

Peter Collins (ed.). *Grammatical change in English world-wide*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015. 488 pp. ISBN 978-90-272-0375-5. Reviewed by **Sarah Buschfeld**, University of Regensburg.

World Englishes in its various forms, types, and contexts is one of the most complex fields in English linguistics studied most extensively these days. The English language looks back at a multifaceted and interesting history in terms of changes in functions and uses but also with respect to evolving and changing linguistic characteristics on the different levels of description. However, as Peter Collins, the editor, states in the introduction, “[t]he investigation of postcolonial varieties of English from a diachronic rather than synchronic linguistic perspective has [...] been largely neglected” (p. 1). To address this “diachronic gap” (p. 10), the 18 articles of the volume are devoted to changes in the grammatical domain across different Inner and Outer Circle Englishes, analyzing both spoken and written materials from established, expanded or newly created purpose-built corpora of both synchronic and diachronic nature. Part 1 of the volume consists of ten contributions on Inner Circle Englishes, spanning regions geographically as distant as Australasia, the British Isles, and Canada. Part 2 addresses changes in different Outer Circle Englishes in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

After having set the scene in the introduction (pp. 1–11), **Peter Collins** opens with a chapter on “Diachronic variation in the grammar of Australian English: Corpus-based explorations” (pp. 15–42), covering historical developments in ten morphosyntactic variables over two centuries (19th and 20th centuries). Results from an analysis of news and fiction writing suggest that Australian English (AusE) has diverged from British English (BrE) and is developing towards American English (AmE) with respect to most of the features investigated.

Alexandra D’Arcy (“At the crossroads of change: Possession, periphrasis, and prescriptivism in Victoria English”; pp. 43–63) investigates changes in the use of the stative possession forms *have*, *have got*, and *got* in newspaper data (*The British Colonist*) from Victoria (Canada) between 1858 and 1935, as this is

the period in which the use of innovative *have got* expanded very quickly in BrE. However, the *British Colonist* data suggest that at least written Canadian English (CanE) did not follow the quick expansion of *have got* distinctive of BrE during that time.

Somewhat linked to the earlier topic but shifting the focus back to the antipodean southern hemisphere, **Marianne Hundt** (“*Do*-support in early New Zealand and Australian English”; pp. 65–86) confirms that earlier findings on variable *do*-support from 19th century BrE have been effective in AusE and New Zealand English (NZE) as well. With respect to negation and variable *do*-support with the lexical verb *have*, she finds that AmE is the most advanced variety, that BrE is more conservative when it comes to the use of *do*-support in the second half of the 19th century, and that NZE and AusE appear to have been relatively homogeneous in this respect and more similar to BrE if not more conservative.

Looking into a European Inner Circle Variety, **John M. Kirk** (“The progressive in Irish English: Looking both ways?”; pp. 87–118) investigates the historical development of different types of the progressive in Irish English (IrE) since the late 18th century. Even though he points out that IrE and BrE share several functions and are similar in scope and distribution in the use of the progressive, he also identifies functions which only occur in IrE but not in BrE. In addition, he finds a higher frequency of the progressive in IrE overall as well as higher frequencies of specific functions (both aspectual and non-aspectual ones), which is obviously due to transfer from Irish.

In the next chapter, **Christian Mair** (“Cross-variety diachronic drifts and ephemeral regional contrasts: An analysis of modality in the extended Brown family of corpora and what it can tell us about the New Englishes”; pp. 119–146) investigates the use of modals and semi-modals in a first-ever analysis of all six completed corpora of the Brown family. One of the most important findings of his analysis is that BrE and AmE have generally been following the same diachronic drift in their development, only at a different pace, and that regional contrasts between BrE and AmE are “weak and transient” (p. 141). With respect to contemporary regional contrasts, and taking on board AusE and NZE as representatives of the New Englishes, he finds that both cluster with AmE and that all three show differences in their uses of certain modals when compared to BrE.

Moving back to Canada but staying within the verbal domain, **Matthias L. G. Meyer** (“Passives of so-called ‘ditransitives’ in nineteenth century and present-day Canadian English”; pp. 147–177) investigates the diachronic development of competing types of passive constructions (i.e. first passives as in *He was offered the job*, second passives as in *The job was offered him*, and passives

with a prepositional complement such as *The job was offered to him*) in 19th century and present-day CanE. His findings convincingly suggest that the frequency of first passives has been increasing since the 19th century and that second passive structures are losing ground to the benefit of the prepositional construction.

