

WORKS ON LEXICOLOGY, SEMANTICS AND LEXICOGRAPHY. COLEMAN, Julie AND KAY, Christian, eds. *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000.

*Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography* is, like many other modern publications, a compilation of works previously presented in a Conference, what does not lessen its interest. In fact, this is the product of the 10th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics as part of the 4th Brook Symposium, held at the University of Manchester in 1998 and edited by Coleman and Kay.

This type of books allows the diffusion of the latest novelties on the research of specific topics and a wider forum of debate, apart from subscribing the sentence “*verba volant, scripta manent.*” Conversely, a generic title may be misleading with respect to the particular contents that are actually found in the text, even though, the inside bibliographic description informs: “selected papers.”

The eleven articles collected here are preceded by a few pages in memoriam Prof. G. Leslie Brook, the well-known author of, among others, *English Dialects* (1963) and *A History of English Language* (1968). The book closes with a report on the work of diverse electronic resources made by their different representatives: the revision of the *OED*, the *Dictionary of S.A. English (DSAE)*, *The Middle English Compendium (MEC)*, *A Thesaurus of Old English (TOE)* and the *Historical Thesaurus of English (HTE)*.

The structure of the book seems to obey to the order of the papers in the Conference, though some of them are more generic and might have been placed first in the book as it will be pointed here.

The first text is Andreas Fischer’s article on lexical gaps, cognition and linguistic change which derives from the study of lexical configurations as exposed by Cruse (1986) and in the light of cognitive linguistics.

It is a fact that more attention has been paid to lexical categorization than to lexical change. The author’s final intention is to approach the latter from the point of view of empty spaces in lexical structures, those emerging from sense re-

lations such as hyponymy, antonymy or synonymy. Within these sets of words so related, sometimes evidence is found “that there is a concept which might or should be lexicalised but it is not” (2). Such lexical gap must be distinguished from underdifferentiation, when a single word covers several senses.

Lexical gaps might be discovered in propositional or analogy series, hierarchies and in opposites or complementaries. An example given for the first type is the correspondence for ‘dead person’ as *corpse*, ‘dead animal’ as *carcass*, but no similar designation for ‘dead plant’. In the case of taxonomies as part of hierarchies we find subordinate terms related to a superordinate term, following Cruse, Fischer gives an example of verbs of locomotion pointing that there is no superordinate for “locomotion on land” (*run, crawl, hop, jump*) different from other verbs of movement like “swim” or “fly” (8). For the opposites the illustration comes from the lack of adjectives denoting the “having a sense or faculty” as opposed to the adjective denoting “not having” it: *sighted/blind*, but *?/mute*.

The author points to psychological salience, perceptual salience and prototypicality as possible explanations for lexical gaps. Emotional involvement with parts of the surrounding world may cause the need for the designation of a dead animal but less often for a dead plant. No apparent differentiation at first sight (though existing at a scientific level) may also lead to a lack of lexical distinction what may as well overlap with the previous psychological salience. The third possible explanation is related with the tendency to find central categories or prototypes; sometimes the absence of a prototype may mean the absence of a generic term.

Fischer affirms that this cognitive motivation must imply the same lexical gaps through history and perhaps even cross-linguistically. Diachronically these gaps appear to have been permanent, to have been filled, to have opened up at a certain stage, or opened and closed again.

The author is aware that further research is needed, mainly confronting several languages, but even though we find his conclusions quite plausible we object to several examples that perhaps should be refined or further explained. To



what extent are *hop* and *jump* verbs of land locomotion and set at the same level with *run*, *walk* and *crawl*? (8) Also, to what extent is “not having the faculty of waking”, to be *lame*? (9).

“Folk-Etymology: Haphazard Perversion or Shrewd Analogy?” has, according to its authors, the objective of describing, identifying and interpreting the process of folk-etymology and its insights regarding the society of its speakers.

The study uses as a primary source one hundred examples taken from Palmer’s dictionary of folk-etymology. These are classified by Runblad and Kronenfeld following Winer’s definition “a popular but false hypothesis for a word derivation, usually based on similarities of phonology or meaning between two or more words [...] or from similarity to results of a known historical process”, which allows them for a further division into class I and class II (22). In class I of folk-etymologies we find those where there is a change in meaning, form or both. To class II belong those for which a false explanation of the origin of the word has been generated. Nevertheless, both types can be combined.

From the analysed examples 85% belong to the first class, so folk-etymologies appear to rely mainly on similarities of words’ forms and meanings and cultural connotations. The reason for substitution can sometimes be based only on sounding closer to the phonetics of the specific language.

The cognitive implications seem to be that folk-etymologies “try to make sense of whatever opaque forms they may encounter, but also to ease the memory load in having to remember such opaque forms” (32).

The paper of Koivisto-Alanko is different from the previous ones, it starts from the study of a single word to reach further fields and has also been used as part of his doctoral dissertation recently published, *Abstract Words in Abstract Worlds* (2000).

