Nurmi, Arja, Minna Nevala & Minna Palander-Collin (eds.) (2009) *The Language of Daily Life in England (1400–1800)*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. 312. [Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 183].

Reviewed by Taru Nordlund

1.   State-of-the-art work on (historical) sociolinguistics

As the editors of *The Language of Daily Life in England* (1400–1800) write, this collection of articles stems from the experiences gained in the compilation and research on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC) during the past fifteen years. The CEEC family of corpora amounts to over 5 million running words and consists of c. 12 000 letters from almost 200 writers. Currently, it covers four hundred years from 1400 to 1800.[1] The CEEC project was at first aimed at testing present-day sociolinguistic theory, findings and methods in a historical context, and has since then produced a considerable number of findings on language variation and change in a macro-societal context. In this book, the research team goes beyond the correlational and variationist framework into qualitative and micro-level analysis. However, the research on, for example, identity work of the writers or life-span changes of individuals is firmly rooted in the findings of the previous work, which gives the reader an overall confidence in the results.

The perspective of *The Language of Daily Life* reflects the development witnessed in sociolinguistics in general. During the past decade, the focus of sociolinguistic studies has shifted from large-scale quantitative to micro-level qualitative work, or even more often to research that combines both (for Finnish studies see, for example, Lappalainen 2004 and Vaattovaara 2009). In this book, the focus is on the individual writer "who uses language to communicate for specific purposes, to create his or her role in the situation and to maintain and form relationships with others" (p. 2–3). Thus, one of the aims in this book is methodological, as it seeks to combine macro- and micro-level analyses in various ways. To orientate the reader into the methodological spectrum adopted in the individual studies, the introductory article classifies theoretical frameworks under three

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[1] (Http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/. 6.11.2009.)

headings, correlational sociolinguistics, interactional sociolinguistics and sociopragmatics.

As stated above, the original theoretical framework of the CEEC project was predominantly correlational and variationist, the main object of study being the diffusion of morphosyntactic changes in the population. The methodological turn has shifted the focus to the individual language user. Interactional sociolinguistics perceives variation as an interactional phenomenom: unlike the correlational framework that regards large-scale categories such as social class and age as shaping patterns of variation, interactional sociolinguistics considers identities as labile and continually negotiated in interaction. From the perspective of historical sociolinguistics, if language is seen as "a communicative tool", questions such as "what kinds of functions do particular linguistic items serve in interaction" and "what kind of social meanings these items have?" (p. 6) become important not only for understanding and explaining linguistic variation but also when addressing the question of language change.

Even though correlational sociolinguistics has received much critique about essentialism, the editors of *The Language of Daily Life* are careful not to overstate the gap between the frameworks but rather stress their interdependence. The correlational framework is in place, for example, when we aim to give a general overview of variation or predict the rapidness or direction of change. And as the editors stress, "new questions arise on the basis of what we already know". It is clear that research questions such as those presented in this volume can only spring from experience with corpus work and general knowledge of sociolinguistic variation in the history of English. Throughout the work, micro-level analysis is reflected against the background of findings on the societal level. The study by Päivi Pahta and Arja Nurmi on code-switching serves as a good example: their article illustrates how research results from previous work (see e.g. Nurmi & Pahta 2004) can provide new research questions, and they again provide new insights on the original data, ultimately increasing our understanding in a hermeneutical way.

The third theoretical framework that also overlaps with sociolinguistics is historical (socio)pragmatics, the study of language change from a pragmatic perspective. Sociolinguistics and historical pragmatics are intertwined in the volume: the studies seek to find out how language use in written interaction is affected by social variables, and vice versa, how social relationships are constructed and maintained in written interaction. This double exposure is illustrated, for example, in Minna

Palander-Collin's paper on self-mention (*I*) and addressee inclusion (*you* vs. nominal title) in the correspondence of a Norfolk gentleman Nathaniel Bacon. Palander-Collin's study shows that variation is explained both by the existence of definable social variables that correlate with linguistic use and the identity-work of the individual writers who use language to achieve different goals. The study thus illustrates the inseparability of sociolinguistic and historical (socio)pragmatic framework in this type of research topic.

The introduction also contains a short passage on letters as research material. Letters were originally selected as data as they have been shown to be closer to spoken language than other texts, and thus serve to illustrate language change that typically arises in spoken language. Furthermore, as letters represent real interaction between correspondents, they can also be studied from the interactional perspective. They have thus proven valuable in both the correlationist framework and from the viewpoint of interactional sociolinguistics.

