MEDIEVAL ENGLISH STUDIES IN SPAIN (1997-2001): PH.D. THESES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Títle: Variación lingüística y textual en inglés moderno, con especial referencia al periodo moderno tardío

Funding Institution : MCYT (BFF2001-3505)

Time Span: desde 28.12.2001 hasta: 27.12.2004

Director: Javier Pérez Guerra

Members: Javier Pérez Guerra, Jorge L. Bueno Alonso, Dolores González Álvarez, Esperanza Rama Martínez, Victorina González Díaz, Raquel Ardao Palacios

Summary: En este proyecto se pretende aplicar, desde el grupo de investigación LVTC de la Universidade de Vigo, modelos variacionistas a la exploración lingüística de los textos ingleses de un periodo escasamente estudiado, esto es, el inglés moderno tardío (1700-1900), con el objetivo final de establecer una descripción rigurosa de ese periodo desde una doble perspectiva sincrónica y diacrónica. En relación a esta última, se incorporará, con una finalidad contrastiva, los resultados de investigaciones previas y de las propias del proyecto tanto sobre periodos previos de la lengua como del inglés contemporáneo. Mediante el uso de una metodología cuantitativa (lingüística de corpus, estadística, modelos multidimensionales) y de aspectos teóricos reveladores del comportamiento sistemático de la lengua, se pretende elaborar un análisis morfosintáctico y estilístico (cuestiones de género y análisis del discurso) del inglés moderno tardío fundamentado en parámetros exclusivamente lingüísticos.

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Title: Dialects and the Geographical localization of texts in the History of English. Applications of the Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English to Computer corpora (Helsinki Corpus)

Funding Institution: Vicerrectorado de Investigación, Universidade da Coruña

Time Span: 1998-2002

Director: Isabel Moskowich-Spiegel Fandiño.

Members: Emma Lezcano González, Begoña Crespo García, Elena Alfaya Lamas, Ana Montoya Reyes, Isabel Roura Javier

Summary: The methods in the investigation of diachronic linguistics have changed with the apparition of computer corpora. At the same time, the publication of *LALME (Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English)* in 1986 implies a revision of all the premises used for establishing the origin of texts that allow scholars to know the history of the English language, the changes taking place in it in the course of time and that make of it what it is today. Our intention was to join both tools and localise those texts not included in the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus but that belong (are attributed) to the same author, cycle or manuscript that others already in the Corpus so as to ascertain if such attributions/localisations were, really, the ones traditionally defended. Our main aim was to check the information given in the COCOA headers of each text in the late Middle English texts in the *Helsinki Corpus* and compare them with those obtained by applying the fit-technique as proposed in the *LALME*

The application of questionnaires and the elaboration of dot maps allows: 1.- check whether the information in the COCOA headers in the *Helsinki Corpus* is correct, since those texts have not always been localised by using the *Atlas*. 2.- In cases where the *Helsinki Corpus* includes only small fragments of works, make sure that the whole piece is correctly localised since one fragment may have been written by a scribe whose linguistic habits are not those of other scribes working on the same manuscript.

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Title: Geographical localisation of medieval English texts.. Application of the Fit-Technique to computer linguistic texts.

Funding Institution: Xunta de Galicia, Secretaría Xeral DE I+D (PR-404A PROY 99-145)

Time Span: 1999-2001

Director: Isabel Moskowich-Spiegel Fandiño

Members: Begoña Crespo García, Emma Lezcano González, Ana Montoya Reyres, Elena Alfaya Lamas, Inés Lareo Martín, Leticia Regueiro Naya, Eva Parcero Souto

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PHD. THESES

Title: The Compilation of the Old English Riddles of the *Exeter Book.*

Author: Mercedes Salvador Bello

Supervisor: María José Mora

University: Universidad de Sevilla

Year: 1997

Summary: This dissertation sets out to demonstrate that the two series of riddles contained in the Exeter Book were organized according to pre-existent patterns deriving from Latin riddling tradition. The first chapters of this work present a comparative analysis of the collections of Symphosius, Aldhelm, Tatwine, Eusebius, and Boniface as well as the anonymous Bern and Lorsch Riddles. All of them present an implicit subdivision into different thematic sections which imitates the structure of medieval encyclopaedias; this points to an ostensible use of thematic criteria guiding the compilation of Latin *enigmata*.

