the contrastive-linguistic explanations (cf. Section 5.4.3).

4.2.3 Definitions of the Norm Three definitions of the norm are examined, which cover the various aspects of the normative dimension of grammatical discourse.

Norm 1 is the set of values characterising good usage, good usage being understood here not only as grammatical correctness but also as the elegant variety used by one or several social groups held up as respectable models. Norm 1 is the variety of a language or a dialect selected by a community of authoritative speakers as a valid linguistic model, as the standard of the language in question.

Norm 2 is the set of rules produced by grammatical discourse, which has been defined since Classical Antiquity as *the art of speaking correctly*. Various types of rules can be distinguished:

– rules formulated using deontic modality, corresponding to what is generally labelled 'prescription'. These rules may define the use of grammatical forms in discourse, for example:

Q. *If there are two Vowels that come together in a word, both fully sounded, and no Diphtong, how must they be divided?*

A. They must be divided thus, viz. The former Vowel to the first Syllable, and the latter to the Syllable following as in tri-al, tri-umph, mu-tu-al, &c (Browne 1692, p. 9).

– instructions on how to produce the required grammatical forms:

> If to one of these words ending in *ll*, a Syllable beginning with a Consonant be added, one *l* must be left out; as *well*, *welcome*, *full*, *fulness*; not *wellcome*, fullness; but if such added Syllable begin with a Vowel, or h, as *filleth*, *well-head*.
> (Care 1687, p. 19).

– rules taking the form of a constative sentence. This is the most frequent case in our collection:

> Adjectives have no difference of Number. They are set

1. Commonly before the Substantive, a *sweet* appl, an *happy* man, an *old* book, a *very old* book, a *very learned young* man, six *difereet old* men. *Many* a man, i.e. many men. *Never* a boy, i.e. no boy.

2. Sometimes after; as, a sword both *long* and *sharp*; an Hill *exceeding high*; a man *experienced* in many things (Lye 1671, pp. 115–116) (original spelling reproduced).

As we can see, there is only a very slight difference between these types of rules (cf. Auroux 1991 for discussion of the distinction between technical norms and moral norms, as well as the possibility for prescriptive grammar rules to be rewritten in a descriptive fashion). Moreover if we use the label 'prescriptive' only for those cases where one linguistic variant is preferred to another, many of the deontic statements found in grammatical discourse cannot properly be regarded as 'prescriptive'. The rules found in the grammars of our collection are constantly criticised and reformulated by the grammarians and are intended to explain how grammatically correct discourse is produced.

Yet identifying the specificities of each of these types of rules enables us to differentiate between specific grammatical projects. The difference between grammarians and *remarqueurs* has been alluded to in Section 4.2.1. The most salient point of divergence is their representation of the normed language. The *remarqueurs* are above all interested in variation across usage (Ayres-Bennett 1987; Ayres-Bennett and Seijido 2013). Their works aim to remove doubts and provide answers to questions of good usage, by contrast with bad or disputable usage, and to justify the validity of good usage. A *remarqueur*'s approach is dramatically different from a grammarian's, since a *remarqueur* does not concern himself with teaching a language or describing it according to the traditional plan of grammars. The *remarques* on the language appear one after another; the order of appearance does not follow any coherent design. These *remarques* focus on various points – phonetic, lexical, morphosyntactical and stylistic – and they are discussed at length.

Grammarians, *remarqueurs* and lexicologists have different intentions and pursue distinct goals. The linguistic tools that they produce reflect distinct forms of normativity. Mazière (2013) explains that grammars, dictionaries and *remarques* do not relate to usage in a uniform fashion:

> Les exemples dans une grammaire, les citations dans un dictionnaire fonctionnent grossièrement comme des *témoins* de l'usage garantissant la règle ou la définition, la forme ou le sens. A contrario, dans les remarques, les fragments discursifs, exemples comme citations, sont l'*objet du discours*, et en aucun cas une illustration ou un garant. Ils sont uniques. C'est, techniquement, d'abord en cela que les remarques sont un outil linguistique spécifique, même si certains remarqueurs ont su aller à la règle.
>
> The examples in a grammar and the quotations in a dictionary function, so to speak, as manifestations representative of usage, and they validate the rule or the definition, the form or the meaning. By contrast, in the *remarques*, the discursive fragments, whether examples or quotations, are the *object of discourse*, and in no case an illustration or endorsement. They are unique. From a technical point of view this is what makes

remarques specific linguistic tools first and foremost, even if some *remarqueurs* were able to produce rules. (Mazière 2013, p. 51; translation ours)

The primary aim of the *remarqueur* is not to reduce the language to a set of rules. By contrast, the pedagogical ambitions of the *maître de langue* (language master) lead him to give a clear and definite representation of the language, which excludes doubt and confusion (see Section 5.3.2).

Norm 3: the conventions of the grammatical art and, in this case, the apparatus of Extended Latin Grammar, and its adjustment to the constraints originating in the grammars of the collection. It is generally both to this type of rule and to rules defined by Norm 2 that the authors refer when they use the terms *rule* or *règle*, particularly in the long-standing debate between the upholders of learning by rule and the advocates of rote learning (cf. Section 5.3.1).

5 The Norms in Context

5.1 A Variety of Reference

The grammars of English under scrutiny and Mauger's work differ on the subject of *the beautiful language*, a pivotal notion in Mauger's grammar (*le beau langage français*). A comparison of the French and English contexts leads us to the conclusion that norm 1 existed in both national traditions. In the case of English, a dialectal variety, represented as existing, is selected and promoted as a form of standard.

The variety of reference is defined mainly in geographical and social terms. Hart (1569, p. 21), for example, states that the variety of English spoken by any reasonable Englishman is the English spoken by educated people in London, and describes it as 'that best and moste perfite English'. Puttenham ([1589] 1869) holds the same position and advises people to use the English of the court: 'ye shall therefore take the usuall speach of the Court, and that of London and the Shires lying about London within lx miles and not much above' (p. 157). The variety selected serves as a long-standing reference which is still seen as valid in the second half of the seventeenth century. The perfection Hart refers to is echoed in Price's *Vocal Organ* by the notion of purity:

> All grammars are rules of common Speech; yet I have not been guided by our vulgar pronunciation but by that of London and our Universities, where the language is purely spoken: nor was I guided by our Dictionaries, seing that our very *Goldenman*, and *Rider* . . . do so shamefully stumble in spelling, neither have I been Heterodox, but consulted our Bible, and best English writers, and the genuine Etymologie, and obtained use of the words. (Price 1665, p. iv)

Price stresses the specificity of his method: the variety that he chose is neither common nor vulgar and he relied on the best writers as models of authenticity.

For Coles (1674), as expressed in the very title of the book, the variety of English which is to be regarded as a reference is the type of English that can be heard in Oxford and London, and it can be contrasted with 'the barbarous speech of your country people' (Coote 1596, p. 30).

To sum up, according to our various sources, the English which is correct, pure and perfect is the English spoken at the court or around London and by educated people. Moreover, this variety of English is suitable for poetic writing. A range of authoritative figures can be identified, including scholars, courtiers and writers (Le Prieult 2016). The references to authoritative figures and to the aesthetic value of the English language suggest that Norm 1 is attested for the English national tradition. Yet this norm is only marginally present in the grammars of the collection. Puttenham's work is not a grammar but a treatise on poetry (*The Art of English Poesy*), and the variety of English selected is only loosely defined.

5.2 Mauger: Good Usage and 'Beau Langage'

Assessing the presence of Norm 1 in Mauger's grammar raises the question of the variety of French taught by French language masters in England and of the social demand they are supposed to meet. Explicit answers are found easily because of the harsh competition between these language masters teaching French in London. This fierce competition involved verbal attacks, smear campaigns and other forms of disparagement, attested in the prefaces and addresses to the reader found at the beginning of the handbooks.

One of the most recurrent criticisms is the accusation of speaking 'bad French', which may be directed at non-French speakers (as was already the case when Du Wes attacked Palsgrave, on the grounds that he was not a native speaker of French) or at French masters and grammarians who, having had little or no contact with the court of France for many years, were unfamiliar with the fashionable way of speaking. This may explain why Mauger relies exclusively on Continental sources, particularly on Maupas (1618), Oudin (1640), Vaugelas (1647) and Chiflet (1659).

In Mauger's addresses to the reader, the guardians of the 'beau langage français' (the beautiful French language) change from one edition to the next, just as the notion of *bad usage* is applied to various levels of linguistic analysis. Two distinct periods can be identified.

In the first period (1656–1658), the norm is discussed in relation to spelling and pronunciation. Mauger advocates retaining the 'ancient' spelling of words, characterised by etymological letters:

> I conclude then that it is not by an ill grounded reverence which we bear to Antiquity that we pare not the skin of our Languages; but we are obliged to it by an absolute

necessity: And seing till now no man hath dared to give it the last stroke, I would not be so impertinent as to give Laws where I ought to receive them. I have therefore conformed myself to the most skillfull writers, and will give you nothing but what they all approve, and the other Masters of the Languages; amongst the which I reckon Master *Penson*, & Master *Festeau*, who are good Masters and many others, *Farewell*. (Mauger 1656, p. 2).

Mauger appears not as a figure of authority, but simply as someone relaying approved linguistic forms representing the good usage produced by the best writers and compiled by the best masters.

His position is similar in 1658:

For my spelling you may follow me, for I follow the most famous pens in France; and be sure that I will not bring a new corrupted way of writing after our French-womens fashion, but follow the most learned men in our language, as Balzac, Corneille, Scudery, Voitures, and other like them. (Mauger 1658, p. 3)

Once again, Mauger sides with writers and rejects the ‘corruption’ of spelling practices for which the *Précieuses* are responsible.

In the second period (from 1676 onwards), the norm is discussed in the light of the words and phrases which follow ‘the fashion of Paris’:

I have added also the Parts of Speach, which are explained most exactly, and in a most gallant way, with questions and answers, very pleasant to the Learner, and very useful to acquire our French Tongue . . . I do not tell you that I speak still good French, and *à la Mode*, as well as if I were at Paris, though I have been long here . . . some of my Country-men of my Profession, out of envy and malice, would make people believe the contrary. ‘Tis impossible I should speak after the old way; for having been seven years a publick Professor of the French Tongue at Blois, having taught there so many Princes, Lords and Gentlemen of several Nations, and having there received with applauses, as every one knows, having the honour to be every day now, with some of the greatest Persons of our Countrey, as Lords Ambassadours, and other great French Lords, whom I teach also the English Tongue, I Know always the new Words and modish Phrases. (Mauger 1676, p. 8)

The new perspective adopted by Mauger reflects a change in his audience. He now mainly teaches ladies aspiring to a good education, and he adapts his pedagogical method to the needs of this new audience. The lessons on the parts of speech take the form of a dialogue between a lady and the language master, prefiguring the gallant dialogues in the practical part of the grammar.

Mauger defends himself against his detractors and takes pride in speaking fashionable French, that is, the most recent form of the language as used at the court of France, as he claims on the title page of the 1688 edition.[4] Another example is found in the address to the reader:

I assure you that there are no Words nor Phrases in my Grammar but are very Modish, for I was every day with some of the Ablest Gentlemen of the Port-Royal; who assured me that my Grammar is in their Library, and my French Letters Translated into English also. (Mauger 1688, p. 8)

Surprisingly, Mauger refers to the gentlemen of Port-Royal who unexpectedly assume here the role of guardians of fashionable speech. Judging by these emphatic references to the French of the court, we might expect Mauger's grammar to pay particular attention to social variation and especially the prestige variety. Yet this is not the case. Although the dialogues in the practical part of his grammar, which account for at least one-third of the book, convey a set of cultural stereotypes and fashionable phrases, no reference is made to any authority to justify the way linguistic facts are presented, and no prescription based on sociolinguistic criteria is to be found. Speaking well, in Mauger's handbooks, amounts to pronouncing French correctly, respecting the rules of concord and agreement and avoiding the use of Anglicisms.

5.3 Grammatical Rules and Norms

5.3.1 Règle and Routine Mauger's discourse on the 'beautiful language' should be regarded as a pretext to promote his grammar and his teaching activities, rather than as revealing active promotion and defence of 'good usage'. Similarly, his support of rules in the long-lasting debate opposing rules and rote learning may stem from a desire to meet social demands. In the First Discourse of his grammar, a lady addresses Mauger, telling him that she knows nothing about Latin or grammar and that she would like to learn by rules. Answering the lady, the master approves of her project (Mauger 1688, p. 45); paradoxically, the success of his work is largely due to the numerous dialogues following the laying out of the rules.

The grammars of English in the collection favour teaching by rule, one argument being that any other method is not fit for learning a language and would be a Herculean task (Aickin 1693, preface). Still, some authors claim that rules are confusing for children, who naturally feel at ease with practice (Coles 1674, p. 103).

5.3.2 Rules: Example 1, Pronunciation When expounding the principles of accentuation in English, Cooper (1688) produces the following rule:

When an ending is joyn'd to a Monosyllable, the primitive word or first syllable is Accented; as *able*, *ish*, *full*, *less*, *ness*, *som*, *ward*, *y* or *ly*: *notable, childish, faithful, faithless, greatness, noisom, backward, hardy, hardly, hardily*. So the endings of verbs, and the comparative and superlative degree; as *actest*, *acteth*, *acted*, *acting*, *acter*: *softer*, *softest*. (p. 111)

This is a case of reduction to a rule based on a morpho-phonological approach. Cooper uses the traditional parts of speech alongside other categories (comparative, superlative, syllables) inherited from the Graeco-Latin framework. Two forms of normativity are involved: norm 2, since rules are produced which give a representation both of the linguistic system and of the stress pattern to adopt in order to pronounce correctly, and norm 3, as the ruling process is conditioned and shaped by the framework of Extended Latin Grammar. Norm 1 is not explicitly referred to.

Mauger's attitude is comparable:

> Si la Diphtongue *oi* est liée à la Liquide *r*, quoy donc ?
> Il la faut prononcer comme *oy*; par exemple, avoir, ne dites pas *aver*.
> Mais suposez que la Diphtongue *oi*, se trouve devant la Liquide *r* quand elle commence une autre sillabe, faut il la prononcer comme *oy* ?
> Oüy; par Exemple, memoire, ne dites pas *memere* mais *memoire*, *écritoire*, *yvoire*, &c.
>
> *If the Diphtongue* oi *be joyned with the Liquid* r, *what then ?*
> *It must be pronounced like* oy; *for example*, avoir, *do not say*, aver.
> *But supose that the Diphtongue* oi *be before the Liquid* r, *when it begins another syllable, must it be pronounced* oi ?
> *Yes; for Example*, memoire, *do not say* memere, *but* memoire, écritoire, yvoire, &*c*. (pp. 23–24)

By contrast, the passage from Vaugelas (1647), which Mauger's rule echoes, states,

> Tantost on prononce *oi*, & tantost *ai*, aux syllabes qui ne sont pas à la fin des mots, comme on dit, *boire*, *memoire*, *gloire*, *foire*, *&c*. & non pas, *baire*, *memaire*, *glaire*, *faire*, qui seroit vne prononciation bien ridicule.
>
> Sometimes it is pronounced *oi* and sometimes *ai*, in the syllables which are not at the end of words, so we say, *boire*, *memoire*, *foire*, &c. & not *baire*, *memaire*, *glaire*, *faire*, which would sound ridiculous. (Vaugelas 1647, p. 99; translation ours).

Vaugelas's description of the rule also assumes an axiological dimension: no one would wish to sound ridiculous. Mauger's description, on the other hand, is not a value judgement, despite the prescriptive attitude, particularly when he invites the reader not to '*say* memere, *but* memoire, écritoire, yvoire'. Mauger's rule does not aim at designating a favoured usage, a socially acceptable pronunciation, but describes, lamely it must be said, the phonological systematicity surrounding the diphtong in question. The pattern of the rule shows that it is conceived of as a distributional rule. Clearly Mauger's grammatical discourse obeys a set of conventions framing the description of linguistic forms, following the path of the distributional method that Priscian used to describe the sounds of Latin (Biville 2009). The parallel between Cooper's discourse and Mauger's

Table 4.1 *Seventeenth-century standard for the description of the French article system*

	definite articles			
	masculine	feminine	plural	indefinite articles
nominative/accusative	le	la	les	
genitive/ablative	du, de l'	de la	des	de
dative	au, à l'	à la	aux	à

rule is obvious. In both cases, the various types of normativity at work in grammatical discourse can be observed.

5.3.3 Rules: Example 2, the Article The history of the analysis of the article in the French tradition is well known (*cf*. in particular Joly 1980; Swiggers 1985; Fournier 2004). The description is founded on the Latin tradition, which defined an articulus bearing a metalinguistic function: the demonstratives *hic*, *haec*, *hoc* are useful to draw the line between the substantive and the adjective and to highlight the gender of nouns with similar endings (Colombat 1999, pp. 180–182). From the beginning, the description of the French article is closely linked to the declension of nouns, although the existence of a case system in French has been contested ever since Meigret's grammar (1550). In the seventeenth-century the dominant standard of description for the identification and analysis of the forms of the article is as shown in Table 4.1.

Three characteristic features of the theory are of particular interest:

(1) The definite/indefinite opposition is generally interpreted semantically. The definite forms are used when the noun's scope of reference is 'limited' to a single or specific referent, whereas the indefinite articles express generality (the referent is undetermined or generic).
(2) The forms *un*, *une* are seldom listed as articles and are usually defined as numerals.
(3) While the generic value of *le* is mentioned by some grammarians, the theoretical framework available hinders its analysis. It was not until the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (1660) was published that the various semantic values of *le* were circumscribed and that the forms *un*, *une*, *des* were granted their modern status of 'indefinite' articles.

In seventeenth-century grammars of English, the article is rarely described as an autonomous part of speech, which is in keeping with the Latin model. Jonson (1640) and Howell (1662) are exceptions, as they define the article as the ninth part of speech. Yet grammarians had to integrate the article into their representations of the system, and unlike the French tradition, the grammars of

English deal with *a*, *an* very early on in their study of the forms of the article. On the other hand, as in the French tradition, the article is mostly dealt with in association with the noun and is included in the parts treating number and case (by contrast with the situation in French, gender is excluded because of the invariability of the English article).

The article is first identified by its prenominal position: Howell (1662, p. 42) calls *a* and *the* 'prepositive articles'. This prenominal anchoring is already mentioned in Bullokar (1586), where the author specifies that the presence of an article helps to identify the noun.

A and *the* play a key role in the description of number. *A* expresses the singular, for example, in Bullokar (1586), Poole (1646), Wharton (1654) and Newton (1669). The numeral *one* is not mentioned as a potential substitute for the expression of unity. Jonson (1640) and Newton (1669) present *one* only to the extent that *a* is derived from it. Only Wallis (1653, p. 71) describes *a* as a numeral and adds that it is a semantically weakened form of *one*.

The contiguity of the article and the noun in grammatical discourse makes the former one of the signs of grammatical case. This produces questionable analyses: for instance, Poole (1646) considers that *a* expresses the nominative and *the* the accusative, while *of* and *to* are the signs for the genitive and the dative. Wharton (1654) and Newton (1669) are more cautious and specify that the equivalence between *a* and the nominative (and *the* and the accusative) is not systematic.

By contrast with the situation in the French tradition, the question of the definiteness of the article is less of a pivotal topic. It is found in fewer grammars, and it is not systematically echoed by the generic/specific opposition. Hume (c.1617) posits in a few sentences that *the* signals that a singular noun is 'determined' (p. 28) and conversely *a* signifies indetermination. For Jonson (1640), *a* is 'infinite' and *the* 'finite', and Howell (1662) explains that *the* is definite and 'terminates the understanding' (p. 42). These two grammarians regard the article as a part of speech. Wallis (1653), who declares that articles belong among adjectives, also discusses the question of indefiniteness. He portrays *the* as having a delimiting force, and thus expressing specific reference, whereas a plural noun (without article) or *a* combined with a singular noun, reveal indefiniteness.

We can see that, as far as the article is concerned, divergences between the grammars of French and the grammars of English can be pinpointed, which underline variations in the extension of the Latin model. The last point we would like to stress is the innovations resulting from this networking of both languages and their descriptions.

The French-English bilingual grammars provide a vantage point from which to observe the confrontation of these two vernacular traditions. In the case of the article, simply translating examples and/or descriptive passages is enough to show problematic disparities. We next make a few observations about the study of the absence of the article in English as expounded in the grammars of Mauger and his rival Miège.[5]

Mauger's description of the French article is rather conservative: the article is associated with noun declensions and the form *un* is only marginally mentioned.[6] Even more surprising is his use of the division between *definite* and *indefinite*, which is firmly established in the French tradition. Mauger applies the distinction exclusively to genitive forms (indefinite: *de*; definite: *du, de la, des*) and dative forms (indefinite: *à*; definite: *au*, *à la*, *aux*) and justifies his position by a semantic opposition:

> I mean by a Definite Article, when it restraineth a particular thing, without speaking generally; as for Example, *J'ay leu un Arrest du Parlement de Londres*; I have read an Act of the Parliament of London.
>
> *De* is the Indefinite Article of the Genitive Case for both Numbers and Genders, when we speak generally, without restraining particular things; as for Example, *J'ay leu un Arrest de Parlement*; without speaking more of one, than of the other; I have read an Act of Parliament. (Mauger 2014, pp. 277–278)

There is every reason to think that this pattern of analysis is not applied to the nominative and the accusative, contrary to the tradition, because the juxtaposition of the French and English microsystems emphasises the double value, definite and indefinite, of the French article *le*, recently theorised in the Port-Royal grammar (Mauger 1660, p. 56):

> The English put very seldom an article to their nominative case, in that they do imitate the Latines; for they say, *wine is dear, beer is good*, &c. so of all other things both living and dead: except they do determinate a particular one, as *the wine which is at such a place is good*, or *the wine that we drunk yesterday is naught*. For living things, *men are good when they serve God well*, speaking in general: but speaking in particular, *the men that serve God are here*. But the French repeat always the article in the Nominative, as *les Roys sont les images de Dieu*, *the Kings are the image of God, le vin est bon*, &c. (Mauger [1688] 2014, pp. 507–508)

Mauger's makeshift solution may seem approximate. Yet it undoubtedly corresponds to the wording, thanks to the descriptive tools of Extended Latin Grammar, of the difference between the systems in marking the referential value of the substantive (*le* in French vs *the/Ø*).

His contemporary Miège, confronted with the same difficulty, offers a solution that differs in two respects. His explanation integrates the forms *a/un*, identified long before in the English tradition and the French-English grammars. In his grammars of English as well as in his grammars of French, Miège forcefully rejects the system of noun declensions[7] and clearly distinguishes between (simple and contracted) articles and prepositions.[8] In compliance with the recent innovation developed in the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée*, a shift in the *definite/indefinite* opposition can be observed: the definite forms are *le*, *la*, *les* and the indefinite ones *un*, *une*, *des* (Miège 1687, p. 48; *un*, *une*, *des* are called 'individual' in Miège 1678, p. 39). The absence of article, both in English and in French, is identified as a deliberate omission, as it were, one of the values of which in English is the construction of generic reference:

> 'Tis true that sometimes the Article is used in French, when it is left out in English. And first before the names of Arts and Sciences; as Grammar *la Grammaire* . . .
>
> Thirdly, when we speak of a thing in general as *l'Homme* a man, *la Nature* Nature, *le pain*, bread. (Miège 1678, pp. 48–49)

However, as Michael (1970, p. 357) remarks about Wallis and Cooper, the 'generality' of the noun is understood as a semantic characteristic typical of certain nouns, rather than the result of a referential construction stemming from the absence of article.

6 Conclusion

Our case study focusing on the grammatical discourse of French and English handbooks in the seventeenth century suggests that traditional grammars may be described in more complex fashion than simply as instruments of social power. They possess a history and rationality of their own, as well as technical characteristics that hint at broader functions than just codification. The short overview of the history of the examination of the article in the French and English traditions illustrates the fact that the opportunity to compare vernacular languages offered by Extended Latin Grammar generates new patterns of analysis and sets up new observable objects. The process involved should naturally affect the representation and standardisation of the languages. However, as we have tried to show, the grammarian's activity aims as well, and perhaps it is a priority, to hand down and perfect the norms inherited from the *grammatica*.

ANNEX: LIST OF THE HANDBOOKS IN THE COLLECTION

Aickin, J. (1693). *The English Grammar: or, the English Tongue Reduced to Grammatical Rules Containing the Four Parts of Grammar*

Arnauld, A. & Lancelot, C. (1660). *Grammaire générale et raisonnée*

Browne, R. (1692). *The English Examiner*

Bullokar, W. (1586). *Pamphlet for grammar*

Butler, C. (1633). *The English Grammar, or the Institution of Letters, Syllables, and Words, in the English tongue*

Care, H. (1687). *The Tutor to True English*

Chiflet, L. (1659). *Essay d'une parfaite grammaire de la langue françoise*

Coles, E. (1674). *The Compleat English Schoolmaster*

Cooper, C. (1685). *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae*
Cooper, C. (1688). *The English Teacher*
Coote, E. (1596). *The English Schoole-Maister teaching all his Scholers*
Hart, J. (1569). *An Orthographie*
Howell, J. (1662). *A New English Grammar*
Hume, A. [c.1617] (1865). *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue*
Jonson, B. (1640). *The English Grammar*
Lye, T. (1671). *The Childs Delight together with an English Grammar*
Mauger, C. (1656). *Mr. Mauger's French Grammar enriched with severall choise dialogues*
Mauger, C. (1658). *Claudius Maugers French Grammar, enriched with severall choise dialogues*
Mauger, C. (1676). *Claudius Mauger's French Grammar with additions*
Mauger C. [1688](2014). *Grammaire françoise/French Grammar (1688)*
Maupas, C. [1607](1618). *Grammaire et syntaxe françoise*
Meigret, L. [1550](1980). *Le traité de la grammaire française*
Miège, G. (1678). *A New French Grammar*
Miège, G. (1687). *The Grounds of the French Tongue*
Miège, G. (1688). *The English Grammar, or, The Grounds and Genius of the English Tongue*
Newton, J. (1669). *School Pastime for Young Children or the Rudiments of Grammar*
Oudin, A. [1632](1640). *Grammaire françoise rapportée au langage du temps*
Poole, J. (1646). *The English Accidence*
Price, O. (1665). *The Vocal Organ or a New Art of Teaching the English Orthographie*
Vaugelas, C. Favre de (1647). *Remarques sur la langue françoise utiles à ceux qui veulent bien parler et bien escrire*
Wallis, J. (1653). *Grammatica Linguæ Anglicanæ*
Wharton, J. (1654). *A New English-Grammar*

NOTES

1. These stages are described as hypothetical (Milroy and Milroy 1999, p. 23), which implies that the model does not claim to be historically valid.
2. The situation is not new and can be illustrated by the following passage from Jespersen (1933, p. 19):

   The chief object in teaching grammar today – especially that of a foreign language – would appear to be to give rules which must be obeyed if one wants to speak and write the language correctly-rules which as often as not seem quite arbitrary. Of greater value, however, than this prescriptive grammar is a purely descriptive grammar which, instead of serving as a guide to what is said or written, aims at finding out what is actually said and written by the speakers of the language investigated, and thus may lead to a scientific understanding of the rules followed instinctively by speakers and writers.

3. cf. Le Prieult (2016) for a synthetic description of the criticisms of the Latin model in the tradition of the grammars of English.
4. ‘Claudius Mauger’s French grammar with additions. Enriched with new words, and a new method, and all the improvements of that famous language, as it is now flourishing in the court of France. Where is to be seen an extraordinary and methodical order for the acquisition of that tongue: *viz*. A most modish prononciation, the conjugation of irregular verbs, short and substantial rules: to which is subjoined a vocabulary, and a most exact new grammar of the English tongue, with all advantages that may make it desirable to forreigners.’
5. On the other aspects of the description of the article in Mauger’s grammar and other French-English grammars, see Raby (2014, pp. 56–69).
6. The form *un* appears only in the Latin section of the handbook to describe the use of ‘indefinite’ *de* in constructions like ‘J’ay reçu une lettre d’un de mes amis’ Mauger ([1688] 2014, p. 512).
7. [W]hat is the Use of that Distinction, but only (out of too great a fondness of the Latin Tongue, as if all Languages were to be ruled by that, or out of a design upon Learners) to breed confusion and so make Learning the more slow (Miège 1678, p. 39).
8. This distinction indicates that Miège is familiar with the Port-Royal grammar in which the status of contracted articles is defined, under the influence of Lancelot’s Spanish and Italian *Méthodes* (cf. Fournier and Raby 2013).

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5 The End of Toleration? Language on the Margins in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*

Lynda Mugglestone

1 The Eighteenth-Century Context

Toleration in eighteenth-century English occupied a markedly conflicted space. It signified, as Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) explained, 'Allowance given to that which is not approved'. Notions of sanction and transgression co-exist uneasily; if 'allowance' (Johnson's 'sanction', 'licence', as well as 'authority') is granted, a sense of unwarranted latitude – and laxity – is also evoked.[1] To *tolerate* is 'to pass uncensured', as Johnson elaborated in the fourth edition of the *Dictionary* (1773), revealing similar tensions between culpability and what might, for various reasons, have to be condoned.

Toleration – and the limits it should rightly observe – was, as this chapter will explore, also particularly resonant for both language and lexicography in the eighteenth century. The question of approval, and its targeted absence in terms of the form and use of particular words was, for example, a staple element of prescriptive and proscriptive practice. Widely evident in contemporary language ideologies, it extended also to the responsibilities (and authority) which the dictionary maker might assume. Integrating lexicography into intended processes of standardisation and linguistic reform, academy dictionaries on the Continent had long implemented toleration with marked restrictiveness in this respect. The *Vocabulario* of the Accademia della Crusca, first published in 1612 (a fourth edition began publication in six volumes in 1729) had sought to sift and winnow usage, presenting a purified sphere of words and meaning; the *Dictionnaire* of the Académie Française, the first edition of which was published in 1694, followed a similar course, validating 'pur usage' in a remit of stabilisation and normative control. As the Académie stressed, the ambition was to secure 'règles certaines' for the use of words. Toleration was not easily given; that which did not merit approval was to be firmly condemned.

As Johnson's early biographer, John Hawkins, makes plain, the London booksellers had also 'long meditated the publication of a dictionary, after the model of those of France and the Accademia della Crusca' (2009, p. 105). English dictionaries had instead 'long conveyed a very miscellaneous idea' in which readers were 'accustomed to expect . . . a solution of almost every difficulty', as Johnson observed (1747, p. 5). For the booksellers, the 'commercial potential' of a dictionary of a very different kind (Reddick 1996, p. 13) was plain. Johnson's *Plan of a Dictionary* (1747) – commissioned under the aegis of the bookseller Robert Dodsley – and dedicated to Lord Chesterfield whose 'authority in our language', as Johnson deferentially stated, was 'so generally acknowledged' (1747, p. 30) – situated lexicography as a reformist enterprise by which English would henceforth be subject to careful scrutiny. Norms and margins intersected to good effect while the precedent of the Académie Française was made overt. As Johnson (1747, pp. 29–30) proclaimed,

> if this part of the work can be well performed, it will be equivalent to the proposal made by Boileau to the academicians, that they should review all their polite writers, and correct such impurities as might be found in them, that their authority might not contribute, at any distant time, to the depravation of the language.

The 'chief intent' of the *Dictionary*, as Johnson (1747, p. 4) further specified, was 'to preserve the purity and ascertain the meaning of the English idiom'. Johnson, as Dodsley (1747, p. 389) likewise stressed, was to create 'a Work which of all others we most want'.

Loanwords, and the patterns of representation they reveal, offer particularly useful ways by which this discourse of intended regulation and control can be examined. While for April McMahon (1999, p. 201), loanwords effectively demonstrate the principle of 'projected gain', it remains true that, as a range of earlier writers confirm, the lexicon is also able to reflect complex issues of power and nationhood, subordination and suppression. The settlement of 'armies of foreign words' brought both advantage and usurpation, as Edward Phillips comments, drawing attention, here in his own dictionary, the *New World of Words* of 1658, to the interrelationships of power and identity, amplification and occupation. 'If too many Foreign Words are pour'd in upon us, it looks as if they were design'd not to assist the Natives, but to Conquer them', John Dryden (1958 III, p. 1060) had observed with similar intent. Tropes of power are prominent; Dryden urges caution as well as control. For Johnson, too, the diatopic margins of language were often to be configured as a site of change in which questions of norms and normativity productively intervene. Contact phenomena and the assimilation of non-native lexis form, for example, topics of careful consideration in his 'Preface' to the finished *Dictionary* (see Johnson (1755, f.C2^{r})). Important, too, are the borders of the language which the dictionary maker must negotiate in the act of composing his text. As James Murray (1888: xvii) later observed (here with reference to the *Oxford English Dictionary*), it is the dictionary maker who must, in this respect, 'draw the line'. Nature herself, Murray added, has 'drawn it nowhere'.

The liminal zones of language therefore offer scope for a number of productive approaches to questions of inclusion and exclusion, as well as for the construction (and imaging) of markedness and norms. As Balteiro (2011) comments, an examination of the treatment of foreign words, and particularly those on the borders of discourse, can, for example, provide a particularly useful index for attempts to gauge prescriptive or descriptive orientation. 'Descriptive prescriptivism' – a process in which patterns of actual usage are described alongside additional information on language attitudes and reception, including 'on whether a form may be accepted by some and refused by others' – is deemed best practice (2011, p. 300). Johnson, however, is characterised by his commitment to normative ideologies in which prescriptivism proper is key.

2 Writing French Resistance

Questions of purism, toleration, and the lexical limits which might be imposed within the native language were, in fact, strikingly topical in the eighteenth century. As a number of writers stressed, issues of victory and defeat, or conquest and conquered, could seem ambiguous when seen in lexical terms. As for Addison, writing in the *Spectator* in 1711, Britain's ascendency in the War of Spanish Succession (a conflict then in its tenth year) was surely at odds with the cross-currents of power and dominance which the lexicon exhibited. 'Our Warriors are very Industrious in propagating the *French* Language, at the same time that they are so gloriously successful in beating down their Power', he pointed out (Bond 1965 II, p. 149). 'When we have won Battels which may be described in our own Language, why', he demanded, are 'our Papers filled with so many unintelligible Exploits, and the *French* obliged to lend us a Part of their Tongue before we can know how they are Conquered?' (1965 II, pp. 149–150). A new Norman conquest, occupying language if not land, seemed imminent.

Anglo-French relations – in language as in life – likewise recur in Chesterfield's own deliberations on language and lexicography, and not least in terms of the agency which Johnson as dictionary maker should assume in this respect. Writing in Dodsley's journal *The World* in November 1754, Chesterfield deftly united local and global concerns. Tropes of power, seen in terms of language as well as nation, are overt. Language, as for Dryden, is positioned as a form of territorial advance as well as potential occupation. In Chesterfield's (anonymous) letter, the spread of English is commended, offering a means of countering, as Chesterfield explains, that of French as global language during the reign of Louis XIVth. Johnson's energies will, Chesterfield adds, bring further aid in this respect. Dodsley's earlier diction of 'want' receives additional elaboration: 'Mr. Johnson's labours will now, and, I dare say, very fully, supply that want, and greatly contribute to the farther spreading of our language in other countries' ([Chesterfield] 1754, p. 603).

Nevertheless, anxieties that English might yet 'be overwhelmed and crushed by unnecessary foreign ornaments' remained pertinent ([Chesterfield] 1754, p. 603). Loanwords again emerge as a topic of critical import. Particular stringency in 'drawing the line' is recommended; 'the time for discrimination seems to be now come', Chesterfield avers. Against the traditional porosity of English, the borders are, he directs, to be made secure and adoption rendered a process of history rather than of on-going discourse. 'Toleration, adoption and naturalisation have run their lengths', Chesterfield therefore concludes (1754, p. 601). Johnson, instituted as lexicographical border guard, is to prohibit incursion and to defend the integrity of the native tongue, bringing both toleration and the processes of 'naturalisation' to an end.

Johnson's own work clearly shares some of this historical as well as ideological positioning. By 1746, when he signs the contract for the *Dictionary*, Britain had, for example, been subject to an attempt at a far more literal French invasion, thwarted in 1744 by the deterrent effect of bad weather as well as a large British fleet positioned in the English Channel. The Seven Years' War, formally declared against France in 1756, was already brewing as the *Dictionary* was composed. 'My uncle is continually employed in computing the year in which this kingdom is to become a province to France', as a further letter in *The World* declares ([Cambridge] 1754, p. 597). Works such as *The Danger of Great Britain and Ireland Becoming Provinces to France* (written by Simon Smith and Richard Munn in 1746) reveal similar concerns. Identity, subordination, and autonomy emerge as recurrent topics in ways which resonate with both language and nation. That the British should 'be reduced to babble a dialect of *France*' was, as Johnson (1755, f.C2^{v}) declares in the 'Preface', to be avoided.

Prompted by the subject of translation, and the diversity of lexical importations that could result, Johnson's comments neatly engaged with popular fears of the kind of subordination which invasion, on a range of levels, might produce. Reified in the hierarchical positioning of 'dialect' against 'language' and, by extension, of subordinate against superordinate, the 'Preface' mirrors, in effect, the positioning of 'province' against 'nation' which popular figurations of Anglo-French relations in the mid-1750s likewise display. For Johnson, linguistic proficiency and *babbling* enact their own patterns of 'discrimination'. A *babbler* is 'An idle talker; an irrational prattler', the *Dictionary* explains; Johnson's patriotic slight towards the French deftly evokes the meaninglessness – and irrationality – which unwarranted fluency of this kind might bring. Johnson envisions – and resists – a state of conquest in which not only England but English too has been subsumed into French. In making the *Dictionary*, 'a national purpose was clear from the outset', as Cannon (1994, p. 237) contends. Patriotism and prescriptivism will, it seems, dovetail with precision in what Johnson sets out to do. As Johnson indicates, he had indeed 'attempted a dictionary of the *English* language' in a 'scheme of including all that was pleasing or useful in *English* literature', and which was, in turn, characterised by 'examples and authorities from the writers before the restoration, whose works I regard as *the wells of English undefiled*' (1755, ff.A2^r; B2^v; C1^r). 'Our language', the *Plan* confirms, is to be considered only as far as it is 'our own' (Johnson 1747, p. 4).

The lexicon (and its constituent elements) can, in this respect, easily symbolise the trajectories of power and national contest. Across a range of entries in the *Dictionary*, the ideological potential of pronouns – as well as a markedly diatopic metalanguage – delineate the kind of borders which Chesterfield and others explicitly desired. *Anglicisms*, defined as 'A form of speech peculiar to the English language; an English idiom', are, for example, carefully elaborated in terms of what 'we' do. 'We say, properly, the *shore* of the *sea*, and the *banks* of a *river*, *brook*, or small water', Johnson states under *bank* (n.), sense 1; 'We now say, *to roast a man*, for *to teaze him*', he likewise advances under *grilly* (v.), defined as 'to harass; to hurt'.

What 'we' do not do can, of course, be equally important. 'Nosism' and its associative tribal 'we', as Paul Rastell (2003, p. 53) suggests, can, for example, act as effective ideological tools in ways which are equally salient in terms of lexicography.[2] This is 'a Gallick signification, not adopted among us', Johnson notes, for instance, under *comport*. Here, 'we' are not 'Gallick' in ways which clearly guide the stance assumed by Johnson. Defined as 'To bear; to endure', *comport* is distanced both from legitimate use and the native language alike. If evidence is provided ('The malecontented sort,/That never can the present state *comport*,/But would as often change as they change will', as a citation from Daniel's 'The History of the Civil Wars' attests), toleration seems to be withdrawn. Similar attributions of the non-English – phrased in terms of the 'Gallick', 'French', or the 'Gallicism' – appear across a range of entries, placing English and French in apparent and patriotic apposition. Murray's metaphorical 'line' can seem strikingly visible. 'A phrase merely French, and not worthy of adoption', we are informed under Johnson's entry for *give* sense 1, defined as 'To rush; to fall on; to give the assault'. Senses 3 and 5 reveal similar division; 'A French phrase', Johnson notes for both. *Tour* signifying 'Turn; revolution' is likewise given as 'rather French than English' while *attend* in the sense 'expect' is decidedly 'French'. *Ruse*, with clearly deterrent intent, is deemed 'a French word neither elegant nor necessary' while *flatter* sense 3 ('to please, to sooth') is 'purely Gallick'. Johnson's 'gallicisms' include *renounce* when used to signify 'To declare renunciation' (attested in a citation from Dryden in the *Dictionary*), as well as, say *delices* ('Pleasures'), *pace* in the sense 'Step; gradation of business', and *disinteressement* ('merely gallick').

Readings of Johnson's proscriptive intent in matters of the native language, and the forms of unwarranted incursion that English can reveal have, of course, long been staple elements in comment on his life and work. As Gilmore (1981) notes, for example, while long-established loans are usually treated with equanimity in the *Dictionary*, recent loans from French, as in the examples given above, prompt a range of restrictive comments. Johnson's 'mere' and 'merely', as under *delice* and *renounce*, seem strongly dismissive in ways which confirm the kind of interventionist stance, and firmly regulated borders, that we prototypically expect in Johnson's work. As under *souvenence* ('Memory; remembrance'), evidence of obsolescence can evoke approbation rather than regret: 'A French word which with many more is now happily disused', Johnson declares.

Johnson's engagement with the processes of naturalisation – and the particular problems that words on the margin present – nevertheless benefits from further scrutiny. While the trope of the dictionary maker as border guard is, as he indicates, both familiar and familiarised, it is by no means always endorsed. Johnson's critical reading of academy discourses in the 1755 'Preface' is, for instance, particularly interesting in this respect, especially in the dissonance between intended stance and actual outcome which he also explores. As Johnson acknowledges, academies have indeed been 'instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders' (1755, f.C2^{r}). As in the lexicographic model which Chesterfield advocated for Johnson's own work, the dictionary maker must watch borders carefully, ready to repulse 'intruders' (those from outside the nation-state who are, unsanctioned, trying to get in) or apprehend 'fugitives' (those who might, for other reasons, be trying to escape). A marked sense of futility is, however, made to attend activities of this kind. Naïve assumptions about national borders, and their maintenance by the lexicographer, instead elicit a sense of resistance, prompting dissent rather than emulation. Such 'vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain', Johnson points out. Chesterfield's expectations of closure are cast aside while the borders of discourse, at least in this account, remain strikingly mutable. 'Sounds', we are reminded, 'are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength' (1755, f.C2^{r}). Expected agency is deflected while the success of such activities is placed in doubt.

3 The Cline of Naturalisation

Johnson's engagement with naturalisation in the *Dictionary* itself presents other critical departures in this respect. As the 1747 *Plan* indicates, Johnson's understanding of naturalisation and loans was, in reality, both nuanced and precise. A lexicon, as he explains, is complex, containing, of necessity, 'different classes'. Some words are 'naturalised and incorporated'; others, however, 'still continue aliens' as in those instances where 'no approaches towards assimilation' have been made (1747, p. 6). In the state of language that Johnson describes, such forms are given not as 'subjects' but 'auxiliaries'. Usage (and the salience of 'testimony' or evidence) is, however, already presented as of fundamental importance; this demonstrates, as Johnson observes, the 'sovereignty of words' and the power that the dictionary maker must, in other ways, observe.[3] It is, Johnson makes plain, only 'an admission into common speech' which will secure full entry into English. By the same token, 'aliens' can, in time, also become 'natives' depending on the facts of use (1747, pp. 6–7).

Johnson's diction of naturalisation was, in fact, to be sustained across the *Dictionary* in ways which often suggest an intriguing level of engagement with ideas of assimilation, diffusion and control. Importantly, rather than representing the end of 'toleration', Johnson, as we will now see, comes instead to explore the temporal and spatial nature of change by which naturalisation is rendered complete for some words and recently begun in others. Other words and senses occupy a range of intermediate positions in which the sustained permeability of English is made plain. Interesting, too, is a carefully documented metalanguage which, at a number of points, clearly approaches the 'descriptive prescriptivism' which Balteiro commends and which also problematises the expected trajectories of Johnson's work.

Words such as *sublime* and *verdant* are, for example, positioned at one end of a self-evident spectrum by which naturalisation as process is embedded in the native language. As Johnson indicates in his entry for *sublime*, this is indeed a 'Gallicism' by origin and hence, at least by derivation, a form 'peculiar to the French language' (see *Gallicism* (n.)). Yet, as Johnson explains, usage has self-evidently removed such restrictions. *Sublime*, the entry concludes, is 'now naturalised'. The expected stance of the border guard is absent while the process of change is recorded with conspicuous neutrality. Just as in the 1747 *Plan*, 'alien' is indeed rendered 'denizen' by virtue of the facts of use. Recent citations from both Pope and Addison, used as illustrative evidence within the entry, support the conclusions which are advanced. 'The *sublime* in writing rises either from the nobleness of the thought, the magnificence of the words, or the harmonious and lively turn of the phrases, and that the perfect sublime arises from all three together', as Addison had stressed in 1713.

Johnson's entry for *verdant* ('green') depicts a similar process of change. 'This word is so lately naturalised, that *Skinner* could find it only in a dictionary', Johnson states. He provides early testimony from Milton's *Paradise Lost* ('Each odorous bushy shrub/Fenc'd up the verdant wall'), though the phrasing of his definition rightly indicates a conviction of the word's recent and wider use.[4] In entries of this kind, Johnson's temporal modifiers carefully map the currents of change in a language which is, as he reminds us, 'yet living' (1755, f.B2^{r}). 'Now' and 'lately', as under *sublime* and *verdant*, hence document the processes of recent adoption and the sense of naturalisation as a newly completed process.

Words such as *adroitness* and *adroit* are, in contrast, made to exist in the *Dictionary* at what is clearly a different point of naturalisation again. 'Neither this word, nor *adroit*, seem yet completely naturalized into English', Johnson's entry for the former declares. Here, Johnson's sense of uncertainty is marked while his diction draws attention to the fuzziness rather than rigid linearity of the border territories of use. *Seem*, as the relevant entry explains, signals only what 'appears to be', offering 'slight affirmation' (see *seem* (v.), senses 5 and 6) in a process of hedging that is surprisingly common in the *Dictionary* as a whole.[5] Relevant evidence, we might note, is also made strikingly contemporary; if *adroitness* remains without illustrative citation, Charles Jervas's recent translation of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (posthumously published in 1746 as Johnson began work on the *Dictionary*), carefully verifies the modern use of *adroit*. If Johnson's preferred sources were, as we have seen, located in the '*wells of English undefiled*', he can, here and elsewhere, also choose to render on-going change the subject of close attention.

Johnson's frequent use of 'yet' as temporal modifier within his definitions is, in this respect, particularly productive. Often neglected, it is habitually used, as in the entry for *adroitness* ('seem *yet* completely naturalized into English' [my emphasis]), to signal not resistance but an interesting engagement with levels of diffusion as the *Dictionary* was composed. As the *Dictionary* confirms, *yet* signifies (when preceded by a negative) 'at this time' or 'hitherto' (see *yet* (adv.), sense 4). As in the earlier example, therefore, if naturalisation in terms of *adroitness* 'yet' remains incomplete, Johnson's metalanguage is infused with a marked sense of temporality. What 'yet' exists is by no means seen as reflective of the future state of English. Instead, closure is withheld while naturalisation is again constructed as a far from finite process.

Johnson's entry for *access* (sense 4) offers a similar example. The entry is carefully balanced in the liminal zones of use; while other senses of this word are fully assimilated, *access* in this respect is, Johnson explains, 'sometimes used, after the French, to signify the returns or fits of a distemper'. If relevant evidence can be adduced, as in the supporting quotation from Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* ('For as relapses make diseases/More desperate than their first *accesses*'), such occurrences, Johnson suggests, still retain conscious reference to the word's non-native origin, being deployed 'after the French'. Nevertheless, as with *adroitness*, proscriptive resistance is absent; Johnson's comments engage, with conspicuous neutrality, with the perceived variability of usage. This 'seems yet scarcely received into our language', he adds, acknowledging the potential for further change. *Enceinte* ('Inclosure; ground inclosed with a fortification. A military term not yet naturalised') offers a parallel case. Accorded similar temporal restriction, it provides further evidence of Johnson's interest in liminalities of this kind. Full naturalisation remains entirely possible, depending on the processes of adoption that speakers may, in time, institute.

Johnson merely observes the patterns of restricted use in the border territories where 'English' might 'yet' be said to be.

Dodsley's expectations of fixity seem remote in such uses, as do the various asseverations which Johnson made in the 1747 *Plan*. Within the *Dictionary*, entries for words such as *perdue* and *phenomenon* instead provide evidence of a clear interest in naturalisation as on-going process, as well as of Johnson's consideration of the wider consequences of changes of this kind. 'This word, which among us is adverbially taken, comes from the French *perdue*, or *forlorn hope*', Johnson explains for the former. While nosism is again conspicuous ('among us'), it is orientated to a different end. Here, the processes of assimilation, as Johnson explains, underpin a change of grammatical form as *perdue* moves from the sense of the original 'Gallicism' to a fully fledged idiom of eighteenth-century English.

