

REVIEWS

Matti Rissanen, Marianna Hintikka, Leena Kahlas-Tarkka, Rod McConchie (eds.). 2007. Change in meaning and the meaning of change: *Studies in semantics and grammar from Old to Present-Day English*. Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki LXXII. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique. Pp. xvii, 377.

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The team of linguists affiliated with the English Department of the University of Helsinki have had a long tradition of diachronic corpus studies of English ever since they started compiling searchable text corpora in the early 1990s. A few years later they were organized into a special Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG), continuing their efforts in creating new corpora of dialectal and specialist texts. Owing to their pioneering work the community of English historical linguists all over the world had access to searchable, albeit limited, diachronic corpora long before the Toronto complete *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* and the University of Michigan *Middle English Compendium* became available. The Helsinki corpora also became the basis for the collection of tagged texts which are most useful for the exploration of English historical syntax: the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English*, the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* and the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence*. Although much larger and more representative diachronic corpora of English texts are now accessible, the Helsinki corpora are still very valuable, providing basis for pilot studies which can be further extended with reference to the huge text databases now available.

The volume under review is a good example of successful work that makes use of the Helsinki diachronic corpora database. The book is divided into two major parts. In the first one (*Meaning and mind*) we find six articles devoted to the semantic developments of content words discussed within the cognitive models of grammar, while the remaining six (*Meaning and grammar*) deal with various grammatical items analyzed from the point of view of the grammaticalization theory.

The volume starts with an interesting paper of Ágnes Kiricsi discussing the gradual shift of the metaphoric location of the mind from the heart in Old English to the head in later periods. The author very convincingly shows that the change is connected with the specialization of the word *mod* 'mood' accompanied by the generalization of *gemynd* 'mind'. The main reason, Kiricsi claims, was the culturally determined shift of the concept of mind from emotional to mental, at least partially influenced by the Latin tradition. What the author does not mention, however, are possible formal requirements of medieval English poetry such as the number of syllables and alliteration which may have been partially responsible for the statistical occurrence of the discussed items. She could have included a few more illustrating examples, also from the Anglo-Saxon prose. In the Middle English texts she should have taken into account the Scandinavian and the Anglo-Norman influences.

Päivi Koivisto-Alanko uses the blending theory with reference to changing metaphoric senses of the word *wit* from Late Middle English to Present-Day English. The application of this semantic conceptual integration framework to the diachronic language material proves rewarding, yet we believe that apart from the corpus material, the author should have referred to the dictionary material, e.g. the *Oxford English Dictionary* and – especially – the *Middle English Dictionary*, where the respective entries for the noun *wit* might have provided the starting point for the author's analysis.

A similar remark can be applied to Helli Tessari's article about *I fear/I am afraid*, where the author should have consulted the *Middle English Dictionary*, which lists some slightly earlier occurrences of epistemic uses of *I am afraid* than those listed in the *OED*. Otherwise, the article is a very sound and meticulous analysis of the development of epistemic senses of these verbs, which strongly confirms the direction of change in the theory subjectification. In the final paragraph the author leaves us with some significant questions that can only be answered if the study of this interesting problem is continued.

Marianna Hintikka looks at body-based metaphors of harm (mostly sickness) from Early Modern English to Present-Day English. It is interesting to see how progress in science contributed to changes in metaphors of sickness. Again some reference to standard historical dictionaries would be welcome. The author's findings could be further corroborated if – in addition to the discussed nouns – she took into account some adjectives describing sickness and disease. In particular, it would be interesting to see the reasons that led the adjective *ill* to modify its basic sense from 'wrong, harmful' to 'unwell, sick', which interestingly occurred in the timespan covered by Hintikka's study.

Seija Kerttula's article is a cross-linguistic diachronic analysis of the terms of taste in English and Finnish. The author's main interest is the concept of 'basicness' in the field of body senses. The article includes a great deal of very

useful and interesting language material. To the rich list of adjectives of senses in Middle English we could add the item *sot(e)*, found in the first line of Chaucer's *General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, which also developed abstract senses and was often used in the binomial phrase *swete and s(w)ote*. According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, apart from the basic 'pleasing to the sense of smell and/or taste', as in *Under soote hony, couert bittirnesse*, we find the metaphoric extension 'spiritually or psychologically pleasing, good, agreeable' as in *Swete ihesu, mi soule bote, In min herte þou sette a rote Of þi loue þat is so swote*.

