

# MEETING READERS. PROMOTING THE USE OF ENGLISH IN EARLY MODERN UTILITARIAN AND SCIENTIFIC BOOKS (1500-1699)

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## ABSTRACT

The recognition of the leading role of English as the language of science would not have been possible without the concerted efforts of men and women of letters and science who promoted its use, other than as conversational discourse, during the Modern period. In this paper, we concentrate on attitudes towards the use of English in this time focusing on material from the period. Primary sources include books from different scientific domains as well as utilitarian prose. One aspect which is relevant to the use of English for science and specialised uses concerns obvious shifts in language style from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. Some scholars claim that English for scientific use underwent a drastic change in style from the Elizabethan to the Jacobean period. This appears to involve a plainer style at the expense of the interpersonal in order to reduce subjectivity. We argue, however, that this does not seem to be the case in the texts selected for analysis. We think that, despite obvious changes in style to reduce superfluous verbosity, interpersonal strategies are still necessarily used. Our ultimate objective is to demonstrate the legitimacy of English to convey scientific thought as demonstrated by contemporary writers and translators.

**KEYWORDS:** Early Modern English; language attitudes; early scientific English; stance.

## RESUMEN

El papel dominante de la lengua inglesa como vehículo de expresión científica no hubiese sido posible sin la importante labor realizada por hombres y mujeres de letras y ciencia que promovieron su uso, más allá del lenguaje coloquial, durante el período moderno. En este trabajo, nos ocupamos de las actitudes hacia el uso de la lengua inglesa durante los años 1500-1699, centrándonos en material de la época. Las fuentes primarias incluyen libros de diferentes campos científicos. Algunos críticos afirman que el estilo de uso de la lengua inglesa con fines específicos de la época isabelina sufrió un cambio drástico en la jacobina. Se produjo un proceso de simplificación a expensas de los mecanismos interpersonales con la finalidad de reducir la subjetividad en el texto. Mostramos, sin embargo, que esto no parece ser el caso en los textos analizados en nuestro trabajo. Pensamos que, a pesar de los



cambios de estilo obvios para reducir texto superfluo propio del estilo ampuloso de la época isabelina, las estrategias interpersonales se utilizan necesariamente en los años siguientes. Nuestro objetivo final es demostrar la legitimidad de la lengua inglesa para transmitir el pensamiento científico, como reivindican los escritores y traductores estudiados.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** inglés moderno temprano; actitudes hacia la lengua; inglés científico; punto de vista.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The recognition of the leading role of English as the language of science would not have been possible without the concerted efforts of men and women of letters and science who promoted the use of the language, other than as conversational discourse, during the Modern age. The implementation of English as a scientific language had begun even earlier with the medical, legal and religious writings produced in King Alfred's reign. In this context, English was felt to be an excellent vehicle to convey ideas beyond those minor issues concerning daily life. The Norman Conquest brought about an obvious disadvantage for English. The imposition of Latin and French as the languages of official communication and science, in the case of the former, created the ideal conditions in which English was downgraded to the lower status of the language of the vulgar. Scholars were delighted to be able to set their writings out in internationally acceptable languages, especially Latin, although other equally distinguished languages, such as Greek and Anglo-Norman, were also used. They could register whatever idea they considered suitable in these languages, thus preserving this knowledge for the classically educated minority within the same specialized community. In a way, this sense of deliberately concealing information from certain sections of society was good entertainment for the élite. However it strengthened their own ignorance, both of what was going on in other spheres of life where English was the first language, and of the attitudes of rejection these methods originated in the vast majority of citizens who had no access to higher education.

