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NEWSLETTER

no. 23 March 2000

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Let me briefly start this *Newsletter* offering, in the name of all SLIN friends, a lot of congratulations to Gabriella Di Martino and Maria Lima on their deserved advancement in the academic career. *Ad maiora!* (N.P.).

1. SSLIN Seminar

The **Fifth SLIN Seminar** will exceptionally be held at Bergamo University (all the previous ones were in fact kindly hosted by David Hart in Rome) on **4 May, 2000, starting at 2.30 p.m.** in the premises of the Dipartimento di Linguistica e Letterature Compare.

There will be a presentation and discussion of HEL teaching perspectives and methodological experiences in Italian universities, chaired by David Hart and Nicola Pantaleo, which will be preceded by an analysis of the lately formulated project of restructuring and reform of Italian university curricula, introduced by M. Gotti's speech intitled "English Historical Linguistics: its place in Italian Universities after the reform". A general presentation of this topic is drafted in 3. below. For any further information please contact the organizers (the same as for the CERLIS Conference, below)

2. HEL and other (English) linguistics Conferences and Seminars

An extremely full summer for most colleagues working in the field of HEL and cognate areas! In this respect the year 2000 introduces itself as a portentous year irrespective of its controversial identity as either the beginning or the end of a millennium. So let us be reminded of the three major events awaiting us in the next few months.

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

All relevant "know-how" about the Helsinki event must have

completely been digested by now. Yet some additional information can help which might concern:

- accommodation for which a hotel deposit for one night's room rate and a reservation fees of FIM 50 (a complete list of hotels and relative fares is provided in *The European English Messenger*, vol. VIII, 2, Autumn 1999, pp.79-80 as well as in the web site given below) should be made payable by 1 May, 2000 to:

AREA Travel Agency Ltd./Congress Team, P.O.Box 6 (Paivarinnankatu 1), FIN-00251 Helsinki, Finland. Tel.: +358-9-818 383. Fax: +358-9-477 5811. E-mail: cteam@area.fi

- the academic programme which starts on **Friday, 25 August, 2000 at 2 p.m.** with a keynote speaker address: from Saturday 26 to Tuesday 29 there are daily semiplenaries and parallel seminar, panel and workshop sections

- the social programme which includes a number of optional tours, trips and visits among which the pre- or post-conference tours to Tallin, Estonia (24 or 30 August), to Lapland (30 August-1 September) or to St. Petersburg by train (30 August-2 September) look especially enticing.

All updated details about accommodation and the social and academic programmes as well as - for latecomers - registration and accommodation forms may be obtained by accessing <http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/doc/ESSE5-2000/index.html>.

§§ The **Eleventh International Conference on English Historical linguistics (11ICEHL)**, organized by Professor Teresa Fanego is due at Santiago de Compostela University (Northern Spain) on **7 to 11 September 2000**. The Conference programme will in fact run from 9.30 a. m. on Thursday 7 until Monday 11 evening. An after-Conference excursion to Baiona and Valença do Minho (Portugal) is planned for Tuesday 12.

Accommodation is provided in one of the 280 single rooms of the Hall of Residence Burgo das Nações at a daily rate of 4,300 ptas.,

including breakfast. 25 double rooms at the rate of 3,400 ptas. per night, including breakfast, are offered at the Hall of Residence Monte da Condesa, half an hour away on foot from the Conference venue. Alternatively a list of hotels is available on request.

The **academic programme** running at the Faculty of Philology (North Campus) includes plenary lectures by Douglas Biber, Laurel Brinton, Santiago G. Fernandez-Corugedo, Raymond Hickey, Chris McCully, Frans Plank, Irma Taavitsainen, Ingrid Tieken Boon, Anthony Warner. Papers will be given in three parallel sessions and a workshop on Historical Word Formation and a special session on electronic corpora are expected to be held: all titles may be found in the Conference web-site (see below).

The **social programme** consists of the University Reception on Thursday 7 evening, a half day tour of Santiago on Friday 8 afternoon, a Concert of ancient music on Saturday 9 evening, and the Conference Dinner on Sunday 10. All events are free for participants who become registered paying a fee of 13.500 ptas. by 1 May 2000. Prices and conditions of payment as well as full information on the Conference are obtainable by visiting the Conference site <http://www.usc.es/ia303/11icehl/11icehl.htm> or by writing to **11 ICEHL, Department of English, Faculdade de Filologia, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, E-15704 Santiago de Compostela, Spain**. E-mail: 11icehl@usc.es. Fax: +34 981 574646.

Please find copies of registration and accommodation forms here attached.

