

## REVIEWS

*The continental backgrounds of English and its insular development until 1154.* By Hans F. Nielsen. Odense: Odense University Press, 1998. Pp. 235.

Reviewed by Elżbieta Adamczyk, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

The book under review is part of a large-scale project, intended to consist of three volumes in total and to cover the overall history of the English language. The three-volume venture is to be known under the title *A journey through the history of the English language in England and America* and is planned as a detailed survey of the history of the English language. The first volume, of interest here, spans the period from the early emergence of the Germanic group of languages up to the year 1154, the date introducing the Plantagenet era in England. Although the internal history of English remains the focus of interest of the present work, it is masterly supplemented with an extensive treatment of non-structural factors exerting influence on the development of the language. Huge as the amount of scholarship in this field is, the present volume is certainly a further significant contribution, offering yet another valuable and certainly attractive account of both linguistic and non-linguistic facts. Designed, as the author has it in the *Preface*, for the history of the English courses at university level, the book is by no means an entirely introductory study.

The volume is organised into seven chapters (*Introduction, The importance of English language history: A practical demonstration, The continental backgrounds of English, The Anglo-Saxon colonisation of Britain, The Old English period, The Latin element in Old English, The Scandinavian settlement in Britain and its linguistic effects, The Norman conquest and the demise of English*), subdivided into a number of sections and followed by a detailed reference list (pp. 213-224) and a useful thematic index (pp. 225-234). There is a list of abbreviations attached (pp. xviii-ix) which along with the *Preface* (pp. xi-xii) precede the main body of the book.

Since the topic has been comprehensively explored, the amount of writing in this field being impressive, the introductory part (*Introduction*) is devoted solely to an overview of publications on the history of the English language. Interestingly, the author's intention was what he calls "a quest for a title" (pp. 1-4), rather than a synopsis of the previous research. All the titles mentioned here are provided with valuable bibliographical information, which is an evident asset of this section. Needless to say, the presented publications cannot be considered to constitute a complete list of studies in this area, the author's "quest" being restricted to publications in English exclusively.

Chapter One opens with some introductory remarks on the evolution of language seen in the context of such factors as inheritance, borrowing and innovation. A specimen of a contemporary text serves as illustrative material for a closer analysis of the different aspects of the development of English (pp. 9-10). Having posited the question of relevance of studying English language history in the first section of this chapter, the author proceeds with a presentation of some widely recognised arguments, supporting the call for this type of research.

The early sections of Chapter Two deal extensively with the continental background of English and provide an informative overview of the Indo-European dialects, as well as some general information on the Indo-European comparative and historical linguistics, including their history and some theoretical assumptions. The focus of interest is gradually narrowed down towards the end of the chapter to the Germanic subbranch of the Indo-European family. The following section is devoted to an insightful survey of the earliest attested Germanic languages and makes an at-

tempt to determine the relative position of Germanic within Indo-European, as well as investigate affinities between particular dialects within Germanic. Accordingly, subsequent section entitled "Germanic diagnostic features" explores a number of linguistic characteristics shared by all Germanic languages, testifying to their genetic relatedness. It is followed by a synthesis of possible classifications of Germanic dialects, including the three alternative models for the grouping, namely the Gotho-Nordic hypothesis, the North-West Germanic theory and the theory of simultaneous three-fold subdivision. Finally, the theory of an early runic language (*Gallehus*), based on a detailed analysis of the Gallehus inscription and postulating a common ancestor for both North and West Germanic dialects, is presented as a likely alternative (p. 54).

All the remaining chapters of the present volume concentrate on Old English exclusively. The analysis is approached in a traditional manner in that the part on the internal history of Old English is preceded by quite an extensive presentation of external characteristics. Although the analysis focuses essentially on the West-Saxon standard, it does not totally neglect dialectal diversification, being supplemented with frequent references to non-West-Saxon dialects (in fact a separate extensive section deals at length with Old English dialectal characteristics (see below)). Chapter Three then traces the external history of Old English, covering not only the period of the very early Germanic settlement on the island but goes back to the pre-Germanic colonisation era. A large section of this chapter is devoted to an overview of the evidence for the Germanic settlement in Britain (pp. 62-77), including onomastic evidence, written sources, archaeological data as well as valuable, strictly linguistic evidence. An illustrative table on pp. 73-74 presents a complete set of characteristics (diagnostic features), shared by particular Germanic languages, including phonological, morphological and lexical parallels. The summary of these features, aimed at establishing the exact dialectal position of Old English within Germanic, draws largely on Nielsen's (1985) close and detailed investigation of intra-Germanic affinities (cf. *Old English and the continental Germanic languages*). The section which follows is meant as an outline of the linguistic conditions in Britain, just after the Germanic settlement, stressing dialectal diversity among the early Anglo-Saxon settlers. A brief methodological discussion on emigrant languages and their interrelations completes the subject of linguistic situation in Anglo-Saxon England. Attention is drawn to the problem of *linguistic selection process* in emigrant, mixed dialects which the Anglo-Saxon idiom originally was, the conclusion being that the selection of forms can be determined in a two-fold manner: partly by sociolinguistic factors and partly by the principle of functional utility (p. 82), which the author instantiated with an example of Australian and Irish English. The chapter closes with a presentation of the Old English runic alphabet and an analysis of its provenance.

The investigation of the structure of Old English is the focus of interest of the subsequent chapter. The analysis proper is preceded with a section on periodisation within Old English, which remains largely in keeping with the traditional stance, where a distinction between *early* and *late* Old English is made, the former used synonymously with early West-Saxon, the latter associated with the emergence of the West-Saxon standard. Pointing to runic writing from the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, the author considers the pre-Old English period to have been not entirely deprived of textual material. Apart from information on the political situation in England and the emergence of the Old English standard, brief as the latter is, the reader will find an overview of textual evidence for different dialects together with several sample texts. The selected specimens include a passage from *Lindisfarne Gospels*, representing late 10<sup>th</sup> century Northumbrian, *Vespasian Psalter*, identified as the 9<sup>th</sup> century Mercian, a passage from a Kentish charter ('Abba') and a West-Saxon fragment from Alfred's Preface to the *Cura Pastoralis* (pp. 95-96). The presentation of specimens of the four dialects is followed by a discussion of their divergent features. Although the book cannot be considered an introductory reading, all the texts are provided with translations. In fact this practice concerns not just this particular subchapter but all the Old English illustrative material included in this volume. The remaining part of this chapter is devoted to a detailed presentation of the "linguistic profile" of Old English, i.e. a survey of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexi-

