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978-0-521-83219-9 - Twentieth-Century English: History, Variation, and Standardization

Christian Mair

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Twentieth-Century English

Standard English has evolved and developed in many ways over the past hundred years. From pronunciation to vocabulary to grammar, this concise survey clearly documents the recent history of standard English. Drawing on large amounts of authentic corpus data, it shows how we can track ongoing changes to the language, and demonstrates each of the major developments that have taken place. As well as taking insights from a vast body of literature, Christian Mair presents the results of his own cutting-edge research, revealing some important changes which have not been previously documented. He concludes by exploring how social and cultural factors, such as the American influence on British English, have affected standard English in recent times. Authoritative, informative, and engaging, this book will be essential reading for anyone interested in language change in progress – particularly those working on English, and will be welcomed by students, researchers, and language teachers alike.

CHRISTIAN MAIR is Chair in English Linguistics at the Universität Freiburg, Germany, with research interests in the corpus-based description of modern English grammar, and in the study of regional variation and ongoing changes in standard English worldwide. He is author of *Infinitival clauses in English: a study of syntax in discourse* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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I hope that the book will convey to its readers some of my own fascination with the “living history” of English, its recent past, its rich and diversified present, and its future, and that it will encourage others to keep researching the many questions which I have had to leave unanswered.

Freiburg, February 2006

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