

Language Use,
Usage Guides
and Linguistic Norms

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Edited by

Luisella Caon, Marion Elenbaas
and Janet Grijzenhout

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	vii
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Part I: Language Use Past and Present

Student Evaluations in Late Modern Times: Testimonials in Favour of James Y. Simpson, M.D.....	3
<i>Marina Dossena</i>	

In Sheridan's Shadow: Elocution and its Legacy in Modern Ireland	17
<i>Raymond Hickey</i>	

An Old Friend Revisited: The Case of <i>But...Neither</i>	31
<i>Wim van der Wurff</i>	

Language-Norm Formation in Dutch Urban Contexts: From Haarlem Exclusive to Post-Modern Inclusive	53
<i>Dick Smakman</i>	

Part II: Language Use in Personal Letters

Between English and Dutch: The Case of a 16th-Century Merchant Shipmaster	65
<i>Terttu Nevalainen</i>	

The Fall and Rise of Lord Chesterfield? Aristocratic Values in the Age of Prescriptivism.....	79
<i>Carol Percy</i>	

James Boswell Practising French and Learning Dutch in the Netherlands.....	93
<i>Marijke van der Wal</i>	

“I Can Read Hollandsch Very Fairly.” The Correspondence between James Murray (1837–1915) and Pieter Jacob Cosijn (1840–1899).....	107
<i>Thijs Porck</i>	

Part III: Usage Guides and Linguistic Norms

“Lowthian Linguistics Revisited”	133
<i>Andreas Krogull and Gijsbert Rutten</i>	

<i>Have Went</i> and Flat Adverbs Once Again – “Irish Style”?	145
<i>Wim Tigges</i>	

Write Back in Anger: Storming the “Accent Bar” in 20th-Century British Writing.....	155
<i>Joan C. Beal</i>	

The Next Step: Cultural Usage Guides.....	167
<i>David Crystal</i>	

About the Editors.....	177
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PREFACE

The volume *Language Use, Usage Guides and Linguistic Norms* explores the gap between actual language use and usage guides that aim to present norms of correctness. In presenting innovative ideas and recent research in the domains that have characterized her scholarly work, the volume is a tribute to Prof. Dr Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade's academic work from her earliest publications on double negation in the eighteenth century in 1978 to her most recent books on *Describing Prescriptivism: Usage Guides and Usage Problems in British and American English* and *Languages of The Hague* more than four decades later in 2019. The themes addressed in the present volume cover prescriptive attitudes to spoken language use and language use in letters, codification, grammars and other language usage guides, cultural guides, and the emergence of new language norms in present-day urban contexts.

The volume has three parts. The first part contains four original contributions on the general themes of language use and attitudes towards language use in the past and present. In the first paper, "Student Evaluations in Late Modern Times: Testimonials in Favour of James Young Simpson, M.D.," **Marina Dossena** offers a preview of a larger study on evaluative discourse by examining a number of testimonials written by scholars and former students to support James Young Simpson's application for the Chair of Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh in 1839. These documents include students' assessments of Simpson's teaching skills, which equally praise his professional and his human qualities. As such, they allow the study of evaluative discourse in contexts in which the participants are in asymmetrical relationships. Dossena focuses on the coexistence of semantic and pragmatic strategies in the testimonials and notices that the texts share a similar degree of formality and politeness while at the same time expressing the students' admiration for the candidate, and thus "conveying a certain degree of affection, in spite of the relative social distance." By relying on positive face-enhancing moves in the testimonials, the students in question are able to express their subjective – and favourable – opinions about James Simpson while maintaining the objectivity required in such text types.

In his article "In Sheridan's Shadow: Elocution and its Legacy in Modern Ireland," **Raymond Hickey** focuses on the perception of accents

and the demand for authoritative guidance in language matters from the eighteenth century to the present day. The paper presents an insightful survey of past and present views on elocution in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It first discusses the interest of young people in the art of public speaking and correct pronunciation during the late eighteenth century in Britain and then goes on to show in how far the situation in Ireland has been different from the one in England. Hickey uses modern English examples to demonstrate how Sheridan's legacy still resonates today, especially with regard to the perception of rural and urban Irish accents in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. The author points out that the loss of Irish English accent features may not always be due to increasing urbanization, but also to natural processes of language change.

In "An Old Friend Revisited: The Case of *But...Neither*," **Wim van der Wurff** re-examines the above-mentioned construction already discussed by Tiekens-Boon van Ostade (1999), and compares it with the competing variant *but...too*. On the basis of a wealth of data and examples from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts, the author demonstrates that the structure consisting of the exclusive focus particle *but* 'only, merely' followed by the negative element *neither* is well attested in Early Modern English. Moreover, after 1580 *but...neither* is found alongside the variant *but...too*, in which *but* occurs without an overt negative. The coexistence of the two constructions, one containing the negative element and the other missing it, raises a number of questions, such as: what was the relation between *neither* and *too*? What caused the emergence of *but...too*? What effect had this on the *but...neither* construction? Van der Wurff answers these questions by making a compelling argument for a diachronic development of the different parts of *but...(n)either* between 1500 and 1700; a development in which each of these parts lost its negative association, thus explaining the variation between *but...too* and *but...neither* and, possibly, the disappearance of the latter by 1800.

