

**HICKEY, RAYMOND (ED.) (2010). *EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH IDEOLOGY AND CHANGE*. CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS. 426 PP.**

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Among the manuscripts by the Spanish “ilustrado” Leandro Fernández de Moratín at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (Spain), readers fond of the eighteenth century can find a scrap of paper where the enlightened intellectual made timid, auto-didactic attempts to learn the English pronunciation with lists of words. Likewise, Gulliver found a way to design his own textbooks to learn the languages of the imaginary lands he visited. Most likely, Moratín and Gulliver were not aware of the fact that, as Raymond Hickey proves in his volume, the English language was undergoing a time of “linguistic insecurity” (20). Many processes involving grammarians, lexicographers, journalists, pamphleteers, publishers, and speakers resulted in major changes in the language that lasted to the beginning of the twentieth century. The edition by Hickey is a helpful source that covers a wide range of aspects to understand how ideas and attitudes hide in linguistic codes, in shifts that occur in syntax, in vocabulary, and in pronunciation.

One of the achievements of the book is to show that the label “prescriptive” –traditionally assigned to the eighteenth century– meant a complex process that involved people, marketing, and prejudices. It exposed social codes, moral values, gendered attitudes, and class awareness. Although the title of the book creates expectations around *Eighteenth century English*, Hickey and the rest of the authors have stretched the boundaries, considering –as the Preface clearly states that the period under analysis will be the so-called Late Modern English (roughly 1700-

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1900). This span of time adjusts to the margins that correspond to a significant area of Historical Linguistics studies and surpasses the boundaries of another expression, –“the long Eighteenth century”–, much used nowadays in areas related to Enlightenment literary criticism.

Stretching boundaries allows the different thematic sections of the book to cover processes occurring on the onset of the modern period. Many examples of the late seventeenth century are included. Joan Beal, for example, in chapter 2 (“Prescriptivism and the suppression of variation”), takes into account the lack of earlier explicit prescription of English pronunciation towards the change of a “good pronunciation”, and proves that later, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the codification stage is established with variants being prescribed. Likewise, changes and continuities characteristic of the last period of these late modern English times are analysed. The careful and rigorous analysis in chapter 11 by Teresa Fanego (“Variation in sentential complements in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English: a processing-based explanation”) proves changes affecting complement clauses and variations gradually taking place all along the nineteenth century and reaching present-day English. Yet, another chapter, Richard W. Bailey’s (“Variation and change in eighteenth-century English”), focuses just on the eighteenth century, following the transformations of the language “diverse at the beginning, far more uniform at the end—at least in documents” (198).

The volume is part of the well know series *Studies in English Language* that so far has systematically covered aspects of national and international varieties of English, analysing linguistic features of the language in present and past times. Although Hickey himself had already edited two books in the series (*Legacies of Colonial English: Studies of Transported Dialects* (2004) and *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007)), no attempt had been done to devote one single volume entirely to the eighteenth century. Hickey’s initiative is quite welcome, mainly because the subtitle of the book (*Ideology and Change*), expands the scope of the research. It implicates areas related directly or indirectly to language variation as discourse analysis, pragmatics, rhetoric, education, even including new aspects about women’s contribution to grammar books.

Hickey has planned the book carefully. He is the author of the photograph on the cover that shows the Customs House in Dublin, which the reader can relate easily to the neo-classical *mélange* and social interaction of the century. A chronological timeline is added, including selected events from late seventeenth century to 1837, and is followed by a list of English monarchs (from 1689 to 1901). Although the timeline is a very useful source, the variety of events does not respond to a specific, coherent selection, so we are left to understand it as a hint of the sophisticated cultural, political, social and religious atmosphere of the times. On the other hand, the careful arrangement of relevant and updated

references indicates the high level of the serious research provided. Primary and secondary sources are listed together with a section of corpora and online resources. A complementary section entitled *Late Modern English Language Studies*, presents of the highlights of the period and provides a long list of references in three parts: *Pre-eighteenth century works on English*, *Eighteenth century works on English (General, Dictionaries, Grammars-general, Grammars-rhetorical, Works on pronunciation, Works on elocution, Works on education)* and *Nineteenth-century works on English*).

