most places, dialect variation in England today seems radically less marked, less divergent and less locally orientated than that spoken just over one hundred years ago. In this paper, I survey some of the recent evidence of this attrition from sociolinguistic and variationist studies carried out in England. In doing so, and by highlighting the origins of some of the ongoing changes in English dialects, I hope to make three claims in particular: firstly, that dialect death is inextricably linked to dialect contact, and hence to understand how dialect death fits into the overall picture of language change in England we need to appreciate the linguistic consequences of contact more generally; secondly, and apparently in contrast with some other speech communities, the attrition process has not led to a wholesale shift by the populace in the direction of RP (the traditional standard pronunciation of English in England) or Standard English. I will argue here, instead, that the dominant trend is towards a number of new socially and regionally based, koineised, ‘compromise’ dialects, shaped by contact between local, regional, interregional and other, including standard, varieties. Finally, although the developments currently affecting English dialects in England are not necessarily particularly new (see below and Ellis 1889, Nevalainen 2000, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2000), they are noteworthy because of their spatial scale, a scale that has resulted from some rather wide-ranging social and economic developments that have accelerated contact between speakers of structurally distinct dialects. I will argue that from the ashes of the many dialects undergoing attrition, new varieties are emerging, unlike the established working-class strong social-networked urban dialects, unlike the traditional rural dialects, and unlike the received standard dialect.

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Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kołaczyk Poznan,
Phonotactics of consonant clusters in the history of English

Consonant clusters are rare in the languages of the world (Maddieson 1999). Most languages do not have clusters, and even those which do prefer simple syllable onsets. The ground for this is the universal preference for the CV-structure which in terms of Beats-and-Binding Phonology (Dziubalska-KoÂłaczyk 1995, 2002) is predictable in accordance with the major preference for the nB binding. The latter means that a combination of a non-beat (=n) with a beat (=B), best realized by a consonant+vowel syntagma, is the most preferred phonological structure. It provides a good phonetic contrast which is both easy to hear and pronounce. The preference for the nB binding (and, in consequence, for the CV) is derived from higher order semiotic and functional principles of, respectively, figure-and-ground and perceptibility/pronunciability. There are languages, however, among them also some major world languages with respect to the number of speakers, which do allow for clusters of consonants. English has been among them throughout its whole history.

In order to survive in a language, clusters need to satisfy certain universal conditions, expressible in terms of phonotactic preferences which derive the preferred clusters for all positions within a word. Their function is, on the one hand, to counteract the CV-only preference and, on the other, to counteract the creation of dysfunctional clusters. Phonotactic preferences also allow for the evaluation of a given language-specific phonotactics. In particular, more and less stable clusters can be distinguished, and thus predictions can be drawn as to their “behaviour” in language use, acquisition and change.

Consonantal phonotactics of English has undergone changes throughout the history of the language (cf. especially Lutz 1991). Present-day phonostylistics also shows variability in consonantal phonotactics (cf. e.g. Shockey 2002). Every-day casual talkers of the past and present can be expected to demonstrate/have demonstrated similar or parallel tendencies of cluster improvement and/or reduction driven by phonotactic preferences. A synchronic scenario, deduced on the basis of universal phonotactic preferences, can thus potentially find a typological match in diachrony. In this indirect way, one arrives at historical phonostylistics. Providing actual evidence for variation in historical casual spoken English which eventually did lead to attested phonotactic changes in consonant clusters may prove unsuccessful. The attested changes themselves, however, already constitute evidence for the validity of predictions based on universal phonotactics. Intermediate steps which had putatively led to those changes may have to remain reconstructed.

In the present talk I will attempt to follow the above “matching” procedure, using phonotactic preferences of Beats-and-Binding (B&B) Phonology. They specify, for a given position in a word, the “goodness” hierarchy of clusters. In other words, they divide a potential cluster space into the preferred clusters, the dispreferred clusters (which are possible, though dysfunctional in the given position) and the impossible clusters. B&B phonotactics is based on the Optimal Sonority Distance Principle (OSDP). OSDP refers to the relation of distances in sonority between members of a cluster in a given position (initial, medial or final) in a word. The function of OSDP is to counteract the preference for a CV (consonant + vowel) sequence in the languages of the world. If allowed to operate fully, the CV preference would lead to the abolishment of all clusters. OSDP is superior to the Sonority Sequencing Principle in being able to account for more clusters and more precisely than the latter.