Taking a big leap from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the twenty-first century, the paper by **Dick Smakman** calls the attention to the role of modern Dutch cities in the formation of language norms. In his contribution "Language-Norm Formation in Dutch Urban Contexts: From Haarlem Exclusive to Post-Modern Inclusive," Smakman discusses three types of language norms in the Netherlands. The first one is the "folklore norm," which associates the city of Haarlem with proper and unmarked Dutch, despite the fact that Haarlem is fairly anonymous and relatively unknown when compared to other Dutch cities. The second one is the "proclaimed norm," i.e. the idea shared by most speakers that "good" Dutch, often associated with Standard Dutch, is the "correct" language spoken

across the country. This language norm can either be “exclusive” or “inclusive,” the former being highly codified and spoken by few people, while the latter is the language used by ordinary speakers in day-to-day communication and is more likely to contribute to linguistic changes. The third one is the “street norm,” which pertains to “street-level discourse by ordinary speakers” and is no longer exclusive of lower strata of society but is also imitated by educated younger speakers who can initiate and lead language changes. Smakman observes that such ordinary speakers in urban contexts are likely to promote future linguistic changes which might narrow the gap between street norms and broader norms.

The second part of the volume concentrates on actual language use in personal and public letters from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. In “Between English and Dutch: The Case of a 16th-Century Shipmaster,” **Terttu Nevalainen** explores the extent to which the language in letters by a sixteenth-century shipmaster reflects his bilingual experience. In her analysis of Francis Johnson’s correspondence with Sir Nathaniel Bacon, Nevalainen discusses a number of linguistic features that are fairly consistent with a bilingual speaker in the Anglo-Dutch context of late sixteenth-century East Anglia. Though the letters show Francis Johnson’s command of formal letter writing, the spelling is interspersed with variants such as *goede* (“good(s)”), *meester* (“master”) and *mijn* (“my”), which suggest an exposure to Dutch writing. In addition, the frequent occurrence of the auxiliary *do* in affirmative statements, as well as the preference for zero variants for the third-person singular verb forms and for zero or WH-relative pronouns with human referents, point toward linguistic strategies commonly adopted by multilingual speakers to facilitate communication in language contact situations. Nevalainen concludes by arguing that while spelling specifically points towards a Dutch-East Anglian linguistic context, all other features are more generally typical of speakers who switch language codes, and they still occur today “in high-contact varieties of English around the world.”

In “The Fall and Rise of Lord Chesterfield? Aristocratic Prescriptivism in the ‘Age of Johnson’,” **Carol Percy** explores the changing cultural influence of aristocrats in the eighteenth century by opposing the views and ideas of the aristocrat Chesterfield and the author and lexicographer Samuel Johnson. As Raymond Hickey in his contribution to this volume, Carol Percy also emphasises the importance of correct written English and eloquent language use for eighteenth-century elite young men. Both Chesterfield and Johnson were in favour of a multilingual education. According to them, young men and women should strive for correct use of English and knowledge of other languages. Percy illustrates Lord Chesterfield’s

attitudes towards the use of both English and other languages, in particular French, Greek, and Latin, with examples from his letters. These are especially interesting because of the fact that standards for the correct usage of the English language were “changing and confusing” throughout his lifetime. Along with the changing tide of social mobility, Johnson allowed for more linguistic variation.

In her paper “James Boswell Practising French and Learning Dutch in the Netherlands,” **Marijke van der Wal** discusses the multilingual experience of James Boswell, who was learning Dutch and speaking French while in the Netherlands. In the year he spent at Utrecht to study Roman Law at the local university, Boswell took the opportunity to practise and improve his French as well as to learn some Dutch, in order to be able to communicate with the locals. Twenty texts – brief essays or compositions – written in Dutch open a window on the way Boswell approached the learning of this language. According to van der Wal, he was determined to learn Dutch by imitating the speech of native speakers, and though there is evidence that he also consulted Sewel’s *A Large Dictionary of English and Dutch* and possibly grammar books, his language shows many oral features that can be only be attributed to the above-mentioned practice. Van der Wal argues that Boswell’s learning process is therefore “caught in the act” in these texts, as they show both imperfect learning of the language and interference of English, as well as near native-like language acquisition.

