

# Introduction

**R. W. McConchie**  
University of Helsinki

The simplest things are best. It certainly seemed so as the HEL-LEX 3 conferees jumped as one at the chance to walk on water, or rather ice, on the Finnish Baltic coast on a gloriously sunny but brisk afternoon in March 2012. For most, this was a unique experience, and the ice proved firm. Everyone found it exhilarating, and it is always an adventure, even for those who are used to the idea. Just as the conference seemed to be, and indeed should be. The day-to-day language we all use is constituted of its multifarious words, with all their slipperiness and uncertainties, and lexicographers have been and are the recorders and compilers of those words, shouldering this massive task with ingenuity, patience, and persistence. This task and its products deserve our appreciation and understanding, and is of increasing interest to serious research.

The third international New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium was held at Tvärminne, a marine biology research station of the University of Helsinki, March 7-10, 2012. The papers covered a broad and fascinating range of subject and approach, as this volume will show. The history of English lexicography is indeed a broad vista. Mapping a little more of its inviting expanse was what the Symposium was about. The present selection represents sixteen of the thirty-three papers from the conference. The conference was privileged to have Professor Lynda Mugglestone from Pembroke College, Oxford, Dr. Philip Durkin, Chief Etymologist of the OED, and Associate Professor Michael Adams of the Indiana University, Bloomington, as plenary speakers.

The papers delivered tackled a broad range of subjects and questions, from Old English to Modern English. Several challenged long-held assumptions about lexicography and lexical items, while others suggested new approaches to generating and assessing statistical data, as well as the application of statistical methods new to the history of the lexicon, a matter of increasing significance in the history of lexicography, as in historical linguistics generally. New sources of corpus data for lexical research were assessed. A range of dictionaries was discussed, including some which have received virtually no scholarly notice before, and aspects of both lexical innovation and lexical survival were canvassed. Despite the spate of publications in recent years, the ground is still being pegged out, so that such research is of primary importance. Neologisms and loans of various kinds were discussed, as were various aspects of special lexicons and word-formation. Another issue brought up was the much-under-researched question of the layout of dictionary entries. A brief introduction to each of the papers is in order.

Michael Adams examines the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (DARE) and the challenges faced by its editors in assembling a dictionary of not one but a range of dialects. These challenges produced some unique and successful innovations in coping with “the evidential responsibilities of scale” which such a dictionary involved. The result has been a unique combination of historical lexicography and dialect geography, the main features of which Adams explains. The primary innovation, introduced by its first editor, Frederic G. Cassidy, was the survey questionnaire. Adams also provides some fascinating insights into the relationships between the Middle English Dictionary and the abortive Early Modern English Dictionary projects and the DARE, especially through those who were responsible for the early stages of research on these dictionaries.

Agnieszka Anuszka Bukowska tackles the problems raised by the sampling methods used in surveying historical dictionaries. She argues that this has not generally been done systematically or with attention to the implications of the methods employed, and adumbrates some fundamental principles which would assist researchers to analyse dictionaries. Using a survey of thirty papers covering a long stretch of years, she finds that single-stretch and multiple-stretch sampling techniques are most used,

but that systematic sampling based on statistical principles is rare, as are reasoned justifications for the methods employed.

Daniela Cesiri's paper, which has arisen from a project on the popularization of scientific discourse, deals with the question of botanical nomenclature in late modern English and Irish sources. Botany in the nineteenth century became an easily available and wholesome hobby in both Victorian England and Ireland, an interest which coincided with a greatly increased interest in gardening as the middle class began increasingly to occupy houses with garden plots. Professional and amateur botanists alike were involved in the field work of cataloguing and identifying species, a recreational activity that crossed gender and class borders. Cesiri undertakes a comparative investigation of similarities and differences in popular terminology in three Irish and two English mid-nineteenth-century texts and discusses the implications her findings might have on our understanding of the "communities" engaged in botanical discourse.

Stephen Coffey discusses the phenomenon of lexical fossils with the intention of providing a more in-depth survey of these than has been done so far, previous studies having tended to concentrate on individual items. Most fossils appear in a variety of phraseological units of one kind or another. Coffey is particularly concerned with these 'containers' and with the general question of what a lexical fossil is, which he shows to be quite complex.

