Cultural History of Early Modern England

Raymond Hickey
English Linguistics
Campus Essen
| House of York | 1461-1470 | Edward IV |
| House of Lancaster | 1470-1471 | Henry VI |
| House of York | 1471-1483 | Edward IV |
| | 1483-1485 | Richard III |
| House of Tudor | 1485-1509 | Henry VII |
| | 1509-1547 | Henry VIII |
| | 1558-1603 | Elizabeth I |
| House of Stuart | 1603-1625 | James I (James VI of Scotland) |
| | 1625-1649 | Charles I |
English monarchs (continued)

**Commonwealth and Protectorate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1649-1653</td>
<td>Council of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1653-1658</td>
<td>Oliver Cromwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1658-1659</td>
<td>Richard Cromwell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**House of Stuart (restored)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1660-1685</td>
<td>Charles II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689-1694</td>
<td>William III (with Mary II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685-1688</td>
<td>James II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1694-1702</td>
<td>William III (alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702-1714</td>
<td>Anne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**House of Hanover**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1714-1727</td>
<td>George I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1830</td>
<td>George IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1727-1760</td>
<td>George II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1837</td>
<td>William IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-1820</td>
<td>George III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837-1901</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English monarchs (continued)

*House of Saxe-Coburg*

1901-1910    Edward VII

*House of Windsor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Monarch</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Monarch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910-1936</td>
<td>George V</td>
<td>1936-1952</td>
<td>George VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Edward VIII</td>
<td>1952-</td>
<td>Elizabeth II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Protestant Reformation in England
Henry VIII (1509-1547), known popularly for his six wives, two of whom he had executed, introduced the Reformation into England and established the English monarch as head of the Church of England (the Anglican Church).
The dissolution of the monasteries in 1538 greatly increased Henry’s power as king.
Jervaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire, one of the largest monasteries destroyed under Henry VIII’s reign
The Thirty-Nine Articles

In 1563, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, made a Protestantism the official religion, i.e. it confirmed the Church of England as state religion.
Elizabeth I (1558-1603), daughter of Anne Boleyn (Henry VIII’s second wife) was a resolute defender of Protestantism as the state religion of England.
Protestantism and the ‘Four Nations’

Of the four nations of the British Isles, England became Protestant with the Anglican Church as the state religion.

Both Scotland and Wales also followed. But in these regions, so-called non-conformist varieties of Protestantism prevailed: (i) Presbyterianism in Scotland (still under the administration of the Kirk of Scotland) and (ii) Methodism (and later Quakerism) in Wales.

Ireland remained Catholic. This held for the native population and the first settlers from England, the Anglo-Normans. In the north of Ireland (Ulster) Scottish Presbyterians settled in the early 17th century, adding religious tension to the island of Ireland.
Major linguistic developments at the outset of the Early Modern Period
The Great Vowel Shift

The major change to affect the sound system of Middle English is that which resulted in a re-alignment of the system of long vowels and diphthongs which is traditionally known as the Great Vowel Shift. Essentially long vowels are raised one level and the two high vowels are diphthongised. The shift took several centuries to complete and is still continuing in Cockney (popular London speech). The shift of short /u/ to a lower vowel as in present-day southern English *but*, which began in the mid 17th century, is not part of the vowel shift.
## Great Vowel Shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1300</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
<th>1600</th>
<th>1700</th>
<th>1800</th>
<th>present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>driven</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td>/ɪ/</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td>/eɪ/</td>
<td>/ʌɪ/</td>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>/u:/</td>
<td>/ʊ/</td>
<td>/ou/</td>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>/ʌ/</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feet</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fool</td>
<td>/o:/</td>
<td>/u:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beat</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foal</td>
<td>/ɔ:/</td>
<td>/o:/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/eɪ/</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>/a:/</td>
<td>/æ:/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sail</td>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td>/æi/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/e:/</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>law</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td>/ɔu/</td>
<td>/ɔ:/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/ɔ:/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Borrowings before and after the Great Vowel Shift

1) /ei/ versus /æ/
   blazer /ˈbleizə/ : blasé /blæˈzei/

2) /ai/ versus /iː/
   divine /drˈvain/ : ravine /rəˈviːn/

3) /au/ versus /uː/
   rout /rəʊt/ : route /ruːt/  
   tower /taʊə/ : tour /toʊə/

4) /oi/ versus /wa/ 
   choice /tʃɔɪs/ : memoir /məˈmɔːr/ 

5) /kw/ versus /k/ 
   quality /kw-/ : bouquet /-k-/
The chronology of recent sound changes

Relative chronology:
Not when A or B happened but just whether either occurred before or after X.

