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NEWSLETTER

no. 31 November 2002

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All materials to be published (reports, reviews, short articles etc.) should be sent to the above address.

Editor's note

I am sorry I must acknowledge the poor size of the present issue of SLIN NL, due to lack of contributions which I have repeatedly lamented on various occasions. Since this little undertaking only lives on the readers' participation and colleagues' voluntary cooperation when the latter diminishes the result is necessarily unsatisfactory. Its survival is not a must, of course. But if you believe that it is worthwhile to go on please give help by offering reviews, general information on linguistic meetings, reports etc.. Let me add sincere thanks to affectionate contributors, on the basis of whose support I have decided to start this rather wilful though largely solitary enterprise. I am especially sorry for the near-cancelling of the Conference announcement section.

N.P.

1. SLIN Conferences and Seminars

11th National Conference of SLIN, organized by Professor Antonio Bertacca, is devoted to oral forms of English throughout history and is accordingly styled *Historical linguistic studies of spoken English*. The conference which will be held in the premises of the **University of Pisa** is definitely set on **5 to 7 June, 2003**. The guest speakers invited to give keynote lectures are Dr. David Britain from University of Essex, who will speak on "Trends in non-standard British English in the last century", and Professor Katarzyna Dziubalska of Poznan University who will deal with "Phonotactics of consonant clusters in the history of English". Here are, reprinted for anybody concerned's use, the topical areas suggested for papers:

1. *Historical Phonology*: reconstruction of past phonetic forms and phonological systems; sound changes; grapho-phonological correspondences and evolution.

2. *Historical Dialectology*: linguistic variation within speech-dominated dialects; interdialectal contact and the spread of change; non-standard forms in speech-based texts such as private letters and dialogues.
3. *Historical Sociolinguistics*: diffusion of sound changes; morphosyntactical variation and change in non-standard, speech-dominated dialects.
4. *Historical Pragmatics*: linguistic forms and discourse structures influenced by the rules and strategies of face-to-face interaction.
5. *Linguistic Historiography*: early attention to spoken rather than written forms in grammars and dictionaries; attempts to write histories of the spoken language; early collectors of spoken forms; transcribers of dialogues.

One-page full abstracts may be sent to reach Antonio Bertacca's e-mail (beran@ec.unipi.it) not later than **31 January, 2003**.

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

ICEHD 1 (First International Conference on English Historical Dialectology), University of Bergamo (Italy), 4-6 September, 2003

The aim of the Conference is to bring together scholars working on geo-historical variation in English. To this end, invited lectures, workshops and panels will be organized in such a way that change in the development of varieties may be discussed from different perspectives simultaneously: not only diachronic and diatopic, but also diastratic (that is, how variation in time and place was in fact also influenced by the social milieu of speakers/writers and their interlocutors). Methodological issues are also expected to be highlighted and may include those developed for the study of historical vernaculars other than English. Our aim is to have a focused programme, albeit relatively small (approx. 25 papers). This will also allow us to set up a schedule that grants individual presentations a slightly longer time than the 20 minutes normally allotted, with plenty of time for debate.

Keynote Speakers: Professors Roger Lass (Cape Town) and Michael Benskin (Oslo).

International Scientific Committee: Michael Benskin, Markku Filppula, Margaret Laing, Anneli Meurman-Solin, Keith Williamson, Maurizio Gotti, Richard Dury and Marina Dossena.

Organizing Committee: Maurizio Gotti, Richard Dury and Marina Dossena. Further information is available in the conference website: <http://www.unibg.it/anglistica/slin/ehd1-home.html>. Address for correspondence: Prof. Marina Dossena, Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere, Università degli Studi di Bergamo Via Salvecchio, 19 – 24129 Bergamo (Italy)

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3. Conference Reports (M. Dossena, I. Halliday & M. Sturiale)

Two reports are given below: the first by Marina Dossena (University of Bergamo) deals with a Conference – to call it “meeting” seems to me rather reductive, given its remarkable format – on “Methods in Dialectology” held in Joensuu (Finland) on 5-9 August; the second is due to Massimo Sturiale and Iain Halliday of Catania University and covers, more comprehensively, the 12th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, the major traditional appointment for historians of English, which took place in Glasgow on August 21 to 26.

