

Karin Aijmer (ed.). *A wealth of English. Studies in honour of Göran Kjellmer*. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2001. 319 pp. ISBN 91-7346-398-1. Reviewed by **Fanny Meunier**, Université Catholique de Louvain.

This edited volume consists in a collection of twenty-three essays dedicated to Professor Göran Kjellmer on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. The title of the book pays a real tribute to his successful academic life and his profound love of the English language. The papers included are offered both to Professor Kjellmer and the readers as a colourful bouquet.

Before embarking on the reading of the various contributions, I recommend a tour of Kjellmer's bibliography¹ which unmistakably reveals his sense of humour. 'Concerning thirst in battle and dog-riding', 'Why is Winnie the Pooh?', 'The cups that cheer but not inebriate', 'How to crash into a kangaroo', 'He is one of the few men in history who plays jazz on a violin' and 'Cowed by a cow or bullied by a bull?' are only a few of his scientific papers' headings. Undoubtedly inspired by Kjellmer's talent, some of the contributors to the volume also came up with intriguing titles such as: 'A funny thing happened to me on the way to Sidney' (Svartvik), 'Did rhoticity kill the Hillbilly Cat?' (Mobärg) or 'Pin, pin bring me luck, because I stop to pick you up' (Persson), thereby inviting the curious reader to further discovery.

A wealth of English contains six sections: grammar, semantics & word-formation, text & discourse, contrastive studies, ELT, and the music & magic in the English language. The grammar and semantics & word-formation headings total seven papers each, while the four additional sections include fewer papers, with the ELT component containing only one paper. The multiplicity of the topics covered, and hence the large scope of the book, may tend to give a rather patchy impression, which does not facilitate the reviewer's task. The present review does therefore not comment on all the articles and is based on a – necessarily subjective – selection. Despite the lack of focus on a central theme, the majority of papers have adopted a corpus linguistics perspective, thereby offering an interesting panorama of linguistic phenomena tackled with the help of corpora.

Tottie and Hoffmann's study illustrates the **grammaticalization** phenomenon through a careful analysis of 'participles that have passed into prepositions' (Fowler and Fowler 1936: 119). They focus on the *based on* collocation when used as a synonym for *because of*. Corpus analysis reveals that, while a substantial increase of the frequency of use of *based on* can be found both in British and American English corpora, the potential prepositional use has quadrupled in American English only. The authors also comment on other word combinations,

such as *due to*, which have followed the same pattern and are now considered as bona fide complex prepositions. In reference to the usually rapid acceptance of features of American English in other varieties of English, Tottie and Hoffman conclude by predicting the grammaticalization of *based on* as a complex preposition into British and other Englishes. The related petrification or **lexicalization** phenomenon is addressed in Seppänen's article. Starting from one of Kjellmer's papers on *as is*, he studies some sequences more literary in style: the *as/that was* combinations. With the help of numerous examples, he demonstrates how such sequences have undergone a lexicalization process leading towards idiomaticity. Implications for lexicography are also discussed, and the author shows how dictionaries have been somewhat slow in recognizing innovations in the language.

Other papers focus on **variation studies**. Olofsson's analysis of *one of whose* addresses comparisons between *American and British English* using a variety of corpora, namely the Brown, LOB, Frown, FLOB, BNC and Cobuild-Direct. While the *one of whose* structure seems to lack ample corpus evidence, Olofsson shows how English has "found a way to express the inexpressible" (p. 21). De Haan provides further insight into the syntactic make-up of *spoken and written English* and shows how the frequency of tags and tag sequences can help establish crude syntactic differences between speech and writing. He establishes the more 'clausal nature' of speech vs. a more 'nominal tendency' for written language. Mobärg compares *singing and speaking pronunciation* and focuses more specifically on the rhoticity² phenomenon. With the help of precise comparisons and rhoticity percentages, he demonstrates the links between linguistic behaviour (pronunciation) and choice of identity in Elvis Presley's career. Although his study cannot prove the conscious or unconscious use of changes in Presley's pronunciation, Mobärg demonstrates that the songs tested differed in a patterned fashion according to genre. Wichmann's study focuses exclusively on speech and shows how progress in *spoken corpus management* can be used to analyse spoken parentheticals. While the latter were usually considered as disfluency or performance phenomena not really worth analysing, Wichmann uncovers the actual pragmatic role of spoken parenthesis as real interaction management tools in discourse.

