

Of Joseph Whene ye gettes such. Do hi be kepte in p
if he had lured other the
Boye & boye

And al manged
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NEWSLETTER

no. 19 November 1998

§§§§ The **Third International Conference on Middle English** headed "Language and Text" will be held in Dublin, University College, from 1 to 4 July, 1999. Those who wish to attend may contact the Organizer Prof. Peter J. Lucas, ICOME3, Department of English, University College, Dublin 4, Ireland.

§§§§§ **10ICHEL** (Manchester, 21-26 August) and **SLE XXXI Meeting** (St. Andrews, 26-30 August) have taken place successfully. Reports on both Conferences are given below in 3.

2. Other Linguistic Conferences and Seminars

§ XIX AIA Conference will be hosted by Milan University, September 21-23, 1999. Details are provided by Marina Dossena (below on this page)

§§ IALICLU (Italian Language Centres) Meeting is going to take place at Udine University on 20-22 May, 1999. Again, further information is given by Marina Dossena on p. 4.

§§§ International Conference on "The Native Tongue": Paris 19-21 March, 1999. Information from Prof. Marina Yaguella, UVR D'Etudes Anglophones; Université Paris VII, 10 Rue Charles V, F-75004 Paris, France. E-mail: maya@paris7.Jeussieu.fr

§§§§ 2nd International Symposium on Bilingualism: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 15-17 April, 1999. Please contact Mrs Gillian Cavagan, ISB Organizing Committee, Dept. Of Speech, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE17RU, U.K. E-mail: gillian.cavagan@ncl.ac.uk

§§§§§ 6th International **Cognitive Linguistics** Conference: Stockholm, 10-16 July, 1999. Queries to be sent to the organizers at humfak@iclc99.su.se or writing to ICLC99, Faculty of Humanities, Stockholm University, S 106 91, Sweden. Fax: 468158871.

XIX CONVEGNO AIA - MILANO, 21-23 SETTEMBRE 1999

Il XIX Convegno AIA si svolgerà presso l'Università Statale di Milano dal 21 al 23 Settembre 1999 e avrà come tema *L'economia della letteratura, lingua e cultura nei paesi anglofoni*. Com'è tradizione, il convegno si articolerà in tre sezioni principali (Letteratura, Lingua e Cultura) e in ciascuna sezione sono previsti quindici interventi di venti minuti ciascuno.

I responsabili di ciascuna sezione sono:

- *Letteratura*:

- Maria Luisa Bignami, Università degli Studi di Milano, Piazza S. Alessandro, 1 - 20123 Milano
- Rosa Maria Colombo, Istituto di Anglistica, Università "La Sapienza", via Carlo Fea, 2 - 00100 Roma

Lingua:

- Giovanni Iamartino, Università degli Studi di Milano, Piazza S. Alessandro, 1 - 20123 Milano
- Paola Evangelisti, Università della Calabria, 87036 Arcavacata di Rende (CS)

- *Cultura*:

- Carlo Pagetti, Università degli Studi di Milano, Piazza S. Alessandro, 1 - 20123 Milano
- Daniela Corona, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Università degli Studi di Palermo, via delle Scienze - 90128 Palermo

Pur lasciando a ciascun socio la facoltà di proporre un argomento di sua scelta all'interno del tema generale del Convegno, aree tematiche orientative per le tre sezioni possono essere: valore estetico e valore economico, il mercato librario, il consumo come ricezione, fenomeni di compattazione linguistica (abbreviazioni, ellissi, polisemia, multifunzionalità, ecc.), economia dei generi e delle varietà linguistiche (ottimizzazione dell'uso degli strumenti linguistici, scelta e ruolo dei registri, ecc.), la rappresentazione e il suo contesto, uso antieconomico e abuso del linguaggio (sinonimia, ridondanza, manipolazioni, forzature, ecc.), uso e consumo del testo multimediale.

I soci che intendono presentare un intervento devono inviare un riassunto di circa 400 parole (due cartelle A4) a ciascun responsabile della sezione cui intendono partecipare entro il 28 febbraio 1999. Si raccomanda di verificare che la quota associativa sia pervenuta a Tilgher al momento dell'invio del riassunto, che deve contenere nome, cognome, indirizzo istituzionale, telefono, fax, indirizzo di posta elettronica e titolo dell'intervento proposto; i responsabili comunicheranno ai diretti interessati quali interventi sono stati accettati entro aprile 1999. Sarà mantenuto il formato poster per quelle relazioni che appaiano meglio comunicabili con questa modalità.

Per ulteriori informazioni rivolgersi a:

XIX Convegno AIA

Sezione di Anglistica, Univ. degli Studi di Milano

Piazza S. Alessandro, 1 - 20123 Milano fax: 02-86339.351

Fondata a Bologna nel 1997 in sostituzione della Conferenza Permanente dei Direttori e Presidenti dei Centri Linguistici Universitari Italiani, l'AICLU è l'associazione che raccoglie i centri linguistici dei diversi atenei italiani con l'obiettivo di coordinare le attività a livello nazionale e internazionale (l'appartenenza all'AICLU dà infatti la possibilità di aderire automaticamente all'associazione europea CERCLES), contribuire al miglioramento della qualità del servizio linguistico dei centri linguistici stessi, favorire lo scambio di informazioni, materiali e personale tra i vari centri e promuovere la ricerca nel campo della didattica e dell'apprendimento delle lingue.

Al fine di ottemperare a questi scopi, l'AICLU organizza anche convegni e seminari a livello nazionale ed internazionale: un seminario è già stato tenuto presso l'Università di Verona, mentre l'Università di Bergamo ha ospitato il convegno europeo del CERCLES. Il prossimo convegno nazionale è previsto nelle date 20 - 22 maggio 1999 presso l'Università di Udine.

