

Oxford
University
Press

English in Australia and New Zealand

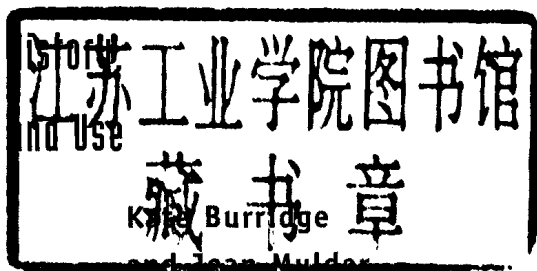
An Introduction
to Its History,
Structure, and Use

Kate Burridge
and Jean Mulder



English in Australia and New Zealand

An Introduction
to Its
Structure, and Use



Melbourne

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford Auckland New York

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS AUSTRALIA

Oxford New York

Athens Auckland Bangkok Bogotá

Buenos Aires Calcutta Cape Town Chennai

Dar es Salaam Delhi Florence Hong Kong

Istanbul Karachi Kuala Lumpur Madrid

Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi

Paris Port Moresby São Paulo Singapore

Taipei Tokyo Toronto Warsaw

and associated companies in

Berlin Ibadan

OXFORD is a trade mark of Oxford University Press

© Kate Burridge and Jean Mulder 1998

First published 1998

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission. Enquiries to be made to Oxford University Press.

Copying for educational purposes

Where copies of part or the whole of the book are made under Part VB of the Copyright Act, the law requires that prescribed procedures be followed. For information, contact the Copyright Agency Limited.

National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

Burridge, Kate.

English in Australia and New Zealand: an introduction to its history, structure, and use.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 19 553813 7.

1. English language — Australia. 2. English language — New Zealand. I. Mulder, Jean Gail, 1954–. II. Title.

427.994

Edited by Lucy Davison

Indexed by Max McMaster

Text designed by Anitra Blackford

Cover design by Anitra Blackford

Typeset by Desktop Concepts P/L, Melbourne

Printed by McPherson's Printing Group, Australia

Published by Oxford University Press,

253 Normanby Road, South Melbourne, Australia

Preface

A LINGUISTIC ADVENTURE

As the celebrity cook Ian Parmenter says, ‘most of us are passionate about good food’. Most of us are passionate about the English language too. For this reason we have blended these two themes into a ‘feast on English’. Our examples are culled from culinary texts: cooking books throughout the centuries, food and wine magazines, books about food, health, diet, and even etiquette. Can you imagine a more pleasant way of grappling with the English language than over knives, forks, and a bottle of good wine?

There is, in fact, a serious intention behind our feast. Not only does the metaphor of food help to give the book a nice consistency, but also, and even more importantly, it draws on everyday experiences. We want to bring English alive and to encourage you to wallow in the day-to-day language that is all around you—everything from the instructions on the back of your Wheaties packet to the language of hangover cures. This is especially important when encountering texts from earlier periods of English. There is continuity in the history of English: the language has evolved and it continues to evolve. We want to show that speakers and writers of the past were part of a living, breathing speech community, and that the language they spoke and wrote is the language we speak and write today. We figure that a tenth-century recipe for curing hangovers or removing unwanted body hair helps to convey exactly this—that some of the needs, the desires, even the obsessions of people of the tenth century were not so different from those we have today. Through these food- and health-related texts, the speakers become more real, as does their language. The texts themselves are more natural too, being free from any literary ambition and stylisation.

A GUIDE TO THE MENU

We have served up a smorgasbord of topics, but as sumptuous as the feast may seem, we have had to be selective in our offerings and frugal with the portions. You can explore the themes further in the practical exercises and questions for discussion at the end of each chapter, as well as through the suggested further readings offered at the end of the book.

The focus is English down under—a conspicuously absent variety in the descriptions of English already available. We use the label *Antipodean English* to refer to the assortment of Englishes spoken in Australia and New Zealand. The term *antipodean* actually comes from Greek and means literally ‘having the feet opposite’—a particularly hemispherist view that life in the Antipodes was out of the question given that we’d all be standing upside down! We also use the abbreviations *OZ* and *NZ English* to cover the varieties of English spoken in Australia and New Zealand. We realise that some people might find *OZ* a bit slangy, but we feel it has gained enough currency recently to earn it a place in our ‘learned’ language. After all, it has been around since early this century (*Oz(zie)* made its first appearance in Australian diggers’ slang). We realise it’s not customary to capitalise the word in the way we have, but we like the symmetry of *OZ* and *NZ*.

