Variation and Change: Historical Pragmatics

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Introduction

Languages, such as English, Russian, Japanese or Tzeltal, are not homogeneous entities. They are always subject to internal variation. Speakers make use of the resources of a language when they communicate with each other, but each speaker has his or her own small idiosyncrasies in the way they use these resources. They innovate consciously or unconsciously by modifying some aspect of their linguistic resources. They may pronounce an existing word in a slightly different way; they may use an existing word with a slightly different shade of meaning or in a different syntactic context; they may borrow a word from another language or invent a new word in order to meet new communicative demands, e.g. to name a new concept or to name an existing concept in a creative – humorous or poetic – way. As a result of these modifications, languages cannot be described as uniform entities. Variability is an integral part of each living language. But this variability is not without regularity. Some variability may be idiosyncratic and pertain to individual speakers only. But to the extent that other speakers adopt the innovations and use them more regularly, idiosyncrasies become regular options, and if most speakers of a language adopt a particular option, it is no longer just an option but a regular part of this particular language or language variety. Thus individual idiosyncrasies can lead to regular variation in a language, and regular variation can lead to language change.

Such variability exists on all levels of a language; on the level of its phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax and semantics. And – crucially – such variability also

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exists on the level of language use, i.e. the level of pragmatics. The research into such

variability has a very long history for some of the core levels of language, in particular

for phonology and the lexicon of specific languages. However, on the level of

pragmatics, research into variability has only just started. The field of variational

pragmatics, which looks at synchronic variation in different varieties of the same

language, started officially in 2008 with the volume *Variational Pragmatics* (Schneider

and Barron 2008; see also Barron and Schneider 2009; Schneider 2010 and Barron this

volume).

Research into diachronic variability on the level of language use is conducted in the

field of historical pragmatics. This field was inaugurated with the volume *Historical

Pragmatics* in 1995 (Jucker 1995) and it has become one of the most vibrant branches

of historical linguistics with a dedicated journal (*Journal of Historical Pragmatics*), a

comprehensive handbook (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010) and a recent textbook (Jucker

and Taavitsainen 2013).

In its entirety, historical pragmatics studies more than just diachronic variability. It also

studies pragmatic features in earlier periods irrespective of whether they are subject to

variation and/or change. This part of historical pragmatics has been called

'pragmaphilology' (Jacobs and Jucker 1995) or 'historical discourse analysis proper'

(Brinton 2001). Variability at a particular stage of a language – as pointed out above –

may lead to language change over time. The study of changes in pragmatic entities over

time is called diachronic pragmatics (Jacobs and Jucker 1995). Brinton (2001: 140)

distinguishes between studies that adduce discourse factors to explain language change

('discourse oriented historical linguistics') and studies that trace the development of discourse features across time ('diachronic[ally oriented] discourse analysis').

Historical pragmatics is predominantly based on the wider conceptualisation of pragmatics which includes the social and cultural context of language use. This approach has also been termed the Continental European or social approach to pragmatics in contrast to the more narrow conceptualisation of pragmatics as a study of utterance meaning in context (variously called Anglo-American, philosophical or theoretical pragmatics) (see Huang 2007: 4-5, 2012: 8; Chapman 2011: 5; Jucker 2008: 894-895, 2012: 501-503). The study of older stages of a language, and in particular the study of pragmatic entities at such older stages and the mechanisms of their change, usually requires a considerable amount of familiarity with the social and cultural context in which they were used, and thus the broader perspective of a social approach to pragmatics is often a necessity.

In the following we shall review some of the relevant work in historical pragmatics. In *Data and methodology*, we shall first give a brief outline of some of the data problems and the problems of methodology in historical pragmatics. In *Pragmaphilology*, we focus briefly on historical pragmatic work in the pragmaphilological tradition, that is to say on work that studies pragmatic features in earlier periods without focusing on either synchronic or diachronic variation. *Diachronic change* will be devoted to diachronic variation proper, that is to say on studies of pragmatic entities that change over time. *Synchronic variation in earlier periods* turns to work on synchronic variation in former times. *Investigating variation: Pragmatic variables* will introduce the

concept of the "pragmatic variable" and discuss some pertinent methodological and theoretical questions.

