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Language Divides – The Long 19th Century from a Linguistic Perspective

1. Introduction

In their *Call for Papers* for the workshop "Borders and Transitions in Language, Literature and Culture", the convenors asked participants not only to discuss "the temporal frameworks that continue to shape our understanding of English Studies", but also sought to initiate attempts which "challenge not only the boundaries [...] but also the very terms and concepts of periodization and chronology these boundaries are based on". The present contribution tries to follow both of these suggestions: it attempts to advocate for the "long" 19th century¹ – a period which has so far been largely neglected in the periodization of English – as one of the most important periods in the history of English. It is in the 19th century that we see a wide interest in language attitudes and language consciousness not only by a limited number of educated speakers but – for the first time – by a large part of the society. This recognition of the 19th century as a distinct period in the history of English in turn also requires the employment of criteria different from those used so far for the periodization of English.

The paper will first summarize the socio-cultural, historical and linguistic conditions crucial for approaching the 19th century from a linguistic perspective (Chapter 2), and will then give a survey of the traditional periodizations of the English language and their respective criteria (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, a closer look at the immediately preceding periods (16th to 18th centuries) – with which 19th-century English has often been combined under labels such as "Early Modern English" or "Late Modern English" – will help to highlight continuations and innovations in 19th-century English, which will then be discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 to 7.

2. Borders and Transitions: The Long 19th Century

Every age may be called an age of transition – the passage from one state to another never ceases. But in our age the transition is visible. (Bulwer-Lytton 1833, 280)

With these words, Edward Bulwer-Lytton explicitly links his century with one of the key words of the present workshop – "transition" –, emphasizing that the 19th century is a period of transition *par excellence*. And, indeed, when approached from a socio-cultural perspective, there can be little doubt that in the 19th century transition was visible (not only in hindsight) in the various facets of industrialization, in urbanization (Manchester quadrupled in size between 1801 and 1871, Birmingham expanded by 73

¹ I here use the term "the long 19th century" for the period between 1789 (French revolution) to 1918 (end of WWI), which was coined in analogy to the more established term "long 18th century" (from the restoration 1660 to the fall of Napoleon 1815); for a discussion of these terms and their relevance for linguistics, see Beal 2001, 1-2.

per cent, Leeds by 99 per cent), in its new means of transport (1790 steamship; 1825 railway; 1763/1886 car), and, of course, in its transition from a society of estates or orders to a class-based system (for surveys, cf., e.g., Görlach 1999, 1-10; Beal 2001, 1-13, and Mugglestone 2006b, *passim*).

With respect to language and, in particular, speakers, these changes caused a hitherto unattested geographical and social mobility and innumerable acts of individual migration. Urbanization in particular meant new and unanticipated proximities for a wide range of regional speakers and thus the mixing of various regional dialects in the new urban neighbourhoods. The new class system led to a new sort of people, so-called "social climbers" or "social aspirers", mainly from the middle classes. These social aspirers have been shown to be the most important instigators of language change because of their weak network ties, which are a result of the geographical and social mobility of these speakers (cf., e.g., Milroy 2000, 217-219).

In linguistics, however, the 19th century has only recently been discovered as an interesting area of research. Although the last two decades saw the publication of a number of textbooks (Bailey 1996, Romaine 1998, Görlach 1998, 1999, 2001, Beal 2004, Mugglestone 2006b) and studies (collected, e.g., in Dossena/Jones 2003, Hundt/Lenker 2006, Kytö/Rydén/Smittberg 2006) on 18th- and 19th-century English, Mugglestone is, in essence, right in describing the "linguistic" attitude towards the 19th century as "Linguistics: Myths of Stasis" (Mugglestone 2006b, 278; chapter heading):

Given the insistence of historians on the 19th century as a period of dramatic shift, it seems ironic that in histories of the language, it is the absence of significant linguistic change which instead comes to fore. (*ibid.*)

3. The History of the English Language – Periodization

The traditional understanding that there is an absence of significant linguistic change in 18th- and 19th-century English is mainly based on the traditional set of criteria applied for distinguishing different periods in the history of English. Their origin can be traced in a typological approach to periodization, a view which centres on language-internal, mainly morphological and syntactic features. They were first explicitly verbalized in the now traditional way by Henry Sweet (1892, 1), who distinguished a "period of full endings" (Old English), from a "period of levelled endings" (Middle English) and a "period of lost endings" (Modern English).

