Hans Sauer / Gaby Waxenberger (eds.)

Recording English, Researching English, Transforming English

Introduction

We have chosen the title *Recording English, researching English, transforming English* not just because it gets increasingly difficult to find a title for a collective volume that is eye-catching and has not yet been used, but mainly because it nicely reflects the contents of the present volume.

All of the articles are, of course, examples of linguistic research, especially of research into earlier stages of English and into the ways and causes of language change. Some are, however, also concerned with the question of how specific stages or varieties of English were recorded in writing. Thus Gaby Waxenberger shows how some of the earliest English sound changes (pre-Old English sound changes in her terminology) were reflected in the earliest runic inscriptions from England, i.e. in inscriptions from the period of ca. 400 to ca. 600; Jerzy Wełna shows how the loss of [x] was rendered in some late Middle English spellings; Julia Fernández Cuesta & Christopher Langmuir as well as Maria F. Garcia-Bermejo Giner show how certain dialects (Southern, Cumbrian) were recorded in the 16th and 18th centuries.

As to the transformation of English, Stella Wang describes how the Old English poetic language of *Beowulf* has been variously translated into Modern Chinese, and John Insley points out how J.R.R. Tolkien incorporated Old English (and other early) words and names into his novels.

Some of the contributions assembled here take up long-standing debates, but approach them from a fresh angle, adducing new material, or formulating new theories, and attempting new answers, which will certainly stimulate further discussion (e.g. Wełna, Blockley, Higashiizumi, Suárez Gómez, Osawa), whereas others open up new areas of research.[1] Thus Gaby Waxenberger emphasizes the allophonic phases of the new sounds brought about by pre-Old English sound changes. It was only when these allophones became phonemes that new characters (= runes) were required. Annette Mantlik and Naděžda Kudrnáčová deal with two topics (shell nouns and secondary agent constructions) that have so far mainly or exclusively been looked at synchronically (i.e. from a purely Modern English point of view); they now analyze them for the first time systematically from a diachronic (historical) point of view. Stella Wang provides the first study of the Chinese translations of *Beowulf*.

We have arranged the articles into five parts. Part I (Sounds and spellings) deals with questions of spelling and how sounds and sound changes are recorded by means of letters (see our remarks above on the studies by Waxenberger and Wełna). The contribution by Guzmán-González emphasizes that not only the spoken language plays a role in language change and in the standardization of a

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[1] At least as far as we know. It is, of course, getting increasingly difficult to be abreast of the wealth of studies that have been published and are constantly being published.

langue, but also the written language, at least during certain periods such as Early Modern English.

In Part II (Words and phrases) Carla Morini lists and discusses the Old English terms for 'chain-mail' and 'chain-mail coat'. Kousuke Kaita explains the uses of the frequent Old English phrase *geweald habban/geweald agan* 'to have power'. Annette Mantlik traces the history of shell nouns and shell noun constructions (i.e. abstract nouns such as *idea* used in a construction such as "the idea was to have a better life"). Since most of the shell nouns were borrowed from French (or Latin) during the Middle English period, it seems likely that shell noun constructions are also due to French loan influence (from ca. 1220 onwards). Naděžda Kudrnáčová shows that secondary agent constructions (such as "the officer marched the soldiers"; "the man walked his bicycle") began in the 13th century; they occur mainly with verbs of movement (*run, walk, dance* etc.).

Part III (Conjunctions, clauses, and sentences) is mainly concerned with questions of syntax. Three contributions deal with the history of the conjunctions used to introduce certain clauses and show how the system has changed almost entirely. Thus clauses indicating cause or reason were mainly introduced with the conjunctions *forþon/forþy* in Old English; these were replaced by *for* (and other conjunctions) in Middle English; finally *for* in its turn was largely replaced by *because* from Late Middle English onwards.[2] Mary Blockley and Yuko Higashiizumi investigate different stages in this process, Blockley mainly looking at the use of *for* in Early Middle English, and Higashiizumi at the use of *because* in Early Modern English. The system of introducing relative clauses also changed almost completely in the history of English. Whereas in Old English invariable *þe* (either alone or in combination with the definite article) was frequently used to introduce relative clauses, this function was taken over by *that* in Middle English: Cristina Suárez-Gómez looks at the process of transition. Fuyo Osawa points at some similarities between passive and impersonal sentences: In particular, both do not express, or at least do not need to express an agent. But whereas passive sentences are still used in Modern English, impersonal constructions were relatively frequent in Old English, but were then gradually replaced by personal constructions and are unusual in Modern English ("Me thinks" > "I think").