Methods in Dialectology XI (Joensuu, Finland, 5-9 August 2002)

Summer 2002 will probably be remembered by English linguists (both synchronic and diachronic) for the excellent series of conferences that ran from mid-July (Middle English in Vienna) to late August (ICEHL in Glasgow) and indeed to early September (ESSE in Strasbourg)... Among these, the 11th Conference on Methods in Dialectology provided an intriguing bridge between synchronic and diachronic approaches, in that both aspects were taken into consideration in the same event.

In addition, the variety of languages discussed in the various papers provided fruitful opportunities for debate on methodological aspects, as per the guideline suggested by the title of the series itself. With over 200 participants, the Conference offered 5 plenary lectures, 9 workshops, 10 posters and more than 120 papers – apparently daunting figures, but which a splendid team of organizers handled beautifully and very skilfully: something unsurprising when we observe that their leader was as well-known a scholar as Markku Filppula, Dean of the Faculty of Languages at the University of Joensuu, and one of his closest collaborators was Juhani Klemola, recently appointed a professor at the University of Vaasa: another ‘household name’ from the Finnish school of English linguistics. Participants were unanimous

in expressing their thanks for such an inspiring event at a venue that also proved extremely significant in relation to the choice of topic for the Conference: ‘Languages across Borders’. Karelia, the region in which Joensuu is located, is indeed greatly influenced by its collocation ‘on the border’ – whether that is meant politically, culturally or geographically. On the one hand, Karelians have always been deeply (though at times quite painfully) aware of the proximity of the Russian border; on the other, the proximity of forests, rivers and lakes, and indeed of the ‘Great North’ gives a special atmosphere to the city and indeed to the University campus itself – cross-country skiing paths just outside classrooms and offices, the vivid light of summer mornings on deep-blue lakes, or indeed the persistent glow of summer dusks are sights and experiences found in few other universities. As for the possible objection that ‘surely the winter is far less magic? what about those endless winter nights?!’ – I am sure the snow must add a special glimmer to that too – at least, that’s what one imagines looking at the broad, straight roads, the warm-looking wooden houses and the lowering fir-trees... All the social events were distinctly in tune with the special milieu, from the Conference Reception at the Art Gallery (with Karelian song and music) to the Conference excursions to Koli National Park, the Ruunaa Rapids or indeed to the Valamo Monastery in Russia: an intriguing blend of nature and culture at all times.

But to return to the academic contents of the Conference – the plenary lectures included papers by Jenny Cheshire (‘Syntactic and pragmatic variation across borders’), Ruth King (‘Crossing grammatical borders: Tracing the path of contact-induced change’), Dennis Preston (‘Dialects across internal boundaries: acquisition, loss and bi- and multidialectalism’) and Peter Auer (‘The construction of linguistic borders and the linguistic construction of borders’). Among workshops, despite inevitable clashes with equally appealing papers, the present writer was able to be present (at least most of the time) in the ones on ‘Dialectology and Typology’ (coordinated by Bernd Kortmann), ‘Dialect Contact and History on the North Sea Littoral’ (with papers by Terttu Nevalainen, Patricia Poussa and Joan Beal), ‘Recording and Analysing Linguistic Data’, and ‘Computational Techniques in Dialectometry’. In addition, the workshop on Irish English (with papers by Ray Hickey and many others) proved special in being coor-

minated by Markku Filppula himself – i.e., the author of a recent Grammar of Irish English and the promoter of several very promising projects on Celtic Englishes. As regards English historical dialectology, papers were read by Anthony Warner ('Distinguishing types of inversion in Middle English'), Anneli Meurman-Solin (presenting research conducted in cooperation with Keith Williamson: 'Towards a reconstruction of the dialect continuum of 16th-century Scots') and the present writer on her lately launched project of collecting a corpus of 19th-century Scottish correspondence.

The scholarly breadth and depth of the Conference is probably best represented iconically by the book of abstracts that was distributed to participants – an actual volume of 236 pages. In fact, all abstracts are also available in the Conference website – this can be reached from the SLIN website (follow 'our links', 'conferences', then 'archive'). As we mentioned above, the organizers thought of absolutely everything and indeed plans are already under way for the publication of the conference proceedings. As regards the next conference in this series, this will be held in 2005 in New Brunswick (Canada). When details become available, a link will immediately be added to the 'Conferences' page in the SLIN website – watch that space!