Now something about the organisation of the book. There’s been a lot of discussion recently about what parts of the language you introduce first. Traditionally linguists have taken a bottom-up approach, starting with the smallest units (sounds) and progressing to the largest units (texts). Or do you jump in with words and work in both directions? What we’ve done here is to keep the traditional bottom-up layout, but we have written the chapters so that they can be read with either approach in mind.

METHODS

The book emphasises a combination of theory and description, and aims to introduce you to the major theoretical and methodological issues in modern linguistic study. At the same time, it provides an overview of the structure and history of the English language in its many different varieties, especially those close to home.

Necessarily, in our view, the book integrates both a synchronic approach (a ‘snapshot’ of the language at a particular point in time) and a diachronic approach (a series of snapshots or a ‘moving picture’ of the language over time). In order to understand where English is currently, you need to know where it’s already been; each aspect of present-day English—be it vocabulary, sounds, or grammar—is followed by a discussion of its historical development.

Our approach is purposefully eclectic and draws upon many different traditions and areas in linguistics. This includes typology, descriptive grammar, discourse-pragmatics, diachronic syntax, grammaticalisation, sociolinguistics, and generative grammar. It does not follow the restrictive rituals that are necessarily part and parcel of any prepackaged framework.

WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY ‘ONE MEDIUM ONION’

Because this is a linguistic account of English, we need to introduce appropriate terminology. Unfortunately, in a discipline such as linguistics, technical vocabulary often comes across as being particularly mystifying, even offensive, simply because we’re dealing with the familiar. Everyone, of course, knows about English, and

ordinary vocabulary has itself a host of linguistic terms: *word*, *sentence*, and even *language*, for example. But when applied to the actual study of a language such as English, these labels turn out to be very imprecise, and a more accurate terminology is needed. When a technical term is first introduced and defined, we have presented it in bold type. We have also included a glossary at the end of the book, enabling you look up the definitions of technical terms and to refresh your memory when required. We hope that the terminology does not induce heartburn, and that the book remains entertaining and approachable, offering something of interest to students and lovers of English alike.

Abbreviations

LINGUISTIC TERMS

A	adverbial
AC	adverbial complement
Adj	adjective
AdjP	adjective phrase
Adv	adverb
AdvP	adverb phrase
C	consonant
Det	determiner
dO	direct object
iO	indirect object
N	noun
NP	noun phrase
O	object
oC	object complement
PP	prepositional phrase
P	preposition
Pred	predicator
sC	subject complement
S	subject
S(entence)	sentence
SVX	subject + verb + everything else (basic sentence order)
V	vowel or verb (depending on context)
VP	verb phrase
X	everything else in a sentence (other than subject and verb)

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACOD	The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary

AND	Australian National Dictionary
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DAC	A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms
DNZE	Dictionary of New Zealand English: A Dictionary of New Zealandisms on Historical Principles
EFL	English as a foreign language
ENL	English as a native language
ESL	English as a second language
HRT	high rising terminal
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
MD	The Macquarie Dictionary
NSOED	The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles
NZ	New Zealand (English)
OAWD	Oxford Australian Writers' Dictionary
OED	The Oxford English Dictionary
OZ	Australian (English)
RP	British Received Pronunciation

Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>xiii</i>
1 Sampling the Varieties	1
Introduction	1
Variation across space	3
Languages, dialects, and accents	4
The standard dialect	5
Regional variation	6
Social variation	10
Attitudes to variation	15
Educational implications	16
Points to remember	17
Exercises	18
2 The Making of English	21
Introduction	21
Determining genetic relationship: who's related to who(m)?	21
Sound correspondences	25
Hunting for cognates	26
Cognates or a question of chance	26
The Proto-Indo-European language family	27
Snippets from the history of English	27
Ancestral snippets from the history of English	27
More snippets from the later history of English	30
When do dialects become languages?	31
The development of Standard English	32
The beginning: Old English	33
The unfolding: Middle English	33
The golden age of prescription: Early New English	34
The development of English down under	36