Data and methodology

Historical pragmatics has to rely on data and on methodologies that differ somewhat from those that are used in other branches of pragmatics. Philosophical methods, for instance, are of very limited value for historical pragmatics since earlier stages of a language are not accessible through the introspection of the scholar. Likewise, it is impossible to interview native speakers who lived centuries ago and impossible to recruit such speakers for experimental research methods, such as discourse completion tasks, interaction tasks, role plays and the like. As a result the historical pragmaticist has to rely on empirical methods and in particular field methods of observation and analysis of existing data. Generally texts written in the past form the data source although some recent work in historical pragmatics has started to make use of the diachronic dimension of speech recordings. Such recordings have been around for almost a century now and already provide ample opportunities for tracing diachronic developments, even if the range of recordings for the early decades of the previous century are very limited. Political speeches and various radio programmes, for instance, are readily available, but it is more difficult to get access to less formal conversational material in natural settings (see Jucker and Landert 2015).

In most cases, however, historical pragmatics relies on written data. Most of the early work in historical pragmatics endeavoured to find data that was as close as possible to the spoken language of the past because it was felt that this type of data was somehow

more authentic and more worthy of pragmatic analysis. Play texts, for instance, were

argued to be close to conversational language in spite of their fictional nature. Court

records and witness depositions are transcripts of actual spoken interactions and were,

therefore, also considered to be good candidates as data for historical pragmatics (see

Taavitsainen and Jucker 2010: 7-11 for an overview). Koch and Oesterreicher in

various publications (Koch and Oesterreicher 1985, 2011; Koch 1999) have introduced

a framework that distinguishes between the dichotomy of graphic and phonic modality

of language, and the scale extending from the language of immediacy to the language

of distance. Within this model, the scholar can search more specifically for instances of

the language of immediacy, characterised by informality, dialogicity and spontaneity

even if only sources in the graphic code are available. Letters, for instance, are

graphically encoded but in many cases they are instances of the language of immediacy.

Culpeper and Kytö (2010) set out to specifically trace features of spoken language in

the written data sources of the Early Modern English period. For this purpose they

compiled the 1.2 million word *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760*, containing

data that is more or less directly related to spoken face-to-face interaction, i.e. comedy

drama, didactic works in dialogue form, prose fiction, trial proceedings and witness

depositions, which all include either constructed or authentic dialogue. On this basis

they investigate lexical bundles, repetitions and "pragmatic noise", which includes

items such as *ah*, *ha*, *hah*, *o*, *oh*, *ho*, *um*, *hum*.

An alternative approach to the problem of data access starts from the presumption that

all instances of language use – whether spoken or written – are communicative and,

therefore, worthy of pragmatic investigations. This approach also maintains that language use in all its forms is always contextualised and subject to specific constraints. It is, therefore, not legitimate to analyse one type of language (e.g. fictional conversations in a drama) and generalise the results to other types (e.g. natural conversation among close friends). Each type of language is interesting in itself and should be analysed as such (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010: 25-6).

In the selection and analysis of naturally-occurring data, the historical pragmaticist faces the dilemma of choosing between a microscopic and a macroscopic perspective. Adopting a microscopic perspective, the researcher focuses on small amounts of data with highly contextualised readings and background knowledge of the socio-cultural situation. Such research is generally qualitative because there is too little material for any observations of statistical regularities and there is little scope for generalisations to larger diachronic trends. In a macroscopic perspective, on the other hand, the researcher relies on large, usually electronically readable, corpora, which allow the identification of trends and larger generalisations. Recent years have seen the publication of a large number of relevant corpora with historical data. Examples include the 1.6-million-word *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* published some twenty years ago and the recent publication of the 400-million-word *Corpus of Historical American English* (for an overview see Kytö 2010). In long lists of hits from such corpora, there is however a danger of losing the nuances of meaning. Search terms are no longer richly contextualised and it is possible that the researcher may miss crucial differences in the significance of specific search strings because such differences only manifest themselves in the larger context in which they occur.

