

Contents

Acknowledgements	xi
Principles of Presentation and Provenance of the Papers	xiii
PART I: Frame of Reference	1
1. Introduction to a Diachronic Study of Variation	1
1.1. Aims	1
1.2. Method	3
2. Early American English	6
2.1. Background to the Study of Early American English	6
2.2. Focus on the New England Idiom	9
2.2.1. Identity in Region	9
2.2.2. Identity in Time	13
2.2.3. Early British vs. American English: Standards of Comparison	17

2.3.	An Old Language in a New Setting: Forces and Directions of Development	18
2.3.1.	Roots in Britain	18
2.3.2.	Factors Promoting and/or Retarding Change	20
	Conservatism vs. Innovation; Unification vs. Diversification	20
	Geographical and Social Mobility	21
	Interest in Education	24
	Social Networks	26
3.	A Corpus of Early American English	27
3.1.	Corpus-Based Study of Diachronic Variation	27
3.2.	The Relationship of the Text to Spoken Language	28
3.3.	Selectional Criteria and Classification of Texts	30
3.3.1.	Characteristics of Early New England Writing	30
3.3.2.	Practical Restrictions Governing the Choice of Texts	34
3.3.3.	Textual Parameters	37
	The Selectional Criteria Considered	37
	Non-Speech-Based vs. Speech-Based Production	38
	Level of Formality	39
	Text Type	41
	Informant Properties	42
3.3.4.	The Structure of the Corpus of Early American English	45

3.4.	Widening the Temporal and Geographical Scope	51
3.4.1.	A New Variety in the Context of the Development of English	51
3.4.2.	Evidence for the Study of the Structure of English: The <i>Helsinki Corpus of English Texts</i>	53
4.	Variation Analysis and the Historical Study of Modals	56
4.1.	The Study of Modal Auxiliaries: Past and Present	56
4.1.1.	A Variety of Approaches	56
4.1.2.	On Approaches to the Study of Modals and Semantic Change	59
4.2.	Variation Analysis and Modal Auxiliaries	67
4.2.1.	The Rationale of Diachronic Variation Analysis	67
4.2.2.	Contextual Factors and Variant Set-Ups Considered	73
5.	Concluding Remarks	78

PART II: Studies	81
A. CAN (COULD) vs. MAY (MIGHT)	81
Chapter 1	83
<i>MAY</i> and <i>MIGHT</i> Indicating ‘Epistemic Possibility’ in Early American English	83
1. Introduction	83
2. Epistemic Meaning and the Variant Forms	84
3. Historical Background	87
4. The Use of <i>MAY</i> and <i>MIGHT</i>	89
5. Syntactic and Semantic Environments	93
Final Remarks	96
References	97
Chapter 2	99
On the Use of the Modal Auxiliaries Indicating ‘Possibility’ in Early American English	99
1. Introduction	99
2. Material and Method	102
3. The Criteria of Classification	103
4. Results	107
Appendix: Figures	124
References	128

Chapter 3	131
<i>CAN (COULD) vs. MAY (MIGHT) in Old and Middle English: Testing a Diachronic Corpus</i>	131
Introduction	131
The Old and Middle English Corpora Studied	134
The Linguistic Factors Studied	139
Full Verb vs. Modal Auxiliary	143
Epistemic Uses	149
‘Non-Epistemic Possibility’	158
Notional Sub-Categories	165
Final Remarks	172
Appendix 1	174
Appendix 2	176
Appendix 3	177
 Chapter 4	 181
<i>CAN (COULD) vs. MAY (MIGHT): Regional Variation in Early Modern English?</i>	181
1. Introduction	181
2. Variational Study of Modals in Early Modern English, British vs. American	183
3. Textual Evidence for Studying Regional Variation in Early Modern English	186
3.1. Aspects of Early American English Writing	186
3.2. The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts	189
3.3. The Sub-Corpora Studied	192

4.	Analysis	198
4.1.	Criteria for Classifying the Data	198
4.2.	Choice of the Variant Form in Declarative Sentences	202
4.2.1.	Variant Forms in 'Full Verb' and 'Auxiliary' Use	202
4.2.2.	Overall Survey of 'Auxiliary' Uses	203
4.2.3.	Negation	209
4.2.4.	Textual Distributions of the Variant Forms in 'Affirmative' Uses	213
4.2.5.	Distributions of the Variant Forms in Different Clause Types; Passive Constructions	218
4.2.6.	Notional Sub-Categories	223
4.2.6.1.	'Permission' and 'Ability'	223
4.2.6.2.	'Neutral Possibility'	226
4.2.6.2.1.	Textual Distributions of the Variant Forms	226
4.2.6.2.2.	Author's Sex and Participant Relationship	231
4.2.6.2.3.	Constructions in Comparative and Relative Clauses	235
4.2.6.2.4.	The Use of the Variant Forms with Animate and Inanimate Subjects	237
4.3.	Choice of the Variant Form in Direct Questions	240
5.	Final Remarks	241
	Figures	243
	Primary Texts	250
	References	251

B. SHALL (SHOULD) vs. WILL (WOULD)	259
Chapter 5	261
The Use of <i>SHALL</i> and <i>WILL</i> from Middle to Early Modern English	261
1. Introduction	261
2. The Sub-Corpora Studied	263
3.1. Overall Distributions of the Variant Forms	268
3.2. Textual Distributions of the Variant Forms	269
4. Final Remarks	273
Figures	274
References	275
Chapter 6	277
<i>SHALL (SHOULD) vs. WILL (WOULD) in Early British and American English: A Variational Study of Change</i>	277
1. Introductory Remarks	277
2. Early Modern British English vs. American: Textual Evidence for a Study of Diachronic Variation	278
3. Diachronic Study of <i>SHALL (SHOULD)</i> and <i>WILL (WOULD)</i> Variation: Classificational Considerations	285
4. Full Verb Uses	290

5.	Auxiliary Uses	291
5.1.	Grammatical Person: Overall Distributions of the Variant Forms	291
5.2.	The Influence of the Type of Text and Level of Formality on the Choice of the Variant Form	294
5.3.	Tense and Aspect	301
5.4.	Clause Type	305
5.5.	'Active' and 'Passive' Constructions	308
5.6.	Animate and Inanimate Subject in Third Person Uses	310
5.7.	Dynamic/Stative Meanings of the Main Verb	312
5.7.1.	First Person Uses	313
5.7.2.	Third Person Uses	319
5.8.	Notional Sub-Categories	321
5.8.1.	'Epistemic' Uses	323
5.8.2.	'Root' Uses	324
5.9.	Two Sociolinguistic Variables: The Sex and Participant Relationship of the Author	326
5.10.	The Choice of the Variant Forms in Questions	329
6.	Concluding Remarks	331
	Figures	334
	Bibliography	337
	Primary Sources	337
	References	339
C.	Summary of Results	345

PART III: Bibliography for Parts I and II	355
I Primary Sources	355
1. Early American English	355
2. Sources for the Texts Selected from the <i>Helsinki Corpus of English Texts: Diachronic and Dialectal</i>	359
A. Old English	359
B. Middle English	361
C. Early Modern British English	368
3. Other Corpora	375
II References	376
Abstract	419