

## References

- Allen, Cynthia L. 1995. *Case marking and reanalysis: Grammatical relations from Old to Early Modern English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bosworth, Joseph & T. Northcote Toller. 1898. *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary, based on the manuscript collections of the late Joseph Bosworth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bosworth–Toller’s Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online*. Ed. T. Northcote Toller, Christ Sean & Ondřej Tichy. Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University. <https://bosworthtoller.com/>
- Dictionary of Old English: A to I online*. Ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey *et al.* Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project.
- Godden, Malcolm & Susan Irvine. 2020. *The Old English Boethius: An edition of the Old English versions of Boethius’s De consolatione philosophiae*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goldberg, Adele E. 1995. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar approach to argument structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sedgefield, Walter J. 1900. *King Alfred’s version of the Consolations of Boethius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sedgefield, Walter J. 1968 [1899]. *King Alfred’s Old English version of Boethius De consolatione philosophiae*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Skeat, Walter W. 1881–1900. *Ælfric’s Lives of saints* (Early English Text Society 76). London: Trübner.
- Taylor, Ann, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk & Frank Beths. 2003. *The York–Toronto–Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*. Department of Language and Linguistic Science, University of York. Distributed by the Oxford Text Archive.
- Toller, T. Northcote. 1921. *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary supplement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Visser, F. Th. 1963–73. *An historical syntax of the English language*. Leiden: Brill.

(Received 19 October 2022)

doi:[10.1017/S1360674322000417](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674322000417)

**Mel Evans**, *Royal voices: Language and power in Tudor England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xi + 269. ISBN 9781107131217.

Reviewed by Minna Nevala, University of Helsinki

Mel Evans’ *Royal Voices* is a compelling linguistic exploration of how power and authority were coded into texts produced by and concerning Tudor royalty. The goal of the studies in the book is, as the name suggests, to find and to discuss the royal voice, meaning the way in which the specific written and spoken characteristics of their language implemented the sixteenth-century English monarchs’ position as heads of state and, as it was believed at the time, as descendants of God. In the introduction to the book, Evans describes ‘the sociolinguistic voice’ (p. 15) as comprising three central elements, i.e. the utterance (signs), the means to convey the utterance (production and dissemination), and the social recognition of the utterance (enregisterment; see further Agha 2005). These voices, or registers, are not seen in the

---

book as static entities, therefore Evans aims at looking at the royal voices both at the macro-level of the Tudor landscape in general and at the micro-level of Tudor monarchs in particular. In addition to voice, the introduction sets the background for the studies by explaining the key concepts of power, register, genre and style, as well as defining the linguistic fields of historical and visual pragmatics.

The book is divided into two parts: the first part comprises studies on the authentic royal voice, i.e. those texts that either Tudor monarchs have written themselves (e.g. holograph correspondence) or which have been produced by other means (e.g. scribal letters or printed proclamations). The second part serves as a point of comparison to the implementation of the authentic royal voice, as it focuses on those texts which have been produced by non-royal writers, such as contemporary noblemen (personal letters) and historians (chronicles). In both parts, early modern correspondence serves as a central source of data, and various linguistic features studied in the book are also investigated for validity in, for example, the sixteenth-century part of the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC-16C).

Part I, titled ‘Authentic royal voices’, starts with an exploration of the material characteristics of Tudor correspondence, as related to early modern epistolary practices. Evans focuses here not only on the materiality of letter writing, such as the difference between holograph and scribal letters, but also looks into the visual characteristics, like letter orientation and signature position. The first chapter, ‘Materiality and power in Tudor royal correspondence’ (pp. 35–61), is a detailed account of how royal letters were produced from a draft by a Clerk of the Signet to the King’s or Queen’s signature. One of the most interesting features discussed in the chapter relates to the status of royal holograph letters as entities more valued and honoured than their scribal counterparts. Even the ‘hybrid’ letters, i.e. those that comprise both scribal and holograph hands, ‘can be seen to reinforce or emphasise the investment of the author and testify to their presence’ (p. 41). Similarly, the mere signature of a monarch served not only as an authentication device but also as the more intimate representation of the royal persona.