Example:
Shortening of /u:/ before /d/ which is older than similar shortening before /k/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>blood /blud/</th>
<th>→ /blud/</th>
<th>→ /blʌd/</th>
<th>[ 17c shift of /u/ to /ʌ/ ]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[ 19c shift ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>too/k /tu:k/ → /tuk/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = early shift X = Sound change B = later shift
Tudor England (16th century)
Contemporary writers of Shakespeare

Christopher Marlowe  Ben Jonson  Edmund Spenser
A Grammar of Shakespeare's Language

Frank Kermode

"The best book on Shakespeare that I have ever read" Melvyn Bragg, Independent, Books of the Year
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td>King James VI of Scotland ascends to the English throne, becoming James I of England and uniting the crowns - but not the parliaments - of the two kingdoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>Jamestown is founded in the Virginia Colony and is the first permanent English colony in the Americas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td>Long Parliament: The Parliament is convened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1642</td>
<td>The English Civil War begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>Trial and execution of Charles I takes place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>Interregnum begins with the First Commonwealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1653-1659</td>
<td>The Protectorate under the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell and later (1658) his son Richard Cromwell is instituted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659</td>
<td>The Second Commonwealth is a period of great political instability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>Restoration of the monarchy in May 1660.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1666</td>
<td>2-5 September: Great Fire of London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>The Glorious Revolution: James II is deposed and a union of the English Parliament with the Dutch William III of Orange is formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>William III dies and is succeeded by Anne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>The Treaty of Utrecht ends the War of the Spanish Succession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1714</td>
<td>Queen Anne dies. Accession of George I, Elector of Hanover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
James VI of Scotland (1566-1625) ascended the English throne in 1603 because Elizabeth I had no children. This resulted in the union of the Scottish and English crowns.

Rose and Thistle, a symbol of the Scottish and English union.

James VI of Scotland (1566-1625) ascended the English throne in 1603 because Elizabeth I had no children. This resulted in the union of the Scottish and English crowns.
The King James bible of 1611 (known as the Authorized Version)

The Book of Common Prayer (revised version of 1662)
Groups of authors (late 16th and 17th centuries)

The Metaphysical poets
This is a group of poets who are taken to have started with John Donne (1572-1631) and whose work is characterised by extravagant comparisons, reserved feelings and a display of learning. The school continued well into the 17th century, among the later representatives is Andrew Marvell (1621-78). The major poetic figure of the 17th century is John Milton (1608-74), the writer of sonnets, elegies and the epics *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671). He was also a significant pamphleteer and involved in political activities.
Groups of authors (late 16th and 17th centuries)

*Jacobean drama*
A general term for drama as produced in the reign of James I (James VI of Scotland, 1603-25). Indeed it continued into the reign of Charles I (1625-49) until the closure of the theatres in 1642. The most important dramatist of this time (apart of course from Shakespeare) is probably Ben Jonson (1572/3-1637)

*Restoration drama*
With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 under Charles II (1660-85) the theatres were re-opened and a flourishing set in, chiefly of comedy, which lasted for much of the remaining 17th century.
The Great Fire of London, 2-5 September 1666
The Earliest English Dictionary

(Robert Cawdrey, 1604)
A Table Alphabettall, containing and teaching the true writing, and understanding of hard usuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French. &c.

With the interpretation thereof by plaine English wordes, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other unskilfull persons.

Whereby they may the more easilie and better understand many hard English wordes, which they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elsewhere, and also be made able to use the same aptly themselves.

Legere, et non intelligere, neglegere est. As good not read, as not to understand.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for Edmund Weaver, &c are to be sold at his shop at the great North doore of Paules Church.
1604.
The question of a standard for English
John Hart (d. 1574) in *An orthographie of English* (1569) offers a reformed spelling of English so that ‘the rude countrie Englishman’ can speak the language ‘as the best sort use to speak it’.

George Puttenham (d. 1590) in *The arte of English poesie* comments that ‘After a speach is fully fashioned to the common understanding, & accepted by consent of a whole countrey & nation, it is called a language’. He then proceeds to mention that he regards the prime form of this language as ‘the usualls speach of the Court and that of London and the shires lying about London within lx. myles and not much aboue’.