Il titolo generale è: *Quale apprendimento/insegnamento linguistico nell'Università italiana del 2000?* Al suo interno sono previste tre diverse articolazioni del tema, i cui titoli sono:

- 1) Università e Europa: culture, mercato e lingue di specializzazione
- 2) Metodi e strumenti per una didattica linguistica adeguata e efficiente
- 3) Valutazione dell'apprendimento linguistico: crediti e certificazione

Coloro che intendono presentare una comunicazione dovranno inviare un riassunto di circa 200 parole (max. una pagina A4), indicando sullo stesso foglio il titolo, nome, cognome, università di appartenenza, indirizzo postale ed elettronico.

I riassunti dovranno pervenire entro il 20 gennaio 1999 a:

Convegno AICLU
C.L.A.V. - Università di Udine
Via Antonini 8 - 33100 UDINE

3. Conference notes and reports

The following reports concern the Manchester HEL Conference, which is given the amplest space with the usual finesse by Richard Dury and Gabriella Mazzon and, most concisely, the Saint Andrews SLE Meeting by myself.

The 10th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, Manchester 21-26 August 1998. (R.Dury)

Thursday. I had arrived a day early (to a cool wind and flying rain) in order to attend the statistics workshop: from five to half past nine on Thursday evening (with a break for sandwiches and coffee), which made us all feel extremely hardworking and earnest, and all Friday morning. In the short time available Roeland van Hout (author of a handbook on statistics for sociolinguistics) was only able to give us a feeling for the subject, a starting point for further study. We learnt that a statistical analysis can only tell you that (in Roeland's favourite expression) "somethin's goin' on here". As a result, a database with many variables can't be usefully tested: you have to first formulate a specific hypothesis and then test it. We learnt (something, temporarily) about chi-square and then multivariate analysis and reproduced some previously-demonstrated exercises on computers using the SPSS program (we had learnt to view the widely-used Varbrul program as a very inferior animal). I finished with a grasp of some basic principles, but feeling that interesting but half-seized concepts (about what tests to use for different types of data, for instance) were going to vanish, and so wishing that the course could have lasted a whole week with many more exercises and with enough mathematical revision to make the handbooks a bit more approachable. If anyone hears of such a summer course, please let me know.

Friday. The Conference proper started on Friday afternoon with Elizabeth Closs Traugott illustrating her theory of pragmatic semantic change (the extension of meaning through an invited inference, which becomes generalized, then codified) through the investigation of how *in deed* comes to mean 'in truth' ('a scalar term') and then comes to have a discourse function, "to sum up, with a better argument" ('a scalar focus particle'). Accompanied by a dense six-sided handout (apparently the whole paper with some function words left out), the talk was impressive, but driven

ruthlessly forward, leaving the poor audience to search through the examples, then trying to catch up again, only to be further confused by the heavy use of ad-hoc abbreviations (IITS, IINs and GIINs, M-C pairings, L, etc.). Content high on scale; presentation not MCOT.

'The papers then were quartered to thin the madding crowd. / Two rooms were at some distance with no short cuts allowed' (in the words of an anonymous poem circulated soon after the Conference). I had to go outside, past the welcoming-party marquee set up on the lawn (and looking, in the light but persistent rain, like a wet and despondant sheep), to the Chapel. This was light, modern and functional enough not to cause speakers any problems. Here we heard Maurizio Gotti's thorough survey of Salusbury's translation strategies vis-à-vis neologisms in his 1661 translation of Galileo's *Dialogo*. I was interested to see the use of coordinated terms not only as a neologism plus gloss but also as stylistically motivated (as in 'forked or horned' for *falcata*). Later that morning we heard Laura Wright talking on scribal variation in the 56 English 'guild certificates' from Norfolk and London written in 1389 (examined by Gabriella Del Lungo at S. Margherita two years ago from the point-of-view of the evolution of an appropriate discourse style). This was a continually-stimulating and wide-ranging talk that showed, among many other things, that overall variation is greater in Norfolk but individual scribal variation is about the same. We look forward to a similar display of fireworks in Naples next year.

Then back to the main hall - through rain that had clearly 'set in' - for the closing plenary. The first sight of the handout caused half of the audience to grow pale: TG-diagrams! But a relaxed and droll Wim van der Wurff (youthful, lanky, bespectacled) gave explanations of great clarity, rephrasing where necessary, adding metaphorical glosses, dividing up his talk into distinct steps. Examples were given of different types of historical research by 'structural people' and 'text people', before suggesting how the two approaches could be brought together. Some found the talk rather simplistic, but I admired the great communicative skill and ability to synthesize. I was reminded of Ernest Rutherford, who split the atom here in Manchester in the Laboratory in Coupland Street in 1911, who once said that you should be able to explain a good physics theory to a barmaid, meaning that it is only by an ability to see the simple structure of ideas that you demonstrate complete command of knowledge.

Saturday. Saturday was again cool with light slanting rain off-and-on throughout the day. Proceedings began with a plenary by (tall, gentle) Bezalel Dresner from Toronto on the levelling of the vowels in the singular and plural of ME nouns. He first divided OE nouns into four groups according to syllabic patterning and then noted the predictable results of ME Open Syllable Lengthening (OSL) and Trisyllabic Shortening (TRISH) on the stem vowel. The resulting different length of s/p stem vowel for three of these groups was levelled in an unpredictable direction in ME (in PrE *head* - *heads*, but *vat* - *vats*). Dresner's message was that we shouldn't say 'levelling took place' but that 'the incoherent phono-morphological system (after the loss of the vowel in the plural morpheme) left language learners with no way to justify the difference in vowels and led them to use one vowel for all forms'.