The study of the semantic change of the word *wit* goes further than just explaining the evolution of the meaning of such word. Using as primary sources the Helsinki corpus, the Oxford English Dictionary and the Michigan Early Modern English Material Corpus, the author deals with the diachronic and synchronic seman-

tic development of *wit* and other lexemes covering the same conceptual field.

The approach proposed, not very common in historical linguistics, but well used by Koivisto-Alanko, is that of prototypicality. In historical semantics the criteria for prototype, frequency and generality, can be established through the times of appearance of the word in texts, editions or historical corpora and the contexts of these realizations.

The prototypical structure of the field of *wit* thus established, offers three main centres: PERCEPTION, COGNITION, and EXPRESSION. By the Late Middle English period the first centre meaning, “five senses” of PERCEPTION, tends to be substituted by “sense” (39) and the COGNITION one grows towards meanings of “superior intelligence” to give rise to the EXPRESSION centre. This, in its turn, will grow further during the Early Modern English period. According to Koivisto-Alanko such a change coincides with a basic semantic change from concrete to abstract and also with the directionality models proposed by Traugott (1989). Thus, from an “external described situation”, that of “I have seen” we come to an “internal (evaluative/perceptive/cognitive)” one; a second tendency (according to Traugott) implies a movement towards a cohesive (metalinguistic) situation like for example, from mental to speech act verbs (41). This may have a parallel when from the meanings of *wit* denoting ability there is a progress to those denoting quality, that is, there is a movement from COGNITION to EXPRESSION. Tendency III goes further to a “subjectification” of the meanings that depend more on “the speaker’s subjective belief-state or attitude toward the situation” (41).

In the case of the semantic field of *wit*, these changes, from concrete to abstract meanings, may have been favoured by the introduction of loanwords during the Middle English period. The evidence registered by the author points to a coming back to the concrete mainly through metonymy, though in general, when dealing with other than abstract nouns, metaphor plays an important role in semantic change. He proposes the study of the evolution of semantic change based on the previous tendencies pointed out by Traugott.

To conclude we are reminded that semantic changes are triggered by external factors reflected in tiny moves that Koivisto calls semantic *fractals*. Such external factors make necessary the work with corpora that may validate what a single example reveals.

The fourth article in the book is one we would have set first. Even though based on the elaboration of the *Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE) and the future *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE), this article points to the need of collaboration between semantics and lexicography looking at cognitive linguistics as the one establishing a bridge.

Kay, one of the editors of this book, states that her main interest is onomasiological, defined here as “the availability of lexical items to express particular concepts” (55), derived from an active participation in the TOE and the HTE. Such projects, dating back to the sixties, originally followed a structuralist point of view, with categorization as the main means of classification. Present progressions in semantics and computerisation permit improvements on that initial form of classifying words.

The HTE incorporates the concept of psychological salience in its classification, that is, the “general processes of cognition which subsume linguistics processes” (56). The type of categorisation employed in its construction considers the semasiological aspects of individual lexical items and their relation with prototypical core meanings. In turn, the onomasiological aspect of groups of lexical items forming a semantic category move around a prototypical core (57). This information is obtained from previous dictionaries such as the OED (*Oxford English Dictionary*), its definitions and citations serve as features of meaning and categorization establishing also core senses. This dictionary makes use of approximate synonyms and restrictive terms in their definitions that make possible the establishment of semantic categories.

According to Kay, the apparent imperfections in the methodologies of dictionaries are sometimes a reflection of the cognitive strategies employed by their compilers. We agree with the author on the great importance of cognitive semantics but the difficulty remains when it is

not clear if you are dealing with real collective cognitive salience or a single one, the lexicographer's.

In the line of historical lexicography, Coleman, co-editor with Kay, reflects on cant dictionaries and their compilers. The cant dictionary tradition has not been valued as part of the lexicographical production. Coleman argues that cant dictionaries, even though part of larger works (such as the well known *Rogue Pamphlets*), are previous to the first monolingual dictionary in English, Cawdrey's *Table Alphabetical* (1604). It could be added that most of the cant vocabulary, though not all, is of English origin achieving its secret character by means of metaphor and metonymy (Mele Marrero 2000). Therefore, its compilation has to be considered part of the English lexicographic tradition.

The main purpose of these works was to become a warning against the false beggars, thieves and prostitutes whose tricks harmed “honest people”. This was also a way to justify the publication of words which later lexicographers would consider obscene. Cant compilers affirm in the introduction to their works that the secret language there revealed was obtained from their living with, or bribing, underworld speakers. Coleman considers this a “belief for that even in this subculture, there is a standard and correct form of language” (77). The nature and origin of cant is another aspect with which these lexicographic works were concerned. From the Biblical babel to the invention of a single individual most seem to point to an obscure origin and unruly behaviour.

We agree with Coleman when she says that the scholarly and lexicographical neglect of cant dictionaries is undeserved, moreover, we would add that their interest should be higher since the primary works on cant are the first on a marginal language, and even more important, they were produced during the period of standardization (Mele Marrero, 2000).