Form, in the *Dictionary*, is often made a subject of close concern in this respect. As Johnson explains with reference to *phenomenon*, this had initially been adopted into English as *phaenomenon*, a form in which the ligature *ae* unambiguously signalled its 'alien' status. Nevertheless, as he notes, it was the fact of 'being naturalised' which 'changed the *æ*, which is not in the English language, to *e*'. Assimilation and adoption are enacted in usage, gradually bringing *phenomenon* both into 'English' and, in this context, into line with the spelling patterns of other English words. 'Being naturalised', Johnson confirms, the word is now unmarked. Assimilatory processes of this kind were, he notes, perhaps to be encouraged rather than impeded. Form in this sense is critical. As he comments under the entry for the ligature *ae*, for example, this 'seems not properly to have any place in the English' (*Dictionary* (1755), *ae*). In these terms, if *phaenomenon* remains a variant spelling in English, it was, for Johnson, neither endorsed nor recommended for future use. 'The *æ* of the Saxons has been long out of use', he states, 'being changed to *e* simple' in relevant words, in ways which are given as precisely analogous to 'the *æ* of the Romans'. This, 'in words frequently occurring . . . .is, in the same manner, altered'.

Similar comments attend the ligature *oe* as an index of non-naturalisation. Considerations of form, frequency, assimilation, and 'our language' again intervene: 'This combination of vowels does not properly belong to our language, nor is ever found but in words derived from the Greek, and not yet wholly conformed to our manner of writing', Johnson explains (*Dictionary* (1755), *oe*). The entry for *defoedation*, defined as 'The act of making filthy; pollution', provides apposite illustration. 'This is no English word', Johnson declares. If the stance of the border guard seems conspicuous, delimiting the native language and defending it from unnecessary incursion as Chesterfield had hoped, this is, we might note, carefully deflected by Johnson's following comment: 'At least, to make it English, it should be written *defedation*.'[6] Just as in the *Plan*, the process of 'making English' is confirmed by 'conformity to the laws of speech' into which new words are – and, importantly, continue to be – 'adopted' (1747, p. 6).

Johnson's often-assumed assiduity in taking up arms in the cause of the national tongue can, as such entries confirm, demand some careful reassessment. Against Chesterfield's desire for certainty or Dodsley's hopes of stasis, we are, in a range of entries, instead made to focus on the possibilities of on-going change and variation, as well as on the flexibility (and continuity) of assimilation as process. Norms, as under *access*, are made relative rather than absolute; comment, as under *mensal* (defined as 'Belonging to the table; transacted at table') or, say, the French-derived *trait*, instead turns to the careful examination of both frequency and diffusion in the border zones of use. 'Conversation either *mental* or *mensal*', Richardson had stated, for instance, in *Clarissa* in 1747. Here, the source language is Latin (<Latin *mensalis*) rather than French, but the constraints of assimilation and use remain the same. 'A word yet scarcely naturalised', Johnson states. Here, naturalisation has barely begun; *scarce*, as the *Dictionary* confirms, signifies 'not plentiful'; 'rare; not common' (see likewise Johnson's entry for *cate* [1773] which makes this quantitative sense particularly clear: 'This is scarcely read in the singular'). *Mensal*, as later evidence confirms, was indeed of restricted currency while its naturalisation was, rightly, seen as uncertain.[7] As Johnson's 'yet' suggests, change, at least when seen from the perspective of the mid-eighteenth century, could have gone either way.

Trait ('A stroke; a touch') was, if anything, rendered still more liminal within Johnson's documentation of the nation-state of English. Just as the 1747 *Plan* had explained, the retention of non-native phonology, spelling, or morphology will, of necessity, indicate 'the state of aliens' in which 'no approaches towards assimilation' have been made (1747, p. 6). For Johnson *trait* – a word pronounced throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as /treɪ/ on the basis of its derivation < French *trait* – was indeed 'scarce English'.[8] Evidence and explication are, in this light, carefully aligned with the complex nature of language on the margins where, as Johnson explores, non-native words are often used without being fully 'English'. Similar patterns attend a range of other French-derived but non-naturalised lexemes in the *Dictionary*. In each, Johnson provides careful documentation of relevant patterns of use, while adding ancillary information where deemed necessary. As under *beau* ('a man whose great care is to deck his person'), he therefore clarifies the non-native pronunciation ('It is sounded like *bo*'), as well as the presence of inflectional patterns which differ from those of the native tongue: it 'has often the French plural *beaux*'. Likewise in *amour*, as Johnson explains, 'the *ou* sounds like *oo* in *poor*' (rather than being analogous to *ou* in native words such as *house*). As we are informed under *ch*, it is, in reality, only the state of being 'fully naturalized' which will remove markers of this kind – and which will render, by extension, such additional comments unnecessary. The methodology Johnson outlined in the *Plan*, by which ‘it will be proper to print those which are incorporated into the language in the usual character, and those which are still to be considered as foreign, in the Italick letter’ (1747, p. 7), also comes into play in this respect. *Beau* and *amour*, like *delices* and *dernier* (‘last’), are all italicised[9] – offering a further reminder, as Johnson explained, of the complex status of ‘foreign’ forms which, even if used in English and in English texts, nevertheless remain unenfranchised within the native tongue.

4 Reading Liminality in Johnson’s *Dictionary*

Language on the margins in Johnson’s *Dictionary* can therefore prove a surprisingly fertile place. Rather than being neatly delimited (or staunchly maintained), the borders of discourse emerge at a range of points as markedly flexible and mobile spaces – liminal zones in which adoption is a complex process of diffusion, assimilation and on-going change. Johnson’s narratives of naturalisation will, in turn, often resist formal closure, while relevant comments can be marked by their caution rather than the rigid insistence on correctness and the ends of toleration we might prototypically expect. The ‘coast’ to which Johnson metaphorically ventures in the *Plan* (1747, p. 33) will, in this light, remain both fluid and dynamic; Johnson’s lexical explorations can, in effect, take him into the littoral territories where new land is being made or other aspects of use in English are being eroded. The stated intent to ‘preserve the purity of the native tongue’ (1747, p. 4) is, in reality, often set aside.

Johnson’s *Dictionary*, interestingly, also raises wider questions about the nature of loans and lexical borrowing. ‘He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations croud upon his memory; and haste or negligence, refinement or affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotick expressions’, Johnson observed, for example, in his ‘Preface’ (1755, f.C2^{v}). Yet as Durkin (2014, p. 10) affirms, the extent to which ‘borrowed terms’ of this kind are, in reality, loans or whether they should instead be seen as incidental code-switches facilitated by the bilingual or multilingual speaker is an issue of some significance in this respect. Naturalisation is not by any means the whole story. If Johnson lacks the language of code-switching, it is this for which, in practice, he often seems to reach in documenting entries which are, in various ways, ‘merely French’ or, indeed, entirely ‘Gallick’. As Hannah Grieg (2013) has recently demonstrated, given the sociocultural milieu of eighteenth-century English, being ‘merely French’ – and not English – could in such uses be precisely the point. French as cultural signifier, she confirms, offered *bon mots* for the *bon ton* and *beau monde* (or those who might desire to be seen as such) in ways which smacked of exclusivity and membership in a social elite.[10] Placed in this perspective, patterns of this kind hence confirm not only the absence of assimilation for words such as *dernier* and *delices* but also the consciously Francophonic diction on which such uses often rely. *Merely*, as Johnson explained, is to be understood as signifying 'for this and for no other end or purpose' (*Dictionary* (1755), *merely* (adv.)); it stresses both intentionality and a sense of purpose.

Communicative strategies could, as here, therefore reach beyond the strictly semantic value of words. *Dernier* was 'an affected cant word', as Johnson adds, for example, adducing its connotative status as part of the linguistic pretension he later condemned in *The Lives of the Poets*. Non-native forms, as used in English, were, as Johnson makes particularly plain, by no means always loans, nor were they intended as such.[11] Similar complexities of descriptive/prescriptive orientation likewise problematise readings of Johnson's 'Gallicisms'. That labels of this kind appear within the intentionally descriptive practices of the later *Oxford English Dictionary* (see, for example, the entries for *debit*, *arrestation*, *approfound*) provides an interesting corrective for the readings of rigid normativity with which such metalinguistic forms are, in Johnson's hands, often imbued. *Gallicism*, as the relevant entry in the *OED* explains, denotes the presence of 'a "Frenchy" kind of diction', being located in a range of uses for which reference models lie, objectively, in France rather than Britain.[12]

Johnson's *Gallicisms* present, in reality, parallel constraints of use. Identified by idioms such as 'he *figured* in controversy; he *held* this conduct; he *held* the same language that another had *held* before' (see *Gallicism* (n.), *Dictionary*), it is plain that, while the individual lexemes in such examples may indeed be 'English', the tenor and mode of expression remain resolutely French. To use *attend* to mean 'to wait' (compare French *attendre*) and *renounce* in the collocation 'renounces to my blood' (as in Dryden's 'The Hind and the Panther', which Johnson cites under *renounce* in the meaning 'To declare renunciation') are arguably 'gallicisms' in an entirely objective sense. They present, in effect, further examples of language on the margins where neither usage nor intent is necessarily orientated to the native tongue. Dryden's use of *renounce*, as Johnson points out, hence offers a precise echo of French '*renoncer à mon sang'* in a form of loan-translation or calque: 'On this firm principle I ever stood;/He of my sons, who fails to make it good,/By one rebellious act *renounces* to my blood'. Forms of this kind (and their treatment in the *Dictionary*) testify less to Johnson's patriotic resistance or unreasoned prescriptivism but instead to a careful engagement with the multilingual patterns of use which English – both then and now – can exhibit.

A similar hybridity is evident in, say, the 'Gallick' use of *pace* to mean 'step; gradation of business' (< Fr *pas*, 'step'), as in the citation from Temple which Johnson provides within the relevant entry: 'The first *pace* necessary for his majesty to make, is to fall into confidence with Spain.' This is, importantly, set against other, fully assimilated (and unmarked) uses in which *pace* signifies 'gait; manner of walk' (sense 2), or 'step; single movement in walking' (sense 1), or 'degree of celerity' (sense 3). Similar is *canaille*, which Johnson identifies as 'A French term of reproach'. If used, for instance, in Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747), it, too, remained resonant of the unassimilated 'other' whose identity (and value) resides in another nation entirely. Johnson's use of the unmodified 'A term of reproach' in defining *barbarian* (sense 3) or *fool* ('A term of indignity and reproach') provides a useful, and illuminating, contrast in this respect.

Latinisms in the *Dictionary* offer precisely the same qualified – and restrictive – patterns of use. *Inoffensive* is, for example, specified as 'A Latin mode of speech' when used to mean 'unembarrassed; without stop or obstruction' (*inoffensive* (adj.), sense 4) as opposed to its fully naturalised senses in 'giving no scandal; giving no provocation' (sense 1) or 'giving no pain; causing no terror' (sense 2). 'These two senses are scarcely English, being borrowed from the Latin idiom', as the entry for *dishonest* likewise makes plain. A *Latinism*, as Johnson's definition specifies, is 'A Latin idiom; a mode of speech peculiar to the Latin'. To be 'peculiar to' is, in this light a condition of appropriacy rather than rigid correctness, delineating what is typical or characteristic of one language rather than another.[13] As Johnson's examples across the *Dictionary* nevertheless confirm, individual usage will, at times, straddle the border territories of discourse, giving a range of forms which depend on close familiarity with other tongues and the structures or idioms 'peculiar' to them rather than to English per se. We can, as a result, repeatedly be made to contemplate the complexity of the kind of language that might be considered 'our own', as well as the ways in which elements from different languages continue to cross and intersect in English use.[14]

Johnson's diction and his wider engagement with language on the move are therefore often more objective than we might expect. Nevertheless, this is, of course, not to suggest that his stance is rigidly impartial in each and every case. As under *ruse*, a sense of personal resistance can, as we have seen, be plain; as under *finesse* ('Artifice; stratagem: an unnecessary word which is creeping into the language'), the *Dictionary* can balance, precariously, between desire and pragmatism, placing the acknowledgement of change (and naturalisation as process) against a conviction of 'need' in which importation is seen as less than necessary. The entry as a whole – and the toleration it reveals – offers a marked doubleness which is perhaps entirely characteristic of the wider patterns of Johnson's work. 'Unnecessary' from a strictly rational perspective (*finesse* can, after all, as Johnson's definition confirms, effectively be glossed by other long-standing loans such as 'artifice'), the word is, as Johnson also acknowledges, 'slowly creeping into the language'. The borders – attesting continued porosity – are being crossed; Johnson's present progressive stresses not stasis but the durative nature of change, while evidence is provided accordingly.

Just as in Johnson's wider writing, we can, in such instances, be made to return to the problems of power and human desire, as well as to the 'vanity of human wishes'[15] which operate, as Johnson often observes, in terms of language as all else. As he noted in his drafted 'Scheme' of the dictionary in 1746, we may indeed desire stasis and a language removed from the incursions of time and change. But, as he stressed – here before work on the *Dictionary* really began – such desire is, by its nature, a 'Phantom', to be pursued only if the 'Shackles' of lexicography are released (Johnson 2005, p. 461). What we desire and what we do, as Johnson's moral essays of the *Rambler*, written during the *Dictionary* years, repeatedly explore, would inevitably be very different. Chesterfield, whose tolerance for naturalisation was, as we have seen, formally at an end, ironically proves the truth of these remarks. Professing conservatism and deferential obedience to the decrees Johnson might provide,[16] he remained, in reality, a striking innovator in linguistic use, and not least, as the *OED* confirms, by means of his own extensive border crossings between French and English; see e.g. the range of Chesterfield citations which appear in the initial position in *OED* entries for words such as *brusquerie* (1752), *début* (1751), *dénouement* (1752), *desoeuvré* (1750), *empressement* (1749).

For Johnson, too, a similar negotiation between desire and pragmatism in language (and lexicography) will often co-exist. To turn English into French was not desirable; nor was the prospect of badly translated texts in which an uncomfortable hybridity of discourse could be apparent, literalising French idioms and expressions within English words. Naturalisation can, nevertheless, also serve as a wider case study for Johnson's engagement with the efficacy of prescriptive practice and with the role of lexicography in this respect. Across the *Dictionary*, the individual desire for particular configurations of use is repeatedly placed against the realities of 'received' English and the wider patterns of currency that any change will, in reality, require. 'Why am I forbidden to borrow from the *Italian*, a polish'd language, the word which is wanting in my Native Tongue', as Dryden had demanded, here with reference to his use of *falsify* to mean 'To pierce; to run through' in his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Johnson, in the *Dictionary*, provides an answer. *Falsify*, as Johnson carefully demonstrates, already existed in a range of meanings which speakers and writers had long seen as established. To what extent usage can be reshaped, and the borders of the native tongue reformed by individual desire, is presented as highly problematic. If Johnson gives Dryden's argument for motivated change in full (in what is, as a result, a strikingly discursive entry under *falsify*), it is by no means endorsed. Against individual volition, naturalisation again proves its salience as a test case for both usage and control. Given 'all this effort', Dryden was, Johnson stresses, 'not able to naturalise the new signification'. As he adds in further corroboration, 'I have never seen [it] copied, except once by some obscure nameless writer' (see *falsify* (v), sense 4, *Dictionary*). Change in language, as the entry confirms, depends not on the individual – whether poet or lexicographer – but instead on the wider acts of use by which words and senses, 'copied' and adopted into use by others, will indeed become part of the native tongue.

Johnson's rereading of academy aspirations, and their own discourse of lexical control in the border territories of use, operates to the same end. As Johnson explained in 1755, the Académie, in effect, affirmed change by its failure and naturalisation by the successive editions of its *Dictionnaire* which had been required 'The French language has visibly changed under the inspection of the academy', he stated (1755, f.C2^{r}); the lexicographer as border guard had failed to have the desired effect. As for Dryden, volition and usage are placed at odds while prescriptive rule is deftly set against a continued porosity in the border territories of use. As Johnson came to explore in *Dictionary* and 'Preface' alike, in neither French nor English had adoption and naturalisation 'run their lengths'. Instead, change – unfettered by the dictionary maker – would of necessity continue, guided by wider usage and the pragmatics of a living tongue.

NOTES

1. All references to Johnson's *Dictionary*, unless otherwise stated, are to the first folio edition of 1755.
2. See e.g. Rastell's (2003, p. 53) further comment: 'There is a connotation of implicit approval of those covered by *we* and disapproval of the non-*we*, which may have disturbing overtones.'
3. See Johnson's comment in his *Plan* (1747, p. 25) on the methodology he adopts: 'I shall therefore, since the rules of stile, like those of law, arise from precedents often repeated, collect the testimonies on both sides, and endeavour to discover and promulgate the decrees of custom, who has so long possessed, whether by right or by usurpation, the sovereignty of words.'
4. *OED* confirms early uses in translations of Homer and Virgil, alongside its use by Milton, Abraham Cowley, and John Fryer. Use in the first half of the eighteenth century is, however, sparsely documented. See *verdant* adj. *OED Online*. March 2016; accessed 3 May 2016.
5. On Johnson's use of hedging and epistemic modality as characteristic patterns within the definitional structures he deploys, see Mugglestone (2015, pp. 130–132).
6. See *defoedation* (n.), *Dictionary* (1773).
7. *OED* notes *mensal* in Irish English and as a term in Scottish history from 1607 designating 'land set aside to supply food for the table'. *OED* also records Richardson's use in *Clarissa*, providing antedatings from Blount's *Glossographia*, and the 1440 *Promptorum Parvolorum*. See *mensal* adj.1 and n.2. *OED Online*, March 2016; accessed 3 May 2016.
8. See *trait*, n. *OED Online*. March 2016; accessed 3 May 2016.
9. See *ch, Dictionary* (1755). Johnson contrasts 'words purely English, or fully naturalised' in which *ch* has the 'sound of *tch*' with the /ʃ/ it has in some non-naturalised

French words. He makes a similar point for the realisation of *ch* with /k/ for Greek-derived words such as *cholerick*. On Johnson's inconsistent use of italics, see Gilmore (1981, p. 245).

10. On French and fashionable sociocultural identities, see also Black (2003). With a certain irony given his stance on naturalisation, Chesterfield provides the first use of *bon ton* in the *OED*, in a letter dated 1 December 1747: 'Leipsig is not the place to give him that *bon ton*, which I know he wants'. See *bon*, adj. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016; accessed 3 May 2016. On Chesterfield and lexical innovation, see further p. 24.
11. See especially Johnson's (2010 (XXI), p. 489) comments on Dryden: 'He had a vanity unworthy of his abilities; to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation; such as "fraicheur" for "coolness," "fougue" for "turbulence," and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators. These are his faults of affectation.'
12. See *Gallicism* n. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016; accessed 3 May 2016.
13. See *peculiar* (adj.), sense 1, *Dictionary* (1755): 'Appropriate; belonging to any one with exclusion of others'.
14. For a useful account of the pervasiveness of code-switching in lexical use, see Pahta and Nurmi (2006).
15. See Johnson's (1975, p. 90) poem 'The Vanity of Human Wishes', written in 1749 during the composition of the *Dictionary*.
16. See e.g. Chesterfield's assertion (1754, p. 600) that 'I hereby declare that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship'.

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6 Eighteenth-Century Pronouncing Dictionaries: Reflecting Usage or Setting Their Own Standard?

Véronique Pouillon

1 Introduction

The emergence, in the eighteenth century, of increasingly rigid prescriptions for spoken English, resulted in part from the process of 'enregisterment' of a variety of the language (Agha 2003), foreshadowing the rise of Received Pronunciation (RP) as a marker of prestige. The usage-based prescriptivism conveyed in pronouncing dictionaries was both a vector for this process and a consequence of it. Yet the authors of these works were overwhelmingly outsiders: in the first section of this chapter, I show that throughout the century, the majority of orthoepists were religiously, culturally, politically and/or socially at the margins of the world whose speech they sought to describe and emulate; their 'marginality' seems in fact to have been an asset (Elliott 2003).

In many ways, orthoepists reinforced a socially established norm, but they also evaluated possible pronunciations according to more arbitrary and subjective criteria, subscribing to an abstract ideal of language. In the second section of the chapter, I inventory and classify the specific motivations and justifications presented in the metadiscourse of four dictionaries: James Buchanan's *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio* (1757), William Kenrick's *New Dictionary of the English Language* (1773), Thomas Sheridan's *General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780) and John Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1791). By contributing to the myth of an absolute, feeding into 'ideologies of correctness' (Mugglestone 2010, p. 329), the orthoepists ultimately helped create an artificial norm for English, partly determined by subjective criteria distinct from class and geographical origin.

2 A Tentative Sociological Analysis of Orthoepist-Lexicographers

2.1 *Social Mobility and the Emergence of Proto-RP*

Pronouncing dictionaries first appeared in the early years of the eighteenth century, in the midst of 'a Georgian "urban renaissance" in which, during the post-Restoration period, English towns experienced an economic and cultural flowering' (Elliott 2003, p. 364). In fact, the new urban culture is probably the key to understanding both the increase in the cultural value of proto-RP as a standardised register of speech and the cultural forms that constitute a response to this state of linguistic affairs, that is, the prescriptive works that sought to ascertain a standard and broadcast it. The urban renaissance was characterised by the growth of urban centres, including but not limited to London, and the development of a middle class with what would today be termed 'disposable income'; it meant that more and more people now came into that 'surplus wealth [which] allows entry to what may be called the world of social competition' (Borsay 1977, p. 593). It actually predates the oft-cited centralising and urbanising effects of the Industrial Revolution (usually considered to have started around 1760):

> The urban renaissance began almost a century before the "classic" period of the Industrial Revolution. By implanting the idea of social space in people's minds, and servicing their demand for this space, it encouraged the pursuit of status. (Borsay 1977, p. 598)

Of course, Britain also had a head start in the Industrial Revolution, with the early adoption of steam and modern steel technology as well as a booming wool industry. As a result, English cities grew rapidly in the second half of the eighteenth century as well, further promoting social mobility; geographical mobility also increased as a result of the industrialising economy. On a much smaller scale, the 1707 Acts of Union fused the Scottish and English parliaments, which meant an influx of Scottish MPs to London.

By the late sixteenth century, the attribution of social class had become more flexible than it had been in the past; it was determined by a set of recognisable features, of which speech was no doubt an increasingly important one:

> In the 1699 edition of his *New State of England*, Guy Miege . . . writes 'gentlemen are properly such as are descended of a good family bearing a coat of arms . . . ', which would seem to shut the door to any *arriviste*, but then adds: ' . . . on the other side, anyone that without a coat of arms, has either a liberal or genteel education, that looks gentleman like (whether he be so or not) and has the wherewithal to live freely, is by the courtesy of England usually called a gentleman'. In other words, physical and mental possessions can be used as a way of transforming wealth into status. In this sense the new sophisticated urban economy can be seen as a munitions factory in the pursuit of status. (Borsay 1977, p. 594)

However, although social advancement was now possible through the acquisition of the external trappings of the elite, the criteria for belonging remained out of the hands of the bourgeoisie, the very people who had enshrined the mores of the aristocracy as an aspirational ideal. Nowhere is this truer than in speech forms: those who did not frequent high society lacked knowledge of the preferred linguistic forms; and language changed constantly, making it almost impossible for an outsider to keep track of the trends in the English spoken at court or in the universities. By definition, proto-RP was ‘a speech variety which is centred “elsewhere” in social space . . . ; a variety whose “correct” forms and usage (i.e. whose metadiscursive standards) are guaranteed by someone else’ (Agha 2003, p. 236). It makes sense, therefore, that in the eighteenth century, ‘ascertaining the standard language essentially became a middle-class activity’ (Knowles 1997, p. 120).

The pursuit of status explains the elevation of a ‘regional prestige sociolect’ (i.e. ‘the prestige variety of English spoken in south-eastern England in the sixteenth century, a region including London and the universities at Oxford and Cambridge’) to a ‘national standard’ (Agha 2003, p. 244), a tool simultaneously of admission and exclusion. The intermingling of people of different socio-economic and geographical backgrounds contributed to a hardening of linguistic conventions as a means of social distinction. The term ‘enregisterment’ describes the set of ‘processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognised register of forms’ (2003, p. 231). The establishment of RP as the prestige variety of British English, starting in the eighteenth century, was the result of various such processes of enregisterment; it required not only the association of social, economic or geographic identities with certain linguistic forms but also the dissemination of specific information about these forms, namely, among other things, phonetic patterns. Indeed, the ‘spread of a register depends on the circulation of messages typifying speech’ (2003, p. 243). One vector of such messages in Britain, rich in phonic detail and precision, has historically been the pronouncing dictionary, which provides a quasi-exhaustive survey of the target register.

2.2 The Authors of Pronouncing Dictionaries

It follows from the intrinsic ‘otherness’ of proto-RP, as the target variety for the potentially upwardly mobile, that those who would study and describe it, and purport to teach it, were ‘outsiders’, at least in the linguistic sense – that is, they were not native speakers of the prestige register. The authors of pronouncing dictionaries definitely fit this description.

From 1701 to 1800, at least 17 authors produced works that fall under the label of pronouncing dictionaries (see Emsley 1940; Sheldon 1946), from the most basic, which indicated little beyond the stressed syllable in polysyllabic words, to the most complex, which incorporated detailed segmental information, stress, and syllable boundaries, as well as thorough discussions of the workings of spoken language – including, occasionally, topolectal and sociolectal variation. In this section I compare these 17 authors in terms of ‘outsider status’: geographical origin, social origin, religious affiliation, education and profession, as well as political leanings.

Eight of the authors were from south-eastern England, London or the Greater London area: Nathan Bailey (bap. 1691–1742), Daniel Bellamy (b. 1687), John Entick (*c.* 1703–1773), William Kenrick (1729/30–1779), William Johnston (1714–1776), Stephen Jones (1763–1827), Benjamin Martin (bap. 1705–*d.* 1782), and John Walker (1732–1807). Five were Scottish: Alexander Barrie (*fl.* 1781–1810?), James Buchanan (*fl.* 1753–1770), John Burn (*d.* 1793), William Perry (1747–post 1805), and William Scott (1750–1804); Thomas Spence (1750–1814) was born in Newcastle of Scottish parents. Thomas Dyche (*d.* 1722x7) and John Ash (1724–1779) were English, from Derbyshire and Dorset, respectively, and Thomas Sheridan (1719?–1788) was Irish, from Dublin.

Strictly none of them were noblemen, or even members of the landed gentry. Most of them, in fact, experienced economic difficulties: Perry spent time in debtor's prison (Sturiale 2006, p. 148), as did Kenrick; Martin came from a poor farming family and died bankrupt (Millburn 2004); Spence, one of 19 siblings, had to work as a child; Ash and Kenrick were apprenticed to a blacksmith and a mathematical instrument maker, respectively. Bellamy 'turned to writing . . . as a source of income' after 'unexpected family misfortunes' (Burns 2004). For Sheridan and Walker, the death of one or both parents led to financial problems. It follows from these often-straitened circumstances that many of the authors of pronouncing dictionaries did not attend institutions of higher learning or the most prestigious grammar schools. In fact, Entick, Martin and Spence appear to have been entirely self-taught. Ash and Kenrick attended dissenting academies (and possibly also, in the case of the former, a Scottish university, and the latter, a Dutch university). Bailey was said to have an honourary degree, 'but it is not known which institution awarded him this degree' (Hancher 2009). Walker spent some time at a grammar school, but his family could not afford the cost. Sheridan benefitted from the fact that his father ran a classical seminary, which he attended; he was admitted to Westminster School, but could not afford to remain there, and eventually attended Trinity College, Dublin, on a scholarship. Bellamy, Dyche and Jones went to more prestigious public schools, and Bellamy went on to St John's College, Oxford (though he eventually left without a degree). As to the Scottish authors, little to nothing is known about their education or formative years in general.

Nine of the authors describe themselves, at some point in their lives, as a '(school)teacher' or 'schoolmaster'; they also made their living as writers – all of them published works other than their dictionaries, some on closely related topics such as grammar, 'elocution' or education generally, but many others on a wide range of subjects, from geography (Scott), the natural sciences (Martin) and religion (Bellamy), to proposals for political reform (Spence). Kenrick wrote and translated a great number of texts in many genres, including verse satire, a guide to female conduct and works by Rousseau, Buffon and Voltaire.

Some authors had other occupations as well: editing and publishing, in many cases; lecturing around the country (Martin, Sheridan, Walker); or even a stint as a surgeon in the Royal Navy (Perry). Both Sheridan and Walker earned some recognition as actors, and Martin set up shop as a maker of scientific instruments, specialising in optics.

Many of the authors of pronouncing dictionaries were members of religious groups other than the Church of England. I have not been able to verify the religious affiliations of the Scottish authors, but it is known that, in the eighteenth century, 'a large majority of the Scottish people adhered to the Presbyterian Church' (Brown 2002, p. 260). Spence is known to have been influenced by the ideas of James Murray, described in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as 'an extreme Presbyterian' (Dickinson 2004). Johnston was a Presbyterian minister in Tunbridge Wells, Kent (Michael 2010, p. 568; Evans 1820, p. 209), and three of the other Englishmen were Baptists (Bailey, Kenrick and Ash). Walker is notable for his conversion to Roman Catholicism (and his uncle was also a dissenting minister).

For several authors, their outsider status is reinforced by their critical view of the state of the educational system in Britain, to say nothing of their political ideas. At the most moderate end of the spectrum, authors like Dyche, Bellamy (who attended Merchant Taylors' School during a period when several of its headmasters were dismissed for their Jacobite leanings (Wilson 1812, pp. 379–380, 390–392, 400)), and Sheridan expressed an interest in reforming education; Sheridan went so far as to propose a detailed plan for overhauling the whole system in *British Education: Or, The source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (1769). Martin, probably because of his own experience, favoured making books more widely available to aspiring autodidacts through a drastic lowering of prices. At higher personal risk, Entick and Kenrick wrote for anti-government periodicals; Entick's writings 'caused his house to be entered and his papers seized' (Humphrys 2004), while a performance of one of Kenrick's satirical plays was 'suppressed by the lord mayor of London' (Rogers and Rizzo 2008). The most egregious offender, though, was Thomas Spence, who 'although more of a political theorist and propagandist than an activist, . . . also associated with the more extreme political radicals' (Dickinson 2004); he was in fact repeatedly arrested because of the contents of his publications (with titles such as *The Real Rights of Man*, 1793, or The *End of Oppression*, 1795) and finally jailed for 'seditious practices and disaffection'. Spence put great stock in the education of poor adults (rather than children), as a means to bringing about a revolution and ending injustice and inequalities.

Though most authors did not go as far as Spence in expressing dissatisfaction with the political, and especially social, organisation of Britain in the eighteenth century, the focus on educational reform as well as pronunciation is telling. They appear to have shared a conviction that the closed Oxbridge pipeline, with its focus on Greek, Latin and theology, did not serve the educational needs of the newly socially mobile middle class. They recognised that 'forms of speech that are prestige commodities . . . ("the property of a few") can be redistributed across the nation . . . , and so come to serve as emblems . . . of unity and egalitarianism within the nation' (Agha 2003, p. 251).

It seems clear from these men's backgrounds, and their professions, that they would not have had access to the upper echelons of British society. They were outsiders by birth, through geographical or socio-economic accident. Beal et al. (2006, p. 3) note that 'many of the period's texts [including grammars and textbooks] were written from the margins – many by teachers', and the 'marginal in society' are 'potential originators according to network theory' (Beal 2002, p. 20), Of Walker, specifically, Beal notes that 'he was exactly the kind of person who, according to social network theory, would be an innovator', 'on the fringe of polite society' (Beal 2007, p. 98, 101). She stresses that he is a 'marginal figure' to explain his status as a '*linguistic* innovator' (2007, p. 102; emphasis mine), which is undoubtedly the case; I contend that marginality might also be a factor in technological innovations (such as transcription techniques) and in the adoption of unorthodox views on what constitutes the linguistic standard.

2.3 A Scientific Approach

The authors of pronouncing dictionaries chose to present language as a sellable product rather than an inherited trait, and analyse linguistic phenomena as scientific objects rather than literary ones. The increasingly detailed descriptions of phonetic articulation, the systematic comparison with other languages, the use of various symbols to transcribe the spoken forms – including, significantly, superscript numbers – all these strategies betray the influence of the natural sciences, which played a central role in the new urban culture of the Georgian Renaissance:

> A key to understanding may lie in the social legitimation of marginal men. Such legitimation is itself a complex, subtle thing. The adoption of science as a mode of cultural self-expression also depends on a particular affinity between progressivist, rationalist images of scientific knowledge and the alternative value system espoused by a group peripheral to English society . . . [S]uch knowledge was at best a minor component in that value system and, in the decades immediately prior to 1780, a diminishing one. The quiescent mood of the Royal Society itself and the peripheral status of natural knowledge within the hierarchy of norms and expectations then characterising Oxbridge life sustain the picture. Natural knowledge thus seemed an appropriate, suitably distinct centre around which a new, marginal group could build its own separate and progressivist philosophy and cultural system. The alliance between science, peripheral status, and progressivist philosophy was itself transmuted as the larger culture within which that alliance had formed experienced its own shifts and changes. (Thackray 1974, p. 678)

There is something of the scientific method in any attempt at precise phonetic description, let alone the elaboration of sophisticated transcription systems. One cannot dispute the essentially empirical nature of a study that takes as its object the articulatory and acoustic properties of language, especially with a focus on detailing and distinguishing segmental, sub-segmental and supra-segmental features, and classifying speech sounds accordingly. In their most advanced forms, the resulting classifications are reminiscent of a Linnaean taxonomy. The representational strategies also betray an inclination towards the natural sciences: by the end of the eighteenth century, the most popular system makes use of numbers placed above graphs to indicate vowel sounds (Sheridan, Kenrick, Walker, among others); Spence used invented symbols, and others diacritics like macrons, breves, and font effects (Buchanan, Johnston). Though the numbers are the clearest example of striving for scientific, even mathematical, clarity, all the systems devised went far beyond the earlier prose descriptions of spoken forms, which relied on rhymes or re-spellings[1] to convey information about pronunciation, if only in embracing the exhaustive approach only possible in the dictionary format.

2.4 *The Dictionary Genre*

The very genre of dictionaries was from the start marked by the intrinsic otherness of its subject: at first, this was languages other than English (Latin in medieval glossaries, and contemporary foreign languages starting in the sixteenth century) and subsets of English inaccessible to certain segments of the population from the seventeenth century onward (beginning with Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall* in 1604, the full title of which specifies that it explains 'hard vsuall English wordes . . . for the benefit & helpe of ladies, gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons'). The dictionary has always been the answer to a need, or to an economic demand for valued linguistic skill or knowledge, which took different forms over the centuries. This means that the authors of dictionaries have also been those well enough versed in their chosen field, but far enough outside of it, to recognise the value of the information they had to impart to their target audience (i.e., those not in the know). Pronouncing dictionaries are far from the only manifestation of such a dynamic: the Scottish Enlightenment illustrates this reclaiming of knowledge from the powerful by the historically marginalised, with, as its crowning achievement, the first edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1768–1771). I would also like to emphasise that the quintessential establishment figure of eighteenth-century lexicography, Samuel Johnson, the author of what is often regarded as the first modern English dictionary, was in circumstance very similar to the authors discussed here. A 'provincial' by birth, he too suffered economic hardship and turned to writing as a result, worked for a time as a schoolteacher, and had the great social disadvantage of what was most likely Tourette's syndrome (Rogers 2009).

The authors of pronouncing dictionaries in eighteenth-century Britain displayed both humanistic and opportunistic qualities in their jack-of-all-trades approach to economic and intellectual pursuits, scraping together a living by their wits and occasionally making valuable scientific contributions in the process. There is no doubt that they were among those uniquely positioned to understand the superficial nature of the trappings of social class; in fact, 'it was precisely those who were the marginalised but aspirant who were most sensitive to the indices of linguistic and social identity in a turbulent culture' (Crowley, cited in Beal et al. 2006, p. 3). But how aware were the orthoepists of contributing to enregisterment themselves? It appears that rather than viewing their dictionaries purely as inventories of socially preferred forms, they saw their work in more ideological terms; their motivations, more or less explicitly expressed in the front matter, range from 'purification' of the language, to improving its internal logic (analogy), to simplifying it or, somewhat confusingly, removing what they deem to be upper-class affectations. The second section of this chapter aims to determine which of these justifications, if any, dominate the metadiscourse in four of the pronouncing dictionaries, and whether the authors perceive their work as a simple transmission of knowledge or as a contribution to the field, actively participating in linguistic change.

3 An Exploratory Study of Prescriptive Criteria in the Metadiscourse of Four Pronouncing Dictionaries

3.1 Approach and Corpus

For this exploratory analysis of the terms employed in the dictionaries, I refer to Pullum (2004) and Wright (2008). Pullum proposes a classification of prescriptivism into nine types (2004, p. 7). The first three categories correspond to a conservative impulse, referring to a present or past social norm: nostalgia, classicism and authoritarianism. The other six, however, are more independent of social context and are more subjectively applied: aestheticism, coherentism, logicism, commonsensism, functionalism and asceticism. These labels are potentially reformist in their aspirations and used by authors seeking to 'improve' the language, but can also be post hoc arguments for conservative choices. Wright puts forward a set of five categories of 'social comment', derived from the writings of eighteenth-century linguists: pleasantness of sound, pleasantness of speech (production), social desirability, science (mostly in the form of 'analogy') and offences against nature (Wright 2008, pp. 229–230). Like Pullum's, Wright's categories are either conformist (social desirability) or more subjective, in that they might be used to justify both conformist and reformist pronunciations. In essence, social desirability underlies the prescriptive project of all the pronouncing dictionaries, but my goal is to determine how often the social value of forms is the explicit criterion given by authors, how often it is disguised (with post hoc arguments), or how often it is in fact considered secondary to other concerns.

This section provides an overview of the prescriptive attitudes expressed in the metadiscourse of four pronouncing dictionaries: James Buchanan's *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio* (1757), William Kenrick's *New Dictionary of the English Language* (1773), Thomas Sheridan's *General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780) and John Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1791). They were selected based on their dates, the availability of good-quality reproductions, the varied backgrounds of the authors and their distinctive approaches to phonetic representation. The study is based on the inventory of every evaluative expression of positive or negative prescription in the dictionaries' front matter. It is impossible to include the full context for each token; please note that unless otherwise specified, adjectives and evaluative expressions are used most often to qualify the pronunciation of a word, or an accent in general, and occasionally individual sounds or segments. Furthermore, not every occurrence of every word has been counted, only those which clearly relate to arguments justifying prescriptive attitudes; this is especially true of words with more than one meaning, such as 'proper', for which great care has been taken not to conflate the more neutral sense of 'characteristic' or 'intrinsic' with the subjective senses of either 'suitable' or 'accurate'.

The period, from 1757 to 1791, includes only works published after Johnson's dictionary (1755), which constitutes a major turning point in dictionary making: indeed, most of the pronouncing dictionaries from the second half of the eighteenth century simply re-used Johnson's word list, part of speech indications and (usually abbreviated) definitions. It seems likely that the publication of Johnson's dictionary, immediately hailed as authoritative (Rogers 2009), and which remained as the standard of monolingual general English dictionaries up until the *Oxford English Dictionary*, freed orthoepists to make truly specialised dictionaries and to focus on pronunciation rather than semantics, morphology, lemmatisation or other lexicographic concerns.[2] I therefore focus on dictionaries that were published after 1755, spread out over the second half of the century, to provide a good overview of the period. They provide a variety of points of view, because of their authors' different geographic origins and professional lives, and all four contain evidence of a thoughtful and individual approach to the representation of speech sounds. I do, however, note that the first dictionary, Buchanan (1757), though it fits the post-Johnson criterion in terms of dates, does not present the same characteristics as the others: idiosyncratic word list and definitions; lack of a specifically 'phonetic' representation of words distinct from headwords; explicit concerns about the choice of spelling and the size of the dictionary; and self-identification as a general dictionary, rather than a specialised pronouncing dictionary. I have nevertheless chosen to include Buchanan (1757) in my study because it does share certain key features with the other three, namely a detailed discussion of pronunciation in the front matter, both as an object of scientific analysis (phonic, graphophonemic) and as an object of prescription, as well as a relatively sophisticated system of diacritics for indicating pronunciation (even though they are simply added on to the headword, rather than appearing on a separate form); all of this leads me to categorise Buchanan among the more modern pronouncing dictionaries and as much more conceptually and technologically advanced than any previous works (see Ballier, Beal and Pouillon 2016, pp. 7–9). In addition, Buchanan's dictionary, because it is the first to include explicit judgements, also provides a baseline and comparison point for the discussion of linguistic prescription in the dictionaries that came after it.

3.2 James Buchanan's Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio *(1757)*

Buchanan's front matter includes a title page, a 16-page 'Preface' (approx. 5000 words) and a 23-page essay on 'the Species of Sounds, with the Matter and Form of Language' (approx. 9500 words): this adds up to 41 pages, or 14,500 words, out of 501 pages total.[3] I have taken into account 49 words or phrases pertaining to criteria for the prescription of spoken forms, which means an average of about one token per 300 words.

The most-used qualifiers in this regard, by far, are *just* (7 tokens) and *proper*, in the sense of either or both 'accurate' or 'appropriate' (with *properly, propriety*, 8 tokens all told, plus one *impropriety*; henceforth all counts should be assumed to include any derived or related forms). They constitute the most frequent expressions of the author's notion of an absolute, faintly moral, standard of correctness: definitely conformist, as well as vague. He also makes use of other terms in this vein: *accurate* (3)*, true* (2) and *pure* (1); on the title page, he refers both to a 'just Pronunciation' and an 'accurate' one, seemingly interchangeably.

Buchanan is also imprecise as to the social or geographical identification of correct speech. He gives only very vague characterisations of speakers, be it those who embody his ideal of 'proper' speech or those whose speech he considers 'improper'. Social class seems to be a factor (*polite vs. uncouth*), as is education (*learned vs. the unlearned, the illiterate)*, yet each of these terms appears only once. Buchanan, a Scotsman, does not express any geographical preference in the dictionary, though in his 1764 *Essay* he recommends to 'inhabitants of North Britain', especially 'persons of distinction there', that they 'chearfully lead the van towards a just and polished utterance' (Buchanan 1764,

p. xi); more generally, he mentions the goal to 'exclude all local dialects' (1764, p. xi), using the term pejoratively to refer to non-standard accents. Nevertheless, he remains vague on this topic, especially compared with other orthoepist-lexicographers.

The other main form that Buchanan's prescription takes is negative aesthetic appreciations, presented in parallel with class judgements; he employs five different adjectives, again, each only once (*vicious*, *drawling, harsh, grating, discordant*) without giving any corresponding positive terms. The most phonetically descriptive and socially specific term he uses is *drawling*, which at the time already evoked a particular, slow and drawn-out, usually lower-class, mode of speech. As regards actual usage, beyond identifying speakers by social class or education level, Buchanan refers to *custom* on three occasions, but always in a pejorative context: indeed, 'the prevailing tide of custom' is the principal cause of 'irregular pronunciation' (Buchanan 1764, p. viii); it stands for random, uncontrolled change and variation, which he considers it his mission to eliminate. Indeed, he writes of the necessity to *regulate* (2), *fix* (1) or *settle* (1) English, which he considers problematically *irregular* (3) and *instable* (1). The rejection of 'custom' and the notion of a problematic 'irregularity' indicate non-conformist tendencies, informed by coherentism and analogy; a certain nostalgia is implicit in his criticism of change. Buchanan deplores the very notion of variation, whether synchronic or diachronic.

3.3 William Kenrick's New Dictionary of The English Language *(1773)*

Kenrick's dictionary includes a title page, a 2-page dedication 'to the King' (57 words), an 8-page 'Introduction' (approx. 2000 words) and a 57-page 'Rhetorical Grammar of the English Language' (approx. 31,000 words); this comes out to 68 pages, about 33,000 words, of front matter (not counting a 3-page table of contents and one page of errata), out of 802 pages total. I took into account 216 words or phrases pertaining to criteria for the prescription of spoken forms; this represents a marked increase from Buchanan, almost twice the rate of occurrence (a little over one token per 150 words).

Kenrick is much more precise than Buchanan in his characterisations of who speaks the right kind of English (22 tokens), and especially, who does not (34). Those to be emulated are the *inhabitants of the Metropolis/natives of London* (8) or, more generally, *natives of England* (2) or those hailing from *great towns* (1). The criteria are not strictly geographic, however; speakers may also be *polished* (3) or *polite* (2), or simply *good* (4) or the *best* (2). Kenrick was himself a native of Hertfordshire and spent most of his life in the London area, and it is perhaps not surprising that he expresses his distaste for accents from other regions in harsher terms than Buchanan; for instance, considering them as linguistically deficient as 'foreigners of different countries' (Kenrick 1773, p. viii). Those whose speech is described in pejorative terms include Scots (5), Irishmen (6), inhabitants of the *northern parts of England*, or, more specifically, people from *Newcastle/Northumbrians* (3), as well as natives of Yorkshire (4). Kenrick further mentions *Wales* (1) and *Cornwall* (1) and, more vaguely, *other provincials*, *some counties in England* (5), *persons... depraved in point of dialect* (1) and simply, *bad* speakers (1). Interestingly, he also rejects certain forms used by speakers that ostensibly belong in the *polite* or *polished* group on the basis of their *affectation* (2), namely *affected fops* (1), *flirting females* (1), and *pedant[s]* (1), among others, 'some of them even residing in the Metropolis' (1773, p. 40).

The second most frequent type of prescriptive qualifier in the *New Dictionary* is the reference to an absolute standard (37 tokens all told, counting both positive and negative mentions). Again, the notion of *propriety* plays a key role (19 tokens; one occurrence of *improprieties*); a few alternate terms are used, just one time each (*just*, *right*, *true*, *genuine* and *really*). Kenrick uses several negative terms in this respect – *errour* (2), *fault* (1), *mistake* (2), *corrupt* (1) – as well as potentially neutral words like *orthoepia/y* (3) and *pronunciation* (3), preceded by the definite article, to exclude any possibility of variation. Both the references to geographical origin and the more absolute terms speak to Kenrick's conformism, with the exception of the set of remarks about 'affectation' and 'pedantry', which, on the contrary, constitute the basis for non-conformist arguments.

A third, broad category of criteria covers functionalism and aestheticism (78 tokens all told), further confirming a predominantly conformist view with post hoc justifications. Kenricks presents functionalist arguments from the hearer's point of view, stating that '[a]s the great end of speech is to be intelligible, audibility and precision are of course its essential requisites' (p. 2); he refers regularly to *intelligibility* (4), *audibility* (3), *distinctness* (8), *significancy* (2) and being *clear* (3) and *articulate* (2).[4] This is opposed to forms that are *indistinct* (2) or *cannot be clearly distinguished* (1). From the speaker's point of view (pleasantness of speech), he invokes *convenience* (2), *facility* (1), *necessity* (1), being *easy* (2) and *simple* (1) – contrasted with *difficulty* (2), *perplexity* (1) and being *complicated* (1). He also offers aesthetic justifications (pleasantness of sound), some vague, such as *pleasure* (3), *euphony* (4), *elegance* (1) and being *agreeable/grateful/least offensive* to the ear (3), as opposed to *dissonance* (3), *cacophony* (1) and being *disagreeable* (2) or *disgraceful* (1). Others are much more detailed and phonetically specific: he advocates *suppressing the sound of the consonants*, making them *least perceptible* (2); he says that all sounds should tend towards the *labial and lingual* (1), rather than the *guttural and nasal* (1), and that no sounds should be *too smooth and sibilant* (1), *too rough and* *aspirate* (1) or *too sonorous* (1). He further recommends *precision* (5), *unity of sound* (3) and *force* (1), as well as a generally *quick* (2), *sharp* (1) and *fluent* (1) pronunciation, as opposed to a *slow and flat* (1) one.

Unlike Buchanan, Kenrick has no great plan for regulating the English language; in fact, he admits that 'we are after all in some degree catching at a shadow, and endeavouring to describe the form of a cloud, which the wind diversifies every moment' (p. 45), making it clear that he does not reject all change. Nor is he 'so ready to allow the propriety, or admit of the necessity, of all these changes' (1773, p. 45). Like his predecessor, he makes some appeal to the notion of internal coherence or analogy: forms must be *conformable to the nature of the language* (3), rather than *barbarous* (1), *confused* (2), *indigested* (1), lacking *good reason* or following an *unanswerable* jus et norma loquendi (1).

As to specific mentions of usage, Kenrick repeatedly rejects *custom* (7) and *practice* (4), which he decries as *arbitrary* (2) and *capricious* (6). Yet he acknowledges using as a reference the *present practice* (3) and also employs the word *custom* in a positive context (3), going so far as to declare that 'though custom must be admitted the arbiter of speech, caprice is by no means the arbiter of custom', p. 12). This confusion and contradiction are central to the role Kenrick gives himself as a prescriptor, simultaneously conformist and non-conformist. He casts himself both as an independent expert of an absolute standard and a connoisseur of variation; he is against change, and yet accepts it; the elite determine correct speech, but only when they are not being 'affected'; pronunciation must be clear and forceful, but not too smooth, rough, sonorous, etc. This constant striving for balance – which Kenrick refers to explicitly: Modus est in rebus (1), *extremes . . . are hurtful* (1) – is the outsider's way of taking ownership of the codes of a more powerful group, by resorting to post hoc justifications for many features of the target accent – for instance, by asserting that their value is somewhat absolute or that they are aesthetically pleasing, or by finding reasons to distinguish himself from aristocratic speakers, deemed pretentious.

