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(Received 27 January 2023)

doi:[10.1017/S1360674323000096](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674323000096)

Ingrid Paulsen, *The emergence of American English as a discursive variety: Tracing enregisterment processes in nineteenth-century U.S. newspapers* (Language Variation 7). Berlin: Language Science Press, 2022. Pp. vi + 450. ISBN 9783985540341.

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In her book *The Emergence of American English as a Discursive Variety*, Paulsen presents three central aims. The first of these aims is theoretical in nature as she sets out to come up with a ‘model of the construction of discursive varieties, which can then inform a general model of the emergence of new varieties’ (p. 2). The second aim concerns the practical application of this model ‘to contribute to a description of the emergence of American English as a discursive variety in the nineteenth century’ (pp. 2–3). The third and final aim of Paulsen’s book concerns the deduction of a general research methodology for studying historical enregisterment ‘in a systematic and goal-oriented manner’ (p. 3).

Chapter 2 is devoted to the development of her theoretical model and thus serves to achieve her first aim: ‘The emergence of American English: Theories, descriptions, and models’ (pp. 7–109). Section 2.1 provides a discussion of existing theories of the emergence of new varieties, namely Trudgill’s (2004) model of new-dialect formation, Schneider’s (2007) Dynamic Model and Kretzschmar’s (2014) speech as a complex system. Identity and its relevance in the formation of new varieties play a central role in her discussion. Section 2.2 gives a detailed evaluation of different approaches to indexicality and enregisterment and presents existing research in the field (e.g. Silverstein 2003; Johnstone *et al.* 2006; Agha 2007). It further looks at perceptual dialectology and discourse linguistic models, most prominently Spitzmüller & Warnke (2011), which is crucial to her analysis. Section 2.3 serves to synthesise the theories discussed and develops the author’s own model of the construction of discursive varieties, depicting its interaction with structural varieties, linguistic ideologies, different indexical orders and metapragmatic and metadiscursive activities (p. 86).

Section 2.4 discusses existing research on the emergence of American English. While it is debatable whether such an in-depth presentation and discussion of existing literature (i.e. 103 pages) is necessary to develop her model, her consideration of a variety of approaches similarly leads to a theoretically well-informed model. This, I would argue, can be applied not only to the study of enregisterment, but when combined with, for instance, corpus studies or analyses of letter writing, it could further be used to explore the historical relationship between discourses on language and structural varieties.

Chapter 3 lays down the foundation for the heart of the book: the analysis of newspapers to trace the enregisterment of American English. In this chapter, titled ‘Tracing enregisterment processes of American English: Aims and methodology’ (pp. 111–65), Paulsen starts by justifying the choice of newspapers for the study of enregisterment (section 3.1). From a discourse linguistics perspective, the advantages, she argues, are that newspapers feature a number of different actors like artists and columnists (female and male) and increasingly also Black Americans, and a variety of text types like advertisements, poems, columns, humorous short texts and letters to the editor. Furthermore, they were affordable and widely distributed (pp. 112, 116–17). In section 3.2, she presents her data, which consist of an astonishing number of 1,200 newspaper articles taken from the *America’s Historical Newspapers* (AHN) and *Nineteenth-Century U.S. Newspapers* (NCNP) databases. The following sections provide historical background on the linguistic features she analyses, namely /h/-dropping and /h/-insertion, yod-dropping, BATH-broadening, non-rhoticity, labiodental realisations of /r/, and the lexical forms *baggage*, *luggage*, *pants* and *trousers* (sections 3.3 and 3.4). She investigates the phonological variants by means of searching the databases for the respellings *hinglish*, *noospaper/s*, *dawnce*, *deah*, *fellah*, *bettah* and *twousers*. The variables and the chosen respellings are results of her initial manual searches and analyses of a small number of articles and thus constitute an inductive approach to the variables – rather than explicitly searching for these variants and respellings as she expected them to occur in the newspapers from the start. Section 3.5 presents four more detailed research questions for the following chapter (pp. 163–5). (1) ‘In how many newspaper articles of the two databases (AHN and NCNP) do the selected search terms occur?’, (2) ‘Which social values and social personae (characterological figures) are indexically linked to the linguistic forms?’, (3) ‘Which strategies are employed and to what extent do they differ depending on the linguistic form?’ and (4) ‘How often do the indexical links occur?’. The first question thus calls for a quantitative approach, while (2) and (3) are analysed from a qualitative perspective. Finally, (4) constitutes a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses. In her framework, the first question gives a general overview of the numbers; (2) and (3) concern the intratextual layer, and (4) the transtextual layer.