§§§ The **33rd Annual Meeting of Societas Linguistica Europaea** will be celebrated in Poznań, on **31 August to 2 September, 2000**. The general topic of the Conference is *Naturalness and markedness in synchrony and diachrony*. The registration fee for non-members is worth 120DM (for members 100 DM) to be paid before June 30, 2000. For any further information please contact Professor Jacek

Fisiak, c/o Collegium Novum, Al. Niepodległości 4, 61-874 POZNAN, Poland. Tel. +48-61.852 88 20. Fax: +48-61. 852 31 03. E-mail SLE@ifa.amu.edu.pl or fisiak@main.amu.edu.pl. The newly created site of SLE is www.univie.ac.at/Anglistik/SLE which in fact is quite worth visiting.

§§§§ **1SHEL (Studies in the History of English Studies)**, the first event of this kind to take place in US is going to be held at the University of California, Los Angeles CA, on 28 to 30 May, 2000. Full information may easily be obtained by e-mailing ACurzan@u.washington.edu

§§§§§ **1st CERLIS (Centre of Research on Specialist Languages) Conference** will be held at Dipartimento di Linguistica e Letterature comparate, University of Bergamo, on May 5 and 6, 2000 on "Modality in Specialized Texts". The keynote lecture will be delivered by Irma Taavitsainen on "Evidentiality and Scientific Thought Styles: Conventions in Medical Writing". Papers will be read, among others, by Maurizio Gotti, Gabriella Del Lungo, Roberta Facchinetti, Marina Dossena, John Morley, Giuliana Diani.

Information on the Conference is supplied by mailing cerlis@unibg.it or writing to CERLIS, via Salvecchio 19, 24129 Bergamo (Italia). Tel. +35 277421. Fax: +35 235136. All details of the event are on line: <http://www.unibg.it/cerlis/home.htm>

§§§§§§ **10th Conference on British and American Studies**, Timsoara University (Romania) on 18-20 May 2000. Contact for information Luminita Frenthiu, Str. Turgheniev 4, 1900, Timsoara. Tel. +40 (56) 192338. E-mail: lfrenthiu@mail.dntm.ro

3. Some remarks on the "decreti di area" (M. Gotti)

I apologize for giving this in Italian since the matter is rather technical and dealing with local problems. Might our kind foreign readers forgive us? At any rate it might provide an exercise in interlinguistic translation. Mightn't it? (Editors note)

ALCUNE CONSIDERAZIONI IN MERITO AI DECRETI DI AREA (M. Gotti)

Negli ultimi mesi si sono avute delle novità rilevanti nel quadro universitario italiano. Il decreto 3.11.1999 ha completamente rinnovato i percorsi formativi, mentre il decreto 23.12.1999 ha rideterminato i settori scientifico-disciplinari.

I nuovi percorsi formativi

Secondo la nuova normativa, le Università rilasceranno i seguenti titoli di primo e di secondo livello:

- a) laurea;
- b) laurea specialistica.

Le Università rilasceranno altresì il dottorato di ricerca e potranno attivare corsi di perfezionamento scientifico alla conclusione dei quali saranno rilasciati master universitari di primo e di secondo livello.

In tale prospettiva, le attività formative vengono programmate sulla base di una nuova unità di misura: i crediti formativi universitari, che rappresentano il lavoro richiesto ad uno studente per ogni attività formativa svolta per conseguire un titolo di studio universitario. Ad ogni credito corrispondono 25 ore di lavoro per studente; la quantità media di apprendimento svolto in un anno da uno studente impegnato a tempo pieno negli studi universitari è convenzionalmente fissata in 60 crediti.

Per conseguire la laurea, lo studente deve aver acquisito 180 crediti, comprensivi di quelli relativi alla conoscenza obbligatoria di una lingua dell'Unione Europea oltre l'italiano; per conseguire la laurea

specialistica lo studente deve aver acquisito 300 crediti, ivi compresi quelli già acquisiti e riconosciuti validi per il relativo corso di laurea specialistica. Per conseguire il master universitario lo studente deve aver acquisito almeno sessanta crediti oltre a quelli acquisiti per conseguire la laurea o laurea specialistica.

La durata normale dei corsi di laurea è di tre anni; la durata normale dei corsi di laurea specialistica è di ulteriori due anni dopo la laurea. I corsi di studio dello stesso livello sono raggruppati in classi di appartenenza.

Pur con la necessaria gradualità, gli atenei potranno impostare i nuovi corsi di studio secondo il modello del 3 + 2 già a partire dal prossimo anno accademico 2000-2001 e avranno comunque 18 mesi di tempo dall'entrata in vigore dei decreti attuativi per adeguare ai nuovi criteri tutti i corsi di studio.

Le lauree di primo livello

Il Cun sta attualmente esaminando la bozza del decreto relativo alle classi delle lauree di primo livello elaborata da una apposita commissione ministeriale. Tale bozza di decreto determina gli obiettivi formativi qualificanti delle classi delle lauree di primo livello e le attività formative indispensabili per conseguirli, nonché il numero minimo di crediti che devono essere riservati negli ordinamenti didattici degli atenei ad ogni tipologia di attività formativa e ad ogni ambito disciplinare. Le classi fissate nella bozza di decreto sono 41; quelle concernenti l'area linguistica sono le seguenti:

cl. III - Discipline della mediazione linguistica (che sostituisce grosso modo la scuola superiore per interpreti e traduttori);

cl. XI - Lingue e culture moderne (che sostituisce grosso modo la facoltà (o i corsi di laurea) di lingue e letterature straniere).

