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

1. SLIN Conferences and Seminars

The 13th SLIN Conference on "Socially-conditioned language change in a diachronic perspective" was successfully held at Lecce University (southern Italy) on 7th to 9th June, this year.

A full, lively description of the Conference may be found below.

In the business meeting that ended the Conference it was decided that the next Conference will take place in Florence in late winter of 2009 and will be headed *The language of private and public communication in a diachronic dimension*.

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

New entries

§ 2 ICEHD (2nd International Conference on English Historical Dialectology)

University of Bergamo (Italy), 23 - 25 August 2007

Provisional programme

Venue: Room 3 - Piazza Rosate 2 (Upper Town)

Thu. 23 Aug.

09.30-11.15 Arrivals

11.15-11.30 Welcoming addresses

11.30-12.30 Chair: Marina Dossena

Sali **Tagliamonte**, Toronto, *Dialects as Diachrony*

14.30-16.00 Chair: Raymond Hickey

Adrian **Pablé**, Lausanne / R. **Dylewski**, Poznań, *Between language change and ideology:*

Goodman and Goodwife in (post-)colonial New England

Juhani **Klemola**, Tampere, *It ain't necessarily so: On the origin of ain't*

Markku **Filppula**, Joensuu, *The dating of some syntactic features of Hiberno-English*

16.00-16.30 tea

16.30-17.30 Chair: Keith Williamson

Daniela **Cesiri**, Lecce, *19th-c Irish 'unexpected' field-workers emerged in a historical linguistic study*

Robert **McColl Millar**, Aberdeen, *Relict areas or contact zones?*

Are Northern and Insular Scots dialects examples of 'colonial' Scots?

19.00 Conference reception

Fri, 24 Aug.

09.00-11.00 Chair: Roger Lass

Aus Van Kemenade, Nijmegen, *Word order and demonstrative pronouns: the dialectal spread of OV word orders in ME*

Nynke de Haas, Nijmegen, *Exploring the origins of the Northern Subject Rule in OE and ME*

Richard Hogg, Manchester, *Anglian: united we stand?*

Hermann Moisl, Newcastle, *Using electronic corpora in historical dialectology research: the problem of document length variation*

11.00-11.30 coffee

11.30-12.30 Chair: Richard Dury

Pieter van Reenen, *The localization of medieval texts of unknown provenance by means of quantification and a series of design choices*

14.30-16.30 Chair: Richard Hogg

M. José Carrillo Linares / Edurne Garrido Anes, Huelva, *The contribution of external sources and technological innovations to the research of ME word geography*

Keith Williamson, Edinburgh, *Different dialectal data sources and their (in)compatibilities*

Julia Fernández Cuesta / N. Rodríguez Ledesma, Seville, *The Northern Echo. Continuities in Contemporary Northern English*

Derek Britton, Edinburgh, *Writing and Speech in Sixteenth-Century Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

16.30-17.00 tea

17.00-18.00 Chair: Margaret Laing

Lister Matheson, Belfast, *Dialect Contexts for 'The Lambeth Scribe'*

Michael Benskin, Oslo, *The origin of ME <as/es/ix> HER/THEM*

20.00 Conference dinner

Sat. 25 Aug.

Chair: Maurizio Gottl

09.00-09.30 Raymond Hickey, Essen, *The linguistic value of literary documents. A reappraisal*

09.30-10.00 Susan M. Fitzmaurice, Sheffield, *Literariness and plainness, variety and fixedness: an exercise in historical perceptual dialectology*

10.00-11.00 Roger Lass, Cape Town / Margaret Laing, Edinburgh, *Databases, dictionaries and dialectology. Dental instability in early Middle English – a case study*

11.00-11.30 coffee

11.30-12.30 business meeting

12.30-12.45 conference closes

Afternoon: conference excursion to Lake Iseo and dinner

§§ 19th International Conference of the Spanish Society for Mediaeval English Language and Literature (SELIM)

The organising committee and the Spanish Society for Mediaeval English Language and Literature cordially invite members of the Society and all other scholars interested in the field to participate in the 19th International SELIM Conference, which will be held in Almagro (Spain) from October 4th to 6th, 2007. Scholars interested in offering 20-minute papers (followed by a 10-minute discussion) must send a 100-to-250 word abstract in electronic format (preferably MSWord or RTF) via e-mail to:

<<mailto:congreso.selim@uclm.es>> before April 30th, 2007. Abstracts should include name(s), institutional affiliation(s) of the author(s), as well as telephone, fax, ordinary mail, e-mail address and technical support. Acceptance of proposals will be confirmed by May, 2007. For further information please visit

<<https://web.mail.uclm.es/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.uniovi.es/SELIM>>

or

<<https://web.mail.uclm.es/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.uclm.es/congresos/selim>>

Address: 19th International SELIM Conference, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Facultad de Letras, Departamento de Filología Moderna, Avda. de Camilo José Cela s/n Ciudad Real 13071 (Spain) Phone: +00-34-926-295300 / Fax: +00-34-926-295312 e-mail:

<<mailto:congreso.selim@uclm.es>>

§§§ MESS 6, 2007 (6th Medieval English Studies Symposium)

Organised by the School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, will be held in Poznań from 24 to 25 November 2007. MESS6 will have as its aim bringing together specialists in the areas of medieval English linguistics and literature. Both linguistic and literary sessions are planned, four plenary and over twenty section meetings. The plenary speakers will be Dr Simon Horobin (Oxford University), Dr Kathryn A. Lowe (Glasgow University), Professor Harold Kaylor (Troy State University, Alabama) and Professor Andrzej Wicher (University of Łódź).

Papers

We will welcome section papers in all areas of research connected with medieval English language or literature. 500-word abstracts should be submitted by the end of July 2007, preferably by e-mail (mess@ifa.amu.edu.pl), in the .rtf or .doc (Word for Windows) format. As the number of paper slots is limited, all proposals will be reviewed by the organising committee and the authors will be notified about acceptance by the end of August 2007. Participants without papers are also welcome.

Venue and Accommodation

The Symposium will be held at the Jowita, one of A. Mickiewicz University student hostels and hotels, in the centre of Poznań. Conference participants will also be accommodated there as well as modestly priced hotels nearby. Reservations in four or five star hotels are also possible. More information on accommodation will be provided in the second circular.

Registration

All enquiries concerning the Symposium should be addressed to the MESS organisers, preferably by e-mail (mess@ifa.amu.edu.pl). Our snail-mail address is:

MESS 2007
School of English
Adam Mickiewicz University
Al. Niepodległości 4
61-874 Poznań
POLAND
ph. +48-61-8293506
fax +48-61-8523103

Organising Committee

Honorary Chair: Professor Jacck Fisiak
Chair: Professor Liliana Sikorska

Members

Professor Marcin Krygier
Dr Radosław Dylewski
Mr. Łukasz Hudomięt, M.A.

Conference Secretaries

Ms. Agnieszka Bury-Galubińska, M.A.
Ms. Joanna Kaczmarek-Górzyńska, M.A.