3.4 Thomas Sheridan's General Dictionary of the English Language *(1780)*

Sheridan's dictionary includes a title page, a 7-page Preface (approx. 4000 words), and a 56-page 'Rhetorical Grammar of the English Language' (approximately 27,600 words), followed by a 5-page 'Appendix' (approximately 2300 words) and a 2-page 'Explanation of the Method used in the following Dictionary, to point out the Pronunciation of the Words' (approximately 600 words); this comes out to 74 pages of front matter (not counting a 2-page table of contents and a 6-page 'List of Subscribers') and about 34,500 words. I took into account 240 words or phrases pertaining to criteria for the prescription of spoken forms; the rate of occurrence of these forms is slightly higher than in Kenrick's explanatory material, a little more than one token per 140 words.

The most frequent argument Sheridan gives for his own prescriptivism is the desirability of *establishing* (5 tokens) or *fixing* (2) a *standard* (7). His stated aim is to eliminate both diachronic change and synchronic variation; in all, 62 terms deal with the necessity of *regulating* (4) the language, with an additional 45 further specifying when and where the best English is to be found. A true nostalgic, he rejects the most recent historical evolutions of English, and even considers the very notion of diachronic change (i.e. the *perpetual fluctuation* (1) of a *floating* language (1)), as 'evil' (Sheridan 1780, seventh page, unpaginated preface). He extends this nautical metaphor, railing against the 'gales of caprice' (1) and the 'current of fashion' (2) (ibid.). He seeks not only to reverse certain changes but also to eliminate future alterations by creating a *permanent* standard (3) for English, to 'keep it steady', like an 'anchor' (ibid.). The period in which he considers that English was in 'its highest state of perfection' (ibid.: sixth page, preface) is the *Augustan Age*, at *the court of Queen Anne* (4). It is perhaps not surprising that Sheridan, as the godson of Jonathan Swift, would subscribe to the 'long-standing belief that excellent prose was written in the century following the Restoration' (Knowles 1997, p. 111) and especially during the reign of Queen Anne, and to extend that belief to apply to spoken language.[5] Indeed, his education 'under a master' who was 'the intimate friend, and chosen companion of Swift' (Sheridan 1780, sixth page, preface) – none other than his father, although the familial connection is never mentioned – is Sheridan's principal argument for his own authority as an orthoepist.

Sheridan also addresses synchronic variation, predominantly regional topolectal differences, which he describes not in moral or aesthetic terms, but rather as a simple case of *diversity* (2) or *difference* (6). The *natives of Ireland* (4), *Scotland* (6) and *Wales* (3), as well as the *people of Somersetshire* (1), and *provincials* (3) more generally, are simply prone to *changing* (2) (or *substituting* (2)) certain sounds. Here, Sheridan aims to settle any *disputes* (3) by providing a *general* standard (1) that would help create a *uniformity of pronunciation* (4). This is an overtly political issue for him: he wants 'to put an end to the odious distinction kept up between the subjects of the same king' by making the 'attainment of the English tongue ... easy' to all (ibid., fourth page, preface). In fact, Sheridan stresses that any subpar pronunciation is *curable* (4), and that *perfection* (1), in the sense of being 'fully informed, fully skilful' (second sense in dictionary entry), can be *taught* (1). It makes sense that the author of a pronouncing dictionary would emphasise the learnability of the socially valued accent, and yet Sheridan is one of the first to do it so explicitly.

Because Sheridan establishes a frame of reference that is historical rather than synchronic, firm in his non-conformist rejection of contemporary usage, he does not single out any elite group as ideal speakers. Apart from a single mention of the 'descendants of all the politer part of the world bred in [the reign of Queen Anne]', and a few references to *custom* (1) and the *natives of England* (2), the most frequent qualifier is the possessive *our* (5) ('our pronunciation', 'our consonants'), which seems to include any speaker who meets Sheridan's standards. The diachronic approach also allows him to distance himself from the elite in much the same way that Kenrick does, without recourse to as many absolute, aesthetic or functionalist judgements, criticising *people of fashion* (1) and even the *people of England* (1) for some features of their speech.

Sheridan does occasionally refer to aesthetic or functionalist criteria, though much less than Kenrick (23 tokens to Kenrick's 78): sounds should be *pleasing* (4) or a *delight to the ear* (1), rather than *disagreeable* (3), in addition to being *easy to the organs of speech* (1). More specifically, Sheridan warns against *too great a precipitancy of utterance* (2) and against over-emphasising consonants over vowels; he strongly condemns 'continu[ing]' a set of consonants 'any length after [their] formation', for instance comparing a 'continued' *m* to 'the lowing of oxen' or *r* to the 'snarling of curs' (1780, p. 42). He also employs many of the words used by Kenrick to refer to an absolute but vaguely defined standard: *true* (5), *right* (4), *just* (9), as opposed to *vicious* (1), *faulty* (2) or *defective* (1) (45 tokens over all). Unlike Kenrick, however, Sheridan links the *propriety* (6) of certain forms not only to an intrinsic superiority, or to a specific demographic, or historical period but also to certain *principles* (5), *rules* (4) and *laws* (2) that he has determined through *examining* (1) and *investigating* (1) pronunciation. He claims, in fact, to be 'the first who ever laid open the principles upon which our pronunciation is founded, and the rules by which it is regulated' (1780, seventh page, preface). Of course, although he borrows the terminology of the natural sciences and purports to reject *custom* (1), *authority* (1) and *analogy* (1), the pronunciations he gives remain subjective prescriptions.

3.5 John Walker's Critical Pronouncing Dictionary *(1791)*

Walker's dictionary includes a title page, a 6-page Preface (approx. 3900 words), 7 pages of 'Rules' for 'the Natives of Ireland', 'Scotland', 'Londoners' and 'Foreigners' (approx. 5000 words), as well as a 71-page list of 'Principles of English Pronunciation' (43,500); this comes out to 85 pages of front matter (not counting one page showing the key for the superscript numbers marking vowel realisations, along with the errata) and 52,400 words, out of the total 574 pages (Walker's dictionary has fewer pages than Kenrick's and Sheridan's because the entries are arranged in three rather than two columns, in smaller font). I took into account 1149 words or phrases pertaining to criteria for the prescription of spoken forms; these terms occur at a rate over three times greater than in Kenrick's or Sheridan's works, about one token per 45 words. This prodigious difference in the sheer number of tokens (which does not include the prescriptive arguments the author makes throughout the dictionary in more than a thousand notes following the word entries) is the first indicator that Walker takes a different approach to both linguistic description and the prescriptive enterprise of compiling a pronouncing dictionary. Both his preface and his 'Principles' contain a much more detailed discussion of variation in general and specific variants of particular forms than any earlier work.

When it comes to the idea of diachronic variation, Walker declares that he considers it 'to have been greatly exaggerated' (1791, p. vi). He concedes that change has occurred and will occur, but to a minimal degree; in fact, he considers that many of the ways in which pronunciation has *degenerated* (2) are not yet so entrenched as to preclude *recovery* (2) (*cf.* also *reclaim*, 1 token). Synchronic variation is his true focus, and he uses similar terms as his predecessors to describe, prescribe and proscribe forms. The most frequent justification is *analogy* (106), closely related to *regularity* (36) and *consistency* (5), and opposed to *irregularity* (31), *inconsistency* (7) and *anomalies* (6). The coherentist notion that pronunciation, at least in its ideal form, can be considered a *rational* (2) *system* (3), based on *principles* (19), *laws* (11) or *rules* (110) is central to Walker's conception and directly connected to his 'scientific approach' (Ranson 2002, p. 53), which stresses close *investigation* (2) and *observation* (3).

However, like Sheridan, this putatively objective approach does not prevent him from expressing moral or class judgements, distinguishing the more *polite* (18) forms from the *vulgar* (45). Walker catalogues the *improprieties* (18), *faults* (16) and *errors* (9) of various groups, in contrast with the *propriety* (16), *justness* (7), *harmony* (7), *elegance* (6) and *purity* (2) and the more *respectable speakers* (6). His primary criterion for determining who falls under this category is geography: in all, 126 terms refer to place of origin as a determiner of *correct pronunciation* (3). The *Irish* (50) and *Scotch* (29) garner the most mentions, far more than the people of *Somersetshire* (2), *Wales* (2) or *provincials* more generally (14). Unlike his predecessors, Walker most often refers to *Londoners* (18) to criticise their speech; when the pronunciation of upper-class London is held up as an example, he refers instead to the *metropolis* (2) or the *capital* (2).

Walker presents a variety of other criteria as well, from the aesthetic to the functional, prizing *distinctness* (2) and *deliberation* (4), *force* (3) and *simplicity* (1) over *indistinctness* (1), *rapidity* (4), *affectation* (6) and *pedantry* (4). And yet, even though he clearly dislikes *variety* (5) and *diversity* (10), he is much less absolute in his judgements than any of the previous authors, in fact deferring to a majority opinion: he aims to conform to the 'general current of custom' (1791, p. viii). Like Sheridan, he has a personal connection to speakers of his preferred accent by being himself a native of the London area and through his association with the actor David Garrick. However, he also adopts a scholarly approach, examining the works of a dozen contemporaries and presenting a meticulous discussion of their positions. He 'explains that he has consulted a wide range of pronouncing dictionaries in order to determine the consensus' (Beal 2007, p. 89), thereby establishing a notion of *usage* (16) or *custom* (21) far beyond the elite:

> Neither a finical pronunciation of the court, nor a pedantic Græcism of the schools, will be denominated respectable usage, till a certain number of the general mass of speakers have acknowledged them; nor will a multitude of common speakers authorise any pronunciation which is reprobated by the learned and polite. (Walker 1791, pp. vii–viii)

This focus on consensus explains not only the degree to which Walker acknowledges variation, but also the manner in which he compares them. In many cases where he lacks strong arguments from authority, he tempers his judgements by including the phrase *in my opinion* (18) or labelling a given form *preferable* (17) rather than just 'correct' or 'proper'. His 'impressive show of scholarship' (Beal 2007, p. 91) together with this ultimately moderate form of prescriptivism prove the restraint in his ambition:

> [M]y design is principally to give a kind of history of pronunciation, and a register of its present state; and, where the authorities of Dictionaries or Speakers are found to differ, to give such a display of the analogies of the language as may enable every inspector to decide for himself. (Walker 1791, p. viii)

All four authors might be described as non-conforming conformists, who consider the notion of 'standard' as central to the making of pronouncing dictionaries, but for whom the 'standard' is neither the existing accent of the elite nor an entirely artificial rule-derived norm. Though Walker is the most explicit in describing the complex blend of motives that influences his choices, it is clear that his predecessors follow a similar path, displaying deference for the speech of the elite while taking into account how widespread different pronunciations might be, rejecting forms that are too specific to any group. This balancing act is distinct from straightforward enregisterment, even though it is closely related to it, and it is also extremely self-aware although inadequately described by the authors. It seems that the kind of 'proper' English the orthoepists were selling was not the accent of the aristocracy; indeed, it has been noted that 'where upper-class usage did not conform to the middle-class standard, it sometimes preserved forms which were later found to be remarkably similar to lower-class usage' (Knowles 1997, p. 120).

4 Conclusion

Eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries were the products of both social mobility and social exclusion; they developed 'from the margins' (Beal et al. 2006, p. 3) not only to enable the socially aspirant and mobile to gain entrance to the closed circles of the elite but also to create a new linguistic order, in all the senses of that word, where the culturally marginal assert their new economic power, and express political views tending, if not towards the democratic, at least towards an ideal of unity. Firstly, in an intralinguistic sense, their authors sought to discern patterns and impose logic: 'it was both scientific and professional to refer to a motivation like analogy' (Wright 2008, p. 230), in accord with the temperament of the times. Secondly, inter-linguistically, they contributed to the institution of a hierarchy of topolects and sociolects. Their third accomplishment, somewhat in contradiction with the previous items, was to challenge the sociopolitical status quo by the very act of staking their claim as experts. I do agree with the idea that 'understanding the circumstances of these texts' production decouples any association between linguistic regulation and social conformism' (Beal et al. 2006, p. 7), in the strict sense of 'conformism', and yet it appears that eighteenth-century orthoepist-lexicographers were attempting to build a new norm to conform to. It is clear that pronouncing dictionaries sold the idea of a standard of English distinct from the speech of the upper classes, as Jones (1993, p. 124) puts it:

> [T]here seems to be considerable evidence to suggest that there was an awareness of a more subtle differentiation in the linguistic sociology of the period, writers distinguishing between different types of 'non-standard' regional forms, ranging from the 'vulgar' through some type of vernacular with the worst excesses of the vulgar removed, to a regional standard utilised by a local élite who were conscious both of its linguistic typology and the differences between it and a London standard.

The next step would be to connect the commentary in the front matter to the pronunciation of specific words (following the model of Beal 2007 and Wright 2008) in order to determine how idiosyncratic the take on the 'standard' was for each author: how much variation do their subjective criteria allow for? How different are the pronunciations preferred in each dictionary? It has also been established that certain linguistic changes in Modern English were due to the rise of a literate middle class, in particular an increase in spelling pronunciations (see for instance de la Cruz Cabanillas 1998); for example, both pronunciations of *forehead* are attested, /ˈfɒrɪd/ and /ˈfoːrhed/. Comparing the pronunciations of specific words will give a better idea of how conservative or innovative the different authors were.

NOTES

1. I use the term *re-spelling* here to mean making use of existing graphophonemic conventions to clarify the pronunciation of a word, as in, 'the coelacanth (pronounced SEE-luh-canth)' (example from the *New York Times*, www.nytimes.com/2013/04/18/science/coelacanth-dna-may-tell-how-fish-learned-to-walk.html?src=recg). Confusingly, eighteenth-century orthoepists also refer to their transcriptions, which include various diacritic symbols, as 'respellings'.
2. This is completely different from the situation in the first half of the century: most of the dictionaries from that period included in the earlier list as 'pronouncing' dictionaries (they are usually regarded as such in the literature) are in fact general dictionaries that also happen to contain some indications as to pronunciation, rather than specialised works; in fact, Nathan Bailey's was 'the semi-standard' general dictionary (Rogers 2009) until 1755, and it was his work that Johnson was specifically commissioned to replace.
3. Buchanan's (1757, p. iv) stated aim was to make a dictionary less 'bulky and unhandy' and 'more portable' than had previously been published.
4. The dictionary definition specifies 'An *articulate* pronunciation, a manner of speaking clear and distinct, in which one sound is not confounded with another'.
5. The idea of an 'Augustan Age' is usually associated with a certain rhetorical style in the prose of the period rather than with pronunciation; Swift himself appears to have found fault with the speech of his contemporaries. In his *Proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue*, he describes the 'roughness' of the language, as well as the 'frequency of consonants' as a 'defect' (Swift 1712, p. 27). Like Kenrick, Swift seems to disapprove of consonant clusters.

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7 Setting a Standard: Authors and Sources in the *OED*

Charlotte Brewer

1 Introduction

Dictionaries and grammars together play an important role in creating a standard. In both cases, they are part of the process of codification outlined by Haugen in 1966: where there are competing varieties of language, one specific variety tends to emerge as culturally dominant and that dominance is in part sealed by its being carefully recorded and written down (Haugen 1966). It is at this stage that codification has a tendency to become prescriptive. Firstly, those engaged in making a record of the culturally dominant variety of language are often selective about which features they choose to include. Secondly, once the record itself is made, it tends to acquire a normative status and is looked to as an authority which licenses certain sorts of usage and not others.

In this way, both grammars and dictionaries can slip from being descriptive to being prescriptive: on the one hand, they set out to describe a standard that already exists and predominates among speakers; on the other, they come to be understood by the people who buy, read and use these works as setting and imposing a standard. Broadly speaking, over the course of the twentieth century both grammars and dictionaries moved from being more overtly prescriptive to overtly descriptive, a shift that matched the growth of linguistics as an academic discipline in universities around the world. The present chapter discusses the role that the *Oxford English Dictionary* has played in the lexicographical part of this shift: how it has recorded (or alternatively set) a standard, from its first publication in the early 1880s through to its current online form today. The interesting thing about the *OED* – one of the many interesting things about this great dictionary – is that it was significantly ahead of its time in the 1850s, when work on it began, in identifying descriptivism as a principal lexicographical criterion. However, as we shall see, this ideal has proved difficult to achieve.

This chapter summarises the current state of knowledge and research on these matters, drawing on the published sources listed in the references. It begins with a brief account of the comprehensive and descriptive aims of the *OED*, explaining the difficulty of realising these owing to immediate practical and cultural constraints. It then describes the *OED*'s distinctive methodological basis, that is, its use of quotations as evidential basis, looking in particular at its choice of authors and sources and its implicit favouring of literary writers. Finally, in a discussion of the changes to the *OED* over the second half of the twentieth century up to today, it considers the extent to which the current revision of the *OED* is proving able to combat some of the innately prescriptive features of the parent dictionary, whether in issues of usage or in its favouring of literary quotation sources.

2 The *OED*'s Original Aims

The first editors of the *New English Dictionary* (as the *OED* was first called) set out in the late 1850s to create a comprehensive historical record of the English language.[1] At that stage, no one had ever explicitly tried to record the entire lexicon of the language before. And no one had deliberately set out to do so in an objective way, without letting judgement intrude on what should and should not be in the language. This linguistically descriptive agenda was first articulated in 1857, by one of the *OED*'s founding fathers, R. W. Trench, whose two lectures to the London Philological Society in 1857 emphasised the neutrality of the ideal lexicographer's role:

> A Dictionary . . . is an inventory of the language . . . It is no task of the maker of it to select the *good* words of the language . . . If he fancies that it is so, and begins to pick and choose, to leave this and to take that, he will at once go astray . . . . He is a historian of [the language], not a critic. (Trench 1860 [1857], pp. 4–5)

When the first lexicographers set out their stall in 1859 in their *Proposal for a New English Dictionary*, they specified that

> The first requirement of every lexicon is, that it should contain *every word occurring in the literature of the language it professes to illustrate*.
>
> We entirely repudiate the theory, which converts the lexicographer into an arbiter of style, and leaves it in his discretion to accept or reject words according to his private notions of their comparative elegance or inelegance. (Philological Society 1859, p. 2)

On the face of it, these two principles would seem to work together: if you put in every word in the language, you do not need to make a decision about whether the word is acceptable or not: in Haugen's terms, you are not selecting one variety of language over another. In the event, however, making the dictionary was less simple.

Firstly, it was impossible for the *OED* to record every word in the language on simple practical grounds – the editors did not have the means or the resources (and even if they had done, they would never have come to an end of their work). In consequence, they had no choice but to select some words and not others. Often this selection was determined by the availability of printed evidence (see the later discussion on the *OED*'s methodology), but where there was a super-abundance of evidence the lexicographers had to make decisions on how 'important' or culturally significant individual candidates for inclusion were, using these decisions to rule some words in and some words out (Mugglestone 2005; Brewer 2007b, pp. 115–122).

Secondly, comprehensive inclusion was impossible on cultural grounds too. For example, a small but significant set of words could not be recorded in the dictionary because they were obscene and might have caused their publishers to be prosecuted. From the start of the editing process, therefore, selection inevitably took place. Inevitably also, given that human judgement was used to make the selection, and that editing and producing the dictionary were carried out and managed by different people over decades (the first instalment of the first edition appeared in 1884 and the last in 1928), consistency was impossible to achieve.

The words that actually did get into the dictionary were also subject to cultural constraints and conditions. This was again unavoidable: lexicographers cannot easily stand outside the culture of their day. Today we can readily identify a range of words in the dictionary relating to sex, gender, race and other contentious areas, where the definitions found in the first edition of the *OED* reflect the cultural norms of the late Victorian and early Edwardian period – norms now obvious to us as cultural biases, because they have since changed. For example, *Sapphism*, a term later used in the early twentieth century by the Bloomsbury group to refer to lesbianism, was included in the dictionary instalment of 1909 defined as 'Unnatural sexual relations between women'. This use of the term 'unnatural' looks pejorative to us today though ambiguously so. Are sexual relations between women unnatural because they cannot be procreative ('Not in accordance or conformity with the physical nature of persons or animals', as sense 1 of *OED*'s own definition for *unnatural* has it) – a view now unacceptable – but perhaps more likely to be typical of British society in 1909? Or did the lexicographers mean 'unnatural' in the sense 'Abnormal; monstrous' (*OED* sense 1a)? The etymology makes it clear it is the latter: it reads, 'from Sappho, who was accused of this vice' (see further Brewer 2014b). Other definitions self-evidently offensive to a twenty-first-century readership include that for *half-blooded*: 'born of different races; *spec*. of superior blood or race by one parent only' (entry published 1898), and for *white man*: 'a man of honourable character such as one associates with a European (as distinguished from a negro)' (entry published 1924).

All three definitions, and thousands of others too, situate the *OED* in a particular period – of the nineteenth and early twentieth century; in a particular location – Western European; and are composed from a particular point of view – that of a white Anglo-Saxon heterosexual male. Whatever we think of such definitions today, they almost certainly reflected the conventional societal standards of the time they were published and could therefore be categorised as descriptive.

The treatment of a different category of words, those to which standards of correctness could be considered to apply (or, as historical linguists might prefer, 'correctness'), was sometimes more idiosyncratic and more obviously prescriptive. For example, the chief editor of the *OED*, James Murray, conducted a personal crusade against silent initial \p\ in words like *pseudonymous* and *psychology*. In an introductory note to the entry for prefix *ps-*, he described dropping the *p* in the pronunciation of these words as 'an unscholarly practice often leading to ambiguity or to a disguising of the composition of the word' – by this he meant that silent *p* obscured the etymology of the word. So the *OED* marked pronounced initial *p* as 'an optional pronunciation which is recommended especially in all words that retain their Greek form (e.g. *psora*, *psyche*), and in scientific terms generally, which have not been irretrievably mutilated by popular use.' It seems hardly credible to us today that one of the great pioneers of descriptivist lexicography should have described chronological variation as a form of mutilation in this way, without appearing to recognise the inherent contradiction involved. Even more remarkable is the fact that Murray's efforts seem to have been successful. A comparison of dictionaries before and after the *OED* was published reveals that his single-handed crusade to drag non-silent *p*-back into existence for such Greek-derived, scholarly words changed not only the dictionary record but also, perhaps, how some people spoke. At the time when Murray wrote, as he himself indicates, 'p' was usually silent (as in the name of P. G. Wodehouse's hero 'Psmith', whose first published appearance was in 1909); but after the *OED* appeared, pronounced initial 'p' began to be recorded in many smaller dictionaries that drew on this work as the major lexical authority in the field. This is a striking testament to the didactic and opinion-forming power of a dictionary, especially the *OED* – whatever may be said or intended of its avowed aim, namely to register usage, not form it. (For a full account of the pronounced 'p' phenomenon, see Brewer 2007a).

But the *OED* went further than inserting prescriptive remarks of this sort in its entries. It also deployed a special symbol to mark 'catachrestic' or erroneous usages: the paragraph mark ¶. This is used many times in the first edition to proscribe usages the lexicographers thought regrettable or ill-advised in one way or another; for example, sense 4a of the verb *enjoy*, said to be

Sometimes used *catachr*. with obj. denoting something *not* pleasurable or advantageous. Chiefly in expressions like 'to enjoy poor health', 'to enjoy an indifferent reputation', where the n. has properly a favourable sense, qualified adversely by the adj. (Cf. the similar use of *jouir de*, censured by Fr. grammarians).

This was published in 1891, but even 60 years later, in the twentieth-century supplement which appeared between 1972 and 1986, the *OED* was still making prescriptive judgements on words despite its supposedly descriptivist rationale.

Its editor, R. W. Burchfield, explained that 'here and there in the present volume I have found myself adding my own opinions about the acceptability of certain words or meanings in educated use. Users of the dictionary may or may not find these editorial comments diverting' (Burchfield 1972–1986, vol. 3, pp. v–vi). In writing in this way he seems to have been hoping to appeal to readers who enjoyed usage manuals such as Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (Fowler 1926), a work he was engaged in re-editing. Examples of his 'diverting' comments on usages include the following:

> *media*[2] ('newspapers, radio, tv' etc.): 'Also erron. as sing. in same sense.'
> *permanentize*: 'A word of little value and rarely found in serious writing – Ed.'
> *opinionnaire*: 'A word of doubtful usefulness – Ed.'
> *regretfully*, sense 2: '"It is to be regretted (that)"' A regrettable use . . . '[2]

As this brief summary of *OED*'s aims and achievements shows, an enterprise that started off with the best will in the world to be comprehensive and non-judgemental immediately ran into problems. The inventory could not list every item but had to be selective; once words were included in the dictionary, they were sometimes described in ways reflecting current views which by later standards appear biased (and therefore prescriptive); in addition, judgements on pronunciation and other aspects of a word did not always report linguistic evidence impartially, but instead bore witness to the lexicographers' own subjective (prescriptive) views on usage. Such instances form a tiny proportion of the work as a whole, but are significant nevertheless.

3 *OED*'s Methodology: Reliance on Quotations as Evidence

By contrast, *OED*'s underlying methodology – its reliance on quotations as its primary source of evidence – appears a promising means of achieving impartial linguistic descriptivism. The lexicographers set about their task in the 1860s by reading (and asking volunteer readers to read) as many printed sources as they could find of works written from 1150 to the recent past, choosing and recording quotations from these sources which showed how words had been used from their earliest recorded instance through to their latest. The quotations were stored on 'slips' – pieces of paper organised alphabetically – and the lexicographers were then able to deduce from the quotations the senses of words as manifested throughout their history. To accomplish this ambitious plan, reading lists were drawn up and printed and hundreds of volunteers enlisted; as is often said, *OED* was probably the first example of crowd-sourcing. Altogether, the half-million or so entries in the first edition were constructed from more than five million quotations of 'real' evidence of usage. As widely recognised, the adoption of this method changed the face of dictionary making. In the words of two of its first co-editors, W. A. Craigie and C. T. Onions,

> [The *OED*'s] basis is a collection of some five millions of English literature of every period amassed by an army of voluntary readers and the editorial staff. Such a collection of evidence . . . could form the only possible foundation for the historical treatment of every word and idiom which is the *raison d'être* of the work. It is a fact everywhere recognized that the consistent pursuit of this evidence has worked a revolution in the art of lexicography. (preface to Murray 1933)

It is obvious to us now that this method looks forward to that of twentieth-century corpus making. If you spread your nets as widely as possible and gather your evidence in sufficient quantities from a representative range of sources, then you are going to come up with a body of data that really should tell you, in some objective way, about usage during the course of the history of the English language – and not just one variety of usage, but many co-existing ones. In consequence, we might expect the *OED* to tell us about a 'standard' of some sort that was truly descriptive – a set of consensually recognised uses of vocabulary over the period that the *OED* covered, from 1150 onwards.

However, the matter was not as straightforward as that. If we go back and look at the reading lists the lexicographers used, we can see that texts of all kinds were drawn upon to determine when a word came into the language and what it meant – works relating to arts, sciences, commerce, crafts, printed letters and diaries, newspapers, and so on. Overall, nevertheless, there was a strong literary bias. This was almost certainly unavoidable. In part it was due to the superior availability, above other sources, of literary texts for all periods – itself a reflection of the cultural values of the time. It was easier for readers to get hold of good editions of Shakespeare and Spenser, Milton, Pope, or Walter Scott (for example) than it was for them to get hold of non-literary sources covering the same time spans: such works could be bought in bookshops, read in libraries, and were also to be found on the bookshelves of many of the educated middle-class readers who had the leisure and inclination to read for the dictionary and submit slips. But there were other important reasons for the predominance of literary quotations. Over the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, the period in which the quotations were gathered, there was a prevailing and relatively unquestioned assumption that literature had a formative role in creating and preserving the nation's language. The intellectual and cleric J. H. Newman described the link between the two in his influential work *Idea of a University*: 'The "sayings" of a great author . . . pass into proverbs among his people, and his phrases become household words and idioms of their daily speech, which is tessellated with the rich fragments of his language' (Newman 1873, pp. 292–293).

The lexicographers' reliance on authors of the (Victorian) literary canon to exhibit the history and development of the English language was therefore entirely natural for the time. In fact, on the completion of the first edition in 1928 the *OED* was often viewed as *the nation's* dictionary, in ways which assumed unproblematic and self-evident connections between high literary culture, national identity, society and language. A press release by Oxford University Press described the work as a dictionary 'not of our English, but of all English: the English of Chaucer, of the Bible, and of Shakespeare', while *The Times* judged it 'a history of English speech and thought from its infancy to the present day' and 'a history of thought and civilization' (Murray 1977, pp. 312–313; Brewer 2007b, p. 249).

In 1888, when the first instalments were combined into the first published volume of the *OED*, the Preface (written by Murray) had named 'all the great English writers of all ages' as the dictionary's principal quotation sources. One writer in particular got top billing: Shakespeare, whose unparalleled cultural and literary status in British culture meant that the editors (and their hundreds of volunteer readers) were extremely keen on recording his language in as much detail as possible. As a result, almost every word attributed to him got into the dictionary one way or another. This virtually comprehensive treatment was not meted out to anyone else, of any period, and in Shakespeare's case it was greatly facilitated by the existence of concordances. Concordances were also available for the Bible, another heavily cited work, and for the canonical literary writers Milton, Chaucer, Pope, Cowper, Walter Scott and Tennyson (Brewer 2013; 2007b, p. 128).

When the second edition of *OED* was digitised in the late 1980s, it was possible for the first time to look systematically at its quotations and see which sources were most cited, and which periods were most heavily cited too. Figure 7.1[3] shows the most-quoted individual works (including the Bible, in various translations). Given that the *OED* is based on its quotations, this chart would appear to represent the relative importance of these sources in contributing to the history of the English language, showing that certain writers have been much more influential than others in creating the lexicon and therefore, inferentially, setting a standard. While this may be true to some extent, the *OED* evidence more certainly tells us something rather different: it reveals which quotation sources were most heavily favoured by the lexicographers and readers whose evidence constructed the dictionary. The case of Sir Walter Scott, the second most intensively quoted individual author, is illuminating here. Scott was one of the most successful and widely read novelists of the nineteenth century; but how likely is it that his novels set or indeed reflected any form of linguistic standard? Many of them were historical and were in fact quoted in the dictionary for archaic and dialectal vocabulary – words Scott had found in reading manuscripts and glossaries and which were only problematically related to

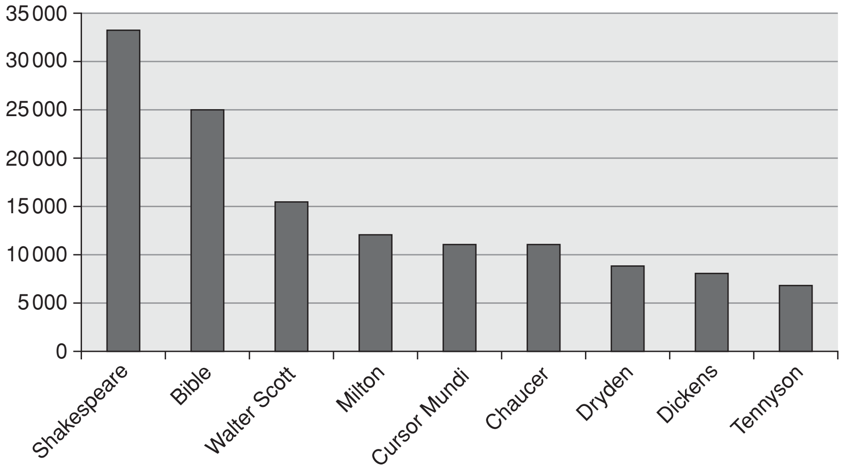

Figure 7.1 Top quotation sources in *OED2*

current use of language in the early years of the nineteenth century (Brewer 2007b, pp. 124–125).

Figure 7.2 shows the variation in quotation numbers from 1599 to the late nineteenth century. This appears more intuitively plausible, with the bulge at the end of the sixteenth century coinciding with a time of great economic and cultural expansion. That economic prosperity and cultural developments of many different kinds should correspond to the creation and record of a great many

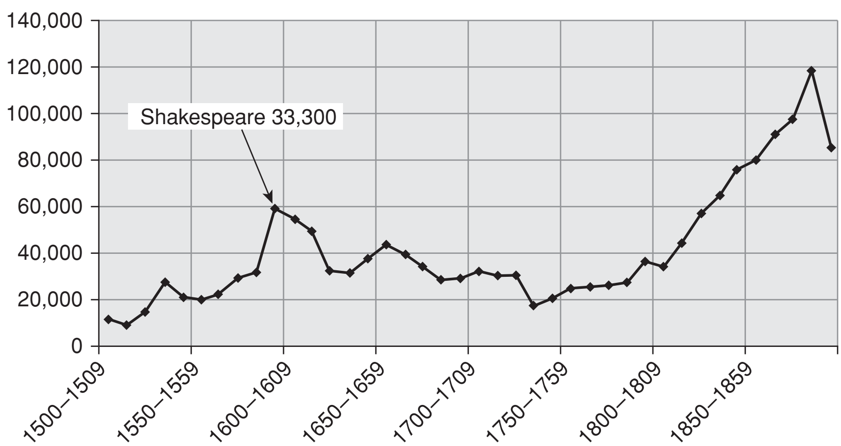

Figure 7.2 *OED2* quotations per decade, 1500–1899

new words seems very likely indeed. The dip in the line 150-odd years later, however, is more surprising. It seems to indicate that the eighteenth century was a comparatively unproductive period lexically. But we would expect the opposite. This was a time characterised by rising rates of literacy and a vastly increased rate of publishing, as copyright regulations lapsed and newspapers started to be published outside the capital.

As with Figure 7.1, the question arises whether these variations in quotation rates really tell us about the history of the English language. On closer investigation, again as with Figure 7.1, it can be shown that the variation in quotation rate reveals as much about the lexicographers, and the circumstances under which they made their choice of quotations, as it does about the English language. In other words, the ups and downs in Figure 7.2 (including the 33,300-odd quotations from Shakespeare) reflect variations in the way that the lexicographers created the record, rather than – or as well as – variations in any supposed objective standard. So the dip in the eighteenth-century record is now recognised as due in part to a shortage of quotations for that period. In turn that shortage can be explained by the generally held view, at the end of the nineteenth century, that the previous one hundred years had not been a period of great literary endeavour: it was thought to be an age of prose not poetry, and the volunteer readers were less keen to read eighteenth-century works (Brewer 2007c). So they sent in fewer quotations.

This bias draws one's attention to another: many of the most-quoted authors were poets. Do poets contribute so influentially to our lexicon, as Newman thought? Or is this another cultural judgement based on assumption rather than evidence? Certainly it would not be linguistic practice today to turn to the language of poets as major sources for contemporary lexical usage (Brewer 2010). A further bias emerges when one considers gender, bearing in mind that at least half of language users at any time over the history of the English language must have been female.

As Figure 7.3 shows, women were quoted in far fewer numbers than men, and the most frequently quoted female writer is George Eliot, whose 3000-odd quotations are well below those of her near-contemporaries Tennyson and Dickens (around 8000 and 7000, respectively). While it is certainly true that up to 1750 or so there were far fewer published women writers than men, the eighteenth century saw the rise of the professional female writer and in particular of the popular female novelist, so that by the end of the century women were responsible for at least a third of the entire published output of novels (see further Brewer 2012). But neither this nor the continued nineteenth-century increase in works published by women is reflected in the *OED*'s quotations. It is striking, also, that the most-quoted female sources (other than Elizabeth Barratt Browning) are prose writers not poets. In selecting its sources of evidence in this way, *OED* is recording, and correspondingly setting, a standard of a specific sort,

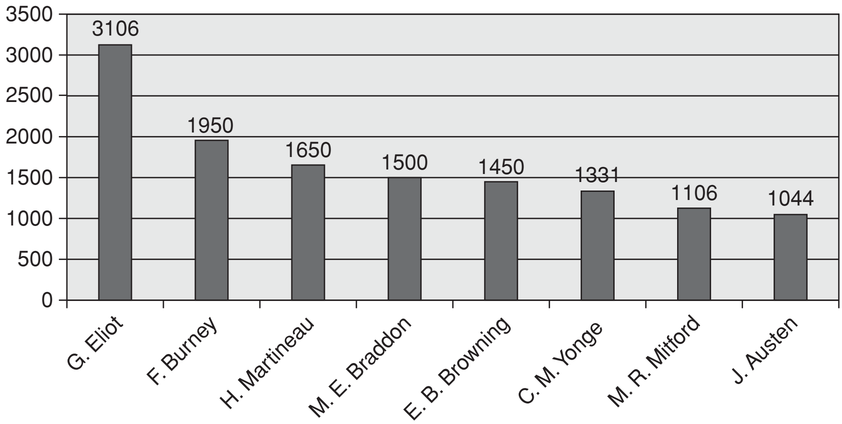

Figure 7.3 *OED2*'s most-quoted female sources

reflecting a view that literary and high cultural language use, and specifically poetic use, by canonical male poets is the most significant and culturally valid variety of the language. Given that the *OED* is, as we have seen, a dictionary that is *based* on its quotations – which constitute its primary evidential basis – then this would seem to be a problem. Nowadays, dictionary makers use corpus evidence to ensure that they are looking at representative examples of language use when they study evidence for what words mean. But as we can see from these charts, *OED*'s corpus was somewhat skewed.

4 *OED2* (1989) and *OED* Today

Many potential research questions emerge from the material just discussed, some of which can be pursued in the references cited in this article. An important point to note, however, is that Figures 7.1 to 7.3 are based on digital analyses of the second edition of the *OED* (*OED2*), published in 1989 and available via various electronic media between 1989 and 2010. This edition is still the only form of the *OED* in print. Readers may well be asking themselves why, even in 1989, the *OED* was so Victorian in its aspect, and whether this is still true of the *OED* we can see online in 2014. The answer to the second question is no. In the 1990s, Oxford University Press decided to initiate a substantial programme of revision of the *OED*, a project whose first results began to appear online (at www.oed.com) in 2000 and which is due to be complete a couple of decades hence. To understand why this revision was so overdue, we should briefly survey the history of the dictionary after publication of the first edition was complete in 1928.

In 1933 the entire work was re-issued with the addition of a short one-volume *Supplement*, the latter designed to sweep up the vocabulary which had appeared over the course of the dictionary's successive instalments from 1888. As time went on, however, new words and new senses continued to appear, and academic research into pre-1900 English language texts and lexis was beginning to reveal flaws and omissions in the *OED*'s representation of historical vocabulary. By the 1950s, the publishers Oxford University Press (OUP) recognised that the *OED* – which, together with the similarly culturally authoritative *Dictionary of National Biography*, had brought world-wide fame and prestige to their imprint – was significantly out of date. Judging that it was too expensive to revise the pre-1900 portions of the work, OUP decided on a more limited objective: supplementing the original dictionary with a collection of as yet unrecorded twentieth-century words and meanings. R. W. Burchfield was engaged to edit and manage this project (Brewer 2007b, pp. 152–212). As already explained, he produced a four-volume work (1972–1986) which added thousands of new entries and recent quotations, covering not only vocabulary for previously undocumented technologies and cultural phenomena (e.g. *atom bomb, the twist*) but also a far broader range of slang and colloquial usages than had been treated in the original *OED*. But the new *Supplement* also had some striking unevennesses and imperfections. These included Burchfield's pronouncements on individual words and usages mentioned earlier, which flew in the face of the *OED*'s original commitment to linguistic descriptivism. There were other problems too. Like his predecessors, Burchfield was committed to the *OED*'s role (as he saw it) as a 'literary instrument', and he therefore set out to provide an extensive, though necessarily inconsistent, record of the language of certain poets and novelists. Male authors were preferred to female ones: George Bernard Shaw, Kipling, Joyce and D. H. Lawrence were all given upwards of 1,500 quotations, while by contrast the three most-quoted female-authored sources were Ngaio Marsh (the New Zealand crime writer), Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie, at around 450 quotations each, followed at some distance by more literary writers such as Elizabeth Bowen and Virginia Woolf (around 340 and 230, respectively). The choice and representativeness of quotation sources therefore remained an issue with the *Supplement* as with the parent dictionary: to what extent did such writers reflect (or set) a linguistic standard that characterised contemporary language usage in any general sense? Were their language uses instead more marginal?

In 1989, OUP decided to merge Burchfield's *Supplement* with the existing text of the first edition to produce the so-called second edition of *OED2*. The result was an unfortunate hybrid: a dictionary that in many respects and certainly most entries was still identical to the first edition of 1884–1928. That is why those digital searches of the 1989 edition turn up such peculiar-looking results: they are derived from a database that is itself based on Victorian and Edwardian scholarship which is long outdated.

Clearly *OED2* could be a staging post only. It is in recognition of this fact that OUP embarked several years later on the third edition of the *OED*, about two-fifths of the way through the alphabet as of 2014. The editors have yet to produce a detailed account of their editorial principles and practices, but distinctive features are emerging as more and more revised entries appear online. Personal conversations with the lexicographers indicate that, as we would expect in today's academic linguistic climate, they are certainly intent on extirpating the prescriptivism that could sometimes be found in entries in the original dictionary, along with the out-of-date cultural biases. They are also keen to widen and balance the range of quotation sources.

Unfortunately, since 2010 it has been impossible to search the revised portions of the *OED* (i.e. *OED3*) electronically. Every quarter, new tranches of revised material are uploaded to the composite dictionary, which now constitutes the latest form of the *OED*, so that revised entries sit side by side with unrevised material. No manipulation of the electronic search tools permits separation of new entries from old, which means that the database now contains three historically different stages of editing – the original *OED*, the twentieth-century *Supplement*, and the recently revised and entirely new entries – which cannot be differentiated. The fact that the revisers dot forward and back about the alphabet in selecting entries to rewrite compounds the problem. This most regrettable state of affairs means that users cannot form a proper, systematic view of what is being changed in the new *OED*, but must instead glean a sense of what is going on by consulting individual entries one by one.

Such consultation indicates that, where implicit or explicit prescriptivism is concerned, significant alterations are taking place in many existing entries. We can see some of the range of treatments if we look at the words and usages on which Burchfield commented adversely. His objection to the use of *media* as a singular noun has been removed, for example, and replaced with a neutral and descriptive editorial note, telling us that 'The use of media with singular concord and as a singular form with a plural in -s have both been regarded by some as nonstandard and objectionable'. The reader's attention is drawn to the 1966 quotation from Kingsley Amis, printed in the *New Statesman* of 14 January that year: 'The treatment of media as a singular noun . . . is spreading into the upper cultural strata' (this quotation had in fact been inserted in the original *Supplement* volume of 1976 by Burchfield, who had ignored Amis's evidence that the usage he condemned was becoming less marginal and more standard). In the new entries for *permanentize* and *opinionnaire*, Burchfield's pejorative judgements are retained, but placed in quotation marks and clearly attributed to the *Supplement* editor himself, a manoeuvre that at least dates and contextualises Burchfield's views – this is a less satisfactory approach but an improvement on Burchfield's own. And Burchfield's comment on *regretfully* as 'a regrettable use' is itself commented on in the new entry for this word: the revisers write, 'however, this use is now well established'.

What is happening here is that *OED3* is being descriptive about prescriptivism, recognising that it is this approach that users want from the dictionary. Indeed, Fowler's *Modern English Usage* of 1926, one of the most popular usage books ever published, is frequently cited in editorial notes to *OED3* entries to explain the history of usage. A typical example can be found under *masterful*, a word which in prescriptive accounts of the language is often condemned for being a malapropism for 'masterly'. Here *OED* is in a particularly strong position, since its entries are based on examples of usage drawn from centuries: the entry quotes examples of *masterful* to mean *masterly* which are completely unproblematic from the fifteenth century onwards.

These and other changes, such as the swift inclusion of recent words and usages, often flagged up on the website's front page, indicate a promising adoption of linguistic descriptivism – and indeed, *OED3* has entirely jettisoned the paragraph mark which previous editions had used to indicate erroneous usage. Nevertheless, prescriptivism still remains in the version of *OED* we consult online. As around three-fifths of the original entries are still unrevised, hundreds (perhaps thousands) of prescriptive comments have simply been reproduced online in an unchanged form. Thus we continue to be told that *enjoy* used with an unpleasant object (i.e. used ironically) is catachrestic. Many other usages are anachronistically proscribed (for example, *enormity* to mean something 'enormous', rather than 'Extreme or monstrous wickedness'), while others retain definitions which are out of place in a descriptive dictionary (for example, *slang*, which is explained as 'The special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a low or disreputable character; language of a low and vulgar type'). Clearly the co-existence of such widely diverging treatments of different entries presents a problem for dictionary users, who find it difficult to understand that an entry in an online dictionary can reproduce material over a century old cheek by jowl with up-to-date definitions. The latter exhibit a descriptive acceptance of the co-existence of different varieties of language, acknowledging that they may have different social values attached to them; the former may contain value judgements which assert the superiority of one variety over another.

So much for issues of usage as explicitly addressed in *OED3*'s new entries. What about the changes now taking place in its use of quotation sources? The *OED* revisers have made an enormous effort here. As the online preface makes clear, they have sought to widen the range of quotation sources significantly, and in doing this they have been aided by the online availability of historical texts in English of every imaginable sort – the entire contents of resources like *Early English Books Online* and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, and also specialised databases of legal texts, newspapers, inventories and wills and the like (http://public.oed.com/the-oed-today/preface-to-the-third-edition-of-the-oed; accessed July 2014). The first edition contained just under two million quotations and the revised edition has so far increased that to around three million. This is a magnificent achievement, especially since, as already emphasised, quotations are the evidential basis of the *OED*.

The new edition provides sophisticated searching tools which make it much easier than before to count and analyse quotations. However, given that the revised entries are blended with the unrevised, and it is not possible for searches to be restricted to either the new or the original material, quotation searches of the online version of *OED* deliver results which are an undifferentiated mixture of very different stages in editing. Nevertheless, it is instructive to see how the global picture has changed since 1989. The list of 'Top Sources' obtainable from the *OED Online* website in March 2014 read, for the first 34 results, are shown in Figure 7.4.

Eleven of the 34 'Top Sources' are literary ones, leaving out of account the fact that many of Caxton's editions or translations were of literary works. The conclusion to be drawn from this list of respective totals is clear. Keen as today's lexicographers are to reduce the dependence of the *OED* on literary quotation sources (and notwithstanding the remarkable emergence of newspapers at the top of the list), two fifths of the way into their revision they are still finding it difficult to correct the predominance of such sources, so that this cultural bias continues to be a major feature even of the revised portions of the work.[4] Indeed, in some cases quotations from literary authors have actually increased; *OED3* has added about 2500 quotations from Chaucer, for example, and doubled the number from Virginia Woolf (from about 225 to 555).

All of this opens up the field for more questions, and more research to answer those questions. Are 'great writers' as influential as *OED* would suggest on the growth and development of English vocabulary, and in particular on the establishment of a 'standard'? Or, to phrase the question as *OED* lexicographers do themselves: '*Did Shakespeare and Chaucer really invent as many words as they are given credit for?*' (http://public.oed.com/the-oed-today/rewriting-the-oed; accessed 30 July 2014). Sadly, until the *OED* website provides researchers with the means to differentiate between new lexical scholarship and old in its dictionary, it is impossible to answer this question and to come to any reliable view on the importance of creative writers in setting a standard in the history of the English. But the evidence so far would suggest that Newman's view on such writers' seminal role in contributing to how we speak should not be disregarded just yet: in *OED*'s record of the language today, it continues to be the case that the phrases of a great writer 'become household words and idioms of [our] daily speech, which is tessellated with the rich fragments of his language'. Whether and to what extent that will change as the revision continues we will have to see. Meanwhile, as the lexicographers revise their way up and down the alphabet

1	Times	39262
2	William Shakespeare	33144
3	Walter Scott	17059
4	Philosophical Transactions	15414
5	Encyclopaedia Britannica	14176
6	Geoffrey Chaucer	13247
7	John Milton	12426
8	Cursor Mundi	11832
9	Nature	11615
10	Daily Telegraph	10524
11	Daily News	10034
12	New York Times	9974
13	Guardian	9436
14	John Dryden	9336
15	William Caxton	9312
16	Charles Dickens	9266
17	Westminster Gazette	8415
18	John Trevisa	8368
19	Bible (Wycliffite, E.V.)	7932
20	Science	7853
21	Blackwood's Magazine	7774
22	Philemon Holland	7734
23	Listener	6967
24	Acts of Parliament	6907
25	Thomas Carlyle	6815
26	London Gazette	6769
27	Alfred Tennyson	6720
28	John Lydgate	6679
29	Harper's Magazine	6393
30	Edmund Spenser	6294
31	Lancet	6146
32	Independent	5943
33	William Cowper	5933
34	William Langland	5726

Figure 7.4 Thirty-four 'Top Sources' in OED Online (www.oed.com/sources; accessed March 2014). Literary sources are underlined.

over the next two or three decades, we can hope that they themselves will tell us more about the relative significance of literary and non-literary sources in creating a standard (or standards) of the language.