About a century later, Christopher Cooper in his *Grammatica linguae anglicanae* (1685) stated that he regarded London speech as ‘the best dialect’, the ‘most pure and correct’, but he was quite liberal towards variation: ‘Everyone pronounceth them (words) as himself pleases’.
The Augustan age

The early to mid 18th century was a period during which satire flourished in England (and Ireland). The main authors are Joseph Addison (1672-1719), John Dryden (1631-1700), Alexander Pope (1688-1744), Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) and the Irish writer Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), the latter being particularly concerned with questions of language and entertaining generally conservative views on language change. The term *Augustan* is derived from the comparison of this age to that of the Roman Emperor Augustus under whose reign Horace, Ovid and Virgil flourished, authors who the latter-day English writers also admired.
A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue

Jonathan Swift

A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue, in a Letter to the Most Honourable Robert Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain, Printed from Benjamin Tooke, at the Middle Temple Gate, Fleetstreet, 1712

To the Most Honourable Robert Earl of Oxford, &c.

My Lord,

What I had the Honour of mentioning to Your Lordship some time ago in Conversation, was not a new Thought, just then started by Accident or Occasion, but the Result of long Reflection; and I have been confirmed in my Sentiments by the Opinion of some very judicious Persons, with whom I consulted. They all agreed, That noting would be of greater Use towards the Improvement of Knowledge and Politeness, than some effectual Method for Correcting, Enlarging, and Ascertaining our Language; and they think it a Work very possible to be compassed, under the Protection of a Prince, the Countenance and Encouragement of a Ministry, and the Care of proper Persons chosen for such an Undertaking. I was glad to find Your Lordship’s Answer in so different a Style, from what hath been commonly made use of on the like Occasions, for some Years past, that all such Thoughts must be deferred to a Time of Peace: A Topick which some have carried so far, that they would not have us, by any means, think of preserving our Civil or Religious Constitution, because we were engaged in a War abroad. It will be among the distinguishing Marks of your Ministry, My Lord, that you had the Genius above all such Regards, and that no reasonable Proposal for the Honour, the Advantage, or the Ornament of Your Country, however foreign to Your immediate Office was ever neglected by You. I confess, the Merit of this Candor and Condescension is very much lessened, because Your Lordship hardly leaves us room to offer our good Wishes, removing all our Difficulties, and supplying all our Wants, faster than the most visionary Projector can adjust his Schemes.
The rise of lexicography in the 18th century

The middle of the 18th century sees the rise of the novel (initially in epistolary form) and the publication of the first major lexicographical work, the monolingual dictionary *Dictionary of the English language* (1755) by Samuel Johnson which was a model for all future lexicographers. (Johnson drew on the dictionaries of Nathaniel Bailey - such as the *Universal etymological English dictionary* (1721), with some 40,000 entries, and the *Dictionarium Brittanicum* (1730) - for the word list he used in his own).
Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

English writer and lexicographer. Johnson was a major critic and scholar who was known both for his brilliant conversation and the quality of his writing. As a man of letters his influence on literature in his day and later periods was considerable. His significance for linguistics lies in the fact that he compiled the first major monolingual dictionary of English, his *Dictionary of the English language* (1755), which was a model for all future lexicographers.
A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
IN WHICH
The words are deduced from their ORIGINALES,
AND ILLUSTRATED in their DIFFERENT SIGNIFICATIONS
BY EXAMPLES from the best WRITERS,
TO WHICH are PREFIXED,
A HISTORY of the LANGUAGE,
AND AN ENGLISH GRAMMAR.
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, A.M.
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. 1

LONDON,
Printed by W. SPANGAR.
For J. and P. Knapton; T. and T. Longman; C. Hitch and L. Hawes;
A. Millan; and R. and J. Dodsley.
MDCCLVII.
Oatmeal. n.f. [oat and meal.] Flower made by grinding oats.

Oatmeal and butter, outwardly applied, dry the scab on the head.

Our neighbours tell me oft, in joking talk,
Of ashes, leathern, oatmeal, bran, and chalk. Gay.


Oats. n.f. [aæn, Saxon.] A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.

It is of the grass leaved tribe; the flowers have no petals, and are disposed in a loose panicle: the grain is eatable.
The meal makes tolerable good bread. Miller.
The oats have eaten the horses. Shakespeare.

It is bare mechanism, no otherwise produced than the turning of a wild oat beard, by the infusion of the particles of moisture.