Beats-and-Binding Phonology is embedded in the framework of Natural Linguistics, and in particular, Natural Phonology (originally by Stampe 1969, 1979, and Donegan & Stampe 1979, later encompassed within the holistic epistemology of Natural Linguistics by Dressler 1985, 1996, 1999). Basic principles and assumptions of the framework will necessarily be presented in the talk.

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Notes


Marcella Bertuccelli - Patrizia Pesola (University of Pisa)

The development of I see - You see as Discourse Markers: grammaticalization as lexical complexification?

According to Traugott 1997, the rise of such expressions as I see, You see as Discourse Markers (DM) can be studied within the perspective of grammaticalization studies in so far as we allow for a view of grammar that encompasses not only phonology, morphosyntax and semantics but also inferences that arise out of linguistic forms and structure cognitive and communicative aspects of text/discourse. Indeed, the development of deverbal DM’s typically follows the paths of other structural shifts normally associated with grammaticalization – namely, decategorialization, bonding within the phrase, phonological reduction, generalization of meaning, increase in pragmatic function, subjectification.

In this paper we would like to argue that the study of the development of DM’s as a grammaticalization process also raise larger questions concerning the status of lexical meanings: in fact, semantic bleaching does not seem to be the only mode of change responsible for the rise of our DM’s. The paper will try to demonstrate the role of lexical inferences in the recovery and foregrounding of latent potentialities of meaning which lead to the restructurining of the functional roles of linguistic items. The consequence of such a restructuring is not, as Heine and Reh 1984 claim, a loss in semantic complexity—rather, it will be suggested, the semantic complexity of the lexical phrase is increased, but it is balanced by reduction of the inferential load involved in the computation of its pragmatic significance.

Alessandra Vicentini, University of Milan

‘Similitudes are the common Field wherein Error is sown and does most thrive’: pronunciation changes and homophones in some 17th and 18th-century English grammars

The variability of English spelling— with all its intricacies and irregularities— was an important part of the instability that was felt to characterize the English language in the 17th and 18th centuries, especially as compared with a language like Latin. The trouble was not merely that English spelling was bad, but that there was no generally accepted system that everyone could conform to; in short, it was neither phonetic nor fixed. Grammarians and lexicographers deemed the chaotic nature of English spelling as their mother tongue’s worst defect, though a defect that could be corrected, to some extent at least.

Among such reforers, Richard Hodges, Henry Care, Joseph Aickin, Abbé Gabriel Girard, Noah Webster and Benjamin Dawson took an interest in homophones, <<such English words as are Alike in sound, and unlike both in their signification and writing, that they are oftentimes taken one for another>>. Such terms were the result of accidents and happenings in the development and evolution of the English language that brought about such pronunciation changes which caused a confusion in communication, adding further ambiguity and ambivalence in English phonological and phonetic system. To remedy such a problematic condition, most authors either demanded a general spelling reform or drew up autonomous systems of graphic reform, attempts that didn’t prove successful anyway.

It is the aim of this paper to trace and discuss all comments on English orthography and pronunciation in the works of the authors taken into consideration, in order to find out consistent observations about homophones, considered here as indications of both 17th- and 18th-century spelling variation and sloppiness in pronunciation.

Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti, University of Florence

Adam Smith’s Lectures on Jurisprudence

My paper will focus on the academic lecture from a historical perspective. In particular I will investigate the role of interactional features, specifically metadiscourse evaluative devices, in constructing the lecturer persona by presenting the case of Adam Smith's Lectures on Jurisprudence. This case study is part of a wider research on the historical lecture (Del Lungo Camiciotti 2001,2002,Forth.).