NOTES

1. For an account of the inception and subsequent progress of the first edition of the *OED*, a project initiated and developed by the Philological Society, see Murray (1977), Mugglestone (2000) and Brewer (2014a).

2. These and other examples are discussed in Brewer (2005).
3. Figures 7.1–7.3 derive from the research project Examining the *OED* (Brewer 2005–) and are based on electronic searches of *OED2*. This edition of the dictionary, available at www.oed.com from March 2000 to December 2010, has now been removed from the *OED* website.
4. According to Willinsky (1994, p. 214), *OED1* had included 4085 quotations from *The Times*. The increase over the *Supplement* and *OED3* has therefore been nearly tenfold.

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8 Conflicting Linguistic Norms in the Letters of Virginian Soldiers during the American Civil War

Gaëlle Le Corre

1 Introduction

Throughout the American Civil War, thousands of lower-ranking soldiers on both sides of the conflict took up their pens to inquire after their families and give news from the front. Usually semi-literate, most of these soldiers were far from mastering written conventions – which is expressed through their idiosyncratic and ingenuous spellings, as well as through their use of non-standard grammatical forms.

Consequently, the analysis of the letters written by lower-ranking soldiers from Virginia during the Civil War offers a great opportunity to gain further insight into the vernacular spoken by white lower-class people from Virginia in the middle of the nineteenth century. The term vernacular refers to 'varieties that seem to be typified by the use of nonstandard forms [. . .]. [It] is used to refer to varieties of a language that are not classified as standard dialects' (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006, p. 14). This variety of English is usually opposed to 'formal standard English or prescriptive standard English [that] tends to be based on the written language of established writers and is typically codified in English grammar texts' (2006, p. 10).

The local vernacular that the soldiers heard around them constituted their first linguistic influence, to which we must add other influences: the religious one – that is the language of sermons and hymns – and the standard norm. Traditional lyrical ballads and contemporary poetry represented a fourth influence – although relatively similar to the vernacular, they were perceived as belonging to an elevated style. The influence of this fourth model had the effect of reinforcing the survival of such features as *a*-prefixing, *for to* infinitives, or periphrastic *do* in the spoken and the religious language (German 2011). Each of these models corresponds to specific linguistic norms.

After a brief presentation of the corpus, this study analyses the different linguistic styles used by the soldiers, as well as the specific contexts in which they are found. Apart from these constant shifts in style, quantitative analyses tend to reveal the rather limited use of certain non-standard and vernacular

Table 8.1 *Summary of the Virginia Civil War Corpus*

Sources	Number of soldiers	Number of letters	Number of words
Internet Archives	38	177	93,791
University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville	5	27	6,276
Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond	13	105	52,222
Swem Library, Williamsburg	4	16	5916
Virginia Historical Society, Richmond	3	3	3004
Virginia Library, Richmond	12	26	10,563
TOTAL	78	357	171,771

forms – which, for this given social group, seem to appear at a much higher frequency rate in speech contexts today. It thus forces us to question the impact of the prescriptive norm on the spontaneity of their written expression.

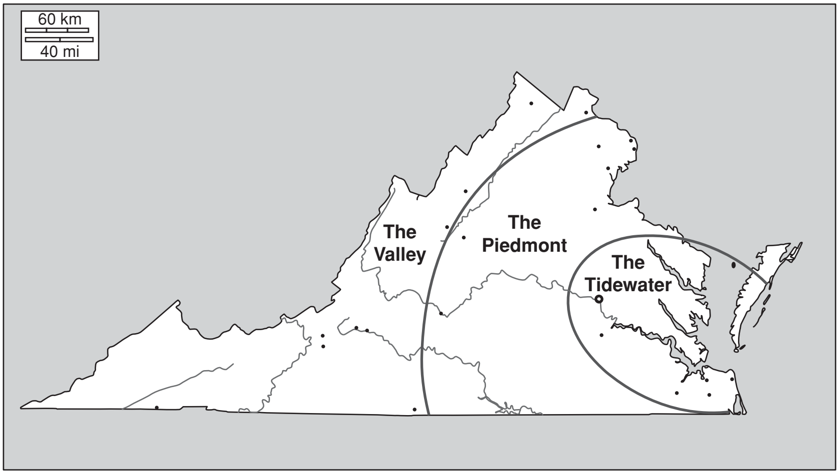
2 Presentation of the Corpus

2.1 Content and Methodology

The corpus on which this analysis is based is composed of 357 letters written by 78 informants for a total of approximately 171,000 words (see Table 8.1). Among those letters, 177 are drawn from the Internet, mainly from the digital history project, hosted by the University of Virginia, entitled *The Valley of the Shadow*. Each transcript respects the original spelling, punctuation and syntax. Indeed, it is specified on the website that 'to ensure accuracy between the original handwritten manuscript and the digital document, the final version of each *Valley of the Shadow* letter and diary has been proofread by two separate individuals'.

Other letters drawn from the Internet were published by Gregory Lepore who designed a website devoted to the Civil War soldiers from Russel County in Virginia. The digital version of most of the letters published are also included on his website. Gilley (1999) also provides a valuable source of information since a copy of each original letter is attached to its corresponding transcript. The transcripts of the letters penned by Christian and Mary Epperly are available on the website of the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History (2011).

The rest of the corpus is composed of primary sources, collected in Virginia between April and May 2011. After having transcribed the letters, I proofread each transcription three times to verify the accuracy between the handwritten manuscripts and the transcripts. Consequently, I excluded all the doubtful passages from the corpus.



Map 8.1 Linguistic areas in Virginia (based on Lucke 1949)

2.2 *Geographical and Social Origins*

Among the 357 letters, only 6 were written by women. Thirty counties are represented in the corpus, so the soldiers' geographical origins are diversified enough to offer a broad overview of the variations that could be heard in the whole state (see Map 8.1). They thus encompass the three linguistic areas generally associated with Virginia (Lucke 1949, p. 14; Read 1934, p. 602). The corpus contains letters penned by soldiers who came from the Tidewater, the Piedmont and the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge areas. However, 170 of the letters (about half of the corpus) were written by soldiers from the Valley and Blue Ridge areas, especially from the county of Augusta in the Shenandoah Valley.

The geographical origins of most of the soldiers are specified in the archives' catalogues. Some of their home counties or home towns are also mentioned on the envelopes, on which the soldiers clearly stated their parents' or wives' addresses. Some soldiers even explicitly refer to their home counties in their letters, as can be seen in the following example:

(1) Joseph is well and all the rest of our **Floyd boys** [Epperly C., born in 1837, to his wife, dated 27 July 1862].

The rank of each soldier is usually specified in the catalogues. When it is not, this piece of information can be obtained on the Internet, thanks to the Soldiers and Sailors Database website. The genealogy website, www.ancestry.com, also provides valuable information about the soldiers' dates of birth and death, occupation and place of residence. Most of the corpus comprises letters written by lower-ranking soldiers – mainly privates – who were born in the first half of the nineteenth century.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the interest of this corpus lies in the fact that it comprises letters penned by a rather homogeneous community of writers who were all from Virginia, and who belonged to the lower class. Most of the soldiers refer to farming in their letters, which leads us to believe that the majority of them were labourers. Only four soldiers out of seventy-eight clearly refer to the slaves they own, which might imply that most of them were not slaveholders (a fact confirmed by the 1860 American Census, which indicates that only about 20 per cent of the white population owned slaves throughout the South as a whole).

3 Linguistic Norms

3.1 Vernacular Norm

The letters were all addressed to the writers' wives, children, siblings and parents (but also to their husbands, for the very few letters written by women). This rather intimate context is more conducive to the use of what the linguists Le Dû and Le Berre (1995) call a '*paritaire*' register,[1] which is different from peer-language since it combines two dimensions – social and regional:

> The *'paritaire' register*... identifies the speaker with a region. He/she is then represented by a regional vernacular but the speaker is also identified as a member of a particular social class (the working class, the peasantry, and craftsmen, on one side, and the upper class, the nobility, and the educated class on the other).... The *'disparitaire'* register represents relationships established on the vertical dimension of society (superiors/inferiors); peer-language is specific to communications established on a horizontal dimension (among equals, peers, and close friends). (Le Dû and Le Berre 1995, p. 254; my translation)

Their partial grasp of the standard written norm is also underlined by the soldiers' ingenuous spellings, inconsistent capitalisation and lack of punctuation, which tends to show that they are relying on an oral model rather than a written one. The soldiers often join words together or separate them morphologically or syllabically to try to render them as they are pronounced:

(2) Dear wife I will try and right you **afew** lines more to see if I can here from you it seams like you have **fore gote** me though I may Be mistaken you may write all the time and the Letters may not Come too hand [Copland S., born in 1835, to his wife, dated 8 February 1864].

(3) Nathanial Robertson & Neal gilbert left here a few days **a go**, to [. . .] **the harse pittle** [John Booker, born in 1840, to his cousin, dated 19 February 1862].

(4) Clifton Pinick got here **yes tid day** [John Booker, born in 1840, letter to his cousin, dated 19 February 1862].

(5) I dont want you think that I am either suffering or grumbling by my long **serry many** about our rations [James Booker, born in 1840, to his cousin, dated 16 March 1864].

Their phonemic spellings also reveal the presence of certain non-standard pronunciations, as we can see in the following selected features.

3.1.1 /t-d/ Final Consonant Cluster Reduction[2]

(6) I still put my **trus** ingod [Epperly C., born in 1837, to his wife, dated 27 July 1862].

(7) Dear **fren** I seat myself [Hefflefinger, H., born in 1843, to Delilah Jessup, dated April 21].

3.1.2 -in' Forms

(8) he is rather in faver of not **drawin from** the north [Schreckhise G., born in 1796 to his son James, dated 5 March 1862].

(9) excuse me for not **rightin** more [Dull J., born in 1832, letter to his wife Giney, dated 27 February 1865].

(10) I this Evening am blest with the opertunity of **writin** you a fiew lines in answer to the cind leter which I received a short time ago dated Aug the 4 [Epperly Mary, born in 1842, to her husband Christian, dated 21 August 1863].

3.1.3 The Deletion of the Morpheme -ed with Past Participles

(11) thay have bin wers **whip** in tensse [Schreckhise G., born in 1796 to his son James, dated 5 January 1863].

(12) I recon you have **receive** it buy this time [Nelson H., to his wife Ann, dated 18 April 1862].

Other misspellings seem to reflect features usually associated with Southern American English (SAE) pronunciation (although some features are also found in African American Vernacular English) (AAVE) (Edwards 2008; Bailey & Thomas 1998).

3.1.4 The Diphthong ɛə + r This variation is described by Thorton (1912, p. 40) as typical of SAE: '[it is] the most conspicuous instance of a Southern mode of pronunciation, [which] turned *affair* into *affarr*, *declare* into *declar*, *hair* into *har*, *stairs* into *stars*.' Although less widespread, this variable could also be heard in the north of the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century (Krapp 1925, p. 107).

(13) thay are stationed at **Farfax** Court House six miles a head of us [Booker James, born in 1840, to his cousin, dated 8 October 1861].

(14) I now want you to send me a box of things as soon as you can I named some of the things a hat if you can get one made two **par** of sockes one or two par galuses and a **par** of gloves [Gilley D., born in 1835, to his father, dated 13 December 1863].

3.1.5 The Pin-Pen Merger before Nasal Consonants

(15) Going never to return **Agin** you **mintion** something About me Comeing home [Copland S., born in 1835, to his wife, dated 8 February 1864].

(16) I receiv you kind leter that you **sint** Bi Mr Bowman [Hefflefinger, to his friend Delilah Jessup, dated 4 September 1862].

3.1.6 The Raising of Vowels in Final Unstressed Syllables

(17) wee have had orders to send of our **extry** bagage [Dull J., born in 1832, letter to his wife Giney, dated 27 February 1865].

(18) I seat my self this plesent **mondy** morning [Duncan C., born in 1831, to Delila Caldwell, dated 30 September 1861].

3.1.7 Intrusive -t

(19) I have been under the fire of the enimy **twist** since I wrote at Sheperdstown & Smithfiel [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 4 September 1862].

(20) Dear Sir I am **enst** more blest with the opportunity of riting you [Hefflefinger born in 1843, undated].

3.1.8 The Devoicing of Final Plosives[3]

(21) This letter is written very right **bat** [Nelson H., from James H. Nelson, to his uncle, dated 18 April 1862].

(22) the yankes have taken craney **Ilent** (i.e. island) [Gilley D., born in 1835, to his father, dated 15 May 1862].

3.1.9 Absence of Rhoticity

(23) I remain your **brothe** til death [Snider J., born in 1830, to his sister Kittie Snider, dated 17 March 1863].

(24) you must go and see my **gall** before you return [Copenhaver A., born in 1832, to his cousin, dated 9 July 1863].

(25) Reserve a doble **potion** for **youself** [Nelson, H., born in, to his wife, 21 April 1862].

Non-standard grammatical forms are also attested in the corpus as we can see in the following examples:

3.1.10 A-Prefixing

(26) they say we are **a whipping** the Yankees [Gilley D., born in 1835, to his father, dated 22 December 1863].

(27) I would like very much to be up in Augusta now and go **a whirtleberrying** [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 15 August 1862].

A-prefixing became recessive both in Great Britain and the United States as early as the eighteenth century. According to Sundby, Bjørge and Haugland (1991, p. 91), this form was denigrated by British prescriptive grammars as early as the second half of the seventeenth century in Great Britain. According to Montgomery (2009, p. 9), *a*-prefixing became a non-standard dialectal form around 1850 in the United States. Krapp (1925, p. 268) describes this form as typical of 'popular speech'.

The following forms were considered incorrect by Murray (1824) and Webster (1839), who were the two most influential grammarians of the time in the United States (Monaghan 2002).

3.1.11 Absence of Subject-Verb Agreement

(28) you all think you have great deal to see trouble about though you have nothing campared to those that live near the line of the enemy, **the yankees is getting** too mean to live [James Booker, born in 1840, to his cousin, undated].

(29) All **the folks is** well [Copenhaver A., born in 1832, to his cousin, dated 8 January 1863].

3.1.12 Multiple Negations

(30) he **dont** lern **nothing** [Cosby A., born in 1843, to his cousin Nancy, undated].

(31) If I **never** see them **no** more [Duncan C., born in 1831, to Delila Caldwell, dated 30 September 1861].

3.1.13 Third Person -s *Absence.*

(32) if **the war last** much longer [Booker James, born in 1840, to his cousin, dated 30 June 1863].

(33) I have not much fathe in him but mabe I Juge rong **he take** the same grounds that the dunkerds do [Schreckhise G., born in 1796, to his son, dated 5 March 1862].

3.1.14 Generalisation of the Morpheme -s *with All Persons*

(34) “ tell uncle bob **I wants** my hat” [Tazewell R., born in 1830, to his wife Martha, dated 9 July 1861].

(35) you must have money to buy clothing and grocries I want you to spend as much time as **you needs** [Gathright O., born in 1826, to his wife Maria, undated].

3.1.15 Irregular Past Forms

(36) several of our boys **seen** them going back [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 13 September 1864].

(37) they **takened** him to the hospitle to day’ you [Hefflefinger H., born in 1843, to Delilah Sessup, dated 20 February 1863]

3.1.16 Zero Relative Although this feature is neither mentioned by Murray (1824) nor by Webster (1839), the zero relative was considered non-standard as early as the eighteenth century (Rissanen 1999, p. 298).

(38) thare wer a bout one third of the men went on line [John Booker, born in 1840, to his cousin, dated 1 March 1864].

(39) their is a great many of them wil go home [Rolston J., born in 1824, to his wife, dated 8 March 1862].

3.1.17 Intensifying Adverbs The use of the intensifying adverbs *right*, *right smart*, *bad*, which are viewed today as typical of SAE (Wolfram and Christian 1976, p. 101), could already be observed in the soldiers' writings.

(40) A ball struck him just across the shoulder and gave him a **right smart** flesh wound. [Petty J., born in 1839, to his wife, dated 5 August 1861].

(41) he thought I was **right** pretty [Mollie Smart, born in, to George, dated 1 October 1865].

(42) he got so **bad** scared [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 25 March 1861].

As can be seen in the previous examples, most of the non-standard grammatical forms observed in the corpus are found in factual contexts, in which the soldiers try to depict life in camp or on the battlefield. They are also to be found when they give advice to their wives or parents as to how to run the house or the farm during their absence.

3.2 The Religious and Lyrical Norms

These rather factual or down-to-earth conversations are counterbalanced by numerous religious references, for which the soldiers adopt a very different style. When they refer to death, their loneliness or the fear of not being able to see their loved ones again, they adopt a different form of speech in which they try to reproduce the ecclesiastical model. In this context, they resort to the religious rhetoric they heard at church or during the sermons that were preached in camp:

(43) I prayed that the **holy spirit** might fall on us, as it did on **the children of iseral** on the day of Pentecost & that thousands might make thare peace with God. [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 16 September 1863].

(44) trusting in the **lord** for his care and blessings to watch over us all and bring us together in **heaven is my prare** [Dull J., born in 1832, to his wife Giney, dated 14 January 1864].

(45) And say **Lord** why **hast thou** taken our leader from us; "but the Lords will be done" we will let our dear brothers ashes **reast in peace**; hoping he is now **joining the choir of saints and angels around the throne in heaven** [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 24 November 1863].

Before universal education became compulsory 'towards the end of the nineteenth century and vernacular speakers were drilled *en masse* in the use of standard grammar, the two other linguistic models to which uneducated English-speakers had been exposed were the King James Bible and the popular lyrical and folk traditions' (German 2011, p. 135).

The solemnity of the ecclesiastical language is underlined by its formal vocabulary (submissive, sustain, parting, afflictions, providence, fortitude, bestow); its syntactic flexibility ('my heart I leave with thee', 'shall not the forget', 'blessed is the name of the Lord'), the use of second-personal singular pronouns 'thou' and 'thee'; the *-th* ending at the third-person singular; and the subjunctive mood. Soldiers also sometimes resort to strings of religious formulas that are directly inspired by the King James Bible (examples 46, 48 and 50). They use the same register when they express their despair, as if it were a way for them to keep at bay the pain, fear, and sorrow they are experiencing. The same style is observed when they share their hopes to see their loved ones again. The influence of the religious rhetoric in the following statements is quite patent and highlights the power it exercised in the shaping of their speech.

(46) I wish you would please remind them that I am **in the land of the living** [Baughman C., born in 1842, to his father, dated 30 November 1864].

(47) I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in **the land of the living** [King James Bible, Psalm 27:13].

(48) **All flesh is grass & the glory of man is as the flower of the field**, fresh & verdent in the morning [Brand W., born in 1840, to Amanda Armentrout, dated 2 November 1863].

(49) For **all flesh is as grass**, and all **the glory of man is as the flower of grass**. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away [King James Bible, Peter 1: 24–25].

(50) I am well and hearty but it pained me when i read in your kind letter the death of your brother.... god **giveth** and then **taketh** away. **blessed is the name of the Lord** [Rolston J., born in 1824, to his wife, dated 3 April 1863].

(51) Naked I came from my mothers womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord giv**eth**, and the Lord tak**eth** away; **Blessed be the name of the Lord**! [King James Bible, Job 1:21].

(52) I pray the Lord to give me a will **submisive** to his **come** what may I now he directs all things [Dull J., born in 1832, to his wife Giney, dated 22 December 1864].

(53) But if we are right in the sight of the Lord we can bear up under the weight of our troubles and **afflictions** [Omohundro, born in 1837, to his friend Rachel, dated 9 February 1862].

(54) I hope throu the cind **providens** of god I get home to plant som next spring [Epperly C., born in 1831, to his wife Mary, dated 19 August 1863].

(55) So I hope you will bare the Disapointment with good Christian **fortitude** & Trust To The **providences** of God for the future Result **be** [Wilson J.P., born in 1837, to his wife Carolin, 3 December 1864].

The soldiers also try to imitate this lofty formal style in their love letters:

(56) Adieu adieu to the one I love
My heart I leave with **thee**
Pray keep it for **thy selfe** alone
It is a gift from me
Hast I thine love in return
Yes **thou sayest** tis true
Then let us nurse and keepe those worme
Till I return to you
When far away from the I roam
I shall not **the** forget
Though months and years might roll away
And I would love **the** yet.
[Watson J.P., born in 1827, to his wife, dated 11 April 1862]

(57) Dear Kate can you imagine my hapiness when I came to the words “Willie I love **thee**; & my love has been tryed; ah **methinks** I can hear those words coming up from **thy** noble but storm tossed heart; and they make me feel like a strong man [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 24 March 1864].

Similar linguistic features may also be found in the Christian hymns and carols composed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as *The Babe of Bethlehem* (written in 1847 by William Walker) or *Guide me, Oh Thou Great Jehovah* (written in 1772 by William Williams).[4] These hymns are still popular today in Appalachia and among the African American population (German 2011, p. 140).

(58) Guide me, O **thou** great Jehovah,
Pilgrim though this barren land.
I am weak, but **thou art** mighty.
Hold me with **thy** pow’rful hand

Bread of heaven feed me ’til I want no more.
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me ’til I want no more,
Feed me ’til I want no more.
Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing waters flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliv’rer, strong Deliv’rer.
Be **thou** still my Strength and Shield.
(*Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah*, Jean Ritchie 1967, p. 48)

(59) ‘The city’s name is Bethlehem, in which God ha**th** appointed.
This glorious morn a Saviour’s born, from him God **hath** anointed’ ...
When this was said, **straightaway** was made a glorious sound from heaven
Each flaming tongue **an anthem** sung, ‘To men a Saviour’s given,
In Jesus’ name, the glorious theme, we elevate our voices,
At Jesus’ birth be peace on earth, meanwhile all heaven rejoices’.
(*The Babe of Bethlehem*, in Botkin 1949, p. 756)

Some of these features can still be observed today in traditional Southern ballads and folk songs, which were passed down orally from generation to generation for hundreds of years. Cecil Sharp (1932) demonstrated that most of the Southern ballads were already popular in Britain and Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The linguistic norms of the ballads represented a sort of intermediate stage in terms of the frequency of use of certain non-standard features (German 2011, p. 144) that were known to be non-standard, but were nonetheless viewed as part and parcel of the people’s cultural inheritance and linguistic identity (Randolph 1982). ‘A number of conservative features of verbal morphology [such *a*-prefixing, multiple negations, irregular past forms, non-emphatic *do*] that had been shunned in the King James Bible and in religious language more generally, such as *a*-prefixing (not to mention the rising national norms)’ (German 2011, p. 144) were commonplace in the poetic style of lyrical ballads.

The folk song *I’m a Good Old Rebel* is a good illustration of this phenomenon. This song was written by Major Innes Randolph and was originally published in *Colliers’ Weekly* on 4 April 1914. Major Innes Randolph was a Virginian and a member of General J. E. B. Stuart’s staff. This song portrays the vernacular language of his troops and reveals that the lyrical model was also influenced by their everyday vernacular speech. Many morphosyntactic features, typical of non-standard Southern vernacular, may be found in this song, such as the absence of subject-verb agreement, the generalisation of *-s* ending with all persons, multiple negations, invariable *ain't*, irregular past forms, non-emphatic *do* and *a*-prefixing:

(60) Oh, I'm a good old rebel
Now that's just what I am
For this "fair land of freedom"
I do no care a damn.
I'm glad I **fit** against it
I only wish we'd won
I **don't** want **no** pardon
For anything I've done.

I **hates** the Constitution
This great Republic too;
I **hates** the Freedmen's Bureau
In uniforms of blue.
I **hates** the nasty eagle,
With all his brag and fuss;
But the lyin', thievin' Yankees,
I **hates** 'em wuss and wuss

I **hates** the Yankee nation,
And everything they do;
I **hates** the Declaration
of Independence too.
I **hates** the glorious union
'Tis dripping with our blood
I **hates** the striped banner–
And **fit** it all I could.

I followed old Marse Robert
For four years, near about.
Got wounded in three places,
And starved at Point Lookout.
I **cotch** the roomatism
A-Campin' in the snow,
But I killed a chance of Yankees–
And I'd like to kill some mo'.

Three hundred thousand **Yankees**
Is stiff Southern dust;
We got three hundred thousand
Befo' they conquered us.
They died of Southern fever
And Southern steel and shot;
And I wish it was three million
Instead of what we got.

I **can't** take up my musket
And fight 'em now **no mo'**,
But I **ain't a-goin'** to love 'em,
Now that is sartin sho;
And I **don't** want **no** pardon
For what I was and am;
For I won't be reconstructed,
And I don't care a damn.

(Botkin 1949, pp. 716–717)

Private Watson wrote a poem about the war, which is inspired by the lyrical style found in the ballads. His poem is characterised by a flexible syntax with the fronting of the subject complement (farward was the cry), an absence of subject-verb agreement, the use of irregular past forms and non-emphatic *do*:

(61) Our boys pored deadly fires on the advancing foe
Determine that his blood should mark
His tracks where he **did** go
Determine that the first who set
His foot upon our shore
Should pay the profit that was dew
To them we **did** march over
Our rifle still increasing crack
And cannons fierce a roar
Told those who were in camp around
There friends **nead not** succor
The drums were **beat** the lines **was** formed
And **farward was the cry**

When many a ringing shout went up
Which said we will do or die
[Watson JP, to his wife, dated 11 April 1862]

The ecclesiastical and lyrical styles only appear when the soldiers want to give a certain degree of formality to their words. They are never used when the soldiers describe their routine at camp or when they refer to their life back home and to down-to-earth topics, which tends to prove that they knew the linguistic norms that should be used in solemn contexts. Consequently, they also tried to adapt their language to the very specific context of epistolary writing.

3.3 The Epistolary Norm

Letter writing was not as common for the less educated population as it was for the learned elite, who had not only mastered Standard English but also the codes of epistolary writing. The soldiers inadequately tried to reproduce this formal style by using epistolary opening and closing formulas that were already considered outdated at the time (Austin 1973).

(62) Dear Sister
I take my pen in hand to in form you I am well i hope when **these few lines approaches** you they may find you **engoying** the Same blessing [Long A., to his sister, dated 9 March 1864].

(63) **Anyway Martha** you **must kiss my little pig for me** and tel calum **howdy** this leaves me tolerable only but I hope that it may find you and all in good health **I must close by asscribing my self your husband** and well wishes until death [Mayo E., born in 1820, to his wife Martha, dated 6 August 1861].

(64) **Respected Aunt**
It is with great pleasure that I take my pen in hand to drop you a few lines in answer to those received some time . . . I **havent wrote but one letter for coons age** except one to the army [Bosserman H., born in 1840, to his aunt, dated 13 December 1863].

The numerous spelling mistakes tend to indicate that the soldiers were using those formulas by rote and that they did not resort to any written model. Besides, given the harsh living conditions at camp, it is quite unlikely that the soldiers had access to books to help them write their letters. The tension between the '*paritaire*' and '*disparitaire*' registers is quite blatant in examples 63 and 64, where we can see the shift between what they perceived as formal speech and a rather intimate and colloquial language:

The soldiers (or their wives) frequently apologise for the several mistakes they might have made in their letters. Indeed, the verb 'excuse' is used 76 times in their letters. The analysis in context indicates that this verb is used 39 times with the collocations 'bad writing' (19 instances), 'spelling' (15 instances), and 'mistakes' (12 instances).

(65) Plese **excuse bad Writin and Spellin** for it is **very Badly dun** [John Booker, born in 1840, to his cousin, dated 22 December 1863].

(66) **look over all mastakes** and **excuse bad writing** as my pen is bad and my ink is pale [Cosby A., born in 1843, to Sallie, undated].

(67) I must soon close my scattering letter **you must excuse everything that is incorrect impute to ignorance** [Hefflefinger H., born in 1843, to Delila Sessup, dated 20 February 1863].

(68) Please **look over bad writing & spelling** & **Correct all mistakes excuse my badly Composed letter** [Houser M., born in 1843, to her cousin James, dated 15 December 1863].

Although these apologetic formulas were already part of fifteenth-century epistolary conventions (Austin 1973, p. 138), the high frequency of these specific closing formulas may reveal the soldiers' awareness of their lack of formal education. Even if they are writing to their family, they feel the need to apologise for their mistakes, which suggests that their written style only partly reflects their natural and informal way of speaking. The soldiers try to adapt their speech to the formality of the situation. Their language clearly shows that they are fully aware of the fact that epistolary writing implies the use of specific codes and formulas and of standard grammatical forms. The non-standard forms observed in the corpus may therefore be the tip of the iceberg. Had they been capable of using standard spelling and grammar, it is quite likely that they would have erased all the linguistic markers of their social class.

4 Impact of the Prescriptive Norm on Their Writings

This hypothesis rests on the fact that the non-standard features found in the corpus are far less numerous than their standard equivalents. This phenomenon not only concerns grapho-phonemic features but also morphosyntactic ones.

4.1 /t/-/d/ in Final Consonant Clusters

Even though the reduction of /t/-/d/ in final consonant clusters is often associated with AAVE (Labov et al. 1969, p. 147; Wolfram 1969, p. 62; Summerlin 1972, pp. 97–98), it can be observed in other varieties of English (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006, p. 362).

Only 109 instances of final /t/-/d/ consonant cluster reduction (e.g. *nex week; conduck, battle feel*) are observed in 25 letters. Out of 2438 words containing a /t/ or /d/ consonant cluster, these 109 instances represent a frequency rate of 4.6 per cent.

These figures are much lower than those observed in spoken English, which seem to show that the soldiers were fully aware of the stigmatisation of this feature. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that final consonant cluster deletion was already socially marked as early as the fourteenth century in Great Britain. Indeed, Dobson considers that this variation 'was apparently common in vulgar and dialectal speech but was resisted in careful educated speech' (1968, p. 961).

Labov et al. (1969) and Wolfram (1969) also noted a sharp decrease in the frequency of consonant cluster deletion in formal contexts in the twenty-first century, which once again tends to support the hypothesis that the epistolary context is not fully conducive to the use of this non-standard feature.

4.2 Unstressed –ing

The same conclusion applies to -*'in* variable. This phonological feature is widespread among all varieties of English, but tends to be more frequent among SAE and AAVE speakers (Houston 1985; Labov 1966; Wolfram and Christian 1976; Shuy, Wolfram and Rilley 1967).

Of the 3485 -*ing* forms that occur in the corpus, only 96 are reduced forms, which represent less than 3 per cent of the total instances. Once again, this frequency is quite the opposite of what can be heard today in the twenty-first century in oral contexts. For instance, Wolfram and Christian (1976) and Houston (1985) have found frequency rates higher than 80 per cent.

This finding seems to support Wyld's (1936) and Houston's (1985) hypotheses that the realisation of -*in'* forms started to be stigmatised as early as the second half of the nineteenth century. Wyld (1936, p. 289) also argues that, before the nineteenth century, this pronunciation was the most common. He thus considers that the widespread use of the -*ing* form in writing is at the origin of the stigmatisation of the reduced form.

The fact that one of the speakers – John Booker from Pittsylvania county – uses the -*in*' form around 90 per cent of the time in his letters might indicate that this variable was much more common in oral and informal contexts. It is interesting to note that John Booker's twin brother, who has a better grasp of the prescriptive norm, never uses the -*in'* spelling, which once again supports the hypothesis that the prescriptive norm heavily influenced the writing of the soldiers. Although, the frequency rate observed in John Booker's letters could be considered idiosyncratic, this rate is close to the figures presented in other studies on SAE. Indeed, Wolfram and Christian's (1976) as well as Houston's (1985) studies on this variation in the South of the United States[5] reveal that the -*in'* variable appear between 80 and 90 per cent of the time.

These two examples show that despite their ingenuous spellings, the soldiers did not write exactly as they spoke and that they were fully aware of the fact that their pronunciation was not fully in line with the standards of the time.

4.3 A-Prefixing

The same conclusions can be made with morphosyntactic variables. The use of the *a*-prefixing variable is quite representative of this phenomenon.

The corpus contains 1639 forms that could possibly be used with *a*-prefixing. However, only 78 instances are listed in the corpus, which represents a frequency rate of 4.8 per cent. It is important to note that *a*-prefixing is a variable, which means that this variation is not used systematically (Wolfram 1980, p. 121). This variable is highly dependent on the syntactic function of the verb and also on the phonological context. It is used with verbal and adverbial forms, but does not usually occur before a verb whose first syllable is unstressed or starts with a vowel (e.g.: ∗ *a*-deserving, ∗a-eating) (Wolfram and Christian 1976; Montgomery 2009). The frequency rate found in the Virginia Civil War Corpus is much lower than in other studies based on spoken English, which present frequency rates as high as 56 per cent in Tennessee, 50 per cent in Kansas, and 52 per cent in northern/western Louisiana among certain speakers (Montgomery 2009, p. 2). Wolfram and Christian (1976, p. 75) found an average frequency rate of 35.1 per cent among older speakers from West Virginia. Montgomery (2009) observed a similar frequency rate (36.5%) among speakers from the Smokey Mountains who were born between 1843 and 1915 (the recordings were done between 1939 and 1984.

Nonetheless, as early as the end of the 1970s, Wolfram and Christian (1976) concluded that this variation was dying out in West Virginia, since the frequency rates fell from 10 to 20 per cent among younger speakers. The rather low frequency rate listed in the Virginia Civil War Corpus might indicate that this variation was already stigmatised in the region as early as the mid-nineteenth century. This could explain why we observe a much lower frequency rate among the soldiers' letters as compared to those found in speech contexts by speakers from almost the same generation (for comparison see Montgomery 2009).

The same conclusions can be observed, for instance, with invariable *ain't*, multiple negations and irregular past forms and past participles, as shown in Tables 8.2 and 8.3. Despite the fact that these features were already condemned by the prescriptive grammarians of the time (Murray 1824; *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 2016; Webster 1839), they remained commonplace for Southern vernacular speakers. When compared with the frequency rates observed in west Virginia in the 1970s in speech contexts (Wolfram and Christian 1976), it becomes quite obvious that epistolary

Table 8.2 *Frequency rates of invariable* ain't *and multiple negations*

	Invariable *Ain't*	Multiple negations	Irregular past forms	Irregular past participles
VCWC	13.7%	20%	7.6%	12.4%
Appalachian English (speakers aged 40+) (Wolfram and Christian 1976)	88.9%	53.1%	–	–

writing operates as a filter. Even though West Virginia does not exactly correspond to the same linguistic area, these results remain quite enlightening since more than half of the speakers in this corpus were from the Valley Ridge area, which is located at the border with West Virginia. Given the fact that these features were still persistent in Appalachia in the 1970s, we can assume that they were already part and parcel of vernacular speakers' speech at the end of the nineteenth century.

The rather low frequency rates of these non-standard features may reveal that the soldiers are influenced not only by their local non-standard vernacular but also by the prescriptive norm and the ecclesiastical model. Indeed, these three features are also absent from the King James Bible (German 2011), as shown in Table 8.4. Even though the ecclesiastical style was mainly limited to sacred contexts, it was supposed to reflect the words of God and was thus considered a dignified and refined form of language. Most of the linguistic features previously described in this study were already considered non-standard by influential grammarians of the time in the United States, which might explain why the non-standard features previously described only appear sporadically in the Virginia Civil War Corpus. Although the soldiers were semi-literate, the little schooling they had[6] enabled them to perceive that certain verbal forms were inappropriate in epistolary writing, and so they tried to avoid using them as much as possible, even when writing to their closest family members.

The fact that the non-standard features previously described are found in relatively small numbers in the Virginia Civil War Corpus (which contains

Table 8.3 *Frequency rates of five irregular past forms and past participles*

	VCWC		Appalachian English (Wolfram and Christian 1976)	
Verbs	Preterit	Participle	Preterit	Participle
Come	16%	11.1%	71.2%	3%
Take	6.25%	11.6%	22.5%	58.8%
Hear	2%	1.9%	20%	27.3%
Go	0.8%	3.8%	–	51.2%

Table 8.4 *Comparative analysis of six grammatical features observed in the Virginia Civil War Corpus*

	A-Ving	Invariable *ain't*	Multiple negations	2 -s (3rd sing.)	FOR TO infinitives	Subjunctive forms
King James Bible 1611	–	–	–	–	+	+
19th-century standard English	–	–	–	–	–	+
SAE	+	+	+		–	–
VCWC	+	+	+	+	+	+
Number of instances in the VCWC	93	54	108	103	14	13

more than 170,000 words) tends to show that the soldiers resorted to other linguistic forms than the one they used in informal speech contexts with their peers. A conflict of several linguistic norms operates in their writings. Although their letters are addressed to their family members, epistolary writing affects their speech. Consequently, they try to avoid using non-standard forms and do their best to adopt the codes of the prescriptive norm. This attempt is also indicated by the fact that they sometimes use to *for to* infinitives or subjunctive forms, which are rather uncommon in the speakers' vernacular speech, but could be found in the King James Bible as well as in Appalachian hymns and folk songs (German 2011, p. 137). The use of *for to* infinitives was, however, considered 'vulgar' by Webster (1839, p. 126). This very fact tends to prove that the soldiers clumsily tried to imitate a standard norm that they viewed as a more dignified and better suited for epistolary writing but that they only partially mastered.

For to *Infinitives*

(69) but I think it best **for to** get the money first [Rolston J., born in 1824, to his wife,
dated 8 March 1862].

(70) Baylor is going to start home is wayting **for to** take this with him [Dull J., born in 1832, to his wife Giney, dated 28 January 1865].

Subjunctive

(71) my love to all enquiering friends if **thare be** any [Brand W., born in 1840, to Kate Armentrout, dated 21 January 1864].

(72) if **you be** so kind as to send me some money [Hite J., born in 1837, to his cousin, dated 3 May 1864].

5 Conclusion

Several linguistic norms can be observed in the soldiers' writings, particularly a secular one based on their regional vernacular, mainly used in intimate and factual contexts, and a religious one, which is a means to express their faith and despair but also to pray for a better future. We could also consider that the lyricism of their love letters is influenced not solely by the religious rhetoric but also by contemporary poetry and folk songs.

The standard norm of the time represented the last model, of which they had only a partial grasp. Although several dialectal features appear in their writings, their vernacular speech only partially resurfaces. This conclusion is shared by Kautzsch (2000, p. 48), in his study of Liberian letters and Virginian narratives written by former slaves:

> The occurrence of some nonstandard features in written documents does not automatically imply that the nonstandard grammar of writers as a whole surfaces in writing. A straight forward effect of literacy can be, for example, elimination at least of nonstandard negation. Certain nonstandard features can be salient; semi-literates can be aware of the stigmatization of certain nonstandard features in writing.

The soldiers seem to be aware of the stigmatisation of their speech and do their best to avoid using forms that could highlight their lack of formal education. The epistolary context could be paralleled with Labov's (1972) *observer's paradox*. The very fact of writing does have an influence on their speech. Even if they are not familiar with this mode of communication, they associate it with formality, education and prescriptivism and it de facto affects their writings.

APPENDIX: CONTENT OF THE VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR CORPUS

SOLDIERS	COUNTY	LETTERS	# OF WORDS	DATES	RANKS	REGIMENTS
			INTERNET ARCHIVES			
BOATWRIGHT THOMAS F.	Augusta	1	923	1835–?	private-second lieutenant	44th Rgt, Va Infantry
BRAND WILLIAM F.	Augusta	41	23 960	1840–1932	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
CARROLL FRANKLIN	Augusta	19	13 026	1842–1920	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
CARTER CHARLES B.	Augusta	2	834	1825–1871	private	52nd Rgt, Va Infantry
COCHRAN B.F	Augusta	3	941	1842–1893	private	1st Rgt, Va Cavalry
DULL JOHN P.	Augusta	15	6 422	1832–1865	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
GROVE MARY J.	Augusta	1	394	1837–	–	–
HANGER KIT	Augusta	1	480	1835–?	–	–
HITE J. N.	Augusta	4	910	1837–?	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
HOUSER MOLLIE	Augusta	7	4609	1843–?	–	–
HULL JOHN N	Augusta	1	670	–	private-corporal	4th Rgt, Va infantry
LAMON M.	Augusta	1	317	–	–	–
LONG A.D	Augusta	1	233	–	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
LONG JAMES	Augusta	2	637	1839–1864	private	1st Rgt, Va Cavalry
MISNER R.F	Augusta	1	472	1824–	private	10th Rgt, Va Cavalry
MOSES SAMUEL	Augusta	1	125	1840–1915	–	52nd Regt, Va Infantry
NEWTON PEARCE JOHN	Augusta	1	276	–	private	19th Regt, Va
PLUNKETT JOHN H	Augusta	1	934	1836–1895	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
ROLSTON JESSE	Augusta	8	4000	1824–1900	–	52nd Rgt, Va Infantry
SCHRECKHISE D.K.	Augusta	1	988	1839–1908	sergeant	52nd Rgt, Va Infantry
SCHRECKHISE GEORGE	Augusta	2	1465	1796–1873	–	–

SOLDIERS	COUNTY	LETTERS	# OF WORDS	DATES	RANKS	REGIMENTS
			INTERNET ARCHIVES			
SIBERT J.J.	Augusta	1	487	–	private-sergeant maj.	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
SNIDER JOHN N.	Augusta	7	4204	1830–	private	14th Rgt, Va Cavalry
WILSON PETER EIDSON	Augusta	1	344	1839–1918	private-captain	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
WISE JOHN	Augusta	3	913	1840–1865	private-sergeant	11th Rgt, Va Cavalry
JAMES BOOKER	Pittsylvania	18	8718	1840–1923	private-sergeant	38th Rgt, Va Infantry
JOHN BOOKER	Pittsylvania	5	3385	1840–1864	private-sergeant	38th Rgt, Va Infantry
EPPERLY CHRISTIAN	Floyd	3	1941	1837–1904	private	54th Rgt, Va Artillery
EPPERLY MARY	Floyd	1	468	1842–	–	–
KELLY CHARLES	Russel	7	1934	1834–1862	private	16th Rgt, Va Cavalry
COMBS WILLIAM	Russel	1	458	–	private-corporal	37th Rgt, Va Infantry
COMBS CELIA	Russel	1	491	–	–	–
FERREL ELIJAH	Russel (born Cabel Co.)	1	889	1808–1891	Private	37th Rgt, Va Infantry
MARTIN HARVEY W.	Russel	3	1850	1828–1916	private	29th Rdgt, Va Infantry
MARTIN'S FAMILY	Russel	3	1103	–	–	–
FLETCHER LORENZO D.	Russel	4	1556	1827–1912	private	22nd Rdg, Va Cavalry
FLETCHER CUMMINGS G.	Russel	1	465	1829–1862	private	37th Rgt, Va Infantry
MCFARLANE SAMUEL P.	Russel	2	965	1836–?	private	48th Rgt, Va Infantry
MCFARLANE AUGUSTUS	Russel	1	433	1798–?	–	–
			UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, CHARLOTTESVILLE			
ANONYMOUS SOLDIERS	Charlotte	2	298	–	–	–
EMBREY JOSEPH W.	Culpeper	3	1512	–	private	13th Rgt Va Infantry
WRIGHT DRYDEN	Pittsylvania	1	354	1841–1918	lieutenant	46th Rgt, Va Infantry

(cont.)

(cont.)

SOLDIERS	COUNTY	LETTERS	# OF WORDS	DATES	RANKS	REGIMENTS
			INTERNET ARCHIVES			
GRIFFITH E.B	Floyd	1	169	1835–	private	24 Rgt, Va
BOSSERMAN HENRY B.	Rockbridge	8	2455	1840–	private	5th Rgt, Va Infantry
HEFFLEFINGER HENRY A.	Patrick (born in NC)	15	3000	1843–	private	50th Rgt, Va Infantry
			MUSEUM OF THE CONFEDERACY, RICHMOND			
BAUGHMAN CHARLES	Richmond	14	6330	1842–1908	private	13th Bat, Va Light Artillery
COPLAND STEPHEN	Appotamox	3	910	1835–1872	private	60th Regiment, Virginia Infantry
GILLEY DANIEL HAYWOOD	Henry	38	13 332	1835–1911	private	16th Rgt, Va
HAMILTON JOHN F.	Rockbridge	6	2012	1837?-1865	private	2nd Bat., Rockbridge Artillery
KERSEY JAMES	Lynchburg	2	756	–	private	34th Rgt, Va Infantry
MAYO EDWARD	Goochland	11	6634	1820–1862	private	44th Virginia Infantry
NELSON H.S	Mecklenburg	12	6 512	–	private	6th Rgt,Va Infantry
NELSON'S WIFE LETTER	Mecklenburg	1	1 368	1832–	–	–
PETTY JOHN D.	Lunenburg	3	4502	1839–1905	private	Lunenburg Light Dragoons
ROCK ROSSER SAUNDERS	Fluvanna	9	6476	1847–?	private	Goochland Light Artillery
SHORT WILLIAM B.	Brunswick	2	1476	1831–	private	56th Rgt, Va Infantry
WILSON JOHN P.	Montgomery	4	1913	1827–65?	private	36th Rgt, Va infantry
			VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, RICHMOND			
COSBY ANDREW N.B	Louisa	3	982	1843–1916	private	22nd Rgt, Va Regiment
BURNS FRANKLIN CRAWFORD	Bath	2	746	1842–1917	private	18th Rgt, Va Cavalry

SOLDIERS	COUNTY	LETTERS	# OF WORDS	DATES	RANKS	REGIMENTS
			INTERNET ARCHIVES			
GRIGGS WILLIAM JAMES	Patrick	3	1169	1842–1906	private-sergeant	42nd Rgt, Va Infantry
WATSON JOHN WILLIAM	Stafford	8	3019	1831?-1864	private-sergeant	47th Rgt, Va Infantry
			SWEM LIBRARY, WILLIAMSBURG			
HINER HARMAN A.	Highland	1	544	1840–1864	private	31st Rgt, Va Infantry
SMART MOLLIE	Loundon	1	1793	–	–	–
WADDY GEORGE M.	Bland/richmond	1	667	1865	private	13th Batt, Virginia Light Artillery
			LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA, RICHMOND			
ANDREW J. COPENHAVER	Smyth	6	1848	1832–?	private	8th Rgt, Va Cavalry
DUNCAN CHARLES	Craig	2	1009	1831–1907	private	46th Rgt, Va Infantry
EAKIN DAVID	Craig	1	193	1839–1865	private	46th Rgt, Va Infantry
GARTHRIGHT OLIVER	Henrico	9	3942	1826–1902	inconnu	10th Batt. Virginia Heavy Artillery
GEORGE MADISON HORNSBY	North-umberland	1	368	1842–?	corporal-sergeant	40th Rgt, Va Infantry
JOHN TROUT	Craig	1	341	1842–1910	private	46th Rgt, Va Infantry
KASEY ELIZABETH	Patrick	1	253	1814–	–	–
JAMES KNICK	Rockbridge	1	554	1834–	private	8th Rgt, Va Infantry
LITTLETON TAZEWELL ROBERTSON	Nottoway	1	848	1830–1862	private	18th Rgt, Va Infantry
MOORE JAMES	Loundon	1	375	1820–1878	sergeant	8th Rgt, Va Infantry
NEWTON WILEY K.	Tazewell	2	832	1821–1864	private	22nd Rgt, Va Cavalry

NOTES

1. German (2011, p. 153) translates these two registers with the words ‘paritary’ and ‘disparitary’.
2. This phenomenon was fairly widespread in the colonial period and originates in England (e.g. ‘Pos’ for ‘post’ [Krapp 1925]).
3. The devoicing of final plosives is a phenomenon usually associated with Appalachian English as well as AAVE, so that the words ‘bat’ and ‘bad’ are homophones (Bailey and Thomas 1998, pp. 88, 91). Fasold (1981) notes a difference between white vernaculars and AAVE, since the devoiced /d/ in AAVE can also be glottalised. This phenomenon is also found in Welsh English (Penhallurick 2008, p. 117).
4. William Williams first wrote that song in Welsh in 1745. The song was translated by Peter Williams in 1771. According to Butterworth (1875, p. 31) this hymn started to be popular in the United States before becoming known in Great Britain.
5. These studies were conducted in West Virginia in the 1970s and in Georgia in the 1980s, respectively.
6. According to the 1850 Virginia census (University of Virginia Library 2007), only 11.6 per cent of the Virginian white population could not read and write.

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9 Correcting English: Josephine Turck Baker (1873–1942) and the Early American Usage Guide Tradition

Viktorija Kostadinova

1 Introduction

The year 1899 saw the publication of the first issue of *Correct English: How to Use It – A Monthly Magazine Devoted to the Proper Use of English*, edited by Josephine Turck Baker. In the introduction, the editor states that the purpose of the magazine is 'to inspire people with a desire to give more attention to correct speech, and also to answer the numerous questions which constantly arise in reference to grammatical construction and pronunciation' (1900, p. 1).[1] For the next 40 years or so, Turck Baker worked arduously to achieve this goal. She had a particular audience in mind, namely 'those who have become careless in speech, or whose social or domestic life does not afford the opportunity to consult books of reference' (1900, p. 1). In addition to the magazine, she published more than a dozen books on language, including grammars, drill books, and pronunciation dictionaries (Gould 1988). Among those publications is one usage guide, entitled *The Correct Word: How to Use It – A Complete Alphabetic List of Everyday Errors in English* (1938), first published in 1910.

