

# INTRODUCTION

Today, most people think of language study as the business of linguistics departments, and many linguists are happy to promote the association; in fact, however, a considerable proportion of scholarship about the English language comes out of English departments. In Europe, linguists are often housed in English departments, and, because of graduate programs focused on English Language Studies, as well as undergraduate language tracks, some American university English departments also include members trained at least partly in linguistics, but who may write from disciplinary traditions and for disciplinary purposes often distinct from those of linguists. This interdisciplinary enterprise leads to a productive synthesis of research aims and methods and teaching interests among scholars in the field of English Language Studies.

*Contours of English* assesses the state of English Language Studies, a thriving discipline located primarily in English departments and English curricula, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Chapter by chapter, it is a book about aspects of English — aspects which, in their own right, will fascinate readers of various disciplines, not only English and linguistics, but also American culture, history, sociology, education, and information sciences. Section by section and as a whole, the book considers ways in which the study of English language intersects with other concerns of the English curriculum (i.e., teaching and research in Anglophone literature and culture) as well as related public discourses and policy interventions. Language is very often a site where school meets world. For all of its range, though, *Contours of English* characterizes English Language Studies only partially; it is a discipline so commodious and various as to defy full description in a single book.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the contours of scholarship about the English language were redrawn dramatically. Partly this was due to the more or less simultaneous rise in the 1950s of two, sophisticated, competitive approaches to understanding lan-

guage, namely sociolinguistics and Chomskyan theory (see Joseph 2002, 62–67). However, this dichotomy is somewhat of a caricature of linguistics. Many approaches to language have managed to thrive alongside generative grammar and sociolinguistics without quite achieving their prominence: Roman Jakobson’s poetics, Michael Halliday’s functionalism, semiotics and semiology, and corpus linguistics, Kenneth L. Pike’s tagmemics, and Anna Wierzbicka’s semantic primes and cross-cultural pragmatics are only a few significant exceptions from the too usual binary opposition of sociolinguistics and generative grammar.

English Language Studies has drawn from all of these frameworks while maintaining interests in philology, in particular the history of the language and the language of texts, which, through the power of computers, can be investigated more thoroughly and systematically than ever before. The rise of corpus linguistics, enabled by heavily tagged digital texts and increasingly flexible search protocols, has profoundly affected the study of language structure and style (including metrics, at one extreme, and epistolary discourse, at the other); it has also facilitated lexicography, a primary philological practice, whether adjunct to a particular text or generalized in a historical dictionary, like the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

When we were conceiving this book, it occurred to us that our purpose was embodied by a practitioner of English Language Studies we know, a mentor to both of us, and to scores of others committed professionally to the discipline, namely, Richard W. Bailey, the Fred Newton Scott Collegiate Professor of English Language and Literature emeritus at the University of Michigan. Most who work in English Language Studies have a particular interest, an expertise expressed in a subdiscipline: they are sociolinguists, or historians, or lexicographers, or they specialize in stylistics or English language pedagogy or some other subject. Bailey, on the other hand, from completion of his doctorate to the present day, has managed to contribute significantly to nearly every aspect of English Language Studies. Many who have written chapters of this book also work across subdisciplinary boundaries, but few have been as versatile or as central to defining simultaneously the breadth and focus of the field. Thus, we have taken Richard W. Bailey’s career as a vehicle for describing the contours of English Language Studies across the sec-

ond half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first: it proves an invaluable guide to where we have been and where we are going.

Though not given much to Universal Grammar, or any other “lightbulb linguistics” (Adams and Bailey 2009, 357–359), Bailey has practiced nearly every discipline that might be considered sociolinguistics (see Preston 2004, 140–141), while idiosyncratically pushing disciplinary boundaries. He started in stylistics. His dissertation contrasted *The Public and Private Styles of the Earl of Chesterfield* (1965). From 1967–1969, he contributed annual bibliographies of stylistics to the new journal *Style* and served as a bibliographer interested in English Language Studies for the *MLA Bibliography*. From the outset, he was dedicated to sharing what he learned, a personal characteristic that has, we believe, become a disciplinary characteristic, partly because of his example. He edited, with Delores M. Burton, *English Stylistics: A Bibliography* (1968), as well as *An Annotated Bibliography of Statistical Stylistics* (1968) and the collection, *Statistics and Style* (1969), both with Lubomír Doležel. The 1960s weren’t the end of Bailey’s interest in stylistics (for instance, he published “The Future of Computational Stylistics” [1979] and “Determining Authorship in Ancient Greek” [1980a] considerably later, and, broadly, style is an issue in his books on the history of English), but they do comprise his focused attention to it.