Today's textbooks on the English language basically follow this periodization, though – in a mixed approach, taking internal as well as external factors into account (cf. the discussion in the contribution by F. von Mengden, in this volume) – there is a general agreement in the more recent publications on the history of English² to distinguish five periods: Old English (500/700-1066/1100/1150; Germanic Conquest to Norman Conquest), Middle English (-1400/1500; death of Chaucer/Caxton/reformation/discovery of America), Early Modern English (-1660 (restoration)/1700 (without further explanation)/1776 (Declaration of Independence)), and then, depending on the respective

2 See the periodization and the terms used in the most recent books on the history of English, such as Hogg/Denison 2006, Mugglestone 2006a and van Kemenade/Los 2006.

approach, also Late Modern English (-1914/1918/1945; World War I, World War II) and Present-Day English (from 1914/1918; 1945-).

These periodizations do not only basically agree on adopting Sweet's three-period distinction as a basis, but essentially also use matching sets of criteria for the additional, more recent periods of English. For the boundaries of Early Modern English, its functional elaboration is considered central, i.e. the continually expanding range of functions in which English ousted Latin between 1500 and 1700. Early Modern English is thus labelled the period of the "Emancipation of English" (Görlach 1994, 30) or the period in which "Latin yields to English". The period from 1650 to 1800 then is seen as the period of the normative tradition, characterized by captions such as the "Appeal to Authority" (Baugh/Cable 2002, 253) or "English at the Onset of a Normative Tradition" (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006, 240). The time after WWI or WWII delimits the period of English World-Wide, a segmentation based on changes due to modern means of communication, the increasing influence of American English and, in the 21st century, postcolonial English varieties such as Indian English. It is basically only the 19th century which lacks a specific label indicating the relevant and specific subject matters which separate this period from others and has, consequently, only been labelled chronologically as "19th-century English" so far (cf. the titles of Bailey 1996, Görlach 1998, 1999 and Mugglestone 2006b).

4. 1650-1800: Standardization – English at the Onset of the Normative Tradition

To understand the continuations and innovations of 19th-century English, it is necessary to summarize the main characteristics of its immediately preceding periods in some more detail. As has been mentioned above, English in the time from 1650 to 1800 may be characterized as a language "at the onset of the normative tradition" (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006, 240). From the 1450s, a supra-regional written variety developed, based on various, mainly orthographic and morphological, decisions taken by the scribes in the Chancery Office (starting with Henry V's signet office). By about 1770, this written standard was almost as invariable as it is today (for details of this development, cf. Nevalainen/Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006 and Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2006).

Since such a process of standardization is crucially dependent on institutional support, it was accompanied by various attempts at an "appeal to authority" (Baugh & Cable 2002, 253). While such an appeal to authority was successful in many other European countries, leading to the establishment of language academies (1582, Italy: "Accademia della Crusca"; 1635, France: "Académie française"; 1713, Spain: "Real Academia Española"), calls for an English Academy by such renowned authors as Dryden, Defoe, Addison or Swift (most influential was Swift's *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*, 1712) remained futile. Since an English Academy has thus never come into existence (for details, cf. also Flasdieck 1928 and Gneuss 1996, 23-25), the codification of English was the result of private enterprise by a series of interested individuals, such as clergymen (Robert Lowth), scientists, schoolmasters (Lindley Murray) and -mistresses, poets, booksellers and actors (Thomas Sheridan, John Walker), a process of codification by, as Finegan nicely summa-

rizes, "[...] not by an official academy, but by a disparate band of independent entrepreneurs" (Finegan in Romaine 1998, 536).³

5. The 19th Century from a Linguistic Perspective: Continuations

5.1 Phonology, Morphology and Syntax

As has been sketched above, there are – in contrast to, e.g., the transition from Old to Middle English – no wide-scale systemic changes in the form of the language, in its phonological, morphological and syntactic systems. In phonology, there is nothing like the series of quantitative or qualitative changes from Old to Middle English or the Great Vowel Shift (which demarcates the boundary between Middle and Early Modern English). There are only a few variables, such as /a:/ vs. /æ/ (in, e.g., *calf*, *glass*, *aunt* etc), /u:/ vs. /ju:/ (in, e.g., *tune*, *due*, etc.), a growing instability of phonemic contrast between /m/ vs. /w/ (in, e.g., *where* vs. *wear*), and also, with some speakers, a confusion between /v/ and /w/ in words like *very*. Furthermore, there is a set of variables which are highly relevant for the present topic, since they function as social shibboleths: non-rhotic pronunciation (in, e.g., *car*, *cart*) and intrusive /r/, the use of /n/ instead of /ŋ/ in unstressed position (in, e.g., *singin'*) and variability in word-initial /h/ as in, e.g., *humour*, *hospital*, *humble* (for surveys, cf. Bailey 1996; 69-137; MacMahon in Romaine 1998, 372-373; Görlach 1999, 44-62).

