

Julie Coleman and Christian J. Kay (Eds.). *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography – Selected Papers from the Fourth G.L. Brook Symposium, Manchester, August 1998*. 2000, xiv + 249 pp. Current Issues in Linguistic Theory Volume 194. ISBN 1 55619 972 4 (US). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Price USD 75,00 (Hb).

Introduction

Volume 194 of the series Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, entitled *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography*, comprises a selection of eleven academic contributions that were originally presented at the 10th International Conference of English Historical Linguistics. The disciplinary focus of this volume of texts is the diachronics of English vocabulary, and the representation thereof in dictionaries. From a theoretical point of view prototype theory assumes a central position, and the methodological approach is mainly corpus-analytical. The above-mentioned foci are highlighted as follows by the editors (p.vii):

Two points stand out particularly. The first is the impact of prototype theory and cognitive approaches generally in lexical studies. The second is the very positive effects of the remarkable range of electronic resources now available to historical linguists, notably corpora, dictionaries, bibliographies and thesauruses. These are important both quantitatively, in the amount of data they make available, and qualitatively, in the versatility of their searches.

These points of emphasis do not seem to be coincidental as they converge with the theoretical and methodological fundamentals of the Cognitive Linguistics enterprise, more specifically with those of usage-based theories and models of language (Barlow and Kemmer 2000; Langacker 1987, 1988, 2000). Three characteristic assumptions of usage-based models that coincide with the abovementioned foci are: the relation between language usage and diachronic change; the importance of usage data; and the central role that categorization plays in our understanding of language structure. On the grounds of these shared focal points, one could view *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography* not only as a welcome addition to the growing body of work on usage-based models of language change (e.g. Croft 2000; Geeraerts 1997; Kellermann and Morrissey 1992; Verhagen 1998), but also as a demonstration of the value of usage-based models of the lexicon for lexicographical work.

It is regrettable that the term "usage-based" does not feature in the title of the book, in the introduction, or in the subject index (pp. 241-249). The absence of an overt reference may be ascribed to the fact that, although the term was coined by Langacker as early as 1987 in his book, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar Volume I*, it has only recently started to gain currency (Kemmer and Barlow 2000: vii). This assumption is substantiated by an overview of the programmes for the 1999 and 2001 International Conferences on Cognitive Linguistics. While none of the presentation titles for the 1999 conference contained the term "usage-based" (despite the fact that some of them were inherently usage-

based), this label appears overtly in 6 of the 2001 titles.

The title of the book under review is also slightly problematic from the point of view of readers' expectations. The syntactic co-ordination of *lexicology*, *semantics* and *lexicography* suggests that an equal (or close to equal) amount of emphasis and space has been devoted to each of the three disciplines, which would amount to a thematic spread more or less comparable to that of Jerzy Tomaszczyk and Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk's *Meaning and Lexicography* (1990). Yet, with the exception of the articles by Kay and Coleman, the majority of contributions in the book are in essence diachronic descriptions of lexical meaning, based on lexicographical data. But then again, there are mitigating circumstances: titles of publications are merely labels that serve as cues to assist the prospective reader in forecasting content. Moreover, the prefatory notes by the authors delimit the scope of the book fairly accurately.

In this review, we shall evaluate the contributions in *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography* in terms of the overtly expressed focus (p. vii), with particular emphasis on the ways in which they contribute to the affirmation and/or elaboration of usage-based models of lexical change.

Evaluation of the respective contributions

Andreas Fischer. *Lexical Gaps, Cognition and Linguistic Change.*

This contribution gives a well-expounded, theory-based overview of the structure and origins of lexical gaps. It could be a useful source of reference for students of lexicology, semantics and lexicography. Lexicographical notions, particularly those of zero equivalence and surrogate equivalence (although these metalexicographical concepts have not been explicated in the article), could be explained cogently against the background of Fischer's exposition.