In the second chapter, ‘Royal epistolary language: Trends and trajectories’ (pp. 62–83), Evans delves more closely into royal epistolary language by conducting a keyword analysis on both her royal letter dataset and sixteenth-century nobility and gentry letters in the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), royal vs non-royal correspondence; scribal vs holograph letters. Her results show that royal letters contain more abstract concepts than non-royal letters, e.g. relating to morality (*justness*) and appropriacy (*discretion*). Royal correspondence also includes more direct expressions and conventional phrases, as well as more direct address forms. The use of the majestic plural, the royal ‘we’, also appears, rather expectedly, but what is surprising is that it is used more in royal scribal than holograph letters. Another prominent difference between the two letter types concerns lexical bundles: those in the scribal letters seem to be more ideational, whereas holograph letters appear more interpersonal. This adds to the earlier discussion about the higher value of holograph correspondence and its more individuated royal voice.

Royal 'we' is one of the features that Evans studies in more depth in the third chapter (pp. 84–114). Overall, this section of the book focuses on the pragmatic aspects of royal texts: metacommunication, self-reference and (regulative) speech acts. By metacommunication, Evans means references between material, verbal and visual characteristics, i.e. reference to speech and writing (written practices). What she finds is that, for example, in scribal correspondence reference *letter(s)* has two functions, that of drawing attention to the letter's physical presence and that of emphasising the document's legal and authorial presence. The royal authority and embodiment is further shown by the use of the word *hand*, which is used in reference to the monarch's physical body (in scribal letters; official) and their 'hand' of composition (in holograph letters; intimate and personal). The majestic plural of course represents the King's or Queen's two bodies, the institutional and the individual. As mentioned above, the use of royal 'we' is more prominent in the scribal than in the holograph letters, but when it comes to switching between the singular and the plural pronouns, holograph letters seem to show more variation. Evans further discusses the fact that speech acts used in the letters seem to corroborate the difference between the two text types, i.e. scribal correspondence shows the use of overt power by being more formulaic and consistent, whereas holograph letters are individual and less formulated and, therefore, represent covert power.

The last chapter in the first part deals with royal proclamations in the Tudor era: 'Tudor royal proclamations: Materiality, orality and performance' (pp. 115–53). Evans starts by discussing proclamations as a genre, concluding they are 'situated at the cusp between an interactive royal text and a legal one' (p. 116). As such, they provide a point of comparison for the studies on letters in the previous chapters, again showing features similar to those analysed in royal correspondence. The linguistic analysis focuses on monarchic reference (first person vs third person), audience reference (nominal vs pronominal) and lexical bundles. Being less formulaic than other legal texts, proclamations show interactive features typical of correspondence, such as first-person point and personal remarks. The increase in interactivity from the era of Henry VII to Elizabeth's reign adds to the immediacy of the proclamation genre, and to what Evans calls the 'epistolarisation' of the legal royal voice (p. 152).

Part II 'Appropriated royal voices' turns the discussion to non-royal accounts of royal voices, writers pretending to be royals or using and reporting royal voice, and historical narratives showing royal language use. Chapter 5, titled 'Non-royal views of royal voices: Afterlives and metalanguage' (pp. 157–66), returns to the concept of enregisterment and its two dimensions of use: the familiarity to the register and the right to use the register. Evans points out that also people outside the secretariat community of practice were socially aware of the royal register, and they knew who was allowed to use it. When looking at metacommunication in both proclamations and correspondence, it is more common in the former than in the latter. It seems that references to royal letters are less evident, and mostly restricted to people close to the monarch and/or the Court. This shows how socially stratified the access to certain royal texts was.

The next chapter (6), which is one of the most intriguing parts in the book, is the exploration of those writers who did not actually have the authentic right to use the royal register, but did so for their own purposes – ‘Impostor, protector and queen: The textual power of royal pretenders’ (pp. 167–93). Evans discusses how counterfeiting official documents was widespread in the sixteenth century, and despite growing efforts at textual identification, there were many ‘jarkmen’ who counterfeited royal and other texts, such as charters. The chapter introduces three different ‘pretenders’, the first of which is Perkin Warbeck, a well-known royal impostor, who claimed to be the son of Edward IV. He took on the false identity of Richard, Duke of York, the younger son of Edward, who disappeared in the Tower. Following his capture after a failed invasion of England in 1497, Warbeck ended up in the Tower as well. He confessed to being an impostor, and was later executed following an attempt to escape. Warbeck’s proclamation and letter of request in English show features typical of royal language: the use of royal ‘we’, directives and legalistic phrases are close to those appearing in other royal texts.

