

REVIEWS – RECENZE

Martin Lehnert: *Altenglisches Elementarbuch*, neunte, verbesserte Auflage, Westberlin: de Gruyter, 1978, Sammlung Götschen, Bd. 2210.

This textbook of Old English, already in its 9th edition, is a valuable source of information about the development in the Anglo-Saxon period, the periodization of the Anglo-Saxon literary heritage, the influence of other languages (especially Latin, Celtic and Scandinavian languages) upon the development of English. The introduction also deals with problems of literary language, Old English verse and Old English orthography. All this is done with evident pedagogical skill, in a concise form, and sources for further study are abundantly given. Within the scope of his introduction the author has succeeded in bringing as much essential knowledge about the subject as possible. A map showing the division of the Anglo-Saxon territory and also a chart presenting the classification of the Indo-European languages into groups are welcome additions to the book.

Lehnert has stressed the fact that it will be necessary in the future to devote special attention to the systematic analysis of the grammar of Anglian dialects to which present-day standard English is to be traced back. (The same idea occurs in Quirk & Wrenn, *An Old English Grammar*,² London, 1960, p. 2). He is, however, aware of the fact that the task is rather complicated because of the lack of original literary sources.

The second part of the textbook deals with the phonology of Old English, the author preferring the traditional succession phonology – morphology, pedagogically more demanding than the reverse order (chosen by Quirk and Wrenn). The division and chronology of the changes are presented logically and accompanied by a sufficient number of examples. At the same time differences in the Old English dialects are pointed out, special attention being paid to Anglian dialects. Again, examples are given of individual differences and deviations.

In Section 32 (Velarumlaut), the author explains the reason for the *i*- and *u*-mutations primarily on the basis of the mentalistic (psychological) theory of anticipation, though to the present reviewer the mechanistic theory (based on the articulatory effort) appears to be a sufficient cause of the change.

The third part of the textbook covers the morphology of Old English (the starting point of the presentation being the situation in Latin). Syntax of Old English is not included; it would be much appreciated if the following edition could comprise at least a brief sketch of it in view of important differences between Old and Modern English syntactic structures.

The fourth part brings Old English texts (Beda's story of Caedmon and extracts from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle). Caedmon's Hymn is presented also in its original Northumbrian version, which again accords with the author's emphasis on the importance of the Anglian dialects. The texts are translated into German; also the

Latin text of Beda's story is given. An *ad-hoc* vocabulary and a word index are added.

The textbook will prove useful to all students of English at university level and even advanced readers may find it of great interest.

Ludmila Urbanová

Paul Procter (Editor-in-Chief): **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, London: Longman, 1978, 1303 pp.

Irrespective of the stage reached, a learner of a foreign language – a beginner, a fairly or very advanced student, or one maturing to perfection – will need a special dictionary of the language he wishes to acquire. Apart from defining the meanings of words, such a dictionary will have to offer information on their pronunciation, their morphological and syntactic behaviour in the sentence, the collocations they enter into and the stylistic and the territorial restrictions they may be subject to. It will have to offer a good deal of information a native speaker may take for granted and therefore consider redundant.

A pioneer work in this field is Harold E. Palmer's *A Grammar of English Words* (London 1938). Palmer-inspired is the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*, compiled under the general editorship of A. S. Hornby, published in Tokyo in 1942 and later reprinted as *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* in England in 1948. Another pioneer work that deserves special mention is perhaps Albrecht Reum's *Dictionary of English Style* (Leipzig 1931), paying particular attention to collocations.

A new publication in the field is the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, prepared by a team of lexicographers, illustrators and computer experts under the general editorship of Paul Procter and benefiting from the advice and experience of such prominent scholars as Professors Randolph Quirk, Arthur Bronstein, David Crystal, A. C. Gimson, Geoffrey Leech and others.

The new dictionary will meet the needs of a wide range of non-native speakers of English, including such whose stock of words is still rather limited. This is because both the definitions and the examples are written in a controlled vocabulary, *A General Service List of English Words* (Longman 1953) having been primarily used for this purpose. For more delicate nuances of meanings a fastidious user may have to have recourse to other sources of reference, but Randolph Quirk is right in pointing out that 'the strict use of the defining vocabulary has in many cases resulted in a fresh and revealing semantic analysis' (p. vii).