The claim that "[t]he paper breaks new ground when it attempts to adduce cognitive factors to explain lexical gaps" (p. 15) may be somewhat of an over-appraisal, given that the author does not proceed beyond a fairly superficial description of the roles that psychological salience, perceptive salience and prototypicality may play in constituting lexical gaps. Moreover, the distinction made between psychological and perceptive salience is not quite clear, and the author gives no real evidence to clarify this distinction.

However, Fischer's explanation of lexical gaps in terms of more general psychological capacities makes a lot of sense, and could form the basis for further usage-based research on the topic in question.

Gabriella Rundblad and David B. Kronenfeld. *Folk-Etymology: Haphazard Perversion or Shrewd Analogy?*

Rundblad and Kronenfeld offer a comprehensive and multi-faceted account of the phenomenon of folk-etymology by departing from a simple, yet motivated,

typology. Unfortunately cognitive aspects of this type of language change have not been addressed adequately. Rundblad and Kronenfeld argue that "[j]ust as analogies do, folk-etymologies reveal how speakers regard linguistic and cultural matters" (p. 21), yet they do not show that analogical change is essentially a cognitive process (cf. Winters 1997); neither do they indicate the implications of such processes for the genesis of folk-etymologies.

Another point of criticism is that, although the authors combine a data-driven approach with systematic sampling techniques, the representativity of the data across the spectrum of language usage may be questionable as their database was rather small (100 folk-etymologies taken from Palmer's *Dictionary of Folk-etymology*). Moreover, examples are restricted to lexicalized etymologies.

From a positive angle it could be said that this article is accessible to a fairly wide readership, and may serve as a foundation for further research on the topic of folk-etymology.

Päivi Koivisto-Alanko. *Mechanisms of Semantic Change in Nouns of Cognition: a General Model?*

This contribution calls to mind the early structuralist work of Jost Trier, who studied the Middle High German terms of knowledge *kunst*, *wisheit* and *list*. However, the author explicitly states that his starting point is very different from that of Trier. His point of departure is not the semantic field of particular words constituting a semantic field, but the concept delimiting a specific semantic field, namely COGNITION. A second difference between his approach and that of Trier is that he does not focus on semantic fields per se but on the directionality of semantic change, with specific reference to the English word *wit*. Two large corpora as well as the OED served as databases.

Apart from the intrinsic value of his study, Koivisto-Alanko's corpus-based findings authenticate previous research on the directionality of semantic change resulting from metonymic transfer (cf. Carstens 1992).

On the negative side, however, it is a pity that the author did not take into account recent cognitive insights on semantic change, such as those presented in Kellerman and Morrissey (1992).

Christian J. Kay. *Historical Semantics and Historical Lexicography: will the twain ever meet?*

Kay summarizes some of the possibilities opened up by cognitive semantics, including usage-based approaches, for description and problem-solving in the domain of historical lexicography. In line with current thinking in mainstream cognitive linguistics he stresses the advantages of an approach that discards rigid boundaries in favour of prototypicality, fuzziness and interdisciplinarity. In our opinion, this article is one of the most important contributions in the volume under review, in that it sets the scene for further explorations in usage-

based models of lexicology and lexicography. We agree with Kay (p. 65):

This approach will not solve all our problems, and we are still far from achieving a comprehensive theory of lexical semantics, but it offers enlightening ways for looking at some of them.

Julie Coleman. *Strange Linguists: The Cant and Slang Dictionary Tradition*

Coleman's contribution is one of the few that do not invoke a usage-based approach to explain specific lexical phenomena or to support particular lexicographical practices. Besides the entertainment provided by her examples and quotes, Coleman captures interesting assumptions and "linguistic theories" underpinning dictionaries of cant and slang published between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is accomplished through in-depth analyses of the prefatory matter of the dictionaries in question. She cogently argues that although the prefaces may be criticized for their subjectivity, they constitute entry points to the otherwise opaque editorial policies underlying these lexicographical products. Coleman thereby highlights the fact that the value of qualitative research should not be underestimated in today's corpus-dominated world of lexicography.