The lecture has been studied nearly exclusively as pedagogic contemporary genre with a view to providing information of relevance to teaching and learning methodology (Young 1990, Flowerdew 1994) and discourse analysis is the research methodology which has probably been most applied in relation to L2 lecture comprehension (Flowerdew 1994: 129). Outside the pedagogic perspective surprising little work has been done on analysing the lectures, when compared with other academic genres such as the textbook and the research article. Yet the lecture as academic genre has a long tradition as a means both to impart knowledge to novices and to present novelty to peers. The only historical study, to my knowledge, is that of the Swedish economics lecture by Gunnarson (1997).

I will present a case study that can help illustrate historically changing lecturing practices in the academia. The results of the analysis of the lectures by Adam Smith will permit a comparison of his lecturing style with the lecturing style of a late nineteenth century economist, Alfred Marshall, and with contemporary lectures in economics. While historical lectures are normally transmitted in written/edited form, the Lectures on Jurisprudence have been edited from notes taken by a student, so the assumption is that they show traces of orality and still reflect strategies of face-to-face interaction to establish a relationship with the audience and guide them in interpreting the contents of the lecture. The text is being analysed electronically and manually.

The case study aims at presenting an argument about how the lecturer/student relationship and lecturing styles vary across time and how this may be reflected in discourse strategies. It is hoped that some insights into the methodology of historical pragmatics will be provided by the case here presented. How do the historically and culturally situated discourse conventions that mark particular genres in specific times affect production and consumption of texts? How do we interpret the communicative functions of historically distant expressions? How important is our knowledge of cultural and social context to assess communicative functions and strategies?

References:


Normally, when people mention Cockney, they think of an almost extinct London dialect or at the most, the accent of East Enders, themselves considered almost extinct, due to overwhelming immigration. Recollections of the speech used by the poor illiterate flower-girl, revived in the famous musical My Fair Lady may come to mind but all in all, it is dismissed as something of the past, something connected with the nineteenth-century underworld.

Notwithstanding this general opinion, Cockney continues to find a place in books about accents and dialects (cf. Hughes & Trudgill 1979/1987) and is often the focal point in the debate on Estuary English and Regional RP (cf. Trudgill 2002:176-179) thanks to widespread use of glottal stop – especially amongst younger generations – in words with intervocalic and word-final /t/ such as butter, cat, and Gatwick and /l/ vocalization in words such as milk, film and parcel and so on in several regional varieties of RP.

More importantly, though, there is a steady increase in Cockney publications: general descriptions of the dialect (cf. Wright 1981), dictionaries of rhyming slang (cf. Jones 1971, Franklyn 1975, Plumtree 1992) and even cookbooks (cf. Murphy 1998), the real breakthrough coming with the publication of parts of The Bible in Cockney (cf. Coles 2001) and its sequel More Bible in Cockney (cf. Coles 2002).

The object of my analysis is the rhyming slang in parts of Mark’s Gospel (cf. Coles 2001). Though one of the aims of the translator of the Bible has always been the search for language accessible to everybody in order to spread the word of God (cf. Nocera Avila 1988:85), it is also true that one of the merits of the Authorised Version is “its openness to a range of meanings […] partly, one assumes, because there were many Puritan and Catholic critics only too ready to accuse it of partiality” (Hammond 1987:661).

Nonetheless, it has been proven in a well-documented paper that the Authorised Version was written in the language of the time in spite of general opinion to the contrary (cf. Gotti 1993:181-198). It is true, archaic language is still used in Church today, particularly in the Anglican Church; however, since the 1950s numerous modern translations and paraphrases have flooded the market. This particular version is particularly lively and is enjoyed by people of all denominations.

My analysis will serve to illustrate how this lively speech-dominated dialect has captured the hearts of people who would not normally read such a text, on the one hand, and will illustrate the dynamic nature of Cockney itself, on the other.