In Part IV (Dialects and their representation) Maria F. Garcia-Bermejo Giner analyzes the representation of a stereotyped southern (Kentish) dialect in the 16th century while Julia Fernández Cuesta & Christopher Langmuir discuss how a northern (Cumbrian) dialect was represented in the 18th century.

Part V (Scholars, authors, and their use of the past) deals with some aspects of the history of scholarship and the history of translations. J.R.R. Tolkien is now most famous as a novelist (*Lord of the Rings*), but John Insley's contribution reminds us of his utmost importance as a philologist, a medievalist and an historian of the English language. Stella Wang discusses the translations of *Beowulf* into Chinese and places them in their historical and intellectual context.

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[2] On these processes of replacement and their stages, see now also Molencki 2012.

There is, of course, no strict division between the five parts. As mentioned above, questions of spelling are not only discussed in Part I, but also in Part IV, and several of the phenomena discussed in Part II (*geweald habban*; shell nouns; secondary agent constructions) also deal with syntax, i.e. Part III. We have, however, tried to group the contributions according to their main emphasis.

After this general survey of the volume we now give a brief characterization of each of the contributions.

Part I. Sounds and Spellings

(1)   *Homo loquens, homo scribens*: Modern linguists – at least in theory, though not always in practice – often postulate the primary status of speaking and the secondary status of writing, and consequently – at least by implication – also the importance of speaking for the phenomenon of language change. **Trinidad Guzmán-González**, however, attempts to redress the balance by stressing that writing is also important for language change, at least during certain periods. She begins with general considerations concerning cultural evolution and then develops the notion of scholarly networks. She also emphasizes that written modes and sources contributed to the standardization of English in the Early Modern English period: The standardization of spelling was obviously a written phenomenon, but the grammars and monolingual dictionaries of English that were published from the late 16th/early 17th century onwards also played an important role in the process of standardization. Furthermore she points out that language planning in general is often concerned with the written language.

(2)   **Pre-Old English sound changes in pre-Old English runic inscriptions**: More than a hundred English (Old English) runic inscriptions have come down to us from the period between ca. 400 and ca. 1100. But only nine of them belong to the early period, i.e. are datable to ca. 400-600. These are important, however, for the history of the English language, because the transmission of Old English in manuscripts only began around 700. The early runic inscriptions, however, show some sound changes in progress which had been completed when the manuscript evidence began. **Gaby Waxenberger** demonstrates that the Germanic *fuþark* (rune-row) was adapted and changed to the Old English *fuþorc* in order to be able to represent the new sounds/phonemes. This was done in two ways: (1) Some new runes were created, such as ᚠ *ōs* for /o:/ and *āc* ᚠ for /a:/ (and somewhat later ᚾ for /y(:)/). (2) Some runes lost their original sound value and were therefore 're-used' for new phonemes such as the old *ōþil* rune ᛟ. After phonemicization of *i*-umlaut, the rune ᛟ denoted /œ(:)/. Waxenberger also stresses the allophonic phase of sound changes which requires no new character. The new character is only required when the allophone becomes a

phoneme. Moreover, she gives a complete list of all the authentic runic inscriptions in the Old English *fuþorc*.

(3)   **The elimination of velar fricatives**: **Jerzy Welna** investigates the fate of the word-final velar fricative [x] <gh>, which was eventually lost in most words (e.g. in *bough, bought, brought, dough,* etc.), but was changed to or replaced by /f/ in others (e.g. *cough, enough, rough*). He focuses on its development in later Middle English, using the *Innsbruck Middle English Prose Corpus*, and concentrating on the three function words *through, though,* and *enough* /θru:, ðəʊ, ɪ'nʌf/. Middle English dialect spellings with <-ow> etc. instead of <-gh> etc. (*enow* instead of *enough*) indicate the gradual loss, although the Modern English standard spelling usually retains the <gh>. Welna shows that the change was carried through at different speeds in the various dialects, and that the final elimination of the [x] only took place in the Early Modern English period.