Le attività formative indispensabili di ogni classe sono raggruppate in sei tipologie; per quanto riguarda i primi tre tipi (di base, caratterizzanti, affini o integrative), le corrispondenti attività

formative sono individuate mediante l'elencazione di uno o più ambiti disciplinari e, per ciascuno di questi, del numero minimo di crediti che gli ordinamenti didattici di ateneo devono riservare alle attività formative di quell'ambito disciplinare. Un ambito disciplinare è un insieme di settori scientifico-disciplinari culturalmente e professionalmente affini.

Le lauree specialistiche

Ai primi di marzo il Sottosegretario al MURST, Luciano Guerzoni, ha annunciato di avere consegnato al ministro Zecchino, a nome dell'apposito gruppo di lavoro ministeriale, la proposta dello schema di decreto riguardante le classi delle lauree specialistiche.

Compete ora al Ministro valutare ed eventualmente correggere la proposta, che rappresenta tuttora un documento di lavoro provvisorio prima della trasmissione, a sua firma, al Consiglio Universitario Nazionale (Cun) per il prescritto parere. Il testo elaborato dal gruppo di lavoro ministeriale prevede 110 classi di lauree specialistiche, corrispondenti ad altrettanti ambiti di saperi e ai relativi profili formativi e professionali. Il rapporto medio è di quasi tre classi di lauree specialistiche per ciascuna delle 41 classi delle nuove lauree (triennali) già previste dall'anteriore schema di decreto sul primo ciclo della formazione universitaria. Sarà così offerta allo studente, dopo la laurea, una pluralità di scelte per la specializzazione.

Contemporaneamente all'esame del Cun, la proposta sarà sottoposta alla Conferenza dei rettori delle università italiane (Cru), alle parti sociali, agli ordini professionali e alle rappresentanze delle associazioni studentesche. Dopo il vaglio del Cun occorrerà acquisire sulla proposta per le lauree specialistiche, come su quella per le lauree triennali (tuttora all'esame del Cun), il parere delle commissioni parlamentari.

I nuovi settori scientifico-disciplinari

Il decreto 23.12.1999 ha rideterminato i settori scientifico-disciplinari, riducendone grandemente il numero totale e cambiandone anche le caratteristiche. In base a tale decreto il settore L18A è diventato L-LIN/10 Letteratura Inglese, mentre per quanto riguarda il settore L18C la nuova denominazione è L-LIN/12 Lingua e Traduzione - Lingua Inglese.

Entro 120 giorni decorrenti dalla data di pubblicazione del decreto nella Gazzetta Ufficiale (avvenuta il 5.1.2000) i settori scientifico-disciplinari saranno integrati, su proposta del Consiglio Universitario Nazionale, da una sintetica descrizione dei relativi contenuti scientifico-disciplinari.

I nuovi settori prevedono la permanenza della divisione del settore letterario in americanisti e anglisti invece di un settore unico di Letteratura dei paesi di lingua inglese, e questo è stato considerato da molti in maniera negativa; si sta infatti notando in alcune sedi una contrapposizione tra anglisti e americanisti, specialmente nei casi in cui gli americanisti spingono per inserire nei curricula formativi i corsi di letteratura americana in alternativa a quelli di letteratura inglese (costituendo così le premesse di formare dei laureati in inglese dotati di preparazione in letteratura americana ma con nessuna conoscenza della letteratura inglese).

I nuovi settori prevedono inoltre la titolarità della lingua solo per il settore L-LIN/12 (Lingua e traduzione inglese) e non per il settore L-LIN/10 (Letteratura inglese), con conseguente divisione della titolarità dei corsi di lingua da quelli di letteratura nella classe Lingue e Culture moderne (sul modello di quanto già avveniva a Torino e Pisa); ciò comporta uno specifico esame di lingua inglese per ogni anno di corso distinto da quello di letteratura. Per evitare il rischio di ricorsi dei collaboratori ed esperti linguistici, è importante che in ogni anno di corso sia previsto un docente ufficiale di lingua inglese che dovrà impartire lezioni proprie e partecipare alle prove d'esame verificando la conoscenza della parte da lui insegnata.

La quantità di ore del corso del docente ufficiale di lingua inglese dipende dalla organizzazione didattica adottata; di solito, ci sarà un docente per ogni anno e l'impegno del docente sarà tutto speso per i corsi di sua titolarità, se i numeri sono ridotti, o non c'è disponibilità di docenti, il docente può essere titolare di più anni e suddividere il suo carico di ore in diversi moduli per i vari anni. In genere si attuerà la stessa divisione dei corsi che verrà adottata per quelli di letteratura inglese.