Hans Jürgen Diller investigates the application of Google's Ngram Viewer to the occurrence of word pairs—in this case *wrath* and *anger*. The paper discusses the advantages and shortcomings of this appealing technique, and the corpora to which it is applied. The disadvantages of the Google corpora include lack of information about their composition, and those respects in which it remains somewhat crude and problematic as a research tool. The crucial and tricky question of genre is also discussed at length. Diller is able to refine previous views on the diachronic relation between these two fundamental emotion words, despite the restrictions of the research tools.

Giovanni Iamartino's paper is concerned with the *Dictionary of Love*, a somewhat cynical exercise in lexicography and social satire which appeared in 1753. It is also, as Iamartino says, "a vivid picture of the culture ... and the society it was compiled for". This work, being addressed primarily to young women, forms part of the tradition of conduct literature. Iamartino provides an extensive examination of the taxonomy of its entries. The purpose of the work is more to expose the manipulative and fraudulent aspects of the language of social intercourse, love, and sexuality, than it is to provide some kind of objective record of it; nevertheless, it has value in the latter function as well. As such it is a genuine extension of the tradition of English dictionary-making.

Mariusz Kamiński explores the development of the *Chambers* dictionary from its modest beginnings in 1867 through the various editions from the late nineteenth century and into the twenty-first century. Kamiński takes up the often-overlooked but important question of the graphic arrangement of the dictionary and the ease of access to entries, outlining the early problems with retrieval of information when etymological grouping disrupted alphabetical order, and all head-words appeared to be discrete and equivalent. Corrections of inconsistency and improvements in layout are traced through the various editions and the practices of the various editors, as well as the persistent conflicts between intentions for the dictionary.

Mark Kaunisto takes up the issue of how neologisms are signalled by contextual markers indicating their newness or their constituents, such as glosses, quotation marks, hyphenation, and so on. He particularly concerns himself with suffixes and their overt 'novelty markers' and the question of whether the markers can tell us anything about the suffixes themselves. Kaunisto's material is hapaxes formed by ten suffixes in the BNC which are marked by quotation marks, hyphens, hesitation markers and contextual cues. In general, the results showed considerable heterogeneity, a new finding, possibly as a consequence of varying levels of formality and complexity.

Rod McConchie looks at the way in which plagiarism as a concept seems to have got in the way of research in the history of dictionaries by imposing a metaphorical straight-jacket on the way processes of transmission between dictionaries are understood, a state of things he describes as 'plagiology'. He examines a couple of well-known instances of accusations of plagiarism, those concerning Johann Scapula and Edward Phillips, finding that they are neither as accurate or as well founded as is generally assumed.

Kusujiro Miyoshi has continued his long-standing interest in the earliest monolingual English dictionaries by challenging the view that Elisha Coles was the first English lexicographer to pay particular attention to word-formation. He traces the inter-relationships between the dictionaries of Cawdrey, Bullokar and Cockeram in terms of their treatment of this aspect of the lexicon, exploring the way in which they exploit an interest in word-formation, as well as the degree to which they rely on each other. Miyoshi also claims that Cawdrey was more influential in this respect than has previously been thought. He shows that these lexicographers not only built on each other, but also expanded their word-lists in new ways.

The metaphor of life and death, encapsulated in language describing the ‘life’ of words has caught the attention of Lynda Mugglestone, who begins her paper by pointing out the ubiquity of this metaphor. The metaphor was already in use before the OED project began in that Trench wanted the dictionary to provide a “biography of each word”, and it has continued to exert its influence ever since. But biographies both record a life and create another life within themselves, a fact which raises many questions. The appealing simplicity of the metaphor glosses over many lexicographical complexities, from evidential inadequacy to difficulties with identity itself. Not to mention the appearance of imposters in the form of ghost-words, and nonce-words, or ‘lexical still-births’, as Mugglestone calls them. Word-death is harder to track. Lexical ‘lives’ must also be negotiated through the various editorial processes and disagreements, a process which may also result in biases and compromises.

Laura Pinnavaia gives a preliminary report, as part of a larger project, of her lexical analysis of seventeenth-century English travelogues of Italy and the attitudes and cultural values this reveals. She examines the number, date and nature of a subset of these publications, some features of the genre, and deals with a number of the characteristic lexical items found in a representative sample of these texts. The texts exhibit a uniformity of style and frequency analysis in that they appear to share many lexical items. Hidden within this uniformity, however, is a range of subject matter and attitude. The rift between the attitudes underlying descriptions of cultural artifacts as against religious institutions and practices is also examined.

