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NEWSLETTER

no. 24 June 2000

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* I have pleasure to inform the readers that the SLIN members Annamaria Caimi and Roberta Facchinetti have happily 'passed the exams' to be appointed "professore associato" in Italian Universities. Congratulations and best wishes to both.

1. SLIN Conferences and Seminars

§ At the end of the SLIN Seminar held in Bergamo on May 4 last (see next paragraph) during the business meeting which traditionally concludes our conferences it was eventually agreed that **the 10th National Conference of Italian Historians of English** will be held at **Pavia University** on a date between **13 and 16 September, 2001**. The local organizer Prof. John Meddemmen is working hard to provide accommodation for participants in the prestigious Collegio Ghislieri within the University premises. The general topic chosen for the Conference is, provisionally, "**Standardization of English in diachrony**" and among the candidates as prospective guest-speakers the names of Gabriele Stein of Heidelberg University and Jeremy Smith of Glasgow University were especially mentioned. All developments and significant updatings will be duly made known in the next issues of this Bulletin.

§§ The Fifth SLIN National half-day Seminar took place at Bergamo University with a rather compressed schedule. Problems for SLIN's identity and curricular destiny in the forthcoming reform of Italian Universities were handled by M. Gotti (a detailed abstract was included in the March issue of the *NL*, pp. 5-10). Experiences in research and teaching were subsequently offered for discussion by D. Hart and M.L.Maggioni, who dealt with Chaucer, R. Dury who revisited computerized corpora - namely OED and Helsinki - and N.

Pantaleo who explored some issues in degree dissertation management. An interesting discussion to which many contributed followed. For fuller and more entertaining information on the event please read Richard's report under 3, below.

2. HEL and other (English) linguistics conferences and seminars

* Here is a brief reminder of the major forthcoming events:

§ **5ESSE: Helsinki, August 25-29, 2000.** Organizer: Professor Matti Rissanen (e-mail: ESSE5-2000@helsinki.fi)

The academic programme will start on **Friday, 25 August, 2000 at 2 pm** with a keynote address by Professor **Raymond Tallis** (Manchester University) whose title is "Literary Studies and Science-Based Medicine: A Tale of Two Cultures". Starting from Friday 25 4-6 p.m.) until Tuesday 29, 4-6 p.m. daily semiplenaries and parallel seminar, panel and workshop sections will be held in the University premises. On the same day, Tuesday, the ESSE General Meeting (17.30 - 16.15) and the Conference Dinner at 19.30 will close the very busy Conference week.

Just for the record, the Panel on Modality convened by David Hart, with Olga Fischer as respondent, will host 15-minute talks by B.M.Naya and J.L. Couso (Santiago de Compostela), N. Pantaleo (Bari), A. Nurmi (Helsinki), M. Gotti (Bergamo), G. Di Martino (Naples) and M. Sturiale (Catania). All updated details about accommodation and the social and academic programmes may be obtained by accessing the Conference site: <http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/doe/ESSE5-2000/index.htm>. So, see you in Helsinki!

§§ **11 ICEHL: Santiago de Compostela (Spain), 7 – 11 September, 2000.** Organizer: Professor Teresa Fanego.

The **academic programme** whose venue coincides with the Faculty of Philology (North Campus) includes plenary lectures by **Douglas Biber** ("Historical shifts in modification patterns with complex noun phrase structures: How long can you go without a verb?"), **Laurel Brinton** ("Grammaticalization versus lexicalization reconsidered: On the 'late' use of temporal adverbs"), **Santiago G. Fernandez-**

Corugedo ("Thirteen-century graphemics and the *Poema Morale*"), **Raymond Hickey** ("The history of English outside of England"), **Chris McCully** ("Levels, cycles, paradigms and viruses: Theorizing a mess of stress"), **Frans Plank** ("Typological or diachronic explanation and the history of English"), **Irma Taavitsainen** ("Historical discourse analysis: Scientific language and changing thought-styles"), **Ingrid Tieken** ("Of norms and networks: The language of Robert Lowth"), **Anthony Warner** ("Change and rate of change in *do*")

In addition 115 papers, among which I take the liberty of mentioning **Maurizio Gotti's** ("Canting terms in Early English monolingual dictionaries"), **Roberta Facchinetti's** ("Dynamic possibility in early ModE: A study of *can* and *could*") and **Marina Dossena's** ("Scot's *lexis* in Johnson's *Dictionary*"); will be read ranging, as usual, over a great variety of topics.