The arrival of English down under	36
The rise of Antipodean accents	37
To prescribe or describe?	38
Can we bridge the gap?	40
Prescription and non-discriminatory language	42
Points to remember	43
Exercises	43
 3 What's in a Sound	 47
Introduction	47
The sounds of OZ and NZ English	47
The speech organs	47
Describing consonants	50
Describing vowels	53
Transcribing sounds	55
Sounds and sound systems	57
Phones, phonemes, and allophones	57
Determining phonemes	59
Sounds in connected speech	60
Variation in OZ and NZ English	62
Sounds in context	63
Syllable structure	64
Prosodic features	65
Points to remember	70
Exercises	70
 4 Sounds across Time	 75
Introduction	75
Types of sound change	75
Process versus change	76
Old sounds drop out	77
New sounds appear	78
Old sounds are modified	79
Phonetic versus phonemic change	81
Phonetic change: changes in accent	81
Phonemic change: changes that alter the system	82
Symmetry of change: The Great English Vowel Shift	85
Sound change in progress	87
Sounds and spelling change	89
The English spelling system	89
The sources of irregularity	90
Whose standard?	92
A question of reform	93
Points to remember	94
Exercises	94

5 What's in a Word?	99
Introduction	99
Identifying words	99
Lexemes versus words	101
Morphemes versus words	102
Types of morphemes	103
Lexical versus grammatical	103
Bound versus free	104
Roots, stems, and affixes	104
Compounds and bound roots	105
Derivational versus inflectional morphemes	106
Building words: derivation and inflection	108
Morphological processes	108
Productive morphemes	113
Representing morphemes	115
Morphemes, morphs, and allomorphs	115
Suppletion	118
Points to remember	118
Exercises	119
 6 Words across Time	 123
Introduction	123
Lexical change	123
Where do words come from?	124
Why do words die?	131
Semantic change	134
Consequences of semantic change	134
Why do words change their meanings?	137
Points to remember	143
Exercises	144
 7 Classes of Words	 148
Introduction	148
The major word classes	150
Nouns	151
Verbs	154
Adjectives	155
Adverbs	157
The minor word classes and subclasses	158
Pronouns	158
Auxiliaries	161
Prepositions	165
Conjunctions	166
Determiners	166
Points to remember	168
Exercises	168

8 What's in a Sentence?	173
Introduction	173
Sentence structure	174
How do we know there is structure?	174
Constituents	175
Determining constituent structure	176
Phrasal categories	179
Phrase structure rules	181
Basic clauses and functions	182
Why differentiate phrasal category and function?	182
Basic clauses	182
Functions	183
Clause patterns	189
Clause type	192
Clause type and clause meaning	192
Declaratives	193
Imperatives	193
Interrogatives	194
Exclamatives	195
Echoes	196
Points to remember	196
Exercises	197
 9 'Conjunction Junction'	 202
Introduction	202
Sentence type	203
Coordination	204
Subordination	205
Finite versus non-finite clauses	206
Types of finite subordinate clauses	207
Types of non-finite subordinate clauses	212
Verbless clauses	213
Functions of subordinate clauses	213
Clause combining and style	214
Points to remember	217
Exercises	218
 10 Discoursing on Discourse	 222
Introduction	222
Presenting information	223
End focus: given information before new information	223
Cohesive texts: topic followed by comment	225
Front focus: initial position gives extra focus	226
The principle of end-weight: 'heavy' elements come late	226

Discourse strategies	227
Movement that builds new structures	227
Movement that keeps everything intact	231
Styles of discourse: what makes a variety distinctive?	233
Speech versus writing	233
Occupational 'dialects'	237
Points to remember	242
Exercises	243
 11 Structure across Time	 249
Introduction	249
Synthetic to analytic: from Old English to Modern English	249
The loss of inflections	250
The rise of fixed word order	253
Planned versus unplanned discourse	256
Analogy: regularising the irregular	257
Verbs: <i>well-hanged</i> versus <i>well-hung</i>	257
Nouns: the story of -s	260
Grammaticalisation: creating grammar	261
Points to remember	266
Exercises	266
 12 English Globe-Trotting	 272
Introduction	272
Globalisation and English around the world	272
The two faces of globalisation: conformity and diversity	274
Global conformity: World English	275
Local diversity: striving for identity	280
What does the future hold?	289
Points to remember	290
Exercises	291
 <i>Glossary</i>	 295
<i>Further Reading</i>	313
<i>References</i>	317
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	327
<i>Index</i>	330

Sampling the Varieties

INTRODUCTION

We begin by posing a question: what is English? Just a glance at the following is enough to show you that this is not the straightforward little question that it at first might seem.