Marina Dossena

ICEHL 12, Glasgow, 21–26 August 2002

There were many remarkable features to this conference, not least the Glaswegian climate, which for five out of six days provided sun and cheerfulness that belied the city's (and the country's) stereotyped image. The local sense of humour lived up to its reputation, however, with several locals apologizing for the terrible weather – a mix of superstition and deadpan irony. With some 180 delegates attending some 130 presentations, the logistics of organizing the event must have posed considerable problems, and these were all handled professionally and unobtrusively. (If there were any major panics or disasters, we missed them.)

Parallel sessions are of course inevitable and while the present writers have made every attempt to provide comprehensive coverage, there will inevitably be gaps.

Day 1 (Wednesday 21st August)

The pre-conference workshops involved a series of interesting presentations on The Digitisation of Middle English Manuscripts (Graham Caie), the Middle English Grammar Project (Merja Stenroos, Simon Horobin and Jeremy Smith), and The Protean Corpus Meets Historical Linguistic Atlas (Keith Williamson, Margaret Laing, Roger Lass and Anneli Meurman-Solin).

The demonstration of the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English (Susan Pintzuk, Ann Taylor and Anthony Warner), originally planned for the afternoon, attracted so many participants that an extra morning session had to be scheduled. An introduction by Ann Taylor was followed by a practical session in the university computer lab. As of the date of the conference, the entire corpus of Old English prose had been parsed and made available electronically, although owing to difficulties in syntactic representation the poetry was still being worked on. The program, employing fairly "flat" syntactic representations, requires the user to first set a "syntactic area" parameter (i.e. all clauses, all NPs, all embedded clauses, etc.) and then uses Boolean variables ranging over syntactic categories and lexical items as well as over the notions of (immediate) precedence and/or dominance, to search for all the relevant items. Data sets can be stored and then be narrowed down by progressive searches. A note of warning: the program is designed to run under UNIX and will require to be adapted for those of us whose universities provide only Microsoft or Mac applications.

The first day came to an end with a buffet supper in the premises of the wonderful Glasgow University buildings. Nice food, a few drinks and chats with old and new friends.

Day 2 (Thursday 22nd August)

The first event of the morning was Olga Fischer's (University of Amsterdam) interesting and provocative plenary lecture – "Grammar Change versus Language Change: is there a difference?". The suggestion in this lively and entertaining presentation was that any attempt to tell the whole history (and story) of language development necessarily involves

considering language and grammar systems, environmental stimulus and innate language ability. The Universal Grammar alone cannot hope to be the only benchmark used to measure and explain grammar and/or language change. This broad-based, inclusive approach seemed to leave some generative scholars feeling hard done by, but it did provide an interesting start to the conference.

The parallel sessions began after the morning coffee break.

Carole Hough (University of Glasgow) chaired the session which hosted three speakers who dealt mainly with semantics. The first was Michiko Ogura (Chiba University) who presented a paper entitled "Scops express emotion - a word study of Old and Middle English alliterative poems". Using examples taken from *A Thesaurus of Old English*, it aimed to illustrate and comment ME general supersession of OE basic words of emotion by native synonyms or ON and OF loan words. Then came Heli Tissari (University of Helsinki) who delivered a stimulating paper on a historical semantic comparison between the two verbs "like" and "love". Finally, Ferdinand von Mengden (Freie Universität Berlin) focused his attention on Old English numerals.

Elena Seoane-Posse (University of Santiago de Compostela) dealt with the evolution of scientific British and American English, with special reference to recent and ongoing changes in the use of the passive voice. Effective use was made of a variety of corpora together with intelligently-chosen examples from scientific papers and some style guides, many of which tracked down on the Internet. Larisa Oldireva Gustafsson (Uppsala University) also dealt with the passive voice in scientific writing, concentrating, however, on nineteenth-century English and making use of the one tenth of CONCE (Corpus of Nineteenth-century English) which contains scientific texts to show that by this century the passive form was well entrenched with no significant evolution in its use. The findings were analyzed in considerable detail, touching on construct, tense and mood with some interesting observations on lexical and phrasal association with passive forms. Amanda Pounder (University of Calgary) gave an intriguing consideration of the haplology phenomenon in English adverb formation, focussing on deadjectival adverbs, adverbs in sequence, and euphonic considerations.