As **Thijs Porck** points out, the correspondence between James Murray and the Dutch scholar and lexicographer Pieter Jacob Cosijn provides a unique “behind-the-scenes” perspective on how Murray contacted foreign correspondents for advice on etymological matters. In “‘I Can Read Hollandsch Very Fairly’: The Correspondence Between James Murray (1837–1915) and Pieter Jacob Cosijn (1840–1899),” he shows how the scholarly correspondence between these two lexicographers contributes to shed light on nineteenth-century lexicography and two of its practitioners. As the primary editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Murray sought the help of various scholars; for English words of Dutch origin he corresponded with Cosijn, who was on the editorial board of a similarly remarkable project, the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (Dictionary of the Dutch language). On the basis of two letters and five postcards, Porck is able to reconstruct how some of the information provided by Cosijn found its way into the *Oxford English Dictionary*. He also proposes that though the relationship between the two scholars was never too personal and involved some disagreement, Murray must have held Cosijn in very high esteem, as suggested by the note written by the former on the margin of a postcard sent

to him by the latter: “Prof. Cosijn of Leiden - Greatest Eng. scholar of Holland.”

The third part of the volume is mainly concerned with the possible impact of usage guides. In their paper “‘Lowthian’ Linguistics Revisited: Codification, Prescription and Style in a Comparative Perspective,” **Andreas Krogull and Gijsbert Rutten** report on recent findings on the effects of grammatical prescriptions as found in a grammar of Dutch from the early nineteenth century. Their paper has a focus on two variables: relative pronouns and genitive case. The grammar in question distinguishes between “polite” *wh*-relatives and the more familiar *d*-relatives *die* (common gender) and *dat* (neuter gender). The authors found prevalent use of *wh*-relatives in newspapers and use of *d*-relatives in private letters and diaries before the nineteenth century and an increased use of *wh*-relatives in letters and diaries after the introduction of the grammar book. With respect to genitives, the authors observed a rise in the use of the analytic genitive *van de*, which seems to temporarily come to a halt after the publication of the grammar book, which favours the synthetic genitive. This article thus shows the impact of a grammar book on language use. In contrast, **Wim Tigges** demonstrates that some structures that grammar books and usage guides dismiss as “bad language” seem to be resilient and may survive. In his paper “*Have Went* and Flat Adverbs Once Again: ‘Irish Style’?,” Tigges first illustrates the use of perfective constructions like *have went* and *has fell* in eighteenth-century English. This usage seems to have gradually died out in Britain itself. The author subsequently provides examples of *have* followed by a preterit verb form taken from a booklet written by a schoolteacher of English based in Ireland in 1995, showing that these constructions still exist in Irish English. He also discusses the use of an adjective form as an adverb in the eighteenth century. This usage also survives in varieties of English today, even though “both the ‘have/is’-plus-preterit construction and the flat adverb have been under scrutiny by authors of prescriptive grammars and usage guides for at least three centuries.”

Perhaps the strongest feelings about language use concern accents. Not only in scholarly articles, grammar books and usage guides, but also in poems, novels and plays, do we find comments that suggest a relationship between accent or dialect use and social status. In “Write Back in Anger: Storming the Accent Bar in 20th-Century British Writing,” **Joan C. Beal** first addresses the privileged status of RP among British English accents until the early 1960s, even though authors at that time were beginning to “write back,” claiming the right to use their variety of the language and thus questioning the “superior” status of RP at the time. The paper concludes that the “accent bar” has been breached and attitudes towards dialects of English

have changed since the 1960s, but the privileged status of RP and its association with intelligence still exists in the minds of some people and continue to obstruct social mobility.

In the final contribution to this volume, **David Crystal** draws attention to the problem of language and cultural misunderstanding and the need for usage guides to cultural allusions. In “The Next Step: Cultural Usage Guides,” he makes some suggestions about how a cultural usage guide could be organised in the manner of a thesaurus. In the appendix, he illustrates a possible entry for British “MOT,” which for a Canadian linguist would refer to the Montréal-Ottawa-Toronto phonology/phonetics workshop, for a speaker of Dutch to an unpleasant insect that you do not want to find in your wardrobe, and for a British English speaker to the “ministry of transport” and, metaphorically, to any check-up test.

We believe that the variety of papers presented in this volume reflects the broad range of subjects that have caught Prof. Dr Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade’s interest during her remarkable academic career; as such they are sources of inspiration for future avenues of research on language use and language norms, past and present language usage guides, and cultural guides.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all the contributors who enthusiastically reacted to our call for papers as well as Alison Edwards and Mo Gordon for their precious help in reviewing some papers.

PART I

LANGUAGE USE PAST AND PRESENT

STUDENT EVALUATIONS
IN LATE MODERN TIMES:
TESTIMONIALS IN FAVOUR
OF JAMES YOUNG SIMPSON, M.D.*

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1. Introduction

In this essay I discuss documents in which both scholars and former students express their support for James Y. Simpson's application for the Chair of Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh in 1839. Although today James Y. Simpson is well-known for his use of chloroform as an anaesthetic, the outcome of his experiments would not be published until 1847, so the testimonials presented here concern a time when Simpson was still building his professional image. Through an analysis of the documents available in the Wellcome Collection, it will be shown how participants enhance the recipient's positive face, so as to stress his suitability for the post. This enhancement concerns both professional and human qualities. At the same time, all the subjects appear to convey their attitude in such a way that their own respective social and professional status can be maintained and indeed enhanced *per se*. As the focus of the investigation is on pragmatic moves, the study is preeminently qualitative, not least because this is in fact a preliminary and very small-scale stage in a larger project on academic stance, where the discussion of quantitative findings is expected to be more relevant.

