INTRODUCTION

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> *To be ignorant of what occurred*
> *before you were born*
> *is to remain always a child.*
> *For what is the worth of human life,*
> *unless it is woven into the life*
> *of our ancestors by the records of history?*
> (Marcus Tullius Cicero
> "Orator", 46 BCE, chapter 34, section 120,
> H. M. Hubbell "Cicero: Brutus, Orator", 1939,
> Engl. trans. p. 395).

Not knowing where one comes from, in the family or society at large, means being unable to understand oneself or how the world works. This is because a person's contextualised history is the fabric and substance of their identity, through which they can fully act in the world. Knowing one's history means making sense of one's present and developing foresight to face the future.

The diachronic evolution of languages is one manifestation of our historical situatedness. Indeed, through language we build relationships and project our self-image. The account of this evolution in historical linguistics encompasses the description of communicative practices in the past (pragmaphilology) and over time (diachronic pragmatics), as well as the explanation of causes of change in patterns of language use. These fields are nowadays mostly studied with the methods of corpus pragmatics combined with discourse-oriented qualitative analyses and the evolution of social norms informing communicative practices (historical sociopragmatics). All these strands of research are present in this volume.

This special issue results from the collective work of three co-editors – Sara Gesuato, Marina Dossena and Daniela Cesiri – whose research has always focused on pragmatics and sociolinguistics, not least in a historical perspective. It offers a selection of internationally peer-reviewed articles in historical pragmatics by well-established senior as well as more junior scholars. Most originate from presentations given at the international conference "Language use across time: what you didn't know you've always wanted to know about

historical pragmatics", held at Padua University on 16-17 February, 2018. The main aim was to explore what the present state of the art in historical pragmatics is by inviting accounts on how and why our current communicative practices have their present form. Another aim was to have a broad view of historical pragmatic studies by casting the net to scholars of different languages. As a consequence, the contributions to this volume highlight varied historical pragmatics topics, such as interactional strategies, politeness phenomena in grammar and discourse, the evolution of discursive practices, lexemes and phraseology. The scope of data is wide, ranging from spill cries in American English to politeness phenomena in Russian historical texts, from linguistic features in classical Greek drama to private correspondence in English, from minutes of Quaker meetings through language teaching materials to paradigm changes in Korean sentence types. Although the articles have their foci in specific languages, a cross-linguistic perspective is present in most (i.e. Korean, Italian, Slavonic languages, Ancient Greek and Latin with relevance to developments in English).

The largest group of contributions, six in all, deals with developments in English, in accordance with the fact that the majority of studies in historical pragmatics have focused on English. This can be explained by the fact that the first electronic corpus on historical data, the *Helsinki Corpus* of half a million words (see Kytö 1991), was comprised exclusively of English texts. It gave an important incentive to study language history in a new way through pragmatic phenomena (see Jucker 1995). But it was just the beginning, and subsequent decades have seen the expansion of digital materials to different dimensions with "big data" that is constantly growing and can encompass billions of words today (see Suhr *et al.* 2019). Besides English, corpus compilation has been active in other languages as well.

The opening contribution by **Andreas H. Jucker** (University of Zurich) is called **"Oops, I forgot, sorry". The spill cries *oops* and *whoops* in the history of American English**. It focuses on two interjections with primarily emotive and exclamatory functions produced semi-automatically. They show an interesting pathway of development that can be traced with the help of digital corpora. These forms were first attested in the early twentieth century in studies on corpus data of American English. These spill cries are often associated with apologies in Present-day English, co-occurring with the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device *sorry*, but have come to function as informal apologies in their own right. A diachronic corpus analysis, including collocational analysis, reveals that surprise is foregrounded in early examples, while the elements of dismay and regret with strong suggestions, or explicit formulations, of an apologetic intent are more prominent in later examples. This article provides a solid application of corpus pragmatics, which is the

main trend in English historical pragmatics at present (see Taavitsainen, Jucker, Tuominen 2014)

Corpus linguistic studies are also conducted in other languages. The contribution by **Annick Paternoster** (University of Italian Switzerland) deals with a politeness formula in Italian, *fare la carità di* 'to be so good as to (give)'. Her article, **From requesting to alms-seeking. The politeness formula *fare la carità di* in nineteenth-century Italy**, reconstructs the meanings and contexts for the use of this formula in two electronic corpora of nineteenth-century Italian based on conduct books, dictionaries and novels. The article first looks at politeness metadiscourse and examines advice for requests in a corpus of 51 nineteenth-century Italian conduct books. The analysis combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings show that the formula *fare la carità di* is used in two contexts, namely when making a (sometimes forceful) request and when begging for material help. These uses appear in roughly equal proportions until the end of World War II, after which the phrase disappears from conduct books completely. The author suggests that its loss may be due to the fact that conduct books have a negative attitude towards and fiercely criticise almsgiving to the undeserving poor, thus giving a societal explanation to the change.