Turck Baker is, however, seldom mentioned in studies of usage guides or prescriptivism. The only two articles to critically examine her work in some depth were written by Christopher Gould in the 1980s. Gould (1988) discusses the influence and role of Turck Baker's magazine *Correct English* in the 'grammar wars' of the 1930s. The 'grammar wars' were a period when 'the growing influence of linguistics in English education' was met with severe negative reactions from purists and traditionalists (1988, p. 121). In this context, *Correct English* is referred to as one of the magazines that criticised scientific linguistic ideas about language and 'helped propagate the notion that American education was beset by an unprecedented crisis' (1988, p. 123). In another article, devoted more specifically to her work, Gould (1987, p. 23) argues that Turck Baker was a prescriptivist *par excellence*, who exercised dogmatism and authority in her pronouncements on 'correct' English usage while giving it a strong social

This chapter was written in the context of the research project *Bridging the Unbridgeable: Linguists, Prescriptivists and the General Public*, funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and directed by Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade.

dimension by being 'unabashed about equating "correct" English with social class and intelligence'; she even 'recognized a correlation between knowledge of English usage and moral fiber'. According to Gould, that was a mark of Turck Baker's 'anachronistic philosophy', which was present in her stance on matters not only of language, but also of literature, philosophy and society at large, and remained a characteristic of the magazine even after her death in 1942 (1987, p. 26). It is worth noting that, despite his critical stance on Turck Baker's notions of language correctness, Gould recognised the lasting presence of such notions in popular ideas about language.

In addition to Gould (1987, 1988), references to some of her books appear in two articles which discuss the treatment of matters of usage in grammar books, one (Rice 1932) devoted to the distinction between *get* and *got*, and another (Stevens 1954) discussing the status and treatment of *ain't* in grammar books. Rice (1932) compares how the usage of *have got* is recorded in 'authoritative dictionaries', among which he cites the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and in popular books of usage advice. He also cites Turck Baker's prescriptive treatment of *have got* from her *Correct English: Simplified Grammar* (1923) – where she dismissed *got* as superfluous '[w]hen used in the sense of possession' (p. 284) – amongst those 'handbook makers and their disciples' who 'bitterly complained' of the use of '*have got* in the sense of possession in the present' (Rice 1932, p. 283). He concludes that usage advice books, and their authors, predominantly dismiss the use of *have got* to express possession as a wrong or improper use of the construction; by comparison, Rice argues, 'authoritative dictionaries' such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* record this usage neutrally, that is, through 'accurate description and not animadversion' (1932, p. 284).

The second study that cites her work does so in the context of treatments of contractions like *ain't* (Stevens 1954). The entry on contractions in Turck Baker's *Correct English: Complete Grammar and Drill Book* (1934) is described by Stevens (1954, pp. 198–199) as containing 'inaccurate and unrealistic statements' that could not show 'less awareness of the stress patterns in a language like Modern English'. In addition, her work is also referred to in *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, which mentions Josephine Turck Baker as one of the minor grammarians in America who perpetuated the conservative treatment of *ain't* as incorrect and a vulgarism, and whose 'single-minded view has become a tradition' (Gilman 1989, p. 61).

In this chapter I reconsider her work in the context both of earlier criticism of her work and of recent studies of usage guides. I show that the results of a close qualitative analysis of her usage guide *The Correct Word: How to Use It* at times reveal a slightly different picture from the one painted in previous treatments of Turck Baker's work. Through an analysis of the metalanguage used in her pronouncements on 'correct' language usage, I illustrate that at times Turck Baker's work displays a clear concern with the actual use of the period and an outlook on usage which is in some respects descriptive rather than prescriptive. Finally, I discuss the importance of her work in studying the actual use of the period in which she wrote.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly outlines Turck Baker's life, while Section 3 deals with her work both in terms of the context in which she wrote and more specifically her views on language correctness. Section 4 discusses the usage guide in detail and the findings of the close analysis of its contents. Section 5 examines possible relationships between her pronouncements and actual language use.

2 Who Was Josephine Turck Baker?

According to the *Evanston Women's History Project* database, Josephine Turck Baker was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1873.[2] Around the turn of the century, she moved to Evanston, Illinois, where she lived for the remainder of her life, with her husband and five children. Evanston was the place where she built a successful career as an author and publisher, her main passion being instructing people on the proper use of English. Gould (1987, p. 22) describes her as 'author of more than a dozen books on grammar, novelist, playwright, poet, pacifist, and mystic'.

Turck Baker was highly educated. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Milwaukee-Downer College in 1895 and a Master of Arts degree from the Boston School of Oratory in 1897. In addition, she held two honorary PhD degrees: one from her alma mater, Milwaukee-Downer College, and a second one from the Chicago Law School (Gould 1987, p. 23). Her educational background reveals much about the factors that influenced her choice of career and later helped establish the nature of her work. Milwaukee-Downer College was a women's college established in 1895 through the merging of two other women's schools, Milwaukee Female College and Downer College, both of which had existed since the middle of the nineteenth century (Watrous 1909, p. 425; Kleinman 1997, p. vii). It was a private institution, which suggests that Turck Baker's parents must have had the financial means to send her to a private school, especially during an economic crisis that affected the region at the time. Watrous (1909, p. 423) remarks that '[t]he hard times following the panic of 1873 threw a large number of Milwaukee working men out of employment, and during the winter of 1874–75 a great many children were unable to attend school on account of the financial condition of their parents'. Milwaukee-Downer College was an institution which provided a high-quality liberal arts education for women. The curriculum was marked by a focus on strengthening a particular set of values in its female students. Although the school 'appeared to offer programs designed to prepare students for "careers", the real motivation was to prepare women to serve society through intelligent performance of women's roles' (Kleinman 1997, p. vi). The kind of influence that the college had on students is summed up by Kleinman as follows:

> To understand the legacy of Milwaukee-Downer College is to understand the nature of what, during the span of its 19th and 20th century history, the college produced – namely, the "Milwaukee-Downer Woman." This was a woman characterized by independence of mind and action, possessing the ability to take on and successfully meet all challenges. (1997, p. vii)

Josephine Turck Baker seems to have been exactly that type of woman. After moving to Evanston around 1900, she founded the International Society for Universal English, as well as her own publishing house, *Correct English Publishing Company*. She was an active businesswoman, with a strong entrepreneurial spirit epitomised by her committed efforts in advertising and selling her work. A search for her name in the Library of Congress historical newspaper database *Chronicling America*, which contains almost eight million pages of American newspapers published between 1836 and 1922, yields 609 results.[3] Most of these are advertisements for her books, but also for courses and workshops she organised, as well as for other services she offered relating to writing, editing and proofreading texts. The earliest record of her name in the database is in the 23 November 1900 issue of the *Essex County Herald*, published in Guildhall, Vermont. The advertisement draws attention to a new series of features to be published in the *Boston Journal*, known as the *Boston Journal Home Study Courses*, 'designed to furnish readers with daily material of an educational nature, written and arranged by authorities on each subject treated'. One of the authorities on the list of planned features is Josephine Turck Baker, and her topic is 'Correct English and how to use it'. She seems to have been fairly successful at creating the language brand 'Correct English' and selling her product in various forms to the general public, partly by capitalising on the linguistic insecurities of her readers.

3 Correcting English: A Life-Long Preoccupation

Turck Baker's magazine *Correct English* became one of the 'popular magazines devoted to "correct" English usage' which 'flourished during the first half of the twentieth century' (Gould 1987, p. 22). Indeed, Gould notes that *Correct English* 'was the most successful of these magazines, in terms of both circulation and longevity' (1987, p. 22). The magazine became particularly popular in the 1930s when the number of subscribers almost doubled, 'from 16,200 subscribers in 1930 to more than 30,000 in 1935' (Gould 1988, p. 122). Mott's comprehensive history of American magazines contains a mention of *Correct English* in a footnote in the section on specialised magazines, where it is described as a Chicago publication that ran from 1899 until 1951 and was 'designed for the classroom, teacher's desk, and public' (Mott 1957, p. 272). Her readership is described as consisting of

> business executives and their secretaries; clergymen, and school teachers; men and women who wish they had paid more attention to the rules of English away back in their schooldays; farm wives who do not wish to be entirely out of touch with the wider world of literary endeavor; mechanics who bend their efforts, in their hours away from work, toward further educational advantages; high-school students who find in our pages just a little more help than the average grammar contains. (Gould 1987, p. 22)

In addition to the magazine, Turck Baker published a wide variety of books on the subject of 'correct' language usage. Gould (1988, p. 122) notes that the influence of the magazine *Correct English* 'was enhanced by the enduring appeal of a series of books about grammar and vocabulary authored by Josephine Turck Baker'. The versatility of her publications is evident from their titles, which include *Ten Thousand Words: How to Pronounce Them* (1905), *The Art of Conversation* (1907), *The Art of Social Letter Writing* (1909), *The Correct Word: How to Use It – A Complete Alphabetic List* (1910), *The Correct Preposition: How to Use It* (1911), *Correct English: Simplified Grammar and Drill Book* (1923) and *Correct English: Complete Grammar and Drill Book* (1934). These books often contain a full list of her other works and seem to have also been regularly advertised in the *Correct English* magazine. A January 1920 issue of the magazine, for instance, contains a 'holiday offer' on some of her books, with readers being advised to '[b]uy these wonderful books [themselves] or send them to a friend for a gift' (Turck Baker 1920). In addition to her book publications and the magazine, as the president and treasurer of *Correct English Publishing Company* she 'administered courses; offered lectures and seminars on topics ranging from business correspondence, leadership, etiquette, will power and salesmanship, in addition to English grammar and usage' (Gould 1987, p. 22). At the heart of it all was the notion of 'correct English'.

A prominent aspect of her work is its strong orientation towards the general public or, more precisely, towards the popular book market. Turck Baker was not unaware of or modest about her own influence; Gould notes that she 'boasted that her magazine was "the final arbiter for what is correct in English" for the US Senate and Department of Agriculture, the New York Public Library, and several large corporations, including National Cash Register, Dupont, and Sears Roebuck' (Gould 1988, p. 123).

Turck Baker lived during an interesting period for the development of linguistic thought in America. The latter half of the nineteenth century, the period during which she was educated, was marked by the strengthening of prescriptivist notions about correctness in etiquette and in language, and a development of a particular kind of cultural milieu referred to as 'the genteel cultural apparatus' (Drake 1977). In the context of language, Drake links the genteel culture of the late nineteenth century to 'an increased interest in language, especially in "linguistic etiquette" in genteel publications; in the reaction against innovation; in the application of intellect and logic to language; in the high premium placed by the genteel on books and authority; in the anglophile tendency of the genteel; and in the desire for a responsible, stable community' (1977, p. 18). Turck Baker's work, especially her monthly magazine, seems to reflect quite a few of these aspects.

Turck Baker is an example of what Finegan (1980, p. 10) calls 'adherents to the doctrine of correctness'. She believed that in language usage right and wrong are clearly distinguished and that one should strive to do things in the 'right' way. In the first issue of the magazine *Correct English*, she explains what she means by 'correct' English:

> Many persons err in using the expressions "good grammar" and "bad grammar." This magazine bears the name "Correct English" not "Good Grammar." Instead of saying "he uses good grammar" or "he uses bad grammar," one should say "he uses correct English" or "he uses incorrect English," or "he speaks correctly" or "he speaks incorrectly." Grammar presupposes an observance of its rules, so that one's speech is either grammatical or ungrammatical. (Turck Baker 1900, p. 4)

Thus, according to Turck Baker, 'correctness' refers to the rules of grammar. The 'correct' expression is the expression that observes the rules of grammar; the opposite is ungrammatical. Examples of some of the usage problems she discusses in the first issue of the magazine illustrate what she meant by 'correct' and 'incorrect' grammatical constructions: *between you and I*, *I feel badly*, *He don't like to do it* are, according to her, all incorrect (1900, p. 5). Her explanations are heavily centred on rules, and she seldom seems to have doubts about whether or not a particular language variant should be accepted as correct. In her view, there are rules that can be learned and observed, and everyone should strive towards the learning, observance and practice of rules in language.

The introduction to the fourth issue of Volume I of her magazine provides an interesting insight into her views on language usage and authority. She distinguishes between 'good' usage and 'correct' usage and warns against equating the two because, 'many forms used by good writers and good speakers are incorrect according to the rules of language' (1900, p. 49). She starts from acknowledging the fact that usage is 'the law of language' only when it is 'correct' (1900, p. 49). While she does acknowledge that the language use of educated speakers and writers is the authority in matters of language, she also warns that many speakers and writers are not aware of the rules of language, and through their lack of observance of these rules, the language acquires 'incorrect' expressions, which after some time gain the sanction of 'good' usage. It is because of this process that she calls on speakers and writers to use 'correct' forms: '[t]he careful use of correct forms will preserve language in its purity just as the careless use of words will promote its deterioration' (1900, p. 49). It is precisely through acknowledging the power of language use that she advances her arguments about the importance of speaking 'correct' English. This is strikingly in line with one of the characteristics of the eighteenth-century doctrine of correctness, of which Leonard (1929, p. 14) notes, 'Where actual usage was observed and recorded – even when the theory was promulgated that usage is supreme – this was, in general, done only to denounce and reform the actual idiom'. However, Turck Baker's explanation about 'correct' usage ends with her noting:

> It is not the aim of Correct English either to promote a pedantic style of utterance, or to create self-consciousness to such an extent that the thought shall be subordinate to the expression. The purpose of Correct English is to inspire the reader to form the habit of using only those forms which best express his meaning, and to exclude from his vocabulary all faulty and incorrect expressions. (1900, p. 49)

4 Turck Baker's Usage Guide: *The Correct Word: How to Use It*

4.1 Introduction

Turck Baker's usage guide *The Correct Word: How to Use it* was first published in 1910. According to WorldCat search results, the guide saw at least eight new editions and seven reprints between 1910 and 1938, which testifies to its popularity. A substantial number of Turck Baker's works are digitally available through the *HathiTrust Digital Library*, including the 1938 edition of *The Correct Word: How to Use It*, the edition on which the present discussion is based.[4]

4.2 Scope and Contents of the Guide

As described in its subtitle, *The Correct Word* is a 'complete alphabetic list of everyday errors in English'. A closer look at the contents of the entries reveals a rather typical usage guide, which covers diverse and heterogeneous aspects of the language, such as 'spelling, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis, and involving sociolinguistic considerations' (Weiner 1988, p. 173), but without purporting to represent or describe the entire language system. Rather, as Turck Baker's title suggests, the usage guide attempts to be exhaustive in covering only common errors – that is, variant items that cause confusion for some speakers – and it also provides clear advice on the correct use of those variants, which Weiner describes as the guide's 'external function' (1988, p. 173). The status of 'everyday errors' seems to be the basic criterion for the selection and inclusion of items in the guide, but there is very little information on how Turck Baker delimited the scope of the usage guide or what sources she used. A few entries refer rather vaguely to other reference works on language, such as *Webster's Dictionary*, *The Century Dictionary*, and *A Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, without citing editions or page numbers. Additionally, Turck Baker refers readers to some of her other publications, such as *The Art of Conversation* (1907) and *The Art of Social Letter Writing* (1909). The total number of entries in the book is 824. I selected the first 50 of every block of 100 entries for analysis, bringing the number of analysed entries to 414.

In line with Weiner's observation mentioned earlier (see also Busse and Schröder 2009), *The Correct Word* integrates various facets of language usage, from spelling and punctuation to sociolinguistic considerations, an aspect to which I return later in the chapter. The entries analysed showed, however, that grammar and lexicon have greater coverage than other areas, as exemplified by the entries in (1) and (2) taken from Turck Baker (1938). Several entries contain occasional references to the pronunciation or spelling of certain variants, as in (3) and (4), and in some cases even a commentary on the social appropriateness of a certain usage item, as in (5).

(1) Chiefest

Chief, meaning of *most importance; foremost*, is no longer regarded as admitting of comparison; in consequence, the superlative form *chiefest* does not accord with good usage. (1938, pp. 31–32)

(2) Evidence and Testimony

Evidence is a legal term. It applies to all the means by which the truth is made manifest. *Testimony* is merely a species of evidence. (1938, p. 63)

(3) O. K.

When written in full as a noun, *O. K.* is spelled either *okay* or *okeh*, each being pronounced *owe-kay*. (1938, p. 120)

(4) Cannot and Can not

Cannot is merely a variant form of *can not*. (1938, p. 31)

(5) Not at all

"Not at all" is the correct response to "I am much obliged," the obligation being thus dismissed. "You are welcome" is properly used in acknowledging an expression of thanks. (1938, p. 118)

Turck Baker organised the entries alphabetically, which is a common formal feature of usage guides (Straaijer 2018). The entries tend to be rather short, ranging from a couple of lines to a short paragraph. This variation seems to be linked to whether the subject of the entry is related to grammar or to the lexicon: entries dealing with lexical items tend to be much shorter than entries discussing grammatical points of usage. A good example of the latter is the entry on the split infinitive, which is 1½ pages long and discusses the usage problem in detail. This may very well have been inspired by the long-standing controversy surrounding the use of the split infinitive, which the author addresses in the entry as well (Turck Baker 1938, pp. 169–170).

Entries in general tend to have a uniform format, consisting of a clear-cut, short and precise statement of advice, recommendations and pronouncements on the difference between, in most cases, two variants. I have already mentioned that this book comes quite close to being a typical usage guide, as its format and presentation of material seem to have been affected by its 'external function' (Weiner 1988, p. 173). The external function in this case appears to be twofold: giving advice and recommendations on disputed usages, while meeting the readers' needs for practicality of use and clarity in advice, evident from the brevity and matter-of-factness of the entries. This consequently influenced Turck Baker's metalanguage, discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.3 *From Overt Proscriptions to Covert Description*

Turck Baker's metalanguage consists of a number of phrases and formulations, as well as what Sundby, Bjørge and Haugland (1991, p. 38) call 'prescriptive epithets', or labels, that she makes use of repeatedly. This kind of uniformity is important for unearthing the levels of usage that she distinguishes in the book. Levels of usage can be understood in terms of what Weiner (1988, p. 173) refers to as the 'status of the alternatives' that usage guide writers assign to different usage variants. 'Correct' is the word that occurs most often, but she also uses expressions such as 'required', 'preferable', 'preferably used', 'interchangeable', 'interchangeably used', 'incorrect', 'superfluous', 'in accordance with the rule', 'in accordance with good usage', 'frequently used', 'frequently misused', and so forth. She also uses a number of labels such as 'vulgarism', 'colloquial', 'provincial' or 'provincialism', and 'idiomatic'. These different metalinguistic levels reveal a usage guide writer who is not as dogmatically prescriptive as Gould (1987) suggests. Although entries abound in explicitly prescriptive and proscriptive comments, there are quite a few cases in which Turck Baker makes recommendations based on 'common usage'. In many instances, however, she shies away from being either overtly descriptive or overtly prescriptive or proscriptive, formulating her pronouncements in such a way that, instead of clearly specified rules, she makes recommendations for what is preferred, rather than insisting on a particular usage herself. Many such entries endorse both the 'correct' and the 'incorrect' variants, while giving advice on the proper contexts of use. In the rather extensive entry on contractions, for instance, it is noted that '[c]ontractions, while not permissible in dignified utterance or in formal writing, are in accordance with the conversational employment of the language' (1938, p. 39). Another example of such metalanguage can be found in the entry on *anyways*, which reads that '[i]ts use in the sense of *in any event*, is colloquial', but that it 'is, of course, avoided in dignified conversation or in written diction' (1938, p. 15). These two examples show a more complex picture of the position adopted by the author, which is often ambivalent between prescribing rules and giving advice.

In the light of this variation, I subdivided the entries into three categories: proscriptive, prescriptive and descriptive. Proscriptive entries are those that contain an outright prohibition of an item, as in (6). Prescriptive entries are those that contain a rule that is not necessarily expressed negatively, as in (7). Finally, entries that contain reference to usage, or in which the author accepts changes in the language and approves of items traditionally considered incorrect, were classified as descriptive (8).

(6) You was

> "You *was*" is always incorrect, *were* being required for both the singular and the plural number of the second person (*you*.) (1938, p. 202)

(7) Not . . . but; Not merely . . . but

> The correlatives *not.. but* and *not merely.. but*, must precede the parts of speech; thus: "It is my aim *not* to criticize, *but* to assist you," not "It is *not* my aim," etc.; "This is intended, *not merely* to interest people, *but* to instruct them," not "This is *not merely* intended," etc. (1938, p. 118)

(8) Every Confidence

> *Every*, being a distributive adjective and expressing the idea of an aggregate considered "one by one," cannot when so interpreted directly modify a noun incapable of being separated into parts. For this reason such forms as "I have *every confidence* in him," "He showed me *every* attention," "I gave him every *consideration*," have been criticised. The insistent use of *every* in the sense of *all possible* or *very great* has resulted in this extension of its meaning, so that this interpretation is now recognized as authentic. (1938, pp. 62–63)

It is important to note at this point that descriptive entries in this case cannot be taken to describe actual usage; rather they refer to the way in which Turck Baker phrased her advice and approved of variants by appeal to common usage or explicit acceptance of changes in the language. Any such reference to common usage or explicit acceptance of particular language change was classified as descriptive. It is crucial to note that a straightforward classification into these three categories proved to be difficult at times, as many entries appeal to both traditional language prescriptions and widely accepted usage; it was particularly difficult when these two perspectives present contrasting views. The classification was further hampered by the fact that many entries do not explicitly state whether users should follow the traditional rule or the observed usage. The two options are presented dispassionately; the implication is that it is up to the language user to decide whether to follow the traditionally prescribed rule or to use the alternative sanctioned by common usage, as exemplified in (8).

The proscriptive-prescriptive-descriptive categories of metalanguage can thus be conceptualised as a continuum of options that the author makes use of in the entries, and she is often seen carefully navigating between these categories. A striking aspect of this kind of presentation of usage advice is the absence of explicitly stated personal preferences of the author. The metalanguage is characterised by a number of semi-fixed expressions which recur throughout the book. Many of the entries contain the typical range of normative metalanguage used (cf. Sundby et al. 1991), such as '[a]s a contraction in place of *isn't*, *ain't* is a vulgarism'; '[*h*]*ain't* is a vulgarism'; and '[i]t is never excusable for *haven't* or *hasn't*' (Turck Baker 1938, p. 76).

References to usage and changes in the language are found in such formulations as '*[a]fraid* in the sense of *inclined to think* has now the sanction of fairly good usage' (Turck Baker 1938, p. 8) and '*[a]ren't I* as a contraction for *Am I not*, is rapidly creeping in favor even among good speakers' (1938, p. 9). On the subject of the use of the verb *graduate*, it is noted that as '[a] student does not graduate himself, but is *graduated* from an institution' the preferred way of using the word would be 'he *was graduated* last June' (1938, p. 75). Nevertheless, the author further notes that '[t]here is an increasing tendency, however, to use the active form (*graduated*) instead of the passive (*was graduated*), with the result that the active form is regarded as established' (1938, p. 75). Another example of her acceptance of variable usage, which is also illustrative of how she deals with authority, is the entry on the use of prepositions with reference to time, where she says that '[e]ither *to* or *of* is used in the wording, "It is a quarter *to* ten" or "A quarter of ten," with *of* given in Webster as "chiefly colloquial." The two words, however, seem to be largely interchangeable, regardless of the preference given in Webster to the preposition *to*' (1938, p. 121). Finally, her treatment of the split infinitive is a good example of her descriptive stance towards certain features, especially those that have traditionally been criticised by prescriptivists. Her views on the split infinitive are also strikingly progressive, given the period in which she wrote. The entry starts off by disputing the claim about the inseparability of the preposition *to* from the infinitive. She further notes, ‘In many constructions, greater force and perspicuity can be gained by placing the adverb before the sign of the infinitive; but, in other constructions, the meaning is more clearly expressed by inserting the adverb between the preposition and the infinitive’ (1938, p. 170).

These examples show that, alongside Turck Baker’s pronouncement of a traditionally or logically ‘correct’ alternative, she also seems to accept alternatives that are, as she often puts it, ‘sanctioned by common usage’ (1938, *passim*). Such entries provide significant insights into potential or actual language change by referring to changes in usage, an issue that is discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

4.4 Dimensions of Usage and Sociolinguistic Considerations

Points of usage are often alternatives that differ on the basis of extralinguistic factors, such as social class of speakers, region and mode; observations about such factors are often made in usage guides. ‘Sociolinguistic considerations’ is a term used by Weiner (1988, p. 173) to refer to such observations. As applied to the analysis of usage guides, these sociolinguistic considerations are observations about particular social aspects of language variation, as perceived by the usage guide writer; more precisely, they are observations about ‘categories of speakers, geographical markers and styles’ in the treatment of usage problems (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2015, p. 62). It should, of course, be borne in mind that such observations are not to be understood as based on objective or scientific sociolinguistic study. Nevertheless, they are examined here, as they are important in revealing how Josephine Turck Baker chose to include and present sociolinguistic considerations in her work.

Sociolinguistic considerations in usage guides may be likened to some of the dimensions in value judgements in eighteenth-century normative grammars identified by Sundby et al. (1991). The dimensions they mention include medium (‘we never write’), genre (‘hardly allowable in poetry’), frequency (‘seldom used’), attitude (‘rude especially to our betters’), social position (‘low’), linguistic competence (‘adopted by the ignorant’) and territory (‘peculiar to Scotland’), etc., where the last four are examples of social dimensions of usage and comparable to sociolinguistic considerations in usage guides (Sundby et al. 1991, p. 38).

In the context of the present analysis, sociolinguistic considerations are taken to mean any kind of references made in the entries of *The Correct Word* to certain sociolinguistic aspects of language usage, such as groups of speakers, in terms both of social class, exemplified by the reference to ‘cultured and educated speakers and writers’ in (10), and of region or territory, exemplified by the reference to ‘Provincial English’ in (11), which was a negative term used to describe features that are ‘not in national use’ (Utter 1916, p. 4).

(10) Had Better

"I had better go," is incorrect according to the grammar of the language, but correct according to its usage; that is, the usage of cultured and educated speakers and writers. (1938, p. 75)

(11) Kitty-Cornered

Kitty-cornered, a corruption of *cater-cornered*, is itself Provincial English and also U.S. for *diagonal* or *set* diagonally. If used, however, *kitty-cornered* is the correct spelling. (1938, p. 97)

Alongside these, there are also references to various levels of usage, such as 'colloquialism' exemplified in (12) and (13).

(12) Enthuse

Enthuse is recorded as a colloquialism. Instead of saying, "I was greatly *enthused*," many prefer, "I was very enthusiastic." (1938, p. 59)

(13) Cute

Cute, in the sense of *smart*, or *clever*, is a colloquialism, and, in consequence, not in accordance with the best usage of the language. (1938, p. 42)

The majority of the entries lack overt references to these sociolinguistic aspects, and they do not mention other factors, such as age or gender. When references to social aspects of usage are present, however, it is mostly groups of speakers that are referred to, albeit very generally; for instance, 'careless speakers sometimes err' or 'many prefer'. One interesting category referred to in the entries is that of authorities on language correctness, or 'critics of usage'. Reference to such authorities often serves to represent the more traditional view of the status of an item compared to the observed patterns of use. Thus, Turck Baker notes that '*experience* has been criticised by some writers as incorrectly employed in the sense of to *suffer* or *receive*' (1938, p. 64) or that '[t]he use of *being* in such constructions as "is *being* built," has been censured by some critics, but its employment, as shown by English scholars, is strictly correct' (1938, p. 28). Unfortunately she does not provide explicit references to actual authorities or scholars.

In some entries, Turck Baker makes observations about usage based on more specialised uses of certain usage items in particular contexts; prominent examples of this are the references to law and business usage. Usages such as the omission of the preposition *to* in *write you* (1938, p. 202); the use of '*deal*, in the sense of *transaction*, *agreement* or *arrangement*' (1938, p. 44); or the omission of the apostrophe 'in the titles employed by business firms and corporations' (1938, p. 16) are all characteristic of business usage, according to the author. Items typical of legal usage include cases such as the word *evidence*, as applying to 'all the means by which the truth is made manifest' (1938, p. 63); the word *party* referring to *person*, as in 'I know a *party* who will lend you the money' (1938, p. 129); and the plural form of *damage*, which is 'correctly used as a law term, meaning money that is recoverable as amends for a wrong and injury sustained' (1938, p. 43).

5 Actual Language Use Compared

As discussed in Section 4.4, certain entries in the usage guide contain observations that refer to changes in language use. In many of these entries the author notes the increased frequency of use of a traditionally criticised feature and concludes that the feature is now acceptable. These entries show that some prescriptive authors, such as Turck Baker, do not in fact always condemn language change. This aspect was illustrated in (8), where Turck Baker notes that the 'insistent use' of the construction makes it acceptable; similarly, in (13) she writes that *between* has changed from referring to only two things to referring to more than two things.

(13) Among and Between

> *Among* applies to more than two persons or things; *between*, once used of only two, is also applicable to more than two; as: "The five directors discussed the matter *among* themselves," "This is *between* us two" or "us three," "A treaty was made *between* the three powers." (1938, p. 12)

Other entries refer not so much to changing usage norms as to changes in authoritative attitudes to usage. In the entry on the distinction between *bad* and *badly* in sentences such as *I feel bad*, Turck Baker notes that 'authorities . . . censure [the use of *badly*] in the place of the adjective *bad*' and that 'in consequence, it falls in the class of disputed points of diction'. 'Nevertheless,' she continues, '"feel *badly*" or "look *badly*," or the like, is sufficiently established to gain authentic recognition' (1938, p. 26). Of course, such statements are not based on empirical data and cannot be taken at face value, as their linguistic relevance is questionable at best; they are nevertheless important because they may serve as indicators of language change taking place at the time of writing. The entries reveal that, far from being entirely prescriptive or proscriptive, there is often a tension between traditional rules of usage and what Turck Baker claims to observe in actual use. Some entries contain references to both the prescribed rule and the perceived facts of usage, with the latter being taken as the authority, as shown in the entry in (8) on the use of *every* as an adjective referring to abstract mass nouns. Turck Baker notes that although the usage is not considered correct and has been criticised, 'the insistent use of *every*' in this sense makes it an acceptable option. There is one caveat here though: the fact that she refers to its persistent use does not mean that this perception of the author is necessarily correct. Thus, the appeal to usage could also be seen as Turck Baker's diplomatic sanctioning of her own authority in dictating what is acceptable and what is not by appealing to 'facts of usage'. The validity of a particular claim does not depend on whether it is formulated prescriptively or descriptively, because her claims are often not based on actual data, but rather on intuition alone, and perhaps on a number of sources she consulted.

It is difficult to ascertain what the function of this appeal to usage may have been, but it may point to an interesting and important development in the genre of usage advice literature. Josephine Turck Baker was fairly conservative not only in her pronouncements on language but also in her opinions on issues of education, literature, the place of women in society and social etiquette (Gould 1987). With this in mind, her relatively liberal stance towards certain problematic features could be interpreted as an indication of the early acceptance of usage as a criterion in giving advice, in the context of the usage guide tradition.

However, the evidence provided by usage guides is insufficient to allow us to make generalisations about the actual use of a certain variant, as we can never be sure whether the inclusion of usage problems was motivated by the perception of objective frequency of use or by their frequent inclusion in previous usage guides. Nowadays, as Peters (2012, p. 256) explains:

> With large new resources for language description available, in the form of both language corpora and the internet itself, there is no reason not to seek evidence of actual usage in a given variety of English . . . This evidence of contemporary usage serves as a foil to the usage commentators' recommendations, to show whether they were in touch with the language norms of their times and places.

In order to explore how some of Turck Baker's observations about language change may relate to actual processes of change, I made use of the 400-million-word *Corpus of Historical American English* (*COHA*; Davies 2010–). Two features were chosen for this comparison: the difference in the spelling of the verb *dispatch* vs. *despatch*, and the variability in the use of *providing that* and *provided that*. For both of these features, Turck Baker accepts traditionally 'incorrect' variants based on their increased frequency of use, as shown in (14) and (15).

(14) Despatch and Dispatch

> *Dispatch*, etymologically considered, is the correct spelling, but *despatch* is so largely employed that the two spellings are interchangeable. (1938, p. 47)

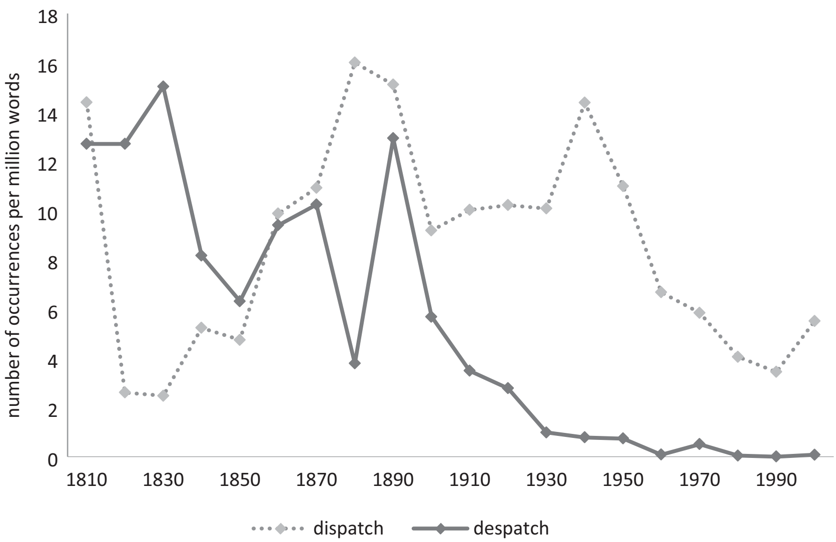

Figure 9.1 Frequency of occurrence of *dispatch* and *despatch* in *COHA*

(15) Providing and Provided

> The participle *providing* has been so frequently misused for the conjunction *provided* that it has been recorded as interchangeably used with *provided*, or *provided that*. (1938, p. 144)

If we compare Turck Baker's observation of the almost identical use of *despatch* and *dispatch* with the results from *COHA* (see Figure 9.1), which show the frequency of occurrence of *despatch* and *dispatch* per million words, it is evident that her observation was not far removed from actual use. Around 1890 and 1900, the numbers of occurrences seem to be almost the same for both variants, although *dispatch* is still more frequently used. If these figures are anything to go by, Turck Baker's pronouncement on the use of the two variants appears to be quite neutral. After 1910 we see a drop in the occurrence of *despatch*. Why this was the case remains unclear, but according to more recent usage guides, *despatch* seems to be largely supplanted, *dispatch* being 'preferred in both AmE and BrE' (Garner 1998, p. 214).

The second case refers to Turck Baker's acceptance of the use of *providing* for *provided* or *provided that* (see Figure 9.2). I limited the corpus search to the use of *providing* and *provided* immediately followed by *that*, in order to exclude cases where the words are used as participles. The results show that *provided that* is more frequent, but *providing that* seems to have been on the increase throughout the nineteenth century. While the difference between the two is still

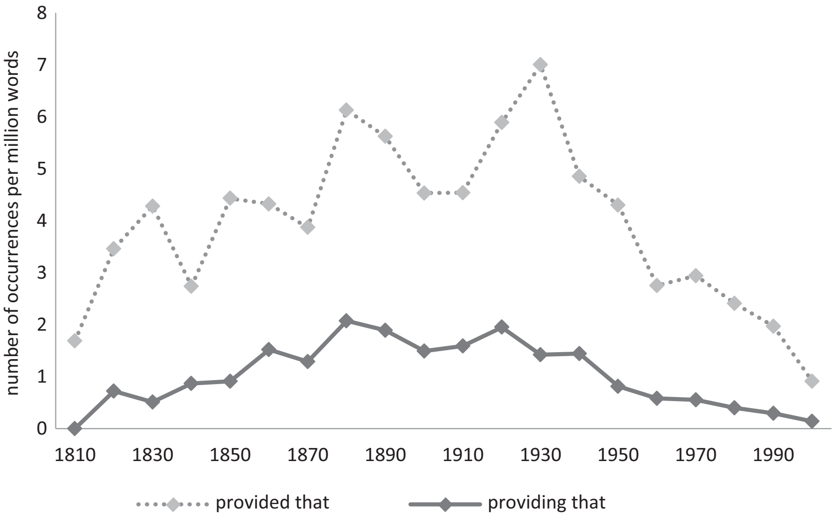

Figure 9.2 Frequency of occurrence of *providing that* and *provided that* in *COHA*

rather large, with *provided that* being the more frequent variant, Turck Baker's observation in this case is interestingly less conservative than one might expect.

These instances are only two of the cases that we can use to explore the possibility that usage guide writers were and are not so out of touch with language use as is sometimes assumed. This kind of comparison cannot allow us to draw definite conclusions, but may, however, point to important ways in which usage guide writers become engaged with the language of their time and how they respond to the challenge of usage guide writing. Ultimately, what I hope to have shown is that, regardless of the prescriptive or descriptive tone of the author, a usage guide may serve as an important source of various types of data related to language in particular and society in general.

6 Conclusion

The Correct Word reveals a successful usage guide author who displays concern with all the dimensions of usage guide writing outlined by Weiner (1988), from the scope of the usage guide and the organisation of entries to the formulation of advice and recommendations. The metalanguage used in the entries reveals that the external function of the usage guide of providing language advice to ordinary speakers and writers may have influenced the way in which the author presented her usage recommendations. The usage guide, furthermore, contains other types of information, which can reveal a great deal about the sociolinguistic context in which the book was written. The dimensions and aspects of usage in the guide reveal concern for contemporary usage, as well as awareness of usage characteristic for law and business contexts. This suggests that the usage guide was a precursor to the development within the genre towards expressing greater concern for specific language users, professionals and the market, which in itself results in a move towards practicality and clearly given advice.

I hope to have shown that usage guides offer important clues to actual language use and even to language change. This is especially valuable in diachronic research, as older usage guides can be used as possible indicators of (sociolinguistic) language variation in the past. Looking at this usage guide has also revealed an author who had a very clear purpose in mind when writing the book, and her orientation towards the book market affected the way in which the book is structured and specific advice is given. This aspect of usage guides may provide insights into the language ideological debates characterising the social and cultural context in which they were written. While it may be true that usage guides tend to contain misinformation about language use, thus perpetuating misconceptions about how language works, they also contain, perhaps unintentionally, a 'wealth of linguistic data' that cannot simply be discarded (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2015, p. 68).

This has two general implications for a better understanding of the usage guide genre. Firstly, usage guides are seldom clear-cut cases of prescriptive writing on language since their semi-technical metalanguage can at times be characterised by a relatively high degree of descriptive statements. This directly relates to the second implication, which is that the most prominent aspect of the usage guide seems to be its external function. In the case of Turck Baker's work, this means that her intended readership influenced the way she organised the book and the way in which she framed her advice and her recommendations.

NOTES

1. Although the first issue bears the date 1899, the volume in which it appears (consisting of twelve issues) is dated 1900.
2. Available at www.epl.org/ewhp/display.php?bioid=35.
3. Available at http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.
4. A comparison of the two editions shows very little in the way of differences.

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Part III

Norms and Margins: Moving into the Twenty-First Century

10 The Grammatical Margins of Class

Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade

1 Introduction

Double negation, according to Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003, pp. 71–72), was steadily disappearing throughout the period covered by their Corpus of Early English Correspondence, 1460–1619. My own analysis of eighteenth-century usage in fiction, drama and correspondence confirms this process: double negation proved much rarer than I had expected, given the attention devoted to the subject in the normative grammars of the period (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1982). For all that, double negation featured highest in two informal surveys of grammatical problems I conducted among educated native and non-native speakers of English (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2005; de France 2010). What is more, double negation has been dealt with in English usage guides from the very beginnings of the tradition onwards down to the present day, from Baker (1770) to Heffer (2010), Lamb (2010) and Taggart (2010). It is not, however, listed in the recently leaked CIA's *Style Manual and Writers Guide* (2012; see Benedictus 2014).

Double negation has developed into an archetypal usage problem: Milroy and Milroy ([1985] 2012) mention it at least five times in the first 50 pages of their book *Authority in Language* as an example of the differences between standard and non-standard English usage. In a more recent publication, Ritchie (2013, pp. 221–222) lists double negation as one of the 'most common "mistakes" made by non-standard speakers', noting that usage 'will be accepted perfectly happily by non-standard, below-middle-class speakers but not in any middle-class context'. Usage of double negation is not merely indicative of social-class membership but is also found with speakers of different ethnic or regional origins, as is clear from examples given by Burchfield in his third edition of Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (1996):

A **plain-speaking shopkeeper** explained to an interviewer from the *Sunday Times Magazine* (12 July 1987): *I run a family business and I don't want no hassle*. A **black**

This chapter was written in the context of the Bridging the Unbridgeable project, financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

councillor in Chicago, brought to trial on charges of bribery and extortion, emerged from the court saying: *I don't take no money from no white folks* (*Chicago Tribune*, 19 Nov. 1990). A **poorly educated person** in a novel called *Glory Days* (1988) by the **NZ** writer Rosie Scott declares: *I don't have nothing to do with them if I can help it*. It is easy to find other examples from various English-speaking areas: '*Clouds come up*,' *she continued, 'but no rain never falls when you want it*.' – E. Jolley, 1980 (**Aust**.); *He never did no harm to no one* – BBC Radio 4, **The Archers**, 1987; *I don't give a damn about nobody* – a **black SAfr. speaker** in A. Fugard's Tsotsi, 1980. (Burchfield, 1996, p. 226; emphasis added in bold, as throughout this chapter)

Double negation, then, is found throughout the English-speaking world: in the language of a British shopkeeper, of black speakers in the United States and South Africa, in New Zealand, and in regional British English as represented in the classic soap opera *The Archers*. Double negation is also used as a literary device to mark the language of fictional non-standard speakers as, for example, in novels by Kingsley Amis (1922–1995) – a Cockney police constable in Amis's *Riverside Villas Murder* (1973) and the main working-class character Clive in *We Are All Guilty* (1991) – and by Ian McEwan (b. 1948). McEwan likewise draws on double negation to characterise a Cockney speaker in *Solar* (2010), but in the autobiographical 'Mother Tongue' (2001) he mentions double negatives alongside 'nothink, somethink, cestificate, skelington, chimley . . . and mismatched plurals' as making up the language he had inherited from his mother. Amis and McEwan share a lower-class background, which strongly influenced their writings (see Cameron 2009 and Abbassiyannejad, Talif and Heidari 2012, respectively).

If double negation is a widely recognised non-standard feature of English, the question is why it rates so high in unacceptability surveys and why readers of usage guides continually need to be reminded of its problematical nature – in relation to the standard variety, that is. Other features in the English language are rather more complex in that they used to have a dual social status. Marked, for the first time perhaps, as a 'vulgar contraction' in 1826, the use of *don't* in the third person singular was according to Phillipps (1984, p. 69) 'acceptable colloquially at least down to the 1870s'. Dykema (1947, p. 374) writes that, in his day, '*he don't*, *she don't*, and *it don't* are dangerous constructions to use unless one's reputation for cultivation is unassailable'. Today, *he don't* is characteristic of dialectal usage (cf. Cheshire 1978, pp. 55, 57–58). Similar examples are the use of *ain't* and variation between -*in* and -*ing* in present participles. The *Pocket Fowler* writes that *ain't* is 'an undisputed element in Cockney speech', while it quotes the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) as saying that 'the contraction is also found as a (somewhat outmoded) upper-class colloquialism' (Allen 1999, pp. 30–31). As for participial -*in* forms, which according to Trudgill (1974, pp. 112–113) are a typical feature of Norwich English, Milroy and Milroy ([1985] 2012, p. 82) note that 'this linguistic element was quite stereotypical of upper-class speech in the early years of the twentieth century'. *Ain't* has been considered a usage problem from the early days of the American side of the tradition onwards (first discussed in 1847) down to today (Peters 2006), but usage of *he don't* and variation between participial -*in* and -*ing* to my knowledge have not. So when is a linguistic feature a potential usage problem? As in the case of double negation, none of the other linguistic features discussed here occur in the CIA style guide, unlike typical so-called old chestnuts (Weiner 1988, p. 173; Peters 2006, p. 760) like dangling participles, *hopefully*, *lie/lay*, *that/which* and *try to/and*, which are. What then is the difference between usage guides and style guides in the way in which they offer language advice? And what are usage guides, to begin with? These are questions I will try to answer in the course of this chapter.

There are many differences in the traditions of giving usage advice between Britain and America (not to mention other national varieties of English). Not only did the American tradition start considerably later than the British one (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2015), the rise of the traditions was also inspired by different social developments, the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom during the later decades of the eighteenth century and large-scale immigration into the United States around the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, while according to Milroy (2001) usage problems in Britain are largely related to social-class differences, in the United States race and ethnicity are responsible for debates on linguistic correctness. This chapter largely deals with prescriptivism in British English, but I will occasionally refer to American usage guides as well.

2 Usage Guides and Usage Problems

2.1 Usage Guides

Usage guides have been described as a by-product of eighteenth-century grammar writing (Peters 2006, p. 761). Though it is true that they are anticipated in providing usage advice by the grammars of Robert Lowth (1762) and Joseph Priestley (2nd edn., 1768) (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011; Straaijer 2011), they are a distinct genre that arose independently of the earlier grammatical tradition during the final decades of the eighteenth century (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2012). They represent a different stage in the English standardisation process, i.e. prescription rather than codification, when the rules of the language were laid down in grammars and dictionaries (Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012, pp. 22–23). According to Weiner (1988, pp. 171–172), usage guides are a 'neglected genre', and he believed that there were only a few of them. Today, however, they are very popular indeed, and new titles continue to appear (e.g. Pinker 2014; Kamm 2015), while old ones are revised (e.g. Gowers 2014; Butterfield 2015) and re-issued (e.g. Amis 2011). Being a usage guide writer himself, Weiner evidently did not realise that his *Oxford Guide to English Usage* (1983) was part of a trend: the 1980s and 1990s stand out particularly for the large number of usage guides published in the United Kingdom.

For this information I am drawing on the HUGE database (Hyper Usage Guide of English), developed by Robin Straaijer as part of the *Bridging the Unbridgeable* project at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (Straaijer 2014). This publicly available database contains a fully searchable collection of selected usage guides and usage problems enabling a systematic study of linguistic prescriptivism. It includes 77 usage guides (American and British ones), ranging from 1770 to 2010, and 123 usage problems, primarily grammatical ones. In addition, it contains an inventory of studies of usage guides and of usage problems (bibliographical information only). Drawing on the database it is possible to see that every usage problem has its own unique history. The database can also help to correct persistent prejudices, such as that the split infinitive was first condemned by Lowth (1762) (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011). Adverse comment on the split infinitive, in fact, only arose during the early nineteenth century, and the first usage guide to discuss the issue was the anonymous *Live and Learn: A Guide for All Who Wish to Speak and Write Correctly*, published in the United States around 1856; in England, the split infinitive first occurs in Henry Alford's *The Queen's English* (1864). Though already in 1996 Bailey had noted that '[t]he earliest complaint about split infinitives came in 1834 in the *New-England Magazine*' (1996, p. 248), which attributed the usage to 'uneducated persons', the notion that the rule goes back to the eighteenth century continues to be found even in the most recent usage guides in the HUGE database, Heffer (2010), Lamb (2010) and Taggart (2010).

Weiner's article, which appeared in a Festschrift for Robert Burchfield (1923–2004), who was at that time working on the third edition of Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (published in 1996), lists a number of characteristics of the genre. Usage guides are directed at native speakers and advanced learners of the language, and they typically include old chestnuts like the ones illustrated in the introduction to this chapter. Since, as Weiner puts it, there are 'icebergs of disputed usage' (1988, p. 183), certain selection principles can be distinguished, though in his view these are primarily personal: 'mainly,' he writes, 'usage guide writers are . . . attracted to controversial variations in usage', adding that 'their dominant motivation is genuinely educational', though they are primarily inspired by their own curiosity (p. 175). Ilson (1985, p. 167) before him had distinguished three more formal selection criteria for usage problems to be adopted into usage guides: 'actual occurrence, fairly widespread occurrence, and discussability without giving offence'. A writer of a usage guide, according to Weiner (1988, p. 179), 'is a linguist, like a lexicographer or a grammarian', and usage guides 'can be organized like a textbook' (p. 180). The example he mentions is Strunk and White (1979, 3rd edn), while his other example, Fowler (1926), presents its entries alphabetically. Usage guide writers collect their examples by using 'concordances and textual corpora and, if he [sic] has access to them, on-line databases' (Weiner 1988, p. 176).