Time for a quick lunch break and we were all ready for a new session early in the afternoon. Terttu Nevalainen (University of Helsinki) chaired the group consisting of: Clara Molina (Universidad Autónoma Madrid), Yoko Iyeri (Kyoto University) and Arja Nurmi (University of Helsinki). Molina was the first to start and she read an interesting paper on the diachronic transition of *sorry* from lexical to grammatical status. Iery presented her research on the development of the verb *forbid* and the expression *God forbid*. Nurmi dealt with the use of modal auxiliaries *Will* and *Shall*, presenting an ongoing research based on the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* and on the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*.

Kathryn Allan (University of Glasgow) opened the session chaired by Irene Wotherspoon (University of Glasgow) and provided us with some fascinating thoughts regarding the metaphorical connections between intelligence and the senses. From Old English through to the present day, the semantics of intelligence provide many startling figurative uses and seem to rely almost exclusively on metaphor. Rita Silcikyte (Central European University) used King Alfred's translations of Boethius to delve into Old English lexemes for human cognition, showing how the accretion of glosses and commentaries added to the texts themselves. Isabel de la Cruz Cabanillas and Cristina Tejedor Martínez (University of Alcalá) provided an entertaining summary of domestic fowl metaphors used to denote human beings.

The second afternoon session was opened by Andreas Fischer's (Universität Zürich) surprise plenary lecture "Non olet" on semantic and conceptual categories for "toilet" (this being just one of the many synonyms listed on the handout). Understandably, this lively presentation produced a fair amount of laughter, but also provided a fascinating excursus through the registers and through history, from the OE *utgang* to the PDE *washroom*.

Letizia Vezzosi (University of Perugia) read a paper on the development of the English reflexive system, and drawing an analysis of OE, ME and EmodE texts to illustrate the grammaticalization process.

After an interesting day, we all met in the City Chambers – splendid example of Victorian architecture – for the Lord Provost's Reception. As recommended by the organisers after the event we were "free to explore the wide range of restaurants in the City Centre" and so we did.

Day 3 (Friday 23rd August)

In the first part of the morning, one of the workshops took place. "Historical Pragmatics" involved, among others, Laurel J. Brinton (University of British Columbia) with a contribution on "Historical pragmatics and the diachronic study of pragmatic markers: a reassessment"; Claire Cowie (University of Sheffield) spoke about "Morphological productivity and orality: -wise in the British National Corpus"; Ursula Lenker (LMU München) focused her attention on truth intensifiers (*sohlice*, verily and truly) and John Myhill (University of Haifa) gave his interesting and stimulating contribution to the study of "The development of impersonal modality in American English". A coffee break and we were all ready for the second part of the morning sessions. Our report on the Historical Pragmatics workshop, unfortunately for our readers, will not be complete, because, as often happens in big Conferences with parallel sessions, the overlapping of lectures made attendance at all of them impossible.

Lilo Moessner (RWTH Aachen) chaired the session on phonetics with contributions by Trinidad Guzmán-González (University of León), Nikolaus Ritt and Herbert Schendl (University of Vienna) and Derek Britton and Keith Williamson (University of Edinburgh). Guzmán-González's leading point was a reconsideration of one of the English historical linguist's favourite topics, the GVS. She gave full evidence for a re-consideration of the theory related to this fascinating and controversial topic. Ritt and Schendl, on the other hand, made the case for "A Short Vowel Shift in Early Modern English". The last duo-speakers from the University of Edinburgh presented "A review of *Northern Fronting* and its development in England and Scotland" with a large range of examples to "leuk oot yows about".

Julie Coleman (University of Leicester) chaired a session dealing with loanwords and *wh*-relatives. Philip Durkin (Oxford University Press) spoke on "Loanword etymologies in the third edition of the *OED*: towards a classification". The complexities and the responsibilities of lexicography were clearly evident in this presentation, but so too were the innate fascination surrounding the subject (bringing a language to some sort of order is a monumental and intriguing task) and the necessary enthusiasm of those who choose to work at it. The stylistic conventions adopted in the third edition are of crucial importance for future study of the history of the language.