This situation, involving the dominance of Latin and French over English, began to decline towards the end of the fifteenth century (Rikhardsdottir 37). Political and cultural issues concerning a sense of national pride allowed English to be more visible and more widely appreciated. English, remaining as it did outside the focus of attention, was able to improve gradually, with the addition of new vocabulary from the imported languages creating a lexical stock surpassing that of many other modern European languages in frequency and richness of detail. More language input was yet to come with the role of England extending beyond her island territory and the consequent linguistic contact this involved with other cultures. English came to represent a suitable language not only for science but also for global communication. The road was not without its obstacles that made the journey difficult, but the work of many sixteenth and seventeenth scientists, translators and printers was essential to pave the way. The work of translators is fundamental during the Elizabeth Age and later, both in order to understand the present state of the language, and also the cultural and literary heritage from this period and after



(Winy xix). In this paper, we concentrate on these attitudes towards the use of English in these centuries focusing on material from the period. Primary sources include books from different scientific domains.

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 reviews the state of affairs concerning early English utilitarian and scientific books. These include a variety of fields of knowledge, namely medicine, language, religion, and cookery, among others. Within this section, we also describe the primary sources used in the present research. The results of the analysis and the discussion of findings are offered in Section 4. Section 5 affords the conclusions drawn from the present study.

## 2. SHAPING AN ENGLISH SCIENTIFIC REGISTER. EARLY ENGLISH UTILITARIAN AND SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

In Lehman's words (424), "modern science in England began in the Jacobean Age", and indeed this period witnessed an unprecedented interest in the use of English as an acceptable means of expression at all levels of communication, including religion and science. The humanist's view that the word was more important than the fact itself was now being superseded by an interest in logic and empiricism, in the modern sense of the words. In this context, translation played a fundamental role as the need grew to provide readers with new scientific information rendered either in Latin or in any other European tongue. This meant more than just the entrance of an enormous mass of scientific terminology into English to fill lexical gaps in the vernacular. It also means new discourse traditions and styles in English. In line with this, Bennett (190-191) argues that the new traditions of writings and the contemporary concern for facts rather than for the rhetoric of language resulted in several linguistic consequences. One of the most interesting relates to interpersonal discourse features:

Although the term 'Scientific Revolution' is today disputed by scholars seeking to emphasize the continuity of the scientific project with the Medieval and Renaissance past, on the level of discourse at least, there is evidence that a major epistemological shift took place in the 17th century that had far-reaching repercussions. This shift can be summed up by Francis Bacon's famous injunction, "think things not words", which meant that knowledge was no longer to be sought in ancient texts but rather was to be found outside language, through the systematic observation of the natural world. This shift had a number of linguistic consequences... a new plainer style was cultivated which focused almost exclusively upon the referential dimension of language at the expense of the interpersonal.

Bennett (192) is more explicit when she describes the changes in style during the period:

The elevation of reason at the expense of emotion led to an emphasis on neutrality and objectivity, believed to be the only way to achieve conclusions that were truly



universal. Hence the new prose gradually developed grammatical features (such as nominalizations and impersonal verb forms) that effectively eliminated subjectivity in order to focus upon the object of study.

This idea of a reduction of interpersonal features in scientific discourse is not always supported in the literature. Alonso-Almeida and Mele-Marrero suggest that, contrary to this position, seventeenth-century writers use large numbers of epistemic and effective strategies in the sense of Marín-Arrese to gain both credibility and reputation. Objective and (inter)subjective devices are shown to strategically combine in order to reach a wider audience while also conveying meaning and authority. The pompous rhetoric of Elizabethan writers may have diminished, but this represents a partial effect upon interpersonal discourse features. It would have been impossible for them to ignore the use of elaborate expressions, at a time when copying, excerpting and re-editing Elizabethan materials along with translating earlier Latin and Continental books were still common editorial practices.

A selection of examples from a random search in the EEBO database supports this view (our emphasis; spelling and punctuation are original):

(1) **It is by reason of** a shadow in the midst of a cloud, the extremities whereof are enlightened. **You may** see the like almost in the night by a candle, on a wall, which hath any hollownesse in it, though it be **whitish** (Comenius K4).

