

Book reviews

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Merja Kytö and **Erik Smitterberg** (eds.), *Late Modern English: Novel encounters*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2020. Pp. vii + 359. ISBN 9789027205087.

Reviewed by Alexander Lakaw , Linnaeus University

This volume contains the proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Late Modern English, arranged at Uppsala University and organised by the editors of the volume in August 2017.

Kytö and Smitterberg's *Late Modern English: Novel encounters* comprises fifteen contributions which shed new light on key areas of language change in and around the Late Modern English (henceforth LmodE) period. In 'Introduction: Late Modern English studies into the twenty-first century' the editors nicely set the scene for the content of the volume by giving a short but detailed history of the study of LmodE, with many useful references to textbooks and studies on the topic. Already early in the Introduction, the editors set out to disprove the earlier assumed characterisation of LmodE as being a static language variety which did not undergo many changes. They thereby argue for the need for studies on the LmodE variety such as the ones included in the volume at hand. In fact, they comment on the rising number of studies dealing with the English language from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, i.e. the period of interest here. The editors relate this rising number to the larger amount of language material being available from this specific period as compared to all the earlier periods of the English language. Due to historical and sociological changes, more textual data written in and even about LmodE (e.g. dictionaries, newspapers, usage guides) are available to researchers today in terms of corpora, databases, text collections, etc.

The book includes studies which make use of these various types of data sources. Besides mentioning the big advantages of the vast number of data sources available to researchers today, the editors comment on one downside related to this otherwise positive development: in terms of generalisability, the data need to be analysed with caution. LmodE is the period when many genres were established, all of which engendered their own stylistic characteristics.

The volume is divided into four different parts dealing with different aspects of the LmodE variety. First, two studies on Phonology are presented. In "A received pronunciation": Eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries and the precursors of RP', Joan Beal provides a study of the historical development of the term and concept

of Received Pronunciation (RP). By investigating early citations of the term and comparing them to the more modern uses of RP, Beal finds that the concept of a standardised pronunciation started to be mentioned frequently towards the end of the eighteenth century, when the term referred to a variety of ‘accepted pronunciations’. Beal shows that, due to specific historically motivated changes in the attitude towards a standard language variety (e.g. the rise of public schools in Britain, the unification of England and Scotland), it was towards the beginning of the twentieth century that the meaning of Received Pronunciation turned into the sociolect we nowadays define it as. Beal’s study combines a literature review approach with evidence from the *Eighteenth-Century English Phonology Database* (ECEP, p. 33), and her findings, which are discussed in relation to different linguistic processes (e.g. standardisation and levelling), present new insights into the dynamics of the early prescriptive movement in the English language, the motivations behind that movement, and its outcome for English phonology in terms of an attempted pronunciation standard known as RP.

Raymond Hickey’s study (‘The interplay of internal and external factors in varieties of English’) concerns the validity of the distinction between internal and external factors in language change. By discussing an impressive number of phonological and lexical examples of change from LmodE and earlier stages of the English language, Hickey argues that individual speakers, who usually are the driving force behind the initiation of language change (which he calls ‘speaker-internally motivated changes’ (p. 48)), are rarely aware of any internal or external factors, which often makes a differentiation between the two difficult to uphold. Speaker-internal changes often become established first after they reach a certain threshold in the speech community. However, since some changes cannot clearly be related to speaker-internal factors (e.g. mergers and prescribed grammatical changes), a differentiation between the two types of factors is still valid and ‘most important with regard to the triggering mechanism of language change’ (p. 60).

The second part includes four studies on changes in LmodE morphosyntax and starts with Lieselotte Anderwald’s ‘The myth of American English *gotten* as a historical retention’, which dispels the myth that the past participle form *gotten* is a prime example of AmE being a conservative language variety. Her approach combines corpus linguistics with qualitative investigations into contemporary prescriptive grammars, dictionaries and newspapers on the past participle form *gotten* in AmE and represents a suitable approach to modern historical linguistics, as quantitative methods need to be supplemented by qualitative approaches in order to find answers to the underlying factors that initiate language change (see also Egbert *et al.* 2020). Anderwald shows that the form *gotten* is not a surviving BrE relict which, related to the notion of colonial lag in AmE, survived the British change to *got* over time. Instead, her qualitative analysis of the contemporary metalinguistic evidence about this verb form shows that *gotten* was reintroduced into AmE from the 1850s onwards, due to reasons which, contrary to the myth around this verb form, do not seem directly related to either the prescriptive or the language-ideological movement in AmE of the time. The underlying reasons for the resurrection of *gotten* in AmE could not be found in Anderwald’s material, but the suggestion that it is related to the massive migration of Scottish-Irish immigrants merits further research.