Part II. Words and phrases

(4)   **The chain-mail coat terminology in Old English and the dating of *Beowulf***: **Carla Morini** provides a detailed survey of the Old English terms for 'corselet, chain-mail coat', namely *byrne, serc, hlenc, hring* etc. (plus the compounds formed with them), and their use in Old English texts, especially in the poetry, in laws, wills and glossaries. She also takes manuscript illustrations and archaeological finds into consideration. Moreover, she analyzes the corresponding Old Norse terms. She points out that the chain-mail coat was introduced into Anglo-Saxon England by the Scandinavians during the Scandinavian invasions of the 9th century, and that it did not exist in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period. From this she concludes that *Beowulf* cannot be dated early; according to her findings *Beowulf* must have been composed in the 10th century.

(5)   **Old English *geweald habban/geweald agan***: The OE set phrase (phrasal unit) *geweald habban/geweald agan* is the focus of **Kousuke Kaita's** study. He does not call it an idiom, because idioms often have a specialized meaning, whereas in this case the meaning of the whole is basically the sum of the meaning of its parts. In translations and glosses it often renders Latin *potestatem habere*. According to Kaita's investigation *geweald agan* is more frequent in verse, whereas *geweald habban* is more frequent in prose; the use of *agan* is on the whole more limited than the use of *habban*. Kaita also distinguishes whether the phrase is followed by a *to* + *-anne* infinitive or not (the latter is true in the majority of cases). The phrase is used in *Genesis B*, but not in *Genesis A*, which is one of the many signs that show that *Genesis A* and *Genesis B* were originally different poems. In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* the phrase *wælstowes geweald agan* 'to be victorious', literally 'to have the battlefield's power' is frequent.

Kaita also compares the phrase to corresponding phrases (especially *giwald hebbian/giwald egan*) in Old Saxon (*Heliand*) and in Old High German, where he notices similarities as well as differences. Finally he addresses the question of whether *habban* in *geweald habban* should be regarded as an auxiliary, but he comes to the conclusion that basically it is still a full verb.

(6)   **An etymological analysis of shell nouns**: Shell nouns are abstract nouns such as *attempt, decision, idea, issue, problem, thing* etc. whose precise meaning (or reference) is often only indicated in a construction with a complement that follows them, e.g. "The idea is / to make everything better", or "The decision was / that the appeal must be dimissed". Some of them belong to the most frequently used nouns in Present-Day English. However, the study of shell nouns and shell noun constructions only began in the late 1990s, and it was mainly synchronically oriented. **Annette Mantlik** now presents the first comprehensive historical analysis by investigating the etymology of 670 shell nouns. As the examples given above also show, the large majority (77% according to Mantlik, i.e. more than three quarters) are loan-words from French or Latin that were borrowed from ca. 1220 onwards. The proportion of loan-words among the group of shell nouns is thus even larger than the proportion of loan-words in the English vocabulary as a whole. This makes it also likely that shell noun constructions did not exist in Old English; probably they represent a structural borrowing from Latin & French that began in Middle English and has increased greatly since.

(7)   **Secondary agent constructions**: In English, some intransitive verbs of movement can also be used transitively and causatively; the subject of the intransitive sentence then becomes the object of the transitive and causative sentence, as in "The soldiers marched." – "The officer marched the soldiers.", or "The horse jumped." – "He jumped his horse." These causative constructions are also called "secondary agent constructions" (SAs), because the object (especially if it is animate) usually also performs the action, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes because it is forced. Sometimes there is not even a corresponding intransitive construction, as in "He walked his bicycle." but not *"The bicycle walked." **Naděžda Kudrnáčová** investigates the history of the fourteen verbs that can be used in SA constructions. All of them refer to bodily movement, namely *run, walk, swim, dance, march, trot, leap, waltz, jump, prance, gallop, pace, canter, fly.* According to her material, secondary agent constructions are a relatively late phenomenon in English: they were first attested in Early Middle English, and their use increased only very gradually. The earliest attestations of secondary agent construction are apparently with *run* (early 13th ct.), followed by *walk* (1485) and *gallop* (1533), the others followed still later.