After this we went through spitting rain to the Chapel to hear Marina Dossena telling us in a light Scottish accent how 18th- and 19th-century collections of Scottish proverbs were tacitly Anglicized in lexis or spelling or alternatively made more Scottish, in a way that reflects Scottish divided linguistic ideals. Later on Gabriella Mazzon (sparkling as ever) took us on a guided tour of the ideological disputes of linguists over the terms *language* and *dialect*, ending up by proposing a variety-sensitive Historical Linguistics as a valuable formative discipline for teaching tolerance of variation. The last talk of the morning in the Chapel was a stimulating approach to code-switching in ME texts by Mary Davidson of Toronto University. I was totally convinced by her argument that speech-based code-switching studies (intra-sentential, grammar-based) are not really applicable to medieval mixed-language written texts. The ME yearbook (Fr-Lat) and sermon (Eng-Lat) texts in the handout showed how the Latin was clearly used to provide discourse structure (to cue or constitute an interpretation in the first case, to provide a structure of topics in the second).

With the rain now coming down thick and fast, the Chapel group huddled and hesitated at the entrance, dashing away singly under improvised head-coverings. After lunch (quite good at Hulme Hall: sandwiches and snacks and unlimited coffee and tea) I had to go to town. On my return I heard Christian Mair on the Freiburg supplementations to the Brown (AmE) and LOB (BrE) corpora (both 1961) with comparable 30-years-on material to produce the jokily-named Frown and FLOB. Pleading the case for the 'number-crunchers' against the 'armchair linguists' he showed how the results of comparative searching can give

immediate clear results of variation (e.g. growing AmE preference for *begin/start* + gerund; the choice of pronoun forms in *it was me that* vs *it was I who*). For the next session I went to the main hall for Piotr Gasirowski - severe three-piece suit, steel-rimmed glasses, neat beard, impressive RP pronunciation - whose formal-rapid-and-precise speech was actually not difficult to follow, thanks to the clarity of the discourse-organization. He attempted to explain why, in RP, OFF-words apparently merged with FORCE-words but then (hey presto!) magically un-merged again, completely intact. (Mm, somethin's goin' on here.) After dismissing the possibility of simple imitation of non-RP varieties, he claimed that the re-shortening of the OFF-vowel was motivated by spelling: this was the only group of long-*o* words without any graphic indication of vowel length (unlike *horse, bone, boat, roe* etc.). The conclusion has consequences for Optimality theory: language constraints are not only innate but, like graphemic representation, may also be cultural.

Choosing Gasirowski meant I unfortunately couldn't hear Dieter Kastovsky: SLIN members may be interested to know that he was talking about Ælfric's formation of linguistic terminology, a subject also discussed by Paola Tornaghi at the memorable CNSLIN7 (1995), by the shining waters of Lake Garda.

Saturday's final plenary talk was given by 'the 10th ICEHI. Speaker', Donka Minkova. It was an express-train ride through alternative reconstructed histories of Germanic velar plosives in OE, trying to explain why increasingly-different allophones still alliterated in OE verse, and why there was also alliteration between all vowel-onsets. The most interesting point of the talk was the suggestion that all OE vowels alliterate because they were all preceded by a glottal stop (as is suggested by the lack of elision between word-final and -initial vowels and also by the non-etymological *h*'s in the *Beowulf* manuscript before vowel-initial stressed words). The talk gave rise to a flurry of contributions from the floor on palatalization, i-umlaut, rules of alliteration and articulation of onset-vowels. Flowers were presented, photographs taken, and the Conference began its short break in proceedings with everyone feeling in a thoroughly good mood. To make us feel even better, the rain had stopped! English delegates (demonstrating an innate ability to distinguish minute gradations of atmospheric luminosity) were saying 'It looks a little brighter...' Perhaps tomorrow's trip to the Yorkshire Dales would be all right after all...

We then went off to a reception at the University's superb and spacious Whitworth Art Gallery. Those old conference hands who thought that dinner might be replaced by a careful consumption of canapés were doomed to disappointment - the advertised 'bites' were seriously small.

Sunday. Sunday dawned to intermittent rain. I went to Bingley (in Airedale) on a family visit through typical heather-capped hill country that gains a gentle beauty as it distances itself from the northern border. The weather did not hold out: by lunchtime it was really 'tipping it down' and I couldn't help feeling sorry for the main group visiting nearby Bolton Abbey.

Monday. We woke on Monday to teeming rain, but already by breakfast it had stopped and there were blue patches in the sky - almost 'enough blue to make a sailor a pair of trousers', but, I fear, not quite. We started with an energetic Nicholas Ritt, who took us through a series of early-morning mind-stretching exercises. As a warm-up we were asked to see how a language can be viewed as a Darwinian system, imperfect copying and environmental adaptation producing variation. In Part 2, 'the rhythmical organization of utterances' was taken as the environment that encouraged adaptive strategies such as (i) OSL (e.g. *bake*) and its exceptions (*have*), (ii) the comparative tendencies to lengthen of stressed short vowels in eME di- and trisyllabic words (occurring in proportion to the lightness of the following syllable(s)). That such vowels in OE monosyllables (with ultra-light zero following syllable) only become long in about 50% of cases, is because such words typically occur in both short feet (alone) and in longer feet (followed by unstressed words or prefixes). (Gasirowski questioned the use of 'adaptation' for this third case.) The talk dealt with many of the same questions as Dresher two days before, but instead of 'levelling in favour of the most frequent allomorph', Ritt was talking in terms of 'adaptation to the most frequent rhythmical organization'. Afterwards Donka Minkova stood up to jokingly declare a moratorium on discussion of OSL for the next five years.

A little later that morning, Roberta Facchinetti from Verona started her talk by drawing our attention to how modal verbs may typically collocate with adverbs (*may perhaps* etc.), sometimes in complicated ways (*certainly may*). We were then taken on a guided tour of examples from 16th- and 17th-century texts, accompanied by expert comments on the type of modality and function of the adverb 'satellites'. The examples were read

with great spirit and appreciative laughter mixed with the pale sunlight that had begun to filter into the room.