con, viewed in both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. It starts with a structural interpretation of the development of the Old English sound system as rooted in Proto-Indo-European. The author, following largely Hogg's (1992) and Krupatkin's (1970) accounts, provides a sketchy description of some early diachronic processes, including breaking, *i*-mutation and back mutation (pp. 100-101). The discussion is supplemented by a concise table summarising all relevant vowel changes and presenting their relative chronology. The section on morphology opens with an examination of the Old English nominal system. The author adopted a diachronic perspective as the basis for the classification of nouns, namely the Proto-Germanic model of nominal inflections, which does not seem to be a common practice in the more recent publications. Accordingly, the nouns are classified formally rather than functionally, depending on the original thematic element they contained in Proto-Germanic. The diachronic perspective prevails also in the presentation of the Old English cardinal numbers, where, among other things, the intricate origin of the numbers 11 (*endleofan*) and 12 (*twelf*) (p. 119) is investigated. The discussion of the other grammatical categories is committed to the traditional framework. The subsequent section deals with an analysis of syntactic patterns of the early Old English and is preceded by an excursus on syntactic typology (Greenberg 1963). A short prose passage and an extract from the Northumbrian version of *Cædmon's Hymn* are analysed in terms of their syntactic structure (esp. word order), the analysis revealing a considerable word-order variation in the early Old English. The examination of the lexicon completes the chapter on the internal structure of Old English. Apart from a brief discussion on word formation, it contains an overview of Old English lexical features, including both borrowed and inherited elements (pp. 135-136).

A lot of room in this volume is devoted to the presentation of the foreign element in the structure of Old English, the relevant material stretching over three chapters which investigate Latin (Chapter 5), Scandinavian (Chapter 6) and Norman elements (Chapter 7) in the language of Anglo-Saxons. They demonstrate the impact these languages had on English, presenting the three major sources of foreign influence in chronological order. A brief introductory section on the Latin element in Old English is followed by a revision of different types of Latin loanwords. An attempt at classification of the borrowed material results in a quite transparent subdivision of the borrowed words, remaining largely in line with the traditional accounts. Yet, the conventional two-fold subdivision into continental and post-continental or insular borrowings, each discussed in separate sections, is refined here by the addition of a group of pre-Christian insular borrowings, comprising Latin loanwords which entered the Old English lexicon before 600 AD, yet after the Anglo-Saxon emigration from the Continent. A number of relevant examples of all types of Latin loanwords are provided to illustrate the borrowing process which was most conspicuous in such semantic fields as religion, scholarship, learning, household, etc. What follows in the next section of the chapter is a brief overview of dissenting opinions on the source and precise dating of Latin loanwords adopted in the very early borrowing period. Here the author cites the view of Serjeantson (1995), according to whom the extent of the early insular borrowing was much greater than commonly assumed, covering 14 different semantic fields. The view is quite controversial and does not tally with the traditional stance (espoused by Ekwall 1960; Baugh and Cable 1993 or Jackson 1953) not only as far as the extent of borrowing is concerned but also as far as the very character of the loanword transmission goes. Since the impact of the Latin lexicon was most permanent in the onomastic material, a large section which follows discusses Latin influence on place-name structure in England. The discussion of the spread of the Latin influence is neatly illustrated with maps presenting the spread of some exemplary Latin terms (within the Roman trade-zone) and the distribution of place-names. The chapter closes with an outline of the theory on the dating and transmission of the Latin place-name element, postulated by Margaret Gelling. The theory based largely on non-linguistic (archaeological) data posits a very early date of transmission (4<sup>th</sup> c.), attributing the introduction of the onomastic material to *Germani* remaining in Roman service during the Roman era in Britain. It should be noticed at this point that the presenta-

tion of facts is balanced and very detached in that the author does not explicitly disclose his opinion; the opposing standpoints are discussed, but none of them apparently favoured.

The chapter on Scandinavian influence on the language of Anglo-Saxons introduces some historical facts from the Viking Age (780-1070), including the early invasion and expansion, settlement and the political conquest. Prior to the discussion of the Scandinavian onomastic element in Britain, a brief critical overview of relevant historical evidence of the period is offered. The onomastic treatment concentrates largely on three types of place names of Scandinavian provenance: *-by*, *-thorp* compounds and the so called *Grimstone hybrids* (compounds with Scandinavian personal names and the English second element *-tūn* 'town') (p. 173). What follows is a synthesis of potential interpretations of these data, including both traditional and more radical stances, the former represented by Ekwall (1936) and Stenton (1947), the latter by Sawyer and Davis (1950). The author distances himself evidently from any of the presented standpoints, which makes the presentation again very balanced and objective. He cites other contemporary researchers such as Lund, Cameron or Fellows-Jensen (p. 176), providing a sketchy overview of research work in this field. Another type of evidence of the foreign influence, namely the lexical evidence is the focus of interest in the following section of this chapter. After a brief methodological discussion, the author proceeds to a presentation of the inventory of Scandinavian loans in Old English, easily categorised in terms of their semantics. Compiled largely after H. Peters (1971), the inventory includes such categories as seafaring terms, legal terms, ranks and war terms, measures and coins as well as a number of words from other semantic fields. This small Old English inventory has its Middle English and Modern English equivalent inventories in the two subsequent sections which are followed by a brief and superficial discussion of loanwords in Middle and Modern English respectively. Frequent references to Present Day English prove the author's apparent inclination to emphasise the links between Old English and PDE and to present the former within a broader perspective, i.e. its later evolution. Since the Scandinavian influence unquestionably extended to phonology and grammar, much room is devoted to a discussion of these issues in the next section. The chapter on Scandinavian linguistic impact closes with some brief remarks on the interpretation as well as the distribution of Scandinavian loanwords in Old English and Middle English.

The final chapter of the book explores the Norman influence and the gradual demise of Old English as a result. The first part of this chapter discusses some important political developments in England prior to the Norman era (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century). Quite detailed presentation of subsequent rulings is supplemented with a diagram illustrating the genealogical relations between the rulers of the period (p. 192). The overview of external history continues into the Norman conquest period up till the year 1154, which is, as mentioned before, the year of the introduction of the Plantagenet dynasty to the English throne. Both are quite detailed accounts, intended as the author suggests, to illustrate the potential influence of external history, political developments in particular, on the evolution of language. The second part of the chapter, still subdivided into smaller sections, is more of an internal history outline, devoted to a presentation of linguistic facts exclusively. The *Peterborough Chronicle* is the focus of interest of the immediate section, where details on its origin, internal organisation as well as linguistic sketch of its fragments are included. What follows and is the last section of the volume is a comparative analysis of two passages, extracts from the *Peterborough Chronicle*: the entry for the year 1137 and the entry for 1085. The parallel investigations, preceded by a presentation of relevant passages (p. 198) (both provided with PDE translations), take into account all levels of language, covering phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon, discussed separately for each fragment. The final section of the chapter summarises the discrepancies between the two post-conquest texts in terms of the retention and loss of the Old English features, which is neatly illustrated in a diagram on p. 210.