Historical pragmatic research is, thus, often a search for the best possible compromise between the two perspectives, namely an attempt to discern the larger picture including diachronic trends while still remaining aware of the embeddedness of the linguistic item under investigation into larger linguistic, social and cultural contexts.

Pragmaphilology

Under this heading we subsume work on pragmatic entities as evidenced in earlier stages of a particular language. Such work may be devoted to the writing of one particular author or to other data that spans only a short period of time. Neither synchronic variation (i.e. variation according to such factors as region, social status, gender, genre and the specific communicative situation) nor diachronic variation is a particular focus of such research (cf. below on synchronic variation and the pragmaphilological approach). Pragmaphilological analyses spanning several centuries may focus, for instance, on the Old English period, which – according to the standard textbooks – lasted some seven hundred years from 450 to 1150. In doing so, they abstract away from diachronic differences and analyse data synchronically without paying attention to diachronic variation. Strictly speaking, however, it is usually a simplification to ignore the diachronic dimension in whatever data a scholar chooses to analyse. Even the work of one single author may have a short-term diachronic dimension between earlier and later texts. A single play text or any other single text may appear to have no diachronic dimension at all but even this may be deceptive as such a text may contain both archaisms and innovations, i.e. earlier and later stages of language development may be represented in one and the same text.

In the history of the English language, two authors have received an inordinate amount of attention in historical pragmatics; Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare (for overviews see Pakkala-Weckström 2010 and Busse and Busse 2010). The numerous historical pragmatic studies of Chaucer's work may serve as an illustration of some of the problems that historical pragmatics has to deal with. Geoffrey Chaucer (1341-1400) wrote his works before Gutenberg had invented the art of printing with movable type and none of Chaucer's original handwriting has survived. We know his work through handwritten copies. His best-known work, *The Canterbury Tales*, for instance, has survived in 82 different manuscripts, and present-day editions are abstractions that try to give an account of the text that is both faithful to what the editors think the author must have intended and helpful to the present-day reader. The typeface is obviously different from the original handwriting. In addition scholarly editions may choose to replace some unfamiliar characters or abbreviations with appropriate present-day characters and extended versions of the abbreviations. They may also introduce line breaks and punctuations which were not part of the writing tradition of the time. Thus the historical linguist cannot be sure whether the available text is really what Chaucer had intended (Pakkala-Weckström 2010: 228). With authors that have received less attention from editors and historical linguists and for whom we know less about the textual histories and the communicative contexts of their work the problems may be exacerbated. It is usually the scholarly editions which are used for the compilation of corpora but in the compilation process the apparatus of explanatory notes and variant readings tend to disappear. What is left is a text that is to a large extent an idealisation far removed from the complexities of its textual histories. Often it may be impracticable to go back to the original manuscript, even though this could often lead to relevant

insights (Caroll et al. 2013). The historical pragmaticists, therefore, must strive to find a balance between a reliance on the editorial work of the standard editions of these works and an awareness that these editions are idealisations.

Historical pragmaticists have studied Chaucer's work from many different angles. Some studies deal with Chaucer's entire work, some focus on the *Canterbury Tales*, on individual tales or even on specific passages from one of the tales (see Pakkala-Weckström 2010: 222 for a useful overview). Among these studies three topic areas have proved to be particularly popular with historical pragmaticists. These include firstly issues of politeness (e.g., Sell 1985 or Shimonomoto 2000). Related to this, the use of pronominal terms of address has also been analysed extensively. Chaucer's characters have an option of using the singular pronoun *thou* (and its case forms) when addressing a single addressee or the plural pronoun *ye* (and its case forms). To some extent the system is similar to the situation in Present-day French or German but the rules appear to be both more complex and more flexible (see e.g., Mazzon 2000; Honegger 2003; Jucker 2006). And, finally, the use of specific speech acts in Chaucer's work has received attention from various scholars. Examples include promises (Arnovick 1994; Pakkala-Weckström 2002), insults (Jucker 2000) and greetings and farewells (Jucker 2011).

