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1. SLIN Conferences and Seminars

The 10th SLIN National Conference due at Pavia University on 13-15 September, 2001 and headed *The Standardizing of English* will have as confirmed guest-speakers Gabriele Stein (Heidelberg) and Jeremy Smith (Glasgow) who will lecture on standard formation and lexical codification respectively. A call for papers is being launched in January 2001: a one-page abstract should be submitted by the end of March to the organizer Prof. John Meddemmen who will in turn consult the scientific committee. A provisional program will be included in the June issue of *SLIN NL*.

2. HEL and other (English) linguistics conferences

§ The large-sized late-Summer meetings of **5 ESSE (Helsinki)**, **11ICEHL (Santiago de Compostela)** and **33 SLE (Poznan)** met all optimistic expectations and are accordingly given a multi-voiced treatment under **3.** below. In the relative "business" meetings it was announced that **6ESSE** will take place at Strasbourg University on a date between the end of August and the start of September 2002, while **12ICEHL** will be hosted by Glasgow University on 21-26 August, 2002.

The newly elected Chairman of ESSE is Adolph Haberer of Lyon 2 and the editorship of *The European Messenger* remains, deservedly, in Martin Kayman's hands.

§§ **The sixth Cardiff Conference on *The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*** will be held **July 19-23, 2001 in Santiago de Compostela** (Faculty of Philology). Papers including those dealing with modern translations of medieval texts may be given in English, French or Spanish. One-page abstracts and contributors' *curricula vitae* should be sent as soon as possible to Dr. Rosalynn Voaden, Department of English, Arizona State University, PO Box 870302, AZ 85287-0302. E-mail: Rosalynn.Voaden@asu.edu. Selected papers from the Conference will be published by Brepols in *The Medieval Translator* 7. The cost of the Conference is approximately \$ 350 to cover registration, accommodation for 5 nights with relative breakfasts and lunches, the opening reception and the final banquet.

§§§ International Conference on *The English language in the Late Modern period 1700-1900* (Edinburgh, 29th August-1st September 2001)

An aim of the Conference will be to present and evaluate ongoing research in the period's syntax, phonology, lexis, orthographic reforms and sociolinguistics. Scholars interested in attending the Conference should contact the Conference Organisers at the earliest. Offers for papers are also cordially invited at this stage. Abstracts of papers, together with requests for further details of the Conference, should be sent in the first instance, to: Professor Charles Jones, Department of English Language, University of Edinburgh David Hume Tower, George Square - Edinburgh EH8 9JX

E-mail: Charles.Jones@ed.ac.uk

website: http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/englang/lme_home.html.

(Marina Dossena)

§§§§ International Conference on *"Modality in Contemporary English"*, 6-8 September 2001, University of Verona, Italy. The conference aims at fostering interaction between scholars from different theoretical backgrounds but with a common interest in English modality, with specific reference to the Present-day, hence promoting discussions, exchanging ideas and reporting recent progress on a variety of issues related to this field. For any information, please visit the conference site:

http://www.univr.it/cla/conferences/modality/modality_index.htm

or contact Roberta Facchinetti at Faculty of Arts, University of Verona, Via S. Francesco 22, 37129 Verona, ITALY, fax: +39 045 8028705, e-mail: far0@chiostro.univr.it.

(Roberta Facchinetti)

§§§§§ Third Symposium on Iconicity in language and Literature: University of Jena (Germany), 29-31 March, 2001: Papers are expected to present detailed case studies of iconically used linguistic forms at all levels of language and in all varieties of language use. Abstracts for proposals (max. 500 words) accompanied by a brief c.v. should be sent by e-mail to Prof. Wolfgang G. Müller (Wolfgang.Mueller@rz.uni-jena.de) or to Prof. Olga Fischer (Olga.Fischer@hum.uva.nl).

3. Conference Reports (M. Dossena, M. Sonmez, D. Hart, N. Brownlee, R. Facchinetti, A. Bertacca and M. D'Acerno)

Here follow a number of reports either on the whole or on special sections (seminars, workshops, panels) of ESSE, ICEHL and 33SLE which of course cannot, and do not intend to, cover all aspects of the vast range of topics dealt with in the Conferences. They are however occasions of 'thinking-over' for those who were there and of glimpses of knowledge for those who were not.

Let us start with Marina Dossena's framework notes for both Helsinki and Santiago.

ESSE5 in Helsinki and ICEHLII in Santiago de Compostela - A general overview

'A Tale of Two Cultural Capitals' could be a good subtitle for this brief introduction to more detailed reports. However, the task of outlining the patterns of similarities and differences between Helsinki and Santiago might prove somewhat challenging. In spite of their geographical distance, their academic proximity is certainly remarkable, both between one another and between each of them and other research centres throughout Europe. And then when the two cities are viewed at different times of day, with changing light patterns and varying numbers of people in squares that can be either bustling with activity (like the Market Square in Helsinki) or as peaceful and quiet as a Finnish lake (like the Cathedral Square in Santiago late on a moonlit evening), it is intriguing to think of all the elements which they share.

Academically, the first trait that the two places had in common was the perfect organization of two of the most important conferences in our field. The English Department of Helsinki University hosted the 5th edition of the ESSE Conference: a tremendous quantity of plenary and semiplenary talks, workshops, seminars and panels on linguistic, literary and cultural issues related to the world of English. Santiago de Compostela, instead, hosted the more specifically focused conference on English Historical Linguistics, but the range of themes was equally stimulating, varying from phonology to dialectology, from syntax to lexicography. In both cases the team of the Helsinki

Research Unit on Variation and Change in English (directed by Matti Rissanen) played a considerable role: in Helsinki as accomplished organizers of such a large-scale event, and in Santiago as speakers in seminars or plenary talks (as was the case of Irma Taavitsainen, who lectured on 'Historical Discourse Analysis: Scientific Language and Changing Thought-Styles' in a session chaired by Maurizio Gotti).

As for the SLIN group, in Helsinki we were in the spotlight soon after the opening of the ESSE Conference with the panel organized by David Hart (Rome 3) on modality in Middle English and Early Modern English. This was an opportunity for the national research group currently working on this topic to present an outline of their work and some preliminary results – participants thus included the coordinators or representatives of all the individual research units (Maurizio Gotti for Bergamo, Gabriella Di Martino and Maria Lima for Naples, Nicola Pantaleo for Bari and Massimo Sturiale for Catania); in addition to these, colleagues from Santiago de Compostela presented their own parallel studies. Finally, Olga Fischer acted as a respondent for each individual presentation and started a debate which proved of considerable interest for the numerous and qualified audience that had been attending.