* I have chosen this topic as a hopefully fitting tribute to Prof. Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade, an important scholar whose academic work and personal qualities I have always held in great esteem and for whom it is my privilege to contribute a short essay to this collection, with heartfelt thanks for her continued friendship over the years.

2. Background

In Edinburgh, a white marble plaque in the High Kirk of St Giles invites visitors to “Thank God for James Young Simpson’s discovery of chloroform anaesthesia in 1847,” and indeed Sir James Young Simpson, 1st Baronet, FRCPE (Bathgate, 7 June 1811 – Edinburgh, 6 May 1870), is one of the most important figures in Late Modern medicine.¹ The son of village bakers,² his earliest work as a doctor was in Edinburgh’s Royal Dispensary for the Poor, from which he went on to specialize in obstetrics and became so well-known that even the upper class and royalty were interested in his practice – most famously, on 7th April 1853, Queen Victoria gave birth to Prince Leopold, her eighth child, with the successful administration of chloroform. Before then, however, Simpson had already made significant contributions to science, and in 1840 he became Professor of Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh – see Dunn (2002).

This essay aims to discuss the testimonials offered to the University of Edinburgh in favour of Simpson’s application for that post, i.e. the Chair of Midwifery, in 1839 (Chair of Midwifery 1839, henceforth CM 1839). As it would not be until 1847 that Simpson would announce his pioneering work in the use of chloroform as an anesthetic in childbirth, the testimonials collected in this source refer to his earlier studies and they also include students’ assessments of his teaching skills. The materials at hand can thus be employed to analyze evaluative discourse in contexts where the participants are typically in an asymmetrical relationship with the subject either because their status is inferior (students vs. lecturer) or because it is superior (senior scholars vs. candidate), although status can also be more or less equivalent, in which case it would be appropriate to talk about ‘peer’ reviewing.

This study is part of a larger project on evaluative discourse in Late Modern times, in which other similar texts are taken into consideration. The materials that underpin the main project include texts currently being made available in the various sections of the *Coruña Corpus of English Scientific*

¹ A memorial bust was also raised in Westminster Abbey: see www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/sir-james-young-simpson. All the websites to which reference is made in this essay were available at the time of writing (December 2020).

² In addition to biographical information found in encyclopaedic sources, and indeed in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, more details are in the website of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, as Simpson became its President in 1850 (see www.rcpe.ac.uk/heritage/college-history/james-young-simpson).

Writing, and studies of which have appeared in Dossena (2016a, 2017).³ In addition, a corpus of nineteenth-century student evaluations is being compiled on the basis of the documents being digitized by the library of the Wellcome Collection in London, where nearly 140 files are currently available. Most documents in the latter collection pertain to evaluations expressed in support of applications for teaching posts in Scottish universities, and while many only include references authored by other academics, several documents also include (former) students' assessments. As this kind of evaluation is meant to support the candidate's application, favourable views are typically conveyed; however, they do not appear to be formulaic in the sense that they do not follow a typical (externally-imposed) pattern. At the same time, they are useful sources for the investigation of positive politeness moves, as all authors, regardless of their status, convey respect for the candidates and appreciation of their teaching skills, their academic competence and their overall image in the professional world.

For the purposes of this study, I have selected the testimonials presented in favour of James Young Simpson, an emblematic figure of Late Modern science. As the project unfolds, other figures will be taken into consideration and more general observations will be offered, not least from the quantitative point of view; at this stage, however, it would be beyond the scope of this contribution to discuss the frequency and distribution of individual lexical items or indeed to offer an analysis of corpus-based findings. Instead, this pilot study intends to present the testimonials as valuable sources of data for the discussion of pragmatic moves and to exemplify what kind of research questions may be addressed as far as stance is concerned.

After an overview of the testimonials and some observations on how they are distributed among the contexts outlined above, given the current space constraints I will focus on the documents in which the students' views are conveyed, so as to outline what pragmatic strategies are employed. My analysis will combine a corpus-driven discussion of the vocabulary and phraseology occurring in the different texts with a qualitative approach to how the testimonials contribute to the presentation

³ The corpus currently comprises texts on astronomy, philosophy and history; both the corpus and its accompanying software are available as open-access resources at <https://ruc.udc.es/dspace/handle/2183/21846>. The studies based on the *Coruña Corpus* are part of the international research projects no. FFI2016-75599-P and PID2019-105226GB-I00, *Etiquetado electrónico de textos científico-técnicos en lengua inglesa entre los siglos XVII y XX: Coruña Corpus*, coordinated by Prof. Isabel Moskowich, Universidade da Coruña, which have received the financial support of the Spanish *Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad*.

of the candidate's suitability for the post. The main research question will address the coexistence of semantic and pragmatic strategies, in which politeness moves can be seen to play a significant part in how the assessment is expressed, while striking an important balance between personalization and objectivity.

