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Editors' introduction

Explaining the development of the English vocabulary and analyzing characteristic features of English text types

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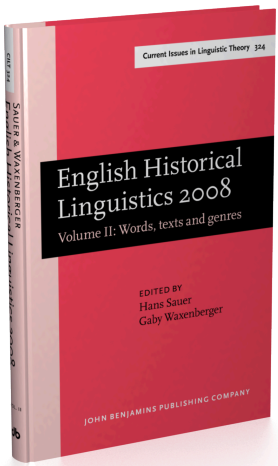

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Editors' introduction

Explaining the development of the English vocabulary and analyzing characteristic features of English text types

1. Survey

The first volume of *English Historical Linguistics 2008* (Lenker et al. 2010) concentrated on historical syntax, especially on the history of verbal and nominal constructions; the present volume focuses on the growth of the vocabulary and on some characteristics of historical text types, for example, formulaic language and politeness. The articles dealing with vocabulary are grouped under three headings: I. etymology; II. semantic fields; III. word-formation, whereas the contributions on historical text types and genres follow under IV.

This order and distribution implies no strict division, however, because some of the articles belong to several of the areas mentioned. The studies collected here also nicely reflect the wealth of approaches that can be taken. Some contributions have an emphasis on theory and methodology, relying on large corpora and using statistical and mathematical methods (especially Bilynsky and Ogura & Wang). Others concentrate more on the analysis of examples without, however, neglecting theoretical questions and general conclusions. Several authors address the question how different text types and how the growth of formulaic language contribute to language change (Gardner, Kohnen, Kopaczyk).

Philip Durkin gives a broad survey of the various etymological problems a historical dictionary such as the *OED* has to deal with, whereas Paul S. Cohen attempts to explain the etymology of a small group of related words (*wank, swank, wonky*). Michael Bilynsky's etymological study based on statistical methods also extends into word-formation, focussing on the various derivations made from native and borrowed verbs.

In a study also based on a large corpus and using statistic methods Mieko Ogura and William S-Y. Wang distinguish between monosemous and polysemous words and place the polysemous words into semantic networks. Carole Hough and Sylwester Łodej analyze specific semantic fields, i.e. 'repayment and revenge' and 'Christian clergy'. Whereas Hough looks at the historical connection between

'repayment' and 'revenge', Łodej shows how the terms for Christian clergy become polysemous by metaphorical extension. Consequently, they often refer to quite different persons and/or things and frequently have a pejorative (see below no. 3) but also a euphemistic meaning (e.g. *cardinal* for 'menstruation').

It has long been recognized that word-formation is at the cross-roads of all linguistic levels, i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, text-linguistics etc. This is also reflected in the contributions by Gardner, Thompson, and Broccias. All of them deal with aspects of word-formation, but each with a different emphasis. In Gardner's study of words that became suffixes (Old English *-dōm, -hād, -lāc, -nes, -rēden, -scipe* > ModE *-dom, -hood, -lock, -ness, -red, -ship*) the emphasis is on their use in various text types. In Thompson's analysis of adjectives formed with the suffix *-ig* (*hālig* > *holy, hefig* > *heavy*) the emphasis is on phonological processes, especially syncope (*hālgum*) or non-syncope (*hāliges*) of the *-i-* in inflected forms of those adjectives. In Broccias's analysis of adverbs in *-ingly* derived from present participles the emphasis is on their function and meaning. In Michael Bilynsky's above-mentioned study of deverbal derivations adverbs in *-ingly* are also considered, but there they form just one group (his group d11) out of seventeen groups altogether (d1–d17).

In the section on textlinguistics and text types Thomas Kohnen gives a general introduction to historical textlinguistics, whereas the other contributors analyze a wide spectrum of different text-types from different periods: legal and administrative texts from 15th-century Scotland (Kopaczyk); women's mystical writings from the early 15th century (Yoshikawa); medical recipes from the 16th to the 18th century (Ortega Barrera); letters, more specifically pauper letters from 18th century Essex (Chaemsaithong), and research articles mainly from the 20th century (Dimković-Telebaković). The focus of their investigations is also different: Yoshikawa and Chaemsaithong focus on politeness strategies, whereas Kopaczyk, Chaemsaithong and Ortega Barrera analyze the use of formulaic language, and Dimković-Telebaković deals with the structure of research articles. After this general survey of the volume we now give a brief characterization of each contribution.