Part III. Conjunctions, clauses, and sentences

(8)   **Connectives before Chaucer: conjunctive *for*:** *For* can be used as a
        preposition ("he speaks for them"), as a conjunction indicating cause or reason
        ("I don't know what she looks like, for I have never met her"), or as a
        complementizer with an infinitival phrase ("for the multitude to be ungrateful").
        Whereas its use as a preposition goes back to Old English and is still very
        common today, its use as a conjunction had a shorter history: it only began in
        Early Middle English, and it is limited and regarded as formal today - in Old
        English, *forþon, forþy* was mainly used in this function, whereas in Modern
        English causal *for* has largely been superseded by *because*. Especially in Early
        Middle English, there are also a number of ambiguous uses of *for*. **Mary
        Blockley** gives a detailed analysis of the use of *for* in Early Middle English,
        concentrating on the later sections of the *Peterborough Chronicle* and on three
        poetic texts, namely *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Havelok*, and *King Horn*, and
        she also discusses the treatment of *for* in editions of these texts and in
        dictionaries.

(9)   **A history of *because*-clauses:** As just indicated, *because* largely replaced
        OE *forþon, forþy* and ME *for* as a conjunction indicating cause or reason. **Yuko
        Higashiizumi** gives a detailed analysis of the history of constructions with
        because, starting with the Early Modern period, and applying several
        parameters. One of them is the function of *because*-clauses (connection to the
        real world, or to the epistemic domain, or to the conversational domain), another
        the position of *because* (between the two clauses which it connects, before the
        two clauses which it connects, and before just one clause, i.e. in independent
        use), and yet another whether its use is hypotactic (i.e. subordinating one clause
        to the other), or paratactic/independent. She concludes that the paratactic and
        independent use of *because* has been on the increase in Present-Day English,
        and that constructions where *because*-clauses are connected to the epistemic and
        to the conversational domain are also on the increase.

(10)   **The replacement of *þe* by *þat*:** English has always had several ways of
        introducing relative clauses, but the system changed almost completely during
        the transition from Old English to Middle English. **Cristina Suárez-Gómez**
        looks especially at the history of the invariable relativizers *þe* and *þat/that*. In
        (late) Old English *þe* was the most frequent invariable relativizer, but it had
        practically died out by 1250, and it was replaced by invariable *þat/that*
        (originally the neuter of the demonstrative pronoun ~ definite article). One
        reason (perhaps even the main reason) for the loss of *þe/the* as a relativizer was
        that the definite article had also taken on the invariable form *þe/the*, and *the* in
        the function of the definite article then ousted *the* in the function of the relative
        pronoun. To get a closer view of the process of the replacement of *the* by *that*,

Cristina Suárez-Gómez looks at three parameters, namely (a) their syntactic function, i.e. *þe/the* and *þat/that* as subject, object and oblique, i.e. introducing a prepositional phrase, (b) whether they introduced restrictive or non-restrictive relative clauses, and (c) whether the antecedent was animate or non-animate. She notices some differences or rather different tendencies in usage mainly during the transitional period, when both *þe/the* and *þat/that* were used as relativizers; but once *þat/that* was used as the only relativizer it also took over all the functions of *þe/the.*

(11) **Impersonal and passive constructions**: **Fuyo Osawa** points out some similarities between passive clauses (constructions) and impersonal clauses (constructions): Both do not (impersonal) or do not need to (passive) express an agent. But whereas passive clauses are still common in Modern English, impersonal constructions were common in Old English, but have practically disappeared and have been replaced by personal constructions ("Me thinks." > "I think."). Osawa gives a critical survey of previous research especially on the passive, both of non-generative and generative approaches. Whereas non-generative approaches often assume that active sentences are more basic and that passive sentences are somehow derived from them ("They gave him a book." > "A book was given to him (by them).", or "He was given a book."), generative approaches often assume that both structures are independently derived from an underlying structure. Osawa, however, criticizes both approaches and proposes a new model: According to her, Old English had a lexical-thematic structure, where a subject was not necessarily required, whereas Modern English has a functional structure, where a subject is required.