Her research should also be valued from a sociolinguistic point of view as it sheds light on social factors that contributed towards the development of cant and slang between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Maurizio Gotti. *Lexical Choices in an Early Galilean Translation*

In our opinion Gotti's most important contribution is not his critical reflection on Salusbury's translation of Galileo's scientific works, but the implications of his views on translation as part of corpus planning for developing languages, and for the development of scientific knowledge through translation. The following quotations from Gotti's article (p. 87) are offered in support of this view:

This work [Salusbury's translations – authors], which can be considered fundamental for the growth of scientific thought in this period and which has greatly influenced the evolution of several disciplines, not only in England but all over Europe, introduced many new terms, which were soon included in the specialized terminologies of the various European languages.

and

A great contribution to this lexical growth was provided by translations of foreign texts, particularly those pertaining to the various scientific branches.

Of particular interest to Gotti is Salusbury's innovative translation of metaphor and his use of certain grammatical constructions in the target language (English) to render a satisfying translation of the LSP of the source language (Italian).

ian) without producing stylistic clashes or inconsistencies in the target language (p.92):

[O]n the whole the form of Salusbury's translation follows the standard rules of the language and – although it succeeds in maintaining the characteristics of Galileo's prose – it reads in a very natural English style.

A question that comes to mind is whether this methodology could be viable with regard to developing LSP's for the African languages in branches of science and technology that have hitherto remained outside the scope of serious corpus development. In other words, Gotti's reflections on Salusbury's work triggers the question of whether a decontextualised methodology of finding (and coining) translation equivalents for English scientific terms should not be discarded in favour of a methodology that departs from the translation of authentic texts, a methodology that has the creation of new terms as a natural by-product.

The methodology that has just been described is particularly promising in that it does not entail a simple process of borrowing from the source language, but a process of enrichment through "the processes of borrowing and calquing or [...] the adoption of existing lexical elements endowed with new meanings, thus making use of the semantic redefinition processes of specialization, semantic innovation, metonymy and conversion" (p. 97) according to contextually motivated procedures.

In South Africa, the translation of examination papers for Physical Science into Sepedi by P.F. Ntake and P.T. Pare (Ntake and Pare 2001) could be regarded as a modern-day parallel to Salusbury's work. Their translations, and the resulting English-Sepedi glossaries, may indeed have an influence on the development of Sepedi similar to that which Salusbury's translations of the scientific works of Galileo had on the development of an English LSP for Science and Mathematics.

Carole P. Biggam. *Grund to Hrof: Aspects of the Old English Semantics of Building and Architecture*

In a fascinating contribution, Biggam illustrates how much scientific inquiry has benefited from the rapprochement between semantics and pragmatics (or language and culture) since the cognitive revolution. She demonstrates that knowledge of the world does not only contribute towards shaping our understanding of language and linguistic structure, but that language is also a gateway to understanding culture and its physical manifestations. Biggam combines the "forces of archaeological and semantic research" by consulting sources such as Taylor's three volume *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* as well as *A Thesaurus of Old English* (which lists more than 630 words connected with building, building materials, types of building, parts of buildings, and rooms) to reconstruct the

world of Anglo-Saxon buildings.

Her contribution is a clear demonstration of the benefits of transdisciplinary usage-based research. The strategy to "build" a stone church and a timber house using Old English vocabulary in the course of the article, offers a truly usage-based strategy to improve our understanding of cross-linguistic influences on language development and change.

Heli Tissari. *Five Hundred Years of Love: a Prototype-Semantic Analysis*

Similar to the contribution by Koivisto-Alanko, this article combines semantic fields with prototype theory, supporting claims with both usage-based and dictionary-based data. It describes the semantic microfield constituted by the English lexeme LOVE by making a detailed corpus-based diachronic comparison between Early Modern and Present-Day English. The well-known distinction between 'family love', 'friendship', 'sexual love', 'religious love' and 'love of things' forms the point of departure. On the basis of semasiological evidence from English dictionaries, these distinctions are then taken as the five major clusters or senses which are situated in different conceptual domains.

