

AAUTE Conference 2011

“Transfer in English Studies”

Session 1 (Chair: Sabine Coelsch-Foisner)

NIKOLAUS RITT (Vienna):

Transferring Mathematics to English Linguistics: Prospects and Problems

In recent years it has once more become fashionable to think of languages as evolutionary systems that are in many respects analogous to biological ones (cf. e.g. Blevins, 2004, Croft 2001, Hurford 2006, or Ritt 2004). Like in the 19th century, the question whether this is justified or not, is hotly debated. Often, the debate hinges on rather general epistemological and/or ideological issues. It is argued, for example, that biological metaphors are bound to break down when applied to the domain of culture, or that evolution cannot explain the behaviour of essentially free-willed agents. – This paper will focus on much more practical aspects of the problem, and report on some of the challenges one faces when one attempts to apply some of the mathematical modelling methods that have proved highly useful in evolutionary biology to the study of language change (cf. e.g. Maynard Smith 1982). In particular it will describe an attempt to model the evolution of English stress placement after the Norman Conquest in terms of game theory. It will show that it is extremely difficult to cast the multifaceted and multidimensional realities of natural languages in terms of rigorous, yet highly abstract mathematical algorithms, but that it might nevertheless be the best way for finding out whether the theories and explanations that we normally develop only in informal verbal terms, actually work as we believe they do.

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NIKOLA DOBRIC (Klagenfurt):

Transferring Context to Substance – Sense Disambiguation Using ID-Tags

Despite massive efforts invested by the linguistic community, one persistent issue in lexicography, natural language processing, and linguistics in general is still sense identification when dealing with polysemous words. Such words, or more accurately their respective senses, are influenced, among other factors, by their immediate morpho-syntactic and semantic context. Context causes great difficulties in identifying and listing meanings as used in a particular communicative situation. In an effort to offer a solution to many problems and dictionary insufficiencies in dealing with the problems of polysemy, the goal of this paper is to explore and present a possible method for solving problems of sense identification by combining lexicography and computer linguistics. The first part of the paper introduces ID tags which are sets of semantic and morpho-syntactic patterns surrounding a given sense, and their role in the proposed methodology. The second part

presents and discusses the ongoing corpus analysis (which is a part of a larger project) of one polysemous lexeme in English, namely *look*, being analyzed as a verb, noun and multi-word unit and the application of the described methodology.

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ANDREAS MAHLER (Graz):

Transfer between Media. 'Intermedialities' and the Cognitive Matrix

Man/woman is the media-based animal. This media-centredness seems to compensate for what has been described as our 'eccentricity' (H. Plessner) or our tendency towards 'the open' (G. Agamben). If media situate us in what we consider to be 'the world', i.e. in our 'semiosphere' (Yu. M. Lotman), we seem, as human beings, to depend on a continuous inter- and intramedial transfer in order to negotiate, and stabilize, our human condition. The contribution proposes to concentrate precisely on this anthropological need for a continuous process of incessant change so as to help maintain our contractual collective illusion of the actual 'realizedness' of a seemingly never-changing world.

Session 2 (Chair: Margarete Rubik)

MARKUS OPPOLZER (Salzburg):

Teaching *Frankenstein* through Comics: A Critical Look at Classics Illustrated

In 1941 Russian-born Albert Kanter (1897–1973) launched a series of comic books in the United States, entitled *Classic Comics* (renamed *Classics Illustrated* in 1947), that should introduce young readers to the canon of English literature. This was during the Golden Age of Comic Books (the late 1930s until the late 1940s) when the medium had an enormous impact on popular American culture. Kanter's series sold extremely well (over 200 million copies) and ran for 30 years, producing a total of 169 issues.

It should come as no surprise that the concept has found a number of imitators. The most recent and influential one is *Classical Comics's* (www.classicalcomics.com) new line of

adaptations. It is explicitly targeted at UK schools and features various text versions (original text, plain text – a translation into modern English, and easy text) which are complemented by a Teacher Resource Pack.