Although the book cannot be considered a revealing or innovative study, it definitely constitutes an important contribution to the research in the field, offering valuable insights into the history of the English language. It is certainly a reliable survey, providing a sound and coherent pre-

sentation of relevant, both linguistic and non-linguistic facts. As admitted unassumingly in the introduction, it relies to a considerable extent on the previous research, a common characteristic of any such synthetic presentations which the book under review certainly is. At the same time it is worth noticing that the treatment of particular issues, committed essentially to the traditional model is evidently characterised by a considerable degree of objectivism on the part of the author, be it an advantage in some respects, a shortcoming in others.

An evident virtue of the volume is its ordered, clear presentation, with quite straightforward and internally coherent exposition of ideas. Its transparent organisation into chapters, sections and subsections, all provided with self-explanatory titles, along with the lucidity of style employing little idiosyncratic terminology make the text easily accessible and highly readable. The orderly arrangement of data in form of summary tables, diagrams, and word lists, all facilitating reading, as well as numerous maps included are further features which add to the list of the book's assets.

Intended as a coursebook and addressed to students primarily, the book is short of being a traditional manual on the history of Old English. Some issues discussed and some analyses offered seem to extend beyond the scope of what can be considered a regular coursebook, much attention being devoted to a discussion of related issues other than merely the structure of Old English. Certainly, the placing of the Old English history into a larger Germanic and Indo-European context which the study does, as well as a comprehensive investigation of factors influencing the development of the language (e.g., the borrowing process) make the text even more dynamic and convincing. Apart from its interesting content, when taken as a whole, the book contains sections which in my opinion are especially valuable and worth recommending, such as the discussion of the Indo-European hydronymy pattern, Indo-European and Germanic homeland and the presentation of Germanic and Old English runic alphabets, all of them neatly broadening the perspective in which to view Old English.

The use of original textual material to illustrate the theoretical discussion, as mentioned before, is certainly a further merit of the work. Basically, all texts included are supplemented with translations, all lexical items glossed, which makes it accessible also to those who are not well-acquainted with Old English.

One critical remark concerns the final part of the volume which strangely lacks some kind of recapitulation, comments or conclusions. Although the book is just the first part of the three-volume venture, some general at least remarks or conclusions which could nicely prepare the ground for a further survey would be more than welcome.

A final comment is directed at the author's apparent bias in the treatment of some topics. The bias is actually not unexpected since hinted at by the author already in the introductory chapter, where he admits that due to his genuine and vivid interest in some fields, he cannot escape being subjective and avoid devoting more attention to subjects of particular interest to him. On the one hand, such inclination, seen, for instance, in the author's frequent references to the other Germanic languages, may prove beneficial, making the book even more valuable and attractive. On the other hand, one may have some reservations as to the length of the section discussing the foreign influence which, quite unexpectedly, takes almost the third part of the volume (at the expense, for example, of the presentation on the emergence of the West-Saxon standard which is just a cursory sketch, taking no more than a half-page long section) (pp. 94-95).

As regards the technical side, the book is executed with great care and the inconspicuous number of spelling mistakes which can be detected cannot be considered but a minor imperfection.

Finally, it is worth stressing that the book makes an impression of a very interesting reading and certainly deserves the attention of all those interested in the field, including both scholars and less advanced readers.

## REFERENCES

- Hogg, Richard M.  
 "Phonology and morphology", in: Richard M. Hogg (ed.), 67-167.
- Hogg, Richard M. (ed.)  
 1992 *The Cambridge history of the English language. Vol. I: The beginnings to 1066.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nielsen, Hans F.  
 1985 *Old English and the continental Germanic languages.* Innsbruck: Inst. für Sprachwiss. d. Univ.
- Nielsen, Hans F.  
 1989 *Germanic languages: Origins and early dialectal interrelations.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

*English words: History and structure.* By Robert Stockwell and Donka Minkova. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. 209 plus downloadable sections.

Reviewed by Matylda Włodarczyk-Golka, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań.

The latest mutual enterprise of Stockwell and Minkova sets out to provide a remedy to a problem raised almost a decade ago by Yakov Malkiel in his preface to *Etymology*. Malkiel expressed his deep discontent at what he phrased as "the policy of rejection" towards etymological issues exercised by universities (particularly in the US) and linguistic journals' editors (Malkiel 1993: xi). Particularly disturbing was to Malkiel the fact that while all other branches of linguistics received a fair amount of attention both in university curricula and published inquiries, etymology remained neglected for no good reason. As we learn from the introduction to *English words: History and structure* this "policy of rejection" is unfortunately still alive: "At the beginning of the twenty first century ... it is extremely rare for students entering college to have a clear idea what Latin is ...". Acknowledging the sad facts, the authors "... take the view that people cannot call themselves 'educated' who do not have a minimal acquaintance with the history and structure of words in their own language" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 1).

Designed as a textbook, the work assumes the task of acquainting a native English student with the pervasive classical element present in the English lexis. Principally, the interest of the book is in the origins of English words. Its specific concern is "that portion of the vocabulary which is borrowed from the classical languages (Latin or Greek)" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 1). Concentrating on this particular problem, the authors intend to introduce the reader to the basics of what they refer to as *linguistic analysis* of lexical items.