In 'Changes affecting relative clauses in Late Modern English', Julia Bacskai-Atkari presents a corpus study on relative pronouns in EmodE and present-day standard BrE, in which she compares the original King James Bible (1611/1769) with the modernised version from 1989 to trace the development of relative markers. By investigating the modern use of the relative markers *who*, *which*, *that* and (to some extent) *as* and analysing the corresponding alternative in the original version, Bacskai-Atkari shows that changes towards the present-day standard BrE usage patterns occurred in LmodE. Her findings show that some changes resulted from the influence of language-internal factors, e.g. the nowadays grammaticalised specialisation of *which* to exclusively refer to non-human referents (p. 105). Other developments are shown to be due to language-external factors, such as the demise of the use of *that* with human referents in subject relative clauses, which was deemed as being inappropriate by the prescriptive community of the time, resulting in a more 'norm-oriented use that goes beyond mere standardization' (p. 107).

The part continues with Tomoharu Hirota's 'Diffusion of *do*: The acquisition of *do* negation by *have (to)*', a corpus study on the development of *do*-negation with the main verb *have* and the semi-modal *have to* in American English (AmE) and British English (BrE). His results indicate that *do* used in negated *have to* clauses was first established in mid-nineteenth-century AmE, about sixty years before BrE followed in the early decades of the twentieth century. By applying a construction grammar approach, Hirota discusses possible explanations for the development towards *do*-negation with the main verb *have* happening at a much slower rate in both investigated varieties. According to Hirota, it can be assumed that the main verb *have* and semi-modal *have to* are being analysed as two different but related micro-constructions with a different bias towards *do*-less negation. The main verb is frequently found in that type of negation, which makes this construction less prone to change than the semi-modal construction *have to*, which is only rarely found in *do*-less negations. Hirota's findings are complemented with some valuable discussions on methodological issues, such as the need for a diachronic BrE corpus comparable to those available for the AmE variety both in size and composition, as well as the need for extrapolations when the amount of data becomes too large for qualitative manual inspection.

The part concludes with 'A diachronic constructional analysis of locative alternation in English, with particular attention to *load* and *spray*', by Yasuaki Ishizaki, a diachronic investigation of the development of the two 'most representative locative alternation verbs' (p. 143) *load* and *spray* in the two competing constructions '*load/spray* something *with* something' and '*load/spray* something *onto/into* something'. Ishizaki investigates examples from the ARCHER corpus (for *load*) and the *British Library's Historical Texts* database (for *spray*) by applying a usage-based diachronic construction grammar approach. The author shows that the *locatum-as-object* construction with *load* (e.g. *John loaded hay onto the wagon*) developed out of the older *location-as-object* variant (e.g. *John loaded the wagon with hay*) in the LmodE period. Regarding *spray*, Ishizaki concludes that, contrary to the development of *load*, the *location-as-object* and the *locatum-as-object* constructions of the verb *spray* seem

to have developed simultaneously in LmodE. The different developments are argued to be related to the different semantic characteristics of *load* and *spray*, which result in different event schema structures of the two verbs in question.

The largest part of the volume deals with orthography, vocabulary and semantics, and contains five contributions, starting with ‘In search of “the lexicographic stamp”’: George Augustus Sala, slang and Late Modern English dictionaries’, by Rita Queiroz de Barros. This chapter is a historical account of G. A. Sala’s impact on LmodE lexicography in particular, and on the contemporary attitude of language professionals on slang in general. Queiroz de Barros investigates to what extent Sala’s list of slang terms included in his often quoted article *Slang* from 1853 had an impact on or even were included in the first version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED1*, 1884–1928, then called *The New Dictionary on Historical Principles* (p. 177)). Her results show that even though Sala’s proposed impact on the *OED1* seems to have been tenuous, his observational skills regarding the contemporary use of slang terms deserve to be highlighted. The major strength of this chapter lies in the successful description of the apparently inconsistent, or even conflicting, attitude of LmodE language professionals (such as the creators of the *OED1*) towards prescriptivism and good language use on the one hand, and the description and acceptance of slang terms on the other hand. As this study concludes, the inclusion of slang terms in the *OED1* shows a remarkably liberal attitude to slang during the LmodE period, which otherwise is characterised by the prescriptive movement which is not known to be willing to promote non-standard language use in the LmodE period (cf., e.g., Mugglestone 2005: 27–8).

