Shorter notices

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It all started with a practical onomastic exercise: pick the *right* Louvain to go to – and 116 ICAMErs did pick the right one and met at the conference centre in Louvain-la-Neuve. The excellent organisation by Sylviane Granger and her team and the Belgian hospitality provided by the centre's staff made this a very enjoyable conference, both academically and socially.

The theme of this conference was future challenges for corpus linguistics. Thus, it was appropriate that three keynote speeches reached out to other fields of linguistics, highlighting the relationship between them and corpus linguistics. Yorick Wilks introduced us to the possible uses of corpora in natural language processing, in particular with regard to word-sense disambiguation and the detection of novel word senses. Charles Fillmore revisited the question of armchair linguistics vs corpus linguistics, illustrating it with the role of corpora in his ongoing project of creating a frame-based lexicon (FrameNet). Chris Tribble talked about the potential and actual impact of corpus studies on teaching, pointing out both problems and achievements. The panel discussion on the nature and future development of corpus linguistics at the end of the conference brought these and other strands (including the future of ICAME as such) together in a fruitful exchange of ideas.

Forty-four papers, sixteen posters and seven software demonstrations, mostly organized in parallel sessions, made for a full academic programme. The section headings, ranging from 'redefining grammatical categories' via 'learner speech and writing' to 'diachronic corpora', amply illustrate the breadth of corpus studies nowadays. With twenty-two contributions in all, the question of language learning and teaching, including related constrastive approaches, played a prominent role this time. This comes as no surprise, our hosts being the founders of corpus-based learner varieties research, who also presented the web interface

under development for the ICLE Corpora. The learner varieties/native languages represented were Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish. The spoken dimension of learner language was taken into consideration by four papers, dealing with the English pronunciation of German and Italian learners (Atwell), the creation of a spoken corpus of Japanese English learners (Isahara/Saiga/Izumi), the use of past tense forms in Japanese-English interlanguage (Kaneko), and the integration of such spoken corpora within a CALL environment (Pérez-Paredes). Special aspects investigated in learner studies comprised phraseology (de Cock; Gvishiani & Gerwe), expressions with *give* and *take* (Kaszubski), phrasal verbs (Hägglund), prepositions (Schmied), modal and reporting verbs (Neff, Dafouz-Milne, Herrera, Martinez Oses, Rica, Diez Prados & Sancho Guinda), tense and aspect (Eriksson), conjunctions (Zagrebelsky), cleft sentences (Boström Aronsson), and cohesive relations (Blagoeva). General teaching concerns played a role in most of the above presentations, and one further paper concentrated on the teaching of translation in particular (Kübler). The contrastive or comparative studies presented focused on mandative constructions in French and English (Serpollet), verbs of possession in Swedish, English, German, French, and Finnish (Viberg), and the question of verbal *vs* nominal style in English, Swedish and Norwegian (Nordrum). An aspect of first-language acquisition, namely the development of literacy, also received attention (Sampson).

With regard to syntax, the question of the nature of grammatical rules was explicitly raised and set in relation to the contribution corpus linguistics can make to clarify the concept (D. Mindt). Rules as tendencies or probabilities were highlighted by papers dealing with the English aspect system (Lorenz) and with the interrogative determiners *which* and *what* (Aarts, Keizer, Spinillo & Wallis). Probabilities or frequencies of different realisations of syntactic constituents were investigated as well (I. Mindt). Linguistic categorization played a role in the presentations on prepositional verbs (Claridge), complex prepositions (Hoffmann), the syntactic characteristics of adjectives (Yamazaki), and *as* with a relativizer function (Tottie & Lehmann). The topics of causality (Allen), causative verbs (Gilquin) and the modal verb *may* (Facchinetti) emphasized the syntax-semantics interface. The modal verb system also served as a basis for an investigation of grammatical change in written English (Smith & Leech). The investigation of the interaction of syntax with prosody (Mukherjee) was one of the approaches to intonation presented, while another one linked it to the expression of attitudes (Wichmann).

Word formation was the focus of two of the papers on lexis, one on the semantics of the formative *eco-* (Kettemann), the other on 'lexical gaps' with

regard to deadjectival nouns (Kjellmer). The changing fate of one particular word, the potentially sexist item *girl*, was traced through various corpora from 1961 to 1991 (Sigley & Holmes). Expressions around the lexical item *time* emphasized the phraseologial aspect, the company words keep (Lenk). Lexis in use was the topic of a paper dealing with codeswitching and borrowing in Malaysian English (Abdul Rahim & Aini Haroon).

Text-linguistic studies were represented almost exclusively by the ZEN (*Zürich English Newspaper Corpus*) team, with papers on text classification (Sanders) and newspaper headlines (Studer & Schneider). The field was brought 'up to date' by a look at the structure and segmentation of on-line texts (Peters & Smith).

Diachronic studies centred on the verb this time: besides *shall* and *will* in Early Modern English (Gotti), and the modal verb *must* in EModE letters (Nurmi), the development of non-finite verb forms in the history of English was looked at (Kautzsch). Word order was the focus of a paper on verb-object order in Old English and Middle English (Pintzuk & Taylor).

Various contributions focused explicity on methodological considerations. The problems involved in something as simple-sounding as lexical frequency counts in German were highlighted, for example (Jones). The possibility of using the internet as a resource to obtain data for low-frequency syntactic features (Trotta & Johansson), on the one hand, or neologisms (Renouf), on the other hand, was also explored. The tagging and parsing of problematic data was addressed twice, represented by disfluencies in spoken language (Oostdijk) and by learner speech containing a potentially larger amount of errors (Meunier & de Mönnink). Biber's MF/MD method of dealing with register variation was put to the test and found not to be completely replicable (Brom, de Mönnink & Oostdijk). Going beyond simple methodology, the proposal for corpus-driven linguistics as a new discipline was discussed, one that would evolve new categories empirically instead of working with existing, pre-defined ones (Tognini Bonelli).

New(ish) resources in the form of corpora and (accompanying) software were also presented. In the diachronic line, there are the extensions to the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (Laitinen) and the *Zürich Newspaper Corpus* (Brownlees), progress on the *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing* (Taavitsainen, Pahta & Mäkinen), the planned German parallel to the *Rostock Newspaper Corpus* (Schneider) and the *York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English* (Taylor, Warner, Pintzuk & Beths). The *Colt Corpus* on CD-Rom represents present-day teenage English (Stenström; Hofland), while the Tractor website supplies a multilingual variety of corpora (Wynne). The software

demonstrations featured ICECUP 3.1 (Wallis), Paraconc (Barlow), Wmatrix (Rayson) and SPSS (Meyer).

The academic programme was nicely rounded off with a social programme, getting us acquainted with the culinary delights of Belgium (of which chocolates are of course an important part!), Brussels nightlife, and the scenic (despite the cold!) city of Bruges.