In addition to this panel, some SLIN scholars were also involved in other seminars: Maurizio Gotti on ESP, Gabriella Del Lungo on historical pragmatics, Roberta Facchinetti and Giuliana Diani on discourse studies, Luisanna Fodde on varieties of English and the present writer on code-switching. Of course there were also other Italian professors and researchers involved in the seminars on corpus linguistics and discourse studies, though this time with a specific focus on present-day varieties of English.

The social programme of the Conference allowed everybody to get to talk to colleagues from different research fields and to establish (or re-establish) fruitful connections along cross-disciplinary or intradisciplinary lines. A fair contribution to an overall atmosphere of pleasantly enjoyable activity was also given by mild weather which favoured (still quite long) sunny evenings and consequently long after-dinner coffees in the Esplanadi gardens. On Sunday afternoon, however, all notebooks and handouts were left aside, and while some of us went on a guided tour of Helsinki, others took a boat to Suomenlinna, 'the Gibraltar of the North', as the tourist guide puts it – or, literally, 'Finland's-fortress': trying to pick up at least a few words of Finnish

was a very tempting pastime, I must admit...

About a week later, it was as if the linguistic section of the ESSE Conference had decided to continue at a different venue; virtually the same people, discussing different aspects of the same topics, in equally good weather, though with higher daytime temperatures! The logo of the Cultural Capitals of Europe for the year 2000 is a star, and indeed it was a pleasant surprise to find that the little star we had seen in Helsinki now loomed large on a wall beside St. James' Cathedral – *Campus Stellae*, as this place used to be called, and here we had our own twinkling star guiding us like faithful pilgrims on our scientific quest...

Like in all places with strong historical or religious associations, there is a special kind of atmosphere pervading Santiago. Pilgrims still walk or cycle most or at least part of the way, and the impressively Baroque decorations of literally all altarpieces, no matter how small the church, are a memorable sight. We even witnessed – by special arrangement, for which we are grateful to the organizers, Teresa Fanego and her team – the ceremony in which a huge incense burner is made to swing in the air high up across the transept of the Cathedral, something that used to be done in the Middle Ages, when the procedure was, well, necessary...

The concert of medieval music in a neighbouring church was an even more decisive step into the past, and perfectly in tune with the medieval texts that so many of us had been examining. As a matter of fact, several papers at both conferences dealt with Middle English varieties. In Finland Kathryn Lowe had chaired a workshop on 'Recent trends in English Philology', in which several projects currently in progress had been presented and discussed in their methodological framework – notably, the Linguistic Atlases of Early Middle English and Older Scots (Edinburgh, Institute of Historical Dialectology), the Middle English Grammar Project (Glasgow) and the Scientific Thought-Styles Project (Helsinki). Now, in Santiago, papers based on data gathered for these projects were read by Margaret Laing ('Some aspects of negation in Early Middle English'), Keith Williamson ('Borderline English – A linguistic comparison of 'Northern English' and 'Scots' of the late 14th and 15th centuries'), Jeremy Smith ('The evolution of spelling-systems in East Anglian Middle English') and Päivi Pahta ('Nota bene: Code-switching in early English medical writing'). Given the richness of these projects

and many others currently being developed, and the need to exchange updated information by bringing data together, it was agreed in Helsinki that the SLIN website might actually function as a kind of clearing house with links to the individual pages of the various research units – to this end, the 'Research' page of our site (in the section called 'Our links', from <<http://www.unibg.it/anglistica/slin/home2.htm>>) has been suitably added to.

SLIN-group scholars also greatly contributed to the debate in the various sessions in Santiago; some of us read papers: Maurizio Gottf ('Canting terms in Early English monolingual dictionaries'), Roberta Facchinetti ('A corpus-based study of Can in Early Modern English') and the present writer ('Scots lexis in Johnson's Dictionary'); finally, last but not least, Nicola Pantaleo chaired the session on the pragmatics of forms of address (Minna Nevala: 'Honoured Sir or Dear Father? Address forms in family correspondence from the 15th to the 17th century'; Teresa Sánchez Roura: 'Captatio Benevolentiae in 15th-century English commercial letters: conventional formulae or free choice?').

Beyond the academic programme, further highlights of the social events were the Conference Dinner and disco in the Hostal de los Reyes Católicos (an impressive building in the Cathedral Square which used to be a hostel for pilgrims and nowadays is a luxury state-owned hotel, or *parador*, as per local label), and the conference excursion to Baiona and Valença do Minho, the latter a Portuguese village in which we strolled around the local market, the city walls and entered even smaller churches than in Santiago. Unfortunately, during the excursion the mist did not rise till well after lunchtime – after so much good weather, it was as if summer itself was saying goodbye to us... Back in Santiago, however, it was a sunny evening again. One final stroll around the lake outside the Auditorio de Galicia, a few more breadcrumbs to the ducks, and then off... to gather ideas for the next paper, the next conference, the next time we'll all be together again. Of course there will be other events in 2001, not least our SLIN Conference in Pavia and AIA in Catania. ESSE 6, however, is scheduled to take place in Strasbourg in 2002, a relatively short time before or after ICEHL 12, which will be hosted by Glasgow University.

(Marina Dossena)

Summary of papers presented in ESSE-5 Seminar on Historical Pragmatics.

There were no less than seventeen papers included in the three sections of the Historical Pragmatics Seminar at Helsinki this August. The convenors were Andreas Jucker and Jonathan Culpeper, leading lights in this newly-defined area of study. Extended abstracts of the papers had been available on the web (<http://www.uni-giessen.de/~ga01/ESSE5>) since February, and they are still there at the time of writing (late September) – but anyone reading them should be aware of the fact that many of the abstracts were written before the papers were completed, and the final papers in some cases diverged from what was reported in the abstracts. The papers were presented in three sections which almost but not completely coincided with the three sessions we had been allocated. The first section, focusing on speech acts and dialogues, contained some papers that included discussion of the methodological and theoretical issues involved in historical pragmatics. Here the materials used came mostly from drama or court depositions, where relation to the spoken language is likely to be close. The second section, which gathered together those papers which analysed address forms, were more concerned with the utterances themselves, in many cases using materials whose relation to speech is very indirect (letters and poems, for instance). The third section was even more writing-based than the earlier two, being papers that looked at genre-specific usages. With so many papers in the seminar, only the sketchiest of outlines from each can be given here, and I hope colleagues who presented such well-researched and interesting papers will forgive the present writer for this insufficient representation of their work.