A parasession on **electronic corpora** discussing first "The Newcastle-Poitiers Electronic Corpus of Tyneside British English" (led by **Beal, Corrigan, Moysl and Fryd**) and, subsequently, "The York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English" (introduced by **Warner, Taylor et alii**) will take place on Sunday 10 at 16.00-17.00. A workshop on **Historical Word Formation**, with introductory contributions by **Cowie & Dalton Puffer, Kornexi, Ronneberger-Sibold and Sauer**, is scheduled on Saturday 9 at 12.30-14.00 and 16.00-17.00.

All titles as well as further timetable details may be found, in addition to full information on both the academic and the social programme, in the Conference site which is <http://www.usc.es/ia303/11icehl/11icehl.htm>. For more personal contacts one may write to **11 ICEHL, Department of English, Faculdade de Filologia, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, E-15704 Santiago de Compostela, Spain**. E-mail: 11icehl@usc.es. Fax: +34 981 574646.

§§§ The **33rd Annual Meeting of SLE: Poznan, 31 August - 2 September, 2000**. The Conference topic is *Naturalness and markedness in synchrony and diachrony*. For any further information on the programme look into www.univie.ac.at/Anglistik/SLE or contact Professor Jacek Fisiak, c/o Collegium Novum, Al. Niepodleglosci 4, 61-874 POZNAN, Poland. Tel. +48-61.852 88 20. Fax: +48-61. 852 31 03. E-mail SLE@ifa.amu.edu.pl or fisiak@main.amu.edu.pl.

§§§§ **Fourth International Conference on Teaching and language Corpora (TaLC)**, English Department, University of Graz (Austria), 19-23 July. For more and fuller details look into: <http://www.mshs.univ-poitiers.fr/saes/COLLOQ/TALC2000.htm>

§§§§§ **2 International Conference on Polydore Vergil: Urbino, 28 September - 1 October 2000**. Organizer: Professor Rolando Bacchielli. A rich programme with several lectures by reputed scholars in various disciplines characterizes the event. For full information apply to Rolando Bacchielli, Istituto di Lingue, Piazza Rinascimento, 7. 61029 URBINO (PU), Italy. Tel. +39. (0)722.305350. Fax: +39 (0)722. 2284. Private e-mail: r.bacchielli@uniurb.it

3. Conference Reports

* Here are two brief reports on the SLIN Workshop and the CERLIS Conference which took place consecutively in Bergamo last May.

The 5th SLIN Seminar, Bergamo, 4th May 2000 (R. Dury)

The biennial SLIN Seminar, usually held in the convenient meeting point of Rome, this time was held in Bergamo because it continued neatly into the following CERLIS conference with its historical linguistics theme. After an informal alfresco forgathering 'Da Franco' at lunchtime, we went to our meeting room, a recently-redecorated vaulted cellar - perfectly comfortable and functional, if unlikely to be included in tourist guides of the city.

These Seminars are very useful occasions, not only for meeting but also for reporting on didactic and administrative as well as on work-in-progress and technical aspects of our study. The present one was no exception, starting with Maurizio Gotti's report on the effects of the proposed University reforms on Storia della Lingua Inglese. In a nutshell, it would seem that there might be a reduction in the number of Universities which offer the subject, but in compensation all the posts that are now 'English Language and Literature' will be divided into separate 'Language' and 'Literature' courses. English historical linguists will be good candidates for the new Language posts and will be able to teach History of the English Language as their 'special subject' (corso monografico).

Nicola Pantaleo then took up the teaching and techniques thread with his report on 'Internet and the Laurea thesis'. After an useful introduction on general problems of the thesis supervisor, he then illustrated in detail the use of Internet searches especially for (i) bibliographic research, and (ii) the acquisition of electronic study texts. In conclusion, the problems and difficulties of this new tool

were discussed.