For your lean cattle, fodder them with barley straw first, and the oat straw last. Mortimer's Husbandry.

His horse's allowance of oats and beans, was greater than the journey required. Swift.

BOOK. n.f. [boec, Sax. suffixed from bo, a beech; because they were on beechen boards, as Liber in Latin, from the root of a tree.]

1. A volume in which we write or read.

See a book of prayer in his hand; true ornaments to know a holy man. Shakesp. Richard III.

Receive the sentence of the law for life, such as God's book is adjured to death.

Shakesp. Henry IV.

But in the coffin that had the books, they were found as fresh as if they had been but newly written; being written on parchment, and covered over with wax candles of wax. Bacon.

Books are a sort of dumb teachers; they cannot answer sudden questions, or explain present doubts: this is properly the work of a living instructor.

Watts.

2. A particular part of a work.

The first book we divide into sections; whereas the first is its chapters past.

Burnet's Theory of the Earth.

3. The register in which a trader keeps an account of his dealings.

Shakesp. Cymbeline.

This life is not so tender as to be altered; prouder, than railing in unprofit for ink.

Shakesp. Macbeth.

Yet keeps his book uncros'd.

4. In books. In kind reminder.

I was so much in his books, that, at his decease, he left me the lamp by which he used to write his labors. Addison.

5. Without book. By memory; by repetition; without reading.

Sermons read they abhor in the church, but sermons without book, sermons which spend their life in their birth, and may have publick audience but once. Hooker, b. v. § 21.

To book. v. a. [from the noun.] To register in a book.

I bequeath your grace, let it be booked with the rest of this day's deeds; or I will have it in a particular ballad, etc. with mine own picture on the top of it.


He made willful murder high treason; he caused the marchers to book their men, for whom they should make answer.

Davis on Ireland.

BOOK-KEEPING. n.f. [from book and keep.] The art of keeping accounts, or recording the transactions of a man's affairs, in such a manner, that at any time he may thereby know the true state of the whole, or any part of his affairs, with clearing and expedition.

Harris.

At the grow book.

BOOK-BINDER. n.f. [from book and bind.] A man whose profession it is to bind books.
The legacy of Samuel Johnson

Johnson’s dictionary became the standard work of English lexicography because of its range, objectivity and use of quotations from major authors to back up definitions given. It was not until over a century later that it was superseded by the dictionary which was to become the Oxford English Dictionary.
Prescriptivism in England
English in 18th century Britain

The rise of prescriptivism and the development of the standard of English in 18th-century Britain: Dictionaries, grammars and works on elocution (the art of public speaking, later of accepted pronunciation) appeared in the second half of the 18th century. They were intended to fix the public usage of English. Some of these works are shown in the following table and more information on four of the major authors is given below.
Robert Lowth (1710-1787)

Author of a normative grammar *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) which achieved great popularity for the manner in which it made recommendations for grammatical usage, something which was interpreted as very prescriptive, even though this may not have been intended as such. Lowth was professor of poetry in Oxford and later bishop of Oxford and of London (as of 1777).
A Short Introduction to English Grammar:

with Critical Notes.


Nam ipsum Latine loqui est illud quidem in magna laude ponendum: sed non tam sua sponte, quam quod est a plebique negletum: Non enim tam præclarum est scire Latine, quam turpe nefare; neque tam id mihi oratoris boni, quam civis Romani proprium videtur. Cicero.

London,
Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; and R. and J. Dodsley, in Pall-mall.
MDCCCLXIII.
The legacy of Robert Lowth

Lowth is perceived as the original prescriptivist in English grammar and indeed he made statements which match this perception such as the following:

‘The principle design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language; and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or not’.

He certainly promoted the concern with correctness in grammar and hence was in large degree responsible for the types of evaluative statements about people’s language which came to be common from the late 18th century onwards in the English-speaking world.
Some of Lowth’s strictures

1) Don’t use double negation
   
   *I did not see no person in the room.*

2) Don’t end a sentence in a preposition
   
   *This is the book we were looking for.*

3) Don’t put anything between *to* and a following infinitive

   *She asked him to carefully mark the papers.*
**Sheridan, Thomas** (1719-1788)
Irish writer, born in Dublin and educated in London and Dublin. He was first an actor and is the author of a farce *The Brave Irishman; or Captain O'Blunder* (1743; published 1754).