As carefully as the closure of the book is planned, the rest of the book is likewise structured. Hickey cleverly opens the book with a general and informative approach to the changes affecting language in times of prescriptivism and internal stability. Many topics battle to be included in this section. Different blocks accumulate a big variety of works from which the analysis attempts to emerge. Touching briefly upon important facts of the political context, the author makes explicit purpose of considering the social life as focus of the book and consciously avoids discussions on historical events, focusing on the “change whose roots lie in English social life” (2). He takes into account different sources to study the language of the period (“hard words” with echoes of Latin or Greek, religious, educational books, grammatical books, relevance of rhetoric, plagiarism, public oratory, etc.). His general overview turns into a careful account of “variation in language” (13), where he deals with aspects such as dialect, linguistic insecurity, and changes in grammatical constructions to explain the complex process of codification of English in this century.

This introductory chapter sets forth an array of chapters that construct a complete composite work. The reader will be pleasantly surprised to understand from different points of view how changes and variations regarding language took place and can be studied as mirror of the social context. If Hickey starts off with points related to eighteenth-century attitudes and concerns, the rest of chapters are in order to provide the acknowledgement of two simultaneous processes that were taking place: the progressive and continuous flow of alterations in language and the attempts to make the standardization official. Contributors’ tasks prove so. Also aspects involving public life are useful sources to trace the changes, the codification process and a number of particular cases and examples that prove a thorough study of primary and secondary sources. However, the contents at times overlap, and the authors themselves realize that, and make references to each others’ chapters in the volume. All in all, successful comments tie up contributions guiding the reader towards a single yet multiple vision of a general context.

The thematic chapters complement each other as they follow general lines of study. There is an interesting group dealing with the grammatical tradition in England. The process of change of language cannot be understood without

women's participation and thus Carol Percy's chapter 3 ("Women's grammars") analyses female contribution to the writing of new grammars in the eighteenth century. Her revision aims at pointing out "the advance of both women and English" (39). In the context of the rising of vernacular grammars vs classical ones, the first grammar of modern English by A. Fisher is presented and compared to other official ones (John Newbery's, Buchanan's, Betterworth's, etc.). A successful point is made when describing grammars as products of marketing, and as such they were advertised to females, consumers and important part of the reading public.

Grammars played an important part in education, and as authoritative goods. They became tools through which women received rules of behaviour, as Ingrid Tieken-Boon Van Ostade clearly exposes in chapter 4 ("Eighteenth century women and norms of correctness"). Readers understand how relevant women writers (Sarah Fielding, Betsy Sheridan, Elizabeth Clift, Fanny Burney, Mrs Thrale) followed linguistic norms of correctness, by having a mentor around them (brother, tutor, friend). They learned much, as shows the comparison between Alice Synge's learning through letters and Thomas Henry Lowth, whose father's grammar proves one of the many parental attempts to teach children in the eighteenth century. Similarly, Karlijn Navest in chapter 6 ("Queeney Thrale and the teaching of English grammar") elaborates on parental teaching, tracing Hester Lynch Thrale's strategies as a teacher of grammar to guide her daughter Hester Maria ("Queeney"). It brings a useful review of the authoritative grammars of Lowth, Ash, Newbery or Johnson's prefix to his Dictionary.

Tieken-Boon further amplifies the area of grammar books in chapter 5 ("Lowth as an icon of prescriptivism"), dismantling the figure of the prescriptivist and showing that his aims were used by others in the eighteenth century (for example, he was not the first one to state the double negation). It is a useful compendium to understand Lowth's contribution in a new light, and includes a serious reflection at the end of the chapter, re-evaluating Lowth's contribution as a normative grammarian within his context, and considering normative linguistics an independent field within linguistics.

The chapters devoted to the study of grammars do not leave out the analysis of other genres that were also changing. In chapter 16 ("Registering the language – dictionaries, diction and the art of elocution") Lynda Mugglestone breaks the myth of Johnson's dictionary and explores the diversity of other works "diversified by size and price, by audience and addressees, by contents and languages attitudes" (309). In a dense chapter, she analyzes dictionaries as reference models, which reveal many ideological constructions. Journals and essays are examined in Chapter 7 ("Coalitions, networks, and discourse communities in Augustan England: *The Spectator* and the early eighteenth-century essay"). Susan Fitzmaurice brings

quite a new approach to consider the journal as social network, exhaustively applying the positive/negative keyword analysis to understand the original nature of the periodical and the relevance of the so-called “Spectator coalition”, group of authors involved in the original issues.

Other less traditional genres are considered in chapter 15 (“‘Be pleased to report expressly’: the development of a public style in late modern English business and official correspondence”). Marina Dossena analyses the “public” style in examples of nineteenth century letters, tracing through keywords the coexistence of ethical values such as deference, respect and authority.

The pragmatic nature of the changes in language is analyzed in the degree of politeness (chapter 8) and through speech acts (chapter 9). In “Contextualizing eighteenth-century politeness: social distinction and metaphorical levelling”, Terttu Nevalainen and Heli Tissari focus on the cultural keywords *courtesy*, *civility* and *politeness*, exposing an interesting case of transition in the use of those terms and their implications. They reach for a sociolinguistic angle to analyse the appropriation of the words, exploring their use as conceptual metaphors. They offer a good review of the historical background of politeness and care for cases of relevant eighteenth-century writers (including Mary Wollstonecraft, Hester Piozzi, Jane Austen, or Eliza Draper among others). This opens up a very interesting line of research, taking into account similar terms in different languages (Goldsmith’s use of *good-natured man*, Prévost’s *bonnête-homme*, etc.)

A similar, yet different approach to politeness is taken by Irma Taavitsainen and Andreas H. Jucker in chapter 9 (“Expressive speech acts and politeness in eighteenth-century English”). Based on Searle’s categorization of speech acts, the authors focus on expressive acts in the eighteenth century as features of status in society. The article falls into many generalizations. Chesterton is “the leading eighteenth century author of the relevant politeness literature” (159) and the material used is described as “new genres of writing in the eighteenth century, that is newspapers and novels” (160). Interestingly enough, the chapter focuses on handbooks of etiquette and politeness, rules of behaviour, maxims and requests. Considering the background of courtesy literature in Medieval times, it elaborates in the specific use of expressive speech acts, such as compliments and expressions of gratitude. It would have been interesting to discover the reason that the authors had to select the Gothic novel *The Monk* as text of analysis. The authors just mention the fact of its being a representative book of the very end of the period, but why not one of the many novels of manners so popular at the time? It could be argued that Gothic convention does not gather as much representation of relevant social politeness codes as novels of manners do.

A last group covers all dealings with variation and change in eighteenth-century English. Much relevance is given in the volume to dialects and regional variation.

Bernd Kortmann and Susanne Wagner in chapter 14 (“Changes and continuities in dialect grammar”) reinvigorate the use of dialects in linguistic research and provide an insightful commentary of the existing catalogues of Late Modern English dialect features. Chapters 12 and 13 are devoted entirely to the cases of Scotland and Ireland. Charles Jones in “Nationality and standardisation in eighteenth-century Scotland”, revises standardisation in relation to nationalistic ideology. Long and careful revision of English attitudes towards Scots in specific texts is provided. Thomas Sheridan and his desire for a national language is brought up as are many other attempts to promote national Scottish standards. There are other examples such as James Adams (1799) and Alexander Scot of the “Caledonian Scotch” (232). Raymond Hickey in chapter 13 (“English in eighteenth-century Ireland”) analyses the complexity of the situation of language change, as English language replaces Irish after the seventeenth century. He firmly proves that literature brings about a lot of information on language, and he studies caricatures, the Stage Irishman, the boundaries between Congreve, Farquhar, Goldsmith and Sheridan. He brings to light texts where Irish characters speak, and presents Swift as resisting change in the language (forgetting Swift’s devotion to language in *Gulliver’s Travels*). His very interesting contribution adds the influence of Ulster Scots and their literature (*Rhyming Weavers*).

In general, the volume is amazing because of its rigorous use of sources and written evidence. Chapters are very well supported theoretically with relevant references to updated works and overwhelming knowledge of traditional sources (many chapters are strongly supported by a detailed state of the question or history of the topics examined). A reader fond of eighteenth-century literary works will enjoy the reading, finding important data and anecdotic details of well known authors and their concerns with language. In sum, the volume by leading scholars from historical linguistic area successfully provides a scholarly piece of research to many other areas of English studies.

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