The book consists of introduction, ten chapters, two appendices, and a four-page index of the names, linguistic terms and dictionary titles occurring in the work. Additionally, the authors have made use of modern technology by providing a significant downloadable section (two further chapters and a workbook) available from one of the websites. Conceptually, *English words: History and structure* can be divided into five components of unequal length and internal congruity. The first three chapters are devoted to creating a general background for the discussion to follow. Starting with a short overview and classification of word origins, the authors proceed to presenting the extralinguistic history of English. This presentation is attained through the two following chapters, with special attention devoted to the contact phenomena contributing to the growth and

change in the field of English lexis from Old English to the Modern English period. Chapters Four, Five, Six, Seven and Eight constitute the main body of the book, distinguished by its homogeneity. Focusing on allomorphy, the discussion progresses from the general to the specific description of this linguistic phenomenon. The so far overwhelmingly morphological perspective widens to incorporate semantics in the next conceptual block comprising the single Chapter Nine. The following section plus the appendices can be treated as the fourth logical part of the book providing manuals to pronunciation of classical words in English (Chapter Ten) and to the dictionaries of English (Appendix One). Appendix Two is a list of morphemes cited in the workbook: there is meaning given for each morpheme, examples of vocabulary items in which it occurs as well as its source. Finally, the two online chapters devoted to recent loanwords in the medical and legal register respectively constitute the last logical portion of the work.

The book opens with a section in which, other than borrowing, the authors identify ten main processes leading to the formation of new words in English: inheritance, creative imagination (neologisms), blending, joining initial letters of a phrase (acronyms), shortening, derivation, conversion, compounding, creation based on names (eponyms) and echoic processes. Interestingly, no known taxonomy is followed here, even though it is not difficult to find within the existing ones a taxonomy less expanded and at the same time more transparent, such as, for example, the one postulated by John Algeo (1998: 59). The next section contains a subchapter on the family history of English and a succinct overview of the lexical foundations of Old English. The reader's attention throughout this discussion is drawn to the major shift in the etymological balance of the lexicon from the insignificant 3% of (Latin) borrowings for Old English to the remarkable 25% in the Middle English period (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 37). The making of the Early Modern English and Modern English vocabulary is approached in Chapter Three where again the presentation is supported by quantitative data. Thus, for the first 10,000 vocabulary items learnt by speakers of English, only one third are native words (Germanic, in use since the Old English period), while French and Latin together are sources for as much as 61,7% of the total of the Modern English lexicon (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 50). This estimate, however, is based on data from *A statistical linguistic analysis of American English* (Roberts 1965), a source of limited relevance for other varieties. Rather complacently the authors do not choose to mention this unfortunate and outdated reference in the main body of the text. Overall, the treatment of sources used in this component of the work is rather selective. For no good reason the authors choose not to take account of the major contributions of recent scholarship in the field. To give just one example, out of the monumental *Cambridge history of the English language* only one chapter is mentioned. The majority of references go back to either of the two books: Baugh and Cable's (1993) *A history of the English language* and Charles Barber's (1997) *publication Early Modern English*. Other than the two references, a reader interested in the extralinguistic history of English is directed to only one further general work, i.e. Fisiak's *An outline history of English* (1995).

Chapters Four and Five provide a description of the essentials of morphology and morphophonology respectively. In the former the reader is introduced to the notion of morphophoneme, and presented with a classification of morpheme types as well as a discussion of affixes and their functions. Chapter Five concentrates on the types (regular, irregular and "zero") and origins of allomorphy, illustrating its underlying mechanisms defined as "the regular changes in the phonological form of roots, affixes and whole words" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 73). Predictable allomorphy (seen as the outcome of a phonological rule) stems from phonetic change. The operation of phonetic change as well as the applicability of a rule of allomorphy are in turn determined by the following factors: the ease of pronunciation of a lexical item, its modification in time, the frequency of use, its origins (native or borrowed) and, finally, the ease of perception. The last section of the chapter is devoted to a description and classification of the English sounds in terms of articulatory features. A major shortcoming to this brief presentation is that it fails to elaborate on some minor but not irrelevant controversies. First of all, in the treatment of

stops the authors accept only the oral members (plosives) as falling within the category while for nasal stops a separate "nasal sonorants" category is postulated. In this way the similarities are blurred in favour of differences between the two groups of sounds. What many a phonologist may also find objectionable or inadequate is the label "palatal" given to /j, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/ when describing them in terms of the place of articulation. Finally, /h/ is presented as a voiceless vowel, which is acceptable as long as its description in terms of consonantal properties is not completely ignored. These minor inadequacies, less problematic to a linguist, are likely to lead a layperson to some confusion, or worse, misconception.

The next two chapters give a comprehensive presentation of the rules of predictable allomorphy that have affected the shape of English lexis. Accordingly, Chapter Six is devoted to replacement and Chapter Seven to deletion rules. In the former a detailed presentation and taxonomy of assimilation processes is proposed. Thus labial, total and voicing assimilations are exemplified and what follows is a listing of various lenition types. Here, the authors take the view that lenition processes instantiate the rule: "Prefer the easier articulation". A short definition of backness assimilation illustrated with a couple of examples closes the discussion in Chapter Six. The next section classifies the following phenomena under "consonant deletion": s-gemination, x-drop, n-drop while V-drop in hiatus and syllable syncope under "vowel deletions". Subsequently, the set of expansion rules is put under scrutiny and illustrated with the examples of U- and P-epenthesis. The following chapter is in turn an attempt to train the reader to unearth the *fossilized allomorphy* in that it introduces the further, less transparent allomorphic phenomena such as ablaut, rhotacism and metathesis as well as two types of cognates, i.e. obscure and false cognates. The approach the authors take to false cognates involves some basic techniques of parsing whose goal is to "discover and verify the real identity of cognates" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 135). Interestingly, the reader is presented with a set of counterexamples or the ways in which the parsing techniques most typically fall through. Generally two such failures are identified; one is boundary misplacement while others can be put down to homophony. In the treatment of the latter the authors pursue a very fruitful line of presentation in that they provide a list of homophonous roots with their meanings and two less comprehensive but still useful lists of homophonous affixes and grammatical suffixes. The last four subsections of the chapter dwell on pseudo-suffixes, semantic variation, multiple derivatives and multiple affixes.

In the opening of the last but one chapter, a tribute to semantics, the reader encounters homophony seen as a phenomenon covering three types of semantic identity: homonymy, homophony and polysemy. Describing these, the authors take a look at the treatment of homophones and words with a diversity of meanings in the dictionaries. The rest of this section investigates the main categories of semantic change and its outcomes. In explaining the internal and external forces triggering semantic change, the authors point to the unpredictability of the direction or specific nature of this linguistic phenomenon. The following question is taken to be a starting point in their discussion: "what forces in our society, or what forces in our thinking, typically have brought about semantic change". Positing a question of this nature, the authors ignore completely the forces inherent in language that are conducive to language change such as polysemy, discontinuous transition and the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign (McMahon 1994: 176-7). Finally, Chapter Ten comes in as a handy manual to the pronunciation and stress assignment rules of the classical vocabulary items. For example, to determine the main stress placement a student is advised to take five uncomplicated steps. The book is concluded with the above-mentioned short index.