(2) **It is pleasant** to see the beautifull and goodly representation of the heavens intermixed with clouds in the Horizon, upon a woody scituation, the motion of Birds in the Aire, of men and other creatures upon the ground, with the trembling of plants, tops of trees, **and such like:** for everything will be seen within even to the life, but inversed: notwithstanding, **this beautifull paint** will so naturally represent itself in such a lively Perspective, that **hardly** the most accurate Painter **can** represent the like... [image]. Now the reason why the images and objects without are inversed, is because the species doe intersect one another in the hole, so that the species of the feet ascend, and these of the head descend (Oughtred 7).

(3) **MY first Experiment** is afforded me by the Dissolution of Sal Armoniac, which **I have somewhat wonder'd,** that Chymists having often occasion to purifie that Salt by the help of Water, should not have, long since, and publicly, taken notice of. For if you put into three or four times its weight of Water a pound or but half a pound (**or even less**) of powder'd Sal[t] Armoniack, and stir it **about to hasten the dissolution,** there will be produc'd in the mixture a **very intense degree of Coldness,** such as will not be onely very sensible to his hand that holds the Glass whilst the Dissolution is making, but will very manifestly discover it self by its Operation upon a Thermoscope. **Nay, I have** more than once by wetting the outside of the Glass, where the dissolution was making, and nimbly stirring the Mixture, turn'd that externally adhering water into real Ice, (that was scrap'd off with a knife) in less than a minute of an hour. And this thus generated Cold continued **considerably intense,** whilst the action of dissolution lasted;



but afterwards by degrees abated, and within **a very few hours** ceas'd. The particular Phaenomena **I have noted in the Experiment**, and the practical uses that **may** be made of it **I reserve** for another place\*, [side note: **\*Divers of the Phaenomena, &c. of this Experiment were afterwards printed Numb. 15. of the Ph. Transact.**] the knowledge of them being not necessary in this, where what **I have already related, may suffice for my present Argument** (Boyle 4-5).

These excerpts from the mid-seventeenth century onwards present a strategic combination of plain language and marked stance language to gain both authority and credibility concerning the scientific methods deployed. These methods are based on the alleged notions of reason and experiment (i.e. empirical means). This is seen in the use of the expressions *It is by reason...* in example (1) and *the reason why...* in (2) as well as the lexical items *experiment, argument, phaenomenona, manifestly*, and *operation*, among others. The idea of process is also marked by the presence of linkers, such as *for* in (2) and (3), *now* in (2), *so that* in (2), and *thus* in (3), among others, to indicate logical reasoning. Likewise, the use of the expositive text-type when it comes to the description of the method for the duplication of the experiment in (3) reinforces this same idea: "For if you put into three or four times its weight of Water a pound or but half a pound... but will very manifestly discover it self by its Operation upon a Thermoscope".

Interpersonal strategies in these excerpts range from vague expressions (Channell) to the use of stance devices. In short, vague language (Cutting 6) refers to those linguistic devices that convey imprecision. Vague expressions may have varied functions and one of these may also point to shared knowledge within the members of a specialized community, e.g. astronomers, doctors, or mathematicians. Belonging to a group of experts made the task of describing particular phenomena easier because these experts were believed not to need many descriptive details, either because they already knew these details or because they were able to infer what their colleagues mean. One case of vague language is extenders, as put forward by various authors (Overstreet, Carroll, and Ortega Barrera, "A Diachronic"). The use of stance devices in these texts also plays an important role since they portray the way in which writers relate to their texts and how much they are involved in the formulation of new knowledge. In many ways, the authors appear as witnesses to the procedures, thus legitimizing the integrity of their observations. In what follows we offer a list of the interpersonal devices detected in the three examples cited. This list supports our view that, despite obvious changes in style to reduce superfluous verbosity, interpersonal strategies are still necessarily used (numbers in brackets refer to examples).

#### 1. Use of vague language:

- a. Lexical items and expressions: *somewhat* (3), *even less* (3), *less than a minute of an hour* (3), *about to hasten* (3), *very intense degree of* (3), *considerably intense* (3), *very few hours* (3).
- b. Morphological endings: *whittish* (1).