Alaric Hall describes the problems of the Anglo-Saxon glossators and translators who were trying to render some concepts of classical Latin culture and mythology into Old English. His example is the Latin word for nymph, which for the lack of the idea of a female supernatural good creature in the Anglo-Saxon culture, came to be expressed in the vernacular by the originally masculine noun *ælf* 'elf', later *ælfen* with the feminine suffix *-en*. The process is very well documented by the author with the use of very rich material from numerous medieval English glossaries. Consulting the *Middle English Dictionary* could have shed new light on the origin of the ending *-en*, which apart from denoting the feminine gender, was also a common plural marker, especially in southern early Middle English dialects.

Turning now to the papers devoted to function words, we start with a synthetic comprehensive presentation of the development of adverbial subordinators in medieval English provided by Matti Rissanen, who summarizes his previous research of individual items. This very competent, well documented and perfectly organized study shows us the processes of grammaticalization of both native connectives in Old English and the new items that were borrowed into Middle English from Old Norse and Old French alike to meet the demands of more precise expression owing to the rapid increase of argumentative and legal writing in the vernacular. In the latter case there is always a problem of deciding whether the grammaticalization occurred in the source language or independently in English after the loaning process. Among bilingual Anglo-French speakers the process may have been parallel – a natural development in the situation of common code-switching, where languages feed each other. For example, in my opinion the hybrid *because (that)* was not a direct French loan, but was coined in England alongside its Anglo-Norman counterpart *a/par cause que* by bilingual speakers much earlier than in continental French, as can be found in the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* and the 14th and 15th century documents written in French and English in England. The gradual grammaticalization of *because* in English down the prepositional phrase to conjunction cline is evidenced by the presence of such phrases as *by this cause that*, *by (the) cause that*, attested, for example, in Chaucer and some medical texts.

Anne Österman deals with adverbial compounds made up from the locative adverbs *here* and *there* from Old English until present times. Supporting her observations with the remarkably rich illustrating material from several huge corpora, she shows that their respective evolutions are by no means parallel, with *here* compounds developing more pragmatic uses, most probably due to the proximal character of the adverb. On the other hand, the author's statistical data give clear evidence to the fact that *there* compounds have always been much more frequently used, albeit mostly in texts of a rather official character.

Leena Kahlas-Tarkka has chosen a relatively rarely discussed subject of indefinite pronouns denoting totality, equivalents of modern *every* and *each*, in early medieval English. Making use of the *DOE Corpus* she discusses the variety of such function words in Old English and tries to find out the reasons for the morphological simplification and/or loss of most of them in later English. The author rightly relates this to the processes of intensification and grammaticalization of individual items, which – as she clearly shows – has some parallels in other languages.

Mikko Laitinen's paper proves that the variation between generic *he* and *they* with reference to such general indefinite pronouns as *everyone*, *anyone*, etc., is much older than rules of political correctness of the late 20th century. In what he calls "epicene uses" of *he* and *they* the selection of the anaphor depends on many factors such as the distance from the antecedent, stylistic differences, tendency towards the semantic rather than the grammatical agreement, the morphological complexity of an item and some idiosyncratic properties of individual morphemes.

Matti Kilpiö discusses the grammaticalization of English *have* perfect by correlating the process of the loss of participle marking with the changes in word order. As his data clearly shows, word order changes were much slower and appear to have been independent of the loss of participial inflection, although both changes aimed at the same end. What is more, both were parts of much larger processes. In the article we find ample and very convincing evidence from the complete Old English corpus, summarized in neat tables for quick and easy reference.

Finally, Rod McConchie presents a detailed morphological study of the development of the borrowed prefix *dis-* in Middle English used with native Germanic roots. He tends to believe that each word has a different story, making it rather impossible for researchers to find a common trajectory of historical development. Like in the other papers in this volume the strength of argumentation lies in the ample textual evidence provided by the author.

Summing up, the book *Change in meaning and the meaning of change* is a very valuable collection of articles of the Helsinki VARIENG team, where significant theoretical considerations are always supported by remarkably rich

language material from various text corpora, some of which have been compiled by the authors themselves. Concerning the theoretical issues, in the volume we find a good proportion between cognitive semantics and grammaticalization, which, however, should not be separated from each other, as some processes of change can be explained in a complementary way choosing concepts from both these theories. The book has been edited very neatly, with only very few misprints. Let us hope that such good work will be continued in Helsinki and its results will become available to the community of historical linguists (and not only) all over the world.