Fair fa' [Good befall] your honest, sonsie [comely] face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin' race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch [paunch], tripe, or thairm [intestines].
Weel are ye wordy o'a grace
As lang's my airm

Scots poet Robert Burns, 'Address to a Haggis'

To hold one box, open at cooling

Instructions on a French tin of snails to keep the open can in the fridge

And she said, with that you got, your dinner, a lovely dinner, bed 'n breakfast. And she said the dinner was, the woman cooks, does all the cooking herself. But she said you got heaps of, ya know, courses 'n, really really lovely food.

Part of a conversation, Melbourne speaker

I were only about five and I were staying to school dinners—and she made me eat a big load of mashed potatoes.

Part of a conversation, Lancashire speaker

We used to cook our trotters out there—all come up in trays, all jelly—they used to nosh 'em there like. It was really beautiful.

Part of a conversation, London speaker

2 English in Australia and New Zealand

In a mixing type bowl, impact heavily on brown sugar, granulated sugar, softened butter and shortening. Coordinate the interface of eggs and vanilla.

Twentieth-century adaptation of a recipe for *Chocolate Chip Cookies* in bureaucratese

Sod Egges: Seeth your Eggs almost hard, then peelee them, and cut them in quarters, then take a little Butter and put it in a platter upon your egges.

Seventeenth-century recipe for *Sod Egges*, as quoted in Black 1977:49

Fygges doth sterc a man to veneryous actes, for they doth auge and increase the seede of generacion. And also they doth prouoke a man to sweate: wherefore they doth ingendre lyce.

Sixteenth-century warning on the dangers of eating figs, as quoted in Furnivall 1868:200

All maners of egges waken a man to the worke of lecherie, & speciali sparowes egges.

Fifteenth-century warning on the dangers of eating eggs, as quoted in Furnivall 1868:222

Wip þon þe mōn hine fordrince. Genīm swines lungenne gebræd 7 on neaht nerstig genim fīf snæda simle. [In case a man overdrinks himself. Take a pig's lung, roast it, and at night fasting take five slices always.]

Tenth-century hangover cure, as quoted in Cockayne 1865

Yu mas putim hatoro long wara pastaim, long tripela de. Bihain yu kukim na kaikai. [You must put hatoro in water first, for three days. After that you can cook it and eat it.]

Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinean Creole) instructions for preparing hatoro (type of cyclad palm), as quoted in Dutton 1985:32

These few samples of texts alone demonstrate the extraordinary assortment of varieties encompassed by the label 'English'. The diversity, as you can see, takes many forms—from exotic vocabulary to some structures that look very un-English indeed. For a few of the passages, we even had to supply full 'translations'.

The kind of variation we see represented here has two dimensions. The first is variation across space. There are two types of space involved: geographical and social. Both geography and society influence language. At any given point in time, English will differ both between countries and within the same country. And socially significant groups of people will differ in their linguistic behaviour. There's another aspect to the social dimension, and that's personal variation. People influence language too. All of us are marked out as individuals by our unique linguistic behaviour. No two people use language in exactly the same way.

The second dimension is variation across time. Time influences language. Shifts in grammar, words, and pronunciation occur even within one's own lifetime. And if the time-span is long enough, the changes can be truly spectacular, as some of the examples above illustrate.

As you can see, 'English' as such is fictitious. There is no one English, no one monolithic entity with a fixed set of linguistic features. Rather, the English language

is more like a bag of mixed linguistic allsorts: a variety of flavours and features. What they have in common is a shared history. All have links of some sort with the group of continental Germanic dialects that ended up in the British Isles sometime in the fifth century. And most are, to a greater or lesser extent, mutually comprehensible.

So which variety of English have we chosen to describe in this book? In later sections, which deal with the structural properties of English, we examine the characteristics of the so-called ‘standard varieties’, as well as those features shared by the majority of other varieties. Wherever Antipodean usage is distinctive, we draw this to your notice. In the other sections we pay more attention to variation and diversity, focusing on who uses what features, where they’re being used, and when. Let’s begin, then, by sampling the sort of variation that occurs across space.