Later he became a travelling expert on elocution. Sheridan produced *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762), *A Rhetorical Grammar of the English language* (1788) and *A General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780) in which he gives guidelines for the correct use of English.
Sheridan was firmly rooted in the ‘complaint tradition’ of English writing and lamented the state of British education in his day.

But he was also a manipulator who generated linguistic insecurity among his readers then offered relief in his many prescriptive regulations.

This type of strategy can be found among prescriptivists to this very day.
A COURSE of LECTURES ON
ELOCUTION:
together with
Two DISSERTATIONS on LANGUAGE;
and
Some other TRACTS relative to those SUBJECTS.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

LONDON:
Printed by W. STRAHAN,
For A. MILLAR, R. and J. DODSLEY, T. DAVIES, C. HENDERSON,
J. WILKIE, and E. DILLY. M DCC LXII.
A GENERAL DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

One main Object of which, is, to establish a plain and permanent STANDARD OF PRONUNCIATION.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A RHETORICAL GRAMMAR.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. BODKIN, PALL-MALL; C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY, AND J. WILKIE, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
MDCCCLXX.
A RHETORICAL GRAMMAR
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.
Calculated solely for the Purposes of Teaching
PROPRIETY OF PRONUNCIATION;
AND
JUSTNESS OF DELIVERY,
IN THAT TONGUE,
BY THE
ORGANS OF SPEECH.

BY THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR MEIKS, PRICE, W. AND H. WHITSTONES;
SLEATER, SHEPPARD, O. BURNET, R. CROZER,
FLIN, STEWART, MILLS, WILKINSON,
RISHAW, PERIN, BYRNE.

MCCCCLXXI

3809. f. 11.
Walker, John (1732-1807) A Londoner and prescriptive author of the late 18th century, best known for his *Critical pronouncing dictionary* (1791) which enjoyed great popularity in its day.
Just as Samuel Johnson had sought patronage for his dictionary from Lord Chesterfield (Philip Dormer Stanhope, 1694-1773), Walker appealed to the famous actor David Garrick (1717-1779) for similar support for his dictionary. Both authors did this by dedicating the plan for their respective dictionaries to their would-be patrons.
TO

DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

SIR,

The same motives which induced me to solicit your patronage for the General Idea of a Pronouncing Dictionary, have determined me to prefix your name to the present work. If either have a sufficient degree of merit to recommend them to the attention of the public, it is in a great measure owing to the early opportunities I have had of observing your pronunciation on the stage, and the frequent advice you have favoured me with in the prosecution of my enquiries. Without any apology, therefore, I present you with a production, which, if useful to the public, will be allowed to be properly addressed to you; and, if worthless, will at least be a proof of your readiness to encourage even the faintest endeavours in the service of the muses; a disposition which will raise you a nobler monument with posterity than that delicate distinction of character, that intensely animated expression, in which you excel as an actor, or that strenuous perseverance in the arduous duties of a manager, which has so largely contributed to the credit and improvement of the English stage.

I am, SIR,

With the utmost respect,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. WALKER.
A CRITICAL
PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY,
AND EXPOSITOR OF
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
IN WHICH, NOT ONLY THE MEANING OF EVERY WORD IS CLEARLY EXPLAINED,
AND THE SOUND OF EVERY SYLLABLE DISTINCTLY SHOWN,
BUT, WHERE WORDS ARE SUBJECT TO DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATIONS,
THE AUTHORITIES OF OUR BEST PRONOUNCING DICTIONARIES ARE FULLY EXHIBITED,
THE CAUSES FOR EACH ARE AT LARGE DISPLAYED, AND THE
PREFERABLE PRONUNCIATION IS POINTED OUT.

To which are prefixed,
PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION:
IN WHICH THE SOUNDS OF LETTERS, SYLLABLES, AND WORDS ARE CRITICALLY
INVESTIGATED, AND SYSTEMATICALLY ARRANGED;
THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREEK AND LATIN ACCENT AND QUANTITY, ON THEAccent AND QUANTITY
OF THE ENGLISH, IS THOROUGHLY EXAMINED, AND CLEARLY DEFINED,
AND THE ANALOGIES OF THE LANGUAGE ARE SO FULLY SHOWN AS TO LAY THE FOUNDATION
OF A CONSISTENT AND RATIONAL PRONUNCIATION.

LIKEWISE,
Rules to be observed by the Natives of Scotland, Iceland, and London,
for avoiding their respective peculiarities; and
DIRECTIONS TO FOREIGNERS, FOR ACQUIRING A KNOWLEDGE OF THE USE OF THIS DICTIONARY.