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A corpus-based study of the discourse marker okay

The focus of this study will be on the word okay and its use and functions as a discourse marker in conversation. In the spoken language, discourse markers are important linguistic signals. They are used by speakers to control the interaction, i.e. taking, holding and yielding the turn (interactional function), and structure the discourse in terms of cohesion and coherence between its parts (textual function). Among the many linguistic items in English playing a pragmatic interactional function, okay is one of the most common. In a century okay has indeed become an international word, being present not only in English but also in many world languages.

Okay is a young word. The OED (1989) dates its adoption from American English in 1919. It is considered to derive from the pronunciation of O.K., a shortened form of the phrase ‘all correct’. Okay can be used as an adjective, an adverb, a verb and a noun. However, the function of okay in spoken discourse seems to be best described in terms of pragmatic categories rather than grammatical ones. In spoken discourse, okay generally functions as a form of [response] expressing agreement, in which case it is uttered with falling intonation, but it has many other important functions, such as that of <appealer>, to elicit feedback from the interlocutor (cf. Stenström 1994), in which case it is uttered with rising intonation.

In this study, the use and functions of okay as a discourse marker will be examined in some corpora of spoken English. First, the spoken component of the British National Corpus will be searched to verify the presence of okay in different spoken registers and to show that its frequency has increased at least in the course of the two time spans that the BNC offers (1975-1984, 1985-1994). Second, the spoken corpora that are part of the ICAME (International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English) will be searched: the London Lund Corpus of Spoken English, the Lancaster-IBM Spoken English Corpus (SEC), the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English, the Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT), the International Corpus of English, East African Component. The data obtained, although not comparable, will at least provide information on geographical, situational and age features of the use of okay as a discourse marker. Finally, a more detailed analysis of the discourse functions of okay will be done using a corpus of teacher-student interviews (the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interaction).

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Elisabetta Lonati, University of Milan

Spelling vs. Pronunciation Debate in Eighteenth-Century English Encyclopaedias

The aim of this paper is to discuss one of the most controversial aspects of eighteenth-century English linguistic debate: the diversity between orthography and pronunciation, as well as the attempts to solve their disagreement. Some scholars thought fit to maintain the “antient Orthography” in order to make clear “the Origin and Etymology of Words”. Others suggested “to reduce Writing to the Pronunciation [...] for the ORTHOGRAPHY , in which case it is uttered with falling intonation, but it has many other important functions, such as that of <appealer>, to elicit feedback from the interlocutor (cf. Stenström 1994), in which case it is uttered with rising intonation.

These premises done, the starting point will be the anlysis of entries such as ORTHOGRAPHY, PRONUNCIATION, ALPHABET, LETTER, CONSONANT and VOWEL in the Cyclopaedia (1728) and the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1768-71) highlighting:

- The metalanguage used to describe such topics and, hence, the awareness to need a specific tool for specif purposes (i.e. scientific description of language);
- The information possibly given about use, for both spelling and pronunciation, as well as the sources of what is said;
- The role the compilers have in the debate, if they have any, and the point of view they express.

This kind of analysis allows not only to expound the general terms of the dispute but also to make clear the internal structure of encyclopaedic entries, the way they organize their content and the practical tools they offer for teaching “the just method of spelling or writing words” (Britannica, ORTHOGRAPHY), as well as “the Manner of articulating or sounding the Words of a Language represented to the Eye by Writing and Orthography” (Cyclopaedia, PRONUNCIATION).

Stefania Maria Maci, Università dell’Aquila

When was Mary Magdalene set ‘on feyer’?

The phonetical representation of ME i in some Norfolk works of the late 15th c.

According to most contemporary critics, the result of ME ï was either /i̯/ or /iː/ in 1500. Though the problem whether lowering preceeded centralization in the diphthongization process is still far from being resolved, it is undoubtly clear that in 1500 the result of ME ï was sometime
This paper is an attempt to analyze whether in 1475, in the Norfolk area there occurred such a phonetical grapheme as <ey> to represent the result of ME i and to what extent.