Such pragmaphilological work analyses the communicative behaviour of fictional characters, fictional characters, moreover, who interact with each other in perfectly crafted verse. These conversations, therefore, cannot be taken to be representative of language use in different contexts by, for instance, everyday fourteenth-century

speakers of English. However, they give an insight into one specific and fascinating area of language use.

Diachronic change

Diachronic pragmatics deals with the changes of pragmatic features over time. Diachronic change can either be studied by comparing two (or more) different points in time, or by tracing the development of pragmatic features over a certain period. In the first case, data from different periods are compared with each other, similar to comparing data sets that differ with respect to other characteristics, e.g. different genres. Such parallels to comparative approaches can best be seen in studies that combine both perspectives. In a study of directive speech acts, Moessner (2010), for instance, combines a comparison of two periods, Early Modern English and Present-day English, with a comparison across three genres, legal, religious and scientific discourse. Directives can be realised in several ways, with more direct or more indirect strategies. Moessner analyses the frequency and realisation of these different strategies in both periods and in all three genres and compares her findings across both dimensions in a similar way.

The second option has sometimes been called the 'evolutionary' approach (e.g. Fritz 2012: 106). It is not based on a comparison of distinct points in time, but rather consists in a step-by-step tracing of developments which often span many centuries. An example is the study of how the present-day form *good-bye* (or short: *bye*) has developed from the blessing *God be with you*. This development was studied by Arnovick (1999) with the help of a large corpus of English plays from the fourteenth to the twentieth century.

Her study shows the gradual loss of the function of blessing, which is replaced by a general closing function for partings. At the same time, the form undergoes contraction and change to a point that the original meaning of the parting is no longer transparent and *God* is replaced with *good*.

The boundaries between synchronic and diachronic approaches are not always clear-cut. For instance, pragmaphilological research that only looks at one specific earlier period can still have a diachronic dimension by (more or less explicitly) relating the results to findings of present-day language use. An example of this is Culpeper and Archer's (2008) study of requests and directness in Early Modern English. Their data comes from the period between 1640 and 1760 and it is treated as a synchronic data set, meaning that changes throughout this period are not investigated. However, Culpeper and Archer compare their findings with results from the large *Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project* that was carried out in the 1980s (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). As a consequence, their synchronic study of requests in Early Modern English has a diachronic dimension, because it points to differences of this speech act between the Early Modern period and the late twentieth century.

When investigating the change of pragmatic features over time, researchers have two basic options. Either they focus on a particular form and investigate how its pragmatic function changes over time, or they focus on a particular pragmatic function and investigate the various forms with which this function is realised over time. The first option is known as 'form to function mapping' (Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 13). It can be illustrated with the study of the development of *Jesus,* the name of a religious figure,

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into the primary interjection *Jesus!* (Gehweiler 2008). The expletive *Jesus!* is used as

an interjection and does no longer have a referential meaning. Thus, while the form is

the same, the function undergoes change. However, as it is often the case (see above in

the case of *goodbye*), the form also undergoes some degree of change, when the taboo

expletive is later shortened into *gee!*, in this case with the additional motivation of

obscuring its original taboo form.

The second option is termed 'function to form mapping' and it is used, for instance, to

investigate speech acts such as requests, apologies or compliments (Jacobs and Jucker

1995: 13). In this case, the pragmatic function of the speech act remains (more or less)

constant over time, but the ways in which it is realised often change considerably. The

fact that the form of a speech act changes over time poses a practical problem in its

identification. With the historical corpora available today, retrieving all instances of a

particular linguistic form is relatively easy. However, it is not possible to search these

corpora automatically for pragmatic functions. A rather time-consuming solution

consists in reading through all texts and identifying each instance of a speech act 'by

hand' (see Kohnen 2007: 139, 2015). Other approaches build on the fact that some

speech acts have recurrent formal characteristics, such as the frequent use of the

Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) *sorry, pardon, excuse* and *forgive* in

apologies (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2008). By searching for these devices, a large

proportion of apologies can be found, even though some instances will still be missed.

