

Preface

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Pages vii–viii of

Categorization in the History of English

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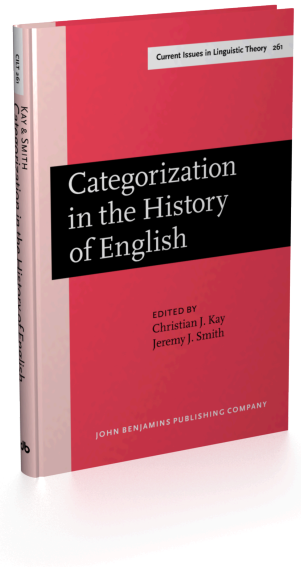
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PREFACE

Most of the papers in this volume started life at a Symposium on Classification and Categorization held at the Institute for the Historical Study of Language, University of Glasgow, in September 1999. Since then, the original papers have been revised and expanded and two invited contributions added.

The purpose of the Symposium was to bring together scholars working on a range of linguistic topics who had a shared interest in the theory and practice of classification, generally from a diachronic perspective. In many cases, this interest arose from engagement with large datasets of lexical and textual materials. The emphasis of the present volume is thus on the establishment of categories and the analysis of meaning in diachronic contexts, with an underlying theme of linguistic change. Cross-linguistic comparison forms a second theme. Much of the data is new and original.

The scene is set by Aitchison's paper describing how linguists' treatment of the mental lexicon sheds light on the development of ideas on linguistic categorization over the past few decades. Biggam follows with a critical overview of how the major theorists in colour semantics in the period since 1969 have dealt with the salient areas and the margins of colour categories. Lexical classification in action is discussed in papers by Fischer, Kay and Sylvester on the way thesauruses of different kinds are structured, while detailed treatments of particular semantic areas are offered by Kleparski and Peters, drawing on cognitive theories of metaphor and metonymy; Mikołajczuk, comparing Anger categories in English and Polish; and O'Hare, experimenting with folk and expert taxonomies.

Papers by Lass, Laing and Williamson, and Smith are concerned with the nature of linguistic evidence in the context of the historical record. Lass proposes a new kind of text typology which takes due account of the nature of linguistic objects with a long evolutionary history, while Laing and Williamson examine the output of a Middle English scribe, identifying different strata of exemplar language. Smith proposes a classificatory system for Middle English vowels and shows how its adoption allows for new interpretations of the data.

This volume has been a long time in the preparation, and we would like to thank our contributors for their patience and helpfulness during this process. Exemplary patience and helpfulness has also been shown by Anke de Looper of John Benjamins, and by Ian Hamilton, who prepared the manuscript for publication. Thanks are also due to those who helped to run the Symposium and reviewed the papers, and to the University of Glasgow for financial support.

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Glasgow, September 2004