In inflectional morphology, the changes are insignificant, since, e.g., also the distinction between second person singular and plural had – at least in written Standard English – been given up earlier. Also in syntax, there are relatively few categorical innovations or losses, all of them mainly statistical in nature, such as, e.g., the continuing expansion of the progressive to passives, as in, e.g., *the house is being built*, or the emergence of the *got*-passive as in, e.g., *the vase got broken* (for surveys, cf. Bailey 1996, 215-261; Denison in Romaine 1998, 92-329, and Görlach 1999, 65-88).

The part of the language most affected was the lexicon: new words were coined at a rate not seen since the 16th century, due to advancements in trade, exploration and colonization and in particular in the fields of technological and scientific innovations (cf. the numbers in Beal 2004, 14-34).

3 Cf. the following titles: Lexicon: Johnson, Samuel (1755), *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the Words are deduced from their Originals, and illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers*. 2 vols.; Grammar: Priestley, John (1761), *Rudiments of English Grammar*; Lowth, Robert (1762), *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*; Murray, Lindley (1795), *English Grammar, Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners*; Ash, John (1763), *Grammatical Institutes: or an Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's Grammar*; Campbell, George (1776), *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*; Pronouncing Dictionaries: Sheridan, Thomas (1780), *A General Dictionary of the English Language, one main object of which is to establish a plain and permanent standard pronunciation, to which is prefixed a rhetorical grammar*. 2 vols.; Walker, John (1791), *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language*.

5.2 Continuing Extension of English on Independent Models – Case Study: The Position of Adverbial Connectors in the History of English

The 19th century, of course, saw continuations in most of the aspects sketched for the English of its immediate preceding periods in Chapter 4 above: there is, first of all, a continuing functional extension of English to new text types and genres. In stark contrast to earlier periods, however, the models for written genres and their patterns were no longer found outside the language in Latin (as from Old English onwards) or French (as in Middle English), but in independent developments.

Such an independent development can, e.g., be noticed in the change of the position of adverbial connectors (such as causal *therefore*, additional *also*, concessive *however*, etc.) from almost exclusively sentence-initial position to a variety of other positions in the sentence (data based on Lenker *forthc.*). In Middle English, adverbial connectors were mainly placed sentence-initially, often in collocation with an immediately preceding conjunction (such as *and*, *or* or *but*; cf. *and* in 1 a, b, c):

- (1) **And therefore** [a] ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right; that is to seyn, by the lawe and nought by excesse ne by outrage. **And also** [b], if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of youre adversaries in oother manere than right comandeth, ye synnen. **And therefore** [c] seith Senec that 'a man shal nevere vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse.' (Chaucer, 1390, "Tale of Melibee", C.1)

From the end of the Early Modern English period, and in particular in the 19th century itself (cf. Table 1, below), we notice a significant difference, namely that authors no longer place adverbial connectors at the beginning of a sentence, but at a variety of positions, such as following the subject (2), following subject and inflected verb (3 and 4), or at the end of a main clause before a subordinate clause (5):

- (2) Its price, **therefore**, besides compensating all occasional losses, must afford something like the profit of insurance (Adam Smith, 1766, *The Wealth of Nations*, Chapter XI, Part 1)
- (3) The natural sciences do not, **however**, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges [...] (Matthew Arnold, 1882, *Literature and Science*, 27)
- (4) In speaking of the future of the novel we must of course, **therefore**, be taken as limiting the inquiry to those types that have, for criticism, a present and a past (Henry James, 1899, *Future of the Novel*)
- (5) There is still some chance, **however**, that Sufism may be a record of its activity (Thomas Kelly Cheyne, 1914, *The Reconciliation of Races*)

Table 1 summarizes these developments on the basis of a corpus-study of prose texts from Old English to PDE compiled for Lenker (*forthc.*): the "long" 19th century clearly emerges as the decisive period when the "medial" position (all positions apart from sentence initial position) of the adverbial connectors became more frequent and actually replaced the earlier pattern of sentence-initial position of a collocate of conjunction and adverbial connector.