A third way of investigating speech acts diachronically apart from automatic searches

for IFIDs and manual identification involves the analysis of metacommunicative

expressions, i.e. words or expressions that are used to talk about speech acts. For

instance, by searching for the expression *compliment* (in its various forms), it is possible

to identify passages in which people talk about compliments (Taavitsainen and Jucker

2008). Such passages provide important insights into what counted as a compliment at

an earlier time, and sometimes instances of compliments can be found nearby (2008:

207-208).

Synchronic variation in earlier periods

Pragmatic features do not only change over time, they can also vary synchronically,

depending, for instance, on region, social status and gender of language users, and on

contextual factors, such as genre and the specific communicative situation. As such,

they can be investigated from a sociolinguistic point of view. Compared to other levels

of language, such as phonology, morphology or lexicon, the variation of pragmatic

features in earlier periods has so far received relatively little attention. However,

research on synchronic variation has been conducted from the very beginning of

historical pragmatics. In particular the variation across different genres and text types

has received considerable attention (see, for instance, Biber and Finegan 1992 and

Taavitsainen 1993 for two early approaches).

Research providing some insight into synchronic variation has often been carried out

within the scope of pragmaphilology (cf. above). Jacobs and Jucker (1995: 11) define

pragmaphilology as the field of study that 'describes the contextual aspects of historical

texts, including the addressers and addressees, their social and personal relationship,

the physical and social setting of text production and text reception, and the goal(s) of

the text.' This wide definition of context covers all factors that can lead to variation of

pragmatic features. In contrast, the narrow conception of pragmatics does not include such aspects (see above). It is in response to the narrow conception of pragmatics that a new branch of historical sociopragmatics has recently been suggested (see Culpeper 2010, 2011). The term *sociopragmatics* points to the relation of this research area with sociolinguistics, and in particular with interactional sociolinguistics. Historical sociopragmatics is mainly concerned with how pragmatic meaning is constructed in interaction. The variationist perspective, i.e. the correlation of pragmatic and sociological features (see next section), is of secondary interest (Culpeper 2010: 74-75; see also Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 17-18).

Among the earliest approaches to synchronic variation of pragmatic features is research on terms of address, in particular pronominal terms of address (see Mazzon 2010 for a recent overview). Due to the strong influence of social identity and the relation between the interactants on the choice of pronominal terms of address, social variation has been a central aspect of such investigations, e.g. in Brown and Gilman's (1960) seminal paper. We briefly mentioned above that speakers of Middle English had the choice between two address terms, *ye* and *thou.* The study of these pronouns is concerned with the (mostly) language-external factors that determine which pronoun is used. Among the important factors influencing the choice are social status, age and the relationship between the interactants (see Burnley 2003: 29). In addition, situational factors play a role, so that even within a conversation, switches can take place for rhetorical or affective reasons. Jucker (2006) illustrates with examples from several of Chaucer's Canterbury tales how switches between *ye* and *thou* often mark a turning point in the story, at which the power balance between two characters shifts. Research on

pronominal terms of address in Middle English thus studies how the choice of address term varies depending on the identity of the interlocutors, their roles and relationships, and the communicative situation.

Lutzky's (2012) study of discourse markers in Early Modern English is another example of a sociopragmatically oriented approach to historical pragmatics. One part of her analysis is based on a corpus of drama texts which are annotated for social status and gender of the characters. She is able to show that the discourse marker *marry* is preferred by characters of low status, while the discourse markers *why* and *well* tend to be preferred by characters of higher social status (2012: 244-247). Moreover, gender plays a role so that, for instance, the discourse marker *well* is more frequently used by male characters, and it is more frequent in dyads of the same gender, compared to dyads of opposite gender (2012: 261).

Other types of variation that can be analysed are genre variation and regional variation. The first type has been investigated quite frequently and an example was already mentioned in the previous section. In contrast, regional variation is so far a rather underexplored area of historical pragmatics.