Some articles offer detailed distribution analyses of **syntactic elements**. Oostdijk provides a comprehensive syntactic description of the English adjective phrase (hereafter AJP), accounting for the most frequent syntactically simple phrases to the most syntactically complex constructions that occur less readily. The author draws a very detailed picture including a descriptive account of the various types of adjective pre- and post-modification. She also presents the distribution of AJP types and the distribution of AJP's over different func-

tions. She demonstrates that complex structures are rare in actual language use and that the more complex structures attested are relatively simple when compared to the vast array of theoretical potential for complexity. Kennedy, too, carries out a distribution analysis of two syntactic phenomena associated with the use of the passive in English. However, while Oostdijk's paper is limited to a descriptive account, Kennedy goes one step further in trying to seek whether the distribution can help account for the difficulties associated with the learning and actual use of the passive.

The usefulness of corpus linguistics is also revealed in the **contrastive** papers of the volume. Altenberg's article on the delexical English *make* and Swedish *göra* can be considered a methodological model for contrastive studies. Not only does it illustrate the various essential steps in contrastive analysis, but it also shows how contrastive studies can supplement interlanguage research by "revealing the degree of correspondence between languages (...), [giving us] a better chance to understand the problems facing the learners (...), [providing] a firmer empirical basis for interpreting their behaviour (...) [and helping] to form hypotheses about interlanguage which can be further checked against learner data" (p. 218). Johansson's article is in the same methodological vein and analyses the English verb *seem* and its correspondences in Norwegian. Beyond the interesting results directly linked to the topic, his study reveals that contrastive studies make it possible to map correspondences across languages but also help highlight the specific characteristics of each language. Aijmer's contrastive interlanguage analysis deals with *I think* as a marker of discourse style in argumentative student writing. She demonstrates that learners have problems mastering the genre conventions and tend to over-personalize academic essays. Her study also has pedagogical implications, and she shows the potential (both L1 and L2) teaching induced features of the over-use of *I think* by Swedish learners.

The topic of **language change and evolution** is also covered by a number of articles. Peters analyses the Latin legacy and its evolution in the language. She acknowledges the influence of Latin on the English language, both in lexical and grammatical terms. She also provides interesting data on, among other aspects, sociolinguistic variations in the maintenance of Latin elements (with women being less likely to anglicise Latin words) and regional differences between British and American English (with British English being more conservative). Stålhammar's contribution, 'Through the computer screen', shows how new technologies require new lexical terms. The author demonstrates that new terms have generally been borrowed from general purpose language or from more specialized fields, and that coinage constitutes the exception rather than the rule. He provides numerous examples of metaphorical computer terms

related to office environment (*document, file, desktop, library*) or to anthropomorphization (*memory, dumb, smart, mother board, daughter boards, hosts, master, etc.*) thereby demonstrating that there is “a life beyond electricity” (p. 121).

Although several authors have included pedagogical implications in their contributions, Svartvik’s paper is the only one appearing in the **English Language Teaching** section. While the expressions ‘English as a lingua franca’ or ‘English as an international language’ are becoming increasingly fashionable, I dearly welcomed Svartvik’s plea for at least some sort of native language model in ELT. His article goes along the same lines as Quirk’s 1990 paper on ‘Language Varieties and Standard Language’ and comes in reaction to Modiano’s article (2000) ‘Rethinking ELT’. While the plea for a lingua franca, with less importance given to a native speaker model, is based on philosophical and humanistic statements which should be respected and valued, the results of such an approach might in the end turn up to be rather disappointing for the learners and, instead of empowering them, this approach might ‘ghettorize’ them, as Jones (1998) shows in her ‘Not White, Just Right’ essay.

Finally, some papers can easily be classified in an ‘**atypical**’ section. Ohlander’s contribution (‘Onomastics, Grammar and Rock’n’roll’) is probably the only linguistic article whose bibliography contains as many references to rock and music documents as to linguistics. However, the article does offer a solid linguistic and grammatical perspective on the names of rock bands (articles, sentences, verb phrases and noun phrases). The author demonstrates the variations in structures and the lack of grammatical systematicity which can be explained, in the case of rock bands, by a quest for ingenuity and originality. Persson’s article on magic in the English language addresses the close relationship between magic and language through the presentation of charms and spells, divination, taboo expressions, naming and timing of utterances. Bergh’s article also belongs to this atypical category, with a bibliography containing no less than nine (out of a total of eleven) references to Chemistry Journals. Bergh analyses the semantic categories, morphological patterns and word formation trends of the periodic table featuring elements’ names, atomic numbers and symbols as recommended by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and shows that it contains features that are unusual in other word formation contexts. Some hot questions do however remain unanswered and I will end the review on this intriguing note (p. 152): “[is there] a chance that the *-ium* suffix will yield to the *-on* suffix when it comes to the definitive naming of the last element in the noble gas series, *ununoctium*?”

Notes

1. A select list of publications is included at the end of the volume.
2. People with a rhotic accent pronounce the ‘r’ wherever there is an <r> in the spelling of a word. Scottish English pronunciation is typically rhotic, while Black American pronunciation is considered as non-rhotic.

References

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