

DALTON-PUFFER, Christiane / KASTOVSKY Dieter / RITT, Nikolaus / SCHENDL, Herbert (eds.), *Syntax, Style and Grammatical Norms. English from 1500-2000*, Peter Lang, Bern 2006 [Linguistic Insights. Studies in Language and Communication (39)] pp. 250, ISBN 3-03911-181-7, € 41,90.

This volume contains a selection of papers presented at the 13th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics (ICEHL), held at the University of Vienna on August 24-28, 2004. The various themes presented cover the period between 1500 and 2000, and are analyzed from a linguistic perspective. In particular, the following fields of research are taken into consideration: prescriptivism, syntax, lexis, and sociolinguistics.

The investigation into the metalevel of grammar-writing is carried out in two papers. In the first of them (A. Auer, 'Precept and Practice: the Influence of Prescriptivism on the English Subjunctive') attention is paid to the relationship between normative rules on the English subjunctive and its actual use. The second paper (L. Oldireva-Gustafsson, 'Irregular verbs in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century English Grammars: a Maze of Classification') explores the role of Late Modern grammar writing in the categorization of irregular verbs.

Some syntactic aspects of 20<sup>th</sup>-century English are examined in two articles; in the first one, T. Egan compares nominal and pronominal subjects in two expanding constructions: that is, the use of bare infinitive *help* constructions in British English vs their *help+to* counterparts, and that of *begin+ing* constructions in American English vs *begin+to* ones; in the second, G. Rohdenburg ('Functional Constraints in the Complementation System') illustrates how the existence of extra-semantic constraints play a fundamental role in the evolution of the competing complement options involved.

English vocabulary is analysed by J.C. Beal and A.P. Grant ('"Make do and mend": An Online Investigation into Processes of Neologisation and the Dearth of Borrowing in Newer English Wartime Vocabulary'), whose paper deals with the acquisition of warfare borrowings in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. M. Akimoto ('On the Decline of *After* and *Forth* in Verb Phrases') investigates the decline and replacements of *after* and *forth* in verb phrases, a phenomenon enhanced by the English trend towards analysis. Finally, S. Thim discusses occurrences of phrasal verbs in the transition period between Late Middle and Early Modern English, giving special attention to combinations with *back*, *forth*, *out* and *up*.

Research carried out in historical sociolinguistics is strongly represented in several chapters, in which the authors focus on relevant linguistic aspects as they are realized in specific social contexts. For example, the interrelated networks of letter-writers during the 18<sup>th</sup> century are examined by M. Palander-Collin and M. Nevala ('Reporting in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Letters of Hester Piozzi'), who show that in

correspondence, reporting plays a fundamental role in creating a sense of immediacy, vividness and intimacy. A. Sairio examines the use of progressives in the letters of Elizabeth Montagu in the 1730s; regarded as a feature of conversation and colloquialism employed as a means to create an illusion of immediacy, progressives are seen to be used in letters written to friends, though never in letters written to family members. I. Tieken-Boon van Ostade demonstrates how abbreviations are regarded as an index of politeness in 18<sup>th</sup>-century letters, but are accepted in private use only, thus revealing whether the letter was a draft, a copy, or the version of the letter that was actually sent. The chapter by E. Seoane highlights the stylistic changes affecting scientific prose when the code choice is between British and American English. Finally, C. Claridge (“‘With the most superlative felicitée’”: Functions of the Superlative in 19<sup>th</sup> Century English’) shows how the use of superlatives is dictated by stylistic and textual constraints, such as the trends towards subjectification - in which words and constructions develop meanings reflecting the attitude of the speaker - and towards semantic bleaching, owing to which the force of the superlative itself may need to be boosted.

Overall, this volume gives evidence of the considerable progress made in various fields of English historical linguistics – a subject that has broadened its empirical basis and strengthened its methodological procedures, thus achieving new results in many significant areas.

[Stefania Maria Maci]

HORNERO, Ana María / LUZON, María José / MURILLO Silvia (eds.), *Corpus Linguistics. Applications for the Study of English*, Peter Lang, Bern 2006, pp. 526, ISBN 3-03910-675-9, € 76,00.

The present volume is a collection of papers presented at the *XII Susanne Hübner Seminar*, held at the University of Zaragoza in November 2003. By gathering the contributions of several university researchers from Spain and other European countries, the US and Asia, the volume gives a clear and exhaustive presentation of the great variety of topics which characterise the state of the art in Corpus Linguistics research. The book is divided into seven sections (Diachronic Studies; Pragmatic Analysis; Cognitive Linguistics; Applications in Translation; Applications in English for Specific Purposes; Corpus Design; Oral Corpora), which cover a wide range of approaches and applications of Corpus Linguistics.

The opening paper of the first section, by T. Nevalainen (‘Corpora, historical sociolinguistics and the transmission of linguistic change’) deals with the transmission problem, a key issue in language change. To illustrate the claim that not all changes necessarily progress in the same direction across generations and