The study then focuses on the Exeter Riddles, examining the traces of internal arrangement in what seem to be three major subdivisions (nos. 1-40, 41-66, and 67-95). A full revision of the text and solution of each riddle and

a detailed analysis of these three groups reveal that thematic sections can be easily detected. Notably, riddles 1-40 constitute a fairly consistent sequence evincing an internal structure modelled on Latin compilation patterns: cosmological topics, ornithological motifs, four-footed animals, instruments, and a cosmological coda. The presence of these cohesive sections suggests that riddles 1-40 were originally an independent collection, which was most likely copied out in its entirety with slight variation from the source. The second group (41-66) similarly displays a characteristic section arrangement--as the juxtaposition of the so-called Aobscene≅ pieces proves. However, the cohesion in the third series eventually degrades into an eclectic assemblage with no clear organization. A comparative analysis of the variable degree of thematic consistency and the frequent repetitions observed in the three groups provide us with valuable information on the compilation process. It suggests, first, that the Exeter compilers used at least three different sources for the riddles; secondly, that they tried to arrange this material into a one-hundred-piece collection, as was customary in Latin tradition, and produced a split collection of forty and sixty riddles which imitates the combined arrangement of the *enigmata* of Tatwine and Eusebius in Latin manuscripts.

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Title: Aportaciones a la hermenéutica antropológico-literaria: bases lingüísticas, simbólicas y conceptuales de la poesía elegíaca del Inglés Antiguo.

Author: Jorge Luis Bueno Alonso

University: Universidad de Oviedo

Supervisor: José Luis Caramés Lage

Year: 1999

Summary: The main aim of this Ph.D. thesis is twofold, as it offers: a) a proposal to frame a practical methodology of textual analysis -Literary Anthropology, a highly useful tool for textual research- within an existing theoretical framework -Literary Hermeneutics- and b) a practical application of such method of textual analysis, providing a literary anthropological study of the most characteristic Anglo-Saxon elegiac poems (*The Seafarer, The*

Wanderer, Deor, Wulf and Eadwacer, & *The Wife's Lament*) with the aim of getting a valid model of the Old English elegiac & poetic discourse, which would help to establish the steady basis of the aforementioned discourse. This will allow us to have an accurate description of the parameters that build the Anglo-Saxon elegiac & poetic discourse. These parameters can be taken as a basis for subsequent studies by future researchers who can use them to analyse other poems from the elegiac corpus for admitting, refusing or modulating their inclusion into this corpus.

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Title: Thematic variation in English: a corpus-based study on the thematic organisation of English declarative sentences in the recent history of the language.

Author: Javier Pérez Guerra

University: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

Supervisor: Teresa Fanego Lema

Year: 1999

Summary: In this dissertation the author explores the syntactic organisation of declarative clauses from late Middle English to present-day English and pays special attention to the consequences which the location of the subject has for the determination of the unmarked word order in Early Modern English. The data have been taken from two electronic corpora, namely, The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts and the Lancaster/Oslo-Bergen Corpus of British English.

The author outlines his own concept of 'theme,' which will be useful for the (explanatory and descriptive) purposes of describing syntactic (un)markedness. Such a concept leads to the existence of, on the one hand, an unmarked SV organisation and, on the other, of several marked patterns, viz sentences introduced by existential there, instances of subject extraposition and insertion of it, clefts, topicalisations, left-dislocations and subject inversions. The subsystems just mentioned are located on a scale of markedness, according to two variables: first, frequency, which is investigated by way of the statistical analysis of the data, and, second,

'linguistic functionality.' This second variable has been examined in the light of variables such as gender, textual category, discourse taxonomy, orality and informative principles such as 'given before new' or end-weight.

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Title: Las figuras del autor y del lector en *The Canterbury Tales* y el *Libro de buen amor*.