Also Ulrich Busse’s analysis of the term *Americanism(s)* in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century usage guides and dictionaries thematises the prescriptive movement, as well as its stance on the influence of American words in BrE. Interestingly, in “‘Divided by a common language’? The treatment of Americanism(s) in Late Modern English dictionaries and usage guides on both sides of the Atlantic’, Busse finds that the descriptions of and comments about Americanisms differ in the investigated dictionaries and usage guides, in that they become more descriptive in the former, but remain rather negative and unwanted from a British perspective in the latter category of publications up to the middle of the twentieth century. This finding, Busse concludes (p. 198), supports Beal’s (2004: 1) proposal to extend the LmodE period up to the middle of the twentieth century (see also Kretzschmar & Meyer 2012: 141).

In the third study in this part, ‘Women writers in the eighteenth century: The semantics of motion in their choice of perfect auxiliaries’, Nuria Calvo Cortés analyses whether the variable use of the perfect auxiliaries *be* and *have* in combination with verbs of motion is related to the semantic characteristics of the verbs themselves. She uses a self-compiled corpus containing eight novels written in the late eighteenth century – the period which ‘seems to have been the turning point in the decline in the use of *be* as a perfect auxiliary’ (p. 216). Calvo Cortés concentrates only on female authors (i.e. two novels from four authors) because women have been suggested to be more conservative in their use of *be* as a perfect auxiliary than contemporary male authors (pp. 205, 208), a claim which could not be investigated further in this study as no texts written by men were included. Her results indicate that indeed the semantics of the verbs trigger the

combination with the verbs *be* and *have*, at least to some extent. For instance, verbs expressing metaphorical motion usually appear with the perfect auxiliary *have*, whereas verbs of motion denoting a change of state favour the auxiliary *be*. These results call for further research into other genres, authors and time frames to make them more conclusive, as Calvo Cortés herself admits.

Julia Landmann's corpus-aided analysis of the semantic integration of eighteenth-century French culinary terms borrowed into English seeks to remedy the lack of information on those terms in the *OED*. Her investigation into 'Eighteenth-century French cuisine terms and their semantic integration in English' is based on historical information from the *OED*, and through her supplementary searches in present-day corpora, Landmann finds examples of more recent changes in the meaning of those borrowings, some of which 'are reflecting present-day language use which is not listed in the unrevised edition of the *OED2*' (p. 239). Landmann also identifies cases of recent semantic changes to some loan words which are not (yet) traceable in their French equivalents, which is possibly related to the development of an English cuisine more independent of the classic French recipes once serving as the donor of the eighteenth-century cuisine terms borrowed into English.

In the last study of this part, 'Spelling normalisation of Late Modern English: Comparison and combination of VARD and character-based statistical machine translation', Gerold Schneider presents a solution to a problem which many, if not most, historical linguists have faced when working with larger corpora and statistical analyses: spelling variation in historical texts. He presents a computational approach to automated spelling normalisation of historical texts (e.g. the ARCHER corpus), which combines a trained version of the rule-based system *VARiant Detector 2* (VARD) with the language-independent natural language processing system *Statistical Machine Translation* (SMT). This so-called *ensemble system* (p. 248) of two very different approaches to automated spelling normalisation performs better than the two systems if applied individually, and Schneider's solution provides a useful tool for researchers who are especially interested in data-driven historical linguistics.

