

The importance of prescriptivism in the development of 'schemes for respelling' in eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries

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La construcció de les llengües : Mites, Normes i Emocions

Girona, June 26th, 2013



Research Question

How did lexicographers whose aim was to eliminate variation end up creating a system perfectly suited to record variation?

Outline

- Some context
- The evolution of transcription systems:
 - ♦ The multipurpose «accent»
 - ♦ Diacritics: the limits of «signposting»
 - ♦ True «respelling»

Some context

- the influence of printers in the 17th century:
a practical outlook
- by 1700, stabilized orthography; attempts at
reform abandoned

Some context

- Socio-economic and political pressures (urbanization, Acts of Union) brought people of different origins together
- Pronunciation standards hardened and became key marker of social status
- Manuals and grammars proliferated, and a new genre appeared:
pronouncing dictionaries

Thomas Dyche 1707, 1723

- in *Dictionary of All Words*, simple stress mark

concórdant
concóporate
cóncourse
concréte
concrétion
concúbínage
cóncubine
conculcate
concupiscence
concupiscible
concurr

hor-net	jal ^o per	lad-der
hor-ror	jave-lin	la-den
horse-leech	jay-lor	la-dle
ho ^o stige	jea ^o lous	la-dy

- but in earlier *Guide to the English Tongue*, «**Double Accent**» shows graphic convention and spoken reality simultaneously

Nathan Bailey, 1740

An Universal Etymological Dictionary, 9th edition

DESTINY *Readers, Gypsies or Fortune-Tellers.*

DES'TITUTE [*destitué, F. destitutus, L.*] left, forsaken

DESTITU'TION, a leaving or forsaking. *F. of L.*

To DESTROY [*détruire, of destruere, L.*] to throw down, to ruin or lay waste, to deface, to kill.

DESTRUC'TION, a Destroying, Ruin, Overthrow. *F. of L.*

DESTRUCTIVE, apt to destroy or ruin, pernicious. *L.*

DESTRUCTIVELY, perniciously.

DESTRUCTIVENESS, the being destructive or pernicious.

“discriminant accent”

- develops from practice of placing stress mark after syllable;
- distinguishes open vs. closed syllables, and thereby long vs. short vowels

“Signposting”: Buchanan 1757

Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio

(´) The common accent, placed over a vowel in a word, denotes that the voice must be raised upon that syllable: but when it is placed reverse over an (ʔ) at the end of a word, it denotes that the final (r) must be sounded.

(—) Long accent placed over a vowel denotes it to be long.

All letters in roman character in the alphabetical words are silent, or not pronounced.

(v) Short accent placed over a vowel, denotes it to be short.

(··) Diaeresis placed over two vowels, denotes that they are both sounded, or parted into two syllables.

- «quiescent letters» shown to have different status, but not removed
- array of diacritics derived from linguistic tradition (macrons, breves, diaeresis)

Accquĩttal, or *acquittance*, (S.) 1. A being discharged from the suspicion of a crime. 2. A receipt. F. *ā dāge*, (S.) A proverb. L. *Adā'gĩo*, (A.) In music, flow in movement, grave, solemn. *ā cre*, (S.) A superficial measure of *ā dāmānt*, (S.) A diamond. L.

“Signposting”: Buchanan 1757

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Accūttal, or *acquittance*, (S.) 1. A being discharged from the suspicion of a crime. 2. A receipt. *F.*
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ā dāmānt, (S.) A diamond. *L.*

First metaphonological representation:

stage in the «second revolution of grammatisation» (Auroux 1994)

“Signposting”: Kenrick 1773

A New Dictionary of the English Language

OAR — **O⁸AR**. *n. f.* [*ane*, Saxon; perhaps by allusion to the common expression of plowing the water, from the same root with *ear*, to plow, *aro*, Latin.] A long pole with a broad end, by which vessels are driven in the water, the resistance made by water to the oar pushing on the vessel.

O⁸A¹⁵RY — **O⁸AR-Y**. *adj.* [from *oar*.] Having the form or use of oars.

O⁸A¹⁵TCA¹⁵KE. *n. f.* [*oat* and *cake*.] Cake made of the meal of oats.

O⁸A¹⁵TEN — **O⁸AT-EN⁰**. *adj.* [from *oat*.] Made of oats; bearing oats.

OATH — **O⁸A¹⁵TH**. *n. f.* [*aith*, Gothick; *að*, Saxon. The difference between the noun *oath*, and the verb *swear*, is very observable, as it may shew that our oldest dialect is formed from different languages.] An affirmation, negation, or promise, corroborated by the attestation of the Divine Being.

O⁸A¹⁵TMA¹⁵LT. *n. f.* [*oat* and *malt*.] Malt made of oats.

O⁸A¹⁵TMEAL — **O⁸AT-MEAL¹²**, or **O⁷AT-MEAL¹⁵**. *n. f.* [*oat* and *meal*.] Flower made by grinding oats.

OATS — **O⁸A¹⁵TS**. *n. f.* [*aten*, Saxon.] A grain which, in England, is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.