Using various comics adaptations of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) – starting with Ruth A. Roche's issue 26 of *Classic Comics* (December 1945) – this paper sets out to analyse these teaching materials not only in terms of a medial transfer, but much more so as functional texts targeted at teenage learners. I am particularly interested in three questions:

- 1) Why are comics considered to be a suitable medium to teach literature?
- 2) Which aspects of the original novel are highlighted, strongly reduced, or gone altogether?
- 3) Does the art work go beyond mere book illustrations?

ANDREA OBERNDORFER (Salzburg):

***Sight and Song* – Ekphrasis between Transfer and Interpretation**

In the preface to their 1892 collection of picture poems, *Sight and Song*, the lesbian author couple Michael Field aim “[...] as far as may be, to translate into verse what the lines and colours of certain chosen pictures sing in themselves; to express not so much what these pictures are to the poet, but rather what poetry they objectively incarnate.” The endeavour to render in words what is seen in paint relies on the concept of transfer. This paper will demonstrate how the authors transfer painterly techniques (e.g. the use of form, colour and texture) to poetry and apply verbal techniques (e.g. envoicing, addressing, describing and narrating) to visual representations. This process of transfer is complicated by the dissimilarity of the purportedly static medium of painting and the purportedly dynamic medium of poetry, so that the paper is also concerned with what qualities of the paintings are lost and what is gained through a verbal rendering and interpretation.

Similarly, the themes and subjects of the paintings do not remain unaffected by the shift of medium. This paper explores how the British fin-de-siècle authors transfer and interpret thematic notions of space, temporality, beauty and creation encoded in the paintings which mostly date back to the Italian Renaissance. On the levels of theme and perspective gender ideologies interfere with the transfer process. *Sight and Song* invites an investigation of gender conceptions in the paintings and poems as well as a discussion of gendered viewing and interpretative strategies – an area in which transfer seems to be neither possible nor desirable because it may obstruct individual responses to art.

The interest of this paper, then, resides as much in the question where and how transfer is technically and thematically possible as on where and why it is not possible – or not desirable.

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EWALD MENGEL, LUDWIG SCHNAUDER, RUDOLF WEISS (Vienna):

Appropriating Alterity: The Reception of Anglophone Plays on Viennese Stages of the Twentieth Century

Nowadays new insight is created by transgressing boundaries, by interdisciplinary research, by the combined efforts of specialists who pool their expertise in order to extend the scope

of their vision. The foundation of such an enterprise is no longer a single and monolithic idea but a patchwork of theories that have to be ‘quilted’ to serve the purpose of investigation. This ‘quilting’ is not a deficiency but a strength of projects of this kind.

The “Weltbühne Wien” project employs the concept of ‘cultural transfer’ as an umbrella theory in order to investigate the complex processes of the transfer of Anglophone plays onto Viennese stages in the 20th century. Under this umbrella various disciplines are assembled: English and Austrian literature, cultural studies, cultural anthropology, xenology, sociology of literature, history, reception theory, translation studies, theatre studies, and comparative literature.

After a theoretical introduction, we will give a brief account of the major findings of the “Weltbühne Wien” project and illustrate our approach with the help of two case studies. The first one analyses the role of national heterostereotypes in the reception of selected English comedies in the first half of the twentieth century. The recourse to stereotyping may be regarded as a defence mechanism, as a variety of cultural blockage. Transferring the comic is probably one of the most difficult of cultural processes as it is intensely culture-specific. Instead of attempting to comprehend unfamiliar features of English comedies Austrian critics frequently fall back on stereotypes to represent, and denounce, the Other. A typical example is Felix Salten’s review of Noel Coward’s *Hay Fever* (*Spleen*), in which he explains the unorthodox comedic components as mental aberrations of the English.

The second case study looks at the wider significance of the appropriation and transformation of Shakespeare as the so-called ‘third German classic’ on the stage of Austria’s national theatre. Just as the Burgtheater lays claim to represent Austrian culture and to contribute to the constitution of national identity, the performances on its stage and their reception can be regarded as reflections of political, historical and ideological developments. A particularly pertinent example of such an analysis is the metamorphosis of Shylock in productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, whose on-stage fate is indissolubly linked to the off-stage fortunes of the Jewish people.

