

La presentazione delle potenzialità di internet e delle sue applicazioni nell'insegnamento delle lingue straniere e la loro valutazione critica vengono condotte con rigore metodologico e scientifico in quanto si ricollegano costantemente alla base teorica posta nella prima parte del volume. Il continuo confronto tra teoria e pratica è particolarmente riuscito e contribuisce alla trattazione esaustiva dell'argomento. La monografia è uno strumento apprezzabile anche per chi si accinge per la prima volta ad utilizzare internet nell'insegnamento delle lingue: le numerose informazioni e gli esempi concreti permettono infatti di valutare in quale modo e in che misura internet possa appoggiare l'apprendimento delle lingue straniere nel contesto specifico e prevedere allo stesso tempo le difficoltà ed i rischi possibili.

[Stefanie Karin Vogler]

CORBETT, John / MCCLURE, J. Derrick / STUART-SMITH, Jane (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scots*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2003, pp. xiii + 304, ISBN 0-7486-1596-2, Lgs. 16.99.

This volume is a very welcome addition to the list of publications that in recent years have discussed Scots in a linguistic, sociological or cultural perspective. The book comprises 12 chapters, all written by distinguished scholars with a long scientific experience in the study of present-day and historical varieties of Scots; it also provides numerous figures and tables (especially in the chapters dealing with phonology), an extensive Index, and an impressively rich Reference section, running to 24 pages and therefore listing ca. 600 titles. The book thus presents itself as an important contribution capable of appealing both to readers whose knowledge of the history and linguistic features of Scots is already good, and to a more general public, for whom some observations and detailed analyses will provide useful insights into a language that is familiar as far as usage is concerned, but whose linguistic and historical background is perhaps less well-known.

In the introductory section the editors provide a relatively short but very accurate overview of the historical development of Scots, first as a national language and then, especially owing to external circumstances like the Union of Crowns and of Parliaments, as a variety with increasingly restricted scope of usage in formal discourse, but with undiminished literary and social value. Subsequently, the first two chapters, on 'Scottish Place-names' (Scott) and 'Scottish Surnames' (Hough), are perhaps among those most likely to elicit the interest of more general readers and, as a result, introduce them to the fascinating topics of language variation and change. The progression towards more specialist fields is bridged by the chapter on 'Studying Scots Vocabulary' (Macafee), in which the author

discusses such crucial linguistic issues as lexical erosion and innovation – typically, only the former was stressed in the past. In the second part of the chapter the author highlights the importance of the *Scottish National Dictionary* and of the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* as lexicographical resources and the way in which sociolinguistic research can contribute to monitoring Scots vocabulary. The next chapter is an extensive study of ‘Syntax and Discourse in Modern Scots’ (Miller), mostly based on a late-twentieth-century corpus of spoken Scottish English (ECOSSE, Edinburgh Corpus of Spoken Scottish English, labelled as the “Miller-Brown Corpus of Scottish English” in other studies, such as Dossena 1998). The author describes the features that characterize Scots syntax and are indeed reflected in Scottish Standard English, thus providing a very clear illustration of the Scots-Scottish Standard English continuum. In addition, this chapter also highlights where change appears to be in progress – for instance, in an apparently more widespread use of progressive forms in Scots, which may eventually result in the development of an imperfective aspect (p. 93). The vast number of examples provided and discussed in detail, often with a contrastive focus in relation to what would be expected in Southern Standard English, certainly helps even non-specialist readers follow the analysis.

More specialist competence is perhaps required for the next two chapters, on ‘The Phonology of Modern Urban Scots’ (Stuart-Smith) and ‘The Phonology of Older Scots’ (Macafee). Both chapters stress their indebtedness to the work of the late Jack Aitken, a synthesis of which is in fact available in the Introduction to the *Concise Scots Dictionary*; indeed, Macafee explicitly states that the chapter incorporates some of his material. The chapter on present-day phonology includes comments on social variation, while the historical one is crucially relevant for those interested in reciting Older Scots poetry. As a matter of fact, the focus on present-day traits and their historical roots is constantly maintained throughout the book – another pair of ‘symmetrical’ chapters is provided by those concerning ‘The Language of Older Scots Poetry’ (Smith) and ‘The Language of Modern Scots Poetry’ (McClure). While the former stresses the importance of discussing Older Scots poetry in its historical context, so that both a literary and a linguistic approach may be adopted, in order to achieve better understanding of the texts themselves, the latter provides an example of this approach in its discussion of the ways in which contemporary Scots poets exploit linguistic specificity in their literary works. Again, the quantity of examples and accurate commentary provide significant guidance to readers, regardless of their greater or lesser familiarity with the topics under discussion. These two chapters are preceded by the one on ‘Corpus-based Study of Older Scots Grammar and Lexis’ (Meurman-Solin). This is indeed a highly significant study in this book, as it sheds light on some important methodological considerations relating to the link between corpus linguistics and the study of historical texts – among these, the need to base our studies not on previously edited works, but on an accurate diplomatic transcription of manuscripts

is rightly stressed in the overview of what historical corpora are available or in preparation. Some case studies are then presented, concerning both morpho-syntax and lexis.