Our analysis starts from an accurate study of the language of Mary Magdalene a morality play written in the Norfolk dialect around 1475 which is contained in the so-called MS Digby 33, as well as of the language of the other plays contained in the MS Digby 33 that are linked to Mary Magdalene because of the regional provenance or the scribal hand, i.e.: St Paul's Conversion, The Killing of the Children, and Wisdom (two of the Digby plays, Christ's Burial and The Resurrection, have not been analyzed as they apparently belong to a different manuscript and were gathered with the aforesaid MS only later). For all plays, we thus can point out every single word with radical ME i and determine its function in the rhythmical pattern — rhyming vs non-rhyming position. Such words are then compared with those with radical ME i found in the Pastons Letters (written in the same dialect as the Digby Plays) which are regard as a sort of "control group" since the language seems to be, orthographically speaking, more freely used, as it was not constrained with metrical and rhythmical patterns.

The result is that both in the Digby plays and in the Paston Letters (surveyed from 1474 onwards) there is a very high percentage of words with radical ME i which are graphically represented as <ey>. Yet, in the plays, there are some interesting cases where ME i is written <ey>, especially when such words do not appear in rhyming positions. There is however a case in which keynd rhymes with mynd in Mary Magdalene, or a case in which the rhyme constrayned / lynd/paynyde / blynyde / mynd in St Paul's Conversion though following the metrical pattern ababbc has the grapheme <blynyde> (blind) which might be either a graphical error by the scribe influenced by the spelling of <paynyde> (pained) or a phonetical error which reveals that the two words do have a different pronunciations but that this difference is felt by the scribe or copyist not so marked as it should be.

In conclusion, though it is not possible to define the responsibility of the scribes or copyists, or authors in such graphical variants, it can be proved that already in 1475 the grapheme <ey> was used phonetically to represent the result of ME i.

Giuliana Russo, Università di Catania

Thomas Tonkis’ De Analogia Anglicani Sermonis Liber Grammaticus (1612): early records of connected speech features.

My paper will deal with an early grammar of the English language entitled De Analogia Anglicani Sermonis Liber Grammaticus written in Latin by Thomas Tonkis in 1612, and never published (MS Royal 12 F XVIII). It has been commonly (Dobson 1957; Michael 1970) attributed to the Thomas Tomkis who “became a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1599, took his B.A. in 1600, was elected a fellow of Trinity in 1602, and graduated M.A. in 1604. He wrote a comedy Abumazar on the occasion of James I’s visit to Cambridge in 1614, and was probably the author of another, Lingua, published in 1607.” (Dobson, 1957)

The aim of my analysis will be to show and reveal Tonkis’ grammar high significance in the English linguistic historiography because of its being an early attempt to record spoken forms. I will demonstrate that though the phonetic and phonology sections of the grammar are not very relevant to the history of the English language, the section on accidence is scattered with interesting and illuminating remarks on colloquial forms. Particularly striking for the modern reader is its detailed treatment of some of the most common features of connected speech. Thus Tonkis records some words both in their citation form (projected pronunciation) and in the related weak form/s (pronunciation in context). He provides instances of anticipatory coarticulation which leads to regressive assimilation of consonants as for example in wimmee (citation form: with me), elision of consonant as in cou’d, wu’d, shu’d (citation forms: could, would, should), and vowel reduction as in tommee which he gives as a contraction of to me thus showing “the shortening of the vowel of to” (Dobson, 1957). Furthermore he gives let’s as a contracted form of let us.

The relevance of Tonkis’ grammar lays also in the fact that Michael (1970) suggests it was probably one of the tacit sources of Ben Jonson’s best known The English Grammar (1640). I will show that even though there are some passages which are almost identical in the two works, surprisingly Jonson’s fails to record the features of connected speech which characterise Tonkis’ De Analogia.

I will finally point out that, remarkably, modern treatment of features of connected speech in current textbooks (Laver, 1994, Giegerich 1992, Ladefoged 2001) and Internet courses in Phonetics and Phonology (Baker, P., http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/chimp/101/trans/home.htm), deal with the subject in almost the same way and give almost the same examples as Tonkis’.