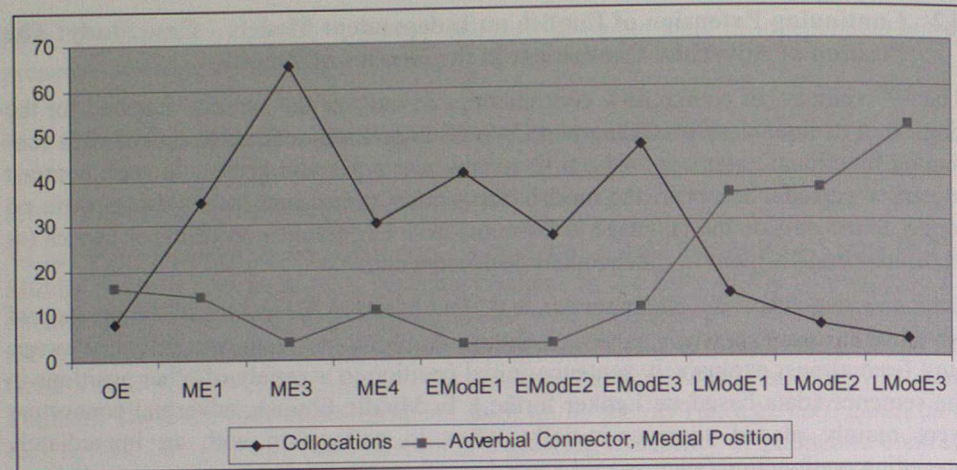


Table 1: Collocations (Conj. + Adverbial Connector at the Beginning of a Sentence) vs. Adverbial Connector in Medial Position (Lenker forthc., Chapter 13) (LModE1 1710-1780, LModE2 1780-1850, LModE3 1850-1920)

This change in position of adverbial connectors, however, is not only an illustrative example of an independent creation of a distinctive pattern of marking textual relations in written English. It also institutes an additional difference between spoken and written English from the 19th century onwards. Table 2 shows that the position of adverbial connectors is markedly different in spoken and written genres in Present-Day English (Biber et al. 1999, Table 10.18) and that the medial position in particular is basically restricted to written genres:

| | per cent in initial position | per cent in medial position | per cent in final position |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| CONV | ■■■■■■■■■■ | □ | ■■■■■■■■ |
| ACAD | ■■■■■■■■■■ | ■■■■■■■■ | ■■ |

Table 2: Position of Adverbial Connectors in Present Day English in CONV (= Conversation) and ACAD (= Academic Prose); ■ = 5 per cent

This innovation may thus be seen as a further instance of a conscious coinage of independent English patterns in written genres (for other instances, cf. Biber/Finegan 1989). It does, however, also reflect – in continuation of the normative tradition started in the 1800s (cf. above, Chapter 4) – the influence of a highly popular metalinguistic text by one of the most influential Scottish rhetoricians, George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), which saw over forty reprints in the 19th century (Gneuss 1996, 32-33).

With respect to the position of adverbial connectors, Campbell explicitly suggests the innovative pattern of placing adverbial connectors at various positions in the sentence. Apart from versatility in connectors themselves (also distinctively increasing in the

19th century; cf. Lenker forthc., Chapter 6, Tables 6.1-6.3), he recommends variation in their position in the sentence:

One of the best expedients for preventing the connexives from becoming to conspicuous, is to avoid the frequent recurrence of the same particles, ... Another useful expedient for answering the same end is **to vary the situation of the conjunction, wherever the idiom of the tongue and the harmony of the sentence will permit the variation [...]**. (Campbell 1776, 411)

6. The 19th Century from a Linguistic Perspective: Innovations

6.1 19th-century Issues: Language Attitudes and Consciousness

So far, it has been shown that there are indeed instances of "linguistic stasis" in 19th-century English, since there are no deep systemic, typological changes (cf. above, Chapter 5.1). Yet, if we move beyond inflectional morphology, we see the continuing expansion of English not only in the lexicon, but also, for the first time, in text-linguistic issues, such as in the development of new, independent patterns specific to written English, and also, macro-structurally, in its extension to further text types and genres (cf. Diller/Görlach 2001). These instances of extension would, however, probably not warrant a demarcation of 19th-century English as a significantly separate period in the history of English. The crucial change segmenting this period from its preceding ones lies in the speakers themselves, in their changing attitudes to their language and their growing language consciousness.

Strang (1970) is one of few textbooks on the history of English which mentions this aspect:

What has changed is the alignment of speakers into groups. The overriding importance of geographical factors has given way to dominance of cultural and socio-economic factors [...] The characteristic of the past two centuries is the extent to which a man can choose the group with which he will linguistically associate [...] He is still not entirely free in this respect [...] But in a broad sense, fluctuating, self-electing, social groups are the main determinants of the variations within English today. (Strang 1970, 78)

This summary of changes calls to mind what is described as "crossing" in modern socio-linguistics. This term was introduced by Rampton (1995) for code- or language-switching among young adolescents of different ethnic backgrounds but is now also extended to other instances of an awareness of language borders and their potential transgression:⁴

Crossing is a particular kind of code-switching in which speakers 'transgress' into a language or variety which, in the social world in which the speakers act, is generally not thought to 'belong' to them. As such, it is linked to matters of maintaining, reinforcing, but also contesting and overcoming social boundaries [...] (Auer 2006, Abstract)