Caroline Gevaert (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) read a paper dedicated to a lexically specific range of loanwords: "Conquered by angry French? French loanwords in the Middle English field of anger". Interesting here was the suggestion that the loanword phenomenon may well extend beyond purely lexical matters and into the conceptual and stylistic fields as well. Patricia Poussa (University of Umeå) presented "Towards a unified explanation for the rise of various *wh*-relatives in the history of English", with a diachronic reach spreading from Middle through Modern English and into the traditional dialect of East Anglia. The suggestion was that the reason behind the choice of these *wh*-relatives was partly a phonotactic one, influenced, for example, by wear on the first consonant of ME relatives.

Amanda Pounder (University of Calgary) chaired the following session in which Julie Coleman (University of Leicester) gave attention to a specialist area of lexicography: "Eighteenth-century Cant and Slang Dictionaries: a statistical approach", making use of systematic and statistical analysis of dictionary entries to suggest not only the criteria that lay behind the compilers' choices of words, but also to provide a view of their understanding of the scope and function of the language they were concentrating on. Susan Kermas (University of Lecce) read an interesting paper on "Homophones and the Stabilization of English Orthography in Nineteenth-century and Early Twentieth-century English". Concentrating on three pairs of homophones in the banking and finance sector (*check/cheque*, *draught/draft*, *ensure/insure*), and with detailed consideration of lexicographical sources, this research provided a most stimulating insight into one of the nicest peculiarities – and one of the most confusing for learners and native speakers alike – in the evolution of the English language. Phonemic vs etymological orthography has always been and will always remain a difficult area that requires more clarification through such work. Jane Hodson (University of Sheffield) granted new life to a subject matter not renowned for its vitality and fascination: "Of dashes, exclamations, and interrogations: gender, politics and the punctuation in the late eighteenth century". In the eighteenth century punctuation was often singled out as an element in writing that provided a grounding for prejudice against women writers' work. The results of Hodson's research show that there certainly is

a question of difference in punctuation – a question and a difference worthy of further investigation.

On Friday afternoon delegates had the choice of two tours: one in the city under the rain (our only rainy day), to visit various sites associated with Charles Rennie Mackintosh; the other out in the country (without rain) for the Glengoyne walk and distillery tour. While there was no whisky tasting at the Glasgow School of Art and the Queen's Cross Church, the Mackintosh tour did provide plenty of artistic and cultural stimuli.

Day 4 (Saturday 24th August)

Bettelou Los (Vrije University, Amsterdam) chaired one of the three morning sessions where the following speakers read their interesting, stimulating papers: Anthony Warner (University of York), Michio Hosaka (Nihon University) and Bjørg Bækken (University of Bergen). Warner's paper dealt with periphrastic DO, where internal linguistic factors together with internally defined stylistic factors operating in negative and interrogative contexts were examined in relation to any underlying grammatical change. Hosaka's paper was a contribution to the literature on English Verb Movement loss: data derived from the Helsinki Corpus and PPCME2 were analysed to examine the development of expletive *there*, modal auxiliaries, periphrastic *do* to supply for the loss Verb Movement forms. The result of his enquiry showed positive evidence for a structural identification which took the place of morphological through the emergence of some functional explanation of word order variation in Old and Middle English. Finally, Bækken concentrated on "Aspects of word order in 17th century English" and once again periphrastic DO was in the spotlight.

Caren Sanders (University of Zürich) gave attention to an area of the history of English that has long been neglected as an area of interest – advertising. This paper, "The global structure of 18th-century medical advertisements", focussed on one specific subject area and drew on material from the Zürich English Newspaper Corpus, which contains some 368 medical notices out of a total of over 2000 advertisements published between 1671 and 1791. Stylistic and formal developments of the genre over this period are extre-

mely interesting and certainly worth further attention.

Among the afternoon sessions the present writers attended María Rodríguez-Gil's talk on the eighteenth century female grammarian Ann Fisher. Fisher, so far considered to be the first English woman grammarian with her grammar, probably first published in 1745 and which appeared in its 32nd edition in 1801, played an important role in the teaching of English in the eighteenth century.