It is worth pausing here to consider a remarkable characteristic of Bailey’s work: he was, from the earliest possible days, alive to the value of new technology to the study of English language and literature and a leader in computer applications in English Language Studies. His bibliography with Doležel included a section on “Stylistics and the Computer” (1969, 80–87). Subsequently, he co-edited *The Computer and Literary Studies* (1973) and also edited *Computing in the Humanities* (1982). When, in the late 1960s, the Early Modern English Dictionary project was re-established, after a quarter century in cold storage, Bailey reinvigorated the project with statistical and automated methods, which resulted in *Michigan Early Modern English Materials* (1975). Though the Early Modern English Dictionary remains incomplete (in fact, barely started), Bailey’s work significantly influenced other dictionary projects, including the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* and the *Dictionary*

of *American Regional English*, but especially the *Dictionary of Old English* (see Adams 2009, 2010). With Anne Curzan (Bailey and Curzan 1997), he was quick to engage in application of corpus linguistics to historical texts, and, as one of the editors of *A London Provisioner's Chronicle, 1550–1563, by Henry Machyn* (Bailey, Miller, and Moore 2006), he was among the first to prepare a hypertext edition of an Early Modern work interesting to historical sociolinguists.

Bailey's engagement with automation began long before scholars could search corpora or texts online via a personal computer—when Bailey began such work, no one had a personal computer. The revolution in English Language Studies that Richard W. Bailey led was not merely a matter of access to facts, not merely a technocratic triumph. As he wrote at the beginning of *Computing in the Humanities* (1982, 1), “Even a brief and incomplete survey of this volume suggests that the motives inspiring humanists to use a computer are by no means new, however innovative and revolutionary the machinery might be; they continue to strive for efficient use of labor, care, economy, and precision,” the sorts of things towards which projects in English Language Studies, like big dictionaries, strive. But Bailey's perspective was not narrowly technical: early work on automation in language and literature, he wrote, was “conceived in the hope of multiplying the power of human imagination” (1982, 1). That is, Bailey was visioning and revisoning the role of the humanities and, within them, the role of English Language Studies. *Contours of English* is designed to extend this project of Bailey's into the new century—the computational influence is evident in the contributions by William A. Kretzschmar, Jr., Joan Hall, Jesse Sheidlower, Marsha Dutton, and Dennis Baron.

Once he had started work on the *Dictionary of Early Modern English*, Bailey was unable to shake the lure of lexicography. He supplemented his work on *Michigan Early Modern English Materials* (1975) with *Early Modern English: Additions and Antedatings to the Record of English Vocabulary* (1978), and, at the same time, helped to form the Dictionary Society of North America, of whose journal, *Dictionaries*, he was the first editor (1979–1989; see Bailey 2004, 161–163). He edited the foundational *Dictionaries of English: Prospects for the Record of Our Language* (1987b)

and wrote a mass of material on lexicography, among other things, in *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992), of which he was also associate editor. Year by year he has written articles on the history of English lexicography (1980b, 1985, 1986, 1987a, 1990a, 1996a, 2000a, 2000b), most recently the chapter on regional and national dictionaries in the *Oxford History of English Lexicography* (2009).

Dialects have been at issue in English Language Studies from the earliest times, whether measured from the earliest period studied (Toon 1983) or the earliest period of their study, for instance, in the nineteenth-century philological reconstruction of English. Bailey began with the immediate rather than the historical, in *Varieties of Present-Day English* (1973b), which he edited with Jay L. Robinson; and he expanded from America and the United Kingdom to the colonial reflexes of English in *English as a World Language* (1982), edited with Manfred Görlach. Bailey has pursued his trademark linguistic and cultural/historical research on varieties of English within the United States and around the world: Canadian English (1991), Scots (1991), English in Sri Lanka (1998), Japan (1997), China (1990b), and South Asia (1996c). These studies serve as context for another of Bailey's major articles, "American English Abroad" (2001), a chapter of *English in North America*, volume six of the Cambridge History of the English Language. He recently completed *Speaking American*, a book whose title and approach reflect Alexis de Toqueville's *Democracy in America*. It provides eight historical case studies, by half-century, that provide glimpses into how, for example, English was shaped in Boston from 1650–1700, New Orleans from 1800–1850, and Los Angeles from 1950–2000.