I would like to argue here that the 19th century marks a tremendous transition in the history of the English language, which is hard to discern when applying the traditional typological categories and language internal and external sets of criteria, since, initially, it does not affect the language system or the range of texts, but the minds, the attitudes and consciousness, of speakers of English. For the first time, there is – mainly

4 I would like to thank Terttu Nevalainen for drawing my attention to the similarities of the concept of "crossing" to the developments in 19th-century English.

due to the increase in geographical and social mobility – a large number of speakers who are becoming more and more aware of the different language varieties and the implications of their use and want to take the chance of choosing a particular language variety – in addition to or in replacement of the variety they had previously used.

The two central linguistic concerns of the 19th century are thus "language attitudes", i.e. a widespread anxiety of individuals about how to speak the language and "language consciousness", i.e. a popular enthusiasm about all kinds of language matters, such as, e.g., historical linguistics and certain regional varieties. In the last part of this paper, three distinctive developments which reflect these 19th-century issues will be presented: (a) the advances in comparative historical linguistics, (b) a new self-assertive attitude towards dialects as illustrated by the scholarly recognition and popularity of regional dialects and their employment in literary texts and (c) the English preoccupation (or even obsession) with accent, as illustrated by the rise of Received Pronunciation. It is, however, necessary to first of all sketch the changing socio-historical conditions which facilitated these developments.

6.2 Socio-Cultural Context

Social Mobility: The relevance of the 19th-century transition from a society based on ranks or orders to a class-based system for the linguistic concept of "crossing", i.e. the feasible, individual transgression from one social/linguistic context into another, is nicely illustrated by the entry for *rank* in Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Johnson stresses the impossibility of transgression inherent in the notion of *rank* when defining it as "the fixed, invariable, external rules of distinction of rank, which create no jealousy, since they are held to be accidental".

A new and extensive class-terminology is attested since the end of the 18th century: the *OED* gives 1773 for the first attestation of the social sense of *class*, and James Murray remarks in 1889 that the phrases/compounds "*higher (upper), middle, lower classes, working classes* appear to be of modern introduction" (*OED*, s.v. *class*). These phrases, and also neologisms such as *class-antagonism*, *class-bias* or *class-consciousness* allow the potential for self- and other-definition and an expression of an idea of transgression, which in turn themselves determine the speakers' choice of their language varieties (cf. also Mugglestone 2006b, 276).

General Education and Mass Literacy: One of the most essential prerequisites for the awareness of different varieties and a conscious choice of a certain variety was the increasingly easy access to education, and, finally, compulsory elementary education ("Elementary Education Act", 1870). There had been a growing interest in education since the beginning of the century, so that in March 1851, for example, 43.8 per cent of the population between the ages of 5 and 15 attended schools. Also, adult education was flourishing in the so-called "Mechanics' Institutes" and similar institutions (ca. 610 institutes); in 1850, e.g., over 5,000 lectures were delivered to ca. 16,020 persons in evening classes (for details cf. Michael 1987).

The 19th century saw the transition from very restricted literacy (at the end of the Stuart age there was ca. 70 per cent male and 90 per cent female illiteracy), i.e. from

skills which were once the preserve of a small specialized elite, to mass literacy (Cressy 1980, 175-89). Incipient mass literacy was, however, not only due to improvements in the educational system, but also to individual efforts at reading facilitated by advances in technology. These allowed the mass production of books, manuals and newspapers (hand-presses: 250 impressions per hour; steam press: 12,000 sheets an hour). Following the elimination of taxes on paper and newspapers in the 1850s, newspapers saw a tremendous increase in number; *The Times*, e.g., went from 5,000 copies in 1815 to 10,000 copies in 1834 to 51,648 copies in 1854. Extensive public reading was further boosted by the "Public Libraries Act" (1850) and also writing boomed, in particular after the introduction of the "Penny Post" in 1840 (from ca. 75 million letters in 1839 to ca. 347 million letters in 1849; all figures are taken from Görlach 1999, 1-25 and Mugglestone 2006b, *passim*).