Author: María Beatriz Hernández Pérez

Supervisor: Fernando Galván

University: Universidad de La Laguna

Year: 1999

Summary: This is a comparative analysis of some fragments in the *Libro de Buen Amor* and the *Canterbury Tales*, following Sniader Lanser's narratological perspective. The chosen fragments in the *Libro de Buen Amor* are the Prologue and the first set of *exempla* and dialogues, including Doña Endrina's episode, as well as the final section. From *The Canterbury Tales*, the chosen fragment are: The General Prologue, and the prologues and tales of The Man of Law's, The Wife of Bath's, The Friar's, The Clerk's, The Merchant's, The Pardoner's, The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas, the Tale of Melibee, the Parson's Prologue and Tale, and the Retraction.

After a first chapter in which Lanser's model is justified, the second one is devoted to identifying and coming to terms with the historical background of both poets. In the rest of the chapters the narratological approach to the texts reveals both in Juan Ruiz and in Geoffrey Chaucer the undeniable ability to assemble and blend the most diverse, past and present as well as international and regional legacies in a unique way. However, the aim of this comparative study is not only to discern how or to what degree the authorial figure had evolved by the fourteenth century in these two countries. The hypothesis is rather that of stating that whatever similarities exist between these two works, they derive from a way of self-presentation that depended ultimately on the general concern with poet's public dimension. The narrative and representational strategies of the *Libro de buen amor* and *The*

Canterbury Tales are seen as consequence of the capital role reception played in these authors' ideological and poetic schemes.

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Title: Dialectología y Toponimia del Kéntico Bajomedieval

Author: Mª Auxiliadora Martín Díaz

Supervisor: José S. Gómez Soliño

University: Universidad de La Laguna

Year: 1999

Summary: In this thesis, a thorough study of the toponimic configuration of the late medieval dialect of Kent (12th-and-14th-century Kentish place-names, to be precise) is carried out through the formal analysis of certain Old English variables dialectally relevant in Middle Kentish. As the introduction puts on display, the general interest of this study lay in the fact that the dialectal analysis of Kentish place-names had not been satisfactorily approached in preceding projects devoted to this onomastic investigation. Any research on Kentish place-names lacked at that point in time, as we still do, the volume corresponding to Kent within the series edited by the *English Place-Name Society*; needless to mention *A Survey of Middle English Dialects 1290-1350. The Southern Counties* (Kristensson 2001) had not been published yet.

This formal analysis intended not only to discover a possible distributional behaviour behind these sound-changes, but also to contrast this toponimic evidence with the information provided by other sources. The aim was therefore two-fold: on the one hand, contribute to disclose a clearer picture of the dialectal configuration of Middle Kentish (taking into account its geographical and historical circumstances); and on the other, integrate and contrast this data with the information provided by both, traditional diachronic studies and those using a more synchronic view.

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Title: Edition and Study of a Late Medieval English Medical Receptarium: G.U.L. MS Hunter 185 (T.8.17)

Author: Francisco J. Alonso Almeida

Supervisor: Alicia Rodríguez Álvarez

University: Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Year: 2000

Summary: The main aim of this thesis consists in the semi-diplomatic edition of the text of MS 185 in the Hunterian collection in the Glasgow University Library. The medical book transcribed here contains medical recipes and charms in Middle English, as well as medical notes and a herbal glossary in Latin. This MS has never been the object of study of any research, and its damaged condition is a factor which calls for immediate editorial work. This can be seen in the fact that the boards have fallen off, and that the ink is rapidly fading away on several parts, despite the efforts of librarians to keep the book in perfect state.

This work also pursues other aims which, though secondary, are not less significant. These objectives comprise (a) the description of the state of medieval medical knowledge and medical manuscripts, (b) the characterisation of the medieval recipe as a type of text, (c) the description of the physical features and the contents of MS Hunter 185, and (d) an account of the language and the dialect of the main scribes.

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Title: El cambio semántico como indicador de cambio lingüístico: análisis de la lengua inglesa entre los siglos XII y XVII.

