

## English Language and Linguistics Research Seminar

Autumn Semester 2016

All seminars will be held in Wells Street 310 at 17:00.

Wednesday 5 October 2016

Andrew Linn, University of Westminster

*Parallelingualism: What can Nordic language policy learn from its past?*

Wednesday 19 October 2016

Sylvia Shaw, University of Westminster

*Women leaders, linguistic style and the 'different voice' ideology in the 2015 UK General Election televised debates*

In the UK General Election of 2015 three female politicians: the Green Party Leader, Natalie Bennett, the Scottish National Party leader, Nicola Sturgeon, and the Plaid Cymru leader, Leanne Wood featured more prominently in the campaign than any group of women has featured in previous UK General Elections. This paper presents data from larger study (Cameron and Shaw 2016) that undertook a linguistic analysis of the leaders' high-profile performances in two televised election debates to assess the extent to which they speak in the 'different voice' of consensus and cooperation that has been claimed to be typical of women in politics. Using the televised leaders' debates as case studies a range of discourse analytic techniques are employed to identify strategies the speakers use to successfully capture the debate floor and oppose each other. We find that, contrary to popular, political and media representations of women as having a more consensual style than men, the women leaders in these dispute genre events frequently performed politics using sophisticated oppositional and adversarial strategies. Our findings also indicate that party status rather than gender determined the leaders' occupation of the debate floor and that this, together with a high degree of variability in communicative styles between men and between women indicates that the leaders' performances represent a more complex and individual pattern of participation than the women's 'different voice' ideology would suggest.

Wednesday 2 November 2016

Brittany Schorn, University of Cambridge

*Buried treasure: Old Norse loanwords in the works of the Gawain Poet*

The linguistic contexts of Viking-Age England in which speakers of Old English and the early Scandinavian languages encountered one another, and the mechanisms by which material was transferred between them, have been the subject of important research (see esp. Townend 2002). There remains, however, a great deal of detailed analysis to be undertaken on the transferred material itself, especially the very rich and diverse Old Norse influence on the medieval English lexicon. The lexical data is very challenging, not least etymologically: given the genetic proximity of the languages in contact, it can be extremely difficult to identify which English words really do show input from Old Norse. In recent years there has been intensive etymological and contextual work on the Norse-derived vocabulary of some texts and traditions, especially before c. 1300 (see esp. Pons-Sanz 2007, 2013; Dance 2003, 2011). Nevertheless, the Scandinavian influence on the vocabulary of the great later Middle English literary monuments has rarely seen sustained exploration, and texts composed in the north and east of England, where the influence from Old Norse is attested in its greatest range and complexity, have not been treated together in a major, etymologically analytical study since Björkman's survey of 1900–2.

In this paper, I shall describe the new methodological framework developed for the Gersum Project (a three-year project, begun in January 2016 and funded by the U.K.'s Arts and Humanities Research Council) which is undertaking a detailed study of the etymologies of c. 1600 words for which Old Norse input has been claimed. The case-studies I will present in this paper will be drawn from the works of the Gawain poet, from which our initial data (nearly 700 words) has been drawn. Using a range of examples, better-known and more obscure, I shall discuss the varied and complex types of evidence for Scandinavian input which they reveal, taking into account their phonology and morphology, their meanings, their wider dialect distribution, as well as their usage in their literary contexts.

Wednesday 16 November 2016

Helen Newsome, University of Sheffield

*A queenly voice: linguistic and political agency in the letters of Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scots*

In one of his few surviving holograph letters (composed before 1521) Henry VIII complained to Thomas Wolsey, then his chief advisor, that ‘wrytting to me is somewhat tedious and paynefull’. For the most part, Henry VIII used an amanuensis for both his personal and official correspondence, only taking time to write letters in his own hand to those that were closest to him (predominantly Anne Boleyn and Thomas Wolsey). In contrast, Henry’s older sister Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland, exhibited completely different epistolary practices, with almost half of her surviving letters being holograph compositions. As writing in the sixteenth-century was such a laborious, messy and time-consuming activity, and Margaret would have had continued access to professional scribes, why then did she devote so much time and energy to writing her own letters? In this paper I will begin to explore the value that royal holograph letters hold in Margaret Tudor’s correspondence and to consider whether choices in hand were affected by issues including privacy, intimacy, authenticity and perceived rhetorical influence.

Wednesday 30 November 2016

Marc Alexander, University of Glasgow

*‘...people are merely minions in the power game’: Metaphors of Power and Incivility*

The 1.6-billion-word record of the UK Hansard contains two centuries’ worth of Parliamentary discourse, rich in attitudes, contested meanings, and metaphors. This paper combines data from the linguistically-annotated Hansard Corpus 1803-2003 with the Historical Thesaurus of English, the Mapping Metaphor database, and corpora of earlier time periods to analyze the evolution of the concepts of POWER and the UNCIVIL.

Through this data, the paper demonstrates the major ways in which people have conceptualized their complex bonds of governance, control, and civilization. In particular, it undertakes two analyses: firstly, the semantic fields underpinning Hansard’s description of the uncivil are used to show the changing attitudes and preoccupations of British politics from the external to the internal; and secondly, by accounting for English’s metaphorical conceptualizations of power in seven major groups — strength, high position, movement, possession, sight, farming, and games — it suggests some challenges to traditional approaches to metaphor.