Francisco Cortés Rodríguez, La Laguna

Foundations for the elaboration of a lexical-constructional database of Old English verbs

The aim of this lecture is to describe the guidelines for the elaboration of a LexicalConstructional database of Old English verbs. Such a database consists of two core elements: a Thesaurus and a Constructicon. The Thesaurus would present lexical units organized in semantic hierarchies. The principles for lexical organization proposed by the Functional Lexematic Model and inherited by its descendant -the Lexical Constructional Model- motivate partially the methodology adopted. However, given the restrictions imposed by a historical language, syntactic information will be a fundamental element in the organization of lexical hierarchies. In fact, our approach starts from the already attested assumption that the members of a lexical class have a common semantic space, which is reflected in their sharing also a similar grammatical behaviour. Thus, the exploration of the syntactic intricacies of a predicate will enable us to ascertain many of the components of the semantic territory where it belongs. These new methodological tools also help us to set the foundations for the design of the other central component in a Core Grammar of Old English, the Constructicon, or catalogue of argument-structure constructions. The study of the interaction of the Thesaurus and the Constructicon will provide English historical linguistics with innovative tools for a better understanding of the semantics and morphosyntax of Old English grammar.

Susan Fitzmaurice, Sheffield

Standard Englishes and the problem of historicity

This lecture reconsiders the notion of language standardization in the history of English. I focus on the extent to which the fresh inspection of literacy practices and technologies in their material historical contexts and their textual products insists on a re-evaluation of how far an understanding of standardization as a purely theoretical notion can take us in accounting for the nature of linguistic change. In this discussion, I draw upon the evidence from written texts from the fifteenth century on the one hand and from the eighteenth century on the other to illustrate the consequences of historicizing the model. I argue that if we are to avoid the trap of constructing the histories of English solely as a march to standard modern English, we must historicize our understanding and operationalisation of processes subsumed by 'standardisation' in studying written varieties of English in earlier periods.

Vincent Gillespie, Oxford

On Allegory, Allegoresis and the Erotics of Reading

The novelist Amos Oz has said of his writing that '[M]y task is a bit like that of someone trying to build something out of old stones that he is digging out of the ruins of something that was also, in its day, built out of stones from a ruin.' All critics instinctively know what he means by this. It is hard to resist hearing in his description of the writer's task an echo of Walter Benjamin's famous dictum: 'Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things.' The thwarted but potent gestural force of ruins generates in the viewer's mind an appetite to complete and to restore, however conjecturally, the residual structure alluded to by the ruinous state. Historically, the pathos of the picturesque is a direct function of perceived absence and incompletion. Similarly, when seeking to complete the narrative edifices they encounter through and by allegory, readers takes on the role of imaginative architects, either working faithfully to blueprints provided by the original text or, more commonly, extrapolating and interpolating their own conceptions and imaginative realizations. Allegory is such stuff as dreams are made on. This lecture will explore aspects of medieval allegory from this perspective.

Dieter Kastovsky, Vienna

Old English word-formation and loan translations

In contradistinction to later periods, where direct loans became extremely frequent and changed the overall structure of the vocabulary, Old English relied almost completely on its native resources when new lexical items were needed, either for poetical reasons (e.g. kenningar), or for the translation of Latin sources. This reflects the fact that word-formation processes in Old English were extremely productive and could therefore be also used for translation processes instead of direct borrowing. Basically all domains of Old English word-formations were used in this way, but compounding and prefixation seem to have been the preferred technique, suffixation also being rather frequent, whereas zero derivation is less prominent. Examples are among others *liber evangelii > godspellboc* 'gospel book', *liber benedictionum > bletsungboc* 'blessing book', *misericors > mildheort* 'mild-hearted = merciful', *collaudare > efenherian* 'praise together', *inhabitare > ineardian* 'inhabit', *trinitas > þriness* 'threeness = trinity', *praepositio > foresetnys* 'that which is put before = preposition', etc. Often, however, this led to mechanical translations of the type *praeferre > foreberan* 'lit. carry before', where *prae* in the Latin source has no specific meaning any more (cf. instances such as *receive, deceive, commit, submit*, etc.). I will look at the various Old English word-formation processes as discussed e.g. in Kastovsky (1992, 2006) from this point of view, at the same time also providing at least a general survey of the various Old English word-formation patterns and their properties.

References

Kastovsky, Dieter, (1992a). 'Semantics and vocabulary", in: Hogg, Richard M. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language.* Vol. 1. *The Beginnings to 1066.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 290-407.

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Christian Kay, Glasgow

Some Interesting Sounds in the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*

Following 44 years of intensive work at Glasgow University and elsewhere, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (HTOED) was published by OUP in October 2009.[1] Based largely on data from the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), supplemented by Old English materials,[2] the project is unique in its historical coverage and in the detailed semantic information captured by its scheme of classification.

Each category in HTOED displays a chronologically ordered survey of words used to express a particular concept throughout the history of English vocabulary. Scholars can thus examine overall developments or those occurring during a particular period, such as Old or Middle English. The paper will demonstrate the semantic potential of HTOED by an examination of categories from Section 01.03.08 Hearing / noise, particularly those dealing with loud, confused and shrill noises. A profile will be developed of possible occurrences of onomatopoeia (imitation of natural sounds) and phonaesthesia (association of sound and meaning) and their interaction during the medieval period.

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[1] Kay, Christian, Jane Roberts, Michael Samuels & Irené Wotherspoon (2009). *Historical Thesaurus of the OED*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://www.oup.com/online/ht/

[2] Roberts, Jane and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy. 1995. *A Thesaurus of Old English*. (= *King's College London Medieval Studies XI*.) Second edition, 2000. Amsterdam: Rodopi. http://libra.englang.arts.gla.ac.uk/oethesaurus/