We have presented approaches to historical pragmatics as falling into three general groups. Pragmaphilology, which describes pragmatic features at an earlier point in time without a special focus on variation or change; approaches dealing with diachronic change; and studies of synchronic variation in earlier periods. As we have pointed out before, these are not strictly distinct categories. Many studies that are

pragmaphilological in aim include aspects of synchronic variation or diachronic change, and similarly there is a certain degree of overlap between the other two categories. The difference between the approaches often depends on the focus of a study, i.e. whether the main aim consists in describing a certain pragmatic feature from a pragmaphilological, diachronic, or variationist perspective.

Investigating variation: Pragmatic variables

Variationist studies are based on the general principle of correlating linguistic features with language-external factors such as social status, gender or origin of the speaker. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2012) have recently proposed the term "pragmatic variable" in order to apply the variationist framework to pragmatic entities. How linguistic features are realised, e.g., whether a pronominal term of address is realised as *thou* or as *ye*, depends on socio-demographic factors, and therefore linguistic features are termed "dependent variables". In contrast, the factors influencing the linguistic realisation are termed "independent variables". Variationist sociolinguistics – and by implication variationist historical pragmatics – is thus concerned with investigating the influence of independent socio-demographic variables on dependent linguistic variables.

Pragmatic studies of variation in earlier periods share the problems of other fields of historical sociolinguistics with respect to the limited availability of data (Auer et al. 2015: 5-7). If no texts have survived from a specific group of speakers, their language use can simply no longer be investigated. As a consequence of the general imbalance in education and literacy (Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak 2012: 308), women and members of

lower social status are typically underrepresented in the surviving data from earlier periods. This means that much less is known about the language use of these groups and that the study of social variation has to be restricted to groups for which more data is available (see, for instance, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 137). Moreover, information about the socio-demographic background of the authors of surviving texts is not always available, which further restricts the data that can be used for such studies.

The difficulty of defining the dependent variable poses an additional problem for the analysis of variation of pragmatic features. Dependent variables are linguistic features that can be realised in two or more different ways, depending on context. In order to study the effect of socio-demographic variables, it is important that all possible realisations are equivalent in meaning and function. In their socio-historical study of Early Modern English letters, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) investigate the variation between the third person singular suffixes *–th* and *–s,* that is to say the replacement of old forms such as *eateth*, *doth* or *hath* with the Present-day English forms *eats*, *does* and *has*. Between the beginning of the fifteenth and the end of the seventeenth century, the older*–th* forms were replaced with the newer*–s* forms (2003: 68). The function of the ending remained the same and both endings equally expressed third person singular. The only difference between them was that one was the older and the other the newer form, and that different groups of speakers preferred one form over the other at various points in this development. Such constancy in function and meaning of the various realisations is much rarer for pragmatic variables (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2012: 296-297). We can say that the two variants *thou* and *ye* fulfil the

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same core function of addressing an interlocutor, but – as pointed out above – they clearly differ in their connotations and they are not fully equivalent in function. In addition, it is often difficult to define all possible variants with which a pragmatic variable can be realised (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2012: 303). For morphological variables, like the third person singular ending, the number of possible variants is small and usually easy to determine. In contrast, it is more difficult to define a set of discourse markers that are possible realisations of the same functions. For some speech acts, such as compliments, it is even impossible to compile a complete list of possible realisations.

Despite these difficulties, the concept of the pragmatic variable is promising for the study of language in earlier periods. A clear definition of the pragmatic variable under analysis is a prerequisite for the study of synchronic variation of pragmatic features. Heightened awareness of the difficulties for defining pragmatic variables might be a first step in creating new approaches to the problems mentioned above. Moreover, pragmatic variables might take on a central role in the investigation of the relationship between synchronic variation and diachronic change of pragmatic features. Again, it is necessary to clearly define a pragmatic variable and its possible variants in order to trace the diffusion of pragmatic innovations across different groups of speakers. This is an area in which there is still a lot of potential for future research.