VARIATION ACROSS SPACE

Very few Australians or New Zealanders really think of their countries as being linguistically diverse. This is probably because in both Australia and New Zealand there is little need in most contexts for anyone to speak anything other than English. This does not mean that they are linguistically uniform, however. It’s true, we tend to use labels such as OZ English or NZ English as if each were a single immutable language, but this is not the reality. The reality is that speakers from different regions, from different social classes, of different ages, of different occupations, of different gender identification, and of different sexual orientation will all talk differently. People talk differently in different contexts too, whether it be an informal chat, an interview, a lecture, and so on. Labels such as OZ English or NZ English are convenient cover terms for what are really clumps or clusters of mutually intelligible speech varieties.

To simplify our discussion, it’s useful to make a broad distinction between the type of variation associated with speakers (**user-related**) and the type of variation associated with occasions of use (**use-related**). User-related variation includes regional variation (the geographical background of speakers), social variation (the age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, and education of speakers), and even personal variation (the linguistic details of individual speakers, including social and geographical features, but also personality, physique, and physical condition).

Use-related variation has to do with the way that we alter our language to suit the situations in which we find ourselves. Our language varies constantly in response to a complex of different situational factors; if any one factor is changed, our language changes accordingly. These factors include:

- the relationship between speakers and their audience, and even others who might be within earshot (are we chatting to a chum or to our local priest?)
- the setting (are we at a football match or in church?)
- the subject matter (are we debating who will win the Grand Final or the existence of God?)
- whether a spoken or written medium is used (are we talking on the phone or writing a letter?)

For the moment we will confine ourselves to user-related variation, focusing in particular on the relationship between variety and regional or social context. We will

also address a number of questions that arise from this type of variation. What are the different varieties that exist? How do we assess these different varieties? Is one necessarily better than the rest? What are the educational implications? Should students be encouraged to be fluent in more than one variety? In chapter 10 we return to variation but look at the other side of the coin: the varieties of English viewed according to how they are used.

Languages, dialects, and accents

When we start to talk about linguistic variation, we very quickly hit problems of terminology. Terms such as *language*, *dialect*, and *accent* are often loosely applied. For a start, the distinction between language and dialect is not at all clear cut, and all sorts of factors enter into people's judgments about what makes something a dialect and what makes it a language. Unfortunately, too, terms such as these often acquire extra associations along the way, and these can very easily prejudice the issues involved. For example, for many people *dialect* brings to mind something rather quaint and rustic. For others the term is pejorative: dialects are varieties that don't come up to scratch. They're haphazard, vulgar, and provincial aberrations of the real language. Let's start, then, with the technical sense of *dialect* as we'll be using it here.

Most people are aware of pronunciation differences. For example, some NZ English-speakers in Otago and Southland pronounce their *r*'s in words such as *curd* and *first*, whereas other New Zealanders and all native OZ English-speakers don't. But these differences are matters of accent, not dialect. **Accent** refers to the pronunciation a speaker uses. **Dialect** refers to a speaker or writer's vocabulary and grammar.

People are generally fascinated by vocabulary differences. For example, if you want to buy a certain type of large, smooth sausage in Auckland, you'll find it's called *polony*. In Christchurch, though, it's *saveloy*, and in Southland it's *Belgium* or *Belgium roll/sausage*. Both *polony* and *saveloy* are familiar terms for some Australians, but people in Adelaide are more comfortable with *fritz*, and Brisbanites and Sydney-siders with *devon*. If you're journeying around New Zealand during strawberry season, you'll soon notice that the fruit can be sold in *punnets* (something that Australians can relate to), *pottles*, or *chips*—it depends where you are in the country. People from Melbourne and some New Zealanders call that round yeasty cake with pink or white icing and desiccated coconut on top a *Boston bun*. But in other places in New Zealand, it's a *Sally Lunn*; in New South Wales it's a *teacake* and in South Australia a *yeast bun*. Variation of this kind is undoubtedly significant for speakers; for example, Melburnians who order *scallops* in a fish shop in Sydney will understandably feel cheated when, in place of the expected serve of succulent marine bivalve molluscs, they are handed slices of potato dipped in batter and fried.

Perhaps less obvious are grammatical differences. These can involve, for instance, differences in verb forms (*I done all the cooking* versus *I've done all the cooking*); negative constructions (*I'm not gonna eat it no more* versus *I'm not gonna eat it any more*); and pronouns (*Are youse eating?* versus *Are you eating?*). Differences in grammar can sometimes result in miscommunication across dialects. For example, speakers who make the distinction between singular *you* and plural *youse* might well be confused if they were part of a group addressed by someone who used