Nationalism/Patriotism: Another factor which championed linguistic awareness of English varieties can be seen in the ideas of nationalism and patriotism on both sides of the Atlantic. For American English, Webster formulated what may be called a "Declaration of Linguistic Independence":

As an independent nation our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well as government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be our standard. For the taste of her writers is already corrupted, and her language is on the decline [...]. (Webster 1879; cf. Romaine 1998, 9)

For British English, Alford coined the term "Queen's English", which did not initially refer to the language of the Queen but to the language of the nation united by the Queen:

The Sovereign is of course no more the proprietor of the English language than any of us ... We speak of the *Queen's Highway*, not meaning that Her Majesty is *possessed* of that portion of the road, but that it is a high road of the land, as distinguished from by-roads and private roads: open of common right to all, and the general property of our country. And so it is with the *Queen's English*. It is, so to speak, this land's great highway of thought and speech. (Alford 1864; cf. Görlach 1999, 185)

7. Language Attitudes and Language Consciousness

7.1 Advances in Philology: The Rise of Comparative Historical Linguistics

The nationalist movement of the 19th century also encouraged an interest in the study of vernacular languages and their histories. For English, Dean Trench (1855) states:

What can more clearly point out our ancestors' native land and ours as having fulfilled a glorious past, as being destined for a glorious future, than that they should have acquired for themselves and for those who came after a clear, strong, a harmonious, a noble language? (cf. Romaine 1998, 48)

This interest in the vernaculars was supplemented and further promoted by advances in the discipline in historical linguistics in general. After 1786, when William Jones had first established the language family of Indo-European languages, research on Germanic and the Germanic languages, among them English, was intensified all over Europe (cf. Gneuss 1996, 45-51). In this context, three very important societies were founded in England between 1840 and 1870: "The Philological Society" (1842), the "Early English Text Society" (1864) and the "Chaucer Society" (1868). In 1884, the indisputably most

influential project was launched, the *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, which was to become the *OED* (first edition completed 1928; for details on the discussions in the Philological Society, cf. Gneuss 1996, 45-48).

7.2 New Self-Assertive Attitude towards Regional Dialects

Scholarly Recognition of Dialects: The interest in the history of the English language was also one of the reasons why regional dialects gained scholarly recognition. Since dialects often keep archaic forms much longer than a codified standard language does, the mapping of regional dialects by societies such as the "English Dialect Society" (1896) or the "Yorkshire Dialect Society" (1897) was – in its beginning – primarily conducted because of or at least justified by its contribution to research on earlier stages of English:

This is the great body of Provincial Language, which when it shall have received the attention not hitherto bestowed upon it, will yield so ample a contribution of sound Old English [...] (Forby 1830, "On Provincial Language"; cf. Görlach 1999, 203)

Yet, these mappings ceased to be subsidiary and books published as a result of these early scholarly investigations into dialects, such as Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1896-1905) and his *English Dialect Grammar* (1905), developed a standing of their own from the end of the 19th century onwards (for the early stages of the study of dialects and names, cf. Gneuss 1996, 61-64).

Regional Varieties in English Literature – Dialect Literature: In the 19th century, regional dialects were also for the first time gaining acceptability in literary texts and started to become legitimate competitors of the standard in terms of status and functions (cf. Blake 1981 and, in particular, Adamson in Romaine 1998, 589-692). While there was – due to the lack of an accepted standard – a free employment of various dialects by the respective scribes in Middle English, Early Modern English literary texts basically employed an artificial stage dialect, which was based on South-Western dialects, for the characterization of rustic characters only, commonly with comic, satirical overtones in a language use depicted as an aberration from a by then approved literary Standard.

In addition to the incipient scholarly recognition of regional varieties, the new phase in the 19th century was also set off by Romanticism, in particular Wordsworth's Introduction to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) in which he praises "the very language of men".⁵ While in the Romantic period itself only Scots and Irish varieties were used, writers of the Victorian period first chose regional varieties within England (cf. Blake 1981, 147-162). Since the 1820s, e.g., Cockney has become the primary urban dialect of literary texts (following the popularity of Pierce Egan's *Tom and Jerry*).

Yet, due to problems of dialect representation written English – in particular for narrative prose texts – is still canonically Standard English (and thus used for the narrator,

5 The claim is even stronger in the advertisements to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): "The majority of the following Poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure."

the main protagonist, etc.), while a kind of stereotypical "eye dialect" is employed for characterization by dialect for other characters:⁶

Thank **yo'**, miss. Bessy'll think a deal **o' them** flowers; that **hoo** will; and I shall think a deal **o'** your kindness. **Yo're** not of this country, I reckon. (Gaskell, 1855, *North and South*, ch. 8; Nicholas Higgin's first words in the novel)

Often, the regional variety is only marked by the use of an apostrophe to indicate /h/-dropping (cf. 'ut vs. hut), but not in any changes in spelling to represent certain vowels variants:

It's your ladyship's own 'ut. (Mellors)

I don't in the least want to turn you out of your hut. (Lady Chatterley) (Lawrence, 1913, *Lady Chatterley*)