The same applies to the two other ‘impostors’, Edward Seymour and Lady Jane Grey. Seymour was Lord Protector to Edward VI, and, as such, lacked the authority of a monarch as well as the King’s support. Therefore, he created his own authority, often by being assertive and verbally abusive. Evans has compared his texts before and during his role as Protector (pre-1547 and after), and finds, among other things, that while Seymour uses the royal ‘we’ after his promotion, he does so in a manner different from authentic royal letters. In other words, ‘we’ refers to his self, not to his authority over third parties or objects. His lexical bundles are closer to those in royal scribal letters than in the royal holograph ones, but his greeting and subscription formulae do not show similarity to scribal correspondence. Evans concludes that Seymour was ‘following his own design’ (p. 185), unlike Lady Jane Grey, the last ‘pretender’ discussed, who seems to have used Edward VI’s documents as her model. Jane was the granddaughter of Henry VII’s sister Mary, and, as such, had a claim to the throne. Her authentic royal status shows in her texts, and, in her proclamation, the use of the royal ‘we’ is prominent, as are legalistic terms, such as ‘lawfully begotten’. The majestic plural is also visible in her letters, as is kinship terminology (e.g. ‘our late cousyn king Edwarde’), which is used to indicate her proximity to and authority in the royal landscape.

In chapter 7 (pp. 194–214), the focus moves from fake royal voices to third-party accounts of royal language in sixteenth-century correspondence. The emphasis is on discourse representation, which means a hearer’s mental representation of a discourse heard or held, i.e. reported speech or writing. In early modern times, both direct and indirect reporting were used and mixed, and, according to Evans, the accuracy of the report may not have been considered essential. Fabricated speech was considered acceptable, as long as it was done to exhibit a person’s positive qualities. In addition to character boosting, there were various other purposes for reporting; for example, foregrounding information, marking the peak of the narrative, or dramatisation. The more important the speaker, the more directly their speech was reported. Evans finds,

however, that the proportions of report type are very similar for royal and non-royal speakers. The majority of examples are of indirect speech, which, according to Evans, suggests that genre conventions overruled pragmatic concerns in the royal voice vs non-royal voice representation.

The last chapter of the book, 'Royal voices, narrative and ideology in sixteenth-century chronicles' (pp. 215–34), concerns royal voices in early modern chronicles, more closely, royal discourse representation in three sixteenth-century texts: Mychell's *A breuiat cronicle* (1552), Grafton's *A Chronicle at Large* (1569) and Stow's *The Chronicles of England* (1580). The same narrative has been chosen from each chronicle: the reign of Henry VII, starting with the battle of Bosworth. The focus is on the reporting types studied in the previous chapter, as compared to PCEEC-16C. What Evans has found is that also here, indirect narrative is the most prominent, with traces of formulae and pragmatic markers associated with royal language, whereas direct narrative is the least frequent report type. Interestingly, in the battlefield orations of Richard III and Henry VII, Grafton reports the use of royal 'we' in contexts similar to those in the royal holograph letters, when royal attributes, such as the 'crown', the 'realm', or the King's 'dignity' are mentioned. Moreover, when it comes to discourse-based characterisation and features that refer to their suitability for kingship, Richard III appears to have been driven by his ambition, Henry VII by religion (his belief in God's plan).

All in all, *Royal Voices* is an enjoyable read, with its ample accounts of socio-historical facts and accurate pragma-discursive analyses. Particularly the latter adds to the validity and methodological innovativeness of the study, as royal language is looked at from several angles. The book discusses the royal voice present in various types of materials, from holograph and scribal correspondence to declarations and chronicles. Similarly, various types of 'human conduits' to those royal voices are investigated, from actual Tudor monarchs to those reporting royal speech and the written word. As the book unfolds, it is fascinating to see how all the elements come together like pieces in a puzzle. Personally, I cannot wait for Mel Evans to unravel more historical mysteries, making the voices of past English writers heard by us present-day readers.

*Reviewer's address:*

*Department of Languages*

*University of Helsinki*

*Unioninkatu 40 B*

*00014 University of Helsinki*

*Finland*

[minna.nevala@helsinki.fi](mailto:minna.nevala@helsinki.fi)

#### Reference

Agha, Asif. 2005. Voice, footing, enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15(1), 38–59.

(Received 2 November 2022)