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[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-*

Readable English Texts), Markus demonstrates how alliteration in prose marks cohesion within units of speech – namely, noun- and verb-headed phrases. I. Taavitsainen, P. Pahta, and M. Mäkinen’s chapter (‘Towards a Corpus-based History of Specialized Languages: *Middle English Medical Texts*’) turns to specialized discourse and describes in full detail a new electronic research tool, the Helsinki Corpus of *Middle English Medical Texts*, containing texts from 1375 to 1500. The final contribution of the first section is by B. Morley and P. Sift (‘Toward the Automatic Identification of Directive Speech Acts’), and deals with directive speech act expressions in Late Middle English prose sermons: its main point is that, given well-defined research parameters, the computerized identification of speech acts is viable.

The second section of the volume discusses typological and diatopical varieties of Modern English. The first paper, by H. Raumolin-Brunberg (‘Leaders of Linguistic Change in Early Modern England’), is based on the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC 1410-1680) and investigates the ongoing linguistic change through the usage of different informants. The author demonstrates that the diffusion of some linguistic changes was promoted by middle-class users, who therefore became “incipient leaders”. H.M. Lehmann, C. Auf Dem Keller and B. Ruef (‘ZEN Corpus 1.0’) illustrate the first public release of the *Zurich English Newspapers* (ZEN) Corpus, consisting of early English newspapers published in London between 1691 and 1791. U. Fries (‘Death Notices: the Birth of a Genre’) offers an interesting application of the ZEN corpus to investigate the rise of a new genre (obituaries) while, at the same time, indicating the limitations of computer corpora when used for text linguistic questions (the latter must always consider the possibility of texts outside the corpus). The last paper of the section, by F. Zumstein (‘The Contribution of Computer-Searchable Diachronic Corpora to the Study of Word Stress Variations’), is set within the framework of a study of English word stress-patterns carried out by the research group in Linguistics at the University of Poitiers, and relies on a large lexicophonetic corpus of 18th-19th-century English.

The last four papers of the volume provide a composite and insightful overview of 19th- and 20th-century English. M. Kytö and E. Smitterberg (‘19th-Century English: An Age of Stability or a Period of Change?’) investigate aspects of stability, variation and change in 19th-century English as recorded in the *Corpus of Nineteenth-Century English* (CONCE) and in *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER). Three case studies are taken into consideration, namely lexical bundles, or multi-word expressions, quantifiers, and the distribution of the progressive compared with that of phrasal verbs. What emerges is that there is no simple answer to the question of stability versus change: in all cases, evidence of both stability *and* change was found. C. Fritz (‘The Conventions’ Spelling Conventions: Regional Variation in 19th-Century Australian Spelling’) is based on the *Corpus of Oz Early English* (COOEE), a two million

word corpus of early Australian English (1788-1900). The article shows that each colonial parliament followed its own spelling policies; as a result, regional standards were established, some examples of which are still traceable in present-day usage. T. Breban ('The Grammaticalization of the English Adjectives of Comparison: A Diachronic Case Study') explores the current polysemy of such adjectives as *other*, *different*, *same*, *identical*, *similar*, and *comparable* and attributes it to a process of grammaticalization. The study, based on the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (750-1710), and the COBUILD Corpus (*Bank of English*), provides both a quantitative and qualitative analysis, bringing to light the development of new meanings and their varying distribution. The final paper of the volume, by G. Kjellmer ('Panchrony in Linguistic Change: The Case of *Courtesy*'), deals with the development of the word *courtesy*, relying both on the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *CobuildDirect* corpus. The word is seen to embrace simultaneously all the stages related to the development of its meanings – an instance of panchrony in linguistic change.

This volume testifies to the fact that past and present are so strongly interrelated that it is difficult to fully understand Present-day English structures and features without turning back to previous centuries. The increasing strength of corpus-based research thus allows for the development of further lines of investigation also in historical linguistics, often with results that may challenge well-established theoretical assumptions.

[Stefania Maria Maci]

HALLIDAY, Michael A. K. / MATTHIESSEN, Christian M.I.M., *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Arnold Publishers, London 2004, pp. 689, ISBN 0340761679, \$ 37.50.

This extremely accessible and well-written textbook is an essential title for anyone with an interest in functional grammar and its general framework. Not only is the theory explained very clearly, but it is also illustrated by numerous examples drawn from an extensive corpus of written and spoken English.

The volume is divided into two parts, each containing five chapters. The chapters in Part 1 (1. The architecture of language; 2. Towards a functional grammar; 3. Clause as message; 4. Clause as exchange; 5. Clause as representation) deal with clause-level grammar. Those in Part 2 (6. Below the clause: groups and phrases; 7. Above the clause: the clause complex; 8. Groups and Phrases Complex; 9. Around the clause: cohesion and discourse; 10. Beyond the clause: metaphorical modes of expressions) describe how lexicogrammar resources are deployed in the process of creating and interpreting texts.