At midday we were back in the main hall for the plenary. Introduced by Matti Rissanen as 'someone who has made major contributions in three very restricted areas: English Historical Linguistics, Historical Linguistics and... Linguistics', Roger Lass (looking the quizzical walrus as he leaned pensively on the lectern) soon had the audience in the palm of his hand. His subject was the apparent variation in 12th-century texts between gender-concord and lack of it. Like a Yorkshire sheepdog chasing, gathering and finally penning a flock of sprightly sheep, Lass went after many an idea (with many a humorous diversion), finally bringing them all together in the stimulating idea that these writers have two different codes, one genderless and one with gender, and that they code-switch.

Taking up the baton after lunch, Margaret Laing from Edinburgh also showed us how eME writing systems, traditionally viewed as 'confused', possessed (chaotic) order. Some scribes (reinventing ways of writing English) adopted an apparently fluid interchangeability for thorn, wynn, yogh and 'y'. The tangle of variations charted in the handout looks a real can of worms (or thurns, or yrms), but its study has allowed ML to make convincing new readings of the manuscripts.

Then off to the Chapel (it wasn't raining!) to hear Ruth Halstead from Catania on phrasal nouns (*sit-in, pullover*). This was an interesting and careful survey (delivered in a light and humorous style) that made it clear how this type of word-formation is typical of later ModE (only four such lexemes recorded before 1500, only 20 examples in Shakespeare) and is associated with certain registers and regional varieties.

Back to the main hall (threatening clouds) for Paul Kiparsky of Stanford (tall, relaxed; the bard's 'highly-abstract Yankee'), who started by explaining how the change from OV to VO order ('pushed' by frequent optional verb-fronting in embedded clauses, 'pulled' by drift to consistent rightward complementation) produced a new phrase structure. The semi-modals (*is to, has to, ought to, used to*) that emerged in IME did not fit well with this. As a result (through 'grammatical optimization') they have subsequently acquired main-verb or full modal features in use, or have been replaced by grammaticalized sequences that do conform (*is to* becomes *is going to*, *has to* becomes *has got to*). A rather note-like delivery made this talk a little difficult to follow, and anyone who did not know the meaning of *Infl* (pronounced 'in-full') at the beginning was no wiser at the end.

Monday's reception was in Alfred Waterhouse's magnificent Town Hall of 1877: an impressive elevation combined with an ingenious plan and imaginative detailing (just like the best papers at ICEHL, in fact). After this, about a dozen of us ended up in a nearby French 'bistrot' where much talk over the garlic bread was about one of the papers of the day I hadn't gone to: Arja Nurmi's corpus-based observation of an un-Ellegårdish 'dip' in the use of periphrastic DO in the early 17th century and her provocative suggestion that this may have been connected with the arrival of language-conscious Scottish courtiers after 1603.

Tuesday. After soft breakfast-rain, Cynthia Allen from Canberra heralded in the day's work. Here was a structure person (no problems with *Infl*), who (as Wim van der Wurff had encouraged) was also interested in texts and contexts. Her point was that the hypothesis of reanalysis and 'sudden change' from OV to VO syntax in the eME period is based on comparing evidence from different dialect areas (Wessex against Peterborough). Looking at the data from the scanty 12th century texts from the southern regions, however, subordinate clauses with final inflected verb are still around 15%, roughly the same as in Ælfric's *Homilies*. The conclusion was similar to that offered by Lass on Monday: 'two grammatical analyses can co-exist', a minority peripheral system can continue with a function for certain discourse and pragmatic situations, and... syntax doesn't explain everything.

Later that morning a gently-spoken Keith Williamson reported on some of the exciting new approaches to dialect mapping being evolved in Edinburgh for *The Atlas of Early Middle English* and *The Atlas of Older Scots*. Sets of dialect features from texts (of both determined and undetermined provenance) are mapped on a relational grid representing 'linguistic space' which reveals linguistic closeness and allows unlocalized texts to be given a probably provenance. At the same time an interesting 'projection technique' places localized dialect features in the grid-squares of a geographical map and then (amazing!) fills in the empty squares by 'projecting' features out to them from full squares (cases of clashing projections being dealt with by simple rules).

In the following talk Jeremy Smith (jolly, youthful-looking) looked at the ME Kentish spelling (part of the orthography section of 'The ME Grammar Project'). Variation was seen as the result of systematic grapho-phonological accommodations by isolated scribes, or 'mini-Orms'. (Orm was the butt of several joking remarks during the Conference.) Concerning

Gruppo SLIN - MEMBERS (draft web-page information for correction)

What follows is the information that will be included on the SLIN website. Since the SLIN Newsletter mailing list is mainly of home addresses and since we decided that it would be more appropriate to give Institutional addresses and telephone numbers, there are quite a lot of gaps. Send an e-mail, or use the slip at the end, for corrections and additions.

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GROUP CASSETTE Tapes

initial <s, z>, the latter was used to distinguished native from French words; hence, as French vocabulary was assimilated, the <s, z> distinction was abandoned as no longer necessary, even though native words would still have had an initial voiced fricative.

The lunchtime plenary, by a standard-bearer of the Helsinki School, Terttu Nevalainen, was a study of four morpho-syntactic innovations in early 'standard English'. By looking at geographic and social variation for these features (as revealed in 'The Corpus of Early English Correspondence') she was able to show that the model of selection and acceptance of one variety as the 'standard' is a descriptive fallacy. Analysis of the data suggested that (i) the generalization of ARE as a plural form occurs first in East Anglia and is then accepted by Londoners and then by the Court, an example of dialect diffusion rather than standardisation; (ii) the generalization of -s for the 3rd person present of verbs was a change that occurred in London but spread from merchants to the Court; (iii) the use of *you* as a subject form occurred rapidly in the 16th century with no visible difference between London and the Court; (iv) the abandonment of multiple negation (associated with legalistic precision) is first found in the Court but is taken over quickly by upwardly-mobile merchants. Though London (with its many immigrants and high death-rate) is undoubtedly a centre of innovation, change there came from outside, from above and from below.

