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(Received 6 December 2022)

doi:[10.1017/S1360674322000508](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674322000508)

Andreas H. Jucker, *Politeness in the history of English: From the Middle Ages to the present day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 210. ISBN 9781108589147.

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Do polite macaronis fit into a photo album of English politeness from medieval times to the present? They do! Alongside nose-gays, drowning swimmers and gentlemen's dogs, the macaronis inhabit the pages of a recent monograph on politeness in the history of English. If you add velvet gloves and iron fists to the picture (p. 191), you have collected a handy array of metaphors to navigate you through the story that the author tells us in the book. Andreas Jucker makes frequent use of down-to-earth analogies to grab and direct readers' attention, but as much as these may appeal to the less specialist audience, make no mistake, the monograph is a fully fledged nuanced and dense academic account of the state of the art, methods, data and challenges posed by the field of historical (im)politeness. It defines itself as a 'bold attempt' (p. xi) to go where linguists have not gone before in terms of a comprehensive coverage of the literate history of the English language.

The first step the author takes is working towards a conceptualisation of politeness both as a phenomenon of interpersonal interaction as well as a technical, second-order term. Then the chapters develop along the time line of conventionally accepted periods in the history of the English language: Middle, Early and Late Modern. The bias,

understandably, is in favour of the newer history: only two out of seven analytic chapters discuss medieval communication. The book consists of a preface, ten chapters, seven of which cover analytical studies, one is introductory, one is methodological and one covers the conclusions, followed by the references and an index. In addition, there are twenty-three figures, eleven tables and countless examples drawn mostly from fictional works. However, for metadiscursive comments contemporary manuals (e.g. Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, Della Casa's *Galateo*, Chesterfield's *Beauties*) as well as news discourse are used as reference points.

Chapter 1 (pp. 1–17) presents the basic concepts, the state of the art, approaches and research questions embraced by the volume. It focuses on exploring politeness in the history of English and sets off with a distinction between politeness as a form of behaviour and politeness in language. It briefly mentions the classics of politeness theory, the notion of face and the distinction between positive and negative politeness. Another crucial distinction, i.e. that between politeness₁ (first order) and politeness₂ (second order), is reviewed in greater detail and a third level (politeness-in-action, Eelen 2001: 32) is added. As the author states, an important weakness of this and similar approaches is that they are rarely useful to scholars and essentialist by nature (p. 7). Instead, Jucker proposes a reliance on the emic, i.e. language specific, as opposed to etic, i.e. language independent or universal, distinction and an ethnographic/metapragmatic approach. Such a solution reconciles the utility of first- (emic) and second-order (etic) concepts and is employed in the empirical chapters of the book.

A close-up on research methods and data problems is presented in chapter 2 (pp. 18–31). First of all, a use–mention distinction is introduced to draw a line between forms of politeness and the relevant metadiscourse. Secondly, quantitative and qualitative methods are discussed. The chapter reviews studies that focus on specific linguistic items conventionally related to politeness effects. The author observes that the better part of relevant research revolves around the use rather than mention of politeness. In such studies, researchers frequently create their own small genre-specific corpora that enable a close contextualisation both in the co-text and broader background of interaction. A combined approach is also possible, as shown in Jucker's analyses of interaction represented in drama, on the one hand, and on the extradiegetic level, i.e. between the playwright and theatre audiences (p. 25), on the other. In studies focused more on politeness metadiscourse, polite vocabulary may be investigated by means of both small- and large-scale methods. However, due to the conventionalisation processes it is also important to bear in mind that close readings are indispensable to filter other usage (sarcasm, irony, etc.).