Reminders and updates

§ 3rd Late Modern English Conference (Leiden, the Netherlands, 30 August – 1 September 2007)

Academic Programme

The conference programme is divided into the main conference and pre-conference workshops.

Pre-conference workshops (29 August 2007):

*Rebels or Reactionaries? Romantic writers in the Vanguard /
Rearguard of Contemporary Linguistic Change
Social roles and language practices in Late Modern English*

Plenary speakers:

Joan Beal, *Three Hundred Years of Prescriptivism (and counting...)*
Raymond Hickey, *Telling people how to speak: Rhetorical grammars and pronouncing dictionaries*
Lynda Mugglestone, *"Living history": Andrew Clark, the OED, and the language of the First World War*

Programme:**Wed 29 August**

Pre-conference workshops

Thu 30 August

Registration

Full day of conference sessions

Drinks reception

Fri 31 August

Full day of conference sessions

Conference dinner

Sat 1 September

Morning of conference sessions

Close

Afternoon of optional excursions

Preliminary programme

Wednesday 29 August 2007	
Conference registration	
Pre-conference workshops	
Thursday 30 August 2007	
9:00-10:00 Conference registration	
10:00-10:15 Conference opening	
10:00-10:05 <i>Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade</i>	
10:05-10:15 <i>Geert Booij</i> , Dean of the Faculty of Arts	
10:15-11:15 Plenary Session (Chair: Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade) <i>Raymond Hickey</i> , Telling people how to speak: Rhetorical grammars and pronouncing dictionaries	
11:15-11:30 Coffee break	
11:30-13:00 Papers Session (Chair:)	
11:30-12:00	<i>Svenja Kranich</i> – Interpretative progressives in Late Modern English
12:00-12:30	<i>Sylvie Hancil</i> – The progressive form in early eighteenth-century spoken discourse
13:30-13:00	<i>Hiromi Azuma</i> – The evolution of pronouns in English: a case from drama texts in Early Modern through Present-Day English
13:00-14:00 Lunch	

14:00-15:30 Papers Session (Chair:)		
14:00-14:30	<i>Froukje Henstra</i> – <i>You was</i> in the language of Horace Walpole and his friends: “A Happiness which I only enjoyed when you was at Eton”	
14:30-15:00	<i>Lyda Fens-de Zeeuw</i> – Plain speech in Lindley Murray’s letters: peculiar or polite?	
15:00-15:30	<i>Terttu Nevalainen & Heli Tissari</i> – Metaphors of politeness in their eighteenth-century social context	
15:30-16:00 Tea break		
16:00-17:30 Papers sessions		
	Session A (Chair:)	Session B: (Chair:)
16:00-16:30	<i>Tony Fairman</i> – “She has four and big agane [and common prostitute Bad woman”: “ellipses” and other compositional strategies in the letters of writers with mechanical schooling: England, 1795-1834	<i>Cristiano Broccias & Nicholas Smith</i> – Temporal <i>as-</i> and <i>while</i> -clauses: change and continuity in their aspectual associations and restrictions from Late Modern English
16:30-17:00	<i>Mikko Laitinen</i> – Letters of the early 19 th -century working poor – linguistic evidence from below	<i>Philippe Bourdin</i> – <i>Ago</i> and its competitors between 1800 and 1920
17:00-17:30		<i>Sigrid Beck, Polina Berezovskaya & Katja Pflugfelder</i> – The use of <i>again</i> in 19th century English vs. Present-Day English
17:30-19:00 Reception Oude UB (Rapenburg 70)		
Friday 31 August 2007		
9:00-10:00 Plenary Session (Chair:)		
<i>Lynda Muggleston</i> – “Living history”: Andrew Clark, the OED and the language of the First World War		
10:00-11:00 Papers sessions		
	Session A (Chair:)	Session B: (Chair:)
10:00-	<i>Daniela Cesiri</i> – The Irish	<i>Charlotte Brewer</i> – New

10:30	contribution to the English language during the Late Modern period	sources for the <i>OED</i> ?
10:30-11:00	<i>Günter Rohdenburg</i> – Grammatical divergence between British and American English in the 19th and early 20th centuries	<i>Manfred Markus</i> – Joseph Wright's <i>EDD</i> and its predecessors
11:00-11:30 Coffee break		
11:30-12:30 Papers Session (Chair:)		
11:30-12:00	<i>Massimo Sturiale</i> – 18 th -century English synonym dictionaries: a case study	
12:00-12:30	<i>Alicia Rodríguez-Alvarez</i> – Some observations on the historical accounts of the English language in 18 th -century dictionaries	
12:30-14:00 Lunch		
14:00-15:30 Papers session		
	Session A (Chair:)	Session B: (Chair:)
14:00-14:30	<i>Wim van der Wurff & Lindsay Bossong</i> – Lexis and grammar in Late Modern English: a case study	
14:30-15:00	<i>Dirk Noël</i> – The entrenchment of the nominative and infinitive construction in Late Modern English	
15:00-15:30	<i>Piotr Gąsiorowski</i> – Non-rhoticity: a story of spread and withdrawal	
15:30-16:00 Tea break		
16:00-17:30 Papers Session (Chair:)		
16:00-16:30	<i>María José López-Couso & Belén Méndez-Naya</i> – <i>It looks as if it's a complementizer</i> : on the use of <i>(as) if</i> and <i>(as) though</i> in declarative complement clauses	
16:30-17:00	<i>Erik Smitterberg</i> – Particle placement in 19 th -century English	
17:00-17:30	<i>Javier Pérez-Guerra & Ana E. Martínez Insua</i> – NP-based complexification in late Modern English	
19:00-24:00 Conference Dinner and Party, Arsenaal		
Saturday 1 September 2007		
9:00-10:00 Plenary Session (Chair:)		
Joan Beal – Three hundred years of prescriptivism (and counting...)		

10:00-11:00 Paper session (Chair:)	
10:00-10:30	<i>Karlijn Navest</i> – J.G.'s easy introduction to "Dr. Ash's Grammar" (1796)
10:30-11:00	<i>María Esther Rodríguez-Gil & Nuria Yáñez-Bouza</i> – A bibliographical approach to the study of 18 th -century grammars
11:00-11:30 Coffee break	
11:30-12:00	<i>Stefan Thim</i> – Lexicalization, usage and attitude: the colloquialization of verb-particle constructions in Late Modern English
12:00-12:30	<i>Robin Straaijer</i> – Towards a quantification of prescriptivism
12:30-13:00	<i>Carol Percy</i> – The role of periodicals in the rise of prescriptivism: evidence from the <i>Monthly</i> (1749-) and <i>Critical Review</i> (1756-)
13:00-13:05 Conclusion (Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade)	

If you wish to receive further information about the conference, please let us know by contacting us at the following address:

3LModE@let.leidenuniv.nl.

Meanwhile, you might like to consult our website, which will be regularly updated (<http://www.lucl.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?m=9&c=291>).