The *English Polish Dictionary* by Krystyn Lach-Szyrma (1828), originally issued along with a reader, is the subject of Mira Podhajecka’s paper. The original intention of the dictionary and reader was to provide teaching materials for the students of the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute. The dictionary has been considered an original work, compiled from the texts in the reader, and not adapted from the work of previous lexicographers. Podhajecka investigates the veracity of this claim, as well as surveying the author’s life and influence, and the circumstances of the publication of the dictionary. The correspondences between Lach’s dictionary and its sources, which prove to be multiple, are examined and compared in detail.

Alan Reddick’s article considers the relation between Dr. Johnson’s definitions and the attitudes to poetical language expressed in his critical works. Reddick focuses in particular on the use of the word *buxom* in relation to what Johnson has to say about the way Thomas Gray uses it. Johnson’s life of Gray was famously negative in its assessment of the poet’s language; controversially so, since Gray was an innovator in his own time with a strong popular following. Johnson found Gray wanting in etymological acuity and poetic conciseness. Reddick also alludes to Johnson’s complaints about adjectival expressions like *honied*, finding a tension between Johnson’s rather strict adherence to the demands of semantics and word-formation and his attention to more colloquial usage.

Olga Timofeeva takes a closer look at the way Latin loanwords in Old English have been considered, asking whether the accepted view of these loans will stand up to the scrutiny of statistical evaluation derived from corpus data. She also questions whether some at least of these are simply translation solutions, or represent other individual characteristics rather than being genuine loans. Timofeeva suggests examining each loan on its own terms and with its own historical trajectory. The present paper looks at six of these, using several Finnish loanwords, such as *sauna*, in English as a modern parallel. The article questions some widely-held assumptions about what a loanword is and how its status should be assessed.

The problems posed by the terminology used by sixteenth-century surgeons, leaders in an effort to publish in English, occupy Jukka Tyrkkö. Focussing in particular on Thomas Gale and his translations, Tyrkkö traces the upsurge in vernacular medical works which began following the incorporation of the

Barber Surgeons' Company in 1540, using the resources of the *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (EMEMT) corpus. Multivariate statistical methods are used to determine the extent of differentiation between surgical texts pre- and post-1550, and from other medical texts of the period more generally. The study is useful in placing these texts in a wider publishing and language context, particularly in signalling changes from the older tradition.

The papers in this volume are presented alphabetically by author, after the two plenary lectures. Following the discussion and general approval of the idea at the conference business meeting, we have established the Helsinki Society for Historical Lexicography, whose remit is to promote research and publication in this area and to provide back-up support for the succeeding HEL-LEX conferences.

Generous contributions to this conference were received from The Finnish Academy and Tieteellisten seurain valtuuskunta (The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies), for which we are very grateful. We would also like to thank the Modern Language Department of the University of Helsinki for its grant, support and encouragement. I also wish to thank the contributors to this volume for providing the copy so promptly and in such good shape. Sponsorship was also received from John Benjamins, Oxford University Press and MTV3. Finally, I wish personally to thank the organising committee of HEL-LEX 3 for their splendid efforts and tireless work.

R. W. McConchie  
for the organising committee

# Selected Proceedings of the 2012 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 3)

edited by R. W. McConchie,  
Teo Juvonen, Mark Kaunisto,  
Minna Nevala, and Jukka Tyrkkö

Cascadilla Proceedings Project    Somerville, MA    2013

## Copyright information

Selected Proceedings of the 2012 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 3)  
© 2013 Cascadilla Proceedings Project, Somerville, MA. All rights reserved

ISBN 978-1-57473-455-3 library binding

A copyright notice for each paper is located at the bottom of the first page of the paper.  
Reprints for course packs can be authorized by Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

## Ordering information

Orders for the library binding edition are handled by Cascadilla Press.  
To place an order, go to [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com) or contact:

Cascadilla Press, P.O. Box 440355, Somerville, MA 02144, USA  
phone: 1-617-776-2370, fax: 1-617-776-2271, [sales@cascadilla.com](mailto:sales@cascadilla.com)

## Web access and citation information

This entire proceedings can also be viewed on the web at [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com). Each paper has a unique document # which can be added to citations to facilitate access. The document # should not replace the full citation.

This paper can be cited as:

McConchie, R. W. 2013. Introduction. In *Selected Proceedings of the 2012 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 3)*, ed. R. W. McConchie et al., v-viii. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com), document #2830.