Finally, the volume concludes with four studies on 'Pragmatics and discourse', starting with Laurel Brinton and Tohru Inoue's chapter, 'A far from simple matter revisited: The ongoing grammaticalization of *far from*'. In this diachronic, corpus-based study the authors show that the construction *far from* grammaticalised in five stages over time. It was initially used as a prepositional phrase [*from* NP] complemented by the adverb *far* denoting either actual or metaphorical distance in the sixteenth century. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century it grammaticalised into a degree modifier introduced by a determiner and used in front of attributive adjectives as a 'downtoner' (e.g. *a far from disagreeable effect*). Finally, Brinton and Inoue also find a more recent change in the grammaticalisation of *far from*, in which it is used preverbally as a modifier of verb phrases serving as an emphasiser instead (e.g. *But far from 'kill' the radio star, social media has [...] made people stars*).

The part continues with Peter Grund's corpus study on historical pragmatics and stylistics, 'What it means to describe speech: Pragmatic variation and change in speech

descriptors in Late Modern English', in which he analyses 'speech descriptors' (such as the adjective *softly* in '*It matters little, she said softly*') functioning as metalinguistic commentary on the nature of speech representation in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction texts. Grund engages in an important methodological discussion on the appropriateness of normalised frequency measures for the study at hand (in contrast to the ratio of confirmed uses and possible-but-not-confirmed uses preferred here), and his results hint at an increase in the use of speech descriptors in the LmodE period. However, the problematic text dispersion of the tokens (e.g. one text stands for 74 per cent of all relevant tokens found in the period 1850–1920) prohibits Grund from making this claim, and calls for future studies on more LmodE novels.

The third article in this part, 'Being Wilde: Social representation of the public image of Oscar Wilde', is a historical discourse study on positive and negative labelling of Oscar Wilde in British media at the end of the nineteenth century. For their analysis, Minna Nevala and Arja Nurmi use articles and news reports of different lengths from the *British Library Newspapers* database, published around the three trials Wilde had to face (i.e. 3 April to 31 May 1895). Their results indicate that even though some positive or neutral labellings of Wilde occur throughout the period investigated, the British press portrayed Wilde more and more negatively as the trials progressed, and that the negative labelling followed the same trends as in the portrayal of other common criminals of the time (see Nevala 2016), resulting in the negative reputation of Wilde which lived on for decades to come (p. 329).

Matylda Włodarczyk's historical speech act analysis of nineteenth-century institutional correspondence discourse concludes the volume. In "'I am desired (...) to desire": Routines of power in the British Colonial Office correspondence on the Cape Colony (1827–1830)', she conducts both macro- and micro-speech act analyses on a number of letters written between the London-based Colonial Office and state-employed servants in the local administration of the then British settlement in the Cape of Good Hope colony. Her results show for instance that, contrary to the findings in studies on modern institutional correspondence, *orders* and *requests* were very frequently made all the way up the hierarchical organisation ladder in the LmodE material (indicating that employees 'lower in institutional rank participate actively in the routines of power' (p. 344)), and that, rather unexpectedly, the LmodE institutional correspondence contains a more diverse range of speech acts (such as *declarations* and *expressives* in replies to directives, and the scarcity of otherwise conventional courtesy markers), resulting in a distinguishable style of institutional letter writing in the LmodE period.

In its clear structure, this volume covers many of the linguistic topics historical linguists are interested in. The editors and the contributing authors present a mixture of different approaches and linguistic research methods. Quantitative and qualitative methods (and even a mixture of both) are applied in the studies, and the material used stems from a variety of different sources, such as corpora, databases, genre-specific text collections and dictionaries. This volume lives up to the promise stated indirectly by its subtitle: the variety of *novel* approaches to the study of the LmodE period presented makes it a must-read for researchers and post-graduate students interested in historical linguistics

in general, and LmodE in particular. Furthermore, given the already highlighted variety of different and partly new scientific approaches, Kytö and Smitterberg have produced a volume which is of interest to everyone who wants to broaden their scope on modern linguistic research methods.

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Paloma Núñez-Pertejo, María José López-Couso, Belén Méndez-Naya and Javier Pérez-Guerra (eds.), *Crossing linguistic boundaries: Systemic, synchronic and diachronic variation in English*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Pp. xiv + 269. ISBN 9781350053854 (Hardback).

Reviewed by Charlotte Maekelberghé , KU Leuven

This volume brings together eleven studies, each addressing aspects of linguistic variation and change across linguistic domains. It is the second book published in honor of Teresa Fanego, following a collection of contributions on clausal subordination (Seoane *et al.*