We would like to inform you that the registration form is now available online on: <http://www.lucl.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?m=9&c=463>

On behalf of the conference organisers,

Patricia Chaudron

VICI-project assistant

The Codifiers and the English Language

§§ 40th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE2007), *Functionalism in Linguistics* (29 August-1 September, 2007, University of Joensuu, Finland)

It is our pleasure to remind you that the 40th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea is approaching. The conference will be held at the University of Joensuu, Finland, from 29 August to 1 September 2007. The general theme of the conference is Functionalism in Linguistics, but the programme will contain presentations on all fields of linguistics.

Plenary speakers

Christopher S. Butler (University of Wales Swansea): *Criteria of adequacy for functionalist theories of language*

Kristin Davidse (University of Leuven): *On the expression of TAM-meanings by grammaticalized complex prepositions in English*

Stefan Th. Gries (University of California, Santa Barbara): *Frequency effects in cognitive-functional linguistics: some problems and some strategies*

Andrej Malchukov (Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig): *Functional typology and optimality theory: competing motivations in the domain of case-marking* (working title)

Eija Ventola (University of Helsinki): tba

The programme

More than one hundred papers have been accepted for presentation in the conference (including three workshops on special topics). The full programme is available on the conference website (<http://www.joensuu.fi/suomi/SLE2007/>).

Registration

You can register for the conference with a Registration form available on the conference website (<http://www.joensuu.fi/suomi/SLE2007/>).

The registration fee includes coffee, tea and lunch during the conference days, the conference reception and the conference excursion to Koli. The somewhat cheaper pre-registration is still available for a few days. The registration fees are as follows: Pre-registration fee (until 31 May) Fee after 1 June 2007 SLE members 150 / 180 Non-members 180 / 210 Students 120 / 150 Scholars from Eastern Europe 120 / 150

The registration fee can be paid by the following methods:

by bank transfer, which is the

recommended method; for this you need the following information:

Recipient: University of Joensuu

Address: P. O. Box 111, FIN-80101 Joensuu, Finland

Bank: Nordea Bank Finland

Plc. Aleksanterinkatu 36, FIN-00020 NORDEA, Finland

BIC/Swift code: NDEAFIHH

IBAN code: FI8116603000102478 (Bank Identifier Code)

If you use bank transfer within Finland, the account number is 166030-102478.

With your payment, please include the following message: SLE2007 project number 03202.

by credit card, for which you need to fill in the required information in the Registration form

by cash upon arrival, although this alternative is not recommended

Conference venue

The conference will be held on the main campus of the University of Joensuu, within walking distance from the city centre. The city itself is situated in the middle of beautiful Finnish nature at a place where the River Pielisjoki meets Lake Pyhäselkä. For further information, visit the following websites:

University of Joensuu <http://www.joensuu.fi/englishindex.html>

City of Joensuu <http://www.jns.fi/>

Travel and accommodation

Joensuu can be easily reached by air via Helsinki (flight-time about 1 hour) and there are several trains per day from Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. For those travelling by car or coach, the roads from Helsinki or the other major ports offer a beautiful journey through some of the best parts of the Finnish Lakelands. For further information, see:

Finnair <http://www.finnair.com/>

VR (State Railways) <http://www.vr.fi/heo/eng/index.html>

Bus Services <http://www.matkahuolto.com/>

Finnish Tourist Board <http://www.finland-tourism.com/>

The participants are expected to arrange their accommodation themselves, but the organisers have negotiated agreements with some of the local hotels. Updated information about these can be found on the conference website (<http://www.joensuu.fi/suomi/SLE2007/>).

When you make reservations in these hotels, please mention SLE2007. There are also a few other big occasions in Joensuu at the same time with the SLE2007. Therefore some of the other hotels appear fully booked at the moment; it may be possible to get a room from these later, but they will not accept further reservations until August.

Social programme

The conference fee includes the conference reception on Wednesday evening, 29 August, and the excursion to the Koli National Park (<http://www.metla.fi/koli/index-en.htm>) on Thursday afternoon, 30 August. The conference dinner will take place on Friday evening, 31 August, and it will have to be paid separately. The dinner costs € 45 and you may register for it with the Registration form. If you request a special diet, please let us know beforehand, so we can inform the restaurant. You can send your wishes to the conference organisers by email (sle2007@joensuu.fi). After the conference, two alternative post-conference excursions are offered. These one-day trips take place on Sunday, 2 September. The first alternative is to the Ruunaa Rapids, situated some 150 kilometres north-east of Joensuu in a largely uninhabited border area, where the participants will shoot the rapids in specially-designed wooden motor-boats and enjoy a substantial traditional-style meal by the fireside.

The second alternative is a trip to the beautiful Savonlinna area, c. 130 kilometres south-west from Joensuu, including visits to the Finnish Forest Museum Lusto (<http://www.lusto.fi/?locale=en>) and Olavinlinna Castle, which was founded in 1475. This excursion will also include a lunch. For the prices and signing up, see the Registration form. For special diets, contact the organisers (sle2007@joensuu.fi).

Organisation

The conference is organised by Foreign Languages and Translation Studies, and Finnish Language and Cultural Research at the University of Joensuu. Scientific Committee: Markku Filppula (Joensuu), Marjatta Palander (Joensuu), Jussi Niemi (Joensuu), Eva Hajiová (Praha), Christian Lehmann (Erfurt) and Anders Ahlqvist (Galway). Local Organising Committee: Markku Filppula (Joensuu, President), Marjatta Palander (Joensuu, Vice-President), Esa Penttilä, Ossi Kokko and Helka Riionheimo. Important dates: 1 May 2007 Payment of pre-registration fees (after this increased fee) 9 August 1 September 2007 Conference. We look forward to seeing you in Joensuu. Conference website:

<http://www.joensuu.fi/suomi/SLE2007/>

Fax: +358 13 251 4211

mail: sle2007@joensuu.fi

Postal address: LE2007 Organising Committee department of English University of Joensuu P.O. Box 111 FIN-80101 Joensuu Finland

§§§ ICEHL 15, University of Munich (Germany), 24 - 30 August 2008.

Conference venue

The Conference will be hosted by the Department of English and American Studies of the University of Munich. (Schellingstraße 3, 80799 München: [online map](#))

Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday morning and Thursday will be working days; Wednesday afternoon and Saturday are set aside for excursions, meetings, relaxing, etc.

On Friday there will be time for workshops (suggestions are highly welcome).

During the conference there will be keynote plenary lectures, papers, panels and workshops.

Invited Keynote speakers:

Marina Dossena (Bergamo)

Philip Durkin (OED)

Teresa Fanego (Santiago de Compostela)

Thomas Kohnen (Cologne)

Submissions

The deadline for submissions is 30th November 2007. Please send your abstract (ca. 300 words excluding references) to contact@icehl.de as a WORD or/and RTF attachment; if your abstract requires special fonts, please send it also as a PDF file. Acceptance will be notified by the end of January 2008.