- c. Extenders: *and such like* (2), *&c* (modern *etc.*) (3).
- 2. Laden value words and words of appraisal: *beutifull* (1), *lively* (1), *hardly* (1), *wonder'd* (3), *accurate* (1).
- 3. Modal verbs: these devices show a variety of meanings, as seen below:
  - a. dynamic possibility: *that hardly the most accurate Painter can represent the like* (2).
  - b. epistemic probability: *the practical uses that may be made of it* (3).
  - c. deontic necessity: *but [it] will very manifestly discover it self by its Operation upon a Thermoscope* (3).
- 4. Use of first person stance markers:
  - a. possessive adjectives: *my first Experiment* (3), *my present Argument* (3).
- 5. Evidential expressions and matrices: *nay, I have noted in the experiment* [experiential evidential] (3), *I have already related* [communicative evidential] (3).

This list evinces that English for specialised purposes is not characterized by authorial detachment. Leech et al. (147) present opposing views concerning depersonalization strategies and scientific writing. Oldireva Gustafsson (133) states that these writings show a “depersonalized tone of discourse” due to the desire for objectivity. However Dixon (353ff) rejects this claim, when discussing the use of the passive voice in relation to the overt aim of the subject to disagree with the alleged association concerning the use of the passive voice, depersonalization with objectivity. Scientific writings are always authored, and so claims can be safely attributed, even if the subject of conception is deliberately omitted. Only in those cases where the subject is opaque, e.g. *it seems*, might we have issues concerning its identification, if this not evident from the context.

In general, our examples exhibit devices concerning the authors’ attitude towards their texts. Authors use language to make themselves visible. This accounts for the presence of modal verbs expressing differing degrees of propositional certainty, for example. This is the case of *may* in 3b in the list above. In this context, evidential matrices of the type in 5 in the list indicate the way in which they have construed knowledge. Linguistically, modals show scope over the proposition, while this is not a feature of evidentials (Alonso Almeida, “On the Mitigating”; Alonso Almeida, “The functions of”). Strategic use of these devices in scientific and specialized discourse reveals a sense of mastering the language at different levels. English is shown to be able to represent high quality knowledge. Its permeability to external linguistic influences and, especially, its sensitiveness to social changes make this language an exceptional tool for communication in professional and scientific settings.



### 3. ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING AND DIFFUSING THE LANGUAGE

The use of the English language in all spheres of life, including the academic setting, gained momentum as England's borders blurred, and the language of birth seemed to be an appropriate tool to maintain all kinds of social ties. The growing numbers of translations into English were steadily expanding the language with new words seeking to fill the gap originated by the use of the classical tongues and the dramatic entrance of the Norman French variety after the Conquest. Prologues to books and translators' prefaces were filled with pleas and arguments providing reasons to use English. These reasons are varied but they all show the inevitable decline of Latin as the language of prestige in England, gradually giving way to the use of the vernacular in writing. In what follows, we have gathered these motivations into three sections, namely (a) order and patronage, (b) giving help, and (c) prestige and pride.

#### 3.1. ORDER AND PATRONAGE

One reason to translate foreign texts into English follows from order and patronage, as shown in the following instances: (original spelling and punctuation):

(4) Forasmuch as it hath been thought convenient by several good Chirurgeons, to contrive a safe way of Blood-letting, for the benefit of young Beginners in that Profession; and whereas Dr. LOVVER of late, in his Treatise of the Heart, hath discovered a plain and secure way of Bleeding, and given a figure of the Lancet, which he commends for that purpose, **I have been advised, for the publick Good, to translate what he hath written**, and likewise give the figure of the Lancet, and description of the Use of it, as it is printed in the 166 page of the last and truest Edition of his Book, Printed at Amsterdam 1671, in the Author's own words (Fabricius Hildanus 2).