Author: Begoña Crespo García

Supervisors: Dr. Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos & Dra. Isabel Moskowich-Spiegel Fandiño

University: Universidade da Coruña

Year: 2001

Summary: The aim of this dissertation was to analyse semantic changes as part of the diachronic phenomenon of language change from a socio-historical perspective. To this end, it was divided into five chapters. Chapter

1 is devoted to the external history of the period under survey, thus providing a social, cultural, economic and political background for intra-systemic changes. In chapter 2 several views on language change are presented paying special attention to the sociolinguistic models here defended. Those theoretical tenets on language change are applied to the situation of England during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The central chapter, that is to say, chapter 3, is concerned with the theory of semantic change. Many different perspectives (Meillet, Stern, Ullmann, Williams, Hughes) are mentioned. Definitions, causes and classifications are thus analysed in detail to search for an adequate framework which is useful to explain different types of semantic change. The practical part of the dissertation corresponds to chapters 4 and 5. The former describes the methodology and the corpus of data selected whereas the latter presents the analysis of those data. All nouns that indicate person-rank taken from the samples in the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* have been decomposed into their different semantic features (always considering context and use) in order to trace a possible shift in meaning from the 12th to the 17th centuries. Contrary to the expectations of certain authors, the results lay claim that, the changes in this lexical field run, predominantly, under the specialisation type, a characteristic of the external social conditions.

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Title: El mito clásico y su evolución formal en la Edad Media: Geoffrey Chaucer.

Author: José María Gutiérrez Arranz

Supervisor: Ricardo J. Sola Buil

University: Universidad de Alcalá De Henares

Year: 2001

Summary: Our thesis is based on Classical myth. The main aims of it are obviously connected with this base: on the one hand, the evolution that Classical myth has from its appearance in Ancient Times to the Middle Ages, essentially related to Geoffrey Chaucer's works and, on the other, to stress the fact that Classical myth is used by Chaucer himself as an element within the system of Classical rhetoric, whose forerunner was Aristotle.

Regarding the first aim, the most widespread and accepted definition of mythology is that it is a group of legends. A legend is a narration of events that are uncertain or unverifiable, but that have been traditionally presented as real. Classical mythology is the group of Greek and Roman myths that, according to reliable sources, were valid from their origin until the year 600 A. D. Taking this into account, myth may be compared with other types of narrations: the aetiological legend, the heroic cycle or the novel. The sources of Classical mythology occasionally come from oral tradition, and one good example is Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, in which the author holds that gods and men belong to different worlds and there is an insurmountable barrier between them. There is another group of sources, called "erudite", which include technical treatises exclusively consecrated to mythology or commentaries on literary works, whose aim is to shed some light on dark matters. This fulfilment began thanks to Hecateus of Miletus (6th century B. C.), and some others, like Acusilaos of Argos, Helanicus of Mithilene and overall Herodotus followed him, the latter being the most important of them. Together with this tradition, we can find the collections of myths, with Erathosthenes, Apollodorus or Nicandrus, who also supply with a great amount of information. The presocratic philosophy had already pointed out the positive aura of myth to understand the transcendental ideas, but it would be Plato who definitely supported this concept. One of the conclusions of our thesis is based upon the behaviour that "Platonic" myth has in Chaucer and that derives from Plato's theory of "theologia", which defends the contradictions of the previous poets when they discussed mythological characters. Plato rejects myth "per se", since it does not completely contribute to his vital and political conception, as he demonstrates in *Res Publica*, so he prefers to use the positive side of such stories and rejects the negative one. The Medieval allegorical trend, based specially on the Euhemeristic theory, and Chaucer's personal touch causes myth to be Platonic in its form, although there are other factors that combine in the use of these mythological characters, between them the outer influences of contemporary authors like Dante, Boccaccio, *Ovide Moralisé*'s writer or John Gower, the problems that the man of the XIV century had to face to do research and that Chaucer suffered, etc. Following the aims of our thesis, the second stage was the influence of the system of Classical rhetoric, galvanized by Aristotle and which had egregious followers like Quintilianus

and Cicero, in the use of Classical myths in Chaucer. Our interest is based on the types of discourse that Aristotle thinks to be essential in any sort of oratory (epideictic, deliberative and judicial). Its systematic use when referring to myth, specially in the case of the first of them, shows clearly that the rhetorical system is really vigorous.