Submissions for workshops and panels should be handed in as soon as possible and they should indicate the list of potential participants and the number of envisaged contributions.

As a selection of accepted papers will be published in the conference proceedings, finalized versions of papers presented at the Conference will be expected to arrive by 15th October 2008.

Equipment

All conference rooms are equipped with OHP, beamers are available as well.

Please make sure you have a sufficient number of handouts for your

paper. Internet access will be made available to conference delegates at the conference venue.

Registration

Details will be provided in the second circular, which will also include a registration form.

Accommodation and meals

Various hotels are available, from relatively inexpensive to luxury. Detailed information will be made available on the Conference website. As Munich is a popular tourist destination throughout the year, early booking is highly recommended. As for meals, many restaurants and bars are located in the neighbourhood of the Conference venue. At lunchtime we will probably also offer lunches for those who are interested to stay at the conference venue (registration needed – see the 2nd circular).

Social programme

Information on walking tours, city tours and conference excursions will be published on the conference website.

Conference e-mail address:

contact@icehl.de

Conference website: www.icehl.de

More information: More information can be found on the conference website: www.icehl.de

You can also send an e-mail to the organizer, Hans Sauer, and his team: hans.sauer@anglistik.uni-muenchen.de or to zora.gnaedig@anglistik.uni-muenchen.de (the latter especially as far as accommodation and technical details are concerned).

§§§§ 2nd International Symposium on Historical English Lexis

The 2nd International Symposium on Historical English Lexis (HEL-LEX2 for short) will be held on April 25- 28, 2008 in Helsinki - Lammi, Finland
Contact Person: **Roderick McConchie**

We hope to build on the success of the first HEL-LEX symposium held in Helsinki in March 2005, which brought about 50 scholars from a number of countries together. This area of research is increasing rapidly both in Finland and internationally, especially with the emergence of corpus linguistics as a means of data compilation and retrieval. The number of publications focusing on aspects of the history of the English lexicon

continues to rise. The symposium will be held once again under the aegis of the VARIENG Centre of Excellence of the English Department, University of Helsinki. We hope to bring together both Finnish and international scholars with a range of interests in lexical studies, including professional lexicographers, working on applying and developing new research methods in this area of English historical linguistics. The plenary speakers will be: Prof. **Dieter Kastovsky**, Chair of English Linguistics, University of Vienna; **Elizabeth Knowles**, Publishing Manager, Oxford University Press; **Julie Coleman**, Reader, Department of English, University of Leicester. We invite all interested scholars and professional lexicographers to attend and to submit an abstract. The subject should be primarily an aspect of the history of the English lexicon, but we also welcome papers of a comparative nature.

Abstracts should be sent to hel-lex2@helsinki.fi by 30 September, 2007.

The proposed venue for the symposium is the pleasantly situated Lammi Biological Station, a University of Helsinki research facility located at Lammi, 120 km north of Helsinki. The town of Lammi is well served by public transport, but we will provide a bus from Helsinki if there is sufficient demand for it. Further details on transportation, from both Helsinki and Tampere, will be provided in the next call.

A homepage will be up soon.

3. Bibliographical information

§ Dossena, Marina / Jones, Charles (eds), 2003, 2007 (second printing), *Insights into Late Modern English*

This volume includes fifteen papers focussing on three important aspects of the history of English in Britain and overseas since the eighteenth century: the grammatical tradition of prescriptivism, syntactic developments and sociolinguistic factors affecting language variation. Within these areas methodological approaches include those relating to corpus linguistics, social network theory, the investigation of specialized discourse in a diachronic perspective, and lexicography. The individual sections are highly cohesive with each other, as the ideological considerations on which the prescriptive tradition was founded are underpinned by sociological factors. Theoretical contributions appear alongside 'case studies', in which instances of specific usage are investigated.

§§ **Mazzon, Gabriella (ed.), 2007, *Studies in Middle English Forms and Meanings*.**

The volume contains written versions of some contributions to the Fifth International Conference on Middle English (ICOME 5), held at the University of Naples in 2005. Most of the papers concentrate on individual aspects of grammar and semantics, although some focus on dialectal fragmentation, and others adopt a pragmatic perspective. There is still a lot to be done in the study of the Middle English lexicon, in the same way as there are many aspects of grammar that have not been fully studied yet. The volume aims at providing contributions that can further the knowledge of these subfields of English historical linguistics, through state-of-the-art case studies that also exploit all modern resources such as computerized corpora and electronically tagged texts.

§§§ **Elsað, Stephan / Langer Nils, Scharloth, Joachim / Vandebussche, Wim (eds) *Germanic Language Histories 'from Below' (1700-2000)*, De Gruyter, 2007.**

<http://www.degruyter.de/rs/bookSingle.cfm?id=IS-9783110193350-1&l=E>
Focusing on the sociolinguistic history of Germanic languages, the current volume challenges the traditional teleological approach of language historiography. The 30 contributions present alternative histories of ten 'big' as well as 'small' Germanic languages and varieties in the last 300 years. Topics covered in this book include language variation and change and the politics of language contact and choice, seen against the background of standardization processes of written and oral text genres and from the viewpoint of larger sections of the population.

§§§§ **Ahmad, Khurshid / Rogers, Margaret (eds), 2007. *Evidence-based LSP: Translation, Text and Terminology*. (Linguistic Insights: Studies in Language and Communication, Vol. 47) Bern: Peter Lang.**

This book presents a number of different perspectives on the central theme of 'evidence' and its interpretation in the study of specialist languages and their various uses. The principal topics include text corpora, citation patterns, some challenging dichotomies, terminology and knowledge management, and specialist translation. Each topic is presented in one of five parts, each with its own introduction. The volume includes contributions from established and new researchers in the field, as well as well-known scholars from other disciplines who bring a fresh eye to LSP

studies. The book presents selected papers from LSP2003, the 14th European Symposium on Language for Special Purposes held at the University of Surrey, Guildford, in co-operation with the AILA Scientific Commission on Language for Special Purposes.

§§§§§ **Williams, Christopher, 2007. *Tradition and Change in Legal English: Verbal Constructions in Prescriptive Texts*, Second Printing (Linguistic Insights: Studies in Language and Communication, Vol. 20) Bern: Peter Lang.**

In this volume the author examines verbal constructions in prescriptive legal texts written in English. Modal auxiliaries such as *shall*, *may* and *must* are analysed, as well as indicative tenses such as the present simple, and also non-finite constructions such as the *-ing* form and *-ed* participles. Results are based on specially compiled corpora of prescriptive texts coming from a wide range of English-speaking countries and also international organizations such as the European Union and the UN. The author also analyses the nature, extent and impact of the calls for change in legal language coming from the Plain Language Movement. Although legal language tends to be depicted as being highly conservative and unchanging, the author shows that in certain parts of the English-speaking world a minor revolution would appear to be taking place, while in other parts there is greater resistance to change.