Contributions after the break, started with the present writer, who talked about the difficulty of handling a large linguistic corpus and the usefulness of a database program such as Access for (i) finding records in the haystack of data, (ii) regrouping records according to linguistic parameters (especially to check that similar records have been classified in a similar way), (iii) adding new parameters not foreseen at the outset, (iv) calculating (and recalculating) statistics.

The creation of a linguistic corpus was also a theme of the following contribution by David Hart. In order to obtain a body of ME speech-based prose he has collected together all the 21 link-passages of the Canterbury Tales, featuring conversational exchanges between the pilgrims. He illustrated how this corpus can be used for the identification of non-verbal modality in pragmatic expressions of politeness, commitment, and flexibility in areas under negotiation.

The afternoon ended with a teaching suggestion from Maria Luisa Maggioni: a study of Chaucer's translation of Petrarch's sonnet 'S'amor non è' as the 21-line 'If no love is' (embodied in Book 1 of *Troilus and Criseyde*). The two parallel and not-parallel texts offer an excellent exercise in medieval translation strategies as well as a starting point for thoughts on the endlessly-fascinating topic of translation itself.

At the final business-session, John Meddemen and Nicola Pantaleo gave us the latest news on next year's SLIN Conference in Pavia and the general topic of 'standardization' was agreed on.

Following the long afternoon's work, most people went to see the Caravaggio exhibition at the Accademia Carrara, before meeting again for our closing dinner at the well-named Osteria del Vino Buono.

(Richard Dury)

**1st CERLIS Conference: Modality in Specialized Texts
(Bergamo, 5-6 May 2000) (M. Dossena)**

The first birthday of CERLIS, the new Research Centre on LSP founded in Bergamo in 1999, was celebrated with a two-day event which might have been a small workshop. Instead, much to the delight of the Organizing Committee, it turned out to be an international conference, with participants from as far afield as Canada and Hong Kong and around 30 papers on a number of different languages.

Proceedings opened on the Friday that followed the SLIN workshop with Irma Taavitsainen's plenary lecture on *Evidentiality and Scientific Thought-Styles: Conventions in Medical Writing*. This session, chaired by Maurizio Gotti, was also a keynote speech in the sense that it indirectly helped everybody remember the tremendous contribution given by the Helsinki group to the development of diachronic corpus linguistics. The papers in the subsequent session (chaired by Richard Dury) all focused on modality in Middle English and Early Modern English legal texts. Gabriella Del Lungo (Firenze) discussed *'The expression of volition in late medieval English wills'*, whereas Maurizio Gotti (Bergamo) outlined *'Semantic and pragmatic values of shall and will in EModE statutes'*. Roberta Facchinetti (Verona) described the way in which encoders refer to *'Hypotheses and rules in EModE legal texts'* - in particular, this paper considered samples in the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts and in the Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts. The present writer's paper (*'Committed wittingly, willingly and of purpose: exclusiveness and intensification through non-verbal modality in EModE legal texts'*) also discussed samples in the Helsinki Corpora (English and Older Scots).

Papers with a diachronic interest were presented also on Saturday morning, though this time Latin and Spanish were in the

spotlight. The other contributions on English discussed present-day registers. In one session, chaired by John Anderson, modality in English economic texts was analyzed by three of our Florence colleagues: Polly Walsh (*Modality in the journalist's verdict in The Economist articles*), Christina Samson (*Modality markers in three economics lectures by Olivier Blanchard*) and Belinda Crawford (*Understanding modality in economic texts: error analysis of student responses to test items on modal verbs*).

Legal English, instead, was discussed by Tarja Salmi-Tolonen (Rovaniemi), Giuliana Diani (Pisa) and Giuliana Garzone (Forli); while the first two papers outlined the forms typically employed in current law statutes, the third one focused on the pragmatics of legal discourse (*Deontic modality and performativity in English legal texts*).

These sessions ran parallel to the ones on German and French specialized texts. Parallel sessions were also scheduled for Saturday morning; in one of these the issues of modality in a didactic perspective were discussed by Charles van Leeuwen (Maastricht) and Marie J. Myers (Kingston, Canada). In another, instead, academic English was under the microscope: first Ken Hyland (Hong Kong) discussed *'Epistemic modality in the negotiation of knowledge'*, then Davide Giannoni (Bergamo) described *'The Disciplined Scholar: Deontic modality in editors' instructions to contributors'*.

