Model(s) of spoken language in 18\textsuperscript{th}-century English pronouncing dictionaries?

SHESL-HTL 2014: Modèles et modélisations en sciences du langage, de l'homme et de la société

24-25 janvier 2014

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Outline

I. Background: Survey of 18th-century orthoepists and their dictionaries

II. Analysis of their representational strategies and metadiscourse

III. Emergence of a model?
Survey of 18th-century English pronouncing dictionaries


su-do-ri"fic


SUDORIF'ICK


Sūdorĭ'fics


SU`DORI´FIC—SU^{6}-DO^{7}-RIF^{15}-IC^{15}
Survey of 18th-century English pronouncing dictionaries


From the beginning, the stress mark used to indicate more than stress: syllable structure

- “Double Accent”, Dyche 1707:v

“The bearing of the accent, or stress of the voice, upon that syllable, draws the following consonant to the preceding vowel […]. Thus we spell ve”stry, vi”sit, ba”nish: but we pronounce ves-try, vis-it, ban-ish; […] the words are everywhere marked where the rule and the ear disagree ”
Strategies and metadiscourse: stress

• 'Discriminant' stress mark, Bailey 1740 (9\textsuperscript{th} edition)

\textbf{NA\textasciiacute{T}URE  NAT\textasciiacute{U}R\textlatin{ALNESS}}

• Two “modes” of stress, Kenrick 1773:iv

“With respect to accent, it is to be remarked that, we have in English two modes of laying a forcible stress on particular syllables: the one by pronouncing them sharp and quick, the other by pronouncing them flat and slow.”
“The great distinction of our accent depends upon its seat; which may be either upon a vowel, or a consonant. Upon a vowel, as in the words, glory, father, holy. Upon a consonant, as in the words, habit, borrow, battle. When the accent is on the vowel, the syllable is long; because the accent is made by dwelling upon the vowel. When it is on the consonant, the syllable is short; because the accent is made by passing rapidly over the vowel, and by giving a smart stroke of the voice to the following consonant.”

ASSIGNMENT || a1s-si2'ne-me1nt TO BOUND || bou'nd
To ANTIQUATE || a1n'-ty1-kwa2te DRAUGHT || dra1ft'
Strategies and metadiscourse: stress

• Corollary of Sheridan's theory of “accent” in terms of syllabification (see Pouillon & Ballier 2013)

- FLATTERY || fla1t'-te1r-y1
- ACTIVITY || a1k-ti1v'-vi1-ty1
- BAREHEADED || ba2're-he1d-di1d
- DECESSION || de2-se1s'-shu1n
- DEPREDA TION || de1p-pre2-da2'-shu1n
Strategies and metadiscourse: stress

- Additional complexity in Sheridan's treatment of certain coda clusters

  To DEDUCT || de2-du1k't FLAXEN || fla1k's-i1n FORBIDDENLY || fo1r-bi1d'n-ly1
Strategies and metadiscourse: stress

• Theory of stress hierarchy, Sheridan 1780:40

“It has been said above, that every word in our language has one accented syllable; but it is to be observed, that in some of our longer polyllables there are two accents to be perceived; one stronger, the other fainter. Thus, in the word *expos\"tulator'y*, the stronger accent is on the syllable *pos"*; but there is a fainter one on the last syllable but one, sounded tur': but this makes no difference with regard to the rule, as the primary accent is so much more forcible than the secondary one, as evidently to shew that it is but one word which contains both.”

DECOMPOSITION || de3'-ko1m-po2-zi1sh''-u1n

DEMONIACAL || de'-mo2-ni2''-a1-ka1l

FORTUNETELLER || fa3''r-tu3n-te1l''-lu1r

To ANATHEMATIZE || a1n-a1th''-e2-ma1-ti2'ze
Perhaps surprisingly, secondary concern

- Inviolability of orthographic form (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1998)
- Compensatory strategies
Strategies and metadiscourse: bijectivity

Buchanan 1757, Johnston 1764, Kenrick 1773, Perry 1775: diacritics

- Classic typographic devices: breves, macrons, italics
- Superscript numbers with 'absolute' value

O\'bliga\'tory — Ob-li-ga-to-ry

1. No character should be set down in any word, which is not pronounced.

2. Every distinct simple sound, should have a distinct character to mark it; for which, it should uniformly stand.

3. The same character should never be set down, as the representative of two distinct sounds.

4. All compound sounds, should be marked only by such characters, as will naturally, and necessarily produce those sounds, upon being properly pronounced, in the order in which they are placed.
Strategies and metadiscourse: bijectivity

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<th>Third</th>
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<td>love-ly₁</td>
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Plus, without superscripts:

- «short ee» i y
- «short oo» u w

And diphthongs:

- oɪ oɪ or oʏ
- au ou or ow

Table 1: Sheridan's inventory of vowels

(Adapted from Hickey 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Sheridan's inventory of consonants
Thomas Spence's "New Alphabet"
Emergence of a model?

*model*: A simplified or idealized description or conception of a particular system, situation, or process [...] that is put forward as a basis for theoretical or empirical understanding, or for calculations, predictions, etc. *OED* 2002

**Model-like features**

- Descriptiveness?
- Consistency?
- Abstraction.
Descriptiveness

- Increase in descriptive capacity in representations themselves
- Interdependence of elements in system
- Dearth of explicit metadiscourse and terminology
Emergence of a model?

Consistency

- Very consistent in some aspects
- Consistency proportional with degree of explicitness in metadiscourse
Emergence of a model?

Abstraction

• Status of “respellings”?  
  - phonetic vs phonological  
  - yoked to orthography

• Articulatory & acoustic description, rejection of top-down “laws”
Thank you!
References