(5) RIght Honorable; If it appeare presumption in me to shew my love, my dutie betraies me to it. The advantage I have gleaned from idle houres, in exchanging this Indian History from Spanish to English, is commended to your **Honors Patronage**, whose first father Ioseph Acosta, hath with great observation made worthie the over-looking. A greater motive then that you are your selfe, needed not to excite me to this dedication. I beseech you my good Lord, take it into shelter, and receive that which is not, for that which I would it were. Let my insufficiencie be measured by my good will. So shall my poore abilities thrive vnder your encouragement, and happily leade me on to some stronger vndertaking; wherein I shall bee bound to thanke you for mine owne paines, and for ever remaine (Acosta A3).



The first quotation is revealing, as the English rendering seems to emerge from a real need to offer practical advice on bleeding. The translation firstly formed part of the scientific literature available in English, but it was also meant as a didactic resource for young learners. A very important aspect of this quotation is the view of surgery as a *Profession*, which deserves scientific descriptions, as opposed to the medieval conception of the surgeon placed low down in the rank of medical practitioners (Alonso Almeida and Sánchez). The translation of foreign material reports on this conception of surgery as a profession, since this surgical text stands as a valuable piece *for the public Good*. The deontic expression *I have been advised... to translate what he hath written* reflects both a positive attitude towards the use of specialized English and a change in linguistic social practices. A lucrative interest is most probably the impetus for this change of mind.

The second quotation in (5) refers to patronage, as shown in the use of the words *Honors Patronage*. Translation was also a way of gaining a living, and readers sought books for instruction but also for entertainment, as seems to be the case of this history book. Wear (43) states that this demand of books for the new bourgeois class had a clear didactic objective and publishers were aware of this fact, and so instruction and profit went manifestly hand in hand:

Publishers of vernacular books were responding to the demand of increasingly confident groups such as the gentry, yeoman and merchants who saw the possession of useful knowledge as confirmation of their status. Moreover, vernacular books were seen as ways of reducing what was perceived by translators like the lawyer-physician Thomas Phayre as a sea of public ignorance (Wear 43).

### 3.2. GIVING HELP

A practical function of offering help and guidance seems to be behind the use of the vernacular in many books in the Elizabethan and the Tudor periods. The patronizing attitude to the facilitation of knowledge allowed writers using English to level the language and bring it into line with to the status of other European national languages. Moore (40), describing the work of the humanist Paynell, states that his works were “concerned to place practical and spiritual knowledge into the hands of those who do not understand Latin”. The translations of new and old texts were geared to maximising understanding with the sole intention of helping others to benefit from knowledge. The following instances illustrate this point:

(6) TO ye laude of our sauour Chryst Ihesu. & the honoure of his blessyd moder our lady saint mary. and all the holy company of heuyn. & for the helpe of mankynde / this boke is translated out of duche in to englishe And for ye loue & comforte of all them that entende to studye the noble arte of Chyrurgia / ye whiche is called the handyworke of Surgery / **very vtyle and profytable to al that entende to occupye this noble sciens ye herein is openly exprest and shewyd** / how it shalbe practysed & vsyd / For many one is therin **very ignorant** yt wyll medle ther with





/ whyche neuer laboured nor neuer sa poynt of ye begynnynge or endynge therof / wherefore it is often tymes senc and dayly chaunceth in small townes / borowghs / & vyllages / **that lye farre from any good cyte or great towne ye dyuerie people hurt or dyseased for lacke of conynge men** / be taken in hande of them yt be barbers or yonge maisters to whome **this sciens was neuer dysclosed** / not thynkynge on the wordes of the olde lernyd men that say / (Brunschwig 1525: Aii).

(7) ¶ Thus endeth the noble experyence & the bertuous handy worke of Surgery / with the Antithodario / practysed & Section of <...> pyled by the experte mayster Iherome / whiche boke of late was translated out of the speche of hye Almayne into lowe Duche. And afterwarde in to our **moders tonge of Englysshe / moche necessary & profytable for surgyans** / as wel for them that haue conynge / as for them that be lerners. For who dylygently often tymes redeth ouer this present boke shal fyndether in grete scyence & conynge. ¶ Imprynted at London in South warke by Petrus Creueris. In the yere of our lorde god. M. D. xxv. and the. xxvi. day of Marche (Brunschwig 1525: colophon).