One of the problems of the book as a textbook is the lack of a coherent list of sources to which an interested reader could refer – the book does not contain one of the essentials of any publication – a reference list or bibliography. This shortcoming is not only technical in nature. Its outcome is that the reader is devoid of a chance to pursue challenging questions he might think worthy of study. Furthermore, encouraging as the textbook-like reader-friendly definitions and

step-by-step introductions to new concepts are to a less linguistically oriented audience, to a more advanced student of linguistics they could be found insufficient. At some points discussions proceed in a manner that is, regrettably, far from serious-mindedness, not to mention linguistic expertise. For example, acknowledging the difficulty some may have identifying the syllables carrying main word-stress, the authors offer the reader the following piece of advice: "Try yelling a word across a noisy room – soon you will develop a knack of recognising stress" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 169). On a different occasion we come across the following definition: "The principles which govern, for any given language, what sequences are judged to be *comfortable* to pronounce, and what sequences are *uncomfortable* or difficult, or even impossible, are called phonotactic constraints" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 77). The value of a definition in terms of ambiguous concepts such as "comfort" of pronunciation seems doubtful. Furthermore, the work includes ideas that do not hold up under scrutiny. The following statement in Chapter Seven (final sections discussing N-drop as one of the allomorphic rules) illustrates this: "One curiosity of N-drop is that it can reset the boundaries within a clitic group" (Stockwell and Minkova 2001: 120). To support the statement the authors provide two examples:

1. OE *a(n) napron* – PDE *an apron*
2. OE *a(n) nadder* – PDE *an adder*

The statement is not a false one in itself, still attested in such a limited number of examples it is definitely a too strong one. A much more cautious and coherent view is found in Jones (1989: 279) who puts the relexicalisation of *apron* to *napron* down to the speakers "associating its etymological nasal onset with the coda of the terminally empty determiner in the same noun phrase" at the same time highlighting the fact that the phenomenon is limited to a very restricted lexical set. Furthermore, Old English examples quoted on this occasion are incorrect: according to Bosworth and Toller (1898) the PDE word *adder* occurred in the two following forms: *nædre*, or *nædder* in OE. The *apron* example is even more unfortunate for as we learn from OED the word had not been attested until the year 1307 and, what is more, is a loan from French (*naperon*).

The publication in question is definitely recommendable as a first-rate textbook, bound to satisfy a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader curious to discover details of his linguistic past. What constitutes the foundations of a sound textbook here are undeniably the transparent layout and the readable non-specialist language revealing practical rather than purely theoretical intentions of the authors. Numerous examples illustrate linguistic facts more than sufficiently and thus further multiply the value of the book for a curious layperson. A diligent student will also benefit markedly from the impressive collection of exercises designed individually for each chapter yielding in total a decent 104 page-workbook. There is no denying that Stockwell and Minkova's 2001 publication will comply with the needs of a wide audience of both serious and more leisurely linguistic interests.

#### REFERENCES

- Algeo, John  
1998 "Vocabulary", in: Susanne Romaine (ed.), 59-91.
- Barber, Charles  
1997 *Early Modern English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Baugh, Albert C. – Thomas Cable  
1935 *A history of the English language*. (4<sup>th</sup> edition). New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.  
[1993] [Reprinted].
- Bosworth, Joseph – T. Northcote Toller (eds.)  
1898 *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Dvorkin, Steven N.  
1982 "Romance etymology", in: Winfred P. Lehman – Yakov Malkiel (eds.), 273-289.
- Fisiak, Jacek  
1993 *An outline history of English. Volume one: External history.* Poznań: SAWW.  
[1995] [2<sup>nd</sup>, revised, edition].
- Gimson, Alfred C.  
1995 *Gimson's pronunciation of English. Fifth edition revised by Alan Cruttenden.* London: Edward Arnold.
- Jones, Charles  
1989 *A history of English phonology.* London – New York: Longman.
- Lehmann, Winfred P. – Yakov Malkiel (eds.)  
1982 *Perspectives on historical linguistics.* (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 24). Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Malkiel, Yakov  
1993 *Etymology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McMahon, April M. S.  
1993 *Understanding language change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- OED  
1933 *Oxford English dictionary.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.  
[1970] [Reprinted].
- Roberts, A. Hood  
1965 *A statistical linguistic analysis of American English.* The Hague: Mouton.
- Romaine, Susanne  
1998 *Cambridge history of the English language. Vol. IV: 1776-1997.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*An introduction to Middle English.* By Simon Horobin and Jeremy Smith. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002. Pp. viii, 182.

Reviewed by Anna Hebda, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań.

Even though it has already been three years since the latest typically student-oriented contribution by Smith (1999), the dramatically low number of textbooks on English historical linguistics has not increased much. An up-to-date HEL handbook is still hard to come by, and this is precisely what makes a specialised work like the one by Horobin and Smith the light at the end of the didactic tunnel. The relatively narrow scope of the book, approximately four centuries, granted the authors the freedom to devote as much space as felt needed to the matters strictly concerning Middle English, without having to dwell upon the developments which preceded its emergence. It should be stressed, however, that wherever appropriate, both earlier and later states of the language are referred to.

The book, as indicated in the preface, has been "... designed as a linguistic introduction to Middle English for undergraduate students who have already encountered the language..." (p. viii). It is a synchronic overview of the spoken as well as of the written mode of the vernacular used in England between c. 12<sup>th</sup> and c. 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, with particular emphasis on the Chaucerian usage, regularly put into diachronic and diatopic contexts, and a brief account of those external factors which indirectly affected the structure of mediaeval English.

*An introduction to Middle English* by Simon Horobin and Jeremy Smith, which starts with a list of abbreviations and a note to readers, consists of seven chapters (each ending with "Exercises" and "Recommendations for reading") organised into three major parts of unequal length. Part One, of introductory nature, contains three chapters, namely: "Introduction" (pp. 1-6), "What did Middle English look like?" (pp. 7-25), and "Middle English in use" (pp. 26-39). In Chapter One, the authors acquaint prospective readers with the purpose of the book, their understanding of the term *Middle English*, and the overall organisation of the work. Chapter Two illustrates the appearance of Middle English as recorded in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer. The third chapter, in turn, focuses on the fortunes of English after the Norman Conquest and the standardisation of speech and writing.