Tra le questioni che costituiscono attualmente oggetto di grande discussione all'interno delle facoltà/corsi di laurea in lingue vi è quella dei crediti da dare al corso di lingua rispetto a quello delle altre discipline; si notano in merito due posizioni principali:

1. Prevedere lo stesso numero di crediti per la lingua come per le altre discipline; ciò evita che un maggior numero di crediti dato alle lingue riduca lo spazio alle altre discipline e fa sì che non si abbiano disparità di trattamento tra le varie discipline. In questo caso il carico effettivo degli studenti viene o ignorato o ridotto ad un valore convenzionale uguale a quello degli altri corsi: es. il corso monografico del docente di lingua + un numero di ore di esercitazione linguistica di 10-20 ore; le altre ore di esercitazione linguistica sarebbero incluse nell'orario ma verrebbero 'offerte' come supporto ulteriore alla didattica linguistica (e considerate quindi alla stregua di servizi analoghi a quelli del centro linguistico o della biblioteca).

2. Partire dal reale carico didattico degli studenti, ipotizzando tuttavia un 'peso' diverso tra la lezione del docente e l'esercitazione del collaboratore ed esperto linguistico (di solito si ipotizza un rapporto di 2 a 1 o di 3 a 1: un'ora in classe del docente richiederebbe una o due ore a casa di studio, mentre quella del collaboratore ed esperto linguistico ne richiederebbe una o nessuna di studio a casa); i conteggi sono molto diversi da sede a sede e comportano carichi diversi.

La storia della lingua inglese nei nuovi percorsi formativi

Nella discussione dei nuovi decreti di area che sta avendo luogo nei vari atenei, l'insegnamento della storia della lingua inglese viene ipotizzato in diversi contesti. In alcuni, esso viene visto all'interno dell'insegnamento di lingua inglese; il docente di storia della lingua inglese diventerebbe titolare di un corso di lingua inglese e - oltre a coordinare l'insegnamento linguistico del proprio anno - recupererebbe a livello di proprio corso l'insegnamento linguistico di carattere diacronico. In altri contesti si sta invece ipotizzando di continuare a prevedere un insegnamento specifico della storia della lingua inglese come disciplina autonoma nell'ambito dei corsi del primo triennio e/o in quelli del biennio specialistico.

Prima che si intuiscano gli sviluppi definitivi di questa disciplina c'è ancora un cammino non breve da compiere, che richiede la partecipazione di tutti i docenti interessati alle varie discussioni e la massima attenzione nel momento in cui verranno prese le decisioni principali. Bisogna essere consapevoli che molte delle scelte verranno operate a livello locale, nel quadro dell'ampia autonomia riconosciuta dalla riforma alle singole Università. E' essenziale comunque evitare che nel nuovo contesto istituzionale e nei nuovi percorsi formativi si perda l'identità di questa disciplina e che - aspetto più rilevante - si interrompa l'insegnamento degli aspetti fondamentali degli sviluppi della lingua inglese, elemento essenziale nella formazione degli specialisti di una lingua straniera. Questi temi importantissimi saranno al centro della discussione che ci vedrà tutti coinvolti nell'ambito del seminario che si terrà il prossimo 4 maggio presso l'Università di Bergamo.

4. Reviews and bibliographical information (R. Dury, M. Dossena)

Further to his consistent interest in the historiography of English language histories, here is Richard's latest effort, which I find extremely interesting and delightful. Marina's instructive review follows. (N.P.)

THE NEVER-ENDING HISTORY OF ENGLISH: histories of the English language, their openings and endings (R. Dury)

'Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?' he asked.

'Begin at the beginning,' the King said, gravely, 'and go on till you come to the end: then stop'

(Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), ch. 1)

When faced with a thesis the present writer always starts by reading the first sentence, the last sentence and then counting the number of books in the Bibliography. This cannot substitute the reading of the whole volume (unfortunately, in some cases), yet the picture one gets of the work by this short method is often a good guide to all the rest. With this in mind, I thought of looking at the beginnings and endings of some 'histories of the English language' to see what this can tell us about their characteristics and the development of the genre.

The earliest 'histories of the English language' are mere outlines, sequences of grammatical sections or collections of illustrative texts, yet their introductory sentences can already be taken as an indication of their general approach. Bailey (1721) begins by saying that English 'is perhaps the most copious language of any in *Europe*', which leads naturally on to a brief overview of language contact in chronological order. This we can see as a common opening strategy: to state the importance or exceptional nature of the object of study in the hope that the reader will read on. We find the same strategy in Claiborne (1983) who opens 'By any standard, English is a

remarkable language', though in his case it is the large number of speakers that he first emphasizes. Unexpectedly, this is exactly the same opening gambit adopted by the *Cambridge History of the English Language* in the 'General Editor's Preface', which begins 'Although it is a topic of continuing debate, there can be little doubt that English is the most widely-spoken language in the world'.