The seminar was started by Irina Shevchenko's wide-ranging paper, which drew attention to the history and methodology of the subject and also provided precise details of interrogative speech acts in British plays from the Renaissance to the present. Her study of these utterances concentrated on their illocutionary aspects. Barbara Kryk-Kastovsky's presentation of speech acts in two seventeenth century English trial records, on the other hand, showed us how the special circumstances of the law-courts enables researchers to investigate the perlocutionary force of speech acts, perlocu-

tions which are historically retrievable not only because of their being recorded but also because of their unusual gravity (ie sentencing). Both plays and trial records featured in Jonathan Culpeper and Marja Kytö's corpus-based research on repetition in Early Modern English. They concentrated on immediately repeated, identical forms by the same speakers, and added prose fiction to their legal and dramatic materials. Like the earlier two papers, their results were presented in terms of pragmatic theory rather than from the variation and change perspectives that some later papers were to adopt.

Still within the first section, something completely different was offered by Mari Pakkala-Weckström, who informed and entertained us with her lively analysis of the language of intrigue and seduction in three of the *Canterbury Tales*, and different again was Ian MacKenzie's provoking discussion of the widespread use of lexical ('non-defamiliarized', semi-formulaic) phrases in all language use including literature. This took us to the end of the first section, although not the end of the first session, which continued at its established, cracking pace.

Turning to papers that researched terms of address, Thomas Honegger returned us to the world of Chaucer's characters and the relations between them. His sensitive reading of *The Knight's Tale* showed how the address forms used by Palamon and Arcite in their prayers to Mars and Venus reflected the conventions used in addressing characters (deities) of the same or of different sex, and that the resulting use of 'you' when address a female deity prefigured and perhaps even prejudiced the outcome of Arcite's prayer. The next paper presented a study of the pragmatics of kinship terms, names, honorifics and titles in late Middle and Early Modern English letters from the *Helsinki Corpus of Early English Correspondence*. In spite of a relative scarcity of materials from women in the earlier period, Minna Nevala showed that these forms varied between the sexes and changed in time. Based on analysis of materials from the *Shakespeare Concordance*, Ulrich Busse then gave a revealing presentation in which the sentence-internal co-occurrence of address pronouns and nominal address forms (*madam, sir, fellow*, etc) in all of Shakespeare's plays was discussed. The last paper of this section was given by Terry Walker, who investigated how you and thou pattern in certain male and female dialogues of the Early Modern Period, using

material taken from the Lancaster/Uppsala *Corpus of English Dialogues* and the Helsinki Corpus. He showed that choice of address pronoun was more constrained for the women speakers than for the men, regardless of the context of utterance.

The third and last section of our Seminar was held partly on Saturday afternoon and partly on the Sunday morning, and comprised papers each of which, in its own way, investigated change in certain forms within or between specific genres. Plays and letters again featured here, with the addition of wills, herbals, charms and recipes, a manual and a language teaching text. Gabriella del Lungo Camiciotti showed how Anglo-Saxon wills continued to show their oral origins whereas late medieval wills, in spite of their many differences from present day ones, had made a full transition to the status of documents written with conscious use of performatives whose perlocutionary force is legally binding. Ruth Carroll's work reminded us of one of the recurring themes from all language seminars at this year's ESSE, that of the fact that many if not most texts contain elements from different genres. Here she was discussing charms and recipes found in a work of veterinary writing. She showed how while recipes for dyes and medicines share some of the characteristics of culinary recipes, the 'cure' can be identified as a separate discourse type. This was further distinguished from the text-type 'charms', where wording is of extreme importance: the efficacy of charms demanding an exact repetition of certain words, sometimes combined with certain actions. Staying within the realm of the approximately medical, Martti Mäkinen's study of herbals from the (Helsinki) Corpus of Early English Medical writing showed a clear understanding of the theoretical issues involved in genre and text-type studies while concentrating on the internal and temporal variability of a specific genre. Focussing on ego utterances and audience involvement, this paper highlighted variations within the genre ("interaction and instruction in these texts seem to go together") and at the same time a resistance to change that lasted from the medieval times to the late sixteenth century.

Now it was back to drama. Manuel Padilla Cruz had experienced a modern comedy all of his own in the journey from Spain to Finland, and his luggage had flown off to some other destination, but luckily for us he arrived on time, and his paper was not in the lost luggage, and we were all able

to benefit from his analysis of politeness strategies in audience addresses from two of the Chester Cycle's Mystery plays. A different sort of politeness strategy was then presented to us - indeed exercised upon us - in a delightful presentation by Maria Teresa Sanchez Roura, who introduced to us the rhetorical strategies involved in late fifteenth century *captatio benevolentiae* (locutions such as 'right worshipful sir') in all 235 useable items of the Cely letters. She showed that they are probably not as formulaic as has been thought. Looking at 'I think' and 'methinks', Minna Palander-Collin now turned our attention to possible gender differences in letters from the following two centuries. Her research so far indicates, we were told, that sender-addressee relationship seems more important than gender, but there is some evidence that, as now, women used first person pronouns and 'I think' as a politeness strategy more often than men. The present writer then presented her preliminary study of how a single writer varied his writing according to genre. Finally, Monika Becker ensured that the seminar ended on a high note with her lively examination of sales talk in Early Modern language teaching textbooks. As with the trial records that were analysed at the beginning of our seminar, she argued that the sales negotiation presents a limited arena for conversational exchange whose perlocutionary effects are practical (an item is or is not bought/sold) and therefore retrievable.

This was my first foray into the field of pragmatics, and I should like to end with two questioning comments from an inexperienced and perhaps naïve observer. First, I was struck by the fact that most of the papers used materials from the Late Middle to Early Modern period, even though one would imagine that the contextual information so essential to pragmatics is more retrievable from later sources. Is this an effect of a bias in available corpora, or does it reflect the fact that we find variations from the distant past easier to identify than more recent ones? And my second question is, why did we all concentrate on lexical terms or relatively short phrases? Longer, structural aspects of text, and aspects of the full-length text were notably absent from this seminar and, again, I wonder if this reflects a distortion entering the field because of the advantages - and limitations - of the taggable electronic text.