In the afternoon I spent some time with the book exhibition and the computer demonstrations, where I was most impressed by the beautiful computerized maps of Essex place-name elements from OE charters by a young researcher from Norway. However, I did go to one very interesting talk during the afternoon: Juhani Klemola's careful and intelligent presentation of the 'Northern Subject Rule', according to which present-tense verbs in Northern and some Scottish dialects end in -s unless adjacent to a personal pronoun, when they have no ending ('They peel and boils them'). This seems to have been established about 14th century and seems likely to have been a substrate influence of Celtic, similar agreement patterning being apparently only found in three world languages: Welsh, Cornish and Breton (Mm, somethin's goin' on here.) The possibility of massive Celtic continuity after the A-S settlement is supported by modern historians, and the importance of Celtic language-contact in the North is also suggested by the Brethonic 'sheep-scoring' numerals traditionally used in knitting and in children's games.

The day ended with the business meeting, devoted to the choice of the next venue. The vote went against Konstanz, despite the good point that no German-speaking country has yet hosted this important event, and in favour of Santiago which has the advantages of being cheaper, of being Spanish and of not being the German centre for theoretical linguistics (a consideration which may have swayed some German 'text people'). 'Then to the conference dinner through rain like floods of doom' (in the words of the bard) where David Denison and his team were justly thanked and praised for a successful and smoothly-run conference.

Wednesday and Thursday. a grey, blowy morning with a grim light ushered in the final day of the Conference. I chose to go to the presentation of the 3rd edition of the OED, promised for 2010, though sample selections will be circulated next year. OED3 involves revising the entries and etymologies; adding donor-language meanings and datings, antedating about a quarter of entries, adding filler and later citations, standardizing short titles, checking citations against reliable editions, adding citations from a new reading programme of non-literary documents, updating defining terminology and grammatical labelling.... Gosh!

The concluding plenary by David Lightfoot started with a historiographical survey of linguistic science from the nineteenth century onwards, drawing parallels with the methodology of Darwin and Marx (the search for historical laws, the viewing of change in terms of gross categories like 'class', 'species', 'language'). Such a teleological and deterministic view of linguistics can still be found in some generativist approaches invoking Universal Grammar; for Lightfoot, however, linguistic change is neither predictable nor end-directed, but is a chaotic system, an iterated algorithm (as successive generations learn a language) where chance factors and variations can soon cause large and unpredictable results.

After Wednesday afternoon, dedicated to the Social Networks Round Table (reported elsewhere), there was a coda to the Conference for the few who remained on Thursday (a trip to York), when I went to the Library. In the Hulme Hall bar that evening just three tables of us were left chatting quietly, feeling that sense of melancholy associated with all endings, when by chance someone at the bar put on an hour-long tape of 60s dance music. Feet started tapping, the familiar tunes brought smiles to faces, we wanted to dance! were surrounded already by dancing shadows of our former selves. To Olga Fischer the merit of opening the dancing, and then

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everyone was on their feet, Ingrid Tieken kicked off her shoes, Derek Britton showed he was no mean mover, Herbet Schendl, Gabriella Mazzon, Marina Dossena, Andreas Fischer, the present writer, Ursula Lenker and the others - all enjoying this liberating, yes, non-linguistic activity, joyously shaking off sadness to the sounds and rhythms of 'Dancing in the Street', 'Knock on Wood' and 'Dance to the Midnight Hour'.

Richard Dury

Workshop on "Social Network Analysis and the History of English", Manchester 26th August 1998. (G. Mazzon)

There is hardly anything more exciting and productive, during a conference, than discussing new ways of analysing data and new methodologies of research. The workshop on "Social Network Analysis [SNA] and the History of English", organised by Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade and held immediately after the end of the main IOCEHL conference, explored a methodology of EHL research that is still in its infancy.

The participants to the workshop presented single case studies, while the convenor herself gave a more general and theoretically oriented paper [see appended list]; the workshop profited from the presence, and the lively contributions to the discussion, of Prof. Lesley Milroy, who together with her husband James Milroy is one of the pioneers of SNA as a way to explain the maintenance or change of some linguistic features within established social groups.

The workshop was organised in such a way that papers were circulated beforehand both within the panel and among the audience (who however only got them in Manchester, during the conference, which means that there was not much time to read them before the workshop started); each paper was presented by a participant other than the author, and questions were asked by the panel, leaving it to the author to give short replies and clarifications. Initially, no response from the audience was elicited, also due to time limitations, but this decision was altered in mid-course, which resulted in a livelier and more varied discussion.

The first two papers probed the applicability of SNA older periods of the history of the English language, by analysing circles such as those of the Lollard movement (Bergs) or of the Benedictine reform (Lenker); the

latter paper was an attempt to extend the methodology to Old English, and this raised some objections; it was argued that the scarcity of external evidence on relations within the group, as well as the patchy quality of surviving written material, should make us extra cautious while attempting any statement of this kind, and may even require that the methodology in question be abandoned.

Nevalainen's paper showed that with Early Modern English the task is slightly easier, since we have more abundant evidence of various kinds about the relationships obtaining in circles like the Court. At this point Milroy commented on the fact that the cases presented in this first section really observe *coalitions* rather than social networks, i.e. restricted groups of people who share a "purpose" (be it political, religious, etc.), and therefore coalesce around it, as it were. It is likely that the members of such groups influence each other linguistically, but they may do so in ways that differ from those that prevail in "real" social networks. Milroy therefore warned against all hasty applications of her methods to these kinds of situations.