The Poster Session also focused on English: Pauline Webber (Rome) presented a poster on *'The Use of Modality in Different Medical Text Genres'*, while Paolo Donadio (Naples) summarized a study of modality in electoral discourse.

The homogeneity of the topic ensured that the debate was always lively and genuinely interesting at all levels. As for comments on the 'ambience' side of the Conference, I must confess I feel a bit

shy to admit that the Upper Town looked really nice throughout (well, I'm a native here, aren't I?). Great early-May weather allowed us to have lunch outdoors on both days and the downpour at the very end of the Conference Dinner on Friday - only made the Old Square look even more atmospheric on the following morning, when - by sheer coincidence - a bit of pageantry was on display with the 'Giuramento degli Allievi dell'Accademia della Guardia di Finanza', their marching bands, historical uniforms and all.

Cerlis has a website in which links to LSP resources and bibliographical references are listed; forthcoming events will also be announced. In the meantime, abstracts of papers submitted for this conference are still available: see <<http://www.unibg.it/cerlis/home.htm>>, the e-mail address is <cerlis@unibg.it>.

(Marina Dossena)

4. Papers read at the Bergamo SLIN Workshop

The two papers on Chaucer read by David Hart and Maria Luisa Maggioni are kindly abstracted by the authors as follows.

Modal forms in the *Canterbury Tales* "Links". (D. Hart)

The research described below is part of the work being carried out for a MURST-COFIN interuniversity project entitled "Aspects of variation in linguistic modality in late Middle and early Modern English".

The "Links" text consists of a little over one thousand lines (1096 to be precise) of direct speech, in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* and the dialogues between the Tales themselves. It is thus non-continuous, consisting as it does of 21 separate dialogues or scenes, involving between two and four speakers, each of whom has one or more speeches. A constant is the presence of the Host, Harry Bailey. Because of its dialogic and interactional features this text lends itself to a study which has as its ultimate aim a characterization of pragmatic values. It is well known that the most fertile genres for this type of discourse analysis include, in non-literary language, the interview and private correspondence. In literary language, dramatic texts are most productive, and in many ways the vivacious verbal interaction of the *Canterbury* pilgrims has theatrical characteristics.

The work carried out has so far observed the following phases:

1. Identification of central modal forms in the text. In Chaucer's English, these are: *can, connen, coude, moot, most, moste, may, mowen, mighte, owen, o(u)ghte, aughte, shal, shul(len), sholde, shulde, wil(e), wol(e), will, wolt, wollen, wolde*, plus some further spelling variants.

Synthesizing, this revealed 76 examples of "will" (all forms), 72 examples of "shall"(all forms), 36 examples of "may/might" forms, and 18 examples of "can/could" forms. There were 2 examples of "ought" constructions.

2. Identification of the so-called non-central or marginal markers of modality. These may be periphrastic forms within the verb phrase or, outside the verb phrase, a multitude of adverbial, adjectival or nominal forms; there are also those verbal forms, partly coinciding with "speech act" verbs, which are known as parenthetical lexical verbs, indicating the attitude of the speaker, such as hope, fear, think, believe. The most common Chaucerian parenthetical forms were *trowe, se wel, bishrewe, mene, wel I woot, seye sooth*, but there were also examples of *warne, drede, dar wel swere, gesse, as it thynketh me*, amongst others.
3. An analysis of those contexts illustrating the co-occurrence of the central forms with the marginal ones, with the aim of seeing how this may condition the modal force of the phrase or utterance. This obviously involves a characterization/description of this modal force in terms of the overall "meaning" of the context where modal forms are seen to be operating.

One example, showing a heavy concentration of deontic forms (legal terminology) together with ritual politeness, is the Host's invitation to the Man of Law to contribute a tale.

*"Sire Man of Lawe", quod he, "so have ye blis,
Tel us a tale anon, as forward is.
Ye been submytted, thurgh youre free assent,
To stonden in this cas at my juggement.
Acquiteth yow now of youre biheeste;
Thanne have ye do youre devoir atte leeste."
"Hooste", quod he, "depardieux, ich assente:*

*To breke forward is nat myn entente.
Biheste is dette, and I wole holde fayn
Al my biheste, I kan no bettre sayn.
For swich lawe as a man yeveth another wight,
He sholde hymselfen usen, by right;
Thus wole oure text.*

(Riverside edition, Part B1, lines 33-50).