From the methodological point of view, this study mostly relies on the tenets of Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005; White 2007, 2015), whereas the connection between politeness and evaluation is explored also on the basis of the findings presented by Dossena (2010, 2019) and Paternoster (2019). More specifically, Appraisal Theory enables the investigation of style and stance starting from the presupposition that all texts interact with one another, no matter how implicitly or explicitly, and respond to one another with the expression of Attitude (e.g. emotional or affectual responses), Engagement (i.e. acknowledging, ignoring or rejecting different view-points, for instance employing evidentiality, concessive forms and presumptions), or Graduation (i.e. strengthening or downtoning statements or their semantic focus). Expressions of Attitude comprise three sub-systems: Affect (relating to emotion), Judgement (relating to the implicit or explicit evaluation of behaviour with respect to social norms), and Appreciation (relating to the evaluation of objects). As we will see, all these elements have a part to play in the documents under discussion. In addition to that, and indeed consistently with that, Paternoster (2019) presents a taxonomy of positive evaluative adjectives found in nineteenth-century etiquette books comprising the following categories: Normality, Capacity, Tenacity, Veracity and Politeness; Politeness, in turn, comprises the subsets Conformity, Affection, Goodness and Pleasure.

The occurrence of (at least some of) these features in the evaluations expressed in support of Simpson's application will show the coherence of such texts with models of socially-accepted behaviour in the professional context of (Late Modern) academic life.

3. The testimonials

The testimonials collected in CM 1839 are published in a 90-page octavo booklet comprising Simpson's application and are organized in two parts: one presenting two Certificates of Approbation signed by students – one accompanied by a letter, the other by the text of the address with which the Certificate was presented to Simpson himself; and a second part presenting both reviews and endorsements issued by other scholars both in the UK and on the Continent. The latter part presents five comments on Simpson's

publications, twenty-five letters, and twenty-two testimonies. In what follows such materials will be discussed in greater detail.

3.1 Simpson's application

The letter by means of which Simpson offered himself as a candidate for the Chair of Midwifery on 15th November 1839 is addressed “To the Right Honourable the Lord Provost, the Magistrates and Town-Council, Patrons of the University of Edinburgh.” Given the text type, the vocative form employed as a salutation is “My Lord and Gentlemen,” whereas the signature is preceded by the formula that in Late Modern times expressed the highest degree of formality and social distance – see Dossena (2008):⁴

I have the honour to be,
My Lord and Gentlemen,
Your most obedient humble Servant,

After one sentence in which the application is announced with an equal degree of formality (“I beg leave very respectfully to offer myself as a Candidate for the vacant Chair of Midwifery”), Simpson goes on to present the testimonials that accompany his application; first of all, he mentions his teaching tasks (“I have delivered three Courses of Lectures on Midwifery, and one, in the University, on General Pathology”), also indicating what groups have provided “Addresses” that “will attest [his] past success as a Medical and as an Obstetric Teacher.”

In the next paragraph Simpson introduces “some extracts from various British and Continental Medical Works” which “will give [recipients] an opportunity of judging in what estimation [he is] held as an Obstetric Author.” The focus here is on research, whereas in the following paragraph attention is paid to his practice and outreach activities, both (previously) as “Annual Pupil or House-Surgeon to the Lying-in Hospital of Edinburgh” and (currently) “as Physician-Accoucheur to two Dispensaries,” in addition to private and consulting practice. Such observations “may serve to show that [the author is] not without experience as an Obstetric Practitioner” – an understatement meant to convey appropriate modesty on the part of the applicant.

⁴ As the study of correspondence has grown considerably over the last two decades, it is not necessary to discuss this point at any greater length here; it may however be pointed out that Fitzmaurice (2002) and Nevalainen and Tanskanen (2004) are very early and fundamental studies; an international perspective on letter-writing in Late Modern times is offered in Dossena and Del Lungo Camiciotti (2012).

Simpson concludes his application showing awareness of “the important duties of the Midwifery Chair” and announces “a number of Testimonials, from some of the most distinguished Accoucheurs and Professional Men of the present day,” which he will “have the honour of submitting” to the consideration of the recipients; again the formula employed here signals suitable distance and conveys the respect required by the occasion.

3.2 Part I. Addresses presented to Dr Simpson by his classes of midwifery and general pathology

As this will be the object of analysis in a specific section below, only an overview of the contents is provided here. The first text is the Testimonial presented by the students of the class of General Pathology at the end of the session 1837–1838, when Simpson “acted as Interim Lecturer for Professor Thomson”; this text, said to have 53 signatures, which however are not given, is followed by the letter which was sent together with the testimonial by Dr Charles Maitland, “Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Class for drawing up a Testimonial of Approbation”; the letter is dated 26th April 1838 (CM 1839, 5–6).