In another contribution on morphosyntactic changes in AusE, **Pam Peters** (“Dual adverbs in Australian English”; pp. 179–204) investigates the development of fully interchangeable pairs of dual-form adverbs (e.g. *quick/quickly*) in 19th and 20th century AusE. Drawing on both written and spoken data, she finds a decline in the use of the zero forms for AusE and yet a steeper decline for BrE.

Celeste Rodríguez Louro (“The evolution of epistemic marking in West Australian English”; pp. 205–219) looks into the diachronic development of AusE *think*, more precisely its grammaticalization into an epistemic/evidential parenthetical. The results of her multivariate analysis reveal age differences between speakers (the corpus used comprises oral histories by speakers born between 1874 and 1983), which suggests that the grammaticalization of *think* mainly occurred in the late 20th century.

Looking into the diachronic development of modals, **Marije Van Hattum** investigates the use of “*May* and *might* in nineteenth century Irish English and English English” (pp. 221–246). She differentiates between objective and subjective possibility contexts and finds that in the former *might* was restricted to past or remote contexts whereas the distribution of *may* was exactly the opposite. For the latter context, the data suggest that *might* has ceased to express past time reference. Due to the absence of major regional differences between IrE and English English, Van Hattum concludes that the change identified mainly took place as a result of diachronic rather than regional variation.

The last Inner Circle contribution of this volume again looks into AusE, for which **Xinyue Yao** (“The present perfect and the preterite in Australian English: A diachronic perspective”; pp. 247–268) investigates diachronic changes in the use of the present perfect and the preterite. Compared to earlier findings on BrE and AmE, the data reveal a similar trend for AusE, viz. a gradual decline in the use of the present perfect in favor of the preterite since the 18th century. Yet, AmE is leading the way in this development while AusE appears to be even more conservative than BrE.

Part 2 of the volume, devoted to the Outer Circle, comprises eight chapters on grammatical changes in Englishes as diverse as Asian and African varieties as well as Caribbean and Black South African English. **Peter Collins** introduces this part with a study on “Recent diachronic change in the progressive in Philippine English” (pp. 271–296) between the 1960s and the 1990s, by which he

aims at shedding further light on the ongoing discussion about the degree of endonormativity Philippine English has developed over time. The results, however, are not conclusive in that they show both exonormative orientation towards the parent variety AmE as well as endonormativity (i.e. departures from AmE patterns), thus implying an intermediate status.

Julia Davydova ("Linguistic change in a multilingual setting: A case study of quotatives in Indian English"; pp. 297–334) investigates recent linguistic changes in strategies employed for introducing direct speech. She finds that, between the 1990s and the 2000s, significant changes in the use of quotatives took place (viz. decreasing frequencies for verbs of reporting and rising frequencies of *be like* and *okay [fine]*), presents some illuminating reasons for and interpretations of the results, and offers an interesting discussion of the results in terms of gender differences.

Staying with IndE, **Bernard De Clerck** and **Klaar Vanopstal** investigate "Patterns of regularisation in British, American and Indian English" taking "A closer look at irregular verbs with *t/ed* variation" (pp. 335–371). The results suggest two general trends: first, regularization, and with it an increased use of the *-ed* forms, is on the rise in all three varieties (i.e. IndE, BrE, AmE), and second, the authors detect intra- and intervaretial variation of which they give a detailed account in the last part of their paper.

In a study of changes in the progressive aspect in an Outer Circle African variety, **Robert Fuchs** and **Ulrike Gut** ("An apparent time study of the progressive in Nigerian English"; pp. 373–387) investigate the development of the progressive in Nigerian English with special consideration to how the variables age, gender, ethnic group, and text category influence its use. As their results from several regression analyses reveal, most of these variables indeed play a role, such as the age of the speaker. The analyses show that younger speakers use the progressive more frequently than older speakers, an observation which the authors "interpret as evidence for ongoing language change" (p. 373).