Reflections on pragmatic aspects and on the speech acts that are taking place, remain to be made, taking note of the expressions of cooperation or non-cooperation, or the interplay of power and politeness.

(D. Hart)

Translation as hermeneutical performance in Chaucer's rendering of Petrarch's sonnet 132 (*Canticus Troili*). (M.L. Maggioni)

For Chaucer and his age the practice of vernacular translation included - apart from the obvious process of interlingual transfer - glossing and interpreting; the theoretical frame in which medieval translation was set was based on the medieval *artes poetriae*, which constituted a crossover of grammar and rhetoric whose dominant discourse was that of hermeneutics.

Some observations on the translating techniques exploited by Chaucer in his translation of Petrarch's sonnet 132 show that he perceived translating as a hermeneutical process which implied paraphrasing and commenting as well as transferring meaning from one code to another.

The presence of the so-called first *Canticus Troili* in *Troilus and Criseyde* has been a sort of puzzle for the historians of English literature; criticism on this issue has mainly aimed, on the one hand, at identifying Chaucer's formal dependance on the Italian original and, on the other hand, at accounting for his intellectual and philosophical attitude, which is traced back to a wider cultural tradition centered on Boethius's thought. In my opinion, an approach to *Canticus Troili* which neglects to take into consideration the cultural context in which Chaucer produced his version of Sonnet 132 - and in particular the medieval idea of the hermeneutical dimension of translation - risks to be reductive and misleading.

The parallel reading of the two poems offers immediately an insight into Chaucer's understanding of Petrarch's spirit; bearing in mind the medieval idea of translation as 'interpretative paraphrase' it is easy to notice how the English poem follows the medieval conventions of the relationship between commentary and translation.

The analysis of the internal organization of the two poems shows at once a close correspondence - allowing for the differences

in metre and stanza form - between their respective logical structures. Chaucer's rhyme-royal stanzas follow the argumentation of Petrarch's sonnet: while the first and second stanzas actually translate the Italian poem, allowing for a degree of liberty, the third one, which formally corresponds to the Petrarchan sextet, is only conceptually connected to it; here Chaucer inserts the most variations, regarding both the expositive level and the content, a difference which is probably due to his plan for the development of the psychological evolution of his character. In this final section of his *Canticus* Chaucer deviates from Petrarch's puzzled attitude and introduces the idea of *maladie* that anticipates Troilus's love sickness, one of the main themes of the first part of *Troilus and Criseyde*.

The nature of Chaucer's relationship to his original can be further highlighted by an analysis of the poet's lexical choices: *Canticus Troili* is made up of a total of 166 words, only 14 of which (i.e. 8,43 %) are loanwords of Romance origin, but only four of them are clear echoes of the Italian poem.

A further case of Chaucer's careful and painstaking attempt at understanding Sonnet 132 can be the one related to his translation of Petrarch's line 6. The rendering of '*S'a mal mio grado*', which means literally "If (it is) in spite of myself" and is interpreted by Chaucer as "If I rejoice at my harm" and translated as *If harm agree me* could give an insight into Chaucer's familiarity with Italian, into his degree of competence in such language and - last but not least - into his effort of interpreting his source.

Syntactical, lexical and stylistic reasons must have influenced the English poet, leading him to interpret the sentence as he did; his understanding and subsequent translation of line 6 of Sonnet 132 suggest a good degree of proficiency in the use of Italian at the multiple levels of syntax, lexis, and usage and possibly a more extensive knowledge of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* than it is usually thought of.

In *Canticus Troili* Chaucer does not only transfer meaning into a different code; he interprets and re-defines his source through an in-depth analysis of the elements pertaining to both form and content, through the conscious effort of translating (i.e. transferring) them into a new text endowed with autonomous life, using the techniques of exegetical translation to produce, not a supplement to the original, but a vernacular substitute for that original. What Chaucer attains through translation of Sonnet 132 is the complete mastery of the source text and the full understanding of all its implications, preserving the original while renewing it and transferring it to a new textual configuration.