Tieken's paper tied in nicely with this line of argument. She commented on the special version of the "observer's paradox" that arises in historical linguistics: given that written documents are always more self-conscious than speech, is there any hope for us to ever reach a knowledge of "the vernacular", i.e. the kind of spontaneous and eminently oral variety that is so important in (contemporary) SNA? Another question raised in the discussion of this paper is how far we can trust our judgement as "modern" speakers, and whether the inevitability of the fact that we tend to perceive and categorise the past in terms of our modern views can actually invalidate our results, and to what extent.

The issue was resumed after a tea-break, when Bax's paper was discussed. Bax devised a grid to classify the kinds of evidence for social networks at our disposal in an order of more-to-less direct, and exemplified his proposal through the study of private diaries, which he claims hold no dangers derived from an "observer's paradox", since they were not written to be read by others. This claim raised some objections, since the ascertaining of relationships through diaries (whose "sincerity" may not always be total) and letters (in which acquaintance or friendship with somebody can be claimed, not necessarily truthfully, for a variety of reasons) looked like a procedure resting on rather shaky ground. Milroy, in particular, emphasised that the concept of "friend", for instance, may vary

according to time, space and culture; she stressed this warning by making reference to her own study of the Chinese community in Newcastle.

Fitzmaurice's paper was presented by proxy, since the author could not be present. Her paper questioned the possibility of applying SNA to the past, and ventured an investigation of the "coalition" (in Milroy's sense) formed by Addison around the *Spectator*. The paper also introduced the question of the different degrees of closeness in these relationships, and in particular the difference between *strong ties* and *weak ties*, of which only the latter are claimed to facilitate change, while the former tend to maintain language norms. Fitzmaurice warns that, since our evidence mostly concerns weak ties, we might overestimate their influence in change because strong ties, which act in the contrary direction, tend to escape us completely. The panel however expressed some doubts about the validity of this warning.

Hickey's paper dealt with shifts in the vowel system of Dublin English which can be explained as "local dissociation", i.e. as attempts, on the part of speakers, at distancing themselves from local norms, not in the direction of standardisation or dialect levelling, but towards the creation of new realisations for some established variables. Being closer in time to the present, his analysis lent itself to more strictly sociolinguistic comments. L. Milroy offered some observations concerning the fact that breakdowns or changes in networks tend to favour the creation of supralocal norms, either in the direction of standardisation or otherwise.

Milroy was then asked to round off the discussion and offer some general methodological considerations. She stressed the fact that SNA is a set of procedures rather than a theory, and that there is a need for "measurement operationalisation", i. e. for the definition of ethnographically determined criteria for group observation. As concerns the application to diachronic studies, Milroy noted that macro-level studies seem to yield more possibilities, since there is a wide range of information sources that can help create a general picture (she referred in particular to Nevalainen's study of some London networks, which took into consideration demographic factors, immigration data, etc.). On the other hand, Milroy was more sceptical on the applicability of SNA in micro-level studies, especially for Middle English and Old English, where data should be integrated from all possible sources, and surveying of social scenarios and linguistic domains should be included.

There was eventually no time for the general summary of discussion listed in the programme, since the discussion of the individual issues had

been so lively. The final impression of both participants and audience was that we had spent an extremely interesting and stimulating afternoon in the exploration of a new way of looking at EHL; notwithstanding all its limitations, and the inevitable tentativeness of its conclusions, this approach seems to attract a lot of interest, and is thus bound to yield more and more intriguing and exciting results in the near future.

List of Papers

A. Bergs, *Social networks in Britain before 1500: problems, prospects, examples.*

U. Lønker, *Social networks and the Winchester Vocabulary.*

T. Nevalainen, *Mobility, social networks and language change in early modern England.*

I. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade, *Social network analysis and the history of English: the observer's paradox.*

R. Bax, *Developing a network strength scale for the study of eighteenth-century English*

S. Fitzmaurice, *Coalitions and their legacy of prestige in prescriptive grammars of English.*

R. Hickey, *Keep your distance! On motivation for sound change in contemporary urban speech.*

L. Milroy, *On social network analysis and linguistic change.*

Gabriella Mazzoni

XXXI SLE Conference, Saint Andrews University (26 August 1998) (N.Pantaleo)

The XXXI SLE (Societas Linguistica Europaea) Conference on "Langue and parole in synchronic and diachronic perspective" was hosted in the beautiful premises of Saint Andrews University, enjoying exceptionally fine weather and providing, in turn, a warm, fully satisfactory (even in the gastronomic sense) hospitality. A great part of its success is certainly to be attributed to the two local organizers: the silently efficient Christopher Bedham and the delicately sympathetic Isabel Forbes. 120 colleagues have joined in, mostly from Eastern Europe countries. The presidential address given by Matti Rissanen with the customary liveliness and non-academic verve consisted of an overview of the major achievements and future developments of the Helsinki Corpus and the associated corpora now attainable to some extent via Internet.

The plenary lectures were delivered by Roland Harweg (Bochum) - in German, alas - Konrad Koerner (Ottawa) who identified "three Saussures", one of whom definitely diachronist, the old beautiful gentleman and famous historian of linguistics R.H. Robins who attempted - a risky task, indeed - to list "the possible landmarks of 20th-century linguistics", causing some dissatisfaction, and Yishai Tobin (Israel) who made a semantic analysis - somewhat controversial as well - of "small/large" vs. "big/little" dichotomies. The great number of papers, grouped into four main parallel sessions - Historical Linguistics, Semantics, Grammar, Sociolinguistics - and such minor subjects as Discourse Analysis, Typology, Interpreting, Music and pictures, with the addition of three workshops covering, respectively, Modality in generative grammar, Functional grammar, Spoken vs. written languages, make it impossible to produce any precise evaluation. Thus my task is shamefully over with the advice to read the proceedings.