The next testimonial, carrying 27 signatures, not given either, is presented “by the Students who attended the First Session of [Simpson’s] Lectures on Midwifery” in 1838–1839 and is followed by the “Address read by William Coke, Esq. A.M.M.D., &c. on presenting Dr Simpson (April 19, 1839) with the above Certificate of Approbation, [...]” (CM 1839, 7–9).

3.3 Part II. Critical notices of various essays on midwifery subjects published by Dr. Simpson

In this part Simpson presents comments on his published research; he begins with his monograph *Observations on the Diseases of the Placenta*, published first in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* in January 1836, and then in the *London Medical and Surgical Journal* in June and July of the same year. Translations of the same text appeared in 1837: one in German in *Neue Zeitschrift für Geburtskunde* and the other in Italian in *Annali di Medicina*, and it is from the preface to the latter text that Simpson extracts paragraphs in English, followed by the Italian original, testifying to the innovativeness of his approach to the subject – the kind of innovativeness that justifies translation. See the quotations below:

Conversant with all that former authors have written upon them, and relying on the results of many researches which he had himself opportunely made, [...], he has, in a praiseworthy manner, filled up the void which Medical Science presented on this point. His work is learned and well executed, and we cannot better make known our favourable judgment of it than by giving its complete translation, which we do in order that Physicians and Accoucheurs may profit by the useful information and sage precepts which the Author, for the same purpose, has now made a public property. (CM 1839: 11)

Istruito di quanto su di esse lasciarono scritto gli autori, ed appoggiato ai risultamenti di molte indagini a bella posta da lui fatte, [...], empì lodevolmente il vòto, che a proposito di ciò offrivano tuttora le Mediche Istituzioni. Erudito e ben condotto ne è il lavoro; e noi non sapremmo far noto meglio il favorevole nostro giudizio, quanto con darne una compiuta traduzione, onde i medici e gli ostetricanti si approfittino delie utili cognizioni e de' saggi precetti, che per esso l'Autore fece di pubblico diritto. (CM 1839: 12)

Positive comments on the same study are also extracted from the *Transactions* of the Manchester Medical and Surgical Association and the *London Medical and Surgical Journal* (both published in 1836), from the *British and Foreign Medical Review* for January and July 1838, and from *Johnson's Medico-Chirurgical Review* for July 1836.

Simpson then presents comments on his “Cases Illustrative of the Spontaneous Amputation of the Limbs of the Foetus in Utero,” published in the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science* in November 1836. Finally, he presents evaluations of “Contributions to Intra-Uterine Pathology, Part 1,” published in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* in October 1838 and translated into French and Italian in the same year and in 1839. Such comments are extracted from the *British and Foreign Medical Review* for January 1839 and the *London Medical Gazette* for February 1839; the next comment, pertaining to Part 2 of the same essay, published in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* in July 1839 and translated and published in an abridged form in the French journal *Archives Générales de Médecine* in September 1839, are extracted from the *British and Foreign Medical Review* for October 1839. In addition, reference is made to an article in Todd's *Cyclopaedia of Anatomy*, published in London in 1839. Finally, the international interest in Simpson's work is also reflected in references found in Johann F. Dieffenbach's *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Medizin* for January 1837 (CM 1839, 14).

3.4 *Scholarly testimonials*

In this section endorsements sent by scholars based both in the UK and abroad are collected. Twenty-five texts are letters addressed to Simpson directly, and they typically start with “My Dear Sir”: this formula, which adds the possessive adjective to the qualifier of the standard vocative form, signals the proximity that a favourable testimonial conveys and functions as a powerful positive face-enhancing move. Another group of twenty-two texts, instead, presents testimonies in which Simpson is mentioned in the third person singular. Eight of these scholarly testimonials are printed together with their French original texts, and in such cases the vocative form reflects what is found in the source language – e.g. “Sir” for “Monsieur” or “Sir and Honoured Colleague” for “Monsieur et Très-Honoré Confrère.” Examples of both kinds of letters are given below.

My Dear Sir,

Although but a short time personally known to you, your writings have been long familiar to me. I fully appreciate in them your laborious investigation and extended research; and I doubt not but that these qualities will ere long yield a rich harvest of reputation to yourself, and of information to the profession. [...] (CM 1839, 44)

I have the pleasure of knowing Dr James Y. Simpson, and can bear testimony in favour of his great merits as a Teacher and as an Author. [...]. Judging from Dr Simpson's talents—his industrious habits—his courteous demeanour and easy address—and the highly creditable mention already made of his name in the professional world, I am certain that he must be a most efficient and popular Lecturer. (CM 1839, 43)