The excerpt in (6) has been taken from the English translation of a Dutch surgical manual. In this occasion, surgery is regarded as an art (*the noble arte of Chyrurgia*), but also as a science, in the text *noble sciens*. This text is addressed to experts and novice practitioners and it makes very clear the fact that *this sciens was neuer dyclosed*, and so the translation seeks to remedy the situation and make it *openly exprest and shewyd*. The writer claims that new practitioners and also barbers living outside cities and large towns in villages without learned doctors may use this book to help the sick because they are now able to read and learn from it. This motivation is quite common in medieval and early modern practical medical texts, as suggested in Alonso Almeida and Ortega Barrera. Example (7) from the same source records the last lines of the translation of the Dutch surgical text. It reinforces the idea of surgery as a science with words, such as *conynge* and *scyence*. This is a clear indication of the new status of surgical texts.

This utilitarian side of translation for health purposes is also described in the following instance where the objective of the volume is to instruct English readers in how to prepare medical remedies:

(8) Wherfor, I haue caused this precious treasure **to be translated into oure vsuall, and natiue language**, that like as all men are subiecte to sicknes: so in likewise all men may by this occasion learne the way vnto helth (...) As touchinge the excellencye of the preparinge medicines, **the vtilitie springinge therof**, and the argumente of the worke, because it is exactlye sette oute by the author in the preface folowing, I wil leaue to trouble the further herein (Gesner ii).

The practical side of reading English texts goes beyond the medical spectrum to cover other areas, such as pedagogical instruction and religion, as evinced in these excerpts:

(9) It was first written in Latine, but now translated, **whereby the simple and vnlearned English readers, as well as the learned Latinists**, might



enioy part of the pleasure that is had in the reaping of this so delectable discourse of the figured warre, and blood-lesse battell, without mortall shot, sweate, or noyse of Canon. **For the vtilitie of our English Children**, but especially beginning to studie the Latine tongue, who reading this pleasant fight in their owne tongue, might learne by way of mirth and <...> pastime, the principall points of the Grammar (Guarna 163: A4v).

(10) I HAVE thought it mete (good Reader) for thy further profite and pleasure, **to put into English**, these foure Bookes of husbandry... And though I haue dealt vvith many, both Graines, Plantes, and Trees, **that are yet strangers and vnknovven vnto vs**, I doo no vvhit doubt, but that vvith good diligence and husbandry, they may in short time so be denisend and made acquainted vvith ou soyle, as they vvyl prosper as vvell as the olde inhabitantes (Heresbach 1577: iij).

(11) CONO. For my part (without vaunt be it spoken,) I haue seruice euery day at certaine appointed houres, where preacheth to me dayly the Prophetes, the Apostles, Basil, Chrisostome, Nazianzen, Cyril, Ciprian, Ambrose, Austen, and other excellent preachers, whom I am sure I heare with greater profite, then yf I shoulde heare your sir Iohn lacklatines and foolishe felowes in your Churches. My wyfe also being geuen to readyng, readeth the Byble and certaine Psalmes **translated into our owne tongue, if there be any thing to hard or darke for her, I make her to vnderstand it**: besides, she hath priuate praiers of her owne that she vseth: in the meane time I haue one, that vvpon the holy dayes (if the weather or our businesse be such as we can not goe to Church) readeth the Gospell, teacheth the Catechisme, and ministreth the Sacramentes when time requires: but in the Sommer time, if the weather be not vnreasonable, we goe alwayes vpon the Sundayes and Festiuall dayes to our Parishe Church, where we heare our Curate, and receaue the blessed Communion: as for my household, I bring them to this order, that they alwayes serue God before their going to woorke, and at their comming to meales (Heresbach 1577: 4).