Contents: Legal Language - Verbal Constructions - Prescriptive Legal Texts - The Linguistic and Pragmatic Functions of Prescriptive Legal Texts - Tense, Aspect and Modality - The 'World Data' Corpus - Plain Language Movement.

4. Reports on Conferences

Here is Richard Dury's accurate, full portrayal of the Lecce Conference, dealt with in his usual impressionistic style enriched by literary nuances.

The 13th SLIN Conference, Lecce University, 7-9 June 2007.

Arrival

As I travelled south to Lecce, the inland town in the heel of Italy, I started thinking of the therapeutic value of conferences, if taken in moderate doses. Like April pilgrimages, they provide a break after the busy year and a welcome simplification of life: first the journey, which isolates you from the world of multiple obligations and gives you a simple goal, your destination. Then the conference itself, a few days of simplified existence (no shopping to do, meals to make, appointments to keep, work to complete) in pleasant company, surrounded by new and unfamiliar sights, sounds and tastes—which itself makes you perceive more, gives a pleasant lightness to existence, so different from the normal whirling confusion of modern life.

It was a showery, early summer afternoon when I arrived. I walked from the station along two modern streets skirting the old centre: a town of low, flat-roofed houses, tufted palms and TV ariels. Business in town was clearly not booming: the pavements of the avenues were broken here and there; I passed two secondary schools closed and abandoned; a large car-park was almost empty. The recently-built 'grand hotel', my destination, had the most spacious of halls yet was not without cheap finishes.

The old centre, however, was quite different: narrow stone streets (shiny after the showers) and honey-coloured buildings, numerous churches with façades carved in statues, swags, garlands, animals, pillars, cornices, you name it, flowery frames, madonnas, semi-naked saints in *hanchement* poses, and flying *putti* in every sort of attitude—all no doubt with a complex meaning, yet at the same time so excessive as to be just fascinating decoration—gracefully grouped on the austere sensuous surface of sun and shade.

It was also charming to see a group of little boys playing football in the street, their sisters wisely discoursing on a nearby doorstep—signs of a healthy street-life sadly extinct in more prosperous northern towns with fuller car-parks.

Thursday

The opening session was in the *rettorato*, an early eighteenth-century monastery in Piazza Tancredi on a site occupied since prehistoric times (as we saw in the small museum in a corner of the cloister). The *aula magna*, a cool vaulted space in cream-coloured plaster, displayed its status in expensive modernity: paired tension cables running the length of the room just to hold tiny lighting elements, the latest flat TV screens, chromed chairs with leather seats, the light from deep embrasured windows filtering delicately through curtains and the fronds of potted palms—everything here was calm, light and slim. (Even John Denton began to look more relaxed.) Seven stainless-steel portholes behind the dais promised serious air-conditioning (working on this pleasantly warm day, not really requiring cooling); the long table was marked at regular intervals by blue-tinted plastic mineral-water bottles and tumblers.

Then the 'authorities' began their speeches. My mind immediately wandered: perhaps one could collect their phrases, write them on numbered cards and, by rolling a dice, create an infinite number of welcoming speeches?...

The first conference speaker (with about forty people present) was an old friend of the SLIN group, Terttu Nevalainen from Helsinki (youthful-looking as ever, with short blonde hair, loose burgundy blouse and slacks), speaking on linguistic variation, in particular the problem of when we can say that variation becomes change: after all, what looks like change in the records of written language may simply be the increased frequency in the use of informal variants, previously associated with unrecorded speech. This hypothetical 'colloquialization' of written English was examined in three test cases: (i) the present continuous for future (little sign of spread to written genres), (ii) 'Saxon genitive', whose dramatic decline in the 14C (least drastic in informal prose) has not been reversed by modern newspapers (where it is used for any topic possessor), since this usage was genre-specific and to save space, and (iii) two 'vernacular universals': (a) 'there was two' (low and declining frequencies in corpus studies, so no 'colloquialization' here), (b) negative concord (multiple negation): common in PDE colloquial usage, but there is no evidence of its spread to written genres (incidentally the avoidance of negative concord began in the 15C—so it's not a product of 18C prescriptivism). In conclusion, there is a lack of evidence for colloquialization of written genres in the chosen features (a 'resistance' that seems unconnected with 18C prescriptivism). It seems that

features of supralocalized language are the input for written language. Colloquialization may have taken place, but also the opposite trend of formalization. Investigators need to be attentive to the way style, shifting within written genres, can give a picture of system change that is only an illusion.

Next to speak was petite and cheerful Eleonora Chiavetta from Palermo, a specialist in botanical texts, who gave us a comparative study of the pragmatic strategies in the texts of two early women gardening writers from the late 19C: Mrs C.W. Earle (1897) and Gertrude Jekyll (1899). Though the former was a radical, she identifies herself as a woman and placed herself in the context of a family (though perhaps her identification as a woman, not 'lady', assuming a public advisory role was sufficiently provocative). Jekyll seems more conventional: the writer is not gendered, no family is mentioned, and the discourse is structured in a typically authoritative presentation of anticipated objections and overriding argument.

The morning ended with Stefania Biscetti from L'Aquila (black shoulder-length hair, white linen jacket over black), who had taken two 17C etiquette books for women from either side of the important cultural divide of the Civil War: Robert Braithwaite, 1631, and Robert Codrington, 1672, together with two 20C examples (1900, 1927) for comparison. She identified features of argumentative, instructional and subjective-focused discourse in the two early texts and noted the differences between them (especially interesting because Codrington clearly had Braithwaite open in front of him as he wrote). In fact, accompanying Codrington's greater openness to women (as capable as men in public affairs, he says), we find a much lower frequency of authoritarian clauses of contrast, a scarcity of imperatives, and the use of hedges ('If I might advise...'); the address to women in the plural rather than singular is less face-threatening too. Though the genre evolved so much over the centuries as to make comparisons with the 20C texts difficult, we were nevertheless able to see a change from strongly prescriptive to more argumentative and descriptive discourse in the later texts.

Then we were outside in the pleasantly-warm sun, chatting and forming into lunch-groups. I found myself in the one that local organizer Daniela Cesari guided through the maze of streets to a restaurant with the strange name of Pieton (a blend of two Italian names): this looked like a stage-set

for an opera (tavern scene with brigands): a vast, dark cavernous space with a huge fireplace, and at the far end a contrasting, top-lit area with many plants (possibly a former courtyard). Here, between innumerable dishes of local specialities from land and sea, I conversed with Pat Poussa: about Kent (where she grew up) and her early archeological studies and about the distribution of wrist claps and about how this was difficult to say (wrist clasps) and how (a drop more wine?) this difficulty was somehow very amusing...

In the afternoon we went to the Language Faculty—a building considerably less refurbished than the *rettorato*, indeed showing some marks of 'southern abandonment' (a correlation of mean annual temperature, income and things not working). (I was only joking about the wine at lunchtime, by the way). The first talk was by Marina Dossena from Bergamo on the interactive features of Scottish emigrants' letters. Learning to write is learning to write a standard language and the authors of these letters, though minimally schooled, never include anything they recognized as dialectal (though a few things occasionally slip through) and the letters follow well-worn formulas especially at the beginning and the end. They also, however, often contain passages aimed to involve the readers and create psychological proximity (marked by deictic and modal choices), a space where writers interestingly were able to achieve some freedom of expression.