Although the author concedes that there are strong family resemblances between these 'loves', she indicates (on the basis of corpus statistics) that 'sexual love' is dominant in both periods, becoming even more frequent in Present-Day English. Tissari's numerical analyses indicate that the relative frequencies of the five 'loves' changed between the two periods studied: 'family love' and 'friendship' became less frequent, while the relative frequencies of 'love of things' and 'religious love' remained largely the same.

Similar to other contributions in the volume under review, this article is accessible to a fairly wide readership, including students of linguistics.

The research on which this contribution reports could be furthered by combining Tissari's views with the insights of other cognitive linguists on the genesis of metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors for love (e.g. Botha 1998, Gibbs 1994, Lakoff 1987, etc.).

Louise Sylvester. *The Vocabulary of Consent in Middle English*

Sylvester combines a semasiological and an onomasiological approach by meticulously examining the definitions, ordering of senses, and use of citations regarding the term *consent* in major dictionaries of English, while also looking at synonyms and near synonyms of the term around the time of its adoption into Middle English.

Her primary focus is the definition language used in major dictionaries of English. A secondary focus is the lexicalization of the notion of CONSENT in Old English, involving lexical-field development.

On the basis of her data, Sylvester concludes that although the concept of CONSENT was lexicalized in Old English, the resulting lexical items may largely

be regarded as rarely used, and hardly central to the Old English corpus. Unfortunately, no usage-based data (apart from dictionary data) is offered to substantiate her claims.

Claire Cowie. *The Discourse Motivations for Neologising: Action Nominalization in the History of English*

Cowie's article is certainly one of the highlights of the book, in that it is clearly usage-based, and invokes quantitative as well as qualitative methods of research. Along with scholars such as Baayen and Renouf (1996) she argues that word-formation is conceptually driven, rather than morphologically motivated. Cowie further argues that neologising is "fundamentally a social and cultural practice", and contends that her contribution merely "begin[s] to explore the extralinguistic motivations for neologising" (p. 180). This is done through a context-sensitive, corpus-based study, followed by discourse analysis.

The extralinguistic factor targeted in her study is register. She focuses on the English deverbal nominalizing suffix *-(t)ion*. What makes her approach so unique is the fact that she adopts a position between that of "passive correspondence" (between words and the concepts, p. 182) and a "constructivist" approach, in which language construes human experience rather than simply reflecting it. Her focus is the "pragmatic or functional role that a new derivation plays in structuring discourse, and the use of word-formation to achieve a certain stylistic effect" (p. 182). She challenges the clear-cut distinction between register markers and common or core linguistic features. A common linguistic feature such as nominalization may, for instance, lose its functionality and become associated with a marker of a particular style or register. A corpus-based analysis reveals that medicine and science consistently produce more neologisms in *-(t)ion* than the other registers, such as letters, legal prose, news, sermons and fiction.

Through in-depth discourse analysis Cowie also proves that nominalization in scientific discourse fulfills different functions, both on a lexical pole (providing a designation for a 'nameworthy' segment of extralinguistic reality) and as a marker of style, e.g. by effecting a learned style and creating a distancing effect.

Cowie's contribution emphasizes the importance of bridging the gap between a structuralist (modernist) approach aimed at describing existing structures and processes of change, and a critical (post-modernist) approach aimed at describing the socially constitutive role of such processes. Cowie's analyses could indeed be viewed as a fulfillment of the ideals of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Linguistics, as worded by Sandig and Selting (1997: 153):

A further area of research [...] is concerned with the ways in which different

world views, predominantly with respect to phenomena such as power and status, manifest themselves implicitly and subconsciously in the style of texts.