The whole interpreted with
OBSERVATIONS, ETYMOLOGICAL, CRITICAL, AND GRAMMATICAL.

BY JOHN WALKER,
AUTHOR OF ELEMENTS OF ELOCUTION, RHYMING DICTIONARY, &c. &c.

LONDON:
STEROTYPED AND PRINTED BY A. WILSON, CAMDEN TOWN;
FOR T. CAMEL AND W. DAVIES; G. WILKIE; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, OMEY, AND BROWN;
E. AND R. CROSBY; G. AND S. ROBINSON; CRADOCK AND JENKINS,
SMITH, DEARY, AND FOSTER; AND WALKER, EDWARDS, AND REYNOLDS.

1815.
A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary,  
and Expositor of the English Language  
in which not only the meaning of every word is clearly explained, and the sound of every 
syllable distinctly shown, but, where words are subject to different pronunciations, the 
authorities of our best pronouncing dictionaries are fully exhibited, the reasons for each 
are at large displayed and the preferable pronunciation is pointed out. 
To which are prefixed,  

PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION:  
in which the sounds of letters, syllables, and words, are critically investigated, and 
systematically arranged; The influence of the Greek and Latin accent and quantity, on the 
accent and quantity of English, is thoroughly examined, and clearly defined, and the 
analogies of the language are so fully shown as to lay the foundation of a consistent and 
rational pronunciation  
likewise,  

Rules to be observed by the Natives of Scotland, Ireland, and London, for avoiding their 
respective peculiarities; and  

DIRECTIONS TO FOREIGNERS, FOR ACQUIRING A KNOWLEDGE OF THE USE OF THIS DICTIONARY.
The legacy of Sheridan and Walker

Did the strictures of Walker or Sheridan influence the later pronunciation of non-local British English? The answer to this question must be ‘no’. In some cases Walker, as opposed to Sheridan, favoured a form which was later to become default in English, e.g. *merchant* for *marchant*. But this did not happen because of Walker’s opinion on the matter.

In many respects, Walker was swimming against the tide of language change. His insistence on maintaining regular patterns of pronunciation across the language (his ‘analogy’) and, above all, his view that the spoken word should be close to the written word, meant that he favoured archaic pronunciations. His view that syllable-final /r/ should be pronounced was already conservative in his day. In many of his statements he does, however, accept change although he might not have agreed with it.

The legacy of both Sheridan and Walker should be seen in more general terms. Even if their individual recommendations were not accepted by standard speakers of British English, both were responsible for furthering general notions of prescriptivism. And certainly both contributed in no small way to the perennial concern with pronunciation which characterises British society to this day.
The English concern with pronunciation

Pronunciation in English is a yardstick of one’s language. More than European countries, the English judge the standardness of someone’s speech by its phonetics.

The ideal which arose during the 18th century and established itself in the 19th century was that one’s speech was not to betray where one came from, i.e. regional accents were frowned upon.
Henry Watson Fowler (1858-1933) was an English lexicographer whose principal work is *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926; later revised by Sir Ernest Gowers in 1965). This is a loosely structured commentary on English usage and style. Together with his brother he also wrote *The King’s English* (1906).
Issues in Standard English today
Inside and outside the standard: What slipped through the prescriptivists’ net

I see what you mean; I seen him yesterday; I’ve seen those students.

I do my work every week; I done the work yesterday; I’ve done that task.

This type of distribution leads to spurious objections to non-standard forms: two-form verbs involve fewer distinctions and are hence sloppy, lazy, inaccurate, etc. But are they? Just look as this:

I hit the main road at eight every morning.

I hit the curb going around the curve.

I’ve hit that curb before.

The same is true of other verbs like bet, cast, etc.
Persistent non-standard features

1) *Them* as a demonstrative pronoun
   
   *Them teachers are annoying.*

2) Second person plural personal pronouns
   
   *You* (plural) = ye, youse, yuns, y’all. Nowadays = you guys

3) Negative concord
   
   *We’re not going to no party. I’m not giving no money to nobody.*

4) Unmarked adverbs
   
   He did the work real well.

5) Double comparisons
   
   *That’s more worse than the first one.*
General characteristics of standard languages

Standard forms of language maintain seemingly irrational features. These make the standard more difficult to acquire, less intuitive. James and Lesley Milroy are of this opinion.