Marina Dossena (University of Bergamo) presented a paper on modality in Older Scots. Her corpus-based research (*Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* and *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots*) mainly concentrated on the central modal *would*, thus highlighting certain elements such as: spelling forms, morpho-syntactic characteristics, semantic and pragmatic values. This session was part of a longer programme of academic celebrations for the completion of DOST (the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*), the focal points of which had been two plenary lectures: one by Marace Dareau (Edinburgh) on the changes in editorial style since the inception of this important lexicographical project under the auspices of Sir William Craigie (joint editor of the OED); the other by Anneli Meurman-Solin (University of Helsinki) on the typology of clause linkage in the history of Scots.

The evening was characterised by two important social events. First, Oxford University Press hosted a reception in the premises of the Hunterian Museum Main Gallery and then came the Conference Dinner which took place in the splendour of Bute Hall. The menu was perfect, but what made the event particularly thrilling was the ceilidh and the dancing.

Day 5 (Sunday 25th August)

The workshop on "Radical approaches to the study of English 1700–1900" provided a series of surprising and stimulating accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century grammarians which belie the traditional view of the study of English as always having been a prerogative of the bourgeoisie and the upper classes. Chaired by Joan Beal (University of Sheffield) and Carol Percy (University of Toronto), the session included contributions from Jane Hodson (University of Sheffield) on Joseph Priestly, Richard Steadman-

Jones (University of Sheffield) on James Gilchrist, Martina Häcker (University of Konstanz) on James Adams and María Rodríguez-Gil (University of Las Palmas) on Ann Fisher. Joan Beal and Carol Percy discussed Thomas Spence and Eleanor Fenn respectively.

Michael Benskin (University of Oslo) gave a plenary paper – “Chancery Standard” – that was in many ways a model of rigorous research methods combined with vigorous, highly effective presentation. This was historical linguistics as both painstaking detective work and breathtakingly incisive identification of mistaken interpretation that has influenced entire generations of scholars.

In the afternoon, Markku Filppula (University of Joensuu) opened the session chaired by Ans van Kemenade (University of Nijmegen) with a paper on the English progressive forms. Particular attention was given to the uses and expansion of the domains of use of progressive form especially with certain kinds of stative verbs – related to different areas such as, for example, intellectual states or cognition, states of emotion or attitude, perception or bodily sensation and so on – and modal auxiliaries, mainly *would* /*d/used* (to) and *shall/will/’ll*. Among the factors analysed to explain the increase in frequencies were the direct and indirect influence of ‘Celtic Englishes’ on other dialects, the ‘universals of language contact’ and the ‘language-internal drift’. The following speaker was Ana Navalpotro-Gómez (University of Santiago de Compostela) who focussed her attention on one of PDE expressions of imminence i.e. *be on the point of + V-ing/N* tracing its history and evolution. The presentation was accompanied by an exhaustive number of examples mainly taken from *The Helsinki Corpus* for the diachronic part and from the OED. The main aim of this paper was to analyse *be on the point of + V-ing/N* either as a case of grammaticalisation or lexicalisation. The conclusions drawn showed that this construction shares features of both.

April McMahon (University of Sheffield) in her plenary dealt with the thorny matter of language classification and relatedness. “Family Values” certainly provided a stimulating picture of various methods that may be applied to the problem – from the quantitative through the comparative to the genetic, borrowing heavily from biology, specifically a software package known as PHYLIP (Phylogeny Inference Package: Felsenstein 2001).

The interesting results produced by this method may well open up a route worth exploring, a route that may help us see exactly what has happened since Babel.

Day 6 (Monday 26th August)

On the last morning of the ICHEL Conference, the present writers shifted from Old English to Middle English to Late Modern English. Mary Blockley (University of Texas at Austin) dealt with OE adversative conjunctions *ac* and *but(an)*. In explaining the final ascent of *but* over *ac* the contributions of four factors were evaluated: frequency, syntactic shift, the rise and fall of multiple negation, pragmatics. Gabriella Mazzon (University of Naples ‘Federico II’) presented an interesting paper on “The pragmatics of interaction in early theatrical texts”, which included some fascinating and entertaining examples of dialogic interaction taken from plays with attention given to performatives, modality markers, and address forms. Teresa Fanego’s paper focussed on the development of English verbal gerunds taking into consideration the period from Middle English to Late Modern English. A theoretical background was soon followed by a close look at the categorial types of gerund and their evolutions with numerous examples derived from *The Helsinki Corpus* (mainly for the EmodE part) and from the work of prior researchers.