- Numerals as diacritics: eliminating vagueness, lending entries a “scientific” air
- Modification of conventional orthography remains unthinkable

“Respelling”: Sheridan 1762

Dissertation on the Causes of the Difficulties, which Occur in Learning the English Tongue

- inventor of superscript numbers (Kenrick uses them as diacritics, whereas Sheridan creates new graphemes)
- gives four clear rules for achieving bijectivity
- system adopted not bijective – for prescriptive reasons

Vowels.

¹ a	² a	³ a	⁴ e	⁵ o	⁶ o	⁷ e	⁸ i	⁹ u
hall	hat	hate	beer	note	noofe	bet	fit	but
		short	^w oo		short	^y ee		-

Consonants.

eb ed ef eg ek el em en ep er es et ev ez etñ* eth ezh ezh ing

“Respelling”: Sheridan 1780

A General Dictionary of the English Language

DILECTION, di-lék'-shún. f. The act of loving.

DILEMMA, di-lém'-má. f. An argument equally conclusive by contrary suppositions; a difficult or doubtful choice.

DILIGENCE, dil'-y-jéñse. f. Industry, assiduity.

DILIGENT, dil'-y-jént. a. Constant in application; assiduous; constantly applied, prosecuted with activity.

DILIGENTLY, dil'-y-jént-ly. ad. With assiduity, with heed and perseverance.

DILL, dil'. f. An herb.

di2-le1k'-shu1n

di2-le1m'ma1

di1l'-y1-je1nse

di1l'-y1-je1nt-

ly1

di1l'

New representational system, using **new set of graphemes**:

- simple, *i.e.* most of the consonants;
- complex, *i.e.* most of the vowels;
- digraphs, several consonants and some diphthongs

Thomas Spence 1775

The Grand Repository of the English Language

A'bacus, (ʌBɪKʌS) n. a counting table; the uppermost member of a pillar.
Abáft, (ɪBʌFT) ad. behind; to the stern.
Abáifance, (ʌBAZɪNS) n. a bow or curtesy; respect.
Abándon, (ʌBʌNDɪN) v. to forsake; to desert.
Abáfe, (ʌBAS) v. to bring down; to humble.
Abáfement, (ʌBASMɪNT) n. depression; humiliation.
Abásh, (ʌBʌʃ) v. to put to the blush.
Abáte, (ʌBAT) v. to diminish; to lessen.
Abátament, (ʌBATMɪNT) n. an allowance made.
Abb, (ʌB) n. the warp threads of cloth.
A'bbacy, (ʌBɪSE) n. the rights, privileges, or jurisdiction of an abbot.
A'bbefs, (ʌBɪS) n. the governesses of an abbey inhabited by women.

New representational system, using **new set of graphemes**:

- Extended alphabet, with ligatures, half-letters and modified letters
- Bijective, phonemic, most like the IPA

Thomas Spence 1782

Thī Hīstīre öv Kruzonea, öR Röbīnsīn Kruzo'z Ilīnd

Spelling reformer

Hârk! hou thī Trūmpit's Sound,
Proklamz thī Wūrd 'around
Thī Jubīle!
Tēlz aul thī Poor öprēs'd,
No mor tha fhāl be lēs'd,
Nör Ländlördz mor molēst
Thar Pröpīrte!

- reformed spelling different from dictionary «respellings»
- condescension? (“laborious part of the people”)
- internalized graphic-phonetic conventions from traditional orthography

Analysis

- Nostalgia
- Classicism
- Authoritarianism

Conservative

- Aestheticism
- Coherentism
- Logicism
- Commonsensism
- Functionalism
- Asceticism

Reformist

(Pullum 2004)

Conclusion: layers of prescriptivism

1. “Right” pronunciation:
 - external social factor that is completely internalized into intellectual framework
 - usage-based not rule-based
 - pedagogical intent: motivation for every innovation, but also limitation

Conclusion: layers of prescriptivism

2. graphocentrism

first phase: orthography cannot be changed

second phase: orthography can be modified, but remain benchmark (in transcription choices, in spelling pronunciation)

Conclusion: layers of prescriptivism

3. transcription systems themselves:

- reformist prescriptivist principles are applied to representation as opposed to language form itself
- “monmodèle” (Ballier 2007)



Thank You!

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Analysis

Prescriptivism about spelling
prescriptivism about spoken language

ennglyssh *broperer*
ennglyssh broperer *crystenndom*
ennglyssh crystenndom

ho'ltage

DESTITU'TION

DES'TITUTE

- the *Ormulum*
- Dyche 1707
- Bailey 1740

Conclusions

Prescriptivism about spelling,
prescriptivism about spoken language

^{15 10 x}
PI-LAS-TER

ACADEMICK, ák-ká-dém'-mík.

ΛBDIKASI IN

Ländlördz

▪ Kenrick 1773

▪ Sheridan 1780

▪ Spence 1775, and
1782

**prescriptivists
with different
objects**