By the 1990s, Bailey had turned squarely to the history of English, publishing *Images of English: A Cultural History of the Language* (1991a) and *Nineteenth-Century English* (1996b), books that reflect his continuing interest in structure, style, and variation, as well as with words. In a way, these works turn Bailey's earlier approaches inside out: history had always been a background issue in his investigation of styles and dialects, though it was much more prominent in his lexicographical writing, not only because he has worked on English of early periods, but also because he is a historian of historical lexicography. Recently, he has

written in a historical mode, but structure, variation, style, and the rest of his interests are all still part of the picture: Bailey's work affirms their mutual implications. He does not hesitate to take the long view, as in "A Thousand Years of the History of English" (2002b), but the historical landscape is made up of individuals like Henry Machyn, the London "provisioner," and Edward H. Ruloff, the criminal linguist whose "sinister life and celebrated death" are the subjects of *Rogue Scholar* (2003b).

Bailey has developed particularly the study of "Ideologies, Attitudes, and Perceptions" (2003a) and questioned traditional assumptions about what is at the center and what at the periphery of English (2007a). He has always focused on the real English of real speakers, whose experience of language is defined by change and so is inevitably historical: "Individuals change their languages throughout their lifetimes; adjusting to differing audiences makes our language different nearly every day from childhood to old age" (2000c, 385). As a result, understanding the history of English or any language is no easy matter: "the place to begin is not in the stolid center but at the vibrant edges of language—among the bilingual, the flouters of convention, the daring, the young—not at the middle of the road, where all the traffic flows, but on the verge, where the boundaries form and shift" (2000, 386). Bailey's history of English isn't what you'll find in textbooks, that is, until the textbooks finally catch up to Bailey and others, particularly in sociolinguistics, who investigate English on similar principles.

Bailey is indefatigably curious and certainly values knowledge for its own sake, but he also works hard to apply what he knows in the public interest. Besides being a distinguished university professor, he has also served for decades as a Trustee of Washtenaw Community College, where the library is named for him. His concern for speakers' control over their language has led to books like *Literacy for Life: The Demand for Reading and Writing* (1983), which he edited with Robin Melanie Fosheim; it also led him to testify in the Ann Arbor Black English case (see Bailey 1980c, 1981a, 1981b, and 1983). A principal justification for English Language Studies is to learn about the language from its speakers and then turn that knowledge to the benefit of those speakers, not only in greater understanding of their own social and linguis-

tic behavior but also in more directly political and economic ways, as proposed in William Labov's *Principle of Debt Incurred* (1982, 172) and Walt Wolfram's *Principle of Linguistic Gratuity* (1993, 227). Such interventions have been distinctive features of Bailey's approach to English from his undergraduate days to the present day (Adams and Bailey 2009).

Recently, Bailey collaborated with Dennis E. Baron (who contributes to this volume) and Jeffrey P. Kaplan on an amicus brief in the Supreme Court case *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), a case about the District's authority to limit gun ownership rights on the basis of the Second Amendment of the Constitution. "The question, then," they advised, "is what does the specific language used in the Amendment mean? Meaning comes from the words of a text and, importantly, *how* they are used ..."; they conclude, "the unmistakably military language used in the Second Amendment makes clear that what is protected is the right of the people to serve in a well regulated militia and keep arms for such service" (Baron, Bailey, and Kaplan 2009, 10), thus arguing that the Supreme Court reverse the ruling of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The majority of the Court disagreed with their conclusions, however, and Justice Antonin Scalia, writing the opinion for that majority, famously (at least among linguists) criticized the amicus brief on points of grammar: "A purposive qualifying phrase that contradicts the word or phrase it modifies is unknown this side of the looking glass ... (except, apparently in some courses on Linguistics)" (2009, 13).