2. Etymology

Philip **Durkin** illustrates some of the complex etymological problems historical dictionaries such as the *OED* are confronted with, using a wealth of examples. Thus some words have discontinuous histories, i.e. they are attested only at long intervals (e.g. *openness, reabridge, caringly*). This may be due either to lack of written documentation, or to independent formation (or borrowing) at different

periods. Sometimes one word was split up into two in the course of its development (lexical split, e.g. *ordinance* and *ordnance*); conversely, occasionally two originally different words converged into one (lexical merger, e.g. *melt, reek, mean, queer*). A good many English words or parts of words are still unexplained. This can be due to etymological, phonological or semantic problems, e.g. the three different meanings of *potty* (1. 'feeble, indifferent'; 2. 'of tea that tastes of the pot'; 3. 'crazy, mad') or the explanation of initial *p* in *purse* (probably borrowed from post-classical Latin *bursa*). The expression *as thin as a rake* 'very thin' may go back to folk-etymological substitution of *rake* (the tool) for opaque **rak*, a word from a Scandinavian language cognate with Norwegian (Nynorsk) *rak* 'skeleton, dead body'.

Paul S. **Cohen** deals with a small group of words which have a possible discontinuous history or possible multiple etymologies, namely *wank* and *swank* (and *wonky*). They may be old (Germanic) words, related to German *wank(-en)* and *schwank(-en)*, but they are attested in (standard) English fairly late (19th or 20th century), and Cohen connects them also with *wang* and *yang* (and *wonk*).

Michael **Bilynsky** has collected and analyzed close to 11,900 verbs, the majority of which is of Romance origin (more than 7,600, with more than 4,400 from French and more than 3,230 from Latin), and the smaller part of which is of native origin (more than 4,200). He describes their word-forming potential, distinguishing seventeen types, e.g. participles (native: *rotted, crumbled, withered* etc.; Romance: *hazarded, ventured* etc.), or adjectives (native: *staggery, wobbly, tottery* etc.; Romance: *allowable, appointable, assignable* etc.), or agent and instrument nouns in *-er* (e.g. *tempter, provoker, offender*), and, as in the examples given, he also arranges them roughly into groups of synonyms. He uses highly advanced statistical and mathematical methods.

3. Semantic fields

Mieko **Ogura** and William S-Y. **Wang** offer a quantitative and statistical study of the development of a part of the English lexicon, which has grown tremendously from Old English (OE) to Modern English (ModE). They have analyzed more than 18,000 Old English nouns and more than 7,000 verbs from the *Thesaurus of Old English* as well as more than 114,000 Modern English nouns and more than 11,000 verbs from WordNet. They claim that the earliest language would have had no polysemy and no metaphors etc., which must have been later developments. They distinguish between monosemous and polysemous words (the latter yielding what they call small-world semantic networks) and state that polysemous words show a decrease in characteristic length but an increase in the number of their

neighbours. According to their findings the words *hlāford* 'lord' and *hēafod* 'head' are the most polysemous and frequent nouns in Old English. In Modern English the nouns *head* and *line* are the most polysemous and frequent words. It is to be noted that *head* forms a hub from Old English to Modern English. There is no comparable continuity among verbs: While the most frequent and polysemous verbs in OE were *healdan* 'hold', *niman* 'take', *began* lit. 'bego', and *awendan* 'awend', the most frequent and polysemous verbs in ModE are *break, make*, and *get*.

Carole **Hough** looks at the development of the semantic fields 'repayment' and 'revenge'. As the usual pattern of metaphorical sense development is from concrete to abstract, repayment has been taken as the source domain, with revenge as the target. However, Hough argues that revenge is not understood in terms of repayment. In Old English the semantic field of revenge includes not only polysemous but monosemous terms. The explanation may be found in the early legal system, which offered 'repayment' as an alternative to 'revenge'. Thus, at least originally, 'revenge' was the more concrete and also the source concept, whereas 'repayment' was the more abstract and the target concept. She also argues that historically this change was a case of metonymy, not one of metaphor.

Sylwester **Łodej** has collected 52 terms primarily referring to ecclesiastical offices (e.g. *priest, bishop, pope*). Many of them additionally acquired secular senses through metaphorization, referring to other people, to animals, to artefacts etc. Łodej discusses the conceptual links, e.g. the function of the office (teaching, instruction in *parson* for a signpost), or appearance (in *cardinal* for a scarlet bird), or habitual behaviour (in *bishop* for an alcoholic drink). He shows that such metaphorical transfers did not occur in Old English, but increased from Middle English onward, culminating in the 19th century. He connects this to the growing secularization in England. He also notices that often the change involved transfer from a higher to a lower status (pejorization of meaning), e.g. *bishop* for the penis, for a large condom, or for a chamberpot.