Nicola Pantaleo

4. Papers read at the Rome Seminar

The ICLE project: the Italian subcorpus of learner English on computer. (M.T. Prat Zagrebelsky)

0. Introduction.

The interest in corpus linguistics has been growing at great speed since the 60's in many European countries, especially in relation to such an internationally widespread language as English. This development poses both theoretical and practical issues in the fields of linguistics and language learning and acquisition as is witnessed by a growing body of monographs and articles, different types of corpora and software, conferences and research groups.(1)

My attitude to what is often described as "the corpus revolution" is that corpora are a very powerful source of empirical data for the study of language in many fields of application such as lexis, grammar, discourse, sociolinguistic variation and cultural studies. However, in my own experience this area is far from easy to master and should be approached in an informed and critical way.

What I will present briefly here is the project of a particular type of corpus, a learner corpus, called "The International Corpus of Learner English, ICLE", and its recent Italian development, for which I am

responsible. I will give you some hints of the kind of research that has developed around the project both abroad and in Torino University.

1. The International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE)

ICLE was started in Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) by prof. Sylviane Granger and her team in 1990. It is a collaborative project that has involved so far 15 European and extra-European countries (Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, The Netherlands, Finland, Belgium, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden).

ICLE currently contains 15 comparable corpora (of the target size of 200,000 words) of argumentative essays written by advanced learners of English as a foreign language - that is usually university students of English in their 3rd or 4th year of study. It is also accompanied by a native control corpus (LOCNESS) of both British and American academic argumentative essays. It aims:

a) to collect reliable evidence on learners' errors and to compare them crosslinguistically in order to see whether they are universal or language-specific;

b) to explore the aspects of "foreign-soundingness" by comparing the national subcorpora to the native corpus.

A bibliography of research carried out on ICLE of more than 20 papers was available in 1997, while the number had more than doubled by April 1998. The most recent contributions are collected in the book *Learner English on Computer*, edited by Sylviane Granger, Longman, London and New York, 1998. A regular update of the activities of the centre of Corpus Linguistics and a list of publications appear in the web page:

<http://www.fltr.ucl.ac.be/FLTR/GERM/ETAN/CECL/html>.

2. The Italian subcorpus within ICLE

My active role in ICLE started in Spring 1997 with a two-week visit to the "Centre of Corpus Linguistics", directed by S. Granger in Louvain-la-Neuve, to become familiar with the project and the software used. It was extremely useful to be in direct contact with, and to become part of an already established and very active academic team.

Coming back to Torino, however, the hard work started. While there was no shortage of four-year argumentative essays, it took very long to collect the learners' profiles required by the project. Then a lot of time and energy went into the keying in of the data and into the setting up of the software. The building of the corpus took about one year and was carried

out by part-time students, advanced students writing their dissertations or by graduate students working under my supervision.(2) By summer 1998 the corpus was completed with the addition of learner essays produced in several Italian universities (Bergamo, Milano Cattolica, Milano Statale, Roma Luiss, Roma la Sapienza and Vercelli)(3).

The Italian ICLE subcorpus is now composed of 230,000 words, from about 300 argumentative essays.

3. Some searches on the Italian subcorpus

The most obvious idea was to repeat some searches that had already been carried out on other subcorpora by other ICLE national teams. The titles of some articles from Granger ed., 1998, are listed here to give an idea of the variety of levels of language that have been touched upon:

"Direct questions in argumentative students' writings" (T Virtanen)

"Vocabulary frequencies in advanced learner English: a cross-linguistic approach" (H Ringbom)

"Overstatement in advanced learners' writing: stylistic aspects of adjective intensification" (G Lorenz)

"An automated approach to the phrasicon of EFL learners" (S De Cock, S Granger, G Leech, T Mc Enery).

Among various interesting areas of investigation the initial choice fell on connectors, which is undoubtedly a very relevant feature in argumentative essays and which had already been studied by Granger and Tyson, 1996, in "Connector usage in the English essay writing of native and non-native EFL speakers of English" *World Englishes*, vol. 15, 1, 1996. This topic was investigated by Sara Selvaggio in her thesis, which was discussed in autumn 1997 with the title "La corpus linguistics e l'analisi delle produzioni scritte in inglese di studenti universitari italiani" and based on half of the final corpus.

Granger and Tyson had started from the hypothesis that French EFL learners tend to use more connectors than native speakers. This hypothesis was not, on the whole, confirmed by the comparison of the French subcorpus with the native corpus, Locness. The data, however, showed some interesting patterns of "overuse" and "underuse".

In quantitative terms it was found that both French and Italian learners tend to overuse connectors that are used to emphasize, exemplify or add to a previous argument, such as "indeed, namely, moreover". They tend to underuse connectors which change the direction of the argument ("however") or develop it logically ("therefore"). Another interesting

finding by Granger and Tyson, which is confirmed in Selvaggio's data, is the tendency for foreign learners to place connectors in initial position at the beginning of paragraphs, sentences and clauses versus a greater tendency to place them in mid or end position on the part of native speakers.

Coming to the interpretation of the findings, the first general question is: does this trend reveal the existence of different language-specific types of argumentation, of different ways of creating coherence according to the language spoken or does it reflect general strategies in the acquisition of the writing of this type of text (such as: It is safer to reinforce a specific argument rather than change the direction of argumentation in a more dynamic way or is it natural to make the structure of the text more "visible" in order to make it appear more coherent)? Granger and Tyson stress the importance of contrastive studies of argumentative discourse. Parallel and comparable multilingual corpora will certainly be of great help in exploring this issue further.