So, even from the 19th century onwards, there are only rare attempts to go beyond the stereotype (cases in which "reading becomes more like an act of deciphering"; Adamson in Romaine 1998, 602); one of the most famous is Emily Brontë's portrayal of Joseph's language by a Haworth dialect in *Wuthering Heights*:

"Nelly," he said, "we's hae a crowner's 'quest enow, at ahr folks'. One on 'em 's a'most gotten his finger cut off wi' hauding't' other fro' stickin' hisseln loike a cawlf. That's maister, yeah know, 'at 's soa up o'going tuh t' grand 'sizes." (Brontë, 1847, *Wuthering Heights*, ch. 10)

The most important aspects of dialect use thus are not only its much increased frequency, but also the scholarly concern certain authors put into describing the dialects correctly. For *Adam Bede* (1859), e.g., George Eliot contacted one of the most famous historical linguists of the time, W. W. Skeat, and studied books on historical linguistics (Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Languages*; cf. Blake 1981, 153). The most significant step, however, is the attribution of specific naturalistic and metaphorical functions and uses of non-standard varieties from the 19th century onwards – a stark contrast to the primarily comical functions ascribed to dialect use in literary texts in the decades before (cf. Adamson in Romaine 1998, 603-606). With respect to naturalistic functions, regional dialects serve to indicate acts of identity (very early with Scottish and Irish writers such as Burns and Edgeworth) or are employed as a tool of social realism by writers such as Gaskell and Dickens (cp. Sam Weller's Cockney in the *The Pickwick Papers* employed to represent a combination of shrewdness and sincerity). With respect to metaphorical functions, Hardy – as one of the first authors – combines pre-industrial values with rural dialects. These can be positive values, such as natural vigour, gnomic wisdom and knowledge of nature, but also negative ones, such as narrow-mindedness or stupidity. In *Lady Chatterley*, Lawrence, similarly, contrasts Mellors' natural sensuality with Sir Clifford's impotence and inhibitions towards his wife, high-

6 Such stereotypical features with no phonetic implications are, e.g., the spellings of *grate* for *great*, *sez* for *says*, *would of* for *would've*. Cockney, e.g., is commonly indicated by stereotypical spellings for a selection of vowel sounds, such as *biled* for *boiled*, *ah* for *out* and /h/-dropping (omission of initial /h/) or its hypercorrect insertion (cp. 'as your 'orse 'ad any Hoads?) and, especially in early examples, the /v/-/w/ interchange (vot a wery fine Vellington boot); for details, see the survey in Adamson in Romaine 1998, 600-603.

lighted by their respective use of regional dialect vs. Standard (for details, cf. *ibid* and Blake 1981, 127-162).

7.3 The Rise of RP: The English Preoccupation with Accent

The most obvious instance of 19th-century speakers' language consciousness and language attitude, however, is certainly the English preoccupation or even obsession with accent from the early 19th to the late 20th century and beyond, as manifest in the "rise of Received Pronunciation", or, as it was contemporarily called, "The New-Fangled English" (Wyld 1920). In her monograph *Talking Proper*, Mugglestone (1995) captures this development in chapter headings such as "Accent: A National Obsession", "Accent as a Social Symbol" or "/h/ and other Symbols of the Social Divide" (all of these features are illustrated by a large number of examples taken from contemporary sources). The most important aspect of this development for the issue of a widespread language consciousness is that the "new-fangled English" was – again – not imposed by an institution such as an academy (cf. above, Chapter 4) or by certain members of the aristocracy. It is essentially a process instigated by the new, socially mobile middle classes and their representatives and endorsed by the pedagogues in general education (cf. Honey 1988). This is nicely illustrated by the following cartoon from *Punch* (6 September 1873):

Lord Reginald. "Ain't yer goin' to have some puddin', Miss Richards? It's so jolly!"

The Governess. "There again, Reginald! "Puddin' – Goin' – Ain't Yer" !!! That's the way Jim Bates and Dolly Maple speak – and Jim's a stable-boy, and Dolly's a laundry-maid!"

Lord Reginald. "Ah! But that's the way father and mother speak, too – and father's a duke and mother's a duchess!! So there."

Apart from some morphological variants such as *ain't*, the schoolmistress – a typical representative of the new class of social aspirers, whose pressure was at its height from the 1830s to the 1860s, – is depicted to disapprove of a recurrently discussed phonological shibboleth of social distinction, the replacement of /ŋ/ by /n/ in spoken conversation (cf. above, Chapter 5.1).