Supreme Court justices, like African American youth in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Oakland, California, are entitled to their own discourse. And Justice Scalia's tart observation does not alter the scholar's motive to learn and then do good things with that knowledge, a motive the professor and the justice share. Bailey's career as scholar and teacher is characterized by openness, to new methods and conceptions of the discipline, of course, but also to hearing all voices raised on a given subject (Adams and Bailey 2009). In his scholarship, he quotes opinions and illustrates attitudes frequently and extensively, so that his argument is often partly an anthology of what others knew or thought they knew, know or think they know. Similarly, though he has certainly written his share of books and articles, he as frequently has collaborated and

has chosen to edit an unusual number of collections and textbooks that focus and make accessible in one place the voices of many rather than the perspective of one or two.

*Contours of English* is offered in that collaborative spirit. The book is organized into four parts representing four particularly active and interesting fields central to English Language Studies, the discipline Richard W. Bailey has nurtured and developed so significantly. It would have been wonderful to assemble a book that mapped all aspects of the field, as represented in Bailey's career, but obviously that could not be accomplished in a single volume. The four parts in this book include American Dialects, the History of English, English Lexicography, and English and Education. Each part is structured neither miscellaneously nor as a debate, but rather as an unfolding disciplinary conversation, and includes three chapters by leading scholars in the relevant subfield marked by different perspectives, methods, and material, as well as a response to those chapters by one of Bailey's students. Part I, American Dialects, includes chapters by Walt Wolfram (North Carolina State University), Dennis R. Preston (Oklahoma State University), and William A. Kretzschmar, Jr. (University of Georgia), with a response by Sonja A. Lanehart (University of Texas, San Antonio); Part II, History of the English Language, includes chapters by Lynda Mugglestone (University of Oxford), Edgar Schneider (University of Regenstein), and Anatoly Liberman (University of Minnesota), with a response by Colette V. Moore (University of Washington); Part III, English Lexicography, includes chapters by Joan Houston Hall (*Dictionary of American Regional English*), Jesse Sheidlower (*Oxford English Dictionary*), and Michael B. Montgomery (University of South Carolina), with a response by Marsha Dutton (Ohio University); and Part IV, English Language and Education, contains chapters by Amy Devitt (University of Kansas), Dennis E. Baron (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), and Geneva Smitherman and Minnie Quartey-Annan (Michigan State University), with a response by Susanmarie Harrington (University of Vermont).

The responses are significant essays in themselves, not formulaic end-pieces to the sections; they point toward the future of English Language Studies, bearing the chapters in mind. Generally, they discuss

how the contributions perpetuate, extend, question, and dissent from a given subfield's traditions, assumptions, and disciplinary foundations. They engage questions about the limitations in current aims and methods that the contributions suggest as well as the research opportunities that emerge when we consider the state of current scholarship. The response essays contribute to the map of English Language Studies today by linking explicitly the contours implicit in a part's chapters and in the part taken as a whole; one might think of the chapters as "areas" and the part introductions, supplied by the editors, and responses as the "lines" that together with the areas configure the field.

All of the essays, chapters, and responses offer something new: experts in the subfields represented and scholars of English Language Studies will find them significant additions to the literature. But we have not prepared this book exclusively for experts. The authors have chosen to write about important topics and have written about them as accessibly as possible. We hope that several audiences will find the book interesting and useful, especially advanced undergraduate and graduate students, those who will reconfigure the discipline in decades to come; our colleagues in English departments, who may not have much experience of linguistics; and any in the public at large or in professions for which knowledge about English language and English Language Studies is important. All speakers of English have something at stake in the knowledge of English collected in this book and, following Richard W. Bailey's lead, we invite them all to learn from it and enjoy it. Study of the English language in all of its variety, contemporary and historical, has never been more exciting. "What a wonderful time to care about language!" Bailey (2000c, 386) has exclaimed. The editors and authors of this volume dedicated to that paragon of English Language Studies wholeheartedly share his enthusiasm.



We are indebted to many people for their help and support as this book has taken shape. We thank all the contributing authors, who have generously shared their research to make this book happen and have been admirably understanding about every logistical detail. We are grateful

to the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback on the full manuscript, and Laura Aull for her help with editing the book. And we feel fortunate to have had Kelly Sippell as our editor at the University of Michigan Press. The University of Michigan Press has published several of Richard W. Bailey's books, and we could not be more pleased that the Press is also publishing this volume in his honor.

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