Johnson (1755) opens with a reference to the Welsh, the 'first possessors of this island', who however have little place in the history of the English language. After this (not particularly elegant) delay, it is the second paragraph that can be seen as the effective opening: 'The whole fabric and scheme of the English language is *Gothick* or *Teutonic*'. An initial statement of a similar kind can be seen as characterizing the whole philological tradition, as in Emerson (1896) 'The English language belongs to the Teutonic branch of the Indo-European family of tongues' and Bøgholm (1939), who starts with his sleeves rolled up 'Urgermanic introduced some new features into what had been the Indogermanic language...'. Mossé (1947), in contrast, starts with a theoretical overview of relationships between languages: 'It is rare for a language to be completely isolated. More often, we need to recognise similarities with other languages. These similarities may be of two kinds...'.

A related approach is to start with a division into historical periods, as does Faiß (1977) 'The English language, as a historical phenomenon, may be divided into the following periods, on the basis of significant differences in phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics...'. Schlauch (1959) clearly has a more historical and sociolinguistic approach with her 'The task of delimiting significant periods in any kind of social history is difficult at best; perhaps most difficult of all in the case of language history'.

Jespersen (1905) explicitly breaks with this tradition when he opens with his programmatic declaration 'It will be my endeavour in this volume to characterize the chief particularities of the English

language, and to explain the growth and significance of those features in its structure which have been of permanent importance. The older stages of the language... will be considered only as far as they throw light... on the main characteristics of present-day English'. The hesitant reader is further wooed by an emphasis on the importance and the singularity of the subject (the famous characterization of the language as '*masculine*') and a new promise 'to connect the teachings of linguistic history with the chief events of the history of the English people so as to show their mutual bearings on each other, and the relation of language to national character'. (Modern readers who smile in a superior way at this idealism may ask themselves if they have done the equivalent of helping to found the IPA, have pulled a number of separate observations into a model with a life as long as 'The Great Vowel Shift', or have written a seven-volume grammar of the language.)

That attention of Jespersen to connections between history and language history is emphasized in the opening sentences of several later works that typically start with a reference to the invasion and settlement of Britannia by the Angles and the Saxons. This is an 'iconic opening', i.e. one that makes a reference to another kind of opening, beginning, birth, entrance, arrival etc. and hence has a built-in 'rightness' about it. An example is Huchon (1923): 'The history of the English language begins with the invasion of Great Britain by the Germanic tribes known generically as Anglo-Saxons' (my translation) and Hogg (1992) 'Bede begins his story of the Anglo-Saxon invasions and settlement of Britain as follows...'

What we may call the Baugh-opening (after Baugh 1935) emphasizes the importance of the historical study of this language for the cultural formation of the reader, hence a much more direct appeal to relevance:

It was observed by that remarkable twelfth century chronicler, Henry of Huntingdon, that an interest in his past

was one of the distinguishing characteristics of a man as compared with other animals. And in these days when the cultivated man or woman is conscious of deficiencies in his education without some knowledge of economics, medieval history, recent advances in basic natural sciences, so also he may discover a desire to know something of the nature and development of his mother-tongue.

After being shamelessly flattered by the supposition that he knows who Henry of Huntingdon is and by being implicitly classed as a 'cultivated man or woman' anxious to improve his education, the reader is seduced into believing that - with true Wildean languor - 'he may discover a desire to know something' about the subject of this book.

The basically similar opening by Potter (1950) has a postwar briskness that would have made 'Baugh 1935' swoon away with shock: 'We cannot know too much about the language we speak every day of our lives'. An echo of the same gambit can be seen in Brook (1958) 'The study of one's mother tongue has an importance different in kind from that which attaches to other branches of study'.

The influence of twentieth-century linguistics can be seen in openings that start with references to the general nature of language (often followed by a survey of linguistic principles in a chapter or more). Early examples of this are Robertson (1934): 'No completely satisfactory definition of language has ever been evolved...', and Wren (1949): 'Language is...'. These have been followed by Bloomfield and Newmark (1963) 'Language is...', Barber (1964) 'What is Language?' (chapter title), and Bourcier (transl. Clark 1978) 'All human language...'.
An alternative approach is to start not with theories of language but with theories of language change, as does Strang (1970) 'Synchronic

variation and diachronic change' (section title). Schbisbye (1972) 'Linguistic change may be regarded as continuous transition, spreading through contact... like waves created by a stone thrown into a pool', and Görlach (1982) 'Recent research has devoted renewed attention to the problems of language change; and interest in language varieties has also focussed attention on origins and historical factors of change'.

This last quotation also gives evidence of the growing influence of sociolinguistics, also seen in the abandonment of the automatic assumption that standard English is the same as 'the English language' and in the spirited opening of Lass (1987) 'There is a matter of definition to be settled at the beginning: what is "English"?'.