Part Two of the volume comprises chapters 4-6. Chapter Four, "Spellings and sounds" (pp. 40-68), covers an outline history of writing in England, salient features of Chaucer's idiom, and the reconstruction of Middle English grapho-phonemic correspondences. The next chapter, "The lexicon" (pp. 69-88), is devoted in its entirety to the origins of the Middle English word-stock, the mechanisms of word-formation active during the period in question, the diatopic variation concerning mediaeval English vocabulary, and the range of styles used by contemporary writers. "Grammar" (pp. 89-125) is the last chapter of Part Two. Divided into two larger sections, namely "Syntax" and "Morphology", it describes the structure of Middle English nominal, verbal, adjectival, and adverbial phrases, as well as the Middle English sentence structure and the inflectional morphology of the language.

Part Three (pp. 126-141), and Chapter Seven at the same time, intended as "a bridge" to more sophisticated literature, raises some potentially controversial questions relating to language change and editing mediaeval manuscripts to show, as the authors put it, "how knowledge of Middle English can be harnessed to engage with broader issues of linguistic evolution, and how an understanding of the Middle English language can contribute to other areas ... in ME studies" (p. 126). The final chapter of the book is followed by an "Appendix" (pp. 142-169), which contains seven annotated excerpts from such Middle English texts as, e.g., *The Peterborough Chronicle*, *The Owl and the Nightingale* or *Ancrene Wisse*, to name but a few. A "Discussion of the exercises" (pp. 170-172), "References" (pp. 173-177), and a thematic "Index" (pp. 178-182) close the volume under review.

*An introduction to Middle English*, the result of cooperation between the two Glaswegian scholars, fully meets the expectations one may have upon reading the introductory note. Horobin and Smith promise a book for those interested in the field, yet with little knowledge of the subject, which would provide not only the basic facts concerning the Middle English usage but also linguistic background for further exploration of concepts currently investigated by the scholarly community. The content of the work, as well as the handling of the material fully reflect the authors' intentions.

Even though the nature of the project required a rather disciplined approach to the selection of data, none of the truly significant matters have been treated superficially or simply left out. Throughout the book, linguistic examples are generously supplied with textual (mostly Chaucerian) illustrations, regularly supplemented by translations or glosses of the less transparent fragments. An additional collection of annotated texts, in the form of an appendix, has been placed at the end of the book.

The authors deserve high praise for a number of student-friendly decisions made during the work on the volume. One of the more innovative solutions seems the introduction of questions for review, commonly under the heading "Exercises", and "Recommendations for reading", at the end of each chapter. While the former is a very good way of highlighting the most important information and systematising the acquired knowledge, the latter typically offers a list of works (with comments) for further reading on a given topic. Another good move on the part of Horobin and Smith was the choice of one, well-represented model of mediaeval English as a convenient refer-



ence point for the discussed linguistic phenomena. For the sake of clarity, the language of Chaucer, for which the authors opted as the model usage, is repeatedly contrasted diachronically, and diatopically, with other varieties of the vernacular. Finally, before broaching subsequent issues for discussion, the authors invariably provide both the indispensable metalanguage and the extralinguistic context.

Nevertheless, carefully designed as it is, *An introduction to Middle English* is not free from drawbacks. A less tolerant reader may find the book somewhat monotonous, with certain concepts reappearing every now and then. The first sentence of Chapter Four (p. 40), for instance, describing the relations among various "levels" of language (already mentioned on pp. 2-3), is repeated almost word for word on page 89, while the "classification" of Norse, Latin and French loans, based on stylistic considerations, can be found on pp. 72-74, as well as on p. 82.

Some of the section headings appear to be slightly misleading in that what they suggest is not necessarily to be found in the respective sub-chapters. Section 3.4. entitled "The dialects of Middle English", focuses on the notion of *standard*, the stages of standardisation of a usage, the shift from the national to local function that English underwent as a result of the Norman invasion, and the importance of LALME for Middle English dialectology. In other words, the section deals with everything but the expected account of Middle English diatopic variation.

Minor "spelling" mistakes, such as the word "from" instead of "form" in paragraph two on p. 34 or "anaysis" instead of "analysis" in paragraph one on p. 43, the use of the Middle English letter "yogh" instead of the OE grapheme for /j/ in the word *forzief* on p. 8 or the velar allophone of /x/ for [ç] in the transcription of Middle English *knyght*, the wrong year in the reference to Fisiak's *A short grammar of Middle English* (1964 instead of 1968), or the lack of diacritic indicating vowel length in the transcription of PDE *sweet* on p. 12, can be noticed in the body of the book, their presence, however, by no means blurs the clarity of the presentation.

Last but not least, on p. 49 there is a paragraph on the origins of Middle English diphthongs, in which, rather surprisingly, the authors pass over two sources of Middle English complex vowels, i.e. the so-called glide-development and the shift of the syllable boundary, of which the results are, e.g., [owx] < [ox] as in *foughten* or /ow/ < /o:/ + /w/ as in *rowen* (see Fisiak 1968: 49-55). Similarly, two factors preventing the operation of the so-called Homorganic Cluster Lengthening, namely: lack of/weak stress and the polysyllabic structure of a word (see, e.g., Mossé 1952 [1991]: 16; Fisiak 1968: 28; Welna 1978: 35), are missing from the discussion of the process on p. 58.

To conclude, *An introduction to Middle English* by Simon Horobin and Jeremy Smith will definitely satisfy the needs of undergraduate students interested in mediaeval English historical linguistics. The book offers the essentials of Middle English phonology, morphology, and lexicon so as to provide the readers with a basis for further study of the issues briefly discussed in the body. Appended with a collection of annotated texts, notes, and glossaries, it constitutes a valuable addition to those few good HEL textbooks already on the market.

#### REFERENCES

- Blake, Norman (ed.)  
1992 *The Cambridge history of the English language. Vol. II: 1066-1476*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fisiak, Jacek  
1968 *A short grammar of Middle English*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Horobin, Simon – Jeremy Smith  
2002 *An introduction to Middle English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Mossé, Fernand

1952 *A handbook of Middle English*. Baltimore, Maryland – London: The Johns Hopkins Press.

[1991] [Reprinted].

Welna, Jerzy

1978 *A diachronic grammar of English. Part one: Phonology*. Warszawa. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

*Time for words*. Edited by Janusz Arabski. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Press, 2002. Pp. 275.