The sociopragmatic trend within historical pragmatics is represented by **Judith Roads**'s (University of Birmingham) diachronic study **Some pragmatic aspects of historical minute-making. The distinctiveness of the Quaker approach**. She relies on discursive analytic methods and investigates the practice of administrative minute-writing among the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) over three centuries. A quantitative assessment for an overall description of the situation is followed by a qualitative analysis of selected illustrative examples in Quaker minute books, which are also compared with corresponding data from other historical institutions. The main line of argumentation shows how present-day Quaker minute-writing methods first developed in the late seventeenth century with commissive and directive speech acts. The prominent formulaic expressions in them leads the author to call minutes a special text type.

Corpus methods continue in **Daniela Cesiri**'s ("Ca' Foscari" University of Venice) paper, entitled **Discursive practices in feminist speeches. A diachronic analysis from the Late Modern period to the present day**. She traces the evolution of discursive practices from the Late Modern English period to the present day in the light of twelve speeches, each delivered by a different feminist activist. Together they represent the three waves in which the feminist movement is commonly divided. All mark the general commitment of the feminist movement to women's empowerment, but their lexical analysis shows that each wave reflects an interest in more specific socio-political issues that varies in time. Additionally, the speakers' age

correlates with discursive practices so that more mature speakers favour terms denoting more general concepts, while the younger speakers refer to more tangible concepts and actual events. This article employs lexical and collocational analyses and is in accordance with the trend that moves at the interface of semantics and pragmatics. It also illustrates an application of the method to an ideological study that very much resembles Critical Discourse Analysis.

Vernacular correspondence can offer valuable insights into language use of past eras seen from below. **Kirsten Lawson**'s (University of Bergamo) article examines data from private letters dating back to the First World War. The title is revealing **"Just a few lines to let you know". Formulaic language and personalization strategies in Great War trench letters written by semi-literate Scottish soldiers**. Her analysis, which combines a Discourse Historical Approach with Critical Discourse Analysis and also relies on corpus-driven methods, illustrates how more conventional components alternate with more spontaneous and speech-based elements in private war correspondence. The findings show how opening salutations are followed by formulaic expressions that create a bridge between greetings and the main contents. Variation in their realization is found to correlate with the different intended recipients of the letters as well as the nature of the writers' relationship with the addressees.

The sixth paper also adheres to the sociopragmatic trend that pays attention to the intended target groups. **Polina Shvanyukova**'s (University of Bergamo) article **"How am I to answer this in English?". Pragmatic fluency in a nineteenth-century English-language teaching text** broadens the scope of the volume to applied linguistics. It discusses the pragmatic dimension of a late nineteenth-century English phrasebook for Italian learners, entitled *Friends at Home and Abroad; or, Social Chat,* by Theophilus C. Cann. The article relies on qualitative data and identifies specific learning goals that were associated with the acquisition of pragmatic fluency with the help of this book. The uses of the text in the teaching and learning of English are considered, and related to the type of learners who were supposedly the intended primary audience.

Next, attention is turned to Slavonic languages with two papers which focus on changing sociopragmatic uses of politeness formula and address terms. This section pertains nicely to the trend of contrastive diachronic pragmatics, which has received scholarly attention with digital corpora becoming more readily available than before.

The article by **Victoriya Trubnikova** (University of Padua) is entitled **"Please", "Thank you", "Excuse me" — "Why can't you behave naturally?". Linguistic politeness in post-revolutionary Soviet Russia**. It outlines manifestations of linguistic politeness in post-revolutionary Soviet

Russia, when massive societal changes greatly affected the definition of linguistic etiquette and the use of formulaic expressions. The change is clearly manifested in social deictics (e.g. address terms like *tovarisch* 'comrade' and *gospodin* 'sir'). The study is based on fictional dialogues in Michail Bulgakov's satirical novel *The Heart of a Dog* with two characters who represent different archetypes: one of the old tsarist era and the other of an emerging Bolshevik regime. They are in a constant clash at the verbal and nonverbal levels, and although fictional, the data can be taken as an indication of how, in the transition period under investigation, politeness formulas and address forms were under constant negotiation, reflecting changing interactional pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms.