The prize for the best opening to a history of English is given by the present writer to... Brunner (1960), who has an elegant iconic opening ('iconic' since it is an opening that mentions beginnings but also because it consists of two long sentences referring to two long periods of history), starting justly with the word 'English', and concisely summarizing a millennium and a half of history. 'English is the name given to the language of the Germanic settlers of Great Britain, who, from about the middle of the fifth century onwards, gradually took possession of the island, defeated the earlier Celtic inhabitants and drove them westwards and northwards. From Great Britain, first to Ireland and then, in the course of colonizations and with the growth of the British Empire, they moved to all parts of the globe'.

Englisch nennt man die Sprache der germanischen Besiedler Großbritanniens, welche die Insel etwa von der Mitte des 5. Jh. an allmählich in Besitz genommen haben und die früheren, keltischen Bewohner unterwarfen und nach Westen und Norden zurückgedrängten. Sie hat sich von Großbritannien aus zuerst nach Irland und dann in Verlauf der Kolonisierungen und mit der Wachsen des britischen Reiches nach allen

Brunner is not in the running for the endings prize since he has what I will call a 'Davisian' ending. This name I take from an incident involving Miles Davis. When he reproached his saxophonist for excessively long solos, the latter replied: 'I don't know what to do; once I start playing that sax, man, I get carried away - I just don't know how to stop'. To which Miles Davis replied, tersely, 'Just - take it out of your mouth'. I hasten to add that the Davisian ending of abrupt closure is no fault for works in the tradition of philology or modern linguistics where the text is divided up as a catalogue of phonemes or as a historical grammar or divided up by 'levels of language'. Other examples in this tradition are Lindelöf (1895), Wyld (1906), Schibsbye (1972-7) and Faß (1977).

For those who favour a more narrative chronological approach (which lends itself to an emphasis on change, sociolinguistic factors and complex interactions, at the cost of analytic simplicity), the necessity of providing a shaped ending is a daunting task. To write the end of a history of a language is like writing the end of an autobiography: there is no natural closure. The automatic compromise in such a circumstance is to look forward to the future, extending the line of development that has just been traced. It is not the strongest of endings and tends to be associated with anxieties: the past is safe and cannot change, one possesses of the present, but the future is beyond control. Hence we find the American T.R. Lounsbury ending in the following astounding way in 1894 (though the words may date from the first edition of 1879): 'English, in the form which it has had essentially for the last three hundred years, may doubtless disappear; but its destruction, if it ever takes place, will be under conditions such as have never before existed, and will be owing to agencies which differ wholly from those that have brought about the ruin of any of the great cultural languages of the past'. What on earth was he so worried about?

Some writers are more optimistic, like Bradley (1904) who wanly hopes 'that our posterity will speak a better English... than the English of today', or the flag-waving McKnight (1928), who ends: 'May we have uniformity in language, but may the English language never be deprived of the freedom which has in the past made possible the revelation of personal charm, which has expressed the natural characteristics of the English people, and which of late is being made to express the spirit of the young American nation'. Jespersen (1904) falls into the same category, and like McKnight links together Britain and America, with his *avant la lettre* Churchillian cadences: 'It must be a source of gratification to mankind that the tongue spoken by two of the greatest powers in the world is so noble, so rich, so pliant, so expressive, and so interesting as the language whose growth and structure I have been here endeavouring to characterize.'

Jespersen was probably influenced by the idealistic move to create an Anglo-Saxon political union (strongest c.1895-1905) and we can even see a shadow of it in Baugh's valedictory quotation in 1935 from Bradley (1921) hoping that 'this vast community of nations' will one day possess a common standard English and declaring that 'There are many on both sides of the Atlantic who cherish this ideal and are eager to do all in their power to bring it nearer to fulfilment'. Taken with his opening sentences this seems to show Baugh in a strange cultural time-warp.

Later writers will identify American English as the dominant variety. The first of these that I have found is Mossé (1947) who says that English 'has ceased to be the language of England alone; it is the language of two empires and, from now onwards, the United States will have much more influence on its further development'.

Those more recent writers who place importance on synchronic variation as a factor of language change may use their conclusion to repeat the message, as does Bambas (1980): 'Regional and social

variations, however, can be expected to survive throughout the English-speaking world despite forced schooling, mobility and electronic communication... Man is a conforming animal, but is never perfectly so.'

Some earlier writers (they seem to be all American), conscious that they are writing for students, take the opportunity to remind them to use the language well. Robertson (1934) reminds his readers that 'mastery of English' depends on the individual's 'own taste' and his 'own observation and sensitiveness to good practice'. Bryant (1948) also warns that theoretical justification for using any forms has to take account of social judgement. Even as late as Claiborne (1983) we find a similar conclusion: 'As it enriched the lives of past generations, so it will continue to enrich the lives of our children and their children's children - provided we take care that they learn how to understand and appreciate it. And provided they remain free to use it'. (The last sentence shows a typical closing gambit, the short and unexpected statement that takes an argumentative jump. Here, a rally to cold-war alertness, perhaps.)