2.   Stretching the boundaries of historical sociolinguistics

The volume is divided into three subsections labelled "Variation and social relations", "Methodological considerations in the study of change" and "Sociohistorical context". The first section focuses on the identity-work of the writers through their use of code-switching (Päivi Pahta and Arja Nurmi), self mention and addressee inclusion patterns (Minna Palander-Collin) and referential terms and expressions (Minna Nevala). Päivi Pahta and Arja Nurmi study the code-switching patterns in the correspondence of Charles Burney, a musician and music historian. The writers look at both the quantity and the quality of switching, and show that switching in this data seems to be an in-group phenomenon that is more frequent in letters between correspondents with a close relationship. An interesting hypothesis made on the basis of their findings is that code-switching seems to be linked to a more general stylistic shift in more intimate relationships. The qualitative micro analysis of the contexts of code-switching shows that there is a lot of variation in how much identity-work is actually done through different instances of switching. Some switches seem to be very conventionalized, while some instances more clearly manifest active construction of identity, for example the use of musical terms in building a

professional identity. Thus, code-switching itself can be seen as a style that indexes certain types of social relationships between the correspondents.

Minna Palander-Collin's article looks at patterns of interaction in late sixteenth-century personal letters. She studies self mention (*I*) and addressee inclusion (*you* vs. nominal title) both quantitatively and qualitatively in the correspondence of a late sixteenth-century gentleman, Nathaniel Bacon. The results show that speech-act pronouns are favoured when Bacon wrote to his inferiors and equal family members. In his letters to social superiors, nominal address forms such as *Your lordship* were favoured. The letters written by noblemen to Bacon show similar types of patterns, whereas the use in the letters of Bacon's inferiors was more mixed. Palander-Collin argues that this was probably due to differences in educational background. Writers from the lower ranks, e. g. servants, adopted the most overt markers of civil discourse style but failed to use all the stylistic nuances of "humiliative" discourse. This type of "stylistic rupture" has been proven to be a feature of lower-class writing in general (see e. g. Vandenbussche 2007: 284–285).

The last paper of the first section is Minna Nevala's study on referential terms and expressions in eighteenth-century letters. Nevala's article continues the theme of how interpersonal relations and social identities are negotiated in interaction. Her data consists of the correspondence of three members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham. Nevala investigates the social information encoded within nominal reference (e.g. *Mr. Boulton, our friend Boulton, your worthy friend Boulton* or *another most agreeable man and your very warm friend Mr Boulton*), and anchors her study in the concept of social deixis. By using referential terms, the writers are able to express interpersonal relations and social roles. The referential terms are shown to be used strategically to index the in-group and out-group affiliations of both the writer and the addressee as well as the third person referent. The paper includes an illuminative discussion on how the writer's choice of referential term can either increase or decrease the distance between himself and the addressee, himself and the referent, or the addressee and the referent.

The second section of the volume discusses theoretical aspects of the study on variation and change. Anni Sairio's paper investigates Elizabeth Montagu's Bluestocking network and the effect of the strength of network ties on the diffusion of change. To calculate a network strength score (NSS) for each of her informants, Sairio has selected parameters that represent geographical proximity, type of relationship, network connectedness,

collaboration, social rank and the longevity of relationship. The scores were compared with the frequencies of pied piping and preposition stranding in the network correspondence. Sairio's results show that linguistic variation was best explained by including the social variable of rank in the analysis: stigmatised forms were avoided when the recipients were Elizabeth Montagu's social superiors. Sairio thus suggests that NSS analysis benefits from the inclusion of sociolinguistic variables.

Terttu Nevalainen discusses caregiver language in early modern English correspondence. She studies letters of Lady Katherine Paston and the linguistic models she provided to her teenage son. Nevalainen locates her study in recent sociolinguistic research on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, and considers to what extent it is possible to reconstruct child-directed discourse in historical data. Combining methods of politeness studies, keyword analysis and quantitative analysis of certain linguistic variables, Nevalainen shows that caregiver language can be characterized at various levels: in speech activity and politeness, e. g. in the frequent use of directives, delivering praise or showing appreciation, as well as in lexical content, the singular pronoun *thou* and the lexemes *child* and *son* emerging as key words. As to the linguistic models transmitted by Lady Katherine Paston to her son, the study shows that she proved to be rather average in her input, but she also used some more local features. This discovery goes against sociolinguistic findings on modern parents who are found to use more standard forms when talking to their children. This would suggest that local variants operate below the level of consciousness. Nevalainen's study proves postitively that child-directed language can be traced back to history and encourages further investigation in the field.