Though not focusing exclusively on usage guides, Peters (2006), like Weiner a usage guide writer herself (Peters 2004), discusses the genre as well. She likewise refers to Fowler (1926) as a typical exponent of the genre (though she also mentions Alford). As one of the genre's more outstanding characteristics she mentions their 'lack of lateral referencing', and the consequent 'remoteness from linguistic research, and a reluctance to refer even to the work of other usage commentators' (Peters 2006, p. 761). Usage guide writers evidently proceed from '[t]he right to make [their] own judgments'. She nevertheless detects a development of the genre away from the making of *ipse dixit* observations about language, through a reliance on panel judgements, to the 'methodological innovation' of drawing on corpus data (2006, p. 765), an important improvement to the unclear methods adopted by earlier writers. Peters concludes by noting that prescriptivists 'have a pervasive influence on popular attitudes to usage and style' (2006, p. 774), adding that there is a strong sense among the general public that out of two alternative usages, only one can be correct. To give advice on such matters is indeed the main purpose of usage guides, but by doing so, they only 'feed insecurity' (2006, p. 774). Despite its often tongue-in-cheek tone, this is indeed the approach taken by Taggart (2010, p. 7), who writes in the introduction to *Her Ladyship's Guide to the Queen's English* that the book is intended for

> native speakers of English, whatever their social and geographic origins, [who] feel uncomfortable with their own language – for the simple reason that they have never been taught its rules. They are aware that they have little formal knowledge of grammar or punctuation and fear that other people are going to despise them if they 'get it wrong'. They use words they do not completely understand in an attempt to appear better educated than they are; and they become agitated about whether to say *lunch* or *dinner* in case they betray what they see as their own humble origins.

Lack of education on the part of his intended audience was also an important consideration for Fowler when he wrote *Modern English Usage*. According to Burchfield in his preface to the third edition of the book, Fowler had written to his publishers 15 years earlier that the book was intended for 'the half-educated Englishman of literary proclivities' (as quoted in Burchfield 1996, p. vii).

Popular though they may be, usage guides are also parodied: one example is *Eats, Shites and Leaves* (2004) by A. Parody, most likely a pseudonym. (The book was not included in the HUGE database.) Another example is Rebecca Gowers's *Horrible Words: A Guide to the Misuse of English* (2016). When a genre is parodied, as in these examples, this suggests that it has reached the pinnacle of its popularity. However, new usage guides still come out and are still reproduced, which suggests that the market is far from saturated as yet.

2.2 Usage Problems

Usage problems may be defined as perceived errors in language use, the main reason for that perception being that the general public tends to believe that, in the case of potential linguistic variation, only one variant can be correct. This is one of the more extreme results of the standardisation process which the English language underwent, which according to Milroy and Milroy ([1985] 2012, p. 6) 'involve[d] the suppression of optional variability in language'. At the same time, usage problems may be features that reflect 'errors' from the perspective of former grammatical or lexical distinctions that are not – or no longer – observed. Examples are *less/fewer*, *teach/learn*, *lie/lay*, *have went/gone*, double negation and the split infinitive. Usage problems are dealt with in usage guides, whose scope, according to Weiner (1998, p. 173), 'is as broad as the English language, covering spelling, punctuation, phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis, and involving sociolinguistic considerations'. While the rules in Baker (1770) only deal with lexis and syntax (Vorlat 2001, p. 391) and Truss (2003) discusses punctuation only (and is therefore not included in the HUGE database), this is indeed true for most usage guides: all linguistic levels are represented in, for instance, the anonymous *Five Hundred Mistakes of Daily Occurrence* (New York, 1856) and the more recent usage guide by Amis (1997; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2015, 2018). Weiner's 'sociolinguistic considerations' have been part of the genre since its very beginnings. A good example from Baker (1770) is his labelling of the phrase *of themselves and Families* as 'mere Shopkeepers Cant', which he calls 'a very bad Expression, though very common' (p. 118), adding that the usage 'will always sound contemptible in the Ears of Persons of any Taste'. Other examples of sociolinguistic considerations are Fowler's discussion of features as used by the 'vulgar or slovenly' (1926, p. 325) and when Treble and Vallins (1936) discuss 'the belief that "you and I" is more grammatical (and more genteel) than "you and me"' (p. 41). Throughout the usage guide tradition, as the quotation from Taggart (2010) in Section 2.1 confirms, the correct use of grammar is not merely connected with education, but with social-class membership as well.

Usage problems tend to have the same structure, showing 'exemplification, explanation, and recommendation' (Weiner 1988, p. 178). This structure can already be found in the earliest days of the tradition (Vorlat 2001, p. 392), as in Baker's Rule XXXIII on the confusion between the verbs to *lie* and to *lay*:

These two Verbs are as often confounded as *Set* and *Sit*; of which the Occasion, in a great Measure, may be that the Word *Lay* happens to be the preterperfect Tense of the Verb *To Lie*.

To Lay is a regular Verb. It's [sic] Preterperfect is *Laid*. This is likewise the Word used with the Auxiliaries. For Instance . . .

The Preterperfect of the Verb *To Lie* is *Lay*; and the Word used with the Auxiliaries is *Lain*. For Example . . . (Baker 1770, pp. 33–34)

Another early example is from Rule 7 in *Five Hundred Mistakes* (Anon. 1856, p. 20):

7. 'You have *sown* it very neatly,' said a seamstress to her apprentice: say *sewed*, and pronounce so as to rhyme with *road*. The pronunciation of *sew*, meaning 'to use the needle,' violates its spelling; it is the same as that of *sow*, meaning 'to scatter seed'.[1]

But items in usage guides may have a different form as well. Weiner (1988) comments on Fowler in this respect, whose *Modern English Usage*, though alphabetically arranged, contains quite a few so-called 'discursive' entries (p. 180). From a title like 'Out of the frying-pan' (Fowler 1926, pp. 416–417), for instance, it is not easy to guess what it might contain. This is one of the reasons why Paul Bennett compiled an index on Fowler (based on the second edition of 1965) called *Bennett's Wordfinder* (Bennett 1996); the list, moreover, helps readers to find words treated by Fowler in places other than those identified by the headwords. With a total length of 66 three-column pages, the index suggests a far greater richness in the treatment of usage problems than the alphabetised listing indicates.

The arguments provided by Baker and the *Five Hundred Mistakes* in the above quotations explain why the verbs *lie*/*lay* and *sow*/*sew* are often confused. Following Weiner's categorisation (1988, pp. 178–179), the explanations would come under the heading 'structural'. Weiner distinguishes five additional arguments for the condemnation of usage problems, i.e. logical, statistical, historical, social and aesthetic, and he offers the following examples:

- logical: *someone called my attention to it* is more logical than *someone called it to my attention*
- statistical: *disinterest* is more common than *uninterest*
- historical: *decimate* in its etymological sense of 'to destroy by a large proportion of' is to be preferred to the transferred sense 'defeat utterly'
- social: authors appealing to so-called 'good writers' in support of *self-deprecating* in the sense of 'self-disparaging'

- aesthetic: adverbs like *scholarlily* must be disapproved of because they 'jingle'.

3 New Light on the Genre

The HUGE database was constructed for the purpose of studying prescriptivism in much more detail than was possible previously. On the basis of its contents, several of the characteristics that have been ascribed to the genre by earlier studies can be placed in a different light. To begin with, there are actually quite a few usage guides, and this was already so at the time when Weiner made a claim to the contrary (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2012, p. 72). Fowler and Alford are often referred to as early exponents of the tradition (cf. Busse and Schröder 2006, p. 462), but the usage guides in HUGE show that the tradition goes back to about a hundred years before Alford. Because the usage guides in HUGE are classified according to language variety, we are now able to see that the British and American origins of the tradition started at different times, in the 1770s in England and the 1840s in the United States. It is therefore not true, as Burchfield (1991, p. 94) claims, that *The King's English* (Fowler and Fowler 1906) and *Modern English Usage* (Fowler 1926) were 'written in a tradition mainly inherited from two works of the nineteenth century, one British (Alford 1864) and the other American (White 1871) [sic]'. Possibly, what is according to our present knowledge the earliest American usage guide, Seth T. Hurd's *Grammatical Corrector, or, Vocabulary of the Common Errors of Speech* (Philadelphia, 1847), formed a bridge between the two traditions, since it uncharacteristically (cf. Peters 2006, p. 761) provides a list of English as well as American sources, but this needs further investigation.

Weiner seems to assume that usage guide writers are male. Perhaps this is due to the stylistic device of preferring sex-indefinite *he* to what is known as singular *they* (Bodine 1975) – another usage problem (cf. Mittins, Salu, Edminson and Coyne 1970) – but we now know from HUGE that women wrote usage guides as well. Pam Peters is a good example, but there are also earlier ones: there is, for instance, Janet Whitcut, who with Sidney Greenbaum wrote the *Longman Guide to English Usage* (1988), while together they revised Gowers's *Complete Plain Words* two years previously. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the earliest female usage guide writer was Rosaline Masson (1867–1947), who published *Use and Abuse of English* in 1896.[2] Later female writers of usage guides are the American Josephine Turck Baker (1873–1942) (see Kostadinova, Chapter 9), Patricia O'Conner (1996), Angela Burt (2000), 'Grammar Girl' Mignon Fogarty (2008) and Caroline Taggart (2010), while most recently Rebecca Gowers (2014) revised her great-grandfather Sir Ernest Gowers's *Plain Words* (1954). Writing a usage guide cannot be claimed to be an exclusively male phenomenon.

Nor is it true that usage guide writers are linguists or, more specifically, lexicographers or grammarians, as Weiner suggested, or even that they are predominantly so. HUGE lists the writers' professions, and a search to this purpose even suggests that usage guides are largely a non-specialist genre. To be sure, there are usage guide writers who are linguists – lexicographers (John Ayto, R. W. Burchfield, Eric Partridge, Edmund Weiner, Janet Whitcut) and grammarians (Sidney Greenbaum), or (applied) linguists in general (David Crystal, Pam Peters, Michael Swan) – but there are also literary and other writers (Kingsley Amis, Bill Bryson, L. P. Smith), while Sir Ernest Gowers was a civil servant and H. W. Fowler a schoolmaster. Bryan Garner is a lawyer and Simon Heffer a journalist; Patricia O'Conner and Caroline Taggart were both editors before they became writers of books on usage. Rebecca Gowers is described on the *Guardian* website as an author and journalist; Stephen Pinker, often identified as a linguist, first trained as a psychologist according to his Wikipedia page; and Mignon Fogarty is described as 'a magazine writer, technical writer and entrepreneur' on the Grammar Girl website. Though they are referred to as lexicographers (*Webster* 1989, p. 11a), the academic credentials of the contributors to *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* – Stephen J. Perrault, Kathleen M. Doherty, David B. Justice, Madeline L. Novak and E. Ward Gilman (1989, p. 4a) – cannot readily be ascertained.

HUGE allows for the classification of usage guides according to the presentation of their contents, either in alphabetical or topical (or, indeed, random) order (see Straaijer 2018). While the items in the first usage guide, Baker (1770), were presented randomly, the first American one, Hurd (1847), has an alphabetical arrangement; *Five Hundred Mistakes* (Anon. 1856) again shows a random ordering. *The King's English* by Fowler and Fowler (1906) is presented according to topic, but *Modern English Usage* is arranged alphabetically. Though *Plain Words* (Gowers 1948) was originally presented by topic, an alphabetical arrangement of the items was felt to be useful as well (Scott 2009, pp. 179–181), resulting in an *ABC of Plain Words* (Gowers 1951) three years later. *The Complete Plain Words* (Gowers 1954) once again reverted to an arrangement by topic, though with an added index to facilitate access. The alphabetical arrangement of Amis (1997) was done by the publisher: when Amis died, his notes on language showed no particular arrangement (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2018). The most recent usage guides in HUGE, Heffer (2010), Lamb (2010) and Taggart (2010), are all arranged non-alphabetically, though they likewise include an index. All this suggests that there has been no change over time regarding the arrangement of items in usage guides from random through (for instance) topical to alphabetical, though increased consideration for the reader is evident from the addition of indexes.

The potential of HUGE as a database for the study of usage problems may be illustrated by two – related – examples. In 2012 I performed an attitude survey on three sentences, one of which was *I could of gone to that party* (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2013). Producing a lot of data on *could of*, several informants also raised the issue of the acceptability of *have went*. Given the non-standard nature of both forms, with *could of* being problematical only at the written level, I did not expect either to be usage problems. A full-text search in the database demonstrated that they were: *could of* proved to be present in usage guides already since 1927 (Krapp 1927), with its most recent discussion in HUGE occurring in 2007 (Butterfield 2007). Examples of its treatment are the following:

An **illiterate** alteration of *could've* = could have, found **depressingly often** in **children's** letters and essays, and in the written work of **poorly educated adults** (Burchfield 1996, p. 186)

. . . sometimes misheard or misconstrued by **naive writers** as *of*, hence 'could of,' 'might of' etc., and also the occasional 'had of.' The problem is easily identified by computer grammar checkers, or a simple computer search; . . . The weak form of *have* is so common that it's sometimes mistakenly spelled 'of,' in 'could of,' 'should of,' **even by adult writers**. (Peters 2004, p. 243)

Phrases such as 'bored of', 'could of' and 'fed up of' – now **common** (but **incorrect**) in spoken English – are **creeping** into written English. Don't use them. (Sayce 2006, pp. 76–77)

Have went as a usage problem proved much older: it was first discussed already in Baker (1770) and Hurd (1847). This example is from the anonymous *Live and Learn*:

This *is not* a very common **error**, but it is a very great one, and I should not have thought it could come within the range of **the class for which this book is written**, but that I have heard the fault committed by **people of even tolerable education**; one might as well say, 'I should have *was* at the theatre last night,' instead of 'I should have *been* at the theatre,' etc., as say, 'I should have *went*,' instead of 'I should have *gone*.' (Anon. 1856?, pp. 93–94)

Most strikingly, *have went* proved to be primarily discussed as a usage problem in American usage guides, which suggests that it is very likely more an American than a British English usage problem (Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Kostadinova 2015).

In the previous examples I highlighted references to particular social groups – *children*, *poorly educated adults*, *naive writers*, *people of tolerable education*. Such references confirm the presence of Weiner's 'sociolinguistic considerations' in discussions of usage problems. The full-text search option of HUGE, perhaps its most powerful facility, allows for a systematic search for sociolinguistic categories of speakers who either engage in alleged linguistic errors or who are held up as authorities of good usage. The word *class* as used by the author of *Live and Learn* above might be taken to mean 'category', as in 'words of this class' (Anon. 1856?, p. 27) or 'this class of connectives' (Anon. 1856?, p. 41), but the immediate context suggests a reference to social class: the author contrasts people of 'tolerable education' with the intended readers of his book, who may then be taken to have received less than a 'tolerable' amount of education, however much or little that may have been.

In these examples I also highlighted a number of metalinguistic comments: *illiterate*, *depressingly often*, *common*, *incorrect* and even *creeping*. Some of these (*depressingly*, *creeping*) are less appropriate in texts on language use. For all that, they have a long tradition in normative texts: Sundby, Bjørge and Haugland (1991, pp. 44–52) provide an overview of the proscriptive labels, ranging from *absurd* to *vulgar*, in eighteenth-century grammars and related texts. With the help of the full-text search facility in HUGE it is possible to show that many of the labels in Sundby, Bjørge and Haugland have a continued metalinguistic presence in usage guides even today. *Absurd* occurs between 1770 (Baker) and 2010 (Heffer and Taggart), *barbarous* between 1847 (Hurd) and 2010 (Heffer), *impossible* between 1770 (Baker) and 2010 (Heffer), *unintelligible* between 1851 (Brown) and (2001) Trask, and *vulgarism* between 1847 (Hurd) and 2010 (Heffer). Similar derogatory terms were found in the responses to my attitude survey (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2013); an example is the following comment of a 66-year-old female native-speaker property manager: 'The "of" [in *could of*] is an uneducated and **vulgar** usage. I would never use it myself.' Here, too, we see a link between lack of education and what appears to be a comment on the social class of speakers who might use *could of* instead of the standard *could have*. It is of considerable interest to see that the use of negative metalanguage equally characterises the proscriptive commentary in eighteenth-century normative grammars, comments from the general public on perceived linguistic errors, and the discussion of usage problems in usage guides. Further research with the help of HUGE will be able to show whether there is a distinction in this respect between linguists and the group which I have labelled non-specialists as usage guide writers.

4 Usage Advice and Social Class

If usage problems are associated with lack of education and the lower social classes in usage guides, this was also the case in my attitudes survey. Several informants – mostly indeed British (see the introduction) – explicitly linked the use of *could of* with usage by lower-class speakers:

- Younger people use it; **white working class** more particularly (62 F Br teacher)
- spoken by **lower to middle-class** high school kids (34 F Am translator)
- people who want to be seen as cool and **working class** (77 F Br linguist)
- I would rate it alongside 'we was' as almost a **working-class** standard variant (69 M Br translator)

- I would note their lack of education and file them as of **a lower class than me** (65 M Br bookseller)
- I would object more if a **middle class person used the form** (57 F Br teacher)
- As in English the spoken language can be taken as **an indicator of class and education**, I would guess the speaker would be **lower class** and at **secondary level maximum as far as education** is concerned (66 F Br teacher)

One of the informants, who identified herself as a 64-year-old retired secretary (British English native speaker), produced the following poignant comment:

> I had a working class background and parents who left school aged 14, but was taught correct grammar as a child and feel very sad that so much bad grammar is heard and read today and seems acceptable, which indicates poor teaching standards. I have often heard British resident people saying sentences like this, often young people though also older people if they did not have good education in the past, and it always grates on me as I think it sloppy to speak one's own native language poorly. Once people have left education they are unlikely to correct these failings so I feel more emphasis should be given in schools to respect for our own language and teaching standards need to rise.

She shares a lower-class background with the writers Kingsley Amis and Ian McEwan discussed in the introduction, and having similarly risen above her social origins, she likewise shows a certain amount of impatience at the inability to produce correct grammar. This view is confirmed by Cameron (1995, p. 93), who writes that '[i]t is frequently assumed that [the correct use of] grammar, at least in Britain, is essentially a symbol of class'. But the informant's reference to 'poor teaching standards' is significant, too, and the same criticism is voiced by quite a few other informants:

- Their schooling SHOULD correct this sort of thing, but increasingly children are not picked up on language inaccuracies, so they continue to make such mistakes into adulthood (51 M Br engineer)
- since the 1960s the correction of children's grammar in state schools was increasingly seen as 'demeaning' of the child's 'home' speech (76 F Br teacher)
- I fear schools do not correct grammar as they once did (77 F Br linguist)
- it's rather a sad comment/result of UK English teaching over the past 30 years (79 M Br retired)

One informant, much younger than the rest of the British informants who commented on the relationship between poor grammar and social class, puts the blame for a decline of Standard English on changes in the British educational system during the 1970s and 1980s (see Cameron 1995):

> I don't know whether this study will be researching educational trends, but I'd argue that **scrapping the systematic teaching of grammar in UK state schools in the 1970s** was the beginning of the end, and there's no way we can ever recover from that . . . my

generation onward have essentially learned English by ear, and in my view the sample sentence in question [*I could of gone to that party*] is a prime example of that (35 F Br teacher).

In this light, it is no coincidence that the large-scale increase in usage guides took place during the 1980s and 1990s, the decades immediately following the period identified as heralding 'the beginning of the end', as the above informant puts it. It wasn't, however, the educational system which tried to remedy the situation, but the publishers, who recognised general insecurity among speakers and writers and consequently identified a gap in the market. The HUGE database allows for a search according to publisher, and though the database contains only a selection of usage guides, particularly for the twentieth century and beyond (see Straaijer 2018, pp. 11–29), it is clear that Oxford University Press is the largest player in the field (e.g. Fowler 1926; Swan 1984; Garner 1998; Ayto 2002). Penguin, too, is an important publisher of usage guides, with Bryson (1984) and Trask (2001), and reprints of earlier titles like Partridge (1942 [1963]), Crystal (1984 [2000]), Amis (1997 [2011]) and Gowers (1954 [2014]). *The Sense of Style* by Steven Pinker (2014) was also published by Penguin.

The question is why usage guides continue to be published when so many are available already. One possible answer is that no single published usage guide has managed to acquire the authority that in countries like France and Spain is held by publications of their respective language academies. As a result, every writer and every publisher are able to try their luck in this respect. And successfully so, it seems: usage guides are bought in large numbers. Cameron (1995, p. viii), for instance, notes that Bill Bryson's book on language sold much better in America than his travel books. Amis (1997) was deemed popular enough to merit a new edition in 2011 with a preface by his son, Martin Amis, also a novelist. The work is unusual as a usage guide in that its entries, though they do offer usage advice, tend to have the shape of small linguistic anecdotes. The primary aim of this posthumous publication was to provide amusement, much in line with Amis's other writings (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2018; cf. McNay 2004).

Peters (2006, p. 775) comments on the publishing industry as one of the parties (along with 'the editorial profession') that is 'not neutral . . . in maintaining public awareness of usage sanctions'. Pullum (2018) confirms this, arguing that the public keeps buying usage guides driven by almost masochistic needs. But there is also a different reason for the popularity of usage guides, even since the earliest days of the tradition. Usage guides, as I have argued elsewhere (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011), arose at the time when we begin to see the effects of the Industrial Revolution, which allowed for greater social mobility thanks to new economic opportunities. Social mobility brings along linguistic and other types of insecurity, and hence a need for guidance, which was immediately picked up by the eighteenth-century publishers. Within sociolinguistics, the lower-middle classes have long been identified as most linguistically insecure, which is explained in Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert and Leap (2009, p. 87) as 'a consequence of [their] position in the class hierarchy, reflecting the wishes of its members to distance themselves from the working class and to become more like the upper middle class'. In the absence – thus far, at any rate – of an educational system that accommodates for this, a very controversial issue, as the reception of *The Language Trap* (Honey 1983) and other publications by John Honey (1933–2001) has shown (e.g. Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012, pp. 132–133), it was the publishers who, for economic rather than ideological reasons, jumped in. Publishers produce usage guides in ever increasing numbers and thus continue to feed the general public's linguistic insecurity. In this respect it is interesting to note that Partridge (1942) was not only reissued by Penguin but also came out as a Book Club Associates publication in 1975, making the book even more widely available.

If the intended reading public of usage guides indeed consists of the socially mobile (most typically found among the middle classes, according to Milroy 1987) and the linguistically insecure (as specifically targeted by Taggart 2010), this suggests an important difference between usage guides and style guides. The CIA *Style Manual* and *Writers Guide* (2012), according to its foreword, is intended as 'an essential reference for the officers of our Directorate'. *The Guardian Style Guide* is intended for 'Guardian writers and subeditors' (McNay 2004), and the various style guides published by the BBC (Luscombe 2011, p. 144) are similarly intended for BBC newsreaders and editors only (cf. Ebner 2015). Consultation of these manuals is mandatory to ensure a uniformity of style as a way to characterise the output of writers for these respective organisations. Consultation of usage guides, by contrast, is never compulsory. Usage guides are there for anyone seeking advice about usage they feel insecure about. Such a desire is probably strongest among the mobile lower middle classes, and in this light it is not hard to understand why double negation continues to be included in usage guides.

According to Hughes and Trudgill (1979, p. 12), Standard English is the only variety of English that no longer has double negation. Double negation is 'most typical of working-class speech, and for that reason tends to have low prestige' (1979, p. 14). For socially mobile speakers who have just risen into the lower middle classes, usage of double negation would be a social shibboleth, marking their linguistic origins in no uncertain terms. The same applies to *ain't*, which, though perhaps not as widespread as double negation, is still very common in Britain as well (1979, p. 14). If there is any overlap between style guides and usage guides in the type of features they deal with, this would not be the case for features like double negation or *ain't*, which nowadays have an undisputed non-standard status. Professional writers, journalists and newsreaders for whom style guides are intended would not be in need of this type of social guidance.

5 Conclusion

In a society like Great Britain, in which social-class membership plays a prominent and pervasive role (cf. Reid 1989), usage guides are an important tool for social advancement. Not only is their main perceived function the maintenance of the norms of Standard English (cf. Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012, pp. 57–58) but they also provide real guidance to those in fear of crossing the margins of social class, grammatically or otherwise. This fear is often played upon by writers of usage guides, and it is fed by the publishers, who continue to bring out new titles or re-issue old ones. Usage guides are a peculiar genre: they are neither grammars nor dictionaries (Busse and Schröder 2009), but they deal with every aspect of the language which shows divided usage. Selection principles are largely personal, and private opinions about linguistic correctness proliferate in the description of usage problems. It is also largely a genre of non-specialists, with many authors coming from non-linguistic backgrounds. Peters (2006) is optimistic about the development of the genre, as she sees new works drawing more on linguistic resources such as text corpora to provide real evidence of usage. This, however, proved not the case in the most recent usage guides in the HUGE database: Heffer (2010), Lamb (2010) and Taggart (2010) continue to provide information that is not based on empirical research, let alone linguistic research. It seems that there is a generally acknowledged collection of usage problems in the English language – the 'old chestnuts' – that continues to find its way into usage guides. Mair (2006, p. 18) calls these old chestnuts examples of 'anecdotal observations . . . [which] are repeated again and again, gaining a life of their own and solidifying into a body of folk-linguistic knowledge whose truth is taken for granted and no longer challenged even in scholarly publications'. It might be concluded that in the usage guide tradition there has been no progress after all. But it remains to be seen whether there is a distinction between usage guides produced by actual linguists, of which there have been several, and those from the hands of non-specialists. To be able to study this question, the HUGE database will prove an invaluable resource.

NOTES

1. The parts distinguished by Weiner may occur in a different order, as in the item which deals with *bored of* in Cochrane (2003, p. 22). In *Five Hundred Mistakes* explanations are found only in about a quarter of the entries (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2015).

2. See my blog post 'Rosaline Masson: first female (British) usage guide writer?' (https://bridgingtheunbridgeable.com/2015/05/29/rosaline-masson-first-female-british-usage-guide-writer/).

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11 Concepts of Correctness and Acceptability in British English: Exploring Attitudes of Lay People

Carmen Ebner

1 Introduction

For more than 300 years, a debate has revolved around disputed language features which fall into a grey area between standard and non-standard English (Beal 2009, p. 35). These so-called usage problems are condemned by prescriptive authors of usage guides, who are eager to impose rules and norms on language use, while descriptivists describe how a variety is actually used by its speakers. Following the linguistic credo of 'linguistics is descriptive and not prescriptive' (Cameron 1995, p. 5), linguists very often avoid such judgements about language correctness or expressing their attitudes explicitly, which makes them descriptivists by definition. Cameron (1995) proposes the apt term *verbal hygiene* instead of prescriptivism, since prescriptivism has obtained a somewhat bad reputation over the past centuries. Followers of prescriptivism have been called – derogatively – sticklers, pedants, mavens and the like. However, it is the attitudes of the third key player in the usage debate, the often forgotten general public, which are the focus of this chapter. Where do lay people stand in the usage debate?

Nash (1986, p. 1) stresses an interesting feature of human nature: our inclination 'to judge others by their language'. The way we use language can hint at or even reveal our regional background, educational upbringing and social-class membership. Milroy and Milroy (1999, p. 1) explain prescription and the observation of linguistic correctness by relating them to other human behaviours, such as observing a dress code or table manners. Such rules, which are very much like the language rules that are discussed in this chapter, are 'imposed from "above" by society' and often seem 'arbitrary' (1999, p. 1).

Despite the long history of prescriptivism, it may come as a surprise that there are only a handful of English usage attitude studies (Leonard 1932; Hairston 1981; Sandred 1983; Albanyan and Preston 1998; Gilsdorf and Leonard 2001). In the late 1960s, W. H. Mittins and his colleagues at the University of

This chapter was written in the context of the research project *Bridging the Unbridgeable: Linguists, Prescriptivists and the General Public*, financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne conducted a usage attitude study, which serves as a basis for my investigation, as it is, to my knowledge, the only usage attitude study examining British English. The Mittins study was clearly aimed at the educational sector as it was, firstly, part of a wider initiative of the Schools Council for Curriculum and Education in 1966 (Burgess 1996, pp. 55–56) and, secondly, it aimed at identifying attitudes towards disputed usage features of teachers, who, according to Mittins et al. (1970, p. 3), are not likely to follow a purely descriptive approach towards language. The method applied by the researchers was in the form of a questionnaire which contained 55 usage problems and generated 457 responses. The survey participants were asked to assess the investigated usage problems by identifying the contexts in which each stimulus sentence was found to be acceptable. A distinction was made between formality and language medium, which resulted in four contexts: formal writing, formal speech, informal writing and informal speech. Five of the investigated 55 usage problems were restricted in terms of context choice, such as the stimulus sentence *Between you and I, she drinks heavily*, which was restricted in formal writing (Mittins et al. 1970, p. 111). Their informants were mainly professionals in the educational sector such as examiners, English schoolteachers and lecturers. However, students and a few members of the general public were also included in their survey sample. The results of the survey were summarised in an acceptability ranking, which makes the Mittins study a snapshot of usage attitudes in British English and enables a comparison with recent usage judgements identified in my study.

In this chapter, I investigate attitudes of lay people towards disputed usages such as the dangling participle, the split infinitive and *like* as a discourse particle. To provide a theoretical background, I start by discussing what we understand by the terms 'usage problem' and 'attitudes' (Section 2). In Section 3, I describe the methodology of my study, which is followed by a discussion of the results (Section 4). The chapter shows how the attitudes of lay people have been neglected for years and how the field of usage attitude studies is now in a state of flux due to the gradual application of sociolinguistic theory to such studies. Furthermore, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data enables us to obtain a fuller picture of lay people's current usage attitudes.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Defining a Usage Problem

Even though usage problems are central to the usage debate, their defining characteristics have often been neglected, possibly because defining what a usage problem is can be a delicate issue. Ilson (1985, p. 166), for instance, states, 'Not every language problem is a usage problem.' For all that, usage problems, according to Weiner (1988) can occur in pronunciation, the lexicon, syntax and morphology. To define usage problems then, it may be useful to proceed from Milroy and Milroy's discussion of the standardisation process and in particular of its aim to suppress 'optional variability in language' (Milroy and Milroy 1999, p. 22). Usage problems occur where there is more than one option, be it the variation in use between *isn't* and *ain't*, or splitting or not splitting an infinitive. As optional variability has been identified as a key component of usage problems, further characteristics can be added to the definition.

Ilson (1985, p. 167) defines three criteria which need to be met for a linguistic feature to be considered a usage problem: 'actual occurrence, fairly widespread occurrence, and discussability without giving offence'. The third criterion refers to discussing vulgarisms and the like in public. The identification of the characteristics of usage problems enables us to have a better understanding of how they function in society. The users of language become a focal point in the discussion of usage problems, which becomes clearer when looking at the arguments used to defend prescriptivism. Since correct usage has been a dividing issue since the eighteenth century (Bloomfield 1985, p. 265; Milroy and Milroy 1999, p. 28), the identification of the arguments can be a complex undertaking. Ilson (1985, p. 167) provides us with two arguments. The first argument involves an aesthetic, logical and/or historical approach to language usage; the second argument creates a social separation (1985, p. 167), hence producing a dichotomy between good and bad usage, which is, respectively, associated with educated and uneducated, wealthy and poor people. In addition to Ilson's two arguments, another argument found in Thomas (1991) may be adduced. Thomas (1991, p. 12) defines linguistic purism as 'a desire . . . to preserve a language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable', in order to guarantee intelligibility. The intelligibility argument feeds into a social argument of defining an inclusion and an exclusion group, which reflects not only Ilson's argument of social separation but also the overarching theme of the volume, namely the tensions between linguistic norms and existing margins in society.

Usage problems may thus be considered social constructs that are brought about by optional variability across time and that are explained and justified by social, historical, logical and aesthetic arguments. In the next section, I look at a specific group that has often been neglected in the debate: the general public.

2.2 The General Public in the Usage Debate

Earlier usage attitude studies focused on the educated world as a means of identifying correct usage in order to settle the usage debate (cf. Leonard 1932). Only with the development of sociolinguistics as a discipline have usage attitude studies shifted their focus to the attitudes of the general public in order to identify possible correlations between social variables such as age and gender and acceptability ratings (cf. Albanyan and Preston 1998). As mentioned earlier, Mittins et al.'s usage survey was mainly aimed at language professionals such as educators and teachers. Niedzielski and Preston (2000, p. 1) provide a possible explanation why the general public seems to have been neglected:

> From a scientific perspective, folk beliefs about language are, at best, innocent understandings of language (perhaps only minor impediments to introductory linguistic instruction) or, at worst, the bases of prejudice, leading to the continuation, reformulation, rationalisation, justification, and even development of a variety of social injustices.

The beliefs of lay people have thus been viewed sceptically by linguists. However, they have been valued in the field of perceptual dialectology, the study of how dialects are perceived, which has been gaining in popularity since the late 1980s (Preston 2006, p. 258). Perceptual dialectology has made extensive use of dialect maps to visualise the perceptions of lay people geographically.

To define the field of folk linguistics, it is paramount to define the group of people it investigates: lay people. These people are not, as the term might suggest, 'rustic, ignorant, uneducated, backward, so-called primitive, minority, isolated, marginalised, or lower-status groups or individuals' (Preston 2006, p. 521). Instead, they are people who have not received any professional training in the study of languages (2006, p. 521). Although it seems easy to draw a line between those who have received training in linguistics and those who have not, lay people in the usage debate are special because of their awareness of language use. Even though a student of linguistics may have received a solid education, he or she might not be aware of specific usage problems. That is why lay people in this study should comprise the general public itself; only after they express their attitudes can it become clear whether they exhibit prescriptivist or descriptivist tendencies.

2.3 *The Concept of Attitude*

A great number of definitions of 'attitude' exist (cf. Baker 1992, pp. 8–16). In this chapter I rely on Allport's (1935, p. 810) definition of attitude as 'a mental or neutral state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related'. This definition contains the component 'experience', which I believe to be vital for the investigation of usage problems. The use and alleged misuse of language by speakers thus constitute the experience which influences the formation and expression of attitudes. Being made aware of the stigmatised status of a language feature, be it through people in the speaker's environment, education or the media, is an essential process in forming the speaker's experience. Lay people's awareness of disputed and stigmatised usage plays a crucial role in the investigation of their attitudes towards the acceptability of usage problems. Some of the earlier usage attitude studies, including Mittins et al.'s 1960s study, highlighted the object of investigation. While raising awareness and drawing the attention of informants to highlighted words or phrases, the informants could be led to believe that there was an issue with the underlined item. Thus, a sort of bias could be imposed on informants.

Since the attitudes of lay people have often been neglected in the scientific discussion of the usage debate, it is essential to highlight their importance in the debate, as a fuller picture of current usage attitudes is only possible through their inclusion. Having outlined the key concepts of this chapter, in the next section I discuss the methodology applied in my study.

3 Methodology

For my study of lay people's attitudes in British English, I conducted an online survey which aimed to answer the following three research questions:

1) How acceptable are the selected usage problems in various contexts?
2) Do any social factors play a decisive role in determining their acceptability?
3) What usage and language attitudes do the respondents to my survey express in general?

The questionnaire included 11 usage problems and was distributed via various online platforms such as social media sites (Facebook and Twitter) as well as blogs. Additionally, it was listed on the newsletter of the University of the Third Age,[1] an educational institution for retired and semi-retired people, and sent to undergraduate university students at Queen Mary University of London. For this chapter, a selection was made by restricting the responses to UK postcodes only, resulting in the 230 responses included in this analysis.

I used a similar categorisation of contexts to the one devised by Mittins et al. (1970). Yet, with the invention of the Internet and new technologies, computer-mediated-communication (CMC) and text-speak needed to be added to the list of possible contexts. To facilitate a more fine-grained analysis, a degree of formality was added by providing a choice of formal and informal contexts. Thus, seven possible contexts were available for the participants: formal speaking, formal writing, formal online/mobile, informal speaking, informal writing, informal online/mobile and unacceptable. In contrast to Mittins et al., the usage problems were not highlighted. The respondents were also provided with the opportunity to comment on each sentence. At the end of the survey, an open-ended question addressing the state of the English language was posed to elicit comment and to obtain more qualitative data. Thus, I analysed lay people's attitudes on multiple levels. To include a sociolinguistic dimension, the results of the questionnaire are investigated on the social variable Age. Other social variables, such as Gender and Social Class, were not considered in this analysis, but have been taken into consideration elsewhere (Ebner 2017). I focus on the social variable Age in this chapter for the following reasons. The Mittins study already concluded that age affects usage attitudes by identifying greater linguistic intolerance among older survey participants (Mittins et al. 1970, p. 23). Bolinger (1980, p. 50) also suggests a generational difference when discussing language usage. Different degrees of acceptability could also be due to the differences in the teaching received by younger and older generations, as teaching is known to have undergone drastic changes in England (Hudson and Walmsley 2005, p. 600).

The analysis is divided into two parts. First, I discuss the acceptability ratings of three usage items and the comments made by survey participants. These acceptability ratings' most significant correlation with the social variable Age is then examined in more detail. The data analysis programme SPSS 23 and the Mann-Whitney U-tests allowed a comparison to be made between two groups: those who find the usage items presented acceptable and those who do not. A qualitative analysis is, moreover, provided of the respondents' comments on each usage problem. These comments are analysed with AntConc, a word concordancing tool which enables an identification of keywords. This collection of comments comprises a total of 4369 words. As the focus of this study is on attitudes, the keyword analysis is used as an exploratory tool to identify key issues mentioned in these comments, rather than presenting themes that seemed interesting to the researcher. For this reason, I decided not to lemmatise the corpus and to provide only the top 20 keywords for each usage problem. In the second part of the data analysis, I discuss the open question, which is analysed in the same manner as the usage comments and consists of 9404 words. Both of these collections of data are relatively small in comparison to available corpora such as the *British National Corpus (BNC)*.

3.1 The Three Usage Problems Investigated

The survey participants were asked to judge stimuli sentences containing an item of disputed usage. The following 3 of the 11 usage problems investigated are discussed in this chapter:

1) Pulling the trigger, the gun went off.
2) He refused to even think about it.
3) The restaurant is only like 2 minutes up the road.

The first two sentences were investigated by Mittins et al.'s study (1970, p. 13) and were found to be unacceptable at the time. The first stimulus sentence (*Pulling the trigger, the gun went off*) includes a so-called hanging, unattached or dangling participle: a mismatch between the subject of the participle clause and the subject of the main clause. In this case, the action of pulling the trigger in the participle clause is ascribed to the subject of the main clause, the gun. Partridge (1947, p. 81), for instance, states that the participle needs to be linked to a proper and suitable subject. According to this explanation, the main clause would need a new subject, as the current subject, the gun, renders the sentence illogical. In Mittins et al.'s study (1970, p. 14), the dangling participle achieved an average acceptability rate of only 17 per cent and was ranked 46th out of 50 usage problems, which were not restricted in context choice. The second stimulus sentence (*He refused to even think about it)* contains the infamous split infinitive. It achieved an average acceptability rating of 40 per cent in Mittins et al.'s study and was ranked 24th. As Cutts (1995, pp. 96–97) explains, the dispute lies in the insertion of an adverb between the infinitive marker *to* and the actual infinitive, which, according to prescriptivists, should remain a single entity, following the example of Latin as a traditional model for grammar. The split infinitive has developed into a so-called old-chestnut due to its recurrent status as a usage problem in the usage guide tradition (Weiner 1988, p. 173). The third stimulus sentence (*The restaurant is only like 2 minutes up the road*) contains, unlike the previous two, a modern and topical usage problem. Mesthrie et al. (2009, p. 118) define one of the new uses of *like* 'as a discourse particle which is used to focus the hearer's attention and to sustain conversation'. It is said to have its origins in the 1970s in the United States and is associated with Californian Valley Girls (2009, p. 118). Because it has been discussed and stigmatised only recently, *like* as a discourse particle was not included in Mittins et al.'s investigation.

To what degree my study of lay people's attitudes is comparable to Mittins et al.'s study is a question that needs to be raised here. Attitude studies are by nature difficult to replicate, due to possible differences in methodologies and survey participants. Since my study focuses on the general public, rather than on educators in particular, I use Mittins et al.'s acceptability ratings simply to illustrate tendencies and to provide an insight into how attitudes towards usage problems in British English may have changed over the past four decades.

4 Data Analysis and Results

In this section, the data analysis and results are discussed, but first I give a description of the survey sample. The 230 respondents, consisting of 68 men and 162 women, are distributed over six age groups ranging from 18 to older than 60, as can be seen in Table 11.1.

The population cumulates at the peripheral age groups, with fewer responses in the medial age groups, which could be due to the means of survey distribution described in Section 3. A comparison to Mittins et al.'s study can only be made for the social variable Age, as the participants' gender was not included in their questionnaire. The majority of participants in the Mittins study (29%)

Table 11.1 *Age groups of the survey respondents (percentages in brackets)*

Age group	18–25	26–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	above 60	Total
	47 (20.4)	23 (10)	36 (15.7)	22 (9.6)	15 (6.5)	87 (37.8)	**230 (100)**

were 25 years old or younger, which does not come as a surprise knowing that the questionnaire was handed out to students training to become teachers. The relatively low numbers of participants in the 25- to 30-year-old group and those over 65–9 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively – can also be explained by the survey context (Mittins et al. 1970, p. 22). The survey population of my study shows considerable professional diversity and a large number of members of the general public (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2013, p. 8). Among the professions we find an architect, an archaeologist, a librarian, a political caseworker, a town planner, a chef, a retired solicitor and a youth worker.

4.1 Acceptability Ratings and Analysis of Comments

4.1.1 Sentence 1: *Pulling the trigger the gun went off.* The average acceptability rate of the dangling participle is 25.4 per cent. A clear tendency towards acceptability in informal contexts can be observed, as shown in Figure 11.1. Compared to Mittins et al.'s study, the dangling participle has become more acceptable, as only 17 per cent of Mittins et al.'s respondents considered this usage problem acceptable in the late 1960s (1970, p. 88).

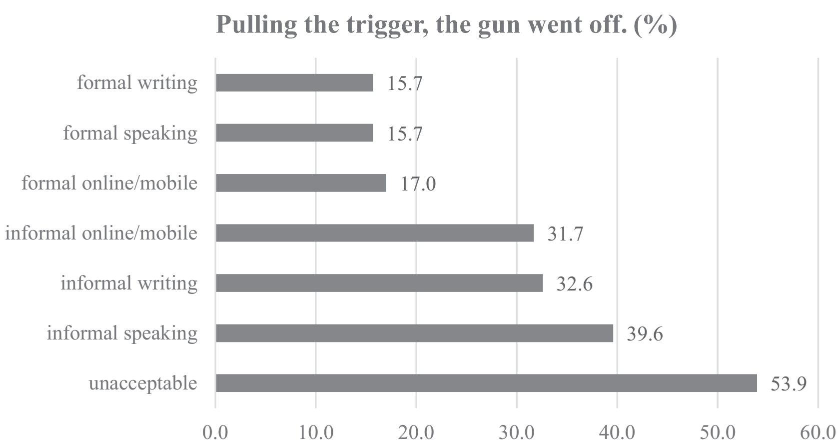

Figure 11.1 Overall acceptability (in percentages) of sentence 1

Table 11.2 *Keyword list for sentence 1*

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	trigger	45	682.724
2	gun	42	637.209
3	The	18	273.090
4	pull	17	257.918
5	pulled	17	257.918
6	sentence	17	257.918
7	pulling	14	212.403
8	subject	14	212.403
9	It	11	141.032
10	context	7	106.202
11	participle	7	106.202
12	This	7	106.202
13	clear	6	91.030
14	meaning	6	91.030
15	sounds	6	91.030
16	make	5	75.858
17	sense	5	75.858
18	unacceptable	5	75.858
19	wrong	5	75.858
20	I	21	61.952

A more detailed analysis of the relationship between acceptability and the social variable Age shows no significant correlation with the acceptability of the dangling participle. These results hint at the widely acknowledged stigmatised status of the dangling participle. To add another dimension to the analysis and to gain a better understanding of how this usage feature is perceived, comments made by respondents were analysed in AntConc. Comparing the comments to another text can identify characteristic items. This so-called keyword analysis was conducted by using as a reference corpus, the *BNC* wordlist, which was downloaded from Mike Scott's webpage[2] and by applying a basic stop-list.[3] Thus, keyword lists were compiled by making use of a log-likelihood measure ($p < .05$) to help identify the 'aboutness' of the text (Culpeper 2009, p. 38). The keyword list for sentence 1 contained a total of 38 keywords, yet as stated earlier, I only report here on the top 20 keywords, which are shown in Table 11.2.

Most of the keywords do not come as a surprise, as parts of the sentence, such as the words *trigger* (1st) and *gun* (2nd) and the action of pulling – *pull* (4th), *pulled* (5th), *pulling* (7th)– were repeated by the respondents. Yet the list contains other keywords such as *sentence* (6th), *subject* (8th), *context* (10th), *clear* (13th) and *wrong* (19th). I next examine in detail the keywords *sentence*, *sounds* and *context*.

Analysing the keywords in context reveals an interesting picture. The keyword *sentence* shows a varying degree of certainty expressed by survey participants, as can be seen in the following examples. Example (2) contains the keyword *trigger*, which indicates the respondents' confusion created by the dangling participle, while (3) contains also the keyword *sure* (15th), which collocates with *not* and illustrates uncertainty.

Examples for the keyword *sentence*:

(1) It's not a proper sentence. (Male, 18–25, student)

(2) Who pulled the trigger? I'm pretty sure this sentence needs a subject. (Female, 26–30, account manager for a charity)

(3) I'm not sure about this sentence. (Female, 18–25, unemployed)

Looking at the keyword *sounds*, an explicit evaluation of the stimulus sentence and its dangling participle can be identified. The following examples show the co-occurrence of *sounds* with adjectives such as *wrong* and *weird*. Thus, the respondents' sentiments towards the acceptability of the dangling participle are expressed explicitly.

Examples for the keyword *sound*:

(4) It sounds wrong when read aloud. (Female, 18–25, unemployed)

(5) What was pulling? Sounds weird. (Male, 18–25, student)

The influence of contextual information on acceptability ratings has already been discussed by Peters (2004) and Ebner (2014), as context is often said to make up for the mismatch of subjects. The importance and lack of context were also noticed by the survey participants in comments (6) and (7).

(6) In this case – without context – the sentence sounds ungrammatical although the meaning is clear. (Female, older than 60, retired)

(7) BY pulling the trigger would be fine – without by I am not sure, but maybe in some kind of literary context. (Male, 26–30, postgraduate student)

Thus the keyword analysis and the concordance analysis not only enabled an illustration of explicit evaluations of usage problems but also provided insight into how respondents tend to offer corrections or an explanation for the unacceptability of a specific usage problem. Furthermore, it indicated that the role of contextual information in studying the acceptability of dangling participles needs to be foregrounded, as this usage is usually studied and condemned by usage guide authors without providing any context.

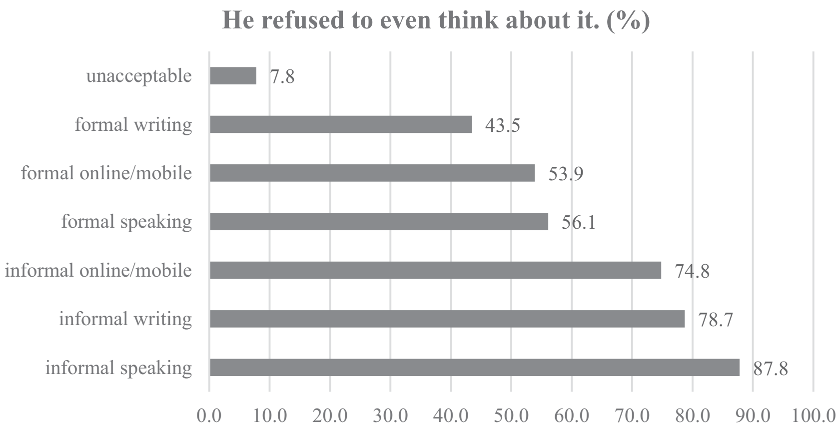

Figure 11.2 Overall acceptability (in percentages) of sentence 2

4.1.2 Sentence 2: *He refused to even think about it.* Despite the split infinitive being an old chestnut in the usage debate and having been discussed frequently in the past (Watts 2008, p. 39), its acceptability ratings show a different picture today. Sentence 2 is considered widely acceptable and achieved an average acceptability rating of 65.8 per cent. Only 7.8 per cent of respondents considered the sentence completely unacceptable. The split infinitive was more frequently classified as informal usage than formal, as can be seen in Figure 11.2. In contrast, in Mittins et al.'s study (1970, p. 72), the split infinitive obtained an acceptability rating of only 40 per cent. Therefore, a general tendency of increased acceptability of split infinitives can be identified.

The Mann-Whitney U-test ($U = 1035.5$, $p = .002$) showed a significant correlation of acceptability ratings with the social variable Age. The older the respondents are, the less likely they are to accept the split infinitive. The median age of the group disapproving of the split infinitive in *He refused to even think about it* is 60 years or older.

From the complete keyword list of 43 keywords, the top 20 keywords for sentence 2 are shown in Table 11.3.

This keyword analysis showed that the top three keywords are *split* (1st), *infinitive* (2nd) and *infinitives* (3rd), which illustrates the respondents' awareness of the split infinitive as a usage problem.

Although the split infinitive seems to be widely accepted, some respondents still show strong emotions towards its usage as can be seen in examples (8) and (9) containing the keywords *split* and *infinitives*.