With the question of language change a prominent connecting thread in many recent works, it is of no surprise that we find conclusions projecting such change into the future. The earliest example is Potter (1950) who also exploits the concluding gambit of the 'periodic sentence': 'As in the past, so in the future, it will shape and adapt itself unceasingly to meet new needs, and in that incessant reshaping and adaptation every speaker and writer, consciously or unconsciously, will play some part'. Brook (1958) draws a Saussurian moral: 'The English language will continue to change, and the changes which it undergoes will continue to be a fascinating subject of study, but the object of such study should be to understand the language, not to change it'. A nice closure emphasizing continual change concludes Barber (1964): 'The whole of nature is in flux, and so is the whole of human life, and we might

as well make the best of the fact. It's not really much good clinging to the bank: we have to push out into the flux and swim'.

The prize for the best closure goes to a writer in this tradition. Strang (1970):

In the end is our beginning; the nature and role of change, the interplay of change and stability, are exactly the same through the centuries as they are across the community at any one moment. If we did not know that what is common is the heart of the matter, we should not speak of the English language.

Strang's *staccato* style means that is not the most elegant of endings (Jespersen and Barber get my vote for that), but she ends - as Brunner began - with 'the English language' and manages to balance the concepts of 'change' and 'stability', and diachronic and diatopic variation in one sentence. The conclusion's total effect needs to be seen in the context of the whole volume: I distinctly remember, reading this text that gradually moves back from 1970 in bicentennial leaps to 570 and then finally to 370 AD, the very strong effect of that final 'In the end is our beginning'.

It is perhaps significant that the two 'prizewinners' are generally considered to be among the best surveys in the last half-century, which must at least show that style and content are not at odds with one another. The sketch has also mapped out a suggestion of evolving characteristics of the genre in a swifter way than would the analysis of whole volumes. And it has incidentally touched on the interesting general subject of how best to begin and end.

Beginnings and endings present problems for all man's temporal works: poems, phone-calls, songs, seminars, books and billet doux. Starting presents us with the problem of making the first step, notoriously the most difficult part of the journey; ending is made difficult by the knowledge that, as far as *matter* is concerned, there is

no ending, and everything is connected to everything else. Yet the successful beginning has the fascination of birth, the revelation of potentialities, and the promise of all to come: misty mornings, overtures, arrivals, aperitifs, the first words of a favourite book, March winds, beginnings, beginnings... And endings contain the idea of repose, of a final flash of revelation and the inevitableness of finished form: the rippling final chords of *Tristan*, the rhyming couplet that justly ends the scene, the sequence of closures to the book you wish will never end, the departure with luggage in the hall and a last look at the Grand Canal, gathering swallows, sunsets, and, one hopes, even this essay's delayed but still expected, yes, final phrase...

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FILPPULA, Markku (1999). *The Grammar of Irish English - Language in Hibernian Style*. London and New York, Routledge/ESA Studies in Germanic Linguistics, pp. ix-334, ISBN 0-415-14524-4, (M. Dossena)

One of the least satisfactory labels in English linguistics is possibly 'British English', which may be a perfectly suitable working tool in general contexts, but which immediately proves inadequate (if not totally misleading) when diatopic varieties are in the spotlight - not to mention the fact that, in the case of Irish English, its inclusion in

the general 'British English' portmanteau would even imply a (slight?) political *faux pas*! It is therefore all the more important that books like Markku Filppula's latest study should help us remember that the 'British' label only refers to an idealized standard which hardly reflects the complexity of usage in different geographical and social milieus.

In addition to this, the specificity of the variety under scrutiny does not limit itself to phonological features, but encompasses lexis, grammar, syntax and discourse strategies. In this respect, Filppula's careful investigation shows that specific features may be ascribed to contact with Irish (Gaelic) in a more pervasive way than might be assumed on account of the limited range of use of this language. For this reason, the book opens with an historical overview on the position of English in medieval Ireland and on its relationship with Irish in different areas; subsequently the rise of Hiberno-English is discussed in relation to the decline of Irish.

The diachronic introduction then gives way to a description of the synchronic variety. This is based on a corpus of interviews carried out by the author (the sociolinguistic profiles of all informants are provided in an Appendix) and on previously recorded materials. Nineteenth-century developments are also discussed on the basis of private correspondence available in the National Library of Ireland.

The features discussed in the synchronic chapters concern both the noun phrase (in particular, the use of definite articles and reflexive pronouns) and the verb phrase (perfects, periphrastic *do* and plural subject-verb concord). Specific attention is also given to prepositional usage (of *on*, *in*, *with* and *of*), focusing devices (i.e. clefting and topicalization) and complex sentences (the paragraph on subordinating uses of *and* being especially interesting in view of the similar constructions found in Hebridean English, Older Scots and Present-Day Scots). Modality is mentioned without any further specific investigation of modal usage - this might prove a further line

of study, especially since the subject has attracted the attention of prescriptivists.