The first excerpt is taken from the prefatory material of a grammar textbook for children, who can now study Latin grammar in their own language. This facilitates learning Latin significantly. The second text has been taken from the *Epistle to the reader* of a book of husbandry, and the last one is from a religious book. The rationale behind the translations happens to be the same, i.e. to help readers understand the texts to benefit from their contents, as evinced in the expressions: *for the vtilitie of our English children* in example (9), *made acquainted with our soyle, as they vvyl prosper* (10), *I make her to vnderstand it* (11). The last quotation is of special interest, as it suggests a husband reckons the translated Bible is for his wife, who is *geuen to readyng*. In contrast with earlier centuries, reading here refers to English rather than to Latin, and this reflects a radical change in the consideration of English as a language of prestige. The expression *if there be any thing to hard or darke for her* is very likely a reference to Latin terms or Latinized English, which was then felt to hinder understanding to those less instructed or unfamiliar with this Classical tongue.



### 3.3. PRESTIGE AND PRIDE

The sense of national pride in the mother tongue is at the heart of the use of specialized English and of translations, as shown in the following excerpt:

(12) Whiche saynge (I feare me) is verified more in some of vs Englishe men, than in anye other nation, I woulde God it were not. And yet I thincke there is no man so bestiall, so rude, or so blunt of wit, but that he is (by a certaine instinct of natural inclination) desirous to know things not before knowen, to heare newes not before heard, and to vnderstand bokes in his maternall tonge, written first in a forein langage, to thende not to seme altogether ignoraunte in matters both of the liberall sciences, and also of histories, set forth for his rudiment and instruction, as in Cosmographie, in Astronomie, in Philisophie, in Logike, in Rhetoricke, and specially in Phisick, whereof we had neuer so muche neede as in these our daies, considering the straunge and vnknownen diseases that swarme amonge vs, and mo in number then can be found remedy for. Therefore considering with my self (right honorable) that I could not better declare my bounden duetie vnto you, nor do my countrey a greater pleasure, than to put some thinge abroade vnder youre honoures name, whereby it mighte receiue some commodite: **I haue taken in hand to translate this noble and excellent worcke called, The Secretes of the Reueuerende Master, Alexis of Piemount, firste written in the Italian toungue, and after tourned into Frenche, and of late into Dutche, and nowe laste of al into English, because that as well Englishe men, as Italians, Frenche menne, or Dutchmen, may sucke knowlege and profit hereof.**

In this quotation, the translator states openly that he is moved by a patriotic feeling since he wants to *do my countrey a greater pleasure*, although his major motivation to render foreign works in English is to offer remedies for *the straunge and vnknownen diseases that swarme among vs*. This patronizing attitude, we have seen, can frequently be found in the prefaces of translated material in modern English. The book industry is a very profitable way of making money. Unsurprisingly, authors and translators knew that bestsellers combined knowledge and authority with a presumably philanthropic desire to help other English speakers (Alonso Almeida and Mele Marrero). The translator states clearly that all fields of knowledge can be expressed in his own native language. English in this passage is given the same status as other national languages, namely Italian, French, and Dutch. In the following excerpts, the status of English is also enhanced to the extent that it is compared to the Classical languages Greek, Latin, and Arabic:

(13) Gentle Reader, although I haue giuen the onset to publish in our owne naturall tongue, this most excellent worke of Distillation, for which cause, it should not be the lesse estéemed, although some more curious than wyse, estéeme of nothing but that which is most rare, or in harde and vnknowne languages. Certainly these kynde of people cannot abyde that good and laudable Artes should be common to many, fearing that their name and practise should decay, or at the least should diminishe. The intension truely of such