R.W. McConchie. *The Vernacularization of the Negative Prefix dis- in Early Modern English*

This article explores the assimilation of the negative prefix *dis-* in Early Modern English, a prefix that has changed from being restricted to usage in borrowings from Latin and French, to a fully productive prefix by the end of the sixteenth century.

An impressive number of usage-based sources were invoked to study the assimilation process, including electronic corpora, dictionaries, and concordances, thereby creating the expectation that a satisfactory answer would be found to the question of whether there is a connection between the rarity of a word and the sociolinguistic significance of its occurrence. The paper then specifically reports on the significance of the statistical rise in the appearance of words starting with the prefix *dis-* in the sixteenth century, and the sociolinguistic implications of this phenomenon.

Although the methodology used in the article is sound, the results of the research (and the conclusions) are, however, somewhat disappointing. After wading through pages of discussions, data tables and graphs the reader is rewarded with "conclusions" such as (p. 223):

[T]hat the rise of *dis-* takes place in the sixteenth century and forms an s-curve is *probable* within the limits of data available [authors' emphasis];

and

[T]he association with literary humanism is *still possible but* must be demonstrated in detail [authors' emphasis].

These rather inconclusive conclusions are followed by the concession (or confession!) that "the result is inevitably unsatisfactory, but may be sufficient to reveal the need for more complete corpora, and more extensive studies at the same level of detail", which is then topped by the following summary of the sociolinguistic implications of the study (p. 223):

The sociolinguistic implications seem to be that idiosyncrasy may be so marked in certain registers and levels of rarity as to distort present data.

Conclusion

The series Current Issues in Linguistic Theory is overtly aimed at publicizing current research findings in the field of linguistics. Its target market is the scholarly fraternity, yet the books published in this series are also widely consulted by students of linguistics. Volume 194, *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexico-*

graphy, comfortably fits into this frame. It introduces various topical issues in the field of lexical semantics, particularly focusing on the diachronics of the lexicon within a corpus-based (usage-based) framework. In those instances where we have criticized individual authors for not invoking the most recent theories and terms, our criticism should be partially offset against issues such as comprehensibility, clarity and accessibility.

In terms of methodology and theoretical underpinnings, *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography* clearly stands in the sign of the corpus-analytical, usage-based era. While *Meaning and Lexicography*, published just over a decade ago (Tomaszczyk and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1990), contains only one contribution (out of nineteen) invoking corpus evidence (cf. Hanks 1990: 31-42), the work under review contains only one contribution that is *not* overtly corpus-based (and, as indicated above, the overt aim of this "exception" was to demonstrate the relevance of qualitative research).

This evidence indicates that in the course of a decade linguistic theory has moved a galaxy away from "the ideal speaker-hearer" and has embraced "the real user", as instantiated by a representative sample (in terms of both frequency and spreading) of authentic usage. *Lexicology, Semantics and Lexicography* demonstrates that usage-based approaches are most valuable in terms of their explanatory value with regard to lexical phenomena. Coupled with "the meticulous scholarship characteristic of philology" (p. vi), historical lexicology and historical lexicography has a lot to benefit from the heuristic tools of a usage-based approach.

A particular contribution, namely that of Claire Cowie, moves even further away from traditional approaches in that she provides a glimpse of the increasing rapprochement between quantitative and qualitative research, and between modernist and postmodernist approaches in the humanities and social sciences, a view that stresses the dialectical relationship between the descriptive and socially constitutive uses of language. Also in the contribution by Biggam, traces of postmodernism can be found (in the format of constructionism), and it will not be surprising if critical and constructionist approaches feature even more overtly in future lexicological studies.

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Adelia Carstens
School for Languages
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
Republic of South Africa
(acarsten@postino.up.ac.za)

Gerhard B van Huyssteen
School for Languages
Potchefstroom University for C.H.E.
Potchefstroom
Republic of South Africa
(afngbvvh@puknet.puk.ac.za)

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