

Workshop by

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From West Germanic to World Englishes: internal and external change in the history of English

The interaction of internal and external factors in language change has attracted increasing attention in recent decades, from traditional historical linguists as well as sociolinguists and specialists in language and dialect contact. The rich vernacular attestation of English over a nearly unbroken period of 1300 years provides ample material for examining the effects of contact on linguistic change. Although there is no question of the role of language contact in medieval English (with Norse and French), scholars continue to debate the importance of contact in other periods of the language, from the prehistory of Old English to the creation of colonial varieties of English around the world today.

This workshop will familiarize participants with ongoing trends in the historical and contact linguistics of English, and introduce them to some of the most active areas of research. We will examine four problems, two from Old English and two from the modern language:

- (1) dialect mixture and Celtic substratal influence in Old English;
- (2) Norse influence in northern England after the Viking invasions;
- (3) internal and external change in contemporary urban dialects of English in the UK and North America; and
- (4) input from non-English languages in the evolution of colonial Englishes, e.g. American or Australian English.

In addition, participants are encouraged to bring their own questions on topics related to language contact and change (not only in English!), and discuss their views and results with others.