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Title: Composite Predicates in Middle English.

Author: Teresa Moralejo Gárate

Supervisor: Luis Iglesias Rábade

University: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

Year: 2001

Summary: This dissertation aims to analyse the linguistic and extralinguistic peculiarities of composite predicates (for example, He told me to HAVE a LOOK at the report) formed with *don, haven, maken, taken* and *yeven* in ME, on the basis of the evidence provided by The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts, Diachronic and Dialectal.The study opens with a contextualisation of the phenomenon of composite predicates in ME within the general historical development of English. The following chapter, Composite Predicates, consists mainly of a review of the previous studies on the topic. The unit that constitutes our object of study is defined and the criteria to limit this unit are established. Several issues relevant to the study of composite predicates, which are dealt with in greater depth later in the dissertation, are introduced. In chapter 3, the chronology and origin of composite predicates is considered. The rate of use of composite predicates in ME is compared with that of previous and later periods in the history of English to determine the extent to which these structures spread throughout the period. The influence of prose and verse text on the distribution of composite predicates is studied, and the origin of the deverbals in our data is examined to illustrate the imprint of French on the structure. In the following chapter, number 4, The syntax of Composite Predicates, composite predicates are analysed with regard to different possibilities of determination, modification, complementation, voice and number variation, as well as to the occurrence of multiple deverbals. On the basis of the results

obtained with the analysis of the previous chapter, in chapter 5, Patterns of Composite Predicates, high frequency composite predicates are classified into various syntactic patterns to unveil the existence of distributional restrictions. The semantic features of composite predicates are the focus of chapter 6. The main semantic categories expressed by composite predicates with each light verb are examined. Pairs consisting of the same deverbal but a different light verb are contrasted to shed light upon the semantic load of the verbal element of composite predicates. Chapter 7, Textual distribution of Composite Predicates, focuses on the distribution of composite predicates across the various textual types included in the HC. The rate of use of composite predicates in text types occurring in several subperiods of the corpus is compared, to add a chronological perspective to our analysis. We compute the normalised frequencies of the global set of composite predicates, as well as those of each individual light verb, in each text type sampled in the HC, to ascertain if the use of composite predicates is favoured by any particular text type and if the use of composite predicates may be associated to any particular register. The semantic fields occurring in each text type are also explored. In chapter 8, Composite Predicates vs. simple verbs, a selection of high frequency composite predicates and their equivalent simple verbs is contrasted to reveal any extralinguistic or linguistic factors that may motivate the choice of one of the two structures, chiefly, chronology, prose and verse texts, text type, syntactic structure, modification and aspect. Finally, chapter 9 contains the main conclusions reached throughout the present study.

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Title: The Word, the Lily and the Sword: Images of Female Heroism in Three Anglo-Saxon Poems: *Elene, Juliana* and *Judith*.

Author: Laurence Erussard

Supervisor: Juan Camilo Conde Silvestre

University: University of Murcia

Year: 2001

Summary: This project examines the deployment of female heroism in Cynewulf's two hagiographies and in the anonymous *Judith*, and offers an

interpretation of each heroine. The evaluation of the characters is based the linguistic and stylistic analysis of the Old English words that define them and on the structure of their discourses. Special attention is given to the substantives and adjectives that define each woman, to the verbs of which they are subject and to the recurrent use of *oratio recta* (up to 63% in *Juliana*) in the poems. The group study shows a highly crafted portrait of womanhood; it challenges the idea that patriarchal structures in Anglo-Saxon society left no room for the heroic representation of women. The three female heroes offer a unified and sophisticated textual and iconographic triptych presenting the three ages of women as in the Virgin-Mother-Crone trinity. The queen, the courageous mother of her nation, and the virgin construct an image dominated by self-assertiveness. A comparative source study shows that these three saints do no pray for help as do their classical and scriptural models and that, unlike all other female characters of English poetry, they are never sorrowful. The result is a portrait that encourages women to enter religious life and men to emulate these female soldiers of Christ.

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