David Denison’s (University of Manchester) plenary lecture “Do grammars change when they leak?” was a lively discussion supported by examples, as he put it, taken from “the recent history of English”. His categories for analytical consideration of language change – structural, social, functional and extralinguistic – were certainly thought provoking (especially the insistence on extralinguistic factors) without being in any way (to lower the register, as sometimes may happen inadvertently during any discourse) “in your face”. That Procrustianization exists in linguistics and linguistic analysis is and has been undoubtedly true – some facts about language are just too inconveniently untidy to be dealt with otherwise within the discipline – and it was certainly refreshing to listen to a leading linguist suggesting that “leaky” forms might warrant further interest and attention rather than the clever-like oblivion that comes from studied lack of attention.

María José López-Couso (University of Santiago de Compostela) read a paper on "Contracted vs. uncontracted negatives in Early English: the interplay of promoting and inhibiting forces", a well presented and cogent analysis of the influence of a series of conditioning factors on contracted and uncontracted negative forms. The texts considered tended to be prose works, so as to discount metrical considerations and to expand research already carried out in the field, while the factors considered included clause type, position of negative, "idiomatic" influence, emphatic force and the relationship between English contractions and analogous Latin forms where texts were in some way related to Latin sources.

Carol Percy's (University of Toronto) plenary lecture dealt with "Linguistic prescriptivism in London print culture: some eighteenth-century intersections". Examples taken from newspaper advertisements and book reviews were used during the presentation to show how they worked as "specific and dynamic instances of prescriptivism in practice".

Next ICEHL will take place in Vienna in 2004, dates still to be decided, but most probably at the end of August.

Iain Halliday
Massimo Sturiale

4. Reviews and bibliographical information

I have pleasure to present, though briefly and quite inadequately, the dense volume (403 thick pages) by John Douthwaite, who teaches at Turin University, on one of the most promising fields of linguistic research in text linguistics. Its title is *Towards a linguistic theory of foregrounding*, a book published by Edizioni dell'Orso in 2000.

After a broad introduction on the notion, epistemological status, and practice of foregrounding within the traditional boundaries of stylistics, and the methodologies applied to its exploration, the author goes through four major topics headed, respectively, "How texts mean", "The concept of foregrounding", "Foregrounding: a working hypothesis" and "Grammar". The discussion is completed by a "sample analysis", a successful attempt to put things down from empirical theoreticity to pragmatic applications, exerted on a passage from *Hotel du lac* by Anita Brookner. The starting-point of the analysis is epitomized in the statement "An utterance does not always mean what it says" (p. 43). Largely drawing on socio- and pragma-linguistics – speech-act theory, conversational implicature, relevance theory, ethno-methodology and conversational analysis – as well as psycholinguistics, mainly concerned with problems of perception and comprehension, memory processes etc., the author outlines a model of text comprehension based on what he styles a rule-constrained "normal world" against whose routinizing function foregrounding rebels giving room to multiple-effect deviation. Grammar investigation, stressing the role of graphology, seems to be a most convenient ground for constructing a non-stylistic theory of foregrounding since, seen from such a systematic perspective, "language consists in the concurrent operation of a variety of symbolizing patterns at utterance and text levels" (p. 45). A most illuminating as well as viable book.

Nicola Pantaleo

5. Varia

The birth of a **new academic association**: it is an interesting novelty made known by Dr. Julie Coleman, Senior Lecturer, University of Leicester (jmc21@leicester.ac.uk or linguist@linguistlist.org) in *Linguist List*, Vol. 13-2773.

“As a result of the International Conference on Historical Lexicography and Lexicology in Leicester this summer, we have established (rather informally) a new scholarly society: the **International Society for Historical Lexicography and Lexicology**. If you are interested in joining (it's free), please visit our webpage.”

6. A (provisional) list of associates' updated e-mails (cont.)

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