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Editors' Introduction

The introduction to this issue of Anglistica on variation and varieties in English is divided into two parts, the first our joint presentation of the papers in the issue and the second a monographical essay dealing a little further with some of the theoretical and definitional, taxonomic and terminological issues involved in variation studies. This gives us an opportunity not only to present the single contributions, but also to begin to explore and extrapolate issues arising from them, in order also to put them into the wider picture of studies on language variation. Some important issues emerge from the papers, some separately and some common to all. We shall inevitably only be able to mention a few of these, leaving other points to be made by the authors' own voices.

Fluidity of distinctive categories

One of the first things to strike us when trying to categorise these papers and wondering whether and how to divide the issue into sections, was that just as variation in language/s and among speakers is not neat, characterised by interconnection, fluidity and complexity, so will the discussion of any one aspect inevitably also involve others. We believe that our not dividing the papers into neatly categorised sections, and our reasons for this, constitute our (albeit small) contribution, to the field, or at least to the debate. In fact, we believe that the field of language variation and varieties needs some clearer thinking regarding its complexity, its organisational or categorial parameters, as well as its terminology. The arbitrary alphabetical ordering of the papers we have chosen is less ideological than forcing them into polarised categories and reflects this need for further clarification.

The papers differently and variously deal with variation on what have been called, for example, the 'user', as against the 'use' dimensions, and could be seen to variously illustrate aspects of what others have called 'diatopical', 'diastratic', 'diaphasic' and 'diamesic' variation, or again intra- or inter-speaker, or intra- or inter-language variation. They also deal with different types of authentic or 'mediated' fictional representations, written, oral or multi-modal data, mono-lingual, multilingual and interlingual texts, and all these aspects within or between languages in translation. The approaches also display and use a variety of methodological approaches. None of the papers would have been satisfactorily confined in one of a single contrastive set among those above without thus neglecting other important intertwined aspects or characteristics.

Let us take, for example, the widely recognised and seemingly simple and all-encompassing distinction between the macro-parameters of variation according to 'user' and 'use' which might at first glance have allowed us to see some of the papers as entering into two neatly distinct sections.

The paper by Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli, dealing as it does with ESP, or more specifically new sub-genres of English for Professional Purposes, would alone perhaps enter apparently non-problematically into the realm of 'use' varieties, or the 'diaphasic' 'diatype', 'register', 'genre' or 'discourse types', rather than into the 'dialectal', 'diatopical', 'diastratic', 'user' type (the variety of terms and subdivisions just mentioned hint at the somewhat problematic terminological question, addressed in the essay by Jocelyne Vincent which follows). Crawford Camiciottoli examines some persuasive strategies in two corpora of financial presentations that represent some of the most common interactional settings in today's global financial community: face-to-face and teleconference presentations of financial results. However, the speakers and listeners in these contexts of 'use' are also invested with professional roles, identity issues and personal expertise which play an important part in manipulating the appropriate register/type; thus 'user' characteristics, are also relevant. Moreover, the speakers from the various large corporations in the two corpora have a dual purpose when presenting their financial data; that of informing their listeners and that of promoting their company thus leading to a hybridisation of two discourse colonies:[1] the reporting and the promotional. Using Aristotle's persuasive categories, pathos, logos and ethos, Crawford Camiciottoli focuses on two persuasive devices, logical connectors and hyperbole. She also provides a very useful extrapolated rhetorical macrostructure of the presentations in the two modalities, also highlighting the multiple goals and rhetorical strategies present in this hybrid business English genre. Indeed, her findings indicate that logical connectives and hyperbole are characterizing features of the genre itself which transcend the medium of interaction be it face-to-face or only through teleconferencing in which the participants were not co-present. Both are used to present financial results in the most positive way possible within the regulatory constraints governing financial disclosures. Her speakers are also, incidentally, using English as an international lingua franca (seen by some as a user type of variety), and, at any rate in situations where the audience and users whether non-natives or native are all experts in the specialist field of discourse involved. So, even with Crawford Camiciottoli's data there are multiple issues involved.

At first glance, Emilia Di Martino's paper seems to deal mainly with variation according to 'user' characteristics (those pertaining to royalty and gay speakers, for example) and on how variables are perceived and represented as indexing their special, or 'uncommon', social status and/or their gender identities, in other words their 'alterity'. However it also explicitly deals with 'style' and in particular 'tenor' (terms traditionally connected to the 'use' category of variation),[2] in that attention is paid to the interlocutor in the context of situation, the interpersonal relationship with one's interlocutor, the effects one wants to have on him/her. Affective attitude guiding language or stylistic choice can be discerned as a key underlying issue. She appeals to literary sociolinguistics and translation studies to discuss how these represented stylistic characteristics travel across languages, under the guidance of a specific mediator or translator who is herself a user with a gender and ideology

[1] Vijay Bhatia, "The Power and Politics of Genre", *World Englishes,* 16.3 (1997), 359-371.

[2] The terminological instability of these terms, such as 'style' which seems to have now crossed over to include personal styling of identity, as in, for example, Nikolas Coupland, *Style: Language Variation and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), is discussed, among other 'unstable' terms, in the next introductory essay in this volume by Jocelyne Vincent.

which one can perhaps extrapolate from her translation choices in Italian. Di Martino's essay too thus is also dealing with interlocking issues.

Francesca Vigo's paper could also be seen to be relevant to either or both of the user and use types of variation. Vigo presents data in mixed intercultural settings where English is being used as a lingua franca. Whether English as a Lingua Franca is to be thought of, however, as a variety of English as such she hints at as problematic. She stretches the definition of ELF, since, in both exchanges she analyses (from a wider corpus collected in the field) there is a native speaker participating; whichever language is being used for intercultural interaction purposes, who is using it (whether native or non-native speakers)[3] and who is co-present, the speakers will vary the use of those resources across instances of use and interlocutors. She focuses however, ultimately, on the relationship between intelligibility and successful communication rather than on the variation issue, on how even limited linguistic resources may still be successfully deployed by speakers, using various pragmatic strategies presumably based, as she hints at, on some universal intercultural pragmatic competence and goodwill.

Variation according to user would indeed be more traditionally exemplified by Siria Guzzo's focus on the English used by the young 3rd generation Italian community in Bedford, U.K. Here we have an example of the use of canonical variationist methodology tracing the frequency of certain distinguishing phonological variables as markers of ethnic identity. Indices of an ethnolect in the first-wave manner of sociolinguistics.

Another immediately recognisable exemplar of a user variety would be Gullah, the focus of Cristina Nisco's paper which engages with the status and function of this English-based creole which evolved along the coastline of the Southern United States. Gullah, is of course, also a typical contact variety and is concerned with speakers' identity stakes through language choice. It is currently classed as an endangered minority language, although this is also controversial;[4] for the moment, at least on the basis of evidence from the web, and from the outside looking in, we can certainly say that it is at least "mythically alive",[5] that it has enormous affective importance for those who identify with the Gullah or Geechee culture which also helps to demonstrate how much symbolic value a variety or language can have. The interest of the paper also revolves around the enabling function of the web in the maintenance, and indeed, empowerment and revival of endangered minority varieties or languages.[6] The web may even eventually add the written or diamesic dimension of functions to Gullah, we suspect.

'Identity' is indeed a key concept in five out of the seven contributions in our issue, but none more so perhaps than in the papers by Cristina Nisco and Siria Guzzo. Guzzo, as we saw, investigates the language of the Italian community of Bedford, a multiethnic town in the south-east of England where the current language situation is especially interesting because the community today consists mostly of L1 English speakers of the 2nd and 3rd generation of Italians. Her findings lead her to posit the hypothesis that some phonological features of Italian might have

[3] See also the debate on the viability of this distinction; it is not an irrelevant distinction since it involves power asymmetry.

[4] See, for example, Salikoko S. Mufwene, "The Ecology of Gullah's Survival", *American Speech,* 72.1 (1997), 69-83.

[5] Seamus Heaney told us in 1986 that Irish Gaelic was "mythically alive"; see "The Loaded Weapon", episode 8 on the Irish Question of the BBC's *The Story of English* video series (by Robert McNeil et al).

[6] We happily remind readers of the point as already made by Geoff Nunberg's 1996 Fresh Air broadcast talk on this, "The Whole World Wired", which we published in print in an earlier *Anglistica* issue: *English and the Other*, 3.1*, (1999), 229-231.

been maintained and transmitted across the generations and used as ways for her informants to show their ethnic identity thus signalling membership of the Italian community. These 2nd and 3rd generations were indeed found to perceive themselves as having a strong Italian identity although their actual Italian language competence varied widely and in some cases was very rudimentary.

Suzanne Romaine's paper concerns, among other important diachronic issues, inter-speaker or user variation (diatopical and diastratic), but also tackles intra-speaker variation, in that the lexical variable (the past tense form of the verb 'sneak': 'sneaked' vs. 'snuck') whose frequency of occurrence she tracks, varies not only between different American and British speakers (as documented in the various types of corpora), but also on different diaphasic or register dimensions of the use type, e.g. for formality and for different purposes (jocularity, among them). Moreover, this demonstrates that a user can also assume or play with other users' lects, or fragments of them, for different purposes (or uses); as is also argued in Vincent's introductory essay, no one is necessarily restricted always to one single identity or role, just as they are not restricted to one single register.

Balirano and Hughes' paper on the audio-visual translation of the film *Eat Pray Love* (in particular, on the 'Eat' part set in Rome) concerns rather more the rendering not of intra-language variation but of multilingual usage (i.e. inter-language variation between and among languages, enacted both by a speaker and by the work to be translated). Thus it also deals with issues of language contact and intercultural interaction, with Anglos as non-native speakers living (eating, praying, loving, indeed) in other countries and the speech of native speakers of other languages represented – among them Italian (with its sociolinguistic differences) embedded in the original mainly English-medium film.

In Balirano and Hughes' paper we can also see, for example, affective loading and social stereotyping of particular diatopical/diastratic varieties at work as these are re-routed by the Italian adaptors for the Italian audience. They mutate an original Roman landlady into a stereotypical though incongruous Sicilian one – with a decidedly low diastratic variety representation of a southern diatopic variety of Italian, presumably to dip into and evoke the negative stereotypes they, controversially, believe are more appropriate to the contextual identity of the landlady. There is also a further controversial choice made by the adaptors when they 'mutate' the American visitor in search of her own personal identities, but in Rome mainly merely looking to learn the language and enjoy the food, into a competent near-native speaker of Italian looking to nourish herself rather with high Italian culture, as if this higher role/identity for an Italian setting were more acceptable to an Italian audience.

Perhaps only the two reviews we are pleased to also host, the first by Maria Cristina Aiezza of *Discourse, Communication and the Enterprise, Genres and Trends* (ed. by Giuliana Garzone and Maurizio Gotti) and the second by Eleonora Esposito of *English around the world* (by Edgar Schneider), could unequivocally and more neatly have stood in for concern with the use and user variety types, respectively.

Methods and types of data

What all the papers do have in common, as hinted at above, is undoubtedly their empirical approach, their concern with collecting and analysing authentic data and presenting it for discussion rather than engaging in unsupported theoretical speculation. This constitutes perhaps the issue's main merit. Some of the papers deal with naturally occurring usage data collected in the field; spontaneous oral (Guzzo, Vigo), carefully prepared spoken (Crawford Camiciottoli), written (Romaine, Di Martino), multimodal and/or multimedia data (Balirano and Hughes). The web and social media are present as context of use (Nisco), as archive and/or as data corpus (Nisco, Romaine). Some papers examine metalinguistic data, rather than only usage, although also collected in the field (Nisco, Romaine). While some papers use quantitative methods (Crawford, Romaine, Guzzo) analysing both small specialised and larger general corpora, they also use a qualitative and ethnographic approach. Some of the data analysed in Di Martino and Balirano/Hughes is from single sets of parallel 'texts', in the case of the literary works they examine (written and filmic respectively) where the given, published Italian versions are compared in detail to the original.

Guzzo and Vigo record and transcribe naturally occurring oral interactions, for their different analytical level foci (phonological and pragmatic, respectively). Crawford also analyses mainly oral textual data (collected personally and transcribed by her, supplemented by transcriptions made available to her) as well as further oral data from personal interviews. Her data consists of partially scripted, meticulously prepared, oral texts, but with many 'interactional' asides in the co-presence situations. She tantalisingly hints at multimodal aspects such as accompanying gesture and 'powerpoint' texts but limits her attention here to the strictly verbal, textual aspects of the two diamesic types of financial reports constituting her two corpora.