The maintenance of the third personal singular inflection in the present-tense of verbs is just such a case. Dialects of English have either dropped this inflection (East Anglia for instance) or they have re-analysed the ending and use it for a specific purpose, e.g. for an habitual – *I goes there every morning* - or have established correspondences between the inflections and the nature of the verb’s subject (Northern Subject Rule).

Despite its own ideology of immutability, even the standard continues to develop. The gradual shift of verb forms from strong to weak is a case in point. *dive : dove : dived* has been more or less replaced by *dive : dived : dived* in present-day English. Another example would be the use of a continuous form with so-called ‘psych’-verbs, e.g. *I’m wanting to go there* for *I want to go there.*
English in the 19th century
Henry Sweet (1845-1912)  
major English philologist of the 19th century

Walter William Skeat (1835-1912)  
major English lexicographer of the 19th century
More than in any other European country England is marked by an emphasis on standard pronunciation. The type of pronunciation known today as Received Pronunciation (after Daniel Jones) or under other less precise epithets such as The Queen’s English, Oxford English, BBC English, etc. is a sociolect of English, that is, it is the variety of English spoken by the educated middle classes, irrespective of what part of England they may live in. In the nineteenth century and into this century as well, this accent of English was that fostered by the so-called public schools (private, fee-paying schools) which were the domain of the middle class. It is also the variety which foreigners are exposed to when they learn ‘British English’.
The codification of Received Pronunciation
Daniel Jones (1881-1967)
major English phonetician
of the 20th century
A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles

A proposal was made by Richard Trench in 1857 to the Philological Society to design a new dictionary which would serve as a definitive work on the vocabulary of English with complete historical coverage. The Scotsman James Murray (1837-1915) became the main editor (see inset on right). The first letter was published as a volume in 1888 and all the 12 vols were completed in 1928. A thirteenth supplement volume came out in 1933 (after which it was called the *Oxford English Dictionary* published by Oxford University Press. The twenty-volume second edition appeared in 1989 (this is also available electronically). Work on a much expanded third edition is underway at present.
James Murray (1837-1915), main editor of the Oxford English Dictionary
## Publication history of the Oxford English Dictionary

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Various book versions of the *Oxford English Dictionary*
Electronic versions of the *Oxford English Dictionary*
thou, pers. pron., 2nd sing.

1. The pronoun by which a person (or thing) is addressed, in the nominative singular; the pronoun denoting the person (or thing) spoken to.

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In ME. freq. combined with its verb when this precedes, the *p* being then absorbed in the preceding *t,* as *art thou, hasten = hast thou.* The initial *p* also became *t* after *s,* *t,* or *d,* as *hast us = hast thou,* *pat tu,* and *tu:* see T 8.


1715-20 *Pope Iliad xi.* 69 *Oh thou! bold leader of the Trojan bands,* *And you, confedrate chiefs from foreign lands!* e1741 *Richardson Panda II.* 273, 1 *dare say thoulit set the good Work forward.* e1683 *Mrs. Hemani
give

• v. (past gave, past part. given) (usu. give something to or give someone something)
  1 freely transfer the possession of, cause to receive or have. > communicate or impart (a message). > commit, consign, or entrust. > cause to experience or suffer: you gave me a fright. > allot (a score) to.
  2 yield as a product or result. > (give something off/out) emit odour, vapour, etc.
  3 carry out (an action). > produce (a sound). > provide (a party or meal) as host or hostess.
  4 state or put forward (information or argument). > pledge or assign as a guarantee. > deliver (a judgement) authoritatively.
  5 present (an appearance or impression): he gave no sign of life.
  6 alter in shape under pressure rather than resist or break. > yield or give way to pressure. > N. Amer. informal concede defeat, surrender.
  7 (of an umpire or referee) declare whether or not (a player) is out or offside. > adjudicate that (a goal) has been legitimately scored.
  8 concede or yield (something) as valid or deserved in respect of (someone).
Interest

/naitris/ /nterest/ 
LME. [f. interest n., partly by addition of parasitic t, partly by assoc. with Ofr. interest damage, loss (mod. intérêt), app. use as n. of L. interest it makes a difference, it concerns, it matters, 3rd person sing. pres. indic. of interesse differ, be of importance, f. as INTER- + esse be.]

1. The fact or relation of having a share or concern in, or a right to, something, esp. by law; a right or title, esp. to (a share in) property or a use or benefit relating to property; (a) share in something. LME.
   + Participation in doing or causing something. M17-M18.
   c. A financial share or stake in something; the relation of being one of the owners or beneficiaries of an asset, company, etc. L17.