Conclusion

Diachronic language studies and variationist studies have a long and eminent history in the field of linguistics but it is only fairly recently that diachronic language studies extended their scope from the language systems to more systematic investigations of

how language was actually used in earlier periods and similarly that variationist studies extended their scope from the traditional core areas of linguistics to include pragmatic variables. The former extension has now established itself as historical pragmatics, the latter as variational pragmatics. Within the context of historical pragmatics, diachronic variation, that is the development of pragmatic entities over time, has always been an important aspect. At the same time, scholars working in the framework of socio-historical linguistics have extended the research tools of present-day sociolinguistics to historical data. However, a more systematic application of a variationist framework to pragmatic entities in a historical context is still very much in its infancy and a lot of exciting work still remains to be done.

In principle, it would be important to explore all of the established levels of sociolinguistic variation – social class, gender, age, region and genre – to all sorts of pragmatic entities – speech acts, discourse markers, conversational styles and so on, in order to determine the interrelationship between synchronic variation at a given point in time and diachronic change. In reality many of these dimensions will remain very difficult to investigate because of the limited survival of relevant material and the impossibility of carrying out historical experiments.

Suggestions for further reading

Jucker, A. H. and Taavitsainen, I. (eds) (2010) *Historical Pragmatics*, (Handbooks of Pragmatics 8). Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

This handbook contains twenty-two survey articles that present detailed state-of-the-art accounts of the entire field of historical pragmatics from data and methodology and

grammaticalisation theory to pragmatic entities, such as discourse markers and speech

acts, and to individual discourse domains, such as scientific writing and literary

discourse.

Jucker, A. H. and Taavitsainen, I. (2013) *English Historical Pragmatics,* (Edinburgh

    Textbooks on the English Language). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

This is the first textbook in the field of historical pragmatics. It is intended for advanced

students of linguistics or pragmatics and provides a clear and concise introduction to

the field. The chapters come with exercises and suggestions for further reading.

Nevalainen, T. and Raumolin-Brunberg, H. (2003) *Historical Sociolinguistics*.

    Harlow/London: Pearson.

This book provides an excellent overview of the potentials and the problems of

sociolinguistic variability studies in an historical context. On the basis of an extensive

corpus of personal letters from the Middle English and Early Modern English period it

discusses the factors that promoted linguistic changes and it identifies the people who

were leading these changes.

Taavitsainen, I. and Jucker, A. H. (2015) 'Twenty years of historical pragmatics:

    Origins, developments and changing thought styles', *Journal of Historical*

    Pragmatics, 16(1): 1-25.

This article surveys the changes in linguistics that led to the rise of historical pragmatics

in the mid-1990s, and the developments in the field within the last twenty years. The

changes and developments are discussed in terms of shifting thought styles. Seven

different turns are identified: the pragmatic turn, the socio-cultural turn, the dispersive turn, the empirical turn, the digital turn, the discursive turn and the diachronic turn.

Corpora

Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) (http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/)

The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts (HC) (1991). Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki. Compiled by Matti Rissanen (Project leader), Merja Kytö (Project secretary); Leena Kahlas-Tarkka, Matti Kilpiö (Old English); Saara Nevanlinna, Irma Taavitsainen (Middle English); Terttu Nevalainen, Helena Raumolin-Brunberg (Early Modern English). In ICAME Collection of English Language Corpora (CD-ROM), 2nd edn.

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Arnovick, L. K. (1999) *Diachronic Pragmatics. Seven Case Studies in English Illocutionary Development*, (Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 68). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Auer, A., Peersman, C. Pickl, S. Rutten, G. and Vosters, R. (2015) 'Historical sociolinguistics: The field and its future', *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics*, 1(1): 1-12.

Barron, A. (this volume), 'Variational pragmatics', in A. Barron, Y. Gu and G. Steen, (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Pragmatics*. London/New York: Routledge.

Barron, A. and Schneider, K. P. (2009) 'Variational pragmatics: Studying the impact

of social factors on language use in interaction', *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 6(4):

425-442.

Biber, D. and Finegan. E. (1992) 'The linguistic evolution of five written and speech-

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