Correspondingly, the process of the rise of "Received Pronunciation" itself and its instigators are summarized in the – almost contemporary – account by Wyld:

The process of 'improvement' [...] began roughly in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and has gained in force and volume ever since. [...] But the triumph of the pedagogue is thus unquestionable, the success [...] must be set down rather to social causes than to a sudden capacity on the part of the Orthoepist to persuade those to whom he had preached it so long in vain. **It was assuredly not the aristocrats who first adopted the new-fangled English. They and their like, and long they may flourish, have hardly done so at the present time. It was the new men and their families, who were winning a place in the great world and in public affairs, who would be attracted by the refinement offered by the new and 'correct' system of pronunciation** which they learnt from their masters of rhetoric, or from their University tutors. (Wyld 1920, 285)

Wyld points out that the codification of pronunciation, which had started with Walker (1791) – a work which had only a very restricted number of readers and even fewer users – was essentially promoted by the newly rich and the geographically and socially

mobile middle classes, and, in practice, spread by the schoolmasters and -mistresses in the various educational institutions (cf. above, Chapter 6.2) as well as in schoolbooks, books on didactics and self-help manuals:

It is the business of educated people to speak so that no-one may be able to tell in what county their childhood was passed. (Burrell, 1891, *Recitation: A Handbook for Teachers in Public Elementary Schools*; cf. Mugglestone 1995, 258)

Accent and Pronunciation must be diligently studied by the conversationalist. A person who uses vulgarisms will make but little way in good circles [...] A proper accent gives importance to what you say, engages the respectful attention of your hearer, and is your passport to new circles of acquaintance. (anon, *Talking and Debating*, London, 1856, 15; cf. Mugglestone 1995, 1)

Elocution thus became an important public and private pursuit among socially mobile speakers. In addition to an increasing number of scholarly publications on contemporary English phonetics and grammar,⁷ self-help manuals for the period's stereotypical social climbers appeared in large numbers: cf. works such as W. H. Savage, *The Vulgarisms and Improperities of the English Language* (1833), *Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech* (1868), *Live and Learn: A Guide for all who Wish to Speak and Write Correctly* (1872), *Common Blunders in Speaking and How to Avoid them* (1884) and – showing the obsession with /h/-dropping – the Hon. Henry H.'s *P.'s and Q.'s Grammatical Hints for the Million* (1855) and *Poor Letter H. Its Use and Abuse* (1866) (cf. the lists of such texts in Mugglestone 1995, 2006b and Görlach 1999, 14). Especially the obsession with /h/-dropping is attested in various sources of the period: By 1864 Alford warned of the open and merciless laughter which awaited any "unfortunate member if he strews the floor with his 'aitches'"; Ellis (1869-74, 221) even describes /h/-dropping in words such as *house* or *heart* as "social suicide" (for the attitudes to /h/-dropping, cf. in detail Mugglestone 1995, 107-159).

This shift of sensibilities around accent and its role in the middle classes may thus – as it is not superimposed by an institution or the aristocracy – be described as a process of "focusing", i.e. high level of agreement in a language community as to what does and what does not constitute the language at a given time (cf. Nevalainen/Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006, 287). So, from the 19th century onwards, markers of linguistic etiquette widened from syntax to accent in a process which typically reflects the century's concerns for language attitudes and an ever-growing language consciousness amongst its speakers.⁸

8. Conclusions

Traditionally, the best way to segment the history of a language into different periods has been seen in conventionalized choices of external – historical – events (such as, e.g., the Germanic or Norman Conquest) or, language-internally, stages at which certain morphological changes were completed (such as, e.g., the "leveling" or "loss" of

⁷ See, e.g. Henry Sweet (1877): *A Handbook of Phonetics*. Oxford: Clarendon; Daniel Jones (1917): *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*. London and (1937): "On 'Received Pronunciation'", *Le Maître phonétique*, supp issue.

⁸ This is still – though there are signs of a diminishing value of RP – true for today's British English. In a quantitative study on "Ideologised Values for British Accents" conducted in 2004, RP still ranks first for "prestige" and "social attractiveness" (see Coupland/Bishop 2007, 79).

inflectional endings). These segments do, however, not necessarily indicate that, at these stages, speakers – deliberately or unconsciously – changed the language they actually used. It is rather a conventionalised segmentation of the continuous development in the language, even if these developments were triggered by historical events such as the Germanic or Norman Conquest. In view of these criteria traditionally used in historical linguistics, the 19th century is indeed comparatively static. If we, however, apply a different kind of criteria based in the speakers themselves and their conscious language use, then the 19th century emerges as a very distinctive, new period in the history of English: it is the time of the emergence of a widespread interest in language attitudes and an ever-growing language consciousness, the first time when a large number and – more importantly – a wide variety of people reflect on their language use, their regional variety, and, as a result, consciously try to adopt new ways of speaking.

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