4. Word-formation

Anne-Christine **Gardner** investigates Old English desubstantival abstract nouns derived with the elements *-dōm, -hād, -lāc, -nes, -rǣden, -scipe* (e.g. *martyrdōm, cildhād* > *childhood, wedlāc* > *wedlock, happiness, frēondrǣden, frēondscipe* > *friendship*). All of them were originally nouns but became suffixes at various points in time (pre-OE, OE, ME). *-dom, -hood, -ness* and *-ship* still exist as suffixes in Modern English, whereas *-lāc* and *-rǣden* died out and only occur in a few fossilized formations (*wedlock, hatred, kindred*). Taking her material from the *Helsinki Corpus*, Gardner looks at the distribution of these suffixes in early and late

West-Saxon prose and also differentiates between their use in various text-types such as religious writing (e.g. homilies), non-fictional prose (e.g. historical writing and saints' lives),[1] legal texts, etc. (see also the article by Kohnen). According to her findings religious prose is more conservative in the use of these suffixes than non-fictional prose.

Penny **Thompson** starts with the traditional view that there is syncope of medial high vowels in Old English long-stemmed disyllabic adjectives when they are inflected, but not in short-stemmed adjectives, e.g. *hālig*, nom. acc. plur. neutr. **hāligu* > *hālgu*, but *hefig*, nom. acc. plur. neutr. *hefig*. There are, however, exceptions to this, e.g. gen. sing. masc. neutr. *hāliges* (where *hālges* would be expected). With respect to adjectives formed with the suffix *-ig* she explains this with two developments which also show the interplay of phonology and morphology: (a) In the OE adjectival suffix *-ig* two originally different suffixes had coalesced, namely *-ig*^{1} < Germanic **-æg* (as in *hālig*, which was historically short and causes syncope but not *i*-mutation), and *-ig*^{2} < Germanic **-īg* (which was historically long and does not trigger syncope but causes *i*-mutation). (b) *-ig*^{1} was then sometimes reanalyzed as *-ig*^{2} and vice versa *-ig*^{2} as *-ig*^{1}, i.e. the historical distinction was eventually lost.

Cristiano **Broccias** looks at the function of adverbs in *-ingly* derived from present participles, such as *warningly* or *sneeringly*. Especially when used with verbs of saying, watching or moving, according to Broccias they often do not refer to manner, but express either the speaker's evaluation ("said Hermione warningly") or describe an event that takes place simultaneously ("He nodded sneeringly"). Since these are particularly common in the Harry Potter novels, Broccias calls them Harry Potter adverbs. Using several corpora (Helsinki, Archer, CLMETEV) he traces their history. According to his findings adverbs in *-ingly* became established in Early Modern English, but those of the Harry Potter type increased dramatically in 19th-century fiction.

5. Text linguistics, text types, politeness

Thomas **Kohnen** provides an introduction to historical text linguistics (and text-oriented historical linguistics). In particular he attempts to distinguish it from both historical pragmatics and historical discourse analysis. He defines the latter two as the broader concepts and historical text linguistics as the more specific one. He shows that English texts have become more 'user-friendly' in the course

1. How far saints' lives are non-fictional or fictional is, of course, a complex question.

of time, relying more on syntax than on pragmatics; he also claims that text function has increasingly determined text structure, and that texts have become more polite. Furthermore he stresses that in Old English and Middle English the religious domain was predominant among the various domains of text types (cf. the article by Gardner). He presents and analyzes two examples of different text types within the religious domain, namely an excerpt from a Middle English sermon, and an excerpt from a private prayer.

Joanna **Kopaczyk** analyzes one particular text type, namely administrative and legal texts from 15th-century Scotland. As her corpus she uses the ECOS (Edinburgh Corpus of Older Scots), subdivided into counties. In particular she discusses fixed expressions (re-occuring lemmatic bundles) and asks how far fixedness and repetitiveness lead to linguistic standardization. Some of the fixed expressions are binomials (of the type *bind and oblige*) but there are also many other types of phrases. She subdivides the fixed expressions according to semantic and functional categories, e.g. reference to time (*the year of god; day of the month*), to place (*the said burgh*), to legal action (*the court affirmed*), to objects of legal action (*the said land, earth and stone*), to participants (*ken till all men*), etc., while the most frequently attested phrase (*of the said*) functions as an element of textual cohesion. Kopaczyk notes an emerging system of standardization with cases of common usage but also of variant usage.