The limited scope of this contribution prevents further analysis here, but it is worth noting that such testimonies could also shed valuable light on Simpson's professional network, which certainly comprised very important scholars:⁵ one name above all is that of Thomas Hodgkin, whose description of the lymphoma currently bearing his name dates from 1832; Hodgkin sent his message from London on 26th November 1839, when he was Conservator of Guy's Hospital Museum and Lecturer on Morbid Anatomy in the same school (see CM 1839, 46–47), and addressed “The Patrons of

⁵ The role of social networks in language variation and change is another aspect of historical sociolinguistics that has elicited considerable interest – see for instance Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1996, 2008), Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Nevalainen and Caon (2000), Pahta et al. (2010), Kopaczyk and Jucker (2013), Dossena (2016b) and Hickey (2019).

the University of Edinburgh” stressing his interest in the success of the institution from which he had graduated and with which he still had close connections. In this case, like in the other instances when testimonials addressed the evaluators, the face-enhancing moves did not only concern the subject of the testimonial itself, i.e. James Young Simpson, but (more in general) the University for which the application was offered.

4. The students’ certificates of approbation and their accompanying texts

In this section I intend to discuss in greater detail the texts provided by two distinct groups of students, paying attention to the features they have in common and how they are introduced in the accompanying messages. As I mentioned above, the certificates pertain to two different subjects and two different academic years; even so, their contents are remarkably similar both in terms of the evaluations they express and in how they are organized. In both testimonials favourable comments are given on how Simpson carried out his duties as a lecturer and on his scholarly competence; in addition, both texts remark on his manner and availability.

The first text, however, also states that the students wish “to avoid expressing any opinion as to the propriety of the continuance or suppression of the Chair” of Midwifery (CM 1839, 5), which had become vacant following the death of Dr. Hamilton and which Simpson had filled during the 1837–1838 Session. This move reflects the fact that these students belong to a different class, that of General Pathology, and as a result they do not want to overstep their disciplinary boundaries – a negative face-enhancing move in relation to the institution, the choices of which the students acknowledge it is not for them to influence, although they do wish to express their support of Dr Simpson’s application.

Both student testimonials express their positive views in highly favourable terms, while always maintaining respectful distance through the formality of their lexical choices. A few examples are given below, in relation to the different aspects taken into consideration. First of all, both texts start by drawing the readers’ attention to Dr Simpson’s teaching qualities:

- (1) We, the undersigned Students [...] are anxious to express the high sense we entertain of the zeal, fidelity, and success with which Dr J.Y. Simpson has discharged the duties of the Professorial Chair (CM 1839, 5)

- (2) We, the undersigned Students [...] desire to express our highest approbation of the unwearied diligence and assiduity with which he discharged the important duties of a Teacher (CM 1839, 6–7)

Tones become warmer when admiration is expressed of Dr Simpson's competence, not least in relation to research:

- (3) We, the undersigned Students [...] express our admiration of his high talents, – of the varied and extensive research which he has displayed (CM 1839, 5)
- (4) The ready and fluent manner in which these Lectures were delivered, [...] have shown at once a facility of expression, and a degree of talent and information, which reflect the greatest credit on Dr Simpson, both as a Lecturer and as a man of unlimited professional acquirements. (CM 1839, 7)

Finally, both texts conclude with their strongest positive face-enhancing move: the one in which the students signal that Dr Simpson also proved a friend, in the sense that he showed both affability and awareness of his classes' needs, thus acknowledging his human qualities beyond the professional ones:

- (5) We, the undersigned Students [...] express our admiration [...] of his uniform and kind affability, which, while it exalted him in the eyes of all as a Teacher, endeared him to each as a Friend (CM 1839, 5)
- (6) His mildness and suavity of manner, and his unceasing attention to the interests of his Students, in affording them every means of instruction in his power, [...] were such as to command our esteem for him as a friend, and our respect as a Teacher. (CM 1839, 7)

As for the texts that accompany such Certificates of Approbation, they obviously diverge from the point of view of rhetorical organization, because they pertain to different text types: one is a letter, the other is the transcription of an address; however, they also share discursive features in which positive politeness is conveyed through face-enhancing moves (both texts consistently praise the recipient, recapping the points made in the certificates in relation to scientific competence, teaching skills and human qualities), expressions of modesty on the part of the encoders, and the expression of good wishes for the success of the application.

Concerning the subjects of the two texts, there is an interesting coexistence of first person singular and plural pronouns, as the presenters

do convey their views, but they also convey the opinions of the other students who signed the certificates; as a result, they speak on behalf of a collective subject and in various cases they draw attention to this fact by means of modalization strategies through which they convey their certainty of agreement among them – see the following instances:

- (7) Dear Sir, It gives me sincere pleasure to present you with the enclosed Testimonial, in the name of my Fellow-Students [...] Being the only means in our power of expressing our gratitude, [...] we trust that you will accept it at our hands and that you may find it serviceable at some period of your future career. (CM 1839, 6)
- (8) Sir, I am deputed by the Gentlemen of this Class, my fellow Pupils, to present to you a Certificate, expressing our sentiments of you as a Public Teacher, and a Lecturer [...]. Each of us, I am sure, was both delighted and proud to subscribe it, because we knew it was well and amply deserved. (CM 1839, 7–8)

5. Concluding remarks

Although this essay did not intend to offer any quantitative findings on the microlinguistic strategies observed in the texts under discussion, it has nonetheless attempted to show the homogeneity with which evaluative comments are offered by means of positive face-enhancing moves which reinforce the approbation conveyed by the individual lexical choices expressing Appraisal.