Chapter 3 (pp. 31–52) combines insights from three separate empirical studies conducted by the author in 2010, 2011 and 2014 and takes the reader to the world of medieval Britain. The contextualisation of interaction in this period rightly starts with the basic sociocultural and moral values of the hierarchical tribal networks constituting the Anglo-Saxon interactional profile. As this warlike and violent society became christianised, the values of *humilitas* and *caritas* were added to kin loyalty and mutual

obligation (as formulated by Kohnen 2008: 142). The ideas developed in the chapter are largely drawn from previous studies conducted by Kohnen into Old English address terms and directives. A metadiscursive approach proposed by Jucker based on a combination of data from the *Thesaurus of Old English* and the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* online adds a selection of vocabulary expressing humanity, courtesy and civility. This, however, does not change the dominant position of discernment politeness in the period as its sources are religious works with didactic functions. Following the Norman invasion, there had been a major change, such that Middle English can be referred to as the bridging period in the history of English politeness. Courtesy understood as good, appropriate behaviour, a prototype of etiquette, appeared on the scene along with courtly moral values and chivalry. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, as the chapter shows, is a great source of insights in this respect. The broad social array of the characters showcases a profound social differentiation of the concept of politeness, though the general nature of discernment is still the dominant feature of the period. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a story of chivalric challenges and courtly love, Jucker draws our attention to the bedroom scene where the normative formality of courtly settings cannot be maintained situationally and has to be even more so maintained through the linguistic decorum of interaction.

Terms of address in Middle English are the topic of chapter 4 (pp. 53–77). A parallel chapter with the same focus is chapter 6, where pronominal and nominal address is discussed in Early Modern English (pp. 100–16). An important background to the discussions in these chapters is the introduction (under the influence of French) and demise of the pragmatic distinction between the singular uses of the second-person pronouns *thou/ye*, i.e. the solidarity vs the polite functions. Case studies presented in both chapters rely on a similar framework whereby the choices in address forms are determined by a combination of social, interactional, power- and formality-related and, finally, politeness factors. Overall, both pronominal and nominal address in both periods could be placed on a continuum between discernment and strategic politeness, with the nominal forms showing more variation in terms of negotiability that parallels the dynamics of interactional status of the interlocutors. The analysis of the types of politeness dominant in Shakespeare's tragedies reveals some novel observations voiced in chapter 5, which provides background for the discussion of Early Modern English (pp. 78–99). Whereas many scholars agree that the transition to this period and the early stages were characterised by positive politeness (based on drama), others indicate the significance of negative strategies (based on letters). However, researchers tend to agree that the shift to negative politeness of contemporary language is a later phenomenon (see Culpeper & Demmen 2011 for an overview). Jucker presents a different point of view: he dismisses the usefulness of the positive vs negative politeness opposition in the development. He proposes that the Early Modern English period, like that of Middle English, is more aptly described as the time of discernment politeness continued from the earlier concept of courtesy. In addition, the importance of sincerity (pp. 90–2) and more generally emotions expressed in address terms, especially in drama (pp. 115–16), comes to the fore. Finally, the author observes that

the demise of the *T* pronoun may have been determined exactly by its heightened emotionality and decreasing utility in neutral contexts (Walker 2007).

In chapter 7 (pp. 117–34), which is based on a paper co-authored with Irma Taavitsainen (Taavitsainen & Jucker 2010), the discussion of politeness moves on to the eighteenth century. In this time, the English society starts to view politeness as an ideal on the level of manners, body posture, facial expressions and language. Politeness reaches the status of an ideology of higher classes and their social control of lower social strata. Rich conduct literature, in the form of both manuals as well as didactic novels and theatre plays, attests to this statement. In response to this specific feature of the period, Jucker focuses on inherently polite speech acts: compliments and thanking. In the case of the former, a transition from ceremonial form to more personal comments suggests itself as a trend over time (p. 122). In the case of the latter, the interpersonal function has come to the fore overshadowing the expression of gratitude (p. 134).

Chapter 8 (pp. 135–59) focuses on educational literature in the Late Modern English period as the polished and appropriate ideals of interaction required clear instructions and careful maintenance. A duality of right and natural behaviour, a politeness model spreading down the social ladder as opposed to a more gentlemanly, though possibly shallow, etiquette, is an important feature of the time. A microstudy of three novels is set against the background of a quick overview of the occurrence of ‘politeness’, ‘civility’ and ‘courtesy’ in two large datasets: Google books and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*, version 3.0 (CLMET3). Civility appears to be the most prominent for the eighteenth century. A study of epistolary novels confirms the distinction between middle-class virtues and aristocratic licentiousness. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the case study shows that although manners are clearly seen as essential human qualities in the data, politeness is not placed at the centre, possibly due to its double-edged nature mentioned above. In educational theatre, on the other hand, which is discussed on the example of Steel’s and Lillo’s works, the excessively polite drama realises the politeness ideal. Nevertheless, it is artificial as well as insincere, hence its rather limited stage success.