The Lecce conference was distinguished from former SLIN conferences by having not only two invited speakers from abroad with hour-long talks, but also two other non-Italian speakers, one of them the next speaker, Lyda Fens from Leiden University, who only started studying after her children left home nine years ago and is now doing a PhD degree with Ingrid Tieken. Her study of the letters of Lindley Murray (1745-1826), author of the popular *Grammar*, shows how he adopted the style and language of Quakers: as well as *thee* or *thou* for the singular pronoun of address, he avoids flattering salutations, addresses fellow-Quakers as 'Friend', does not use the 'pagan' names of days and months, and in general adopts a Quaker 'plain language'.

After a coffee break in the corridor, the last session of the day began with a paper by unfortunately-absent Gabriella Mazzon, read by Massimo Sturiale, on the status of 'Estuary English'. RP has certainly lost status in recent

years: non-RP speakers have been appointed to high office and are commonly heard on the BBC; we find variation and change in RP's classic features, and references now to 'near RP' or 'regional RP'. However there is no replacement of it by 'Estuary English', which has a rather 'mythical status': indeed, it cannot be seen as a new variety, though some of the features identified with it are spreading. Perhaps it would be better to think in terms of a continuum from RP through EE to Cockney.

Next came Pat Poussa from Umeå University in Sweden, the other foreign non-plenary speaker. Her historical approach saves her from seeing the past as an illusion of simple uniformity and focuses her attention on complicated reality. Hence it was with detailed maps and a profusion of data that she argued that *th*-fronting to *f/v* (e.g. *teef* and *bovver*) is not just spreading from London via large urban centres (a classic Labovo-Trudgillian scenario), since, by careful examination of SED data, it can be frequently found in traditional rural dialects. She looked in particular at *thill-horse* (second horse in a team), often *fill-horse*, and also at *free for three* and *sheaf for sheath*. There seems to have been ebbs and flows of this phenomenon in the past and it is clearly not an exclusively London or urban phenomenon.

Then the conference demon struck—the moment at all conferences when the projector refuses to work, submitting the waiting speaker to a little more additional stress. The screen just showed the enigmatic message 'PC AUTO 50 CARD'; people with more or less technical knowledge came and went; a new computer was brought, tested and... worked. Maria Grazia Guido from Lecce, in elegant black, having survived all this, told us about phrasal verbs in the fossilized interlanguage of little-schooled first-generation Italian immigrants. The mistakes that she collected by elicitation experiments were explained by universal economy principles triggered when two different 'iconic schemata' are in competition. So she found forms like 'the lorry blockup the entrance' and 'it wearouts', in which the particle is cliticized, converted to a suffix and bleached of meaning, forms also found in creoles.

The day ended with Daniele Franceschini, a doctoral student from Pisa, who guided us through variation and change in the English present perfect, a much-discussed topic, he told us, with a bibliography of over 6000 entries. This is a complicated area of change and variation across regional dialects, which he has examined with the help of the 30-year-apart LOB/BROWN and FLOB/FROWN corpora and the New Zealand Wellington Corpus as well as BrE and AmE informants. He has found common collocations that defied the rules of grammars: 'I just thought...'

'How long is it since...', cases of spreading AmE usage ('Was this place ever an old schoolhouse?') in which simple past is gaining ground; but also a weaker opposite tendency for the present perfect to spread (especially in NZE) in sentences with a definite past-time adverbial (like 'he's played for us last year'). Attempts we might make as teachers to associate present perfect use with specific adverbs are made more difficult by these adverbs changing meaning (as in 'Who's to say what folk have done long ago?', where *long ago* could just mean 'in the past').

The long day ended convivially around the long tables of 'Alle Due Corti', their French windows open to the street. We had fun translating the menu written only in dialect and then sampled the very best of Salento cooking, worthy of a special place in Italy's regional cuisines. More prosperous northern town with fuller car-parks do not have this rich variety of dishes and ingredients, pastas and seafood.

Friday

Friday started slightly cloudy and with a forecast of rain. We met again in the vast oblong room of the Language Faculty at nine, with twenty-four people present—more drifting in a little later. Tony Fairman, gaunt, with grised beard and thick glasses, gave an impassioned talk about the letters he is discovering (previously unknown to historical linguists) in local English county archives from the early 1800s, written by people with little schooling. This schooling would have been 'mechanical', i.e. actually inspired by the factory organization (as in the Bell and Lancaster system). The first thing to note about these letters (as Marina Dossena had observed about her emigrants' letters) is that they are not written in dialect, yet they differ from standard English in similar ways—clearly there is a hidden history of spoken English that even modern grammarians conspire to keep hidden: ignoring non-standard forms or labelling them as 'deviant' and confining them to a footnote. Though not written in dialect, these letters give vital information about pronunciation (since the writers adopt the standard spelling system to spell phonetically) and common syntactical patterns: 'I add Given me' ('someone gave to me'), 'werry' ('very'), 'righten' ('writing' – but even a 7-year-old gentleman's son has 'been' for 'being'), and 'dow' ('do'). Fascinating material—we all I'm sure look forward to the publication of the corpus.

Silvia Masi from Pisa next gave a wide overview, from the 16C to the 20C, of English greeting and leave-taking formulas. The data were gathered from drama, 20C corpora and film adaptations of novels (though the novels themselves would have been a better source). There followed a more detailed study of 'How do you do?' (now apparently little used) and of the recent 'Cheers'. The latter seems to be a product of 'cheerio' (first OED quote 1910), also used as a drinking salutation (1919), and 'cheers' a drinking salutation (also first cited 1919), then with the meaning of 'thank you' (from the 1970s), then used for leave-taking. (The co-incidence of 'thank you' and 'goodbye' expressions, I thought, can also be seen in Northern *ta* and *ta-ta*, and often in Italy I hear 'Grazie' among leaving formula when I haven't done anything to be thanked for.) A concluding thesis was that in today's less structured society these formulas are less fixed.

Nicholas Brownlee from Florence, the very picture of relaxed good humour and British charm, followed with a talk on the letters that were reprinted in news pamphlets (both regular and one-off) in the Civil War Period (1640-50), taken from his Florence corpus of Civil War pamphlets. In contrast with the earlier years of the century, these inserted letters were now accompanied by editorial evaluation and information about the writer and addressee, to give value to the correspondence and suggest its reliability—a reflection of the greater value of news in this period. The most interesting part of the talk was the presentation of the small group of such letters with lower-class writers and addressees, which reproduce non-standard forms (either to denigrate, or as a mark of authenticity). The editors comment on the language, showing they have a clear idea of standard English: the letter 'is worth your reading if it be but for the English'; the author of a forged letter has attempted 'to *Scottize* it'.