(Margaret J-M Sonmez)

ESSE5/2000. Panel on *Modality in Middle English and Early Modern English*

There was a goodly gathering for this panel discussion on the first day of the Helsinki proceedings. The convener, David Hart (Roma III), referred to Frans Plank's 1984 "rough chronological sequence" in his brief presentation of significant changes over the five-hundred year period in question. Introducing the panellists, he pointed out that their differing approaches and methodologies - in particular regarding interest in either the syntactic or the semantic aspects of the topic - had made it necessary to follow a chronological rather than a thematic order of presentation.

Belen Mendez Naya and Jose Lopez Couso (Santiago de Compostela) looked at the Middle English period, and referred particularly to their research into types of dependent desires, both finite and nonfinite, such as desideratives, causatives, and permissions. Nicola Pantaleo (Bari) took Middle English religious texts for his discussion of impersonals as modals; he illustrated the development and subsequent obsolescence of some non-central modal expressions of volition and obligation, noting especially the pragmatic pregnancy of certain modalizing impersonals. Arja Nurmi (Helsinki) drew on her close knowledge of the Corpus of Early English Correspondence in outlining the development of 16th century modal auxiliaries, with a schematic analysis of possible sociolinguistic variation (gender, social stratification, social and geographic mobility). Maurizio Gotti (Bergamo) referred to material in sections M3 and E3 of the Helsinki Corpus, focusing on the evolution of central modal verbs, and analysing in particular features concerning type specificity and certain pragmatic uses. Massimo Sturiale (Catania) also based his remarks on the Helsinki Corpus, in this case to religious texts in sections EmodE I, I, and III (1500-1710), with reference to marginal modals, modal idioms and modal lexical verbs. Gabriella Di Martino and Maria Lima (Napoli Federico II) had as their corpus teaching manuals spanning the period from the late 16th to the late 17th century, exploiting the rich opportunities for pragmatic analysis offered by such texts.

Olga Fischer (Amsterdam), in her role as respondent, drew conclusions, in the process handling comments from Dieter Kastovsky (Vienna) and David Denison (Manchester).

(David Hart)

Dieter Kastovsky: History of English from a Typological Perspective

Dieter Kastovsky began with an apology: the panel he was convening was no longer to be. The various participants he had invited had all had to withdraw. Though the typologies of their excuses were different – ranging from illness, to work, to family engagements unforeseen six months before – the end result was the same. What had begun as unrelated local incidents had developed into a drift of irreversible momentum. There was no alternative but to rewrite the programme and transform the panel into a workshop. In place of the participants he, Kastovsky, would argue some of his views on language change for the first part of the workshop, and then invite the floor to discuss these and other ideas for the rest of the period. As can be imagined, the participants' sundry misfortunes were the floor's gain. Believing that historical linguists should seek to provide a story – after all 'history' is etymologically related to the word 'story' – Kastovsky provided a highly stimulating, discursive account of his distinction between 'local' and 'global' language change. Examples of local change are found in the introduction into early middle English of French loans such as 'consume' / 'consumption', 'deceive' / 'deception'. The setting out of such historical facts is obviously important, and an essential task for the language historian, but diachronic analysis does not end there. The linguist must also seek the overview, the global or typological changes that chronologically encompass this succession of local changes. Thus, in any global assessment of early modern English lexical enrichment, one also needs to consider the manner in which French loan words changed English stress distribution. From being a fixed initial stress system based on the Germanic pattern, English became stress variable (e.g. 'history', 'historic', 'historicity'). Interrelationships of this nature, concerning the various different levels, should be sought and explained, since language change constitutes what Sapir calls a 'drift': "The drift of a language is constituted by the unconscious selection on the part of its speakers of those individual variations that are cumulative in some special direction. This direction may be inferred in the main from the past history

of the language" (Sapir 1921: 165-166).

Kastovsky's lively presentation was matched by an equally animated discussion from the floor. Questions and opinions revolved around two main points: on the one hand what are the global changes that need to be accounted for, and on the other hand, are there any recognised patterns, that while chronologically-limited in the textbooks, are instead a constant feature of English? As for the latter, mention was made of the Great Vowel Shift. It was pointed out that as vocalic displacement is a constant feature of the English language, the uniqueness implied in the naming of this period of vocalic change was illogical. In relation to possible typological changes, debate ranged over such matters as the general principle of linguistic economy, suggested patterns of modality (Nicola Pantaleo), and changing verbal constructions including the use of ergatives (Marina Dossena).

(Nicholas Brownlee)

ESSE5/2000 *Seminar on Text and Discourse*

On the very first day of the ESSE Conference, while the large majority of delegates were still struggling with plane delays, overweight luggage and Helsinki peculiar taxi system, the TEXT AND DISCOURSE Seminar opened up the first of its two sessions.

Italians, for sure, are very talkative and productive; this was confirmed by the fact that we held the arena for half of the seminar, with seven out of the total fifteen papers: Annalisa Baicchi and Silvia Bruti (University of Pisa, "Cataphora in written and spoken discourse: two different markedness values"), Marina Bondi (University of Modena, "The discourse function of contrastive connectors in academic abstracts"), Julia Bamford (University of Siena, "The relationship between the visual and the verbal: chalk and talk in economics lectures"), Maria Rosaria D'Acerno (Istituto Universitario Orientale Napoli, "Words and gestures"), Giuliana Diani ("The discourse functions of *I don't know* in English conversation"), Christina Samson (University of Florence, "Modality markers as metadiscourse strategy in written economics lectures"), and finally the present writer (University of

Verona, "The modal verb *can/could* in contemporary spoken British English").

Yet Italians, for sure, are also very generous and civilised, hence, we left room for a number of scholars from other nations: Hilde Hasselgård (University of Oslo, Norway, "The role of multiple themes in cohesion"), Gunther Kaltenböck (University of Vienna, Austria, "The use of it-extraposition and non-extraposition in spoken and written texts"), Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen (University of Turku, Finland, "Dialogical coherence? Patterns of cohesion in face-to-face conversation and e-mail mailing-list messages"), Jarmila Tamyikova (Palacky University, Czech Republic, "Irregularities in text-shaping: their communicative values"), Riitta Välimaa-Blum (University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis, France, "The English ϕ -plural and the Finnish partitive: non-exhaustive quantity in the cognitive model"), Tatiana Fedoulenkova (Pomorsky State University, Severodvinsk, Russia, "Biblical Idioms in written genres of discourse"), Moeko Okada (University of Lancaster, England, "Puns, wordplay, and conversation: Michael Frayn's comedy sketch, "Heart to Heart"), and Lyudmyla Oleksiyenko (Kyiv Taras Shevchenko University, Ukraine, "Questions as indirect speech acts in modern conversational discourse").