The findings of her study are presented in chapter 4, ‘Results: Metadiscursive activity in nineteenth-century U.S. newspapers’ (pp. 167–378). These are divided into two, starting with phonological variables (section 4.1), then turning to lexical forms (section 4.2). Both sections begin by addressing the question of temporal and regional distributions of the articles in quantitative terms (sections 4.1.1 and 4.2.1 respectively). The remaining

sections of chapter 4 are devoted to indexical values and social personae. The analysis is very detailed and comprises a considerable number of different text types and actors exemplified by the fact that chapter 4 alone spans 211 pages. Paulsen looks at the entire pool of eye dialect, respellings, lexical choice and characterisations in text types like anecdotes, poems and letters, in order to understand how discursive varieties and characterological figures are constructed linguistically. Further, she considers visual elements of advertisements, cartoons and illustrations, and the historical contexts of the newspaper articles (where accessible). This includes their potential authors, the place of publication in which papers were originally printed, and in how many and which papers they were reprinted. Characterological figures she discusses in detail are Black Americans, the British upper-class swell, the average Brit (the tourist), the dude (rich, or poor aspiring to climb the social ladder), New Yorkers, the cowboy, the rural working-class American, the upper-class southern white American, the upper-class southern girl, the Topsy figure, mountaineers and many more – this list is far from exhaustive. Her main findings are that *hinglish* is nearly exclusively linked to the English, while *noospaper(s)* is mainly associated with white Americans. *Twousers* and *deah* and *fellah* are linked to the dude most of the time. *Bettah* is often linked to Black Americans, but also to white Americans such as the dude, mountaineers and southerners (section 4.1.3). As regards lexical forms, Paulsen reports that *baggage* had become linked to American nationality and the authentic American towards the end of the nineteenth century and had thus acquired positive evaluations. These values could also be found for *pants*. However, in this case she argues that ‘links between *trousers* and positive values like elegance, high quality and a high social position were also still strong’ (p. 378). Paulsen shows that the construction of characterological figures is often tied to more than just these forms and comprises a repertoire of different respellings, eye dialect, and grammatical and lexical forms, and in the case of the white American often the absence of these marked forms.

This is discussed further in chapter 5, ‘Interpretation: Key values and phases in the enregisterment of American English’ (pp. 379–94). Here, Paulsen interprets the results of her qualitative and quantitative analyses in terms of the indexical values of American-ness and the construction of an American register (in the sense of a cultural model of action following Agha 2007) through the values of nationality, authenticity and non-specificity, i.e. absence of explicit marking of forms. These, Paulsen argues, are the core values by means of which the enregisterment of American English proceeded (see section 5.1). Sections 5.2 to 5.4 treat the role of nationality, authenticity and non-specificity. The final section of chapter 5 then concludes her interpretation. As for the first value, she shows that delimiting American English against British English was crucial, and /h/-dropping and /h/-insertion are the two main features by which this is shown. She writes:

Americans used /h/-dropping and -insertion to argue that their standard is superior because the ‘correct’ retention of /h/ was not a form used by only a small group of upper-class speakers but by all speakers who were deemed relevant for the imagination of the American nation. (p. 381)