Part IV. Dialects and their representation in literature

(12) **The Southern dialect**: **Maria F. García-Bermejo Giner** stresses the fact that until fairly recently dialect in literature was usually employed for comic purposes and humorous effects and assigned to characters of lower social rank. She points out that in the 16th and 17th centuries Kentish and South-Western dialects were preferred for this purpose, but often with an admixture of other dialects. In particular she analyzes Thomas Churchyard's *The Contention bettwixte Churchyeard and Camell* (1552), one of the earliest representations of the south-eastern or Kentish dialect. A typical feature of Kentish were forms such as *cham* (< *ich am*) for 'I am', but Churchyard also used other more or less typically southern features such as *h*-dropping and insertion of intrusive *h*, voicing of initial fricatives (*bevore, zay* instead of *before, say*), and voiced alveolar plosives instead of interdental fricatives (*dat* instead of *that*). Interestingly, however, when no attempt at representing a southern dialect was made, then Churchyard also employed northern features, such as *stondes,*

knowes, loues also as a plural form of the verb (northern subject rule) and *barnes* for 'children'.

(13) **Scoto-Cumbrian? Julia Fernández Cuesta & Christopher Langmuir** analyze the representation of dialect in two 18th ct. poets from the north of England, more precisely from Cumbria (Cumberland), namely Josiah Relph (1712 – 1743) and Susanna Blamire (1747 – 1794). According to their findings the dialect spellings found in Relph and Blamire can be assigned to four groups, that is, spellings typical of Cumberland, spellings characteristic of Northern English in general, spellings shared by Northern English and Scots, and spellings probably taken over from Scots. From this influence of Scots on Relph's and Blamire's Cumbrian dialect spelling they give a certain credence to the term Scoto-Cumbrian. Moreover, in a few cases Blamire has different spelling conventions than Relph.

Part V. Scholars, authors, and their use of the past

(14) **J.R.R. Tolkien and the historical study of English**: J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973) is now mainly famous for his novels, especially *Lord of the Rings*, but in his official occupation he was professor of English philology, first at Leeds and later at Oxford. He published a number of important articles and editions in this capacity, but his philological training also shows in his novels. **John Insley** reviews Tolkien's professional achievement as a philologist and highlights especially his interest in personal names and place-names. Insley begins with Tolkien's early review of philological research in *The Year's Work in English Studies* (1924-1927). Then he emphasizes Tolkien's discovery and description of the Middle English AB-language, the literary West Midland dialect of the *Ancrene Wisse* and the Katherine Group (1929), as well as his article on the use of (the Northern) dialect in Chaucer's "Reeve's Tale" (1934). Moreover, Tolkien published the probably most famous essay ever written on *Beowulf*, namely "Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics" (1936), and in 1955, he attempted a comparison of "English and Welsh", a subject which is still hotly debated today. Finally, Insley discusses Tolkien's use of names in his novels.

(15) **Chinese translations of *Beowulf***: Between 1926/27 and 2006, nine Chinese translations of *Beowulf* were published, namely by Xidi (Zheng Zhenduo) [twice], Zhipan (Liang Zhipan), Chen Guohua, Yan Yuanshu, Liang Shiqiu, Feng Xiang, Chen Caiyu, and Li Funing. These are analyzed in **Stella Wang's** contribution. She points out that most of them are indirect or secondary translations, i.e. they are based on Modern English translations or retellings of *Beowulf* and not on the Old English original (with the exception of Feng Xiang). She also discusses the translation techniques employed by the various translators; moreover she sketches the cultural and political climate in which the

translations were written and published, and their repercussions on discussions about a Chinese literary language.

Our volume thus has a broad coverage: It deals with many of the basic linguistic levels, especially with phonology and orthography, vocabulary and phraseology, syntax, and also with regional varieties. It spans the entire history of the English language, from very early Old English (pre-Old English) to the twentieth century, with an emphasis on Old English and Middle English, but also with contributions on dialect representation in the 16th to 18th centuries, and the uses of Old English words and texts in the 20th century. Moreover the origin of the contributors reflects some of the countries where English historical linguistics is at present a prominent and thriving area of research, e.g., the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, and the USA.[3] The popularity of conferences on Old English, Middle English and the history of English as well as the publication of new handbooks such as Bergs & Brinton 2012 also attest to the vigor of the field of English Historical Linguistics.

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[3] The absence of contributors from Great Britain in the present volume is accidental; there are several contributions by British scholars in Sauer & Waxenberger 2012 – otherwise the origin of the contributors is almost the same in that volume (Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, USA); additionally, Croatia, Switzerland and the Ukraine are represented there, and Austria, Finland and Sweden should, of course, also be mentioned.