The convenors, Karin Aijmer (Göteborg University, Sweden) and Andreas Jucker (Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Germany) did an excellent job; they were strict in allotting time, copious in asking questions and soliciting discussion, quick in helping with any kind of technical problems, including reluctantly working video cameras. Their undisputed professionalism, together with the high level of papers, ensured the success of the whole seminar, to the point that lively, fruitful, spontaneous extra-sessions were improvised while sipping coffee, when browsing through books, and even during the post-conference tour to Estonia, along the medieval-looking, long-winding, narrow streets of Tallin.

(Roberta Facchinetti)

33SLE on Naturalness and Markedness in Synchrony and Diachrony

The 33rd Annual Meeting of the prestigious *Societas Linguistica Europaea* was held in Poznan under the general super-efficient supervision of Prof. Jacek Fisiak, wonderfully assisted by the teachers and staff of the well-known School of English of Adam Mickiewicz University.

The success of the Conference, which took place in the modern and perfectly suitable premises of the Centrum Kongresowe of Instytut Ochrony Roslin, was certainly due to the careful and skilled organization as well as to the high standards of the papers read.

After the Opening ceremony, the Conference started with Prof. Werner Winter's history of the *Societas* from its very beginning in Kiel in 1966 to the present day. This was not only a detailed account of the *Societas* itself but also a vivid retrospective of how linguistic studies have changed in the last few decades.

Then we divided into the parallel sessions into which the Conference was organized, ranging from Historical Linguistics to Syntax, to Pragmatics and Discourse, to Psycholinguistics and Language contact, to Lexicology, to Natural Linguistics, to Cognitive Linguistics and Translatology, to Sociolinguistics, to Literary Linguistics; finally, two workshops (one on Human-centred linguistics, the other on Prepositions) and a Round Table on Linguistic representations of national identities in Europe were also included.

Given the impossibility of being in two places at the same time, I was able to attend the Historical Linguistics and the Natural Linguistics sessions only.

Peter Trudgill (Fribourg) started the Historical linguistic session with a paper in which he argued that dialect mixture and new-dialect formation are not haphazard processes; rather they depend on the number and proportions of different variants and on the proportions of speakers of different dialects, so that predictions are possible about what the outcome of the mixture will be. These predictions, of course, will have to take into consideration also the degree of markedness of the individual variants. Piotr Jakubowski (Poznan) spoke of the dialectal distribution of some unetymological formations in early Middle English adjectival inflection; their presence in inflection constitutes a test of the system stability and coherence.

Hanna Rutkowska (Poznan) focussed on the definite and indefinite articles, their expression and non-expression, and their function in the (unfortu-

nately) often neglected *Cely Letters*. Among the most remarkable differences between Middle/early Modern English and Present-day English usage, she mentioned the frequent occurrence of the indefinite article before a numeral or of the definite article immediately before a proper noun.

The afternoon session started with Isabella Bunyatova (Kiev), who dealt with the irrationality vs. rationality in the languages of the old Germanic communities, arguing that rational and irrational ways of world perception interact in the course of language evolution. This is clearly demonstrated by the movement towards 'rationalizing' various structural schemes in the old Germanic languages, such as, e.g., the reanalysis of impersonal sentences into constructions with pronominal element (such as the change from the Old English structure 'Logical subject (dative) + Impersonal verb' to the Present one 'Subject + Predicate' or 'It + Predicate (+ that) + Subject').

In an interesting paper on the chronology and relative basicness of English colour terms, Seija Kerttula (Helsinki) took into consideration the etymology of about one hundred Present-day English colour terms, their first English occurrences and, for loanwords, the etymological data in the source language. Her conclusion was that while the Anglo-Saxons focussed on brightness in their colour naming, the focus was transferred to hue during the Norman period, and this hue-based colour terminology even grew in importance in the later evolution of this particular semantic area.

Jerzy Welna (Warsaw) concentrated on the lowering of [e] to [a] in the non-prevocalic sequence [er], a change which after 1500 seems to have undergone the opposite change of [ar] to [er]. On the basis of the Helsinki Corpus and the OED, his paper examined circumstances of the restoration of etymological [er] claiming that the reasons for the reversal of the change were much more complex than the mere impact of the written form of the Latin loanwords as maintained by the traditional theory.

Joanna Kopaczyk (Poznan) analyzed one of the most outstanding features of Middle Scots phonology, i.e. the palatalization of consonants in the neighbourhood of high vowels, a phonological process which has so far been given little attention. This is surprising since palatal consonants had phonemic and not merely allophonic status and are one of the distinctive features of Middle Scots phonology. She argued that while Scandinavian influence discouraged palatalization, as is demonstrated by Scots-English contrasting

pairs such as *kirk* vs. *church*, French and Gaelic influence on Middle Scots seems to have been much stronger and probably responsible for these changes.

This paper concluded the first day, which had its final event in the Conference dinner served in the comfortable restaurant which is part of the Centrum Kongresowe. This enabled the participants to meet, exchange opinions, socialize and of course drink a toast to one another and to the admirable organisers.

Next morning, we started with the first plenary paper ('Sources of markedness in language structures') read by Wolfgang U. Dressler (Vienna), Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kolaczyk (Poznan) and Rossella Spina (Perugia). The basic question of their talk was why and how unnatural (marked) phenomena arise in a natural language. In their approach, they inspected external evidence from diachrony, first language acquisition and socio-cultural variation. The last of these is responsible for the rise of many marked options within pragmatics and discourse, while phonostylistic variation in casual speech, due to the conflictual interaction between phonology and morphology, accounts for the rise of marked phonotactic phenomena such as hiatus or clusters (as, e.g., in the forms *tsao* and *pfrao* < *die Sau/Frau*, which have arisen in some Austrian dialects as a consequence of the reduction of the definite article *die* to /d/, later combined with word-initial fricatives to give morphotactically and morphosemantically marked opaque affricates). In morphology, markedness reversal in child language explains why and how the second conjugation subjunctive of the Italian first plural present *-iamo* was extended to the first conjugation and to the indicative. Finally, studies of first language acquisition have confirmed that marked options of adult language are acquired later than the corresponding unmarked ones (as in the overgeneralization of weak verb inflection), a fact which can be explained if we combine naturalness theory with complexity theory.

Our attention was next turned to historical semantics by Oleksandr Oguy and Victor Levitskiy (Chernivtsy); in their paper they argued that simple words are less marked than derived and compound words, as is demonstrated by the disappearance in Middle High German of 97% of compound words, of 67,6% of derived words and of only 39,3% of simple words of the Old High German lexicon.