She takes this to show a shift from the exonormative to the endonormative phase (in Schneider's 2007 terms) in the discourse on American English (p. 381). The use of words such as *hinglish* to characterise the English and to construct the Americans as superior is in fact shown to be found early and continued throughout the century. Another form which Paulsen reports to have been closely tied to the value of nationality is the word *baggage* rather than *luggage*, as the former was regarded as the American form (p. 384). Whereas nationality concerns the construction of an American register by way of marking it as distinct from British English, authenticity is to do with the opposition between authentic and inauthentic American speakers and forms. Paulsen shows that a backed BATH vowel, non-rhoticity, labiodental /r/ and the word *trousers* became enregistered as non-American or more specifically as inauthentic American. As such, they often occurred in characterisations of the dude figure, i.e. an American who often unsuccessfully tries to imitate British norms, including in terms of fashion and style. Thus, she takes the dude as evidence for Schneider's (2007: 288–9) argument that even while developing their own norms (phase of endonormative stabilisation), orientations to the former coloniser (phase of exonormative stabilisation) may persist (p. 385). She argues that 'the dude figure is used to exploit precisely this link to British English speech in order to construct the use of these forms as inauthentic' (p. 385). She contends that characterological figures were generally important in the construction of an authentic American register as exemplified by the American cowboy, hunter and farmer. Linguistic features that were used to mark their speech were *ain't* as a negator, alveolar realisations of the *-ing* variable, KIT lowering in the word *if* and hyper-rhoticity, the last three indicated by respellings (p. 386). However, she does point out that 'the cowboy and his speech were not constructed as models for all Americans despite their authentication as genuine Americans' (p. 388), which leads her to the next value: non-specificity. The case of non-rhoticity illustrates this quite well. Paulsen shows that it was associated with the dude figure but also with southern Americans, Black Americans and mountaineers, while hyper-rhoticity was associated with cowboys, hunters and farmers – always of course in combination with other features. In contrast, rhoticity 'was constructed as non-specific – as the form used by authentic Americans who are in no way "peculiar"' (p. 391).

In chapters 4 and 5, Paulsen captures the nineteenth-century discourse on an emerging American English variety and its relation to Englishness very well. Its multifaceted and thorough analysis yields very important insights into the emergence of American English and into the sociolinguistic history of Late Modern English, namely the role of a number of linguistic forms and social actors these are tied to. Her book also deserves credit for always discussing her chosen variables together with other phonological, grammatical and lexical forms. It is also commendable that she not only draws on linguistic literature but furthermore considers the make-up of the different media and text types in the newspapers. Thus, the visual and content-related peculiarities of anecdotes and advertisements as well as their importance for the history of American English are discussed based on literature from the respective fields. Therefore, she shows convincingly that the emergence of American English can be explained in terms of nationality,

authenticity and non-specificity. Furthermore, the way she goes about analysing different social personae reveals, in an easy-to-follow manner, how indexical links are created and how the social personae are constructed. She usually starts out with the historical context of the newspaper article, summarises the text and its intended meaning, describes how and in which characters forms like *deah* or *fellah* occur, discusses the interplay between those and other linguistic and non-linguistic forms and evaluates these with respect to previously discussed examples. Relevant passages from the newspapers are either included in full or in abbreviated versions in the respective paragraphs.

Nonetheless, some of her arguments could have been brought across with fewer examples and perhaps some more overviews. Moreover, at the beginning of chapter 4, a trigger warning or a note would have been helpful as the newspapers discussed in the chapter frequently contain stereotypes and racist depictions of Black Americans (it is the nineteenth century after all). Paulsen's analysis, however, at no point suggests that these are objective truths but always regards these instances as part of the discursive negotiation of different actors, which evidently reveal existing societal power relations.

Chapter 6 addresses the implications as well as limitations of her study (pp. 395–408). Concerning the limitations (section 6.1), she states that her study only focuses on discourses in newspapers, that using respellings led to higher frequencies of direct speech and negative evaluations of variants (as opposed to metadiscursive comments or positive evaluations), that she only looked at a restricted number of linguistic forms and newspaper articles, and that detailed information on the authorship and origin of the articles is not always accessible. In section 6.2, 'Implications for modeling the emergence of new varieties of English', Paulsen claims that her study has shown that 'identity constructions are central for the emergence of new varieties of English'. She gives an example as she states:

According to the model of social positioning, Americans living at the end of the nineteenth century who shared the evaluations conveyed in articles ridiculing the dude figure were likely to realize the post-vocalic /r/ and use the word *pants* in order to distance themselves from this social persona and signal their identity as true Americans. (p. 399)

In section 6.3, 'Implications for a theoretically informed history of American English', she discusses her findings against the backdrop of Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model and additionally suggests that the metadiscursive activities regarding non-rhoticity (as inauthentic and, through the dude figure, implicitly as British) indicate a shift from the exonormative phase to the endonormative phase. She also draws attention to the fact that racial othering was central in the enregisterment of American English (p. 404). In section 6.4, she states that quantifying metadiscursive activities and integrating them into mathematical and computer-simulated models (e.g. Baxter *et al.*'s 2009) could be beneficial for studying the role of social factors in language change, but remarks that how this can be achieved needs to be explored further in future research (p. 408).

Unless I missed a vital argument, points like those made in the quote above (taken from p. 399), which concern the influence of a register on the structural variety, would require the analysis of additional data based on the structural level. Recapping enregisterment

theories and their relevance for Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model, Paulsen similarly states:

Registers ... influence speakers' selections of linguistic forms in the process of social positioning in interaction, which is essentially an act of identity. ... speakers' attitudes towards and evaluations of linguistic forms are highly relevant because they influence speakers' linguistic choices in a process of (conscious or unconscious) social identity alignment. (p. 409)

Her analysis has clearly shown identity to occupy a crucial role in the emergence of American English as a discursive variety. In her model, however, metapragmatic and metadiscursive acts constitute the discursive construction process of a variety, which only 'potentially influences speaker's choice of forms in interaction when they position themselves socially' (p. 87). While this social positioning can be conscious or unconscious, she does not establish an explicit connection between her results and studies of structural varieties. Given her aims and the thoroughness of her analysis, this seems warranted. However, claims such as those made above at times appear to disregard the fact that from analysing the discursive level we can only gain access to the potential of a structural variety, especially when we consider phonological variants historically based on respellings. It could have very well been the case that forms were part of a discursive variety, while in actual speech they were highly context dependent, very infrequent, or even absent. In fact, she does point to this shortcoming herself: 'It is equally possible that linguistic forms remain part of discursive varieties even though they are neither produced nor cognitively perceived anymore' (p. 28). Furthermore, she admits that her study 'needs to be combined with detailed studies of actual language use in nineteenth century America in order to find out how the emerging registers actually affected speakers' linguistic choices' (p. 412). While I am not suggesting that there is no connection between the discursive and the structural level, in my opinion statements like those cited above could have been formulated more cautiously. Nonetheless, this should by no means downplay the contribution to studying the emergence of American English and historical enregisterment she makes in her book, but merely points to the fact that we must be careful with claiming definitive influence on a structural variety, even if we show social positioning and identity to play an important role on the discursive level.

In sum, Paulsen achieves her three aims and develops a convincing model and methodology for the analysis of discursive varieties and their connection to structural varieties. Despite some of its shortcomings and although the length of the different chapters may become demanding for readers after a specific point, her thoroughness at the same time can be considered one of the book's major strengths. She thus opens up opportunities for further research using her model and methodology. Connecting her findings to the study of historical American English on the structural level also promises to be fruitful with respect to studying the emergence of new varieties. Further research could employ her model to explore the function of other figures such as the British dandy as a possible prototype for the construction of the inauthentic American

dude, or critically assess racism in newspapers and its potential role in fostering the perpetuation of linguistic power imbalances of the twentieth century.

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(Received 23 February 2023)

doi:[10.1017/S1360674323000102](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674323000102)

Ee Ling Low and Anne Pakir (eds.), *English in East and South Asia: Policy, features and language in use* (Routledge Studies in World Englishes). London and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. xvi + 336. ISBN 9781138359857.

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For historical reasons, English has risen to prominence as the unchallenged lingua franca of the world. Over the past few decades, World Englishes has established itself as a major

¹ This contribution is supported by the Start-up fund provided by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.