Review of Núñez-Pertejo, Paloma, María José López-Couso, Belén Méndez-Naya and Javier Pérez-Guerra eds. 2019. *Crossing Linguistic Boundaries: Systemic, Synchronic and Diachronic Variation in English.* London: Bloomsbury. ISBN: 978-1-350-05385-4. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350053885

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This book is a very welcome, informative and thought-provoking collection of contributions on diverse themes in English linguistics. Its focus is synchronic and diachronic variation, and aims to show how work that straddles traditional dividing lines in linguistic research can illuminate much about the structure and use of English across time and space.

The book is divided into two parts (plus an introduction from the editors). The first part is entitled *Tensioning the System*. This foregrounds research that is 'cross-componential', looking at the relationship between, for instance, syntax and pragmatics, or prosody and semantics. The second part is entitled *Synchronic and Diachronic Variation*. Here the focus is on the interplay between contemporary variation and language change. In both parts, the data come from a number of varieties of English, and have been collected using a range of different methods. This review provides a summary of each of the contributions (except the editors' introduction) and a brief evaluation.

The first chapter is by Raymond Hickey ("Prosodic templates in English idioms and fixed expressions"). His research connects to long-standing work on idioms which have been studied mainly with a focus on morphosyntactic structure and semantics: less attention has been paid to prosody. An important issue in the categorisation of idioms is gradience. For instance, modification within idioms depends in part on the semantics of

the modifier (e.g. *He has several/?political/*greasy chips on his shoulder*, where the asterisk is intended to mean 'unacceptable on the idiomatic reading'), and such variation in acceptability foregrounds the gradient nature of aspects of categorisation in idiom formation. Hickey's focus, however, is on items which he considers to be on the 'invariant' end of the cline, and where the invariance is closely linked to prosodic patterns. A taxonomy of prosodic patterns associated with fixed expressions is presented, which groups together clusters of fixed expressions in terms of both their prosody and their meaning (e.g. two-feet expressions that suggest contrast such as *chalk and cheese* vs. three-feet expressions that suggest completeness or entirety such as *signed*, *sealed and delivered*).

The second chapter, "Word search as word formation? The case of *uh* and *um*," by Gunnel Tottie, looks at the status of forms such as *um* in corpora of recent and contemporary American English. She argues that these forms can function as stance adverbials, with initial uses commenting on propositions expressed in (earlier) clauses, and medial uses focussing attention on the following word or phrase, often indicating an ironic attitude on the part of the speaker/writer. While antecedents in spoken language corpora are readily available for the former, the latter are more complex. Tottie explores the hypothesis that such expressions in written language may have as a model the use of *um* as a 'word search' in spoken language. The chapter demonstrates some of the methodological complexities involved in using corpora to investigate such linguistic expressions. Less than eight per cent of the uses of *um* in the *Santa Barbara Corpus* were as a word search, and there are only a couple of examples that might serve as a model for the 'ironic' use found in written corpora. Tottie argues that salience in discourse —the fact that *um* is used to signal an attempt to retrieve a noun or adjective, typically— combined with the different functions of the discourse types in the relevant corpora (i.e. conversations in the spoken corpus, journalistic texts in the written one) may explain why the written corpus data pattern in the way that they do, despite the low frequency.

Ryan B. Doran and Greg Ward's chapter, "Demonstratives licensed by cultural co-presence," looks at the role of more generic socio-cultural knowledge in facilitating the use of English demonstratives. This is contrasted with other uses, well described in the literature, where the demonstrative indicates that the referent of the accompanying noun is more specifically familiar to the particular speaker and hearer. The authors

suggest that familiarity with particular cultural practices or scenarios is important for one of these uses (compare *I like that smell when you go into a bakery* with *I didn't like the smell when I went into that bakery*.) The invocation of such familiar practices can also help to explain the use of the demonstrative expression as a whole utterance in social media memes of the type *that feeling/moment when X*, where a given scenario that is not necessarily familiar (e.g. *that feeling when a cop follows you all the way home from work*) is treated as if it were part of a widely shared cultural experience. A further construction that is explored by the authors is the use of proximal demonstratives as property predicators (e.g. *I met a journalist at a bar last night. She's this amazing writer for The Mercury*) which can also rely on cultural stereotypes for interpretation.

Nikolaus Ritt, Andreas Baumann and Christina Prömer's contribution is entitled "The fall and rise of English *any*." It looks at the changing frequency of the use of *any* in the history of English, and starts with the interesting observation that, while the normalised frequency of *any* increased from the late Middle English period, it had actually declined prior to that time. The authors explore this change in frequency in connection with the grammaticalisation of the numeral *ān* 'one' into the indefinite article in the early history of the language. They point out some strong similarities in the frequency, function and distribution of *any* in Old and Present-Day English; they also provide a careful qualitative account of the similarity of meaning between the determinatives *a*, *any* and *one* in contemporary English, and a quantitative description of the rise of frequency of *a/one* compared to *any* from Old English onwards. The authors propose that the loss of the exclusiveness function of Old English *ān* would have aligned the meaning of that form more closely with that of *ænig* 'any' in the Middle English period, which is argued to be a factor in the latter's initial decline. But following the grammaticalisation (and specialisation) of the indefinite, each of the three forms came to be located in its own functional niche: *a(n)* as a marker of simple indefiniteness, *any* as an indefinite individualiser, and *one* as an indefinite exclusive individualiser, thus allowing a resurgence in the frequency of *any*.