The different text types included in the collection attached to Simpson's application reflect the social distance existing between the participants both in their textual organization and in their rhetorical choices; at the same time, they prove consistent in the ways in which their pragmatic aims are illustrated. While scholarly opinions typically express appreciation for the candidate's academic competence and express favourable judgements on his publications, especially when they are not addressed to the candidate directly, the students' testimonials are closer to the letters addressed to the candidate in the emphasis they place on the candidate's personal qualities, expressing admiration and therefore conveying a certain degree of affection, in spite of the relative social distance. The participants' mutual face is therefore enhanced in all the texts discussed here, as the linguistic choices of individual subjects reinforce their roles and status; this, in turn, guarantees the propriety, the appropriateness and the validity of the predications.

In future, it may prove of even greater interest to study peer-reviewing strategies in other academic contexts; however, at this stage it is certainly useful to see how in Scotland students' opinions were expressed and indeed valued already in Late Modern times.

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IN SHERIDAN’S SHADOW: ELOCUTION AND ITS LEGACY IN MODERN IRELAND

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1. Introduction

Since at least the eighteenth century, the “art of elocution” has been a concern of writers on language and projected by them as a desirable accomplishment for people striving for acceptance in higher social circles. A plethora of works on elocution, appeared in print from about the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. Sheridan (1762) and Walker (1799 [1781]) are leading works (Spoel 2001) with similar publications continuing into the nineteenth century, e.g. Bell (1849), both in Britain and America (McIlvaine 1871). The initial concern of Thomas Sheridan (1719–1788)¹ was with the state of education expressed in his *British Education* (1756) which in its long subtitle indicates quite clearly his negative opinion of education in the Britain of his time. In this and later works Sheridan can be accused of opportunism as he tried consciously to engender a sense of linguistic insecurity in his readers and profited in no small way from the demand for authoritative guidance in matters of education and language through the highly paid public lectures which he delivered on these topics throughout his career.

¹ Despite being Irish, Sheridan had a considerable influence on public attitudes to education and specifically to elocution in his time (Benzie 1972; Sheldon 1967). His Irish background was often held against him by English writers, such as Samuel Johnson, and some of his pronunciation preferences, which were criticised by John Walker in his dictionary of 1791, were seen as due to his Irish background. There is no doubt that during the nineteenth century it was Walker who had the greater influence on English pronunciation, given the likelihood of him being preferred over the Irishman Sheridan as an arbitrator on matters of standard English pronunciation (Sheldon 1947).

Elocution for Sheridan and his contemporaries was understood as the art of public speaking and demanded not just general features like clarity of argument and delivery but, in very concrete terms, specific pronunciations which these eighteenth-century writers laid down in no uncertain terms. Sheridan, and his slightly younger contemporary lexicographer, John Walker, both went to some pains to point out the elements of Irish, Scottish, Welsh and London pronunciation which they regarded as particularly egregious. Given that Sheridan was Irish, his comments on the English pronunciation of his fellow countrymen are especially relevant.

As a desirable accomplishment for young people concerned with upward mobility (Mugglestone 2003), elocution is praised by various authors to a varying extent. Some authors are censorious toward local accents, for instance, Graham (1837, 21) notes that several regions of England have phonetic realisations which he, referring back to Walker, criticises as “defects.” Others offer specific advice to speakers from the regions of Britain, e.g. Scott (1808, 5–19) has neutral observations on pronunciation typical of speakers of English from Scotland.

The unquestioned preference for standard pronunciation for the entire population of the country led of necessity to the demotion of all vernacular and regional forms of English. Prescriptivist authors like Sheridan, and above all his main competitor John Walker (1732–1807), were vociferous in their condemnation of all pronunciations which they regarded as non-standard (Hickey 2009), though just what constituted a standard pronunciation in each case was a subject of much debate among these and similarly minded authors (Pouillon 2018).

The denigration of regional forms of English by prescriptivist authors had the effect, intended or not, of provoking linguistic insecurity in those people exposed to the works of these writers. This insecurity was furthered on a wider level by more general negative attitudes to regional accents in Britain and Ireland. For the current paper the question is whether the attitudes towards elocution in the regions was coloured by the view that this could mitigate the socially undesirable effects of a strongly regional accent. In the case of Ireland² this question was heightened due to the country's less integrated status in the United Kingdom during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. It is also worth considering how independence for (the south of) Ireland in 1922 affected attitudes to elocution and which

² See Sheridan's damning description of Irish education the late eighteenth century (Sheridan 1787).