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Massimo Sturiale, Università di Catania

Eighteenth-century “Proper” and “Correct” English: Ann Fisher’s and William Perry’s Descriptions of “True Pronunciation”.

The man who speaks or writes English by Rote only, or through Custom, from being his Mother Tongue, &c. cannot be supposed to have any reflex Notions, or reasonable Assurance that he does it, either with Propriety or Elegance: But by acting at Random only, must needs be frequently making Solecisms, false Concord, and betraying his Ignorance upon the most trivial Occasions; also by being unacquainted with Grammar, or unable to express himself properly, he must also of course, be a Stranger to the Beauties of Language, the ease and Elegancy of Stile, &c. (Ann Fisher, 1754: ii)
The aim of my paper is to trace a description of spoken English standardisation in the eighteenth century. Different in their nature, but with a common objective, Ann Fisher's Grammar and William Perry's Dictionary gave their contribution to the prescription of norms for a "correct" pronunciation of standard English, being perfectly in line with the language guardians of the time who, as Blake (1996: 237) put it, were busy to fashion "what was right and set the standard", supporting the "polite language" ideology (see Watts 2002, see also MacMahon 1998). The prescriptive attitude of Fisher's grammar is immediately made clear in the subtitle where it is also defined as "an easy guide to speaking and writing the English language properly and correctly". The book is divided into four parts, being in order "Orthography", Prosody", "Etymology" and "Syntax". First published around 1745, though no extant copies of that edition have come to us (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostad, 2000: 1), it was revised several times and reached its thirty-second edition in 1801. Considered by far one of the most popular English grammars written by a woman in the eighteenth century (cf. Percy 1994: 122, see also Smith 1999: 210) it represented an innovative approach to English grammar writing.

My study will mainly focus on part II, that is "Prosody, or the Art of Pronouncing Syllables in Words truly, with Tables of Words properly accented". Examples of "due pronunciation" will be analysed, discussed and finally compared with the data derived from the investigation of Perry's Dictionary. One of the most famous lexicographers of his time, with his dictionary Perry gave an outstanding contribution to the prescription of spoken Standard English and to "the eighteenth century preference for a linguistic usage which was at once fixed and immutable" (Jones 1995: 1) and at same time, as Watts puts it (2002: 158, see also Watts 1999), setting the tone "for social climbers wishing to acquire those attributes of polite society that were enshrined within forms of language". In fact, Perry's intentions to fix a standard based on the concept of 'politeness' are first revealed in the dedicatory letter addressed to Lord Robert Manners when he states that:

The following dictionary intended to fix a standard for the pronunciation of the English Language, conformable to the present practice of polite speakers in the city of London

and later in the Preface:

It is from the practice of men of letters, eminent orators, and polite speakers in the Metropoli, that I have deduced the criterion of the following work, on the merit of which the learned part of mankind are capable of determining for themselves (1793: iii).

To conclude, although Perry shares a few characteristics with Sheridan and Buchanan, as he himself maintains in the Preface, he also reveals a certain dissatisfaction with the way "the sounds of words are expressed" (1793: iii) by the other two eighteenth-century scholars. Therefore, my paper will examine the "more rational method" (Ibidem) proposed in his attempt to better represent the sounds of the English language.

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Dialects are intended as varieties of language differing in pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary, but are not so different as to cause misunderstanding.

Since the Anglo-Saxons originally came from different parts of Western Europe, they spoke different dialects of West Germanic and they were not a politically unified nation until late OE times. They settled in different parts of Britain, but they were able to communicate with each other.

All living languages are in a continuous state of change and development and Old English between the fifth and the twelfth centuries was no exception. Any mention of the forms of Old English words or features of pronunciation points out one dialect of the language at one particular stage of its development in a generalised way.

About the middle of the sixth century it was possible to recognise several distinct regions ruled by their own forms of government – the so-called heptarchy (Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Essex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria). These seven kingdoms provide the basis for most dialect study of the period even though written records cannot be found until the beginning of the eighth century and even then some of these areas left no trace from the pre-Alfredian period, except for the inscriptions on some coins. Their dialect can be traced through working backward from modern varieties.