On the basis of Granger and Tyson's and Selvaggio's findings I decided to investigate "moreover" together with its close synonym, "furthermore" in a larger Italian subcorpus (110,248). My findings were reported in the Bertinoro Conference on "Corpus use and learning to translate" (14-15 November 1997). They confirm the overuse of both "moreover" and "furthermore" on the part of the Italian learners.

A more qualitative investigation seems to show that Italian learners often tend to misuse these connectors either to reformulate what has already been said often in a phatic and redundant way or to move to another point, perhaps not so strictly related to the previous one. "Moreover" and "furthermore", instead, are described by grammar books and dictionaries as adding a different point which is strictly linked to the previous one and felt to be more important and likely to be convincing.

In trying to give possible reasons for the overuse, and the misuse, of "moreover" and "furthermore", the following hypotheses can be made:

a) overteaching: This does not seem to be the case on the basis of the teaching material used and the teaching approach taken; in general, perhaps we can say that the greater "visibility" of connectors may be the result of the Italian students' efforts to write a text in a limited number of words and divided into clearly structured paragraphs, which is very different from the prototypical written text in Italian which is a free composition, the "tema".

b) the grouping of connectors into semantic areas: this is quite possible as many reference grammars or pedagogical presentations deal with connectors in this way and thus blur the semantic and stylistic differences among them.

c) the preference for formal connectors that are considered more appropriate in writing in comparison to other connectors such as "also besides": this may be possible, even though there is often a mixing of formal and informal connectors in the learners' productions.

d) the lack of semantic and stylistic information in the dictionaries, especially the bilingual ones: it is possible, as they often provide lists of equivalents of translation such as "inoltre, in aggiunta, oltre a ciò, per di più" accompanied by very few helpful examples.

e) transfer from different, and often very poor, writing argumentative habits in the mother tongue: possible, as writing has very little space in our university curricula. We know very little about our learners' writing styles and skills in the mother tongue.

The awareness of all these possible causes may improve the quality of the teaching materials and explanations, and calls for a greater use of empirical data and of both native and learner corpora as a learning resource. It also calls for a comparative approach in the study of foreign languages, which is often overlooked in favour of a total immersion communicative approach. Comparative and contrastive awareness should be used not only in the teaching of translation, but also in the teaching of the foreign language in general, especially at an advanced discourse level.

4. Conclusion

To finish on a general note, this type of corpus-based research is very demanding in terms of hours of work to create the corpus, equipment and need for cooperation. I feel, however, that it is a very important type of research because it links the large amount of teaching of our overcrowded universities to some kind of systematic thinking and description and makes good use of the amount of learner interlanguage which is produced at every exam session.

I hope that other Italian institutions will embark on similar learner projects for other levels of competence and genres, so as to contribute to a more complete and reliable picture of the Italian learners' different stages of interlanguage in terms of both universal and language-specific processes.

Notes

(1) Some recent titles in this area are McEnery Tony and Andrew Wilson, *Corpus Linguistics*, Edinburgh University Press, 1996; M. Stubbs, *Text and Corpus Analysis: Computer-assisted Studies of Language and Culture*, Blackwell, 1996; Thomas Jenny and Mich Shorts eds., *Using Corpora for Language Research*, Longman, 1996.

(2) They are Nicola Poeta, Miura Tonini, Sara Selvaggio and Aurelia Martelli.

(3) I am greatly indebted to my colleagues Marina Dossena (Bergamo), Francesca Trusso (La Sapienza, Rome), Jane Sherman (LUISS, Rome), Cecilia Rizzardi (Milano) and Virginia Pulcini (Vercelli) and to the students who helped in the keying in of the essays.

(M.T. Prat Zagrebelsky)

5. Bibliographical information

Here are a few suggestions for reading provided by Rolando Bacchielli and myself, in view of the SLIN Conference on Historical Pragmatics and a few details of current periodicals.

(Historical) Pragmatics

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Levinson, S.C., 1993, *La pragmatica*, Bologna: Il Mulino

Mey, Jacob L., 1993, *Pragmatics: an Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell

Verschueren, Jef, 1998, *Pragmatics*, London: Arnold

Gobber, G. (Ed.), 1992, *La linguistica pragmatica: atti del XXIV Congresso della Società di Linguistica italiana (Milano, 4-6 settembre 1990)*, Roma: Bulzoni

Kiefer, Ferenc, 1997, "Modality and pragmatics", *Folia Linguistica* XXXI, 3-4, 241-53

Sweetser, Eve, 1990, *From etymology to pragmatics: metaphorical and cultural aspects of semantic structure*, Cambridge: C.U.P.

Periodicals

Journal of English Linguistics, quarterly edited by William A. Kretzschmar, (University of Georgia, Athens, USA), SAGE Publications, 6 Bonhill Street, London, EC2A 4PU, UK, now £25 yearly (20% discount). Subscription Hotline: +44 (0)171 330 1266

VIEWS (Vienna English Working Papers) (running since 1991), six-monthly edited by Nikolaus Ritt et alii: a free forum of discussion with voluntary (financial) contributions.

Linguistica e Filologia, quarterly, Publications of Dipartimento di linguistica e letteratura comparate, edited by Maurizio Gotti.

6. SLIN Website and subscribers' e-mails (corrections and additions)

The Internet site of our SLIN activities is being steadily built up by Richard Dury and Marina Dossena, on whose recent promotion as Ricercatore at Milan State University our warmest congratulations are extended, along with Luisanna Fodde, newly appointed Associate Professor at Cagliari University. For its successful completion we would appreciate your cooperation in sending the required information on one's own academic address and publications, and by filling in and returning the attached leaflet.

Please note that the e-mail addresses of Mariateresa Fabbro, Richard Dury and Nicola Pantaleo, published in the latest issue of *NL*, should be amended as follows: feke 2@tin.it, richard@spm.it (he has lost his pop..ularity!) and n.pantaleo@lingue.uniba.it. Here are more addresses:

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