After the coffee-break, Mirella Billi (from Viterbo) gave us a brief overview of 'camp' discourse and behaviour, a phenomenon of uncertain origin, etymology and definition. She placed one significant origin, however, in self-conscious theatricality both on stage (subverting idealistic mimesis) and off (inverting the serious and futile, emphasizing the invented status of the human subject). Linguistically (apart from winking irony) we find this behavioural style reflected in general excess (antitheses, extended series): illustrated by Hamlet's advice to the players, which seems to imitate

(the very excess that it condemns. Hurrying to finish, the speaker then gave us a brief history of camp texts from the 16C to the 20C.

The morning ended with Antonio Bertacca from Pisa who gave a bold paper arguing for the primacy of system-internal features over external (language contact and social phenomena) in linguistic change, with phonological change as especially central (ah well, Antonio is a phonetician...); since this is always operative, often cyclical and follows fairly stable universal and language preference rules. In the case of morphology, change is once and for ever, but phonological phenomena can be cyclical (a point that had been exemplified in Pat Poussa's earlier paper.)

For lunch I went with a few others into the centre—everything calm, no crowded lunchtime eateries, but we had the mischance to step (in fact, I believe I took the first step) into a quick food place (serving local dishes, though), where the food was fine but the TV screens everywhere and their silly chatter and mindless advertising jingles was a little annoying (part of the attractive modern decor for the local kids, no doubt). We came out... into a downpour—rain not only from above but gushing down drainpipes, turning streets to streams. Armed only with frail folding umbrellas we rushed—and sheltered—and dashed—and sought shelter again; reached the *viale*—hoped for some dryness under the trees: then came up against a broad, unjumpable stream of reddish water flowing fast from a bordering park. The young adventurers, seeing the difficulty of throwing a rope bridge across the obstacle, decided to ford the water-course quickly with leaps or on heels or tip-toe. Damp but radiant with their success, they arrived at their destination.

Back then in the Faculty building, that jewel of modern architecture, the puddle-hoppers heard about *bog-trotters*—in Daniela Cesari's paper on Liverpool English. The question here was whether we can see a clue to acceptance or rejection of the Irish community in Liverpool in loans (showing contact between speakers) or in negatively evaluative terms for Irish phenomena (showing rejection). The conclusion was that attitudes seem to be mixed. There are some clear lexical borrowings from Gaelic and Irish English (*gob* 'mouth', *lug* 'ear', *pug* 'punch') and some similar phonomorphological changes (like *kilt* for *killed*). (However some of the loans listed were unconvincing: *moggie* 'cat' seems to derive not from Gaelic but from the name *Maggie* (OED) and is found all over Britain—though I do remember it as typical of the Liverpool comedian Ken Dodd, so perhaps

Liverpudlians use it more frequently.) The disparaging terms (*shawly*, *Paddy*, *Mick*), on the other hand, attest non-integration and possible hostility.

Susan Kermas, the conference organizer, spoke next—a solidly-based diachronic lexical study of 'rose' idioms, with interesting observations presented clearly but, in a way typical of the speaker, somehow modestly too. She discussed first a major problem of all idiomatic and phraseological studies: the elusiveness of variant forms. The 20C 'roses all the way', for example, may be a variant of the 17C 'path strewn with roses'. (Martin Warren's powerful 'conc-gram' concordance program, which I learned about at another conference later in the month, would search corpora and list together 'path strewn with roses' with 'path which John scattered with roses' and 'rose-strewn path', but even that would not include 'roses all the way' in the same list.) To tackle another problem, the variable shelf-life of phraseology, the speaker divided her idioms into perennials and shorter-lived plants associated with various centuries.

The next speaker, old SLIN friend Paola Tornaghi from Milano Bicocca, with the help of a 10-page handout, told us about the three early-15C century occasional poems (in Digby 102) that she is preparing for a critical edition. These, rhyming but with some interesting alliteration, were probably written by the same S.W. Midlands author, and are a kind of 'political theory' expressed through personifications and exempla, reactions to the new situation created by the emerging power of Parliament. A close reading of part of the texts followed, revealing interesting aspects of a language in evolution.

The first speaker after the coffee break, David Katan (from Lecce), stood out for me for his enviable ease of exposition combined with lightly-presented but eloquent statistical analyses. His talk on Bible translations was powerfully related to the anthropological concept of 'habitus' (subconscious attitude system), itself further analysed in socio-psychological terms of value-orientation (ideas of what is normal or right), communication-orientation (reader or writer oriented), power distance (belief in hierarchy or power-distribution) and uncertainty avoidance (reaction to unstructured situations and desire for more or less regulation). Such parameters can perhaps form a net to catch persistent general cultural attitudes, and it was Katan's thesis that we can see them behind a constant difference of attitude towards Bible translations in Anglo-American and

Italian cultures: a long and continuing history of reader-oriented translation in the former case, an openness to multiple translations (even from the US Catholic church), while Italy (despite being a leader in Bible translations in the late 15th and early 16th centuries until bans in 1559 and 1596 – a development beautifully illustrated in simple graphs of book production) shows a preference for one single official version.

Two young researchers from Turin, Teresa Damascelli and Gerardo Mazzaferro, then presented their project to create a corpus of OE Religious Prose manuscripts copied in the West Midlands in the early ME period, testifying an interesting sociolinguistic situation of a continuing A-S cultural tradition in this area for a century and a half after the arrival of the Normans. The texts will be transcribed and marked up and also associated with images of the respective MS pages and published on the web.

The day ended with Bryan Weston-Wyly, a quiet-spoken, bespectacled American from the Université de la Vallée d'Aoste who like David Katan brought studies from outside fields to explain an aspect of English language history. In this case it was the psychological concept of cognitive schemata (world views) linked to metaphors—used here to explain the evolving socio-political ideology of Anglo-Saxon society. Although the arrival of the Augustinian mission helped to establish the idea of a 'pastoral' view of social organization (replacing the archaic scheme based on a leader predator), this evolution had already started in Anglo-Saxon culture. In fact, even in *Beowulf*, which retains much of the old 'predatory ideology', we find Hrothgar described as *folces hierde* ('folk-herd, guardian of the people').

Shortly afterwards we were in a coach heading for the sea and the social dinner, gliding over the flat 'tavoliere salentino', marvelling at the vast open sky, the olive groves and vineyards and occasional tall trees and flat-roofed houses—a savannah-like landscape of stark, primal, almost troubling beauty. I noticed that fallen walls here remained fallen and excess road-building material was simply left at the roadside—perhaps signs of archaic Mediterranean mentality (trusting to Nature's recycling), or perhaps just not enough money to go around for everything.