A point worth mentioning in this connection is the retainment of the articles in the definitions, a practice observed by the first edition of *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, but abandoned in its later editions. It will be appreciated especially by those non-native speakers of English whose mother-tongues are articleless.

In some cases the value of the definitions is heightened by illustrations. In principle, the latter do not elucidate single lexical items, but cover groups of items that are thematically related, coming under such headings as 'geometrical figures', 'household equipment', 'human body', 'insects', 'mountain landscape'.

The British pronunciation given by the dictionary is that usually referred to as 'Received Pronunciation' and the transcription used is that employed by A. C. Gimson in the 14th edition of the *English Pronouncing Dictionary*. If differing from British pronunciation, American pronunciation is given as well, its 'more common forms' (p. xviii) having been chosen for representation.

One of the most valuable features of the dictionary is its information on the grammatical, morphological and syntactic behaviour of English words. The amount of this information exceeds that offered by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. The codes employed are partly mnemonic in character and therefore easy to understand and to handle. Additional grammatical information is given in the usage notes, which also draw attention to synonyms and to common mistakes.

Another important feature are the labels indicating the stylistic rank of the words and/or the geographical region(s) within which they are used. In addition to the British and American variants of English, even the Australian, Canadian, Caribbean,

Indian and Pakistani, Irish, New Zealand, South African and Scottish variants are taken into account. It is certainly right that also taboo words have been included and indicated as such. They cannot be ignored by non-native speakers, for they may prove to be pitfalls into which many an unwary non-native user of English may tumble.

Most welcome are the numerous examples. In this respect, a possessor of both the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* will be in a fortunate position, for there are cases when one of the two has an example or examples to offer, whereas the other has none.

All the information on the use of English words provided by the Dictionary will be greatly appreciated by the non-native speaker of English. In fact, the presented information may even whet his appetite for more. As he will hardly ever acquire a native speaker's feeling for English, he will always be in need of a reliable and comprehensive guide to Modern English usage. It therefore appears that there would be a place even for a larger dictionary meant specially for him, perhaps one of the size of *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Needless to say, this is not a criticism, but merely a suggestion. Within the limits of 1303 pages, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* offers a wealth of information which makes it into a work of reference that will be acclaimed as an outstanding lexicographical achievement by non-native users of English all the world over.

Jan Firbas

J. I. Rodale, *The Synonym Finder*, revised edition by Laurence Urdang and Nancy La Roche, Rodale Press, Inc., Emmaus, Pa., 1979.

Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus, G. C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1976.

Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 1980.

The innumerable editions of *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, first published in 1852, testify to the usefulness of a reference book providing a sophisticated native speaker of English with vast collections of words covering certain semantic fields. *Roget's Thesaurus* is usually less useful to non-native speakers or learners of English, partly because its range is beyond the limits of their knowledge of the English vocabulary and partly because it does not give usage labels. A disadvantage of *Roget*, felt perhaps by all its users, is its complexity, resulting in not so readily available information. Better structuration of the material is achieved with the alphabetical arrangement of a thesaurus, as is evidenced by three recent achievements of American lexicographers.

The most extensive of the new generation of thesauruses is the revised edition of *Rodale's Synonym Finder*. Its 1355 pages of small print contain over 1,000,000 words (as we learn from the blurb, or more than 1,500,000 words according to the Editor-in-Chief's introduction). The average size of an entry seems to be about 60 words, but the entries are divided into numbered subgroups according to meaning, a still finer classification within the subgroups being indicated by semicolons. For instance, *head*, as a noun, is divided into 13 numbered subgroups containing about 200 words, further divided by 33 semicolons, which gives six words between semicolons on the average. (The size of similar word-groups in *Longman's 1962* revised and modernized version of *Roget's Thesaurus* seems to be slightly smaller, indicating finer classification.) If we compare the groups of synonyms of *head*, n., conveying the meaning of 'part of a body' in *Rodale* with the analogous group in *Roget*, we find that *Rodale* offers more synonyms or closely related words, although of stylistically limited applicability: archaic *mazard*, *costard*, informal *upstairs*, *noggin*, slang expressions *gourd*, *noodle*. (If the comparison were made on the basