COMMUNICATIVE SPACES

Variation, Contact, and Change

Papers in Honour of Ursula Schaefer

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Introduction

1.   Scope of the volume

To collect contributions in honour of Ursula Schaefer in a volume entitled *Communicative Spaces: Variation, Contact, and Change* might appear fairly obvious to some, but less so to others, especially since *variation*, *contact* and *change* have become omnipresent linguistic buzzwords. We would therefore like to take the opportunity to briefly outline our intention in choosing the *leitmotifs* for this volume.

As already said, referring to language variation, contact and change in the title of a book dedicated to a renowned scholar of English linguistics and medieval studies seems to indicate a severe lack of imagination on the side of the editors – after all, even the most die-hard adherent of generative diachronic syntax will be hard pressed to deny that the Middle English period takes pride of place when it comes to pervasive variation, language contact and ultimately language change. It is the notion of *communicative space* which provides the specific perspective on variation, contact, and change that has informed much of Ursula Schaefer's work over the years, and it is this perspective we invited potential contributors to this volume to share.

Ursula Schaefer's view of linguistic variation has always been based on an attention to cultural aspects. As part of a culture, a language or rather all its manifestations have their place within what we might conceive of as a 'variational space' (*Varietätenraum*). The variational space – or 'architecture' of a language, to use Coseriu's term – comprises the 'orderly heterogeneity' (cf. Weinreich et al. 1968) of dialects, sociolects, and registers: variation is not random, but internally structured according to language use and language users. While a variational space depicts the sum total of all varieties of a single language, a communicative space includes more than one language in its architecture. According to Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher, "*the* central principle underlying the organisation of variational […] and communicative spaces" can be seen in the conceptional continuum between communicative 'immediacy' and 'distance' (2007: 346). The notions 'immediacy' and 'distance' as the most fundamental poles of variational as well as communicative spaces have first been suggested by Koch and Oesterreicher in 1985. While their framework has informed a considerable body of research in Romance and German linguistics, it

has not received due attention in English linguistics – a shortcoming that Ursula Schaefer's work also tried to redress. As we would like to support these efforts, we have included the first English translation of this seminal paper into this volume.

What, then, is so interesting about 'communicative spaces', 'immediacy', and 'distance' when applied to language and language change, specifically to contact-induced language change? The theoretical surplus value in choosing this cluster of concepts over others may best be illustrated with reference to Ursula Schaefer's work in her project *Institutionalisierungen der Volkssprache: Verschriftlichung und Standarisierung des mittelalterlichen Englisch* as part of the Dresden *Sonderforschungsbereich* 537 "Institutionalität und Geschichtlichkeit".[1]

The communicative space of late Medieval England was trilingual: we find English alongside Anglo-Norman French and Latin, with the former occupying the 'immediacy'-corner of the communicative space and the latter serving as languages of written record and thus as the 'languages of distance'. English as the spoken vernacular in the Middle English period can be characterized as both medially and conceptionally 'oral', a distinction that Koch and Oesterreicher have repeatedly stressed. In terms of medium of realization, 'spoken' vs. 'written' is a dichotomy, whereas it is a continuum in terms of conceptional realization: a lecture delivered to an audience is much higher on the scale of conceptional literacy than a greeting in a conversation, even though both speech acts are realized in the same medium.

The startling re-emergence of English as a written language in medieval England obviously led to a reshuffle of the communicative space, but crucially also to structural changes within the language. Ursula Schaefer has pointed out that "English, no doubt, reconquers literate ground in the 14th century, yet it does so by establishing itself not *against* Latin and French, but *with their help*" (2006: 10). The important point here is that the English vernacular had to take on characteristics of a language of distance in order to be able to fulfil those communicative functions that used to be exclusively associated with Latin and French. That is, a language or variety does not simply change its position within the communicative or variational space and remains otherwise unaltered when it assumes functions in the realm of 'distance' communication. The concepts of intensive vs. extensive elaboration/*Ausbau* as they have been advanced by Koch and Oesterreicher following Kloss (1952; [2]1978) and Haugen (1966) capture the processes that are at work here: intensive *Ausbau* refers to the structural changes under way when a primarily spoken language is textualized (*Verschriftlichung*), and extensive *Ausbau* describes how the language under discussion extends its functional range within the overall communicative space. In the communicative

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1 'Institutionalization of the vernacular: textualization and standardization of medieval English' as part of the Dresden *Sonderforschungsbereich* 537 'Institutionality and historicity'.

space of Medieval England, multilingual speakers and writers had the opportunity to draw on the resources of both French and Latin when it came to the intensive *Ausbau* of English. This process entailed both linguistic transfer and cultural transfer: specific text types or genres such as court proceedings, statutes, or romances were typically committed to writing in a specific language. The multilingual scribe, familiar with the discourse norms and discourse rules of a specific genre or *discourse tradition* (cf. Koch 1997; Oesterreicher 1997), was then able to rely on his knowledge of French and Latin and to exploit his familiarity with the relevant discourse traditions in the *Ausbau* (or, more recently, *Ausbauization*, cf. Tosco 2008; Fishman 2008) of English. Thus, Latin or French were not 'rivals' for medieval English, but 'role models' in the process of textualization and ultimately standardization.

With the framework of the communicative space as a general theoretical backbone we invited contributors to share their views and research on language variation, contact and change within communicative spaces of all kinds with us. We explicitly encouraged contributions not only from linguistics but also from adjacent fields of enquiry in which language(s), texts, and discourse traditions are of paramount importance, i.e. literature, cultural studies and history, to name but the most obvious. We were looking forward to new input and fresh perspectives on a concept which we hoped could be fruitfully exploited within many disciplines, for many different languages and with reference to all possible periods, not just the Middle Ages.

2.   Structure of the volume

Our initial hopes have become reality: we are able to present a many-sided collection of papers. It ranges widely in terms of the fields and periods investigated as well as in terms of authors' origin. Because there is no denying the fact that Ursula Schaefer's interest in historical aspects and developments looms large, we have decided to arrange the volume chronologically.

To lead off, Holger Kuße goes back in time furthest and discusses the origin and background of Slavonic scripts. Tom Shippey reflects upon variation, contact and change in relation to the Old English poem *Andreas*. Trying to place Ælfric within the *English* tradition of grammaticography, Göran Wolf also addresses an issue of the Old English period. Most contributions centre on the Middle English period and partly relate explicitly to Ursula Schaefer's findings. Claudia Aurich discusses the role of the communicative space in late medieval England and its influence on lexical items in proverbs. Thomas Honegger compares Marie de France's *Lanval* with its English adaptations und thus provides a literary example for the mechanisms behind the concept of the communicative space. Considering the development of the conjunction *as*, Richard Ingham il-

lustrates a case of sense extension via language contact between English and Anglo-Norman. Andrew James Johnston deals with Chaucer's conceptualisation of Christian history by interpreting linguistic allusions in the *Man of Law's Tale*. Lucia Kornexl zooms in on the grammar school classroom in late medieval England and describes the performative dimension in this specific communicative space. Katie Long and Rainer Holtei present a rereading of *The Owl and the Nightingale* and show the dialogue's metatextual allusions to the relationship of orality and literacy. With regard to the Middle English romance *Havelok the Dane*, Ulrike Schenk gives an account of the cultural background of literary creativity in the early Middle English period. David Trotter discusses *clos*(*e*) in Anglo-French and English and finds that English dialects harboured the Anglo-French element longer than the standard language. Beatrix Weber postulates a trilingual register of legal and administrative discourse for the communicative space of Late Medieval England. Laura Wright examines the language of the Hammond scribe and uses the manuscripts' watermarks to trace an altogether different medieval 'communicative space'. Paving the way for those contributions which deal with the early modern and late modern period, Karl Maroldt offers an explanation of the causes of the Great Vowel Shift. The 16th century is also of interest to Christian Prunitsch. However, he takes us to the Polish-Lithuanian Union and considers the prestige of the Polish language in this historical state. The language contact of Italian and English and its cultural background is the centre of attention in the contribution by Maria Lieber and Gesine Seymer. From a corpus-linguistic point of view, Manfred Markus sheds light on *sirrah* in Shakespeare suggesting a new etymology of this nominal address. In her exemplary account of written correspondence between two Scotsmen and a Dutch librarian, Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade illustrates an early instance of English as a world language. Haruko Momma provides a historical account of a metaphilological communication between John Mitchell Kemble and Jacob Grimm. Hildegard L. C. Tristram and Christina Bismark give a full-scale report on a Freiburg-based research project investigating the analyticisation of English and neighbouring languages. Claudia Lange offers a corpus-based study of reflexives in Early Modern English as a test case for the text type- or genre sensitivity of linguistic change. Konrad Ehlich ponders the challenges of transnational communication and his consideration of the term 'lingua franca' takes place against this background. Christian Mair reflects upon the paradox of a world which becomes more monolingual and more multilingual at the same time. This collection of papers is rounded off by a translation of the seminal paper written by Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher, whose German original was published in 1985. It has – directly or indirectly – informed most contributions to this volume.

3.   Acknowledgments

We have deliberately refrained from titling this collection a *Festschrift*. Yet, it serves the same goal and the process of making it involved the same main ingredient as an explicit *Festschrift*, i.e. discretion. Accordingly, we owe many thanks for being appropriately discrete to everyone involved in this project, especially to all contributors to this volume. We also have to thank Susanne Busch and Alina Markova on the Dresden side as well as Sandra Weiser on the Gießen side for proof-reading and unselfish help with bibliographical matters. Finally, we are grateful to Martina Polster who was with us in the initial stage of the publishing process and to Annette Reese as well as Claudia Stegmüller for being understanding and welcoming when the Munich department of Peter Lang Verlag took over looking after us.

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