Reviewed by Konrad Szcześniak, Uniwersytet Śląski, Sosnowiec

As recently as a few decades ago there reigned the nonchalant notion that vocabulary was nothing but a disorderly welter of odds and ends. As the editor of the volume *Time for words*, Janusz Arabski observes, this view has changed dramatically and now the question is approached with the new-found conviction that "the lexicon is more highly structured than was thought before" (p. 7). Indeed, the structured lexicon has recently become a revered subject explored seriously from all conceivable angles. This resulted in an evolution which caused lexical studies to diverge into disparate approaches focusing on aspects as varied as lexical memory retention, psycho-analysis-style lexical associations, or the poetic side of word meanings – metaphor. The wealth of approaches and their original nature contribute to our understanding of how the lexicon works and how its potential can be tapped in foreign language teaching. It is in this spirit that the authors present the subject in the volume. Perhaps the only downside of this wealth is that the various topics discussed in *Time for words* are too many (the volume has 275 pages and 25 articles subsumed under three parts) to be comprehensively summarized in a review. Instead, I have selected the most symbolic examples of the current trends in lexical studies.

The volume opens with the article "Binomials, memes and the evolution of culture", by Hans W. Dechert, where he provides a new perspective on the question of form of expressions. Why do people say *whiskey and soda*, and not *soda and whiskey*? There is plenty of research on such questions and practically as many explanations as researchers. Among the most common explanations so far are the (unfortunately facile) suggestions of conventional agreement ("what people often repeat gains currency"), or (even more inane) de-gustibus-non-est-disputandum assertions of subjectivity ("what people like takes root"). There are more ambitious approaches, too. Steven Pinker (1995) points out that "the vowels for which the tongue is high and in the front come before the vowels for which the tongue is low and in the back" – hence we say *whiskey* first, and *soda* second.

In this cacophony of approaches, is there room for more theorizing? There certainly is room for intriguing thoughts. Dechert weaves a number of grand theories presenting an unusual way of thinking whose great advantage is that it handles the present problem whereas most previous theorizing does not. First of all, Dechert's proposal does not make one erroneous assumption (which the previous theories can be accused of): that the human mind is a stoically disciplined and predictable machine which will approach a linguistic problem according to one unchanging rule. Dechert is aware of the mind's capriciousness and proposes a theory that allows multiple forces at play, even contradicting ones, which results in more tolerance than the traditional approaches anticipate. He shows that it should not be a problem when some people say *night and day*, whereas

others prefer *day and night*. Just how this is possible Dechert explains by pulling together anthropological evidence, philosophy of science, and the evolutionist Richard Dawkins's idea of the "meme" to cast new light on the old problem. This original approach comes as a genuine surprise in the midst of research activity traditionally performed in an unforgiving single fashion. Dechert's article is a reminder that any theorizing about this and similar questions is most fruitful when it is pluralistic and when it views the human mind as a compound of various (often conflicting) mechanisms. It does not dismiss the previous attempts to solve the problem. What it does is to demonstrate that one explanation does not necessarily exclude another, even if they turn out to be strange bed fellows.

#### *Mental lexicons in multilinguals*

The entire collection of articles talks about vocabulary in foreign language processing, but the question of the mental lexicon proper is discussed most thoroughly in Janusz Arabski's article "Learning strategies of L1, L2 and L3 lexis". Arabski approaches the lexicon not as a sum of words of a language, but as a mental store responsible for managing words. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that the lexicon is a highly complex mechanism. Its structure is probably so baroque that if it were to change only slightly, its functioning too would not be as we know it. For example, one remarkable fact about the lexicon is the unusually fast retrieval time needed to access words – something speakers owe to how the lexicon is organized. What about its structure in the second language? Is it the same as in the first? Which leads to yet another question: Does foreign vocabulary learning differ from that in the mother tongue?

Some interesting data on such questions comes from the empirical study conducted by Arabski. His work has the advantage of circumventing a common problem of this kind of study. Usually, the lexicons are compared in terms of one detail at a time. The L2 lexicon can be shown to perform very well in terms of retrieval time, but this leaves out the question of how lexical meaning is represented. Data on these separate questions must be collected separately in different tests, often with contradictory results. In Arabski's study these questions are integrated in an ingenious study, where the subjects were asked to memorize words in three languages (their native Polish, and English and German) and then to report the strategies they used to remember these words. An astonishing finding was that "the entire language experience is activated as a whole" (p. 211) in the memorization. When faced with the word *equine*, the subjects think (somewhat dadaistically) of *egg wine*, words they use to create a mnemonic association. It is important to stress that such mnemonic associations are based on words coming not only from their first language (Polish), but also from English, German, Silesian (Polish dialect), Latin, French, and even from Portuguese. What this means for the study of the lexicon is that, since words from many languages are called up for a given association with equal frequency as those from a person's mother tongue, the retrieval times must be comparable for all these languages. Secondly, since the meanings of these words are equally available for the mnemonic associations across all these languages, it could mean that the lexical representations in L2 or L3 do not differ dramatically from L1.

Of course, the exact structure of these lexicons as well as their mutual relationship remain an unknown quantity and require more research, preferably corroborated by scans of the neuronal aspect of the lexicons. But progress is under way already thanks to studies like the one above and the surprising clues they provide.

#### *Metaphors*

Foreign language learning, and vocabulary learning in particular is fraught with familiar difficulties – affective filter, insufficient input, poor fast-mapping, to name just a few. These limit the amount of vocabulary that students absorb, a problem further exacerbated by the students' diffidence in using vocabulary in new contexts. This problem is brought up in Danuta Gabryś's article

"A universal or unique and amorphous feeling of anger". Although not really angry, Gabryś shows that the predicament is fairly serious, as even very proficient students are unnecessarily leery of perfectly correct English expressions especially when they are similar to their Polish equivalents. It is hardly a welcome status quo in foreign language business – in practice what it means is that, due to their diffidence, students get deprived of expressive power and most of their competence does not go beyond prior exposure, which leaves very little room for creativity.

Gabryś does not merely identify a problem, for this would hardly be news. An important point of her article is the solution she proposes to overcome the difficulty. She claims that a lot can be achieved by raising the student's awareness of the metaphorical nature of expressions both in their mother tongue and in the target language. She refers to the Theory of Metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson which has recently become extremely popular among linguists and psychologists, but which unfortunately has had little impact on language teaching. Gabryś sets forth to demonstrate the practical strengths of the Theory of Metaphor, arguing that if students were aware of the possibilities that metaphor offers, they would make better use of the English vocabulary. This sounds like a useful idea, considering the present disproportion of problems in the language classroom and the relevant working solutions. Gabryś's solution is promising in its robustness. There are reasons to believe that it could cut a huge swath of problems across the learner's lexicon at one fell swoop: It could stop students from relying so heavily on vocabulary uses witnessed in their experience; students familiar with Metaphor could recognize it in great quantities of new vocabulary which would thus become more salient and easier to remember; and finally Metaphor could also serve as a relatively risk-free method of inventing expressions by students themselves.