Session 3 (Chair: Gerlinde Mautner)

INGRID PFANDL-BUCHEGGER (Graz):

Re-Conditioning the Ear – Condensed Listening as a Means to Accelerating Foreign Language Learning

Recent neurological findings support the thesis that listening is of great importance in foreign language acquisition. Not only is the auditory system the first sensual system to be developed in the foetus, but it remains, for one’s entire life, one of the vital perception mechanisms assuring correct acoustic analysis and additionally controlling spatio-temporal awareness. Because of the predominance, in our time and age, of the visual sense, its importance is, however, often neglected.

In an era of communicative approaches to FLT, the project FauvoT(= FSU mit audio-vokalem Training) wants to shift the focus back on to the central role of auditory perception. FauvoT is an inter-departmental project in the field of foreign language teaching at the University of Graz, Austria. Its aim is to evaluate the efficiency of an innovative approach to language teaching that focuses on the influence of concentrated listening using electronically modified audio-materials as a means to accelerating language learning.

As has been shown by experiments in the field of developmental cognitive neuroscience, the auditory system is subject to a selectivity process which starts at a very early age. Children develop strategies for selective hearing, a preference for the sounds of their native language, within the first year, thus gradually acquiring certain listening habits. This progressively leads to a selective deafness to auditory input that is outside of the range of the sound system they grow up with. As a consequence, adult learners in particular tend to be restricted by the dominant sound patterns of their mother tongues. Such patterns act as acoustic filters which impair the correct auditory perception of a foreign language, thus impeding and slowing down the learning process.

In this paper results from students' use of pre-filtered language material (as a means to retrain the perceptual capacity of the learners) within the framework of English pronunciation classes will be presented and discussed.

LOTTE SOMMERER (Vienna):

Analogical Transfer in Old English Syntax: Article Emergence Caused by Formal Pattern Recognition and Transfer

The development of the definite article in English has been interpreted as a phenomenon caused by grammaticalization (cf. Traugott 1982; Lehmann 1982[95]; Himmelmann 1997) or reanalysis (cf. Lyons 1999; Osawa 2007; Philippi 1997; Roberts & Roussou 2003), with a heated debate about those two notions being either epiphenomenal descriptive terms or 'real' causal mechanisms. In this paper it will be suggested that the process of grammaticalization/reanalysis should be broken down "into more fundamental mechanisms of language change, including (among others) analogy" (de Smet 2009: 1730).

Using evidence from an extensive qualitative and quantitative corpus study¹ it will be suggested that the demonstrative *se(-seo-pat)* grammaticalized due to the emergence of a positional, syntactic, lexically underspecified 'determination slot' in early Old English. This slot becomes functional itself which leads to the recruitment of the demonstrative as a default slot filler (= definite article). In other words, the development of the definite article was driven by the grammaticalization of a "lexically underspecified construction" (van de Velde 2010: 291; Trousdale & Traugott 2010: 12).

The emergence of this construction is best explained by a non-nativist, usage-based, form-driven, analogical model of morphosyntactic change which takes into account the frequency of linguistic surface forms (i.e. concrete tokens) (cf. Fischer 2007: 4; Bybee 2003; Krug 2003; Tomasello 2003; De Smet 2008; 2009; Sommerer forth.) and the formal influence of taxonomically related constructions (Croft & Cruise 2004; Hopper 1988; Goldberg 2006; Tomasello 2006; Trousdale & Gisborne 2008).

Formal pattern recognition and the analogical transfer of formal patterns from one domain to another seems to be responsible for the emergence of the category. Thus, it will be argued that the process is triggered by complex analogy and frequency effects on several linguistic levels.

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¹ Using CORPUS SEARCH, noun phrase (prehead) patterns in several Old English prose texts from the 0.2/ 0.3 period were investigated in the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (YCOE).

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ERICA AUTELLI (Innsbruck):

The Role of Interdisciplinarity / Transfer in View of English and Italian Interjections

Interjections are very close to a very basic kind of language. Primary interjections, in particular, are those which consist of natural sounds. Italian tends to be a language with open syllables. This raises the question: How do English and Italian interjections differ from a phonotactic point of view? How many of them do exist, and are they monosyllabic or polysyllabic, do they have open syllables, any dental clicks, and which is the letter that comes first in the process of uttering an interjection? As we will see, also secondary

interjections differ in both languages, and not only! A few examples of dialectal interjections will be given. All in all, this demands a particular effort in teaching and learning interjections. This leads us to the next question: How should interjections of a second language (in this case respectively English and Italian) be taught in class in the view of language transfer? Both first language and other languages may have a strong impact on learning. A few possible teaching methods will be provided.