The diachronic line extends to earlier periods in the next article, written by **Marco Biasio** (University of Padua and University of Novi Sad): **The etiquette of aspect. How and why *prositi* stopped worrying and entered a pair**. It considers Old and Middle Russian sources to investigate the absence of pre-verbed proto-perfective first person non-past forms of *prositi* 'to ask (for)' in directive speech acts up to the second half the eighteenth century. On the basis of linguistic and extralinguistic data, the author argues that the phenomena under scrutiny can be related, on the one hand, to the semantic properties of verbs of communication, and on the other, to the lack of a *Tu-Vous* distinction in pronoun usage, consistent with the etiquette of hierarchically oriented social relationships. Thus this article moves at the intersection between semantics and pragmatics.

The two following papers deal with the pragmatics of classical languages. They focus on discourse features in drama, which, however, typify everyday real-world communicative practices. These articles show how several western socio-interactional practices have their roots deep in ancient sources.

Severin Hof's (University of Zurich) article, entitled **Talking about lament in ancient Greek drama. Historical metapragmatics and language ideology in Sophocles' *Ajax***, discusses Sophocles' tragedy *Ajax* as challenging the ancient Greek notion of lament being a genuinely feminine, and thus inferior, speech act. By using the sociolinguistic concept of 'language ideology', the author shows how Sophocles deconstructs this notion by juxtaposing Ajax's metalinguistic utterances with the linguistic behavior of a female character, his slave Tecmessa. The discussion is contextualised within the genre of tragedy and the ancient Greek discourse on language. This article serves as an example of work with a literary slant, carried out at the interface between language and literature.

Another article similarly based on classical sources is **Closing conflicts. Conversational strategies across Greek and Roman tragedies**, written by **Federica Iurescia** (University of Zurich) and **Gunther Martin** (University of

Zurich). It deals with closing sequences in ancient tragedies, where conflicts hardly ever find peaceful resolutions, and conversations often end without an agreement being reached. In fact, the non-negotiated and unmediated end affirms the non-cooperative nature of the dialogue. This paper looks specifically at how the close of dialogues is managed in the absence of negotiation, mediation or cooperation, in an approach that considers both the specificity of the individual situation and broad diachronic developments.

The final paper, by **Hyun Jung Koo** (Sangmyung University) and **Seongha Rhee** (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies), is entitled **From self-talk to grammar. The emergence of multiple paradigms from self-quoted questions in Korean**. On the basis of historical corpus data, the article traces the grammaticalisation processes affecting self-quoted questions in Korean (i.e. those with no linkers to the host clause). The authors show how these constructions were reinterpreted as modal markers and connectives, and triggered the development of multiple forms in other paradigm changes through analogy by virtue of their semantic and morphosyntactic resemblances. The final chapter is in accordance with the increasing interest in historical pragmatic studies in Asia and its applications to new languages with pragmatic studies making use of corpus data.

The above summaries show that topics in historical pragmatic studies vary, but have a great deal in common, too. The analyses are based on solid methods often combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, and some rely on discourse analytical methods. All articles make use of genuine empirical data and show a firm socio-historical anchoring to their multi-layered contexts. Some deal with micro-level features, which are, however, related to larger issues in language use. Others deal with macro-level phenomena, revealing how changes of language-internal features always reflect changes in the external world either explicitly or more implicitly. In sum, the articles in this volume give evidence of the versatility of the field in asking new research question, adopting novel angles and applying triangulation with several methods. More generally they show, in a cross-linguistic perspective, how histories of people's social lives reflect on language use.

Authors' bionotes:
Irma Taavitsainen is Professor Emerita of English Philology at the University of Helsinki and a founding editor of the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*. Her research focuses on historical pragmatics, corpus linguistics, genre and register variation and scientific thought styles. Her most recent co-edited volumes are *Developments in English: Expanding Electronic Evidence* (CUP 2015), *Diachronic Developments in English News Discourse* (Benjamins 2017), Special Issues of *Studia neophilologica* (2017) and *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* (2017), plus *From Data to Evidence in English Language Research* (Brill 2019) and *Late Modern English Medical Texts* (Benjamins forthcoming 2019).

Sara Gesuato earned her PhDs from Padua University and the University of California at Berkeley. She is associate professor at Padua University, where she teaches English language and linguistics. Her research fields include pragmatics, discourse and genre analysis and corpus linguistics. Her publications examine the structure and wording of initiating and reacting speech acts, the phraseology and rhetorical structure of academic genres and the temporal and aspectual meanings of catenative motion verb constructions. She has co-edited two volumes on pragmatic issues in language teaching and learning, and is investigating pedagogical applications of the analysis of oral and written speech acts.

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