#### *Really interactive programs*

People are used to reports about computers beating chess champions. So why are there no computers beating language teachers? To be sure, the boon offered to language learners by computers is certainly no hype. In many respects, computers do hold some advantage over even the most dedicated teachers, if only in terms of superhuman patience. Moreover, thanks to the increasingly mind-boggling capacity offered by the hardware, computer-assisted learning is definitely an exciting prospect. Unfortunately, the progress in hardware is not matched by similar developments in software – language learning programs have shortcomings not addressed by their updates. The problem is that they are improved merely in quantity (more graphics and audio) but not in quality. For example, learners still cannot experiment and if they type in a novel sentence which the program does not recognize, too bad.

It is therefore an honor for the present volume to be graced by Brian Farrington's article describing the new software he has devised. Without any risk of sounding effusive, I feel confident to predict that Farrington's work will pioneer a new line of computer software – different from its precursors not in the number of audio-visual gimmicks, but because it represents a leap in quality. According to Farrington, the computer can check practically any sentence produced by the learner, and even finish incomplete sentences for him/her. One way to allow the learner to produce his/her own sentences (rather than rely on the program's examples to memorize and regurgitate on cue) is to build a rich database containing all the anticipated sentences a user might come up with. Of course, we are talking about a combinatorial grammar system here, so the number of possible correct sentences will exceed the number of bytes of the computer memory. This is one reason why no one before has ventured to "amass" as many sentences as possible in the computer memory.

Still, Farrington's idea seems perfectly feasible. After all, we are not interested in *all* the sentences that might strike the learner's fancy. The number of sentences is limited by the topic and vocabulary provided in exercises. For example, in exercises for salutation in business letters, the learner will no doubt stick to commonly predictable sentences whose number could not be multiplied too seriously even by Chomsky.



The ideas presented by Farrington are so exciting and thought-provoking that one feels tempted to recount them all here, which would be supererogatory. They are all to be found elegantly compressed in a short deliciously readable and funny article in the volume.

#### *Objective indicators of competence*

To stay with computers and computer-aided language learning for a moment, let us look at an article discussing students' essays. Romantic views of written composition as a kind of inexplicable art aside, students' essays can be evaluated with precision based on a number of reliable indicators of competence. To take a banal example, mistakes are one indicator – an essay riddled with mistakes is visibly less effective than a clean passage. But research on students' writing competence needs to go beyond banalities.

Andrzej Lyda does just that in his article "Disjuncts and conjuncts in discourse management". He suggests one useful indicator by showing that the long-term improvement of language skills is naturally accompanied by the increased use of link words like *of course, however, on the other hand*, etc. The use of such words more than doubled in the written production (some words were used a few times more often than at the beginning), according to Lyda's longitudinal study of a group of Polish college students, which started in their first year, and ended two years later.

Lyda shows that an increased use of these words is a reliable signal of language development. Because they serve to link pieces of information into larger logical structures, to contrast facts, or give examples, etc., their use by a student shows that his/her language competence allows him/her to handle complex ideas. This is also confirmed by the length of sentences (which doubled over the two years of the study). These discoveries are intuitively correct. By confirming their validity, Lyda has pointed out a conveniently straightforward indicator of students' writing competence.

To appreciate its value, it is helpful to look at ways in which such data routinely finds its practical application. Here is another contribution to computer-aided language learning. At present, new software is being developed that serves to evaluate students' written compositions (the most sophisticated is the E-rater produced by ETS's team led by Jill Burstein and Karen Kukich). Unable as computers are to truly comprehend essays, they are still nevertheless very good at high-precision assessment of the written text. To grade an essay, computers use indicators like how many relevant words are used in it. The problem with relevant vocabulary is that it is topic-specific, so for each topic, a new batch of such word indicators has to be fed into the computers. Disjuncts and conjuncts are definitely a universal indicator of an essay's quality, independent of its topic. I am not aware whether E-rater uses disjuncts and conjuncts, but they certainly would be a strong ingredient.

It is interesting that research like Lyda's often mines the first two years of university studies for data on language development. As Maria Wysocka noted in her article "On the learning and use of foreign vocabulary in advanced learners of English", "the third year is that period during the five year cycle when students achieve the best results in language learning" (p. 202).

Maria Wysocka takes this fact as a premise of her study aiming to collect specific data on which words during this period of time are best consolidated, and which remain elusive to the learner. Because answering such questions requires more than just a single study conducted at one sitting, Wysocka proposes a global effort by many practical English university teachers. She then goes on to propose a set of rules that should be observed in the course of the study. They include specific procedures for discovering the most effective techniques of introducing and practicing new vocabulary.

This is a promising plan. Although methodology already makes practical use of working ideas about such questions, there are still a lot of unknowns that the present study can cast light on. At present, the best metaphor for the functioning of the student's vocabulary is still Jean Aitchison's idea that it is like looking at a subway network from the outside – trains come and go, that we

know for sure, but where they originate and what routes they take has to be discovered by a lot of ingenious guesswork. In the case of a learner of foreign vocabulary, the subway enigma is complicated by an extra twist – the fact that the subway is under construction and interested in constant purchase of new trains. If Wysocka's research can provide clues about at least one sure route, that would be progress. A massive study coordinated by a single clear procedure warrants optimism.

Wysocka's idea is perhaps the most symbolic of the entire volume. The nether regions of the mind, its lexical subway can best be probed in a cumulative effort, preferably by specialists interested in different aspects, willing to come together and compare their findings the way they do in *Time for words*.

#### REFERENCES

- Aitchison, Jean  
1989 *Words in the mind. An introduction to the mental lexicon*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Arabski, Janusz (ed.)  
2002 *Time for words. Studies in foreign language vocabulary acquisition*. Peter Lang: Frankfurt.
- Pinker, Stephen  
1995 *The language instinct: How the mind creates language*. New York: Harper.

#### ELECTRONIC SOURCES

- Burstein, Jill – Karen Kukich  
1998 "Automated scoring using a hybrid feature identification technique", at:  
<http://www.ets.org/research/dload/ac198.pdf>