This was followed by a paper on cognitive metaphors read by Heli Tissari (Helsinki), who analyzed the lexeme *love* in a number of corpora and who took into consideration the categorization of metaphors trying to link them to changes in people's view of the world.

The next speaker, Janusz Malak (Opole), investigated impersonal constructions in Old English, while Marit Christoffersen (Kristiansand) focussed on the fact that in Old Norse the subject of an utterance (besides being the first in the default SVO order) could be sentence final; this was probably a device of markedness, first of all of a pragmatic kind rather than a mere syntactic phenomenon.

A paper more directly connected with the history of English was read by Elzbieta Adamczyk (Poznan), who tackled the many questions raised by the eventual elimination of Siever's Law from the grammar of Old English. However, the former operation of this law resulted in regular paradigmatic alternations in Old English, as is demonstrated by the different inflectional endings for heavy and light stems, in particular in the *ja-*, *jā-* and *o-*classes.

A key-note of the day was constituted by the passionate, highly-involving Presidential Address delivered by Professor Ranko Bugarsky dealing with the problems of peace and war in Europe. The day ended with a beautiful concert, especially organized in the town centre for the participants in the Conference.

Saturday started with the second plenary speech ("Protean markedness and Procrustean explanation in historical linguistics") by John Charles Smith (Oxford). In order to assess Andersen's claim that markedness relations can be observed in every variety of linguistic change, from its inception to its completion, both in the relations among variants and in the relations that define the plethora of categories typically conditioning the gradual process by which newer forms replace older ones, Smith examined data from a variety of languages, discussing in particular the notion that the different disappearance of agreement between the past participle and a direct object in the Romance compound past tenses formed with the auxiliary 'have' may be an instance of a change which is sensitive to markedness. However, according to Smith the relatively unspecific nature of 'markedness' is the Achilles' heel of this type of explanation for linguistic change. In his opinion, in fact, even if the view that the actualization of morphosyntactic change is gradual and proceeds according to a set of hierarchies which are determined by factors rele-

vant to the change in question is well founded, the claim that they are markedness hierarchies is either uninteresting or unsubstantiated. The relation of hierarchies to a general theory of markedness is perhaps best regarded as epiphenomenal rather than phenomenal.

The Historical Linguistics session of the day began with Urszula Okulska (Poznan), who examined private letters and diaries from the early Modern English part of the Helsinki Corpus for a total number of 72,000 words in order to analyze the changes from *the which* to *which*, and from *(the) which* to *who(m)* with a personal antecedent in the language of 26 men and 21 women.

Then Marcin Kilarski (Poznan) considered the status and functions of grammatical gender; in particular he tackled claims concerning the arbitrariness of gender assignment, the realization of gender distinctions in grammar and the functional value of the category. In his opinion this is a less than central category, of which he gave us "a qualified obituary".

Last but not least was Radosław Dylewski (Poznan), who investigated the history of strong verbs in early American English, tracing the tendency to transfer strong verbs to weak conjugations and the reverse phenomenon; he also took into consideration such irregularities as the substitution of the past participle for the preterite and vice versa, as well as forms inherited from Middle and early Modern English and new forms typical of early American English.

The Natural Linguistics session started on Friday morning with Camiel Hamans (European Parliament, Brussels), who argued against the idea that only 'normal' patterns and rules of derivational morphology are to be included in morphological theory; on the contrary he claimed that also what Aronoff defined morphological "oddities", such as blendings, acronyms, clipping and 'stub' compounds, should be incorporated, not only because they are very frequent and productive in modern word formation but also because some of them (in particular clipping and 'stub' compounds) are highly regular.

Thomas Menzel (Oldenburg) tackled the many questions raised by the continuations of the I.E. **i*-declension in the Slavic languages, which clearly challenges Natural Morphology, since in all these languages there is one inflectional class which violates the parallelism between gender and inflectional class, an obvious example of markedness. However, since language-

specific phonological changes in the consonantal inventories influenced inflectional class stability, this turns out to be just another case of the continuous influence of phonology on morphology.

Next to speak was Michele Loporcaro (Zürich), who proposed a phonetically grounded, perceptual explanation of the different developments of the reflex of Proto-Romance /e/ in some southern Italian dialects. All over the south of Italy, if this vowel was followed by a high vowel metaphony changed it into a diphthong, but while in the Apulian dialect of Altamura this diphthong was later monophthongized, in the Calabrian dialect of San Giovanni in Fiore it merged with preexisting diphthongs. However, these two apparently paradoxical processes can be easily reconciled if we take into account the role of perception in the causation of sound change and the interaction with structural patterns already established in the language-specific system such as, for instance, the syllable structure constraints obtaining in the system of Altamurano.

The paradigmatic status of obligatory prothetic [e]-insertion in L1 Spanish and/or Basque learners of L2 English (as in *student* > [e]student, stop > [e]stop, etc.) was the topic of the next contribution, from Miren Lourdes Oñederra (University of the Basque Country). She argued that this is undoubtedly a case of paradigmatic context-sensitive process of the L1 becoming visible only through interlinguistic contact. Perceptual aspects as well as phonetic motivation along the lines of syllable structure were taken into account to come to the more general conclusion that if this and other processes, e.g. the widespread final obstruent devoicing, are allowed a paradigmatic status some open questions of current phonological literature can be more satisfactorily answered.

On the last day of the Conference, Livio Gaeta (Turin) gave an interesting talk on grammaticalization, which, he remarked, represents a bridge from diachronic to synchronic linguistics and the essence of which is the conventionalization of initially natural structures. On the other hand, however, grammaticalization can also be seen as conditioned by catastrophic changes in grammar leading to very unstable states of affairs, i.e. it is a repair strategy to reduce markedness in grammar, and this implies a reanalysis driven by principles of naturalness.

Next to speak was Heide Wegener (Potsdam), who dealt with the impor-

tant role of transparency in German morphology, in particular in noun plural formation. While generative grammarians consider the *s*-plural to be the default one despite its very low frequency in German, Wegener argued that the peculiarities of the *s*-plural can simply be explained by transparency, as is demonstrated by the fact that onomatopoeic nouns, proper names and unassimilated borrowings take *s*-plural, which is overgeneralized in child language. On the other hand, the non-occurrence of *s*-plurals inside compounds can be explained with universal constraints on syllable structure and with preference laws for syllable contact, which require transparency.