Stephanie Hackert and **Dagmar Deuber** ("American influence on written Caribbean English: A diachronic analysis of newspaper reportage in the Bahamas and in Trinidad and Tobago"; pp. 389–410) provide further and, even more importantly, explicitly diachronic insights into the question of Americanization of New Englishes, a trend which has been identified as a driving force in the development of present-day Englishes in general. To that end, they analyze different features known as indicative of such influence in press news reports from the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago from the 1960s and today. Results show that Americanization is indeed a factor influencing the development of Carib-

bean English but that other processes, like colloquialization and densification, seem to be at work as well.

Subsequently, **Joybrato Mukherjee** and **Tobias Bernaisch** (“Cultural keywords in context: A pilot study of linguistic acculturation in South Asian Englishes”; pp. 411–435) investigate collocations involving cultural keywords, i.e. nouns such as *government*, *religion*, and *terror*, and the verbs following them. Even though, strictly speaking, the study is not diachronic, it claims to allow diachronic inferences. To that end, the authors introduce what they call a diversity/unity (*d/u*) ratio, a measure to investigate the linguistic divergence of a variety from its colonial parent variety, assuming that the greater the difference is, the greater is its diachronic advancement.

In another contribution on the development of modal verb usage **Dirk Noël** and **Johan Van der Auwera** (“Recent quantitative changes in the use of modals and quasi-modals in the Hong Kong, British and American printed press: Exploring the potential of *Factiva*® for the diachronic investigation of World Englishes”; pp. 437–464) provide evidence from Hong Kong English (HKE). They investigate the use of modals and quasi-modals in Hong Kong as well as British and American newspapers. They introduce *Factiva*® as an interesting and effective tool that can be utilized as a search engine for the investigation of diachronic developments in certain text genres, and find that in both BrE and HKE the use of modals seems to be decreasing and the use of quasi-modals increasing, whereas in AmE newspapers both types – and especially the quasi-modals – are on the rise.

In the last article of the volume, **Bertus Van Rooy** and **Caroline Piotrowska** look into “The development of an extended time period meaning of the progressive in Black South African English” (pp. 465–483) since the 19th century and detect an increase in the use of the progressive aspect in the 20th century. A more frequent use with stative and achievement verbs, which diverges from findings for native speaker varieties, is interpreted as “persistent transfer from the substrate languages” rather than the result of real language change. The authors conclude by pointing to “the need for further investigation of more constructions and varieties to determine the interplay between on-going change and language contact in the development of non-native varieties” (p. 481).

While further diachronic research will certainly deepen our understanding of changes in English world-wide, the volume under review succeeds in offering a very important first contribution to bridging the research gap identified above. It clearly meets Collins’s aim to “provide a stimulus for more studies in this relatively new field of enquiry” (p. 10), especially in that it shows various ways of

how to cope with the methodological challenges, i.e. the rarity of existing diachronic corpora or the problems of how existing data can be used most effectively and how corpora can be expanded for the purpose of diachronic investigation. The volume is therefore not only valuable because of the findings of the individual contributions as such, i.e. specific insights into the development of both individual grammatical features and broader tendencies such as Americanization. It also – and even more importantly – advances the discipline by suggesting and showcasing innovative methodological options. All in all, the volume is a highly professional collection of high-quality papers approaching the topic from a quantitative, corpus-based perspective, covering a so far under-researched and methodologically challenging topic. In addition to substantial pieces of documentation of results in the forms of calculations, tables, graphs etc. in the articles themselves, many contributions offer valuable and informative in-depth documentation of data, analyses, and results as appendices.

Apart from some minor editorial shortcomings (e.g. in formatting) and the occasional – and hardly avoidable – misprints, there is not much to criticize about this volume. It does lack a clearly discernible systematicity when it comes to the arrangement of articles in the two parts (e.g. according to geographical regions). Some varieties (e.g. AusE in part one) are overrepresented, while others are missing, as are all non-postcolonial Englishes (which are increasingly topics of World Englishes research). On the other hand, an equal treatment of even the most important existing varieties would simply not have been feasible within the confines of a single book anyway. This volume is definitely a pioneering and milestone contribution for promoting a stronger diachronic orientation in World Englishes research and should, first and foremost, be valued as such.