Let's assume that the start of English dates from the Germanic peoples’ migration from 450 A.D. onwards. The new settlers in Britain must have remained in touch with other Germanic peoples on the continent through trade and other means. The language spoken on both sides of the North Sea cannot have been too different at this stage. Moving to Britain didn't mean cutting off the new settlers or immediately creating the sense that they were different from those they had left on the continent.

Compared with other Germanic peoples, the Anglo-Saxons are exceptional in their early use of writing: a proof is the large amount of surviving records.

During the time of migration to England and of the early settlements some important changes took place in the phonology of the various varieties of English. They gradually made their pronunciation increasingly different from the varieties of Germanic they had left behind on the continent. These changes principally affected the vowels and diphthongs.

There are therefore some important phonological differences between varieties of Old English and of Old Norse, brought by the Danes, which can help us to realise how the latter may have influenced the former. As far as vowels and diphthongs are concerned, there are a number of interesting phonological differences between North and West Germanic (for example the development of Germanic diphthong ai); they can help to distinguish Norse loans in Middle English.

The main purpose of this paper is to offer an exhaustive summary of the characteristics of the four Old English dialects that emphasise differences reflected in the later development of the English language. A chronological, though relative, order of several developments will be given to show how some essential patterns of the later English phonology can be found in the Old English vowel system, marked by fronting, iumlaut, breaking, smoothing, retraction, through spelling as the mirror of pronunciation and dialectal variety.

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Laura Pinnavaia (Università Cattolica – Milano)

**Phonological adaptations of Italian, French, Dutch and German borrowings in English: a semantic concern.**

When a foreign word is borrowed, from one to three different substitution mechanisms can become operable in order for some form of phonological adaptation to take place: the first and least marked form of adaptation is determined by the non-existence of the foreign phones in the target language resulting in their replacement by close-sounding native equivalents, the second and more marked, is guided by the phonotactic constraints of the native language, the third, and most marked adaptation, is led by both the phonological and orthographical conventions of the target language. In the phonological adaptation of Italian borrowings in the English language as represented by the *Oxford English Dictionary* it was found that the first substitution mechanism prevails, a finding that was interpreted as a determined attempt by English speakers to preserve the Italian sounds as far as is phonetically and phonologically possible.

This paper sets out to examine the reasons for this claim by means of further phonological analyses on Italian borrowings as well as on a series of borrowings from French, German and Dutch. By comparing and contrasting the phonological adaptations in English words deriving from both Romance and Germanic origins, the intention to ascertain the real extent to which a source language per se – considered as a purely linguistic entity with phonological features more or less similar to Anglo-Saxon ones – can be a determining factor in the type of phonological adaptations it is subject to.

The hypothesis proposed is that the type of phonological adaptations foreign borrowings manifest in English, are not solely stimulated by the phonetic and phonological distance of their sounds. While this factor can obviously not be underestimated, it appears that there are other stronger forces at work, such as time, semantic field, first context of use and user of the borrowing in English. By examining a selection of Italian, French, Dutch and German borrowings listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the scope of this paper is to highlight that the phonological adaptations of these foreign borrowings in English are rather consciously dependent upon the semantic - taken in its widest sense – weight of each individual borrowing and what it and its language of origin historically, socially and culturally represents in the English language.

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Rolando Bacchielli – Urbino

**Some features of the spoken language that have surfaced and marked the physiognomy and physiology of English.**

Much too often we forget that a natural language is first and foremost a spoken system and, paradoxically, in our biased stance in favour of the written medium we find it uneasy and bothersome to retrace the ways that led the spoken forms of language to coalesce into its stable standardized structure.

In my inquiry I will tackle the problems of:

- streamlining
- levelling
- corruptions
- nautical terms
- folk etymologies
- names
- forms of obscuration
- word play

and will pursue the perspectives of a) reduction and expansion, b) convergence and divergence, c) the driving force of phonethemes and phonotactic rules, d) the contribution of dialects, slang and marginal languages.