Interest

noun 1. look with interest at the new product attentiveness, attention, undivided attention, absorption, engrossment, heed, regard, notice, scrutiny, curiosity, inquisitiveness.
2. an object of interest curiosity, attraction, appeal, fascination, charm, allure.
3. a matter of interest to all of us concern, importance, import, consequence, moment, significance, note, relevance, seriousness, weight, gravity, priority, urgency.
4. his interests include reading and music leisure activity, pastime, hobby, diversion, amusement, pursuit, relaxation; inf. thing, scene.
5. have an interest in the business share, stake, portion, claim, investment, involvement, participation; stock, equity.
6. you must declare your interest in the case involvement, partiality, partisanship, preference, one-sidedness, favouritism, bias, prejudice, discrimination.
7. his commercial interests are in trouble concern, business, matter, care; affairs.
8. earn interest on investments dividend, profit, return, percentage, gain.
Studies on the *Oxford English Dictionary*
LEXICOGRAPHY AND THE OED

Pioneers in the Untrodden Forest

Edited by LYNDA MUGGLESTONE
LYNDA MUGGLESTONE

LOST FOR WORDS

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CHARLOTTE BREWER
TREASURE-HOUSE OF THE LANGUAGE
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(the history of meanings)
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T. F. HOAD

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Walter W. Skeat

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The Oxford Dictionary of New Words

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twigloo happy clappy loved up
car thrillcraft karoshi
bra ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT
BURB Aga saga

The World’s Most Trusted Dictionaries
A CONCISE DICTIONARY OF NEW WORDS
The development of modern English
A standard work (published in 2004) on the late modern period (1700-present)
A recent overview (published in May 2009) by a leading expert on 18th century English.

Published by Edinburgh University Press.
A more flexible view of how standard English is evolving (published in 1999)
Outside the mainstream: the history of varieties of English apart from southern British English
There are many persistent misconceptions about language. This book examines a range of these and discusses them objectively.
A critical look at the way in which notions of standard language are used manipulatively and to exclude others.
Every language which is spoken is changing. This study looks at the ways in which standard varieties of English have been evolving in the past hundred years or so.
Beyond national borders: the idea of World Englishes

English is increasingly seen in a global context, one in which the language is divorced from its origins in England. As a result of this, notions of standard English, deriving from Britain and America, are seen as increasingly inappropriate for the non-western world.
World Englishes

The Study of New Linguistic Varieties

RAJEND MESTHRIE AND RAKESH M. BHATT

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Other introductions to World Englishes
Authority in printed form: major dictionaries of English (British and American)
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HELPING LEARNERS WITH REAL ENGLISH
Views of the development of the English language today

(note the use of the article and the singular versus the plural in the following books)
THE OXFORD HISTORY of ENGLISH

EDITED BY
LYNDA MUGGLESTONE

A HISTORY OF THE English Language

EDITED BY
Richard Hogg and David Denison

CAMBRIDGE
The Language Industry in Today’s Society
my english are fabuluos
Your Grammar is broken.
WE CAN FIX IT!
There is plenty of well-meant advice available for those uncertain about what is ‘correct grammar’.
Books on mastering / using grammar

- Grammatically CORRECT
  The WRITER'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE to punctuation, spelling, style, usage and grammar
  ANNE STILMAN

- English Grammar in Use
  A self-study reference and practice book for intermediate students of English
  with answers
  THIRD EDITION
  Raymond Murphy
Correct grammar and appearing ‘educated’
Making fun of others’ mistakes
Linguistic insecurity: What is the ‘correct’ form?
Yes, grammar matters, but . . .
What should the teachers do?

It depends on the context. If you are teaching English, especially in a foreign language context, then you must make sure that your students learn standard forms, hence the need for correction.

If there is tension between the vernacular of a student (his/her native dialect) and the standard then you should stress that the standard is just one form of language without any inherent claim to superiority over colloquial forms. But it is the form used publicly and hence when in a public context it is advisable to use at least a modified form of the standard to avoid censure by others.
And what is the linguist’s standpoint?

The standard is one form of language which by historical accident became that which is preferred in writing and in public usage. There is nothing better about the standard or worse about colloquial speech or dialects.

Be tolerant and put aside any prejudice you might feel about certain pronunciations, words or turns of phrase!
References (selection)