In chapter 9 (pp. 160–83) the author presents the rise and demise of non-imposition politeness. This task is conducted based on the discussion of requests and non-imposition politeness tokens, such as *please*, *could you*, etc., and quantitative case studies based on the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA). The method employed is a sampling while the interpretations of relevance for politeness judgements are drawn from an inter-rater reliability test. The results show a clear trend and partially confirm results of previous studies (e.g. Culpeper & Demmen 2011). However, in the case of *please* combined with indirect conventionalised requests, its rise only starts in the 1940s and continues to the 1980s, when a slow decline begins. This suggests that the evidence from American corpora witnesses a much later increase of non-imposition politeness tokens than previously suggested (p. 180). One reason for this might be the rise of camaraderie politeness, which takes the notion back to its positive pole.

The concluding chapter 10 summarises the narrative of the book (pp. 184–91). It characterises Old English as the period of discernment politeness, humility and gentleness, Middle English as the period of transition from discernment to deference and Early Modern English as favouring the politeness of deference and solidarity. The eighteenth century is viewed as the ‘compliment culture’ (p. 185), while present-day English has witnessed a rise of non-imposition politeness. The view takes into account continuity (e.g. deference politeness continues discernment politeness), major changes in society and key metadiscourse of politeness, the related values, manners and morality. On the micro-level of analysis, however, a broad array of interpersonal factors and negotiability of politeness categories come to the fore and the results of the numerous case studies corroborate the crudeness of generalisations and the fact that they cannot be seen as exhaustive (p. 188). Perhaps the most pessimistic conclusions that Jucker offers concern present-day politeness, which he sees as dissimulation and frequently attests to the dissociation of politeness and morality. Interaction has become so rapport-oriented that the notion of *sincere insincerity* is proposed to capture the clash between polite behaviour and interactants’ true beliefs and feelings (pp. 190–1).

The book is an important addition to research into historical politeness. Diachronically, the book poses and in most cases comprehensively answers questions about the relevance of the concept of face: when did it first appear on the politeness scene? What broad types of politeness characterised the periods in the history of English? How important are social variables at different points in time? How can the patchy data be approached in order to attempt a diachronic narration of the phenomenon? How can the limited literacies be accounted for in research?

The monograph pays a lot of attention to genre variation. Not only is this parameter incorporated into the contextualisations on a general level (e.g. educational literature, epistolary novels), but also in a much more nuanced manner (individual tales of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* are characterised in reference to their generic models, e.g. the fabliaux or exemplum). The analysis delves into the lexicon of politeness (both textual and metacommentary), terms of address and speech acts. In all cases, potential limitations are signalled clearly while potential directions for the future are indicated (covering different data and more data).

The ambitious aim of the book, i.e. an attempt to cover a history of English since medieval times to the present-day, results in a fascinating narration that succeeds in bridging many gaps and bringing many insightful findings mentioned above in summaries of individual chapters. At the same time, this bird’s-eye view cannot have been achieved without a high level of generalisation and some omissions. These are acknowledged in the text on many occasions, but it might have been useful to the specialised audience to specify some alternative approaches that circulate in the field. The references newer than 2015, regrettably, are really scarce, which might provoke a pessimistic outlook on the field more generally, as the references suggest that little relevant work exists for the five years prior to the book’s publication. This could have been avoided had the most recent work by Jonathan Culpeper and colleagues (Tantucci *et al.* 2018) and joint work by Dániel Kádár and Juliane House (Kádár &

House 2020), known best for thought-provoking ideas in cross-cultural politeness studies, been taken into account.

Finally, a great success of the monograph is that it addresses a broad audience. Major literary achievements, i.e. medieval romances, the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, are used as primary data sources. In this way, the book appeals to readers from outside the field of linguistics who are familiar with the canon of English literature.

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(Received 17 December 2022)