Session 4 (Chair: Herbert Schendl)

ELIF EBRU SIMSEK (Salzburg):

Literature in English, a Nomadic Journey from the Margins to the Centre

It is an unquestionable fact that the English language is the lingua franca through the process of globalization. Some perceive English as a panacea for the contemporary developing world affairs, but for many others it has been a new tool for cultural imperialism regarding its colonial past. Literally the initial spread of the English language had the mission of civilizing the colonies. However, with the widespread institutionalization of English through colonialism or globalization, English has gained an ambiguous status concerning its ethnicity and nationality. Therefore, some have insisted on Standard English and many others have asserted English to be a distinctive property of England. My focus will be on how the institutionalization of English has yielded a transfer in English literature in terms of its previous nationalistic priorities. We will see how Benedict Anderson's concept "print-capitalism", which calls for a national consciousness, is reversed with the current status of English literature. Moreover, as Ismail Talib argues we better no more call it English literature but rather literature in English, as he denotes that the former refers to literature written by English writers.

I want to argue that writing in English offers one to become a nomad, a term Elif Shafak has put forward. To be a nomad is to escape the hegemonic structure of authenticity, and so for many writers nowadays English has become an agent to become the so called nomad. Salman Rushdie identifies this very clearly in *Imaginary Homelands*, "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy". Besides a postcolonial perspective there is a special need to focus on the transfer in gender studies. Writing in English has provided the indigenous voices to be heard, feminists like Chandra Mohanty have unveiled the hegemonic discourse within feminist theory. Thus, within the contemporary world to say that the institutionalization of English is linguistic imperialism is very much essentialism. In today's world, literature in English has become an agent for postcolonial and feminist writers, a fertile land for the nomads to write from the margins to the centre.

MANFRED MARKUS (Innsbruck):

The Value of Corpus Linguistics for Literary Studies: Hyperbole and Emphasis in Shakespeare's Nominal Addresses

While English corpus linguistics has developed to one of the most successful branches of linguistics, both synchronic and diachronic, literary studies still seem to shy away from the application of the computer as a tool of analysis. This is probably due to the general focus

of literary research on individual works, authors and genres, whereas linguistics is more interested in systematic language functioning to be abstracted from concrete literary data. In stylistics/text linguistics, however, the two philological branches may easily meet on a common ground.

My paper traces the various forms of emphasis and hyperbole as a means of style in Shakespeare's plays. This aspect of Shakespeare's style has hardly been dealt with by researchers, but a concordance-based analysis shows it to be among the features that provide Shakespeare's language with its typical vigour and liveliness. Given the width of Shakespeare's dramatic oeuvre, the topic will be limited to nominal addresses of the type "most dearest lady". Applied to these, the exuberance of emphasis and hyperbole is part of the diplomacy of reciprocal status classification in dialogue around 1600. Tracing the awareness among Renaissance individuals of their social status and relationships, the paper also includes cultural history in its method.

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Session 5 (Chair: Holger Klein)

DAVID MALCOLM (Gdańsk):

Foreign Transfers? or, What Happened to the British Short Story in the *Fin-de-Siècle*?

This paper addresses three central issues in the history of the short story in Britain. These are: 1. the widely-observed delay in the development of the short story in nineteenth-century Britain; 2. the explosion of short story writing and publishing in the three decades after 1880; and 3. the role of non-British models and writers in those years, of which H.G. Wells remarked that "short stories broke out everywhere," and in which short fiction became, according to Henry James, "an object of almost extravagant dissertation." Particular attention is paid to the influence of Poe's and Hawthorne's fiction on that of Stevenson and Conan Doyle. The role of Henry James as a mediator between U.S. and British short fiction is discussed. The paper also considers Crackanthorpe's echoes in his short fiction of Maupassant's work. Foreign transfers will be seen to play a substantial part in the expansion of short fiction writing in the *fin-de-siècle* in Britain.