persons séemeth much like them which gape for all, and woulde all haue, leauing nothing to anye body, but that which they must néedes forgo, not considering that we are not borne for our selues onely, as Plato sayth, but for the profite of our countrie. Surely, if that I did not feare to be to long in this Preface, I would prooue howe all Artes and sciences may be published in that tongue which is best vnderstanded: as for example, Hippocrates, Galen, Paulus Aegineta, Aecius, were Grecians, and wrote all in the Gréeke, to the perfect vnderstanding of their countrie men. Also Cornelius Celsus being a Latinist, wrote in the Latin. Auicenn and Albucrasis, Arabians, wrote in the Arabicke tongue. ... **For what kinde of science or knowledge euer was inuented by man, which is not nowe in the Italian or French. And what more prerogatiue haue they than we English men (of the which many learned men haue made sufficient prooffe within the few yerres, fully to furnish & satisfie our Nation with many goodly works.) For our English is as méete & necessary for vs, as is the Greeke for the Grecians, though in the translation we be constrained to make two or three words sometyme for one.** For if it were not permitted to translate but word for word, then I say, away with all translations, yt which were great losse to the common weale, considering that out of one language into another haue ben turned many most excellent works, the which the best learned haue both receyued & approoued to the singular commoditie of all men.

This instance explains the suitability of using the vernacular language, which is shown to be more natural for the writer of writing scientific works in the following terms: *I would prooue how all Artes and sciences may be published in that tongue which is best vnderstanded.* Translated material does not undermine the status of English since translation is seen both as a product and as a process. The author of the translation engages in the production of a new text using reduction and extension procedures (Cruz García; Alonso Almeida and Sánchez) so as to accommodate meaning to the customs of the target language and culture, as evinced in *though in the translation we be constrained to make two or three words sometyme for one. For if it were not permitted to translate but word for word, yt which were great losse to the common weale.* This rephrasing represents a plea for the fundamental role of the translator, but it also accounts for the significance of English as an independent and prestigious language.

This prestige is also manifested in the following excerpt concerning religious activities:

(14) **we syng & pray god w[i]t[h] our tonge** / let vs se that we do so also with our hert & mynde / we speke fayre and deuoutly with our mouth / let vs meane aswel in our soules / or els it is not well (Ryckes 1525: Ciiij).

There has been always a correlation between language and religion. Language is the means to express beliefs and to reach God, and this had only been possible through the use of Latin in the Middle Ages and later. In this case, the quotation is in fact a reference to the spectral independence of religion with respect to Latin, because it is only through real feelings along with faith that people can reach God, and that is possible *w[i]t[h] our tonge*. The reality is,



however, that the vernacularisation of religion brought about the adoption of Latinate words and expressions (Nevalainen), which were meant to dignify the use of English for religious purposes.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has shown that English for specialised discourse practices was promoted from different fields of knowledge during the modern English period, even though Latin was identified with the language of global scientific communication. In this context, translation was an important practice, as much of the scientific, and even utilitarian, prose was presented in this classical language at the expense of the vernacular. Publishers were able to profit economically from translated material, so consequently much material was rendered into English. Other books were translated as the result of patronage for the new bourgeois class that demanded books for instruction. This didactic tone is behind the use of English since the vernacular was thought to facilitate students' learning. In the specific case of medical utilitarian texts, the intention was to provide knowledge for those occasions where a learned practitioner was not available. In the realm of religion, the use of English also represented a democratisation of religious practices since praying in the vernacular was possible due to a seeming disassociation between language and religion. Faith was gained through unconditioned belief and genuine feelings rather than through specific words. This promotion of English also had a political cause and effect, since its use entailed a sense of nationalistic pride comparable to that which was accorded to other languages of the European continent.

The process by which science and practical material gradually came to be expressed in English provided, for the first time, an extraordinary wealth of information for those not instructed in Latin. During the Jacobean Age, the objective of description became central for researchers and this apparently implied an increase in the number of linguistic devices used to convey objectivity. We have shown that, even if Jacobean rhetoric employed a plainer style with respect to Elizabethan practices, the connection between a less elaborated style and a reduction of interpersonal features leading to objectivity is not attested at all. Although expressions showing an opaque or implicit conceptualizer are used, these do not necessarily make the information presented more objective, since identification of source of information is possible through context.

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