The contribution by Kristin Davidse and An Van linden, "Revisiting *it*-extraposition: The historical development of constructions with matrices *(it)/(there) be* + noun phrase followed by a complement clause," is also historical in focus, looking at the development of extraposition in English, and linking the change in this construction

to patterns of grammaticalisation and subjectification (including the creation of new modal meanings). The research comprises a thorough corpus investigation of data from the Old English period onwards; given the specificity of the search, the number of tokens analysed is understandably modest, but nevertheless provides an exhaustive account of the relevant data. Via a careful syntactic and semantic analysis the authors propose that predicative and existential subtypes should be seen as instances of the same overarching macro-construction.

Bert Cornillie's chapter "On grammatical change and discourse environments" involves cross-linguistic comparison along with diachronic analysis and focuses on the role of discourse, broadly construed, in linguistic change. The discussion involves both co-text and context, and offers some helpful discussion about the role of context in historical linguistics more generally; for instance, it makes some interesting claims about the place of morphosyntactic changes such as grammaticalisation in the Labovian distinction between change from above and change from below. Cornillie provides a range of data to illustrate the various points he makes, with a focus on the development of syntactically complex constructions in English and Spanish as a result of Latin influence through borrowing, combined with local (= vernacular) innovation. There is a focus on the behaviour of individual writers and their place in particular textual traditions.

Grammaticalisation is also central to the contribution made by Diana Lewis, "Grammaticalising adverbs of English: The case of *still*," which explores the development of various more subjective uses of the English adverb *still* (e.g. the evaluative use in *Still, you didn't lose on penalties*) from its spatial use (e.g. *He stood still*). The focus is again partly quantitative (in terms of frequency counts) and partly qualitative, exploring semantic and syntactic changes, especially in terms of greater subjectivity for the former, and positional variation for the latter. The final substantive section broadens the discussion by relating the developments discussed to models of grammatical change, and reflects on the various stages and levels of change in grammaticalisation.

The second section, on synchronic and diachronic variation, begins with a contribution from Manfred Krug, Ole Schützler and Valentin Werner, entitled "How British is Gibraltar English?" It reports on a questionnaire-based survey of lexical choices in the Gibraltar speech community, paying attention to its unique sociolinguistic

context. The results of the study show that, while British English generally serves as the main reference variety, many younger Gibraltarians (especially men) have adopted 'less British' variants in specific cases. The contribution is noteworthy for its discussion (and use of) particular methodological and analytical innovations in contemporary dialectology.

Lucía Loureiro-Porto's chapter "Singular *they* in Asian Englishes: A case of linguistic democratization?" provides a historical context for the development of singular *they* (including observations about prescriptivist reactions), and the stage of the varieties under investigation in Schneider's Dynamic Model, especially with regard to degrees of language contact. The study finds that, overall, the feature is less common in the Asian varieties studied than it appears to be in British English. It also finds that the frequency of singular *they* is different in the three varieties (with the feature in Hong Kong English significantly more frequent than in either Indian English or Singaporean English), and different across text types, with the feature more common in spoken, spontaneous discourse; these (and other) differences are linked to greater democratisation of English in Hong Kong.

Marianne Hundt's contribution "It is important that mandatives (should) be studied across different World Englishes and from a Construction Grammar perspective" considers uses of the subjunctive across varieties of English world-wide and the relationship between the subjunctive mood and modal mandatives such as *should*. The chapter also addresses the possible influence of British and American usage on other varieties. Using a number of corpora, and investigating both co-textual and contextual factors influencing the variation, Hundt finds that there is no tendency for the World English varieties to be associated either with British English patterns, or with those of other nearby varieties. Using a random forest analysis, Hundt shows that 'trigger' (specific lexical items) is the most important predictor of use of the subjunctive, with 'variety' also being a strong predictor, and that the regional differences may be particularly marked with weaker triggers (verbs like *suggest* and adjectives like *anxious*). The final part of the paper provides a brief connection to constructional analysis, linking the fact that 'trigger' was the most important predictor to a model of linguistic usage which focuses on variation in slots within conventional form-meaning pairings.

Debra Ziegler and Christophe Lenoble provide the final contribution, "The stative progressive in Singapore English: A panchronic perspective," and the focus here is both on the evolution of the progressive and its contemporary use. The chapter also considers the place of wider cross-linguistic patterns in the development of aspect marking. The authors also provide some thoughtful analysis of general principles of grammatical change, especially with regard to grammaticalisation and the mechanisms involved, as well as a particularly illuminating discussion of *have* progressives (both generally and in terms of their characteristics in Singaporean English).

This book provides a wealth of material to inspire future work in English linguistics, and is a fitting tribute to its dedicatee, Teresa Fanego. While there is no specific overarching theme to the contributions, there is a more general one: the exploration of cross-componential variation in contemporary and historical varieties of English. This means the book benefits from great diversity. The research topics covered range from phonology to pragmatics, historical to contemporary, structural to applied, and the methods involve the investigation of computerised corpora, individual introspection and experimentation. As a result, the volume engages with a great range of possible work in English linguistic enquiry, and the contributors are leading figures in their field. The style of the writing is very appealing —while the analysis is detailed and extensive, each contribution is written in such a way that it will appeal to a more general audience. A particular strength of the volume is in the diversity of the methods used by the different researchers: this shows very nicely the ways in which important themes that involve cross-componential analysis may be explored. The book will be welcomed by many researchers in English linguistics, as it serves to illustrate the richness of the field, and the new avenues of enquiry which are opening up.

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