The book closes with two chapters that look at Scots in an even broader perspective, one as far as geographical distribution is concerned ('The Scots Language Abroad' – Montgomery) and another focussing on socio-political issues in present-day Scotland ('Language Planning and Modern Scots' – Corbett). The first challenges the idea that Scots is not used outside Scotland – first of all, Ulster Scots is discussed, especially in relation to its historical roots and its function as an input variety (alongside Lowland Scots) in many overseas contexts. As regards North America and Australasia, the author outlines the geography of Scottish settlements and discusses the influence these have had on emerging supraregional varieties; especially the vocabulary and morpho-syntax of American English are treated extensively in this light. After these contributions on the history and current situation of Scots, the final chapter discusses issues related to the future of Scots: its role in education, its use "beyond the domestic and traditional spheres" (p. 256) and further research prospects. The author presents the initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years, in order to facilitate status improvement – for instance, the attempt to have a question on Scots included in the 2001 Census (which, however, was regrettably unsuccessful), the creation of a Cross-Party Group on Scots within the new devolved Parliament, and the issue of 13 'principles' based on the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights formulated by the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages. While socio-political issues may indeed be crucial, the author finds it not less important to stress the numerous academic activities currently in progress (among these, the creation of SCOTS, the Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech, under way at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh) and to outline paths for future research on all of these aspects.

As a matter of fact, the need for further investigation is also emphasized by Miller in the conclusion of his chapter, where "a small army of questions" is presented, replies to which ought to be supplied by "a small army of researchers" (p. 109). It is true that so far the number of Scots scholars has been relatively small – and yet there is perhaps reason for some optimism, judging on the quantity and quality of studies promoted both in Scotland and abroad: the book being reviewed here will certainly contribute to their improvement at all levels, both outlining the results that have been obtained so far and providing further thought-provoking questions. Finally, no review is thought to be complete without at least marginal notes on what disappointed the reviewer (at least to some extent); however, in this case it is really very difficult to find something to criticize – the present writer only noticed one typo (p. 294: 'Spietel', instead of 'Speitel') and one omitted line (p. 278: 'Dossena forthcoming [b]') in the Bibliography. As regards the latter, I hope I will be forgiven if I take this opportunity to update two references below.

- Dossena, Marina, 1998, Diminutives in Scottish Standard English: A Case for Comparative Linguistics?, *Scottish Language* 17, 22-39.
- Dossena, Marina, 2003, Modality and Argumentative Discourse in the Darien Pamphlets. In Dossena, Marina / Jones, Charles (eds.), *Insights into Late Modern English*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 283-310.
- Dossena, Marina, 2005, *Scotticisms in Grammar and Vocabulary*. Edinburgh: John Donald.

[Marina Dossena]

FACCHINETTI, Roberta / RISSANEN, Matti (eds.), *Corpus-based Studies of Diachronic English*, Peter Lang, Bern 2006, pp. 300, ISBN 3-03910-851-4, € 50.00.

This book is a collection of papers presented at the 25th *Conference of the International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English* (ICAME), held at the University of Verona on 18-23 May 2004. It illustrates the state of the art in corpus-based research on diachronic English, by means of case-study analyses, software presentations and theoretical discussions on the topic. Furthermore, it confirms the ever-increasing importance of corpora as an invaluable tool for historical linguistic research, reflected in the way in which the volume is constructed.

The volume is divided into three sections (Old and Middle English; Modern English; 19th and 20th Century English) each comprising four contributions. The sections are preceded by two introductory papers. The first one, by R. Facchinetti and M. Rissanen ('Introduction') outlines the contents of the book. The second chapter, by A. Curzan and C.S. Palmer ('The Importance of Historical Corpora, Reliability, and Reading') offers a detailed contribution to and a wider definition of historical corpus linguistics research involving complementary methodologies and engaging current linguistic theories.

The opening paper of the first section, by J. Van der Auwera and M. Taeymas ('More on the Ancestor of *Need*'), is based on the Old English and Middle English sections of the *Helsinki Corpus of Diachronic English* and focuses on the origin and early developments of the verb *to need*; present-day usage appears to have replaced four earlier ones: (a) one meaning 'compel'; (b) an impersonal one meaning 'it is necessary'; (c) one used in negative polarity contexts; and (d) one used in positive polarity contexts. The second contribution, by M. Markus ('Spotting Spoken Historical English: the Role of Alliteration in Middle English Fixed Expressions'), concentrates on speech-related varieties of English and comments on the affinity between alliteration and speech. Basing his study on the *Innsbruck Prose Corpus of ICAMET* (*Innsbruck Computer Archive of Machine-*