Table 11.3 *Keyword list for sentence 2*

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	split	49	734.521
2	infinitive	38	569.629
3	infinitives	30	449.707
4	Split	16	239.844
5	rule	14	209.863
6	wrong	14	209.863
7	I	48	207.315
8	sentence	11	164.893
9	The	8	119.922
10	writing	8	119.922
11	acceptable	7	104.932
12	Latin	7	104.932
13	splitting	7	104.932
14	sound	6	89.941
15	English	6	84.201
16	fine	5	74.951
17	formal	5	74.951
18	meaning	5	74.951
19	This	5	74.951
20	avoid	4	59.961

Examples for the keyword *split*:

(8) I love split infinitives and I see no reason why they should not be used in English, I think it brings more emphasis to the adverb. (Female, 18–25, student)

(9) Can't stand split infinitives . . . (Female, above 60, retired primary head teacher)

That respondents are not shy about making explicit evaluations concerning the correctness of sentence 2 can be seen by looking at evaluative words such as *wrong* (6th) and *fine* (16th) in the keyword list. I next examine the evaluative word *wrong* in more detail. The following examples show that respondents are not only aware of the disputed status of split infinitives but they also make explicit value judgements. Mostly these judgements describe the acceptability of the split infinitive. However, a few comments also decried the use of split infinitives, as can be seen in example (10). Not only does the respondent, a retired schoolteacher, argue that split infinitives are incorrect, wrong and ugly but he also provides a reason for his judgement: his own education. This is in stark contrast with example (11), a comment made by a young trainee schoolteacher, who cannot see anything wrong with the sentence. Thus, these

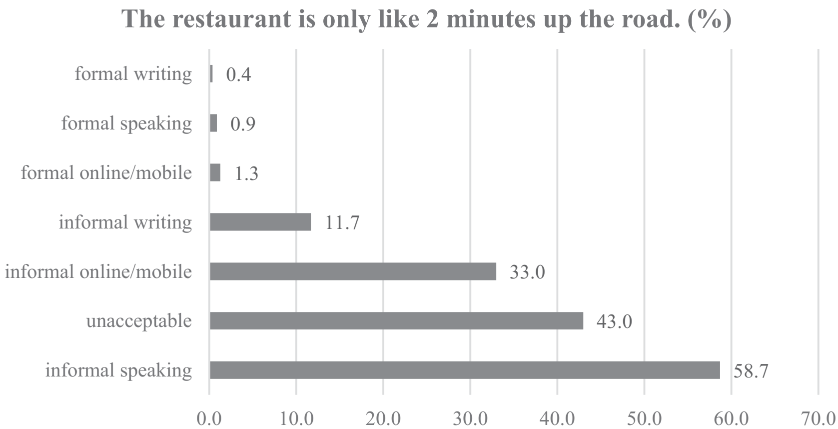

Figure 11.3 Overall acceptability (in percentages) of sentence 3

keyword examples clearly illustrate the generational difference in viewing the acceptability of the split infinitive, which was also identified in the statistical analysis of this usage problem.

Examples for the keyword *wrong*:

(10) Though very clever linguists argue that there is nothing wrong with split infinitives in English, because I was taught that it was incorrect, it always sound[s] wrong (and ugly) to me. 'He refused even to think about it.' (Male, above 60, retired schoolteacher)

(11) Again, don't know what is wrong with this sentence! (Female, 18–25, Primary school trainee teacher)

The awareness of this particular usage problem is highlighted not only in the keyword analysis but also in the comments made by the survey participants. The analysis of the social variable Age shows how the traditional disapproval of split infinitives seems to be disappearing.

4.1.3 Sentence 3: *The restaurant is only like 2 minutes up the road.* The discourse particle *like* in this stimulus sentence has a hedging function, which is used for an estimation and to indicate uncertainty. Its average acceptability rating of only 17.7 per cent reflects this usage's widely acknowledged stigmatised status; 43 per cent of the respondents ticked the box 'unacceptable'. Figure 11.3, however, shows that many respondents find *like* acceptable in informal speaking and online contexts. What is more interesting is that *like* is barely acceptable in any formal contexts (Figure 11.3).

Table 11.4 *Keyword list for sentence 3*

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	Like	21	313.972
2	word	17	237.263
3	people	15	224.266
4	speech	15	224.266
5	It	16	208.673
6	I	46	193.244
7	informal	11	164.462
8	sentence	11	164.462
9	The	10	149.511
10	unnecessary	9	134.560
11	young	9	134.560
12	context	8	119.609
13	filler	8	119.609
14	acceptable	7	104.657
15	minutes	7	104.657
16	redundant	7	104.657
17	superfluous	6	89.706
18	totally	6	89.706
19	wrong	6	89.706
20	completely	5	74.755

The Mann-Whitney U-test ($U = 3654$, $p < .001$) shows a significant correlation of acceptability ratings with the variable Age. These results suggest that the older the respondents are, the less likely they are to accept the new use of *like*. Again, the age group of those older than 60 shows the highest agreement on the unacceptability of this particular usage.

The AntConc analysis generated a keyword list containing 89 keywords. From the top 20 keywords, which are shown in Table 11.4, lay people's perceptions of this particular usage problem become apparent.

The use of *like* in the investigated stimulus sentence is described as *informal* (7th), *unnecessary* (10th), *acceptable* (14th), *redundant* (16th), *superfluous* (17th) and *wrong* (19th). The keyword *acceptable* deviates from the other adjectives found in the keyword list; however, its occurrence in phrases such as *not acceptable* and *acceptable in informal* indicates how this particular usage item is perceived as either acceptable in informal contexts or as unacceptable. I next discuss the keyword *young* (11th) in more detail to provide us with more information on the users of this usage feature.

As the use of *like* is associated with young people, its use is frequently mentioned by older respondents, who comment on these new developments. Some consider it 'extremely irritating', while others think it has become part of the 'standard talk' of young people. Examples (12) and (13) illustrate the generational difference and show a dichotomy between the use of *like* by young and older respondents.

Examples for the keyword *young*:

(12) This misuse of the word *like* is extremely irritating, particularly as even apparently well-educated young people seem to need to insert it into every sentence. (Female, above 60, retired)

(13) Has become standard talk in the young. (Female, above 60, retired (previously consultant anaesthetist)

In example (14), a female student provides an account of how she experienced the new use of *like*. Although the informant states that *like* was deemed incorrect in school, she now has noticed how widespread *like* is. This development is also mentioned in example (15). Another informant describes the use of *like* as an obvious and incorrect trend. The respondent associates its use with young people; however, she does not consider it 'fundamentally wrong'.

(14) 'Like' is a totally colloquial form of speech. I'm guessing there's a linguistic term (that I don't know) for these words, but to me it goes in the same category as 'ah' or 'umh', it's just [a] filler in a sentence. Acceptable informally but not in anything frmal [sic]. I remember when I was taking my GCSEs (mid 2000s?) and the use of 'like' started spreading at our school. The students who considered themselves more intellectual made fun of those who used it and called them americanised [sic], and teachers would comment on it as being incorrect. As much as I still subscribe to that belief it definitely slips into conversations, and I've noticed the use is completely widespread nowadays. (Female, 18–25, student)

(15) This is obviously a trend that is incorrect, but is heard with great frequency in everyday speech, especially by young people. I understand why people are irritated by it, however I don't find this fundamentally wrong. (Female, 18–25, architect)

Both the statistical analysis of acceptability ratings and the keyword analysis of comments made by survey participants show an interesting pattern in how *like* as a discourse particle is perceived by the questionnaire respondents. The greater intolerance of older survey participants towards its use is reflected in the attribution of this feature to young speakers.

4.2 Perceptions on the State of the English Language

The second part of my analysis deals with the open-ended question '*What do you think about the state of the English language?*', which aimed at obtaining

Table 11.5 *Top 20 keywords for the state of the language question*

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	Language	138	1559.624
2	English	115	1288.195
3	I	228	850.434
4	People	63	712.002
5	It	66	695.268
6	grammar	53	598.986
7	rules	36	406.859
8	evolving	30	339.049
9	communication	28	316.446
10	change	27	305.144
11	spelling	26	293.842
12	important	25	282.541
13	The	24	271.239
14	changing	22	248.636
15	correct	21	237.334
16	formal	19	214.731
17	time	19	214.731
18	However	18	203.429
19	speak	18	203.429
20	thing	17	192.128

qualitative data from the respondents. Of the 230 respondents selected for this study, 176 provided a reply. The replies were collected in a corpus of 9404 words and were then analysed with AntConc. By investigating the answers, recurring patterns in the responses were identified, and the next section reports on my findings of the keyword and concordance analysis.

4.2.1 Keyword and Concordance Analysis. From a total of 292 keywords, the top 20 keywords help to identify the 'aboutness' of the corpus (see Section 4.2.1). Many of the top 20 keywords, as can be seen in Table 11.5, are nouns one would expect to find in the responses, such as *language* (1st), *English* (2nd), *grammar* (6th), *rules* (7th) and *spelling* (11th). Because my aim is to identify what lay people consider to be correct and how they refer to normative rules, I look at the keywords *correct* (15th) and *rules* (7th) in more detail.

Two interesting patterns can be detected in relation to the keyword *correct*. The first pattern reflects attitudes towards language change. While one young respondent accepts the violation of 'correctness', an older respondent bemoans the 'loss of some correct grammatical phrases', exemplifying the generational difference (see Section 4.2.2).

(16) I think our language is evolving, and while some phrases may be strictly correct, such as the 'data are' example from earlier, they sound awkward and clunky to my ear. I'm not too bothered if a phrase is technically incorrect, if it would sound right to most people. (Female, 18–25, librarian)

(17) I think that the English language is alive and kicking although I am sad to see the loss of some correct grammatical phrases. (Female, above 60, retired)

The second pattern illustrates the subject of correct language and education. Examples (18) and (19) are taken from the responses of two teachers from different generations. The younger respondent argues for the teaching of grammatically correct English while still preserving regional dialects and spellings. The retired teacher voices a slightly different opinion: he advocates the teaching of 'correct Standard English' and mentions the regional feature *was/were* as a usage problem. It seems that more recent understandings of regional varieties are reflected in the attitudes of teachers.

(18) I think it's important to know and apply the rules of grammatically correct English. However, I also think it's important to maintain regional dialects and spellings. (Female, 18–25, secondary teacher)

(19) People should know about 'less/fewer'; 'me/I'; 'was/were' and so on, and be able to speak and write in correct Standard English when the occasion requires it. Teachers who fail to take this duty seriously are disadvantaging their students. (Male, above 60, retired schoolteacher)

The keyword *rules* (7th) provides an interesting insight into what lay people think about language change. The qualitative analysis of recurring themes showed that two themes are frequently mentioned by the survey participants: allowing language to change with society and the need to know the rules in order to be able to break them. Examples (20) and (21) exemplify the former theme. Nevertheless, these changes are often also viewed negatively, as is done by the respondent in (21).

(20) The 'rules' in English are really a description of how the languag[e] was used at the time they were written, so they need to change with the times and the changes in usage. (Female, 41–50, university administrator)

(21) It [language] is a living language and so changes as society changes. This can be difficult to accept if you are older and were trained in strict rules. But – sometimes it seems too 'sloppy' and my grandchildren can seem limited in their use of language. (Female, above 60, specialist tutor for adult dyslexic students)

The second theme I discuss here is the utilisation of rules. While example (22) states the need for 'learning grammatical rules in primary and secondary education', the female administrator further explains how acquiring rules is a prerequisite for being able to break them. This approach is also emphasised by both respondents in examples (23) and (24), who nonetheless state that not knowing the rules and still breaking them will have consequences.

(22) I welcome the exciting proliferation of different Englishes, but I do believe more emphasis should be put on learning grammatical <u>rules</u> in primary and secondary education. As with learning to play an instrument, it is important to first understand the technique, before playfully abandoning the <u>rules</u>. It is all about the context, and the main problem is not knowing what is appropriate in different types of communication. (Female, 41–50, administrator)

(23) I think that those who say that good English is on its deathbed are exaggerating. 'language is a living thing that grows and adapts to changing use'. It has done so in the past, and will continue to do so. That said, in the interests of clear communication, I think it is important that we all learn the basic <u>rules</u> at least . . . so that (a) you can safely break them, should you so desire; and of less importance, but still . . . so that (b) you don't make yourself sound like a cretin. (Female, 51–60, freelance translator)

(24) I myself believe in the truism that you must learn the <u>rules</u> before breaking them: anything else will make you look silly. (Male, 18–25, student)

5 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Having analysed the available data, I now answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter. The data analysis has shown that there are different degrees of acceptability for each of the three usage problems investigated.

The split infinitive has, without doubt, become widely acceptable, although this does not necessarily mean that the usage debate has ended. As the qualitative data analysis has illustrated, there are still people who dislike the use of split infinitives. However, as age has proven to be a decisive sociolinguistic factor and the statistical analysis has shown that older respondents tend to not accept the split infinitive, this use will ultimately cease to be problematic. The dangling participle shows a high degree of unacceptability, as does the more recent, but widespread use of *like*. The analysis of the qualitative data has shown that the dangling participle is considered unacceptable because of the confusion and ambiguity it can cause. Many informants asked who was actually pulling the trigger of the gun. *Like* is considered the least acceptable item of the three usage problems investigated in this chapter. Its association with young people clearly illustrates a generational difference. As already mentioned, social factors play a decisive role in determining the acceptability of a usage feature. Age proved to be an important social variable in the study of usage attitudes.

The open question concerning the state of the English language was analysed for recurring patterns. The concordance analysis for the keyword *correct* identified two such patterns. While one revealed respondents' feelings regarding changes in Standard English, the second pattern reflected attitudes towards 'correct' or Standard English, regional dialects and teaching. Again, a difference between two generations of teachers was described, which highlights the importance of age in the prescriptivism and descriptivism debate. As the social factor Age has clearly proven to be pivotal in the discussion of usage problems and my data have shown that younger generations exhibit more lenient attitudes towards language, it can be assumed that the generational difference is reflected in different interpretations of correctness and acceptability. The flexibility of normative rules was also emphasised by respondents who believe that rules need to change with the demands and needs of speakers. Furthermore, the keyword *rules* brought to light how respondents view other speakers if they do not know the rules, but break them anyhow.

The aim of this study was to show how a usage attitude study can be used to assess the acceptability of disputed usage items such as the three investigated in this chapter. My findings have shown that social factors cannot be neglected, as age proved to play a crucial role in the understanding of the usage debate. The sociolinguistic angle to my analysis showed that there are certain generational tendencies. Yet other social variables, such as Gender and Social Class, cannot be excluded from the discussion and will be investigated in detail in Ebner (in progress). The issue of awareness was also raised in the definition of usage problems, and its importance was highlighted in the discussion of comments made by survey participants. Although the questionnaire did not highlight any usage problems, many people identified the investigated usage problems and used appropriate terminology, as could be seen in the split infinitive examples.

A careful comparison to Mittins et al.'s study (1970) reveals tendencies of increased acceptability for the two usage problems investigated in both studies. However, the difference between the acceptability increases is quite stark. While the split infinitive shows an increase from 40 to 65.8 per cent, the average acceptability rating of the dangling participle has only increased from 17 to 25.4 per cent (cf. Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2). The reason for the relatively low increase in acceptability of the dangling participle in this sentence may lie in presenting it without context, which is said to increase the ambiguity caused by the mismatch of subjects.

While prescriptive usage guide writers and descriptive linguists have made their voices heard in the usage debate, albeit to different extents, the general public has often been neglected. The study presented in this chapter includes lay people in the debate and shows how a combination of quantitative and qualitative data allows us to reach a better understanding of usage attitudes.

NOTES

1. I am very grateful for the help of Adrian du Plessis in listing my call in the U3A newsletter.
2. See www.lexically.net/downloads/version4/downloading%20BNC.htm; accessed 9 July 2014.
3. Stop-list downloaded from http://xpo6.com/list-of-english-stop-words.

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12 Maori English in Maori Literature: Standardising the Margin into a Norm

Sonia Dupuy

1 Introduction

Is the normalisation of the margin an inevitable process? The question may sound paradoxical – for when the margin becomes a norm, it no longer is a margin – and yet, the development of New Englishes in diglossic societies seems to be giving rise to ever more stable codifications of those dialects that might at first have been seen as linguistic margins. American English is by far now accepted as a 'norm' in itself, and Australian and New Zealand English have also, in their own ways, been 'normalised.' Schneider (2003) describes five phases in the process of linguistic normalisation. 'Foundation' corresponds to 'the initial stage' when settlers come into contact with a foreign language. Then comes the stage of 'exonormative stabilisation', when the settlers come to rely on a more and more distant norm. This gives way to the process of 'nativisation', a stage of considerable lexical borrowing and dramatic phonological changes. The fourth step is that of 'endonormative stabilisation', when the 'gradual adoption and acceptance of an indigenous linguistic norm' has become 'remarkably homogeneous' (2003, pp. 244–251). At that point, dictionaries are produced. This stage was reached earlier in Australia than in New Zealand, as the gap in the dates of publication of the national dictionaries suggests. The *Macquarie Dictionary* – of Australian English – was published in 1981, while the *Oxford Dictionary of New Zealand English* was not published until 1997. The last phase is that of 'differentiation', when 'the emergence of a new variety of English . . . is almost a thing of the past'. It is at that precise moment that 'new varieties of the formerly new variety emerge as carriers of new group identities within the overall community' and that 'differences between settler- and indigenous-strand varieties are likely to resurface as ethnic dialect markers' (Schneider 2003, p. 253). New Zealand English has reached that stage, and Maori English is now slowly emerging alongside. The two varieties may be considered as either end of one and the same spectrum, along a linguistic continuum, respectful of the identities of both Pakeha – New Zealanders of European descent – and Maori. Maori English naturally shares features in common with Pakeha English. This can be explained by the fact that it is only after the phase of endonormative stabilisation that ethnic varieties may arise. This, in turn, may also help explain the difficulty for Maori English to be recognised as an ethnic variety per se.

The title chosen by Richard A. Benton for his chapter on Maori English in *English around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives* is revealing of the degree of scepticism surrounding the dialect: 'Maori English: a New Zealand Myth?' Benton (1991, p. 195) contends that 'the mysteries of Maori English are . . . likely to remain opaque for scholars for some considerable time'; he nonetheless lists a few characteristics of Maori English, such as the 'systematic use of non-standard forms', together with the 'representation of "Maori" pronunciations' and 'the use of Maori words and phrases, especially in "stream of consciousness" narratives involving memories of older Maori-speaking relatives'.

Six years later, Holmes (1997, p. 71) notes that 'the distinguishing characteristics of Maori English are not generally agreed upon.' She forcefully reorients the debate, focusing on the linguistic features of Maori English, their differential distributions amongst Pakeha and Maori in New Zealand, and the potential influence of the Maori on the construction of Maori English. The status of Maori English is further complicated by the fact that New Zealand is a rare example of a territory where a dominant variety, the English of New Zealanders of European descent, is being increasingly influenced by a marginal variety that has been developing among an ethnic minority. Phonological, prosodic and lexical influences have been documented (Holmes 1997; Holmes and Ainsworth 1996, 1997; Warren 1998).

Allan Bell, in a chapter entitled 'Maori and Pakeha English: A Case Study', also stresses the complexity of the question, stating that 'among the most intriguing and elusive issues in the study of New Zealand English is that of the nature – and even the existence – of Maori English' (Bell 2000, p. 221). *Languages of New Zealand* (Bell, Harlow and Starks 2005) did not include a single chapter on Maori English, implicitly denying its very existence. It only alludes to the influence of Maori English on New Zealand English: 'In present-day New Zealand English, L1 Maori English appears, for example, to be a powerful source of linguistic innovation, particularly, perhaps, in the North Island' (2005, p. 157).

That same year, Holmes herself reviewed her initial analyses and concluded,

> The concept of 'Maori English' has become steadily more complex as research in the area has increased . . . There is no single identifiable dialect which can be called 'Maori English,' as was once assumed in discussion of this concept. Rather we are dealing with a range of varieties along a continuum from standard to vernacular, used in a range of contexts from formal to informal. (Holmes 2005, p. 111)

In this chapter, I reconsider these very sceptical statements made on Maori English in relation to its pervasive role in Maori literature, which gives Maori English a very palpable existence.

2 Features of Maori English

There are two kinds of ambiguity to which the definition of Maori English may give rise. Firstly, in the very early days of research on Maori English, Richards (1970, p. 131) distinguished not one, but two forms of Maori English that Holmes (1997, p. 70) summarises thus: 'Very broadly speaking, Maori English 1 refers to the English of educated middle-class Maori New Zealanders, while Maori English 2 is used by the much larger group of Maori from lower socio-economic background.' Such analyses implicitly turn Maori English (ME) into a dialect determined by socio-economic factors rather than by ethnicity, a suggestion made by Bell in his introduction to Maori English in 2000 when he states that only 'some of the features appear to be genuine ethnic markers' while some 'arguably derive from Maori language influence' and 'others seem to be simply common features of vernacular English' (Bell 2000, p. 226).

The second kind of ambiguity surrounding the question of Maori English relates to the 'misplaced' expectations of linguists in trying to establish clear boundaries between Pakeha and Maori English, two dialects that have influenced each other (Bell 2000, p. 222). African American Vernacular English differentiates itself from American English largely by the higher frequency of particular features, rendering the distinction between the two more relative than absolute. The hypothesis, then, that Pakeha and Maori English should be placed along the same continuum in no way invalidates the existence of Maori English. As Burridge (2008, p. 614) argues,

> An important fact to note at the outset is that these features are largely also features that can characterise 'Pakeha' New Zealand English . . . . The difference is that these features are more clearly evident (in terms of degree, consistency and their co-occurrence) in Maori English than in Pakeha English, and it is this that makes it a distinct variety.

Bell (2000, p.223) focuses on what he describes as Maori Vernacular English (MVE), a term he carefully qualifies, adding 'if there is indeed such a variety as MVE'. The advantage of such a choice is its all-encompassing dimension, making it inclusive of *all* features of ME, whether they are connoted as vernacular or not. This, however, also reveals that quite a few of these features are more typically 'vernacular' than 'Maori', which means that they may be likened to some variables already found in vernacular English, especially New Englishes such as Canadian English; for instance, Bell (2000, p. 230) goes on to

Table 12.1 *Stable features of Maori English, after Bell (2000)*

Discourse features	Discourse particle *y'know*
	Discourse particle *eh*
	High rising terminal intonation
Morphosyntactic features	*There's* + plural complement
	Have deletion
Consonants	Initial T non-aspiration: [t] not [tʰ] for /t/ (*time*, *type*)
	Final Z devoicing: [s] or [z] for /z/ (*his*, *goes*)
	TH affrication or stopping: [t] or [tθ] for /θ/ (*think*, *through*)
	Ing reduction
	DH affrication or stopping: [d] or [dð] for /ð/ (*these*, *them*)
Vowels	U fronting: [y] or [ʉ] for /u/ (*too*, *doing*).
	ɪ decentralisation: [i] or [ɪ] for /ɪ/ (*did*, *big*) making *pin* rather sound like *pen*

list 12 stable features of Maori English, divided into four categories, as shown in Table 12.1.

This list can serve to indicate to what extent the features analysed as linguistic markers of Maori English are traceable in Maori literature. The features appear in descending order of frequency in their categories (the first three features were noted in the number of tokens occurring per 10,000 words, while the last nine were in percentages). In pragmatic terms then, Bell first notes the extensive use of the discourse particles *eh* and *Y'know* – both of which occur in Pakeha and Maori discourses, but far more systematically in the latter; this conclusion had already been reached by Meyerhoff (1994, p. 370), who found that 'Maori used *eh* significantly more often than Pakeha (average indices of 34.2 for Maori vs. 7.4 for Pakeha)'. The function of the tag could be associated with the pragmatic function of the particle *ne* in Maori, which is the equivalent of 'is that so? won't you? won't we? isn't it?' or as an 'interrogative emphasising a question, request or proposal and often followed by *rā* or *hā*. (http://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/4366). This very plausible hypothesis is supported by such instances as (1), when elsewhere the pragmatic tag 'eh' is commonly used.[1]

(1) Well, we got him on the way, **ne**? (Hulme 1984, p. 6)

In addition to these two pragmatic features, Bell notes several morpho-syntactic features such as a near-systematic deletion of HAVE, the complementation of *there's* with a plural, and the existence of a plural form of the second-person pronoun *yous*. The last element is also signalled by Taylor (2001, p. 336) as 'particularly characteristic, almost a shibboleth, of Maori English today'.[2] Bauer (1995, pp. 400ff) maintains that the form was originally Irish. He nonetheless recalls that Maori also has dual and plural second-person pronouns. On that particular point, Keown adds,

Table 12.2 *Maori consonants*

Sonorants	/m/, /n/, /ng/, /r/, /w/, /wh/
Obstruents	/t/, /p/, /k/, /h/

Maori has separate singular, dual and plural second-person pronominal forms, meaning that the modern English pronoun 'you', which is used for all three pronominal forms, has three counterparts in Māori: '*koe*' (you, singular); '*korua*' (you two) and '*koutou*' (you plural), and is therefore not only a legitimate plural form in certain non-standard varieties of English, but also arguably indexes an existing (and more complex) number distinction in Māori. (Keown 2013, pp. 43–44)

Most of the phonological features that Bell describes are, in fact, informed by the Maori consonantal system. As Harlow (1991, p. 76) explains, 'Voice is not distinctive in Maori and, as one would expect under these circumstances, obstruents are inherently voiceless, and are clearly so phonetically in careful speech, while sonorant consonants and vowels are inherently voiced.' Table 12.2 shows a list of Maori consonants, divided into sonorants and obstruents.

Despite the striking decrease in the number of Maori speakers, 'the unaspirated [t] for instance may continue to survive because of its symbolic value as a signal of Maori identity' (Holmes 1997, p. 83). In terms of prosody, the high rising terminal (HRT) has been noted as another typical characteristic of Maori English, but this feature, together with the fact that Maori English is syllable-timed, obviously cannot be textually apprehended. Only five features may be traced in Maori literature: discourse particles *eh* and *y'know*; *have* deletion; *there's* + plural complement; and ɪ decentralisation.As mentioned, however, these features are also found in other varieties of English. What is more distinctive is the incorporation of features of the Maori language – generally referred to as Te Reo Maori – into Maori English. This should come as no surprise considering that 'Maori topics are more frequent in these interactions' (Holmes 1997, p. 74). Schneider (2003, p. 269) claims that the progressive transformation of English everywhere follows a 'characteristic' lexical process: 'we find the lexical processes characteristic of this phase: the borrowing and coinage of words for fauna and flora as well as elements of the indigenous culture and, generally, objects characteristic of the new environment.' Unlike phonological features, such elements can be observed in Maori literature.

3 Maori English in Maori Literature: A Slow Process of Codification

The rise of Maori literature is still quite recent: Maori literature, as a form of cultural recognition, only developed in the 1990s. The two Maori writers who today have international stature are Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace. Keri Hulme has also gained recognition, and Tina Makareti has, more recently, risen to literary fame. To date, Huia publishers have published a long series of Maori short stories that are also considered here. Even though Alan Duff is not classified as a Maori author, when we think of Maori English in literature, the first piece of work that often comes to mind is his (1990) novel *Once Were Warriors*. It was in fact the very first attempt to transcribe Maori Vernacular English, and its reception stressed its linguistic dimension. I thus focus on this one novel, without, of course, disregarding other works. This analysis is based on the search for non-standard structures in English and Maori words. While phonological variance is difficult to trace in fiction, the marginal spelling of some English words duplicating Maori pronunciation does suggest a form of codification. And there are examples that suggest an effort to translate such specifically phonological features as the I decentralisation, with occurrences of *shit* written as *shet*:

(2) She told them the Maori of old had a culture, and he had pride, and he had warriorhood, not this bullying, man-hitting-woman **shet**, you call that manhood? (Duff 1990, p. 28)

This is one of the rare cases of I decentralisation, possibly because such spelling modifications, even if they faithfully reproduce phonetic variations, might entail problems of intelligibility. Among the words subverted from their original spellings, some have become quite common in Maori literature; for example, *nah* or *na* instead of *no*; *bro* or *cuz* instead of *brother* or *cousin* but when used semantically closer to that of *mate*. These have become unmistakable Maori markers in Maori literature. The following excerpt from *Luminous*, in which the protagonist is modelled on a Maori student, illustrates that evolution:

(3) Tiri enrolled in the next year's intake. He hung out with Evangel because Evangel had Brown skin, and he was the only one there that Tiri felt comfortable with . . . Steph invited him around to their flat all the time, and started saying 'bro' and 'cuz' like Tiri.

Evangel wanted to say, 'Don't you know how stupid you sound?'

Later, he told her, 'We were both brought up Pākehā. The difference is that I want to stay Pākehā, and you want to be something else.' (Tawhai 2007, p. 131)

The rewriting of other words can be noted, such as that of 'university' into 'varsity'as in this next example:

(4) Rose made us laugh telling about the people she knows, and taking off professor this and professor that from varsity. (Grace 1994, p. ii)

However, some modifications found in *Once Were Warriors* are not to be found anywhere else in Maori literature, except in its sequel, *What Becomes of the Broken-Hearted*. One example is *nuthing* for *nothing* (Duff 1990, p. 12). While the words *bro* and *cuz* can definitely be regarded as now stable codifications, the standardisation of *fellow* into *fulla* rather than *fella* has been a slow process. Indeed, although Hulme (1986) uses the form *fellas* (*Te Kaihau, the Windeater*, p. 92), variations can now be found; one example is a possibly phonetically more accurate transcription into *fullas*, a form that Benton (1991, p. 196) considers the ultimate transformation of the word 'fellow'. In fact, the latest edition of *Maori Short Stories* of 2013 still presents the reader with two different spellings of the word in three separate short stories. *Fulla* appears six times, while *fella* appears only twice. Variations still persist, however, and fulla seems to be more and more consistently replaced by fella. For example, in the ultimate rewriting of *fellow* as *fulla* rather than *fella*, in Tina Makareti's 2010 novel, *Once upon a Time in Aotearoa*, no occurrences of *fulla* could be found (the five occurrences read *fella*). This means that the spelling codification of such English words as they would be pronounced in Maori is not yet fully stabilised. Two hypotheses can be retained here. Firstly, in *Once Were Warriors*, Duff systematically rewrote the phrase *full of* into *fulla* (5):

(5) Other day it was a bookcase. **Fulla** books of course. (Duff 1990, p. 10)

So it is likely that he would have wanted to avoid any potential confusion between *fulla* as *full of* and *fulla* as *fellow*. A second hypothesis must also be explored. The rewriting of *fellow* into *fella* and sometimes *fellah* is now recognised as a common marker of Aboriginal English, and it can hardly be doubted that Maori writers are bent on creating Maori markers that cannot be likened to those of other Pacific ethnic groups.

Deletion or truncation of letters or phonemes is also quite common in Maori literature. In *Te Kai Hau, the Windeater*, the narrator calls a child *Hey boy, cm're* (p. 92). Some such truncations may be informed by Maori English features such as the initial /t/ de-aspiration with a frequent reduction of *them* into *em* and *themselves* into *emselves* (6).

(6) rich white bitches and bastards not satisfied with life being kind to **em** . . . . paying **em** to do crimes

I ain't having **em** looking at me sniggering to **emselves.** (Hulme 1986, pp. 9, 15)

It nevertheless remains a socio-economic marker and appears in other varieties of vernacular English. There are multiple occurrences of this feature in Maori literature, and indeed, more often than not, it is uttered by characters from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Some can be found in *Stonefish* (7):

(7) Pound flat completely man, make'**em** paper and rehang until absolutely dry. (Hulme 2004, p. 220)

The truncation of the *th*- morpheme often leads to the addition of *em* to the previous verb or preposition, as in *fixem up on payday*; *the place is teeming withem*; *some ofem*; and *forem* (Duff 1990, pp. 14, 15). Still, other such transient word compounds are not necessarily related to the phonological features of Maori English. There is no mention wheresoever of a deaspiration of the 'h', and yet that of the third-personal singular pronoun *him* is often deleted and the remaining morpheme added to the previous word, as in *to hell withim* (1990, p. 13). Such reductions are not necessarily consonantal, but may be vocalic, as in *sposed*, *stead* or *bout* (1990, p. 13). But the final devoicing /z/ and the absence of consonant clusters certainly may explain the no fewer than 14 occurrences of *whass* instead of *what's*, as in *Whassa madda, Grace?* or *Whassa madda anyway?* (Duff 1990, pp. 91–92). Still, as Lambert (2008, p. 161) remarks, the final /ts/ cluster is 'realised inconsistently as either /s/ (. . .) or /z/'. Indeed, *thas* and *thaz* forms are both used, although the /s/ realisation appears to be prevalent, with 13 occurrences to 3 (Duff 1990). The examples in (8) are significant, as explained next:

(8) and **thas** even tho we pissed as, man

Oh, **thaz** right, my kids're waiting for me. (Duff 1990, pp. 119, 109)

Reduction of *-ing* is marked by the very frequent dropping of the 'g' at the end of *-ing* morphemes, as in *fuckin* or *cryin*. This again is not systematic and only appears in dialogues. Such reductions are common to other forms of vernacular English, but no apostrophes were used in *Once Were Warriors*, which could have made this one small difference significant in itself. In *What Becomes of the Broken-Hearted*, the sequel to *Once Were Warriors*, apostrophes were systematically used, as they were in other Maori novels and short stories, a choice likely to have been made by the publishing house.

Reductions sometimes give way to common word slurs, codifying relaxed or condensed pronunciations. They typically pervade the discourse of Maori characters with, for instance, the transformation of *kind of* into *kinda*, of *lot of* into *lotta*, of *a couple of* into *cupla* and *instead of* into *steada*. Examples (9) and (10) are revealing:

(9) We might **haveta** go look for that chick with the funny eye, she always looks like she knows about stuff. (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 55)

(10) Do you reckon if we were around in those days we **woulda** eaten cat? (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 58)

But these word slurs are common in American slang too and mainly derive from the fact that *of* often elides because of its being no more than a schwa in certain phonological environments. This also happens to be the case of *to* and *have* and *would*, with examples like *haveta* or *woulda* and even *woudna* as in *I wouldna wanted that to happen to me* (Duff 1990, p. 36) These features may – through TV influence and processes of linguistic identification – be informed by African American Vernacular English more than by features specific to Maori English, which could explain why they are not systematically observable in Maori fiction. This can also be said about the liquidisation of 't' as in *bedda* for *better* or *madda* for *matter* (1990, p. 36). There are, however, attempts at transforming such slang into something more local with the occurrences of *whadda y'mean* or *gunna* (Grace 2006, p. 94).

Finally, word slurs and elisions often give birth to phrases transcribed as one word. These compounds are quite common in Maori literature with such instances as *whatshername* (Duff 1990, p. 13), *whaddaboutit* (Hulme 1984, p. 15) and *Jeezuzfuckenchrise* (Duff 1998, p. 87). These occurrences are unique in themselves, and even if the tendency to slur words is not essentially a feature of Maori Vernacular English, some words may, in the years to come, stabilise as markers of Maori English.

More specifically syntactical features, such as the elision of the auxiliary, are more stable phenomena. As Bell asserts, the auxiliary *have* is often deleted (2–4), and sometimes *be* is also dropped, as in (11):

(11)
a. you hungry? (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 56)
b. Fishing been any good? (Hulme 1984, p. 13)
c. you better. (Duff 1990, p. 15)
d. you been waiting for me to wake up. (Grace 2002, p. 83)

As detailed by Bell, the existential form *there is* is often complemented with a plural, as in *There's mobsters and all sorts out there where they live* (Tawhai 2007, p. 37), *there's the pictures of the larvae* (Hulme 2004, p. 83) and *There's holes in the roof* (Grace 2006, p. 73). Those occurrences again only appear in dialogues, and in quite a few Maori novels such as *The Matriarch* (Ihimaera 1986) there are none to be found. Once again, this is not specific to Maori English as it can be found in other English dialects; Cheshire and Edwards (1998, p. 64) confirm that '[c]ertain nonstandard grammatical features, such as multiple negation and unmarked plurality, are sometimes listed as common to most urban varieties of English'.

Among the other persistent features of Maori English inscribed in Maori literature, the plural form of the personal pronoun *you* can be found in quite a few occurrences:

(12)
a. Us boys won't get no kai if **youse** girls don't hurry up. (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 62)
b. All **yous**. Look at **yiz**. (Grace 2002, p. 27)

This goes so far as to give way to the following metalinguistic commentary in *Letters from Whetu*, a short story by Patricia Grace, when the autodiegetic narrator reflects on his teacher's remark:

(13) I sometimes do a bit of a stir with Fisher, like I say 'yous' instead of 'you' (pl.). It always sends her PURPLE. The other day I wrote it in my essay and she had a BLUE fit. She scratched it out in RED and wrote me a double underlined note – 'I have told you many times before that there is no such word as "yous" (I wonder if it hurt her to write it). Please do not use (yous heh heh) it again.' So I wrote a triple underlined note underneath – 'How can I yous it if it does not exist?' (Grace 1994, p. 122)

This stresses the acute consciousness of Maori writers of the cultural recognition of Maori English. Such criss-crossing of now accepted common linguistic features of Maori English with Maori literature shows that Maori literature indeed participates in the construction and recognition of Maori English as a written dialect, showing it to be a Maori form of New English and not essentially a written transcription of local phonetic and phonological variances.

Finally, there are other Maori English syntactical features traceable in Maori literature that have not been noted as features of Maori English by either Bell or Holmes, who mainly concentrated on Maori speech. Heim (1998) describes some of them. He shows that, in quite a few cases, the subject is postponed, as in the following two examples:

(14) a. Died here, **my wife**, when last we came. (Grace 1994, p. 55)
b. No aching back or tired arms **he.** (Grace 1994, p. 20)

This form of right dislocation – a sentence structure in which a constituent that could otherwise be either an argument or an adjunct of the clause occurs outside the clause boundaries to its right – is indeed common in Maori literature. Heim also notices that the subject is sometimes highlighted by its elision in passages where it does not change, as in the following two passages from Waiariki:

(15) a. Next morning then I, with many there to see me go. Out to sea with the day just coming, pulling strong and straight. Around the point, then quickly to the chosen place to get down my line before sunrise. (Grace 1994, p. 18)
b. Soon they will return, those who gather agar, with kits full and backs tired. Back to the camp to rest and eat, then before nightfall to pick up the dried agar and tramp it into the bale. Then to get ready the beds in the tent and then to sleep, for it is much work this gathering of agar. (Grace 1994, p. 55)

For Harlow (1991, p. 15), this elision is typical of Maori structures conveyed in the English language; he notes that in Maori narratives, pronouns are omitted 'after the first mention or two of the subject until a new subject is introduced'. Another syntactically prominent feature is the use of subject emphasis in what Heim (1998) describes as 'hybrid active-passive constructions with subject postponement'. He associates this with the Maori syntactic construction described by Harlow (1991, p. 36) as 'the actor emphatic which combines features of both the active and passive'. This syntactical feature, apparent in Maori literature, is not listed as one of the features of Maori English. There may be an explanation for that omission. Indeed, Harlow makes it clear that it is in 'classical' Maori where pronouns are omitted after one or two first mentions. He explains that modern Maori English is now more consistently following the English use of pronouns. Still, it has to be noted that Maori literature, diegetically turned to the past, includes a number of older Maori characters, expressing themselves either in their own Maori English or in the Maori language. This means that even if Maori English is itself evolving towards a less marginal pattern or one that distances itself from the structures of Maori, Maori literature still exploits both forms of Maori English, old and new.

To conclude, it is easy to see that Maori English is growing into a more recognisable written form in Maori literature. The comparison of linguistic data with examples from Maori literature is a promising line of research.

4 Te Reo Maori in Maori Literature: A Declaration of Linguistic Independence?

The second most notable feature of Maori English is that it is interspersed with Maori words. Schneider (2003) lists a number of words that are now commonly used in Maori English, such as *toetoe* ('pampas grass'), *kauri* to describe the fauna, *waka* ('canoe'), *whare* ('house'), *marae* ('courtyard of a meeting house'), *hei tiki* ('good luck carving'), *hui* ('meeting'), *hangi* ('earth oven'), *whanau* ('extended family') and *mana* ('prestige, standing'). Most of the words listed by Schneider do appear in Maori literature; such incorporation of Maori words and phrases in Maori literature is widespread. Here again, however, the process of standardisation is made more complex by the fact that Maori words in Maori literature fall into two categories.

First, and predictably enough, there are Maori words that are now fully understandable by New Zealand readers, even those who are not Maori literate. These words more or less correspond to the ones listed by Schneider. The word *kai* – 'food' in Maori – now appears as a persistent feature of written Maori English. It has come to convey two meanings: food as such and 'a meal', as in (16):

(16) a. 'Watch me knock back this **kai**!' He took six slices of meat for his first helping. (Tawhai 2007, p. 35)
b. After the **kai**, Aunt Hiraina told me how well used the meeting house was now. (Ihimaera 1997, p. 181)

The persistence of the word in Maori literature in 2007 already shows that, unexpectedly perhaps, it has clearly been standardised. Earlier, Bauer (1995, p. 416) explained that '[a] few words, such as *kai* "food", do seem to be associated with Maori English, but this is not a clear trend'.

More to the point however, the word *kai* increasingly appears with the English determiner *the*, which shows that it is now fully integrated as a Maori *English* term. This is not to say that there are no determiners in Maori – in the singular, either *he* ('a, some') or *te* ('the') can be used while the particle *nga* is used for the plural. However, the combination of the Maori word with the English determiner makes this kind of semantic integration a forceful marker of Maori English.

Apart from these highly predictable terms, there are a range of other Maori words that are not necessarily accessible to New Zealand or outside readers, such as *taniwha* – a dangerous water creature – or *karenga*, a shout (17):

(17) a. Her eyes were like a **taniwha** when she got mad, sometimes I was sure I could see smoke escape from her nostrils. (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 61)
b. We went on a marae trip in intermediate school and my feet felt rooted to the sport when a **karanga** rang out in the wind and tears pricked my eyes as if I had been pinched deep inside. (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 61)

At times, whole sentences in Maori go untranslated as in (18), where only part of the sentence can be understood by the English speaker:

(18) **Āe, te wahine pōuri o te pō**, the sad woman of the night, she is our **tipuna** never to pass on her **whakapapa** as she is married into the white world, never to be seen again. (*Huia Short Stories 7*, 2007, p. 64)

In the early days, glossaries were provided, as in *The Bone People* (Hulme 1984) or *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (Grace 1978), but even these glossaries were partly elliptic. Maori words are often glossed or sometimes presented in dual semantic pairs in Maori and English as in Witi Ihimaera's novels (19):

(19) At the sound of the bell the people would murmur to each other, **'Te tangi atu nei te pere. The bell is calling**.' (Ihimaera, 1997, p. 112)

Lately however, glossing has been declining in favour of inference skills, and glossaries – there was one in *The Bone People* – have disappeared altogether. There is obviously a political purpose behind such a higher frequency of Te Reo Maori. Moura-Koçoğlu (2011, p. 154) comments, 'Maori literature written in English increasingly features a deliberately idiosyncratic use of indigenous language and concepts underpinning indigenous identification, thus creating the means of cultural representation in a vigorously political sense.' I must emphasise here that the incorporation of words from the contact language in the creation of New Englishes abides by a 'hierarchy of borrowability' and that, as Degani (2010, p. 167) explains, the 'fundamental assumption in the literature is that vocabulary is borrowed before structure, and non-basic recedes basic vocabulary'.

The increasing use of Maori in Maori literature calls for one last important comment. While Maori contains short and long vowels, it took quite some time to see macrons – vertical bars indicating longer vowels – incorporated into the text. Although there is no macron in the sometimes long passages in Maori in *Sky Dancer*, a 2003 novel by Witi Ihimaera, they have been more systematically used since 2005. The now generalised use of the macron also stands out as a significant move towards a better recognition of Maori in Maori novels.

5 Maori English as Cultural Translation: A New Narrative Dynamic

There is a third side to Maori English that is possibly less easily apprehensible, but still woven into the fabric of Maori literature. If English remains the basis of such literature, it is nonetheless sometimes diverted from its common word combinations into chains of words that better fit a Maori world view.

Maori thoughts, idioms and proverbs are sometimes 'translanguaged'. Maori writers are acutely aware of the phenomenon, as strikingly conveyed in *A Way of Talking*, when Nanny, the Maori grandmother, is caught saying, 'Time for sleeping. The mouths steal the time of the eye'. The sentence is in English, but the combination of words does not come out as sounding like English. The narrator herself comments, 'That's the lovely way she has of talking, Nanny, when she speaks in English' (Manhire 1997, p. 273). Such hybridity is another typical feature of new literatures in English. It provides, as Yao (2003, p. 31) writes, 'new possibilities of expression in one language by building creatively upon the signifying capacities of another'. Michaela Moura adds,

> As indigenous traditions, legends, and myths are translated into a contemporary context in literary discourse, so is language. While Standard English remains the Platform, it is enriched, altered, and adjusted to convey a distinctly indigenous perception of contemporary postcolonial like in Aoetaroa New Zealand. (Moura-Koçoğlu, 2011, p. 154)

So there are phrases that are sheer cultural translations of Maori proverbs and idioms. As such, they are English, and yet, they appear as phrases that have no existence in mainstream English, clearly vibrating with a Maori ring. The lexicon is English, but the semantics are essentially Maori. This is an important part of the characterisation of Maori English. Maori literature is endowed with a metaphorical system of mythological references, more complex to apprehend than syntactical and lexical features. In the *Healing Tongue*, Peter Beatson

(1989, p. 4) speaks of ‘those aspects of spiritual beliefs which have been incorporated into the English language literature of Maori writers’. As suggested earlier, Maori English is also expressed through the cultural translation of Maori speech patterns, which are possibly harder to grasp for a non-native speaker. For Bill Pearson, Grace’s method for instance is ‘suggestive of (not an accurate reproduction of) the speech patterns for rural Maori English more often than of Maori’ (Pearson 1982, quoted in Heim 1998, p. 159). This means that Maori English is not only struggling to be officially recognised as a dialect alongside New Zealand English, with which it obviously shares common features, but is also being enlarged and enriched in Maori literature, adding ‘foreignness’ to English by translating poetics. As Otto Heim (1998, p. 160) suggests about the novels of Patricia Grace, ‘the experience of Maori elders is to a certain extent foreign to the English language, and therefore the English language must admit a certain foreignness if it is to accommodate this experience’. Such foreignness is naturally reminiscent of Venuti’s statement on ‘Domestication’ and ‘Foreignisation’, where he questions how much a translation assimilates a foreign text to the translating language and culture and how much it rather signals the differences of that text (Venuti, 2012).

6 Conclusion

The criss-crossing of linguistic data on Maori English with Maori literature emphasises the fact that Maori literature actively participates in the construction *and* recognition of Maori English as a written dialect, showing it to be a Maori form of New English and not essentially a written transcription of phonetic and phonological local variations. However, if, in Maori fiction, narrators make extensive use of Te Reo Maori and Maori speech patterns, they only rarely rely on spelling variances or auxiliary deletion, or anything in fact that Benton described as ‘non-standard forms’ that only occur in the mouths of socio-economically deprived Maori characters. That narrators should thus not rely on features of Maori English that may be likened to slang is a sign that Maori writers are codifying a kind of Maori English that calls for increased recognition on the local scene, without taking the risk of limiting it to the language of those on the margins of society – that *Once Were Warriors* describes. On that point, Benton (1991, p. 196) writes,

> There is obviously plenty of scope for research on the vocabulary, syntax, semantics and figurative structure of English spoken by New Zealanders who are members of the Maori community. However, such research is sensitive in nature in an atmosphere where ‘non-standard’ is still frequently interpreted as ‘substandard,’ where dialect is often a pejorative term, and where Maori people are increasingly suspicious and resentful of exposing their social anatomy and physiology to the world at large, with little of any demonstrable benefit to them individually or as a people.

What kind of Maori English, then, will end up codified in Maori literature? It is now a common assumption that vocabulary is always borrowed before structure. It is easy to understand why the Maori novels of Patricia Grace, Keri Hulme and Witi Ihimaera contain more Maori words than Maori structures. Maori readers[3] *and* writers are less and less conversant in Maori, as Patricia Grace explained when she declared that she did not speak Maori despite her knowledge of *some* Maori (Fresno and Grace 2003, 12).

So it is likely that the codification of Maori English will follow one of two separate trends: either a more predictable incorporation of Te Reo Maori using a more stable transcription of Maori speech, or a more comprehensive integration of both Maori speech *and* Te Reo Maori, with the same degree of respectability. Major (1994, p. xxvii) advocates a reconsideration of slang in the creation of New Englishes, so as to 'bring to the language we call slang a better name, a better reputation'. This is echoed in the Facebook page *Chur Bro*[4] (2010), which is described as 'the official page of Maori slanguage' and not of 'Maori slang.' The authors are bent on 'transforming English into something new and special'. The ultimate purpose of 'transforming English' is not only to further develop Maori English but also to sustain the validity of the theory of *linguistic* reverse colonisation to perfection.