Romaine analyses an impressive amount of written usage and metalinguistic data of various sorts from a wide array of corpora and written resources, on the look-out for occurrences and frequencies of 'sneaked' and 'snuck'. She marshals a wide variety of corpora ranging from the diachronic to the synchronic, mono-genre to multi-genre, in addition to the vast resources of Google Books which provide an opportunistic corpus to compare variation and observe change over time. These are used to check existing data from dictionaries and language blogs and they provide us both with an example of how to use multiple resources and how language can vary in unexpected ways. We must add that it also communicates a contagious enthusiasm for the search, which drives one to not give up until one gets a clue or an answer to some query, to not trust labelling or dating, but to also manually check. It is a lesson in methodology, on how to weed out false hits and interpret different types of data. A fascinating example of the 'treasure hunt' that Sali Tagliamonte mentions.[7] Romaine's 'hunt' also, incidentally, reminds us that the wider than ever availability of texts (thanks to digital archiving) can show up the need to update even the most authoritative of sources, the Oxford English

[7] Sali Tagliamonte, *Variationist Sociolinguistics: Change, Observation, Interpretation* (London: Wiley, 2012), 349.

Dictionary (for example, on the first attestations of 'sneak'). Her discussion and attentive use of data raise and unearth indeed many fundamental issues pertaining to language variation and change. Issues implicated, for example, are the role of language attitudes to standard and sub-standard varieties and/or variables, the pathway from colloquial and comedic to generally unmarked usage, the direction of influence from below as widening usage bubbles upwards to be found in that of prestigious writers which in turn influences further upwards the acceptance even by usage panels. Careful documentation reveals, furthermore, the fact that under these conditions, the direction of change may be from regular to irregular forms rather than the more usual movement towards regularisation.

Nisco deals with mainly written metalinguistic data, in that what she finds on the web is mainly talk *about* Gullah rather than talk *in* Gullah, also collected with a definite touch of the treasure hunt from dedicated sites and blogs for evidence of the use of and attitudes to Gullah.

Vigo's data, in which she looks for pragmatic or discourse strategies, consists of two multiparty exchanges selected from a larger corpus of intercultural exchanges collected in the field and in similar circumstances to Meierkord's,[8] in student digs and university common rooms and offices in Britain with a multicultural mix of interactants. Recordings (even only audio recordings such as hers) of authentic, naturally occurring spontaneous 'mundane' interaction, and doubly so, of intercultural interaction, are difficult to come by, ethically (and without observer paradox complications), and the exchanges she presents are thus also useful documentary contributions.

Siria Guzzo's paper, as mentioned above, represents for us the archetypal variationist sociolinguistic attention to the collection of data. Using both participant observation methods and the more conventional sociolinguistic investigative techniques such as questionnaires, she recorded a number of young speakers of Italian origin and their Anglo equivalents, focussing in particular on single phonological variables, the so-called FACE diphthong and the (de)aspiration of voiceless stops /p, t, k/ discernible in the speech of two informants, English L1 speakers of 3rd generation Italian origin, one male and one female. She also describes the slow process of getting to know the informants and gradually winning their confidence in order to be able to record their conversations and interview them without incurring the problem of the observer's paradox. We leave it, as we said, to the authors' own voices to naturally present their data and their more detailed discussion of points, and to the following essay by Vincent to lay out a few more general and relevant methodological issues, and especially to attempt to issue some important terminological caveats.

We would like to close here by stressing, as does the next essay, that recognising varieties of variation and variation in varieties (in other words in all our language activity), gives us an insight into something fundamental about human nature, culture and society: that we are all individually multiple, fluid, capable of changing, negotiating, manipulating, constructing or creating our social reality and identities

[8] Cristiane Meierkord, "Interpreting Successful Lingua Franca Interaction. An Analysis of Non-native-/Non-native Small Talk Conversations in English", <http://www.linguistik-online.com/1_00/MEIERKOR.HTM>, 19 November 2012.

and that of others through our use of language. By this we alter our perceptions and the perceptions of our interlocutors and thus participate in the small changes in culture and society which these papers help to bring to light. Recognising this reminds us that we can be agents and not necessarily only entrapped receivers of social order, at the mercy of others' meanings and evaluations, as long as we are linguistically rich, i.e. aware of and in charge of our linguistic resources, of our linguistic repertoires, and that these should be as wide and rich in varieties and variables as we can make them.