Maria Luisa Maggioni (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Milan)

“a roghlych rurd rowned in his ere”:

**prosodic traits in Patience (MS Cotton Nero A x). A lexical and pragmatisical analysis**

*Patience* is a fourteenth-century retelling of the biblical story of Jonah’s, attributed to the so-called Gawain-poet; the author takes as his subject the evangelical virtue of ‘patience’ and illustrates it by contrasting Jonah’s impatience and the patience of God. The whole narration contains a
strong dialogic element, mainly based on the words pronounced by both Jonah and God, in various instances of direct speech.

As Jucker (2000:20) states “spoken language is no longer seen as the only legitimate source for pragmatics, and [...] spoken and written are no longer seen as one simple dichotomy”; when the author of a written text wishes to record the suprasegmental components of verbal communication, he/she has to allow his stylistic choices to interplay with the purely linguistic ones. Verbs, nouns adjectives, adverbs, as well as whole phrases, are therefore used with a ‘metaphonological’ function (as defined in Cigada, 1989).

In this paper I will consider Patience – a brief self-contained narrative poem – as a corpus constituting a homogeneous textual entity and I will try to approach the applications of both historical pragmatics and ‘metaphonological’ analysis to it. The dialogic data obtained form the fictional representation of spoken language in poetry will be analysed in this paper by calculating the occurrence of the different ‘metaphonological’ signs, in order to evaluate their communicative force.

After a brief introduction, I will first list the verbs and phrases (both unmarked and metaphonologically marked) introducing direct speech. Secondly, I will discuss the expressions used by the poet to describe suprasegmental traits. Finally, I will try to highlight how Patience can be regarded as an instance of a significant stage in the diachronic process through which English has formed the lexical means which enable it to communicate narratively the suprasegmental components of a speech act.

CIGADA, S. (ed.), Il linguaggio metafonologico, La Scuola, Brescia
VANTUONO, W., 1972, “The Structure and Sources of Patience”, Medieval Studies 34, pp. 401-421.

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A Treatise on the Astrolabe: Brede and Mille for children.
An analysis of linguistic strategies of face-to-face interaction.

Chaucer’s A Treatise on the Astrolabe, which dates from the second half of the 14th century (1391), is considered one of the first and superb piece of technical writing in English.

The author adopted the literary genre of the treatise which was traditionally the most suitable form to provide a systematic and logical organization to the consolidated scientific knowledge. Employing the dialogue Chaucer succeeds in establishing a rapport with readers (Lyte Lowys is not the only audience) and in involving them in the work’s description and procedures. In effect, the decision to write in English rather than in Latin, which, up to that time, was still considered the proper language of the scientific prose, enhances the comprehension of the content and of the instructional purpose.

The methodological choices correspond to the linguistic form, which is not a passive means of communication, but a skilful vehicle that strengthens the reader-writer relationship and facilitates comprehension. Chaucer integrates the human voice into his writing through the use of a familiar tone, a drastically simplified terminology, the metadiscourse and metaphoric comparisons in his description of the astrolabe. By assuming the role of a highly valued guide, the author takes the audience by the hand and moves him from step to step. He speaks through the prose and his firm and caring presence is confirmed by the employment of deictic forms as the constant use of demonstratives, first and second person pronouns, a large employment of imperatives, time and place adverbs and other grammatical features.

This paper intends to investigate and analyse the value and modernity of some pragmatics principles of Chaucer’s Treatise which can serve as a model for scientific writers.

References:
P. Pintelon, Chaucer’s Treatise on the Astrolabe, Antwerp, 1940.

Standard English The dialect normally used in writing and spoken by the most powerful and educated members of the population. It is a minority dialect, spoken by perhaps 12-15% of the population. About 7-12% of standard English speakers speak it with a regional accent (like Melvyn Bragg and John Kettley). Ä English is used widely in government and education but may have few native speakers. If the capital of England had been York. In others. Malta and Nigeria. has certain words and pronunciations in the same way that American English does. such as India. leading to distinctive.