Fumiko **Yoshikawa** discusses politeness strategies in *The Book of Margery Kempe* (ca.1420) and in the *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian (i.e. Juliana) of Norwich (ca.1400), concentrating on address forms and indirect requests. In her methodology and terminology she follows the politeness theory proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) [1978]). Both Margery Kempe and Julian(a) of Norwich are mystical writers, but whereas Margery often uses direct speech, Julian(a) rarely uses direct speech. God addresses Margery as 'daughter', but Julian(a) as 'my darling' or 'my child', other people address Margery, as, for example 'daughter', 'sister', 'mother' (all in a metaphorical way) etc. The use of address forms becomes even more complex, however, if the use of *thou/thee* and *ye/you* is taken into consideration. For example, God always addresses humans and is addressed by them with *thou/thee*, which probably expresses closeness to God. Humans when addressing other humans, however, vary between *thou/thee* and *ye/you*. In Margery Kempe's *Book*, for example, the address 'sir' is usually combined with 'ye/you'; Margery uses this form of address towards priests, but also towards her husband. The address forms 'dame' and 'damsel' are also combined with *ye/you*, whereas 'woman', on the other hand, is combined with *thou*.

Ivalla **Ortega Barrera** describes what she calls 'general extenders', also called 'utterance final tags' or 'post-noun hedges', in medical recipes from 1564–1770. Extenders are phrases such as "and such, and other, and the like, and other things"

added at the end of lists and enumerations. She distinguishes between adjunctive extenders (*and* + noun phrase, as in the examples given above), and disjunctive extenders (*or* + noun phrase, e.g. *or otherwise*), and she explains that they show intersubjectivity, solidarity, iconicity and evaluation. Before analyzing the extenders, she not only describes the texts she uses but also the typical structure of medical recipes.

Krisda **Chaemsaithong** discusses the use of politeness strategies in requests, more precisely in a collection of Essex pauper letters written in the late 18th century by labourers (poor lower class), asking their superiors (usually middle class) for financial assistance. In his analysis Chaemsaithong follows the model developed by Brown & Levinson (1987), distinguishing between negative and positive face. He finds that in the salutations, pre-close messages and subscriptions of those letters negative politeness prevails, whereas in the main sections (content sections) there is a mixture of negative and positive politeness strategies. This is contrary to what Brown & Levinson claim, but Chaemsaitong points out that English society has never been a homogeneous block; rather, different subgroups must be distinguished within English society and its historical development.

Gordana **Dimković-Telebaković** deals with the complex genre of the *scientific research article* and starts with a short history of the English research article. It had precursors in letters scientists wrote to each other, but from 1665 onwards it developed in the context of the Royal Society, in whose transactions experiments were described, e.g. by Robert Boyle. She also reviews recent research on the research article and outlines the typical structure of it (Introduction – Method – Results – Discussion). Then she concentrates on the Introduction of the research article, analyzing two recent examples in detail, and adding additional steps to those distinguished in previous research.

6. Conclusion

The articles grouped together in this volume are dedicated to the vocabulary of English and to historical text types. They bear witness to manyfold approaches in the field of historical linguistics ranging from largely mathematical to more traditional linguistic methods, thus granting new insights into the development of the English language. The time span covered in this volume is approximately 1,300 years, language change thereby being documented in general as well as in particular. Research in other linguistic disciplines (e.g. Thompson's phonological analysis of OE *-ig* (< *-*īg* and *-*æg*) and/or neighbouring areas (e.g. Hough's excursion into legal history) are often the prerequisite for the studies on vocabulary proper. Language change also goes hand in hand with growth, be it by polysemy

(e.g. Ogura-Wang, Łodej), by loans (Bilynsky), by shift of meaning (e.g. Hough) or by phonological developments triggering morphological changes (e.g. Thompson). This volume thus reflects language change and as a result growth of the vocabulary. It documents the cornucopia of approaches and methodological growth in linguistics as such with the benefit of providing new insights into Old, Middle and Early Modern English.

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