We arrived at 'Le Dune'—a large beach restaurant on a little bay near Porto Cesareo on the Ionian coast. In the *aperitivo* area we dutifully 'mingled' before moving to the dining area. The meal (good, varied, abundant) was accompanied by music from a multi-function synthesizer (a little loud, we

thought). At a certain point, the pony-tailed musician introduced a demonstration of 'la pizzica', the traditional local dance—here in a faint tourist version but elsewhere apparently still going strong—characterized by a hypnotically repetitive *tamburello* rhythm and wild whirling instrumental accompaniment for a foot-forward, foot-back dance movement, repeated with variation by the circling couple to the hypnotic music: clearly an ancient form of techno-rave. The onlookers occasionally cried softly *a pizzica pizzica!* (which could mean 'it stings, it stings'), but it wasn't clear if this was sympathy, complicity or encouragement in the trancelike state.

This was followed by a brief outline of the origins of the dance as therapy for women bitten by spiders; why only women were bitten was not explained, but the demonstration that followed, with a girl writhing on a rose-petal-strewn sheet to the sound of music, folding her legs under her and arching her back, gave some of us the idea that old-fashioned sexual frustration had something to do with it.

Then the musician said they would choose some people from the group to join the dancers. Alarm! I was at the nearest point to the floor, trying desperately to make myself as thin and invisible as possible. Luckily I was passed by—and Bryan Weston-Wyly was the first chosen... and acquitted himself, I must say, very well. Then Marina Dossena and Nicola Pantaleo joined the dancers and the ice was broken.

Caedmon like, I crept away and strolled down to the beach with Nick Brownlees, where we had a brief English conversation with some bright-faced local kids sitting on the steps, before going to the water's edge and admiring the calm transparent water and the wide sweep of the bay.

Saturday

The last half-day was in the sixteenth-century Palazzo dei Celestini. All the historic buildings in Lecce, by the way, have a cast-iron stand outside holding a descriptive text in Italian, in the most absurdly inappropriate style, which I doubt if anyone ever reads to the end. 'La sua imponenza deriva dalle ragguardevoli dimensioni in lunghezza'—that sort of stuff, as though anyone standing in front of a long building needs to be informed that it is long. Anyway, we were guests in the Provincial council chamber, a large room with counsellors' wooden stalls, in the company of a three short, dark-complexioned, jacketed, silent men, who occasionally helped with

microphones (no doubt local government employees getting some Saturday overtime.)

Stefania Maci from Bergamo (fringe and shoulder-length hair, owl-like glasses) started proceedings with a talk on Italian loans in internet texts devoted to promoting Italian food products. An important distinction was made between loanwords like *pasta* (OED quotes going back to 1874) and 'casual loans', those tied to an ephemeral situational context, words that always remain quoted, like *espresso* (though this example is actually in the OED, with quotes from 1945)—words that here are added to take advantage of the prestige associations of Italian cuisine and to appeal to the intended customer's feelings of sophistication and knowledge of foreign cultures.

The next speaker, Thomas Christiansen of Lecce (burly, hair swept back, speaking with a faint Northern accent), appealed to me for ease of exposition and good use of statistical information. He has collected a 3-million word corpus (not bad in itself) of transcribed unscripted speech from the long-running radio panel game 'Just a Minute'. Although he readily admitted that this was 'bad data', he said that its size and the 40-year span could give interesting perspectives on language evolution, including the use of slang, often not well represented in corpora—and this he proceeded to do in a rapid overview well supported by excellent graphs, clearly signalling important points to the audience and adding explanations economically in parenthetical remarks. Among other things, we saw the evolution in the use of *OK* by age-group, the arrival of vulgar terms in the 1980s, sometimes used more by women participants, and the proportions of world, AmE and BrE slang terms. Almost as an aside he mentioned various predatings of terms with respect to the *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang*. Following a similar theme of the recent evolution of non-formal language in PDE, Pat Kennan from the University of Piemonte Orientale (Vercelli) talked about written English in the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* from the much shorter period 2004-7. She was interested in neologisms, the principles behind their process of creation (alliteration, rhyme, clipping etc.) and their functions of use. The latter aspect was particularly interesting; the way for example a world-view or ideology can be summed up and repeated through a short word, or the way these newspapers have a disturbing power, shown in their threatening use of jeering nicknames.

The last talk was by Elisa Mattiello from Pisa on lexical innovation in the language of young English-speakers. Since the subject of study was the constantly evolving in-talk of teenagers, it is intrinsically elusive (its non-

codified status being one of its valued attributes). Data here came from films and dictionaries (maybe internet chat groups could be another source). An overview of semantic indeterminacy and evolution and of modish word-formation rules gave a good idea of the cloud-like nature of a phenomenon that could perhaps be best studied in future by restricting the field of study. ('Girls talking about boys' would be a fascinating study. Good title, too.)

Our last coffee break was offered by the Provincial government in the cube-shaped atrium to the council chamber, prefaced by a short speech from the President, working on Saturday and dressed informally in one of those light-coloured hunter's waistcoats that are popular with older men. I should have taken some photographs of the plates of *pasticcini*—of various forms and colours, the most artistically-formed I've ever seen.

Then followed our traditional Workshop/Business Meeting (reported elsewhere in this *Newsletter*) and we went for lunch in the calm and sunny centre before meeting again for a coach trip to Otranto: worth a visit just for the amazing twelfth-century mosaic covering the whole floor (not just the nave) of the cathedral, a medieval encyclopaedia of Old (not New) Testament figures, historical heroes and beasts real and mythical.

On our return, we parted company in front of the hotel, our brief interval of simplified life coming to an end. A day later we would be struggling with e-mails, back in the world where we're whipped and whirled. *A pizzica pizzica!*

Richard Dury

5. Varia

In August 2006 the initiative was taken to build a **language museum**, or rather a modern interactive language exploration activity center, in Denmark's second largest city, Aarhus.

The Institute for Anthropology, Archaeology and Linguistics (AAL) of Aarhus University kindly provides office facilities for the Language Museum during its start-up phase.

The vision is to erect a modern museum presenting all sides of the phenomenon of language in a variety of ways that are appealing, engrossing and educational to the general public, child and adult. State-of-the-art advanced interactive set-ups are envisaged with multiple hands-on exhibitions. Top-notch technology will involve visitors with each other, providing an unusual meeting place with people speaking other languages.

Denmark's International Language Museum does not only deal with the Danish language. The museum will furnish a portal for the phenomenon of language in its many diverse forms and functions. It will provide insights into the diversity of the world's more than 6000 languages, and a voyage of discovery into the realm of the ultimate essence of humanity.

There are, it seems, a handful of museums devoted to individual languages around the world and another handful are planned. But apparently there is not a single general language museum anywhere, though also a couple besides Denmark's Language Museum seem to be in the planning.

We invite everybody involved in or entertaining similar projects to contact us, we are looking forward to cooperate about this new trend in 'popular linguistics'.

<http://www.languagemuseum.dk>

sprogmusct@hum.au.dk

<http://www.aal.au.dk/en>

Peter Bakker, Dept of Linguistics, AAL, Aarhus University, Ole Stig Andersen, Information [Copenhagen newspaper] Benedikte Skaarup Madsen, The Language Museum

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