The book is both well-written and well-documented: figures, tables, appendices with specimen texts of interviews and indexes providing a specially valuable set of data to complement a rich bibliography of almost 300 titles. A very welcome addition to the study of Celtic Englishes - although this is another label that has been challenged - as further investigation of these varieties as contact languages may help us both revitalize declining languages and find out a little more about English itself.

Marina Dossena

5. An updated list of English Historical Corpora (Ch. Meyer via R. Facchinetti)

I must thank the Editor of *Journal of English Linguistics* for allowing a re-publication here of the following list appearing in the March issue of the periodical. I must also acknowledge Roberta Facchinetti's role in achieving this. The list is supplemented by the contents of the *JEL* Special Issue (March 2000) on Historical Corpora, edited by Anne Curzan and Charles Meyer. (Editor's note)

English Historical Corpora in 1999

One of the major tasks Matti Rissanen accomplishes at *ICAME* conferences is to update colleagues regularly on the most important English Historical corpora available or in preparation. Hence, last year in Freiburg he handed out a list of corpora which has been further updated during these months and will soon appear, together with Matti's comments and elucidations, in the article "The World of English Historical Corpora: From Caedmon to Conrad" - *Journal of English Linguistics*.

Chuck Meyer, editor of the journal, and Matti Rissanen himself very kindly let us have the list, so that it could be

circulated within our group in advance. Here it is, then; let us dive freely into the distant and recent past of the English language.

1. *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*
matti.rissanen@helsinki.fi
Manual: <http://khnt.hit.uib.no/icame/manuals/HIC/>
2. *Brooklyn-Geneva-Amsterdam-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English*
In preparation.
SP20@york.ac.uk,
kenetade@let.vu.nl
3. *The York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Poetry*
In preparation.
SP20@york.ac.uk
4. *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English*
<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/mldeng/>
Registration: kroch@ling.cis.upenn.edu
5. *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form*
<http://www.press.umich.edu/webhome/healev/siteform.html>
6. *Electronic Beowulf*
<http://www.uky.edu/~kiernan/BL/kportico.html>
7. *Middle English Compendium*, Humanities Text Initiative at the University of Michigan.
<http://www.hti.umich.edu/mec/>
8. *Middle English Collection*, University of Virginia.
<http://etext.virginia.edu/mideng/browse.htm>
9. *Corpus of Early Middle English Tagged Texts and Maps*, Institute for Historical Dialectology, Edinburgh.
In preparation.
M.Laing@ed.ac.uk
10. *Innsbruck Computer Archive of Middle English Texts (1100-1500)*
Sample on the new ICAME CD-ROM.
manfred.markus@uibk.ac.at

11. *Corpus of Early English Correspondence (1417-1681)*. Helsinki.
Sampler corpus on the new ICAME CD-ROM.
<http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/doe/projects/ceec/>
12. *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing (1375-1750)*. Helsinki.
In preparation.
jma.taavitsainen@helsinki.fi
13. *The Canterbury Tales Project*. Oxford, Sheffield, Brigham Young.
<http://www.shaf.ac.uk/uni/projects/ctp/>
14. *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots (1450-1700)*. On the new ICAME CD-ROM.
anneli.meurman-solin@helsinki.fi
15. *Edinburgh Corpus of Older Scots (1380-1500)*. Institute for Historical
Dialectology, Edinburgh.
In preparation.
I.K.Williamson@ed.ac.uk
16. *The Corpus of Irish English*. Essen.
In preparation.
r.hickey@uni-essen.de
17. *Early American English Corpus*.
In preparation.
merja.kyto@engelska.uu.se
18. *Modern English Collection*. University of Michigan.
<http://www.hti.umich.edu/english/pd-modeng/>
19. *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER)*.
University of Northern Arizona and University of Southern California.
Douglas.Biber@nau.edu,
Finegan@almaac.usc.edu
20. *Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts*. Chemnitz/Zwickau.
On the new ICAME CD-ROM
<http://www.fu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/real/lampeter/lamphone.htm>
21. *Century of English Prose*. Cleveland State University.
r0097@vmcms.csuohio.edu
22. *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*. Lancaster and Uppsala.

In preparation.
j.culpeper@lancaster.ac.uk,
merja.kyto@engelska.uu.se

23. *Early Modern English Dictionaries Database*. Toronto.
<http://chass.utoronto.ca/cgi/english/emed>
24. *A Corpus of Nineteenth-century English*. Uppsala and Tampere.
In preparation.
merja.kyto@engelska.uu.se,
juhani.rudanko@uta.fi
25. *Zurich English Newspaper Corpus*.
In preparation.
ufries@es.unizh.ch
26. *Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*. Manchester.
d.denison@man.ac.uk
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