NOTES

1. Other occurrences can be found in Hulme's short stories: 'Come in quick, it's cold out there eh? We got some important people from Maori Affairs, surprised us eh, they're in there talking now but we can slip down the back and have a kaputi, get warm eh?' (Hulme 1986, p. 96).
2. Interestingly, Taylor (2001, p. 336) adds that 'it is not in Australia regarded as mainly a feature of Aboriginal English, rather of "uneducated" speech generally'.
3. This example from *Once Were Warriors* (p. 28) no doubt enforces that interpretation: 'Back she went: Maoris, eh? Can any of us in this room speak the language? No reply.'
4. See www.facebook.com/pages/Chur-Bro-Maori-Slang-is-the-best/389202888904. *Chur* is derived from the relaxation of *cheer*, now meaning 'cheers' but also replacing *choice*, which in 1990s New Zealand English meant 'awesome'.

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13 Imposing a Norm: The Invisible Marks of Copy-Editors

Linda Pillière

1 Introduction

Printing and publishing have historically played an important role in standardising the English language, but we are usually unaware of the numerous changes made to a manuscript before it reaches the bookshop. Indeed, most readers probably do not even notice the name of the editor and would be surprised, even taken aback, to discover that a novel is more of a collaborative effort than first assumed.

However, there are memorable occasions when editorial modifications do become visible, the furore over the US publication of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* being one of the more recent,[1] and the relatively frequent existence of American English (AmE) editions of British novels provides evidence of editorial interventions. Many of the modifications are instances of 'verbal hygiene' (Cameron 1995) and reveal the important role played by copy-editors. Yet, despite the growing interest in the role of copy-editing (Wates and Campbell 2007; Nunn and Adamson 2012; Owen 2013), studies have tended to focus on publishing in academic journals. Few have drawn attention to the omnipresence of modifications in fiction and even fewer to the gatekeeping role that many copy-editors assume. This chapter examines the interplay between usage/style guides and editorial practice, and seeks to examine whether copy-editors contribute to establishing a written norm.

In earlier research I focused on the changes introduced into the texts of British novels re-published in the United States between 1980 and 2010 (Pillière 2010, 2013). The corpus comprised 60 novels from various genres: Booker Prize winners, children's fiction, science fiction, biography, romance and travelogues. Some changes were obviously dialectal due to spelling differences (*center* instead of *centre*), punctuation differences (the use of single or double inverted commas to introduce speech), grammatical differences (*gotten* instead of *got*) or lexical differences (*candy* instead of *sweets*). All these changes exposed the important role played by editors (I use the term loosely here),

I would like to thank the anonymous members of *Copyediting-L, ACES, SfEP* and *AFEPI* without whose help the survey would not have been possible

but would have been clearly visible to any attentive reader, without the original edition to hand. Other differences were less straightforwardly 'dialectal', less visible and less easily explained. It was also difficult to ascertain whether the changes had been made by the author after initial publication in the United Kingdom or by the US editor. It was equally difficult to tell whether these modifications would have been approved by all copy-editors or whether they were specific to one publishing house or even one copy-editor.

In order to discover why these changes might have been made, what role, if any, might have been played by style and usage guides and how these changes might affect written English, I designed an online survey which presented participants, all of whom were or had been professional copy-editors, with extracts from the corpus that featured changes to grammatical structures and to information packaging in the two editions. In each case the participants were asked to state a preference, if any, for one of the two extracts. They were also asked to give reasons for their choice. It was thus possible to test whether the modifications were identified as dialectal differences, as grammatical rules, as style preferences or simply an individual copy-editor's choice of norm.

The first part of this chapter briefly presents the copy-editor's role within the publishing process, followed by an overview of style and usage guides used by copy-editors. The two grammatical points under investigation are then presented from the perspective of style/usage guides and scholarly articles. A presentation of the research design and the results of the survey follow. Finally the data are analysed and the findings discussed.

2 The Role of Copy-Editors within the Editorial Process

Copy-editing is often considered to be 'the heart of the editorial process' (Mackenzie 2011, p. 161), although copy-editors' exact role can vary according to the type of text they are working on, as can the job title. Some publishers distinguish between copy-editors and line editors (Cavin 1993, p. 199). The former works on the style and creative content, whereas the latter intervenes at the micro-level of the text, checking it carefully for spelling, punctuation and grammar and ensuring that references and quotations are accurate, although there is often some overlap. Other definitions focus on the process, rather than the job title. *The Chicago Manual of Style* distinguishes between two kinds of editing: mechanical editing or 'the consistent application of a particular style to a written work' and substantive editing, which 'involves rewriting to improve style or to eliminate ambiguity, reorganizing or tightening, recasting tables, and other remedial activities' (2010, 2.46 and 2.47). A further distinction concerns the levels of editing – light, medium and heavy – although what these terms refer to may again vary slightly from one publisher to another. Light copy-editing (or baseline) is generally correcting indisputable grammatical mistakes; medium copy-editing covers errors in syntax, usage and any infelicitous turns of phrase;

heavy copy-editing involves a greater degree of rewriting (Einsohn 2006, p. 12). For the purposes of this chapter, I use the term 'copy-editor' throughout to refer to the profession, as the main aims remain very similar: 'to remove any obstacles between the reader and what the author wants to convey and to find and solve any problems before the book goes to the typesetter' (Butcher 2006, p. 1). The copy-editor's chief concerns comprise '"the 4 Cs" – clarity, coherency, consistency, and correctness – in service of the "Cardinal C": communication' (Einsohn 2006, p. 3). Far from acting on a personal whim, copy-editors rely heavily on style and usage guides to help them achieve a 'correct' version free from awkwardness, inaccuracy and errors.

3 Style Guides and Usage Guides

The distinction between style guides and usage guides is not always clear-cut (see Tieken, Chapter 10, for a fuller discussion). Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* is really a usage guide, and some works even claim to be both, such as *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* and *The American Heritage Guide to Contemporary Usage and Style*.

However, style and usage guides differ in many important respects. Firstly, style guides are aimed at professionals. A publishing house will have its own mandatory in-house style guide, thus imposing a consistent style throughout a text. These guides are concerned with ruling on specific spellings (*-ise* or *-ize*) or punctuation. Publishers may also require copy-editors to follow a more complete guide such as the *The Chicago Manual of Style* or may publish their own such as *The Random House Handbook* or *The Cambridge Handbook for Editors, Copy-editors and Proofreaders*. Certain professions or academic disciplines use a specific style manual or guide. Journalists turn to the *AP Stylebook* for guidance; students in the humanities to the *MLA Handbook*. A usage guide, in contrast, provides rules and advice 'to enable its user to make choices between linguistic features that can be functionally equivalent in a given context' (Weiner 1988, p. 173). So while a style guide is used by professionals, a usage guide is consulted by anyone who feels insecure about points of usage.

Despite the potentially different readership, the grammatical content of style guides often resembles the prescriptivism of usage guides. Advice on when to use *which* or *that*, recommendations on dangling participles or the use of *only*, appear in both style and usage guides. It is the tone and aim that are different. While an in-house style sheet provides a list of do's and don'ts with no personal comment and a style guide, such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*, will generally avoid using the first person, a usage guide gives clear opinions on matters of usage, using the modal *should* and imperatives to convince its readers (Cameron 1995, p. 67). As the writers of *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* (1994, p. 7a) point out, 'Behind usage as a subject lies a collection of opinions about what English grammar is or should be, about the propriety of using certain words and phrases, and about the social status of those who use certain words and constructions.' As a result, usage guides introduce a moral tone which is absent from style guides.

If a style guide aims at consistency, a usage guide promotes clarity (though the two are not mutually exclusive), and clarity is achieved through concision: 'as long as it's accurate, the briefest way of phrasing an idea is usually best because the brevity enhances speed, clarity, and impact' (Garner 2009, p. xviii). Succinctness is therefore desirable: the authors of *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* devote a whole chapter to the art of concision, advocating the deletion of words that 'mean little or nothing' or that 'repeat the meaning of other words' (Williams and Bizup 2014, p. 139), while Strunk and White insist that 'vigorous writing is concise' (2009, p. 25). The metaphor 'good style is healthy and strong' is echoed most clearly in Sword's (2007) *The Writer's Diet*, which aims to produce lean and fit prose.

If clarity means telling things straight, wordiness suggests dishonesty. For Orwell (1946, p. 357), 'the great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms.' Other usage guide writers may not go as far as equating a clear, concise style with honesty, but they do associate correct usage with good manners. Writing lengthy sentences is 'an unfriendly act' (Cutts 1995, p. 41); 'unclear writing is a social problem' (Williams and Bizup 2014, p. 6), and the would-be writer should realise that '[s]ome writers . . . claim to be sickened or disgusted when they find words misused, and it is only civil to spare them distress' (Cook 1985, p. 163).

A clear style is thus held up as an ideal, both moral and stylistic. However, even style sheets sometimes adopt a moral tone. Writing about the house style of the *Guardian* newspaper, Marsh remarks that 'part of it is about consistency, trying to maintain the standards of good English that our readers expect . . . But, more than anything, the *Guardian* style guide is about using language that maintains and upholds our values.'[2] The clear link between language and morality leads to a style guide being elevated to 'holy text' (Pullum 2004, p. 7), the undisputed authority of what is and what is not considered to be acceptable.

One of the striking characteristics of both style and usage guides is their disregard or apparent lack of knowledge of current linguistic research. Usage guide writers are rarely linguists themselves (John Humphrys is a radio news presenter, Bill Bryson a writer, Bryan Garner a lawyer). It is perhaps then hardly surprising that usage guides offer little grammatical explanation as to why they prefer one form to another. As the authors of *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* point out,

> A fairly large number of these opinions have been with us long enough to be regarded as rules or at least to be referred to as rules. In fact, they are often regarded as rules of

grammar, even if they concern only matters of social status or vocabulary selection. And many of these rules are widely believed to have universal application, even though they are far from universally observed. (1994, p. 7a)

Finally, it is worth emphasising that there are fundamental differences between the teaching of grammar in the US and the UK educational systems. While English grammar disappeared from the British school curriculum from the late 1960s, leading Aarts, Clayton and Wallis (2012) to talk of the 'grammar gap', school grammars and college handbooks, heavily influenced by usage guides such as Strunk and White, play a more important role in the United States. Zwicky, writing on *Language Log* (2006), points out the dangers of blindly following such guides:

People think that rules are important, and they are reluctant to abandon things they were taught as children, especially when those teachings were framed as matters of right and wrong. They will pass those teachings on. They will interpret denials of the validity of such rules – even denials coming from people like Garner and Fiske, who are not at all shy about slinging rules around – as threats to the moral order and will tend to reject them.

4 The Usage Points Chosen for Analysis

In order to discover copy-editors' motivations for textual modifications, my questionnaire contained several usage differences, but for the present chapter I focus on two of them for the following reasons. While it is generally agreed that the first difference, the use of *that* rather than *which* in restrictive relative clauses, is a prescriptivism-related change (Bohmann and Schultz 2011; Curzan 2014), those responsible for enforcing the rule are not so clearly identified. Bohmann and Schultz imply that it is the writers themselves (2011, p. 98), although they do suggest in their conclusion that 'the changing style sheets and policies of individual editorial boards may provide rewarding results for contextualizing the probabilistic developments extracted from corpus linguistic analyses' (2011, p. 99). Cameron (1995, p. 56), in contrast, quoting Stainton in *The Fine Art of Copy-editing*, suggests that the distinction may be on the way out. One of the aims of the questionnaire was to investigate which of the two hypotheses is the closer to reality and how far copy-editors are responsible for maintaining this distinction. The second structure that I focus on is the elimination of *there is/there are*. This point has received less attention and also provides a clear example where linguists and usage guides differ in their analysis.

4.1 Which *and* That *in Restrictive Relative Clauses*

A restrictive relative clause is one where the information contained in the dependent clause is integrated both syntactically (no comma) and prosodically (no pause) (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, p. 63). The MHRA Style Guide (2008, p. 25) gives the following examples:

> The family had two cats, which slept indoors, and a dog.
> The family had two cats which slept indoors and one which went out at night.

In the first sentence, the non-restrictive relative provides information that is considered supplementary, while in the second the relative restricts or defines what the antecedent (*cats*) denotes.

While both *which* and *that* appear in restrictive relative clauses in spoken English, various corpora studies have commented on and convincingly demonstrated that *which* is being replaced by *that* in written English (Biber et al. 1999; Leech et al. 2009; Bohmann and Schultz 2011). This substitution is happening at a faster rate in American English (Bohmann and Schultz 2011, p. 96), so it is hardly surprising that *which* is frequently replaced by *that* in AmE editions of British English (BrE) novels. Note that this rule does not apply to all relative clauses. In cases of pied-piping, when the relative pronoun is preceded by a preposition, *which* will be retained in the US edition. Similarly, the preference for *which* prevails if *that* has previously been used or if *which* is preceded immediately by a demonstrative pronoun.

4.2 Which *and* That*: A Dialectal Difference?*

In their translation of the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, Heacock and Cassidy remark that they felt it necessary to replace *which* with *that* in restrictive clauses because although it was 'perfectly acceptable in American English', it was 'used with such abandon in British English that (it) in fact marked the text as being British' (1998, p. 95). Similarly, Hargraves comments that 'Americanizing editors can usually do no wrong in systematically changing *which* to *that* in defining clauses of British English' (2003, p. 53). Biber et al. (1999, p. 283) suggest *that* belongs to a more informal style and that colloquial forms are more prevalent in the United States. Yet this insistence on dialectal difference is misleading. Equally misleading is *The Chicago Manual of Style Online* when it states, 'In British English, writers and editors seldom observe the distinction between the two words', the suggestion here being that writers themselves choose *that* over *which* because of dialectal differences.

It is not necessarily the case that an AmE writer will use *that* in a restrictive relative clause. Nor is it necessarily the case that a publishing house will impose the *which/that* distinction. *One Book/Five Ways* (1977), records the publishing history of a single manuscript *No Time for Houseplants* that was sent to five North American university presses: the University of Chicago Press, MIT Press, University of North Carolina Press, University of Texas Press, and University of Toronto Press. The five edited manuscripts reveal very different attitudes regarding the use of *which*. In the original manuscript, the author, an American, frequently uses *which* in a restrictive clause. Two out of the four university presses in the United States, the University of Texas Press and University of Chicago Press, chose mostly to leave *which* untouched:

> Remember also to avoid spraying plants which have been standing in direct sunlight. (pp. 25 and 207)
>
> Plants which produce rhizomes may be propagated by dividing the rhizomes. (pp. 27 and 210)
>
> Stem cuttings which cannot be rooted in water are rooted in perlite. (pp. 27 and 209)

The MIT Press and the University of North Carolina Press, in contrast, both substituted *that*:

> Remember also to avoid spraying plants that have been standing in direct sunlight. (pp. 83 and 141)
>
> Stem cuttings that cannot be rooted in water are rooted in perlite. (pp. 85 and 143)
>
> Plants that produce rhizomes may be propagated by dividing the rhizomes. (pp. 86 and 143)

In other words, when *One Book/Five Ways* was published, the use of *that* in restrictive relative clauses was clearly being imposed by some editors, but not necessarily practised by all Americans nor even by all publishing houses. This suggests that, rather than being a dialectal difference, the use of *that* or *which* is evidence of the copy-editor following the directives of a style sheet or usage guide.

American style and usage guides clearly advocate the use of *that*, and none more adamantly than Strunk and White: ‘Careful writers, watchful for small conveniences, go *which*- hunting, remove the defining *whiches*, and by so doing improve their work’ (2009, p. 59). *The Chicago Manual of Style* offers similar advice:

> In polished American prose, *that* is used restrictively to narrow a category or identify a particular item being talked about ... *Which* is used non-restrictively – not to narrow a class or identify a particular item but to add something about an item already identified ... *Which* should be used restrictively only when it is preceded by a preposition. (15th edn, p. 230)

Other style and usage guides such as *The American Heritage Book of English Usage* are a little more cautious: ‘this use of *which* with restrictive clauses is very common, even in edited prose. If you fail to follow the rule in this point, you have plenty of company’ (1996, p. 39).

To understand why this rule has become so deeply entrenched, we have to remember the importance of clarity for usage guides. If all that separates a restrictive relative from a non-restrictive relative is a comma, then its accidental omission or misplacement could alter the meaning or render it ambiguous. Fowler is of the opinion that '[i]f writers would agree to regard *that* as the defining relative pronoun, and *which* as the non-defining, there would be much gain both in lucidity and in ease' (1926, p. 774).

Added to this commitment to clarity is a preference for a neat binary system. The rule for using *that* in a restrictive relative may originate 'from a desire for grammatical symmetry' (Hinrichs, Szmrecsanyi and Bohmann 2005, p. 808). As *which* is the only relativiser to be used in a non-restrictive relative clause, it is less 'messy' if only one relativiser (*that*) is used in a restrictive relative clause.

However, this desire to regularise the language has not gone unchallenged (Pullum 2012; Liberman 2012). The semantic difference between the two types of relative needs to be taken into account. When there are two separate assertions (as in a non-restrictive relative), the information in the first assertion must be sufficiently newsworthy to be 'an independent and self-sufficient piece of information' (Huddleston 1984, p. 399). The sentence 'Yesterday John saw an animal, which resembled his great-uncle Fred' is 'slightly odd' because 'John's seeing an animal would not really be newsworthy in most situations that we can imagine' (Baker 1995, p. 334).

4.3 *Use of* there is/there are*: Empty Words?*

The debate over the use of *there is/are* further underlines the dividing line between style/usage guides and linguists.

4.3.1 What the Arbiters of Usage Say Although the structure *there is/are* (henceforth existential *there*) is commonly used in both written and spoken English, it is shunned by style and usage guides. Garner (2009, p. 811) quotes a number of style/usage guides which, even if they accept that the structure may be common and idiomatic, advocate avoiding it whenever possible on the grounds that existential *there* adds extra words but no meaning and is a weak, tame way of beginning a sentence. Garner himself advocates using existential *there* only if 'the writer is addressing the existence of something' (2009, p. 811); otherwise *there is* and *there are* are simply 'signals of clutter' and, as Payne remarks, 'nothing saps the vitality of language as quickly as meaningless clutter' (quoted in Garner 2009, p. 811). While a sentence without existential *there* 'is clearly less wordy, it is also more direct and more forceful' (Adams and Tickle 1994, p. 166); using existential *there* results in a sentence lacking vigour or strength: 'Many a tame sentence of description or exposition can be made lively and emphatic by substituting a transitive in the active voice for some such perfunctory expression as *there is* or *could be heard*' (Strunk and White 1999, p. 18). Strunk and White advocate replacing 'there were a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground' with 'dead leaves covered the ground' and 'the sound of the falls could still be heard' with 'the sound of the falls still reached our ears' (1999, p. 18). Unfortunately, their comment seems to equate existential *there* with the passive voice, and this confusion can be found in other grammars or style/usage guides that quote the two authors. In a post entitled 'Drinking the Strunkian Kool-Aid' on *Language Log*, Pullum (2009) suggests that 'a large number of the ten million or more Americans who bought *The Elements of Style* have been confused by Strunk and White's less than clear labelling of the passive voice' and that this is why so many errors prevail still today. I return to this point in my analysis of the survey results.

The debate over existential *there* is not really one of grammatical usage, but another example of *stylistic prescriptivism* (Curzan 2014). This is probably why the structure does not feature in professional style guides such as *The Associated Press Stylebook*, *Butcher's Copy-editing*, or *New Hart's Rules*. Most usage guides accept that the structure is grammatical, but consider it to be 'weak' or 'clumsy'. However, Williams and Bizup do acknowledge that 'experienced writers commonly begin a paragraph with *there* to introduce new topics and concepts that they develop in the sentences that follow' (2014, p. 97), and that point is one echoed by linguists.

4.3.2 Existential there*: Usage Patterns Uncovered by Linguists*

Although the term dummy *there* (Radford 1997) might give credence to the style/usage guides' belief that existential *there* is meaningless, linguists have also underlined its pragmatic role. Using existential *there* displaces the subject into a postverbal position, which gives it end-focus (Erades 1975), thereby enabling the speaker 'to focus the hearer's awareness on the referent of the construction' (Lakoff 1987, p. 545) or to 'tell the addressee that she must be prepared to divert her attention towards a new item of information' (Breivik and Swan 2000, p. 28). A similar analysis is found in Bolinger (1977, pp. 93–94) and later studies by Cheshire (1999) and Sasaki (1991). Existential *there* is therefore one of several non-canonical structures that are different from their own basic or canonical counterparts not in 'truth conditions', but 'in the way the content is presented' (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, p. 1365); that is, in the way information is packaged (Chafe 1976; Breivik 1981; Erdmann 1990; Lambrecht 1994).

5 Methodology

The questionnaire sought to address three questions. Were the modifications made to British English (BrE) texts considered necessary by all AmE copy-editors? Did BrE editors evaluate the changes that were made differently

Table 13.1 *Personal characteristics of respondents*

Characteristic		*Age group* 18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	over 60	Total
Gender %	Male	1.66%	2.21%	4.42%	6.08%	7.18%	21.55%
	Female	3.87%	13.81%	15.47%	18.78%	26.52%	78.45%
Nationality %	US	6.77%	18.79%	19.55%	20.30%	34.59%	100.00%
	BI	2.08%	8.33%	20.84%	37.50%	31.25%	100.00%
% of total responses		5.52%	16.03%	19.89%	24.86%	33.70%	100.00%

from AmE copy-editors? How far did the choice of copy-editors reflect the advice and rules of style/usage guides?

The aim was to reach a broad spectrum of copy-editors on both sides of the Atlantic. Various copy-editing associations and forums were contacted by email and given the link to the questionnaire used in this study: *Copy-editing-L*, a listserv for copy-editors; *American Copy Editors Society* (ACES); *The Society for Editors and Proofreaders* (*SfEP*); *The Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders and Indexers* (AFEPI). In addition, the link to the questionnaire was posted on the Facebook page of *Editors' Association of Earth*.

A total of 229 responses were received. For the purposes of this chapter, I selected responses on the basis of answers to 10 demographic questions. The selected respondents were born in either the United States or the British Isles (BI), have lived there for 20 years or longer, and are, or have been, professional copy-editors. This resulted in a total of 181 respondents (48 BI and 133 US).

5.1 Characteristics of the Participants

In terms of gender, 142 of the respondents were female and 39 male. The variable Gender in relation to Age Group and Origin can be seen in Table 13.1.

The figures are reported in percentages. The bottom line gives the total percentage for all the respondents taking part for each age group and shows that the percentage of respondents increases with age. Only 39 respondents belonged to the age groups (18–29 and 30–39), while 106 respondents were aged 50 or over.

For the purposes of the present study the variable Education has not been taken into account, since all the informants had attended some form of higher education. This also suggests one reason why there are fewer respondents in the 18–29 age group, as most will have entered the profession in their late twenties. The variable Gender was not considered for the purposes of this chapter, but the higher number of female participants (78.45%) may be due to the fact that many copy-editors are freelancers, working from home. Given the various

Table 13.2 *Use of style and usage guides in relation to origin*

		Style guide						
		CMOS	APA	AP	MLA	SW	Oxford	Cambridge
Nationality %	US	80.45%	34.58%	28.57%	30.07%	44.36%	0.75%	0%
	BI	66.66%	39.58%	4.16%	31.25%	16.66%	54.16%	29.16%
% of total responses		76.79%	35.9%	21.54%	30.38%	37.01%	14.91%	7.73%

terms used by respondents to refer to their place of birth and residence (UK, Britain, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland), I chose to group these answers under the single heading British Isles.

Respondents were also questioned on the style and usage guides used. It was impossible to provide a full list of all the style guides, and as the survey aimed at discovering whether US copy-editors were influenced by specific style guides, the list provided focused on style guides identified from the pilot study: *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS), *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), *Modern Language Association Handbook* (MLA) and Strunk and White (SW). An open-response question enabling those who wished to add other style guides provided a diversity of answers; the three most popular – *The Associated Press Stylebook* (AP), Oxford,[3] *Butcher's Copy-Editing* (Cambridge) – figure in the results shown in Table 13.2.

Other style guides mentioned included *Garner* and *Fowler*. Eighteen respondents mentioned they used the style guide provided by the client or their company.

5.2 Materials

The online questionnaire was based on a pilot study conducted the previous year and sent to one specific source: *Copyediting-L*. The pilot study had revealed the need to select the sentences for commentary carefully and to address a wider audience, as few British copy-editors contributed to *Copyediting-L* and most respondents from *Copyediting-L* were older than 50. A new questionnaire was devised and sent out for feedback. The comments and suggestions received were incorporated into the final questionnaire, which was designed using Google Forms so the link could easily be accessed across the world, and the results could be easily downloaded into Excel for statistical analysis.

The final questionnaire comprised 14 questions: an initial question on the use of style and usage guides; 12 questions, each featuring two sentences, one from the BrE edition of a novel and the other from an AmE edition, and containing both a closed-response and an open-response question; and a final question that presented a short paragraph from the BrE edition of a short story and asked what modifications, if any, might be made. Examples of the 12 usage questions are to be found in Sections 6.1 and 6.2. The participants were informed that the survey's aim was to discover more about textual changes made by copy-editors, but not about the provenance of the sentences, although several of the respondents recognised one or other as being BrE or AmE. The order in which the versions appeared (BrE and AmE) was not consistent, and the points I wished respondents to comment on were not highlighted in any way. Proper names were changed to avoid revealing that a particular novel was under scrutiny. Nine literary works published between 1981 and 2001, written by different authors and edited by different publishers, featured in the questionnaire. Although my original corpus of 60 novels provided numerous examples of changes that I suspected were prescriptivism related and influenced by style and usage guides, selecting the sentences to be included in the survey proved difficult. It was necessary to exclude any sentence that also contained another dialectal difference to avoid overlapping choices and to avoid examples that required too much contextual detail or where the use of lexical items was ambiguous.

Among the hypotheses tested were whether copy-editors always replaced *which* by *that* in restrictive relative clauses and whether they always removed existential *there*, the two points retained for analysis here. These questions were then followed by a series of demographic questions regarding gender, education, age, place of birth, number of years spent in an English-speaking country, current profession and types of text that the respondent edited. The final demographic question was included to check whether editing practice varied from one field to another.

Reactions from the respondents were mixed. Some used the open-response question to criticise the sentences and/or the wording or format of the questions. One commented twice that the sentences were 'awful' (US 02 age 50–59), and several noted that they would have preferred more context. One BI respondent commented in a private email that 'nearly every publisher and commercial client has their own style guide (plus the European Community, which is quite different again) which may overrule some of the conventional treatments'. Such criticisms would need to be taken into account in producing any future questionnaire. Other respondents emailed me after completing the questionnaire to express their pleasure in taking part. It is therefore safe to conclude that any such survey is likely to provoke both positive and adverse criticism.

Many copy-editors formulated quite lengthy answers to the open-response questions, resulting in the survey taking longer than initially forecast.

6 Analysis of Results

The results from the questionnaire were fed into an Excel spreadsheet, which enabled the various answers to be classified and summarised. All the responses to the open question were organised into thematic networks to discover common themes and differences (Attride-Sterling 2001). A thematic framework was created to classify and summarise the data, with headings and classifications that reflected the approach of both style and usage guides and linguistic grammars, as well as any new themes that appeared from the responses. The data were then compared with the variables Age and Origin, as well as the style and usage guides used by the respondents.

6.1 Question Regarding this *and* which *in Restrictive Relative Clauses*

Participants were presented with the following question:

Please read the following sentences. Which do you prefer?

a) Jack Brown rode a green Vespa GS scooter that he polished twice a day.

b) Jack Brown rode a green Vespa GS scooter which he polished twice a day.

Informants could choose from the following answers:

I prefer sentence (a).

I prefer sentence (b).

I have no preference. Both are equally acceptable.

I think that neither one is acceptable.

This was followed by an open-response question:

Is there any particular reason for your answer? You can be as brief or as lengthy as you wish.

Both sentences were from *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. Sentence (a) was from the AmE edition, sentence (b) the BrE edition. Although the BrE sentence reads as a non-restrictive clause (it is unlikely that the character owned several scooters, one of which he polished twice a day), there is no comma. For the AmE copy-editor there were three possible choices: add a comma or interpret the sentence as being restrictive and either keep *which* or substitute *that*.

6.1.1 Answers to the Closed-Response Question The US and BI results to the closed-response question are compared in Figure 13.1.

As Figure 13.1 shows, the BI respondents were less categorical about the use of *which* and *that* than their US counterparts. While a clear majority of US respondents preferred sentence (a), an equal number of BI informants expressed no preference or preferred (a). The breakdown of the responses in terms of age is shown in Tables 13.3 and 13.4.

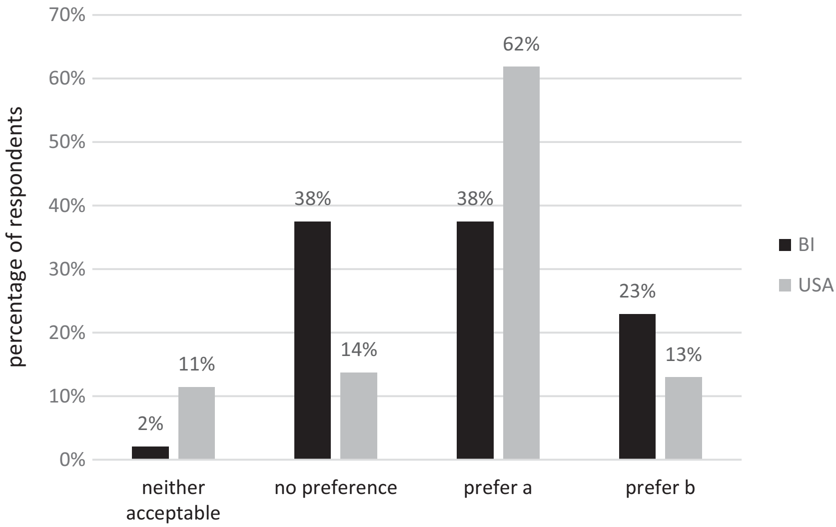

Figure 13.1 Distribution of responses by origin of respondent for *which/that*

Table 13.3 shows that the US preference for (a) was clear in all age groups. The youngest age group in the survey (18–29) was the least decisive, with 56 per cent (5) preferring (a) and 33 per cent (3) preferring (b). The two youngest age groups in the BI results (see Table 13.4) overwhelmingly expressed no preference: 100 per cent for the 18–29 age group and 75 per cent for the 30–39 age group. These figures appear then to corroborate Cameron's hypothesis that the distinction is disappearing, but given the low number of participants aged 18–29 (9 US; 1 BI) and that there were only 4 BI participants for the 30–39 age

Table 13.3 *Correlations between the demographic variable Age and responses for US informants:* which *and* that *in relative clauses*

Response to each question	Age group 18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	over 60	% of total responses
neither acceptable	11%	4%	8%	11%	17%	11%
no preference	0%	16%	4%	30%	11%	14%
prefer a	56%	64%	80%	52%	59%	62%
prefer b	33%	16%	8%	7%	13%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 13.4 *Correlations between the demographic variable Age and responses for BI informants:* which *and* that *in relative clauses*

Response to each question	Age group 18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	over 60	% of total responses
neither acceptable	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	1%
no preference	100%	75%	40%	39%	20%	38%
prefer a	0%	0%	40%	39%	47%	38%
prefer b	0%	25%	20%	22%	27%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

group, it would be imprudent to draw any firm conclusions from the data. More important is the reason given for choosing one or other of the sentences, as we see in the next section.

6.1.2 Answers to the Open-Response Question Out of the 133 US respondents, 76 (57%) offered reasons for this choice (a total of 1189 words), as did 27 (56%) of the 48 BI respondents (a total of 446 words). Overall 26 (21 US; 5 BI) respondents labelled the type of relative clause, using the following categories: *defining* (3), *descriptive* (1) *restrictive* (9)*, non-restrictive* (14)*, non-defining* (1), *essential* (3), and *dependent* (1).[4] The absence of a comma featured heavily in the US responses, with the term *comma* occurring 51 times (67%), but only 6 times in the BI responses (22%). It was given as a reason for all four answers. There were some who chose (a) on the grounds that (b) did not have a comma; there were some who chose (b) but added that it needed a comma; those who found neither sentence acceptable did so on the grounds of meaning and the absence of a comma in (b). The frequent reference to the absence or presence of a comma does not really demonstrate any grammatical knowledge as all the style and usage guides mentioned earlier insist on the need to use a comma in a non-restrictive relative. Unlike the US respondents, who generally seemed confident about always adding a comma before *which*, the BI informants were less at ease in choosing between the sentences. One person who chose sentence (b) added,

(1) But this is a grey area and I would probably allow either. (BI 26; age over 60)

Another, who chose (a), admitted not being totally sure:

(2) I have followed my instinct as I cannot recall the grammatical rule. (BI 40; age over 60)

Another who had no preference stated,

(3) I'm not sure that I don't use these interchangeably in some contexts. (BI 23; age 50–59)

Generally, the BI respondents were far less categorical:

(4) The difference is pedantic. (BI 24; age over 60)

(5) A lot of time gets wasted on the that/which question. (BI 32; age 50–59)

Both sets of respondents were aware that usage was different on either side of the Atlantic and offered this as a reason for having no preference:

(6) I believe US English is more strict about using 'that' in this context but in UK English most people are happy with 'that' or 'which' in a restrictive/defining clause. (BI 12; age 40–49)

(7) Depends if it's US or UK English. (US 5; age 50–59)

Others saw the difference as clearly dialectal and as a reason for preferring sentence (a):

(8) I'm American. We set off non-restrictive clauses with a comma. (US 17; age 40–49)

(9) As an American, I greatly prefer that in restrictive relative clauses. (US 21; age 40–49)

Others saw it more as a question of practice or style:

(10) I adhere to the American practice of differentiating between that and which. (US 88; over 60)

Some even admitted only making the distinction because of the norm imposed by style guides:

(11) For an American audience I tend to follow the which/that convention to avoid the accusation that I'm ignorant of it. There's nothing wrong with the BrE convention, though. (US 104; age over 60)

(12) American editing practice would say that sentence b would need a comma, but I know of many highly literate non-editors who would write or say sentence b. Of course if I'm editing for an American publisher, I'll make the text conform to sentence a. (US 87; 50–59)

(13) Only because I'm American and CMOS, APA, and AP prefer to distinguish between that and which. I don't personally care. (US 102; age 40–49)

Two US respondents mentioned they had been taught always to use a comma with *which* 'so it looks wrong to see the "which" without a comma' (US 90; age 50–59). Although only one US respondent referred to 'style/usage/punctuation rules', deontic modality was frequent in the US responses: 16 US respondents used *needs/need/needed/necessary*; 9 used *should*; 1 used *must*. Out of the BI respondents only two used *necessary*, another one used *must*, and their comments were generally less categorical:

(14) I have followed my instinct (BI 40; age over 60)

(15) It 'sounds' better (BI 30; age 50–59)

6.2 *Answers to the Question on Existential* there

The question regarding existential *there* followed a similar format to the *that/which* question, except in this case a short sentence was added to explain the context.

> Please read the following sentences. Which do you prefer? (Context: This is an account of a battle and the beginning of a new paragraph)
> a) There are three distinct aspects of this enormous battle that appear to make it particularly important in the story of John Smith.
> b) Three distinct aspects of this enormous battle appear to make it particularly important in the story of John Smith.
>
> Sentence (a) was taken from Simon Winchester's novel *The Surgeon of Crowthorne*, and sentence (b) from the US edition *The Professor and the Madman*.

6.2.1 Answers to the Closed-Response Question The US and BI responses to the closed-response question can be seen in Figure 13.2.

Both US and BI respondents overwhelmingly preferred sentence (b), 74 per cent and 71 per cent, respectively. The correlation between the demographic variable Age and the choice of response was not conclusive, as can be seen in Tables 13.5 and 13.6.

In both tables, the 40–49 age group has the lowest preference for (b) and the highest for (a), but the numbers involved are not high enough to draw any satisfactory conclusions. The variable Age is not taken into account in this section, unless it is considered significant.

6.2.2 Answers to the Open-Response Question Out of the 133 US respondents, 93 (70%) offered reasons for their choice (a total of 1045 words), as did 37 (77%) of the 48 BI respondents (a total of 502 words). These numbers were higher than for the previous question. Four US and two BI respondents explained that both were acceptable depending on the context:

(16) It would depend on the exact wording that preceded. (US 3)

(17) Meaning is slightly different, so would depend on context. (BI 1)

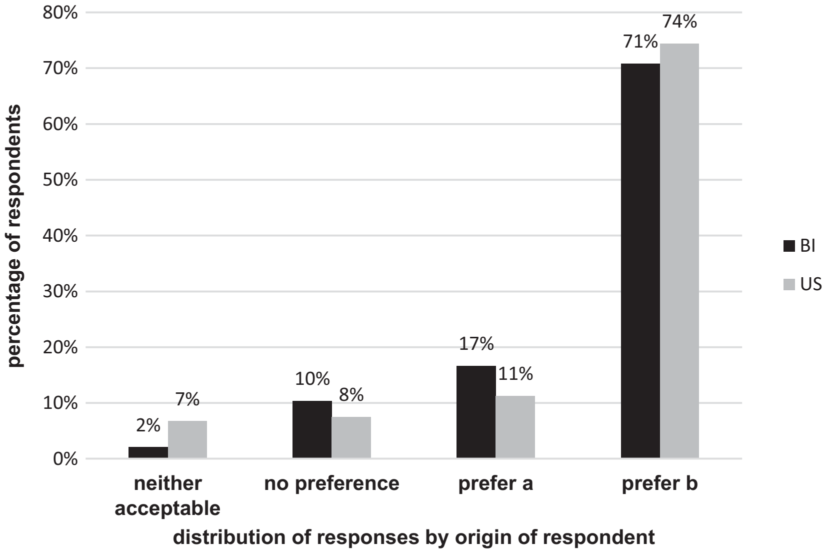

Figure 13.2 Distribution of responses by origin of respondent for existential *there*

Those who found neither acceptable identified other elements in the sentences that they found problematic, notably the use of *appear*:

(18) Sentence a is wordy, and sentence b uses a confusing verb (appear) that makes it seem like the battle is "appearing". My rewrite "Three distinct aspects of this enormous battle seem to make it particularly important." (US 15)

Table 13.5 *Correlations between the demographic variable Age and responses for US informants: existential* there

Response to question	Age group 18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	over 60	% of total responses
neither acceptable	0%	12%	11%	8%	2%	7%
no preference	0%	4%	8%	8%	11%	8%
prefer a	11%	0%	23%	11%	11%	11%
prefer b	89%	84%	58%	74%	76%	74%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 13.6 *Correlations between the demographic variable Age and responses for BI informants: existential* there

Response to question	Age group					% of total responses
	18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	over 60	
neither acceptable	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	2%
no preference	0%	25%	10%	11%	7%	10%
prefer a	0%	0%	30%	11%	20%	17%
prefer b	100%	75%	60%	78%	67%	71%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

(19) a) is clumsy b) is preferable, but ‘appear to’ is redundant. (BI 6)

(20) Why does the part about ∗appearing∗ need to be in there? Why so many unnecessary modifiers? Tighten it up. How about this: Three aspects of this battle make it important in the story of John Smith. (US11)

(21) Unclear referent (it). (US 17)

(22) B would be my closest choice. However I would change “in the story of John Smith” to “to the story of John Smith.” (US 12)

Those who preferred (a) also invoked the potential ambiguity of *appear* in sentence (b).

The grammatical labelling of *there* was more varied than the grammatical labelling of relative clauses. One explanation may be that few US style/usage guides actually label it grammatically, even though they condemn its use. One US informant used the term ‘existential’. Others used terms to be found in Garner or other usage guides: ‘dummy subject’ (US 87) ‘placeholder’ (US 48) ‘false subject’ (US 135) and ‘expletive’ (US 51). *There* was also identified as belonging to the category of ‘filler words’ (US 62) or even ‘cleft’ (BI 23). Existential *there* was rejected on the grounds that it was in the ‘passive voice’ (3 informants), and sentence (b) was preferred because it was in the ‘active voice’ (4 informants). The terms ‘passive’ and ‘active’ were used by a further four informants. One even went so far as to say both sentences were passive. Only 2 of these 11 responses came from BI informants. This is the area where the influence of Strunk and White is clearest. The use of ‘passive’ and ‘active’ without the accompanying term ‘voice’ raises another question. It may simply be a shorthand for *passive voice* and *active voice*, but it may also be a sign of a general tendency to condemn certain turns of phrase as ‘passive’ or ‘weak’, even though there is no passive voice (Pullum 2014). It is also possible that the

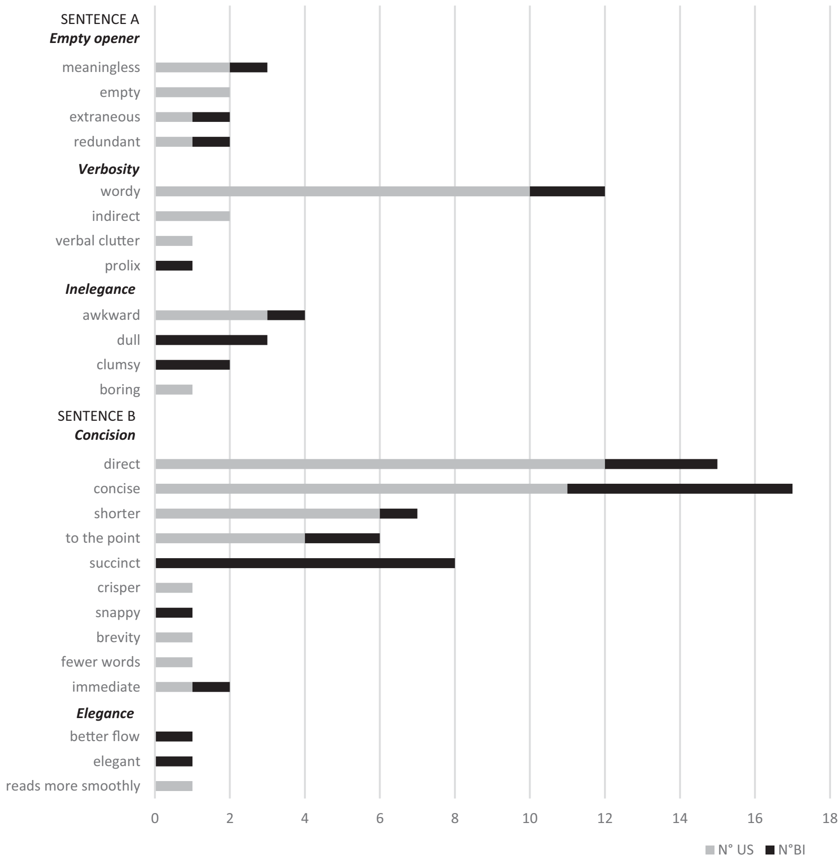

Figure 13.3 Reasons for preferring sentence (a) or sentence (b): existential *there*

adjectives *indirect/direct*, which occurred 14 times in the US responses, may be linked to the idea of active and dynamic. The use of *direct* occurred only twice in the BI responses.

If the preference for sentence (b) was not clearly stated in grammatical terms (unlike the previous question on *that* and *which*), 13 US respondents and 1 BI respondent (11% of overall total) invoked the need to avoid beginning a sentence with *there*. The reasons given for rejecting sentence (a) are shown in Figure 13.3, grouped under the thematic headings of *empty opener, verbosity* and *inelegance*, while the reasons for preferring sentence (b) are given under the headings *concision* and *elegance*. The themes *inelegance* and *elegance* cover both style and the act of reading.

The theme 'good style is healthy' was found in US responses that labelled existential *there* as *weak* (9), *flabby* (1) and even a *dead* structure, and sentence (b) as *strong* (1) and *tighter* (2). BI respondents did not use these expressions.

There was little trace of deontic modality. One respondent used *ought*, but in relation to the use of *appear*. One US respondent referred to a rule:

(23) I think the best rule ever is "omit needless words". (US 96)

And three US respondents used imperatives or made comments that read as rules learnt off by heart:

(24) Avoid use of "there is/are" whenever feasible. (US 53)

(25) Avoid "there are" always. (US 52)

(26) Always best to avoid the placeholder "This," "There is," "It was" for the specific. (US 48)

Although a similar tone was found in one BI response, it was downplayed by the modality at the end of the sentence: '"There are" is to be avoided if possible.' With two exceptions, all the maxims came from US informants aged over 60. Two others confessed to having a personal vendetta against existential *there*:

(27) There are/It is (I've forgotten the technical name for this subjectless construction) is on my search-and-destroy list. It's just weak writing, not a grammatical error. (US 104)

(28) Whenever possible, I eliminate "There" when it is unnecessary. (US 106)

In addition to the use of negative adjectives already mentioned, three US respondents rejected sentence (a) or preferred (b) because they did not 'like' using existential *there*. Again, these comments were made by respondents aged 50 or over.

The pragmatic role of existential *there* was recognised by three US informants who preferred sentence (a). The sentence was 'more complete in beginning with "there are"' (US 25); *there was* worked 'better as an establishing structure' (US 21), and while one respondent felt existential *there* was too 'didactic' to work for the text under consideration, she might use sentence (a) 'in a textbook for young people' (US 90). This link between the use of the existential structure and children's fiction may have led another informant to label it as 'babyish' (US 91). One BI informant (BI 29) also referred to the importance of context and preferred (b) for non-fiction, because it was more 'direct', and another explained that she was 'a technical editor so trained to emphasise conciseness' (US 70).

7 Conclusion

The survey sought to answer three questions. The first addressed the issue of the modifications made to BrE texts for publication in the United States to ascertain whether those changes represented a general tendency or simply the whim of an individual copy-editor. The results of the questionnaire showed that the replacement of *that* by *which* and the removal of existential *there* were common practice and that the majority of the US copy-editors who took part in the survey would have made similar changes. This also confirmed hypotheses found in previous studies (Hinrichs, Szmrecsanyi and Bohmann 2005; Leech et al. 2009; Bohmann and Schultz 2011; Owen 2013).

The second question aimed at investigating the reactions of BI copy-editors to the modifications and at comparing their reactions with those of their AmE counterparts. While US informants clearly preferred the use of *that*, the BI informants were far more divided. Those who did choose *that* in preference to *which* gave similar reasons to their US counterparts: *which* needed to be preceded by a comma. The removal of existential *there* was generally approved by both sets of informants, frequently on the grounds of concision.

The final question set out to investigate how far copy-editors were influenced by style and usage guides in their decisions and so, by implication, how far usage guides might influence edited English. While the number of informants was too small to draw any definite conclusions, some important tendencies can be observed which suggest fields for future research. Few copy-editors referred directly to a style or usage guide in answering the questions. However, one or two stated that they were compelled to follow style guides for the distinction between *that* and *which*, although they themselves did not personally have a preference. More significantly, perhaps, certain key terms found in usage guides were also used in the open-response questions. One informant mentioned ‘verbal clutter’ for existential *there*, a term used by Garner himself in *Modern English Usage*. Terms such as *concise* and *direct* also occurred frequently, and the erroneous linking of existential *there* with the passive voice seems to confirm Pullum’s hypothesis on the pervasive influence of Strunk and White. Several US informants referred to being taught to avoid existential *there* or to use restrictive *that* at school. The use of verbs of preference or the statement ‘I’m an American and we . . . ’ suggests the prescriptive norms have become fully integrated.

While some copy-editors insisted on the need for context, others were far more categorical in applying a rule. The fact that US copy-editors used imperatives and evaluative adjectives, such as those found in usage guides, suggests that they were more influenced by usage guides than their BI counterparts, but this would need further investigation.

Many of the responses revealed copy-editors' careful reading of texts. They found problems that the survey had not anticipated, such as the ambiguous use of the verb *appear*, and they offered corrections of the already edited sentences, resulting in an even greater concision.

The reactions of the respondents revealed that they preferred to follow style/usage guides rather than actual usage. One or two copy-editors made it quite clear that if their remit is to change the relativiser then they have little choice. A few informants did mention that existential *there* played an 'establishing role' at the beginning of a sentence, but the majority of the responses that advocated avoiding *there* did so on the grounds that *there* was meaningless, unnecessary or awkward, thus underlining the gap that exists between prescriptivists and linguists.

Finally, in the age of international publishing houses, the question needs to be asked whether the standardisation of edited English, clearly observable in the AmE editions of BrE texts, will not be imposed upon BrE texts themselves, thus removing the need for further editing. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Garner's latest edition of usage is no longer entitled *Modern American Usage* but *Modern English Usage*, even though the contents are little altered.

While the role of copy-editors in enforcing written norms has not gone totally unnoticed – Cameron, for example, refers to them as the 'foot-soldiers of hyper-standardization' (1995, p. 53) – their pervasive influence on the text and on an author's style has been difficult to prove. This chapter has sought to throw light on this role, thus underlining the need for further research in this domain.

NOTES

1. See www.theguardian.com/notesandqueries/query/0,5753,-18387,00.html.
2. See www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/aug/31/language-style-guide-cliches-grammar; accessed on 31 October 2012.
3. *Oxford* is used here as a general term to refer to *New Hart's Rules, Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors, New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors*, and *Oxford Guide to Style*.
4. Several respondents labelled both sentence (a) and sentence (b) in their answer, which accounts for the fact that more than 26 labels are recorded.

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