Before the coffee break, the present writer (Parma) talked about the productivity of the Old English nominal *a*-class applying morphological naturalness theories. I argued that the reasons for this productivity (as demonstrated by the Present-day English default *s*-plural) are to be found first in the word-based inflection of this class, which is also typical of present-day English nominal and verbal inflection and which is more transparent than stem-inflection, and secondly in the non-ambiguity of its nominative/accusative plural marker (i.e. *-as*), which showed no syncretism with other casual markers, whereas in all other classes it was more or less extensively syncretic. Last but not least, even if Mayerthaler claims that frequency does not play any significant role in developments of this type, I strongly believe that an inflectional class which is considerably larger than the others in a system inevitably tends to attract neologisms and loanwords as well as lexical items originally belonging to other classes, and this typically was the case with the *a*-class, which contained over 50% of the Old English lexicon.

After the coffee break (which, as on all other morning and afternoon similar occasions, provocatively displayed large trays full of various kinds of delicious biscuits) I had the honour of chairing the last session, which scheduled two Russian colleagues. The former, Natalia Gagarina (Berlin), dealt with the inflectional classes of Russian verbs. She proposed the hierarchical scheme of verbs in a bottom-up manner, starting with microclasses, which in turn form subclasses constituting a macroclass, i.e. the highest and most general type of class, which consists of several hierarchically lower (sub)classes and microclasses. The paper also addressed the particular problem of the different degrees of productivity of inflectional classes using first language acquisition data.

The latter, Maria Voeikova (Vienna), examined the problem of language-specific preferences in the acquisition of case forms by children. In particular she claimed that the order in the acquisition of cases seems to be determined by their different functional importance rather than by their formal shape. Regarding typologically different languages, she argued that systems with a low number of casual distinctions (usually four, as for instance in modern German) combine them with case marking on articles, which results in a long-drawn-out process. Languages with more distinctions (e.g. the Slavic and Baltic ones, with six or seven cases) usually distinguish between 'core' and 'marginal' cases, the former of course being acquired earlier. In agglutinating languages such as Hungarian and Turkish, the lack of fusion helps children to acquire case markers relatively early and easily, a fact which confirms the importance of biuniqueness in language acquisition.

Finally, mention must be made of the paper read in the Language Contact session by another Italian participant, Maria Rosaria D'Acierno (Naples) on the use of tenses by Italian university students of English, which unfortunately I was unable to listen to.

In general the Conference, with its over 100 papers exploring many different sectors of linguistics, proved to be very fruitful as well as highly enjoyable; it also enabled the participants to exchange views on recent and current scholarly research and to be acquainted with one another during the 'social events'.

The 34th SLE Meeting is announced to take place in Leuven in 2001 (August 29th-September 2nd); the general topic is *Language study in Europe at the turn of the millennium: Towards the integration of cognitive, historical and cultural approaches to language*. For further information apply to Bert Comillie (Secretary), SLE Meeting 2001, Departement Linguïstiek, Blijde-Inkomststraat 21, B-3000 Leuven (Belgium).

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(Antonio Bertacca)

33SLE on Naturalness and Markedness in Synchrony and Diachrony

Professor Jacek Fisiak, the founder of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE), is the Director of Poznan University and is one of the main scholars in the field of Linguistics. He is the promoter of this conference, which has enriched us greatly on many sides: scientific, academic, and also personal. A nice welcome was offered to us at the airport by some students and by Prof. Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kolaczyk. She was, with Prof. Jacek Fisiak and Prof. Marcin Krygier, one of the most active co-ordinators of the conference, which, in fact, would not have been possible without her enthusiasm and professionalism.

The 'Linguistic Adventure' started with a Plenary Paper delivered by Werner Winter (University of Kiel), who gave us an historical perspective of the society by linking it to the political development of Poland and Europe. A Polish student of the School of English translated this presentation into Polish, thus permitting the audience to taste the real culture of this country. As the political scene changed so the "Societas Linguistica Europaea" had to face different realities. Nevertheless, the difficult phases it had to overcome never seemed to reduce the scientific interest the society had achieved all over the world. The ideas that were behind the founding of the SLE in 1966 were very well illustrated throughout this introductory paper and Prof. Fisiak, the founder of the School, was proud to name all the scientists who had joined the SLE.

The perfect Conference Centre could hold many people from different countries: both speakers and listeners, who alternated in order to give and to listen to papers. There were twelve (12) different sections with a hundred and eighteen (118) speakers, covering topics such as: 1) *Historical Linguistics* (Peter Trudgill's Plenary paper, then Larissa Naiditch, Olga Ossipova, Janusz Malak, Heli Tissari, Seija Kertulla, Heli Tissari, etc); 2) *Syntax* (Brigitta Haftka, Nicole Delbecque, Rivka Halevy, Ivanka Petkova, Jacek Witcos, etc); 3) *Natural Linguistics* (Sarka Simackova, Michele Loporcaro and Biagio Mele, Livio Gaeta, Antonio Bertacca, Maria Voeikova, etc); 4) *Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis* (Anna Duszak, Dorota Rut-Kluz, Marcin Luczak, Elena Filimonova, etc); 5) *SLA*,

Psycholinguistics and Language Contact (Larysa A. Komarnicka and Olga Y. Ivasyjuk, Bruce Duncan MacQueen, Maria Rosaria D'Acerno, etc); 6) *Human-Centred Linguistics* (a debate about a new perspective on Linguistics mainly held by Professor Victor H. Yngve University of Chicago and Janusz Malak University of Poznan, then Anna Cislo, Mati Hint, etc); 7) *Lexicology* (Katrin Mutz, Jens Erik MogensenPavlov Stekauer); 8) *Prepositions* (Viktor I. Pekar, Candida Silva-joaquim, ignasi Navarro I Ferrando, Luis Alberto Gonzales, etc); 9) *Literary Linguistics* (Helen Aristar Dry, Jacek Fabizak, etc.); 10) *Linguistic Representations of National Identities in Europe* (Ingrid Hudabunigg, Krzysztof Kosecki); 11) *Cognitive Linguistics and Translatology* (Dorotea Mecler-Ott, Pawel Cichawa, Anna Slon, Vera Zabolkina), and 12) *Sociolinguistics* (Sharon Ash, helge Omdal, Martin Skjckkeland, Helge Omdal). Plenary papers were also delivered by: John Charles Smith: Protean markedness and procrustean explanation in historical linguistics, Wolfgang U. Dressler and Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kolaczyk: Sources of markedness in language structures. Then a Presidential address by Ranko Bugarski: Discourses of war and peace, which again focused on historical perspectives. On Friday evening a concert in Aula AM in the centre of town reunited the researchers of the SLE celebrating their 33rd scientific meeting with those of the Polish Linguistic Society celebrating their 75th anniversary.