(M.L.Maggioni)

5. Reviews and bibliographical information

* John Denton (Florence) resumes here his very much missed task of careful reviewer. Then a visitor of the SLIN web-site, Alison Wilson, Sales and Marketing executive of OED online, writing to Richard invites inspection of the electronic Dictionary.

§ Bauer, Laurie and Peter Trudgill (eds), *Language Myths*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1998, pp. XVIII-189, ISBN 014-02-6023-4 (pbk. £8.99).

McArthur, Tom, *The English Languages*, Cambridge, CUP, 1998, pp. XXI-247, ISBN 0-521-48582-7 (pbk. £8.95).

One of the tasks I set myself in my introductory courses on English grammar and phonology for university students fresh from school is the uphill one of language myth demolition or, to put it more bluntly, 'Prince Charles bashing', considering the role His Royal Highness has taken on as defender of tradition in matters linguistic. The Prince is indeed a prominent figure in the 21st and last chapter (each chapter corresponding to a myth) of the book edited by Bauer and Trudgill. John Algeo in his contribution entitled 'America is Ruining the English the English Language' rightly takes issue with the Prince for saying (or implying) just that and thus lending the weight of royal prestige to a myth that Algeo has little difficulty in exposing as untenable. The 21 myths systematically subjected to the devastating critical hatchets of an impressive line up of prominent linguists (one per myth) range from the more classic ones concerning changes of word meaning (Peter Trudgill), the 'illogical' status of the double negative (Jenny Cheshire), the existence of 'primitive' languages (Nicholas Evans), 'It is me' vs prescriptive 'It is I' (Laurie Bauer), the 'chaotic' nature of English spelling (Edward Carney) to less familiar ones (to me at least) such as 'Some Languages are Spoken more Quickly than Others' (by Peter Roach) and 'In the

Appalachians they Speak like Shakespeare' (by Michael Montgomery). The authors (who also include Roy Harlow, Jean Aitchison, Anthony Lodge, Janet Holmes, Lars-Gunnar Andersson, James Milroy, Winifred Bauer, Howard Giles and Nancy Niedzielski, Lesley Milroy, Walt Wolfram, J.K. Chambers, Dennis R. Preston, and John H. Esling) all carry out well argued and convincing demolition jobs on the myths assigned them. I would like to see a book like this in (at least) the hands of as many aspiring young university (English) language specialists as possible. It will hopefully be a further important step in their conversion from folklore to science. (No prizes for guessing the syntactic feature in the previous sentence which would cause a lot of prescriptivist eyebrows to be raised, including those of the Prince of Wales! - but, then none of them read this Newsletter anyway).

The plural in the title in the richly documented study by the editor of 'English Today' and 'The Oxford Companion to the English Language' is a fairly recent development (not, in fact used in the two titles just mentioned), though sporadic uses, at least of 'Englishes' (documented by the author), can already be found in the 1970s (see pp. 61-67). As could be expected this book is a mine of information, one of its most valuable features being the survey of (mostly) 20th. century scholarship on English (including the history of the language). Chapters 4 and 5 on 'Models of English' and 'Standardness' will prove (or rather are probably already proving) to be the stimulating starting point for many a student graduation dissertation. Together with Jeremy Smith's excellent historical survey (already rightly acclaimed by Richard Dury in a previous issue of this Newsletter) 'The English Languages' will be close to the top of any introductory reading list I prepare for my students, even after the radical degree course reform in Italian universities.

(John Denton)

§§ I recently came across your SLIN website whilst looking for people in Italy to contact about the new online edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. I thought perhaps you, and the members of your group, might be interested in hearing a little more about OED Online, which has already been described by the UK Guardian newspaper as "the internet's biggest, most prestige-laden reference book". For further information on the Oxford English Dictionary Online, please see our website <http://www.oed.com/publications/online.htm>. A free online tour is also available at <http://www.oed.com/tour/>. OED Online is available by annual subscription and a network licence allows unlimited access to all the users of an institution's network. We would be delighted to offer free institutional trials of OED Online to any of the universities where your members lecture. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further information or a free trial!

(A. Hilton via R. Dury)