Within the debate in 17th England “about the coining of new terminology and the style to be adopted in writing specialized texts” (98), Gotti's paper deals precisely with Thomas Salusbury's (1620-?) choices when translating Galileo's works. His *Mathematical Collections* and *Trans-*





lations (1661-1665), two volumes the second of which is incomplete nowadays, must have been rather valuable for its contemporaries, since they were the only translations into English of Galileo's works available for nearly three centuries.

Gotti analyses Salusbury's methodology by contrasting two passages from *Dialogue on the Great World Systems*, a Galilean text from which new terminology spread to various European languages. From this analysis it is made clear that Salusbury's translations are quite close to the original, sometimes even rendering calcs of the Italian syntax into English. The same happens with the reproduction of technological terms, the ones used by Salusbury, also of Latin origin, follow Galileo's. They cannot be considered borrowings since, as attested by the *OED*, their inclusion in the English language was quite earlier. Where Galileo innovates, Salusbury does too, but in most cases by calquing: *gioviale/jovial*, referring to Jupiter's moons.

Gotti points to the colloquial character of Galileo's language, adequate for a dialogue, and affording for metaphorical constructions. Salusbury tries to maintain these features when possible in English but seems to avoid the figurative language when more specific terms could be used.

The article concludes that even though the influence of Salusbury on the language of science is difficult to evaluate, his lexical innovations appear in the *OED*, even though he is rarely quoted. What his works seem to confirm is "the great linguistic creativity characteristic of this period and of the main word-formation processes adopted to facilitate the rapid lexical growth" (98).

Up to here we have seen that cognition, psychological salience, and the influences of other cultures on languages are basic for the categorization of words and their meanings definitions. This cannot be achieved without taking into account other disciplines. Biggam's article points to this direction. The combination of linguistic and archeologic data in his virtual construction of an Anglo-Saxon house "from *grund* to *hrof*," evidences the need of such interdisciplinary studies. An example could be the introduction of the borrowing from Latin *fenester* to

be applied to 'windows' in Roman and Continental buildings, in spite of the existence of other words in Old English: *eagðyrel* or *eagduru*, "holes through which eyes can see" (113). This obeys to a distinction in architectural form since the Roman or Continental windows seem to have been different from the native ones (early Britonic and Anglo-Saxon constructions) on archeological evidence.

Tissari also looks for a model of categorization from a prototype-semantics perspective. The semantic field, or "microfield" as the author says, is in this case LOVE. Using a diachronic corpus from Early Modern English to Modern English and under the influence of Lewis (1960) and in accordance to dictionaries definitions, five types of love are distinguished: 'family love, friendship, sexual love, religious love, and love of things'.

The prototype analysis starts from the base of typicality, in this case that of the participants and that of the domains where they occur. These have to be included in an extralinguistic context. The data, obtained from four different corpora, revealed that the proportion of 'sexual love' within the concept of LOVE is dominant but more frequent in Modern English; 'family love' and 'friendship' have become less frequent and 'religious love' and 'love for things' have remained more or less the same in the two periods.

In the same line, Sylvester studies the concept of CONSENT and its legal understanding when related to the crime of rape. The analysis of dictionary definitions and specially the *OED* shows that the prototypical meaning of the terms in the field is that of 'agreement'; according to the author, the citations used do not seem to back the definitions clearly, possibly under the influence of the etymological meaning in French and Latin. Though Old English dictionaries include words defined or under the covering of the concept of CONSENT, it seems that there was no clear lexicalization of the concept in this period. Thus, the borrowing of the word in the Middle English period may obey to the need of comprehending the meanings not only of 'agreement', but also of 'concord'.

The two final articles deal with affixation and display a great number of tables and statis-

tical results. The first treats the deverbal nominalizing action suffix *-tion*. Cowie uses data from *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* but combines them with discourse analysis, apart usually dismissed when working with corpora but from our point of view quite necessary. This analysis reveals a higher use of the suffix between 1850 and 1900, and the registers that produce more new types in *-tion* are those of medicine and science.

Cowie's results seem to agree with Halliday and Martin (1993) who consider nominalization as part of the process of "grammatical metaphor" and as a typical resource of scientific discourse. The study also points to the possible use of *-tion*, a suffix of Latinate origin, as a mark of style which appears in "mock-learned" uses (201) in works of satirical drama.

The final article, by McConchie, deals with the vernacularization of the prefix *dis-*. Again a combination of the Helsinki Corpus, the *OED* and texts and excerpts of Renaissance authors are used for compilation of data. A special reference is made to a medical text by William Clever, which shows a high occurrence of rare terms with the prefix *dis-*. A detailed analysis serves the author to assert the initial hypothesis that the suf-

fix is mainly used in medical writings especially in the 16th C and possibly related to the later stages of humanism in England.

Most of the works included in this book underline the idea that they are preliminary studies, and as such most of them are very detailed and careful in the presentation of their data and seem to have a promising future. Perhaps the main objection is that pointed at the beginning of this review, the title. *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography*, we dare to suggest, only if preceded by the simple words "Works on", could have been more revealing about its contents, so concerned with definitions.

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