(Maria Rosaria D'Acerno)

4. Reviews and bibliographical information

§ *Vienna English Working Papers (VIEWS)*, vol. 9, no.1, August 2000

The editors of *VIEWS* open this first number of "the not-so-new millennium" by proposing a range of topics of remarkable scientific weight which in fact make it, with their own words, "a real bumper issue". Here is a brief presentation of the contents:

- Leiv Egil Breivik, "On relative clauses and locative expressions in English existential phrases" criticizes the findings of Fox and Thompson's paper, "A discourse explanation of the grammar of relative clause in English conversation", *Language* 66.297-316, 1990 comparing them with his own discussion of the data presented in the LOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen) Corpus of British English and in the Survey of English Usage at University of College London.
- Bryan Jenner, "A footnote on the trochee" responds to Niki Ritt's paper on the same topic published in the previous number of *VIEWS* by recalling the seminal, pedagogically productive contribution made by two "old" authors, Abercrombie 1964, 1965 and Albrow, 1968.
- Hans Platzer, "Being 'involved' in Business English" explores the difference between 'model' and 'apprentice' business letters drawing on his own collected corpus of students' tasks.
- Barbara Seidlhofer, "Mind the gap: English as a mother-tongue vs English as a *lingua franca*" puts forward a strong advocacy for the completion of the Vienna EFL Corpus whose inspiring broadlines she offers for debate.
- Daniel Spichinger, "From anglocentrism to TEIL: reflections on our English program" outlines a possible course on English as an international language utilizing his own experience of MA studies and challenging in this light the present restrictive configuration of English/American Departments.

On a whole, a stimulating reading which demands interactive contributions to be addressed to the *VIEWS* editors (e-mail: nikolaus.ritt@univie.ac.at; fax: +43 1 4277 9424).

(N. Pantaleo)

5. A Mock-History of the English Language (via L. Fodde)

In the beginning there was an island off the coast of Europe. It had no name, for the natives had no language, only a collection of grunts and gestures that roughly translated to "Hey!" "Gimme!" and "Pardon me, but would you happen to have any woad?"

Then the Romans invaded it and called it Britain, because the natives were "blue, nasty, br(u)tish and short." This was the start of the importance of u (and its mispronunciation) to the language. After building some roads, killing off some of the nasty little blue people and walling up the rest, the Romans left, taking the language instruction manual with them.

The British were bored so they invited the barbarians to come over (under Hengist) and "Horsa" Roundabit. The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes brought slightly more refined vocal noises.

All of the vocal sounds of this primitive language were onomatopoeic, being derived from the sounds of battle. Consonants were derived from the sounds of weapons striking a foe. "Sss" and "th" for example are the sounds of a draw cut, "k" is the sound of a solidly landed axe blow, "b", "d", are the sounds of a head dropping onto rock and sod respectively, and "gl" is the sound of a body splashing into a bog.

Vowels (which were either gargles in the back of the throat or sharp exhalations) were derived from the sounds the foe himself made when struck.

The barbarians had so much fun that decided to stay for postrevel. The British, finding that they had lost future use of the site, moved into the hills to the west and called themselves Welsh.

The Irish, having heard about language from Patrick, came over to investigate. When they saw the shiny vowels, they pried them loose and took them home. They then raided Wales and stole both their cattle and their vowels, so the poor Welsh had to make do with sheep and consonants. ("Old Ap Ivor hadde a farm, L Y L Y W! And on that farm he hadde somme gees. With a dd dd here and a dd dd there...")

To prevent future raids, the Welsh started calling themselves "Cymry" and gave even longer names to their villages. They figured if no one could pronounce the name of their people or the names of their towns, then no one

would visit them. (The success of the tactic is demonstrated still today. How many travel agents have you heard suggest a visit to scenic Llyddumlmunnyddthllywddu?)

Meantime, the Irish brought all the shiny new vowels home to Erin. But of course they didn't know that there was once an instruction manual for them, so they scattered the vowels throughout the language purely as ornaments. Most of the new vowels were not pronounced, and those that were pronounced differently depending on which kind of consonant they were either preceding or following. The Danes came over and saw the pretty vowels bedecking all the Irish words. "Ooooh!" they said. They raided Ireland and brought the vowels back home with them. But the Vikings couldn't keep track of all the Irish rules so they simply pronounced all the vowels "oouuo."

In the meantime, the French had invaded Britain, which was populated by descendants of the Germanic Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. After a generation or two, the people were speaking German with a French accent and calling it English. Then the Danes invaded again, crying "Oouuo! Oouuo!" burning abbeys, and trading with the townspeople.

The Britons that the Romans hadn't killed intermarried with visiting Irish and became Scots. Against the advice of their travel agents, they decided to visit Wales. (The Scots couldn't read the signposts that said, "This way to Lyddyllwyyddymmlwylldd," but they could smell sheep a league away.) The Scots took the sheep home with them and made some of them into haggis. What they made with the others we won't say, but Scots are known to this day for having hairy legs.

The former Welsh, being totally bereft, moved down out of the hills and into London. Because they were the only people in the Islands who played flutes instead of bagpipes, they were called Tooters. This made them very popular. In short order, Henry Tooter got elected King and began popularizing ornate, unflattering clothing.

Soon, everybody was wearing ornate, unflattering clothing, playing the flute, speaking German with a French accent, pronouncing all their vowels "oouuo" (which was fairly easy given the French accent), and making lots of money in the wool trade. Because they were rich, people smiled more (remember, at this time, "Beowulf" and "Canterbury Tales" were the only

tabloids, and gave generally favourable reviews even to Danes). And since it is next to impossible to keep your vowels in the back of your throat (even if you do speak German with a French accent) while smiling and saying "ooouoo" (try it, you'll see what I mean), the Great Vowel Shift came about and transformed the English language.

The very richest had their vowels shifted right out in front of their teeth. They settled in Manchester and later in Boston. There were a few poor souls who, cut off from the economic prosperity of the wool trade, continued to swallow their vowels. They wandered the countryside in misery and despair until they came to the docks of London, where their dialect devolved into the incomprehensible language known as Cockney. Later, it was taken overseas and further brutalized by merging it with Dutch and Italian to create Brooklynese.