In the last paper in the methodological section, Helena Raumolin-Brunberg discusses lifespan changes in the language of three early modern gentlemen. Her study shows that there is significant divergence between the informants in respect of how they participated in the on-going changes. Raumolin Brunberg's study questions the stability of linguistic behaviour in adulthood and stresses the fact that individuals vary in the ways they make use of linguistic variants to support their identity and social roles, and to what extent they aspire for social advancement. Raumolin-Brunberg seeks to find explanations for this divergence in the childhood language acquisition of her informants. She makes an important point, also discussed elsewhere, that adults are more likely to change their behaviour with regard to a feature that they learned as variable, while the features that have been learned as invariable typically remain unchanged. Other possible

explanations for the divergence are provided by migration and accommodation into a new domicile, as well as the result of a dialect contact situation and the only partial adoption of the patterns of usage in the new environment. Raumolin-Brunberg's study, with support quoted from sociolinguistic studies elsewhere, makes a strong theoretical point that the validity of apparent-time analysis and the roles of generational and communal change should be re-evaluated in further studies.

The last section of the volume presents three case studies of language in a particular socio-historical context. Mikko Laitinen's article looks at the singular *you was / were* variation in the eighteenth century correspondence. His letter material proves to be fruitful in looking at the impact of normative grammars and prescriptivism on linguistic change: the material illustrates both the rise and decline of the *you was / were* variation. The use of *you was* began to spread in the late seventeenth century. The change originated from below the level of consciousness and was led by men. With the newly emerging genre of normative grammars, the variable rose above the level of consciousness and its use started to decline. The change was again led by men. These results contradict the tendency shown in present-day studies that women typically adopt prestige forms more quickly than men. Thus, Laitinen's study stresses the importance of contextual knowledge, for example an individual's educational background and access to prescribed forms, in investigating the diffusion of linguistic changes.

In the last two papers of the volume, Samuli Kaislaniemi looks at foreign terminology in East India Company mechants' correspondence, and Teo Juvonen looks at the linguistic and historical aspects of possession in the correspondence of John Paston II. While these two articles seem further away from the sociolinguistic core of the rest of the volume, they still nicely illustrate how the use of the CEEC corpus can be extended to areas probably not thought of in the first place.

Kaislaniemi's paper looks at three different types of borrowings from Japanese in the letters of East India Company merchants in Japan in 1613–1622. The first case study considers the borrowing of a local word for a known referent, *goshuin* 'license for trade; passport'. The second borrowing, the honorific term *tono*, represents a case of mismatch between the semantic values of Japanese and English words. The third case study discusses the Japanese word *tatami* 'straw mat' that came to be used as a length measure, and thus illustrates a case of semantic shift and appropriation. The article looks at borrowings in particular, and the writer knowingly leaves out the much controversial and debated distinction

between code-switching and borrowing. However, for a reader less familiar with these concepts, it would have been helpful if the paper had contained a short definition of these concepts with respect to this data, especially when the overall "foreignness" of the East India data is evaluated in terms of code-switching and against the findings of Nurmi and Pahta (2004) on the CEEC. Kaislaniemi's pilot study shows that close reading of the processes of borrowing in their socio-historical context proves to be a fertile approach that can question traditional views, for example, on the speed of the establishment of a borrowing in a speech community.

The volume is concluded by Teo Juvonen's paper that looks at possession and ownership both as a socio-historical and as a linguistic concept. Against the framework of cognitive grammar, Juvonen presents a categorization of possessive relations into prototypical (e. g. kinship *my brother* p. 262 or material possession *his gown of russette* p. 264) and less prototypical (e. g. social possession *I schall haue a-nothyre mann* [servant] p. 265 and abstract possession *yowre receytys* 'receipts' p. 268). He also looks at the possessive constructions from the viewpoint of what kind of possessive relations they refer to. Juvonen's study indicates that two different possessive relations operate in the possessive constructions: possessive NPs are linked with relational categories, that is, categories such as kinship and social terms that do not stand alone but presuppose a possessor. The verb *have* on the other hand is linked with sortal categories, e. g. material possessions that can be discussed without reference to their owners. Juvonen demonstrates that in the life of the Pastons, ownership and family relations had a great impact on each other. His article thus gives further proof to the importance of obtaining enough knowledge of socio-historical context to assure empirical validity of the research, and as such functions as a fitting ending to the whole volume.

3. Conclusion

The Language of Daily Life in England (1400–1800) is an inspiring book in many ways. Not only the section specifically labelled as methodological, but also the other sections provide meta-theoretical discussion that clearly reveals the writers' aspirations to promote the field of historical sociolinguistics. Methodological considerations are also put into practice: the project that at first started from the correlational and variationist

framework now represents a whole spectrum of methods and theories that interconnect successfully.

As promised in the introductory section, the protagonist of this volume is the individual who uses language in specific situations. The volume emphasizes the importance of social and historical background. It is true that in some cases the background can inflict limitations on the writers, e. g. lack of education affecting the extent of stylistic repertoires. However, the foremost impression after reading the studies in this volume is the great potential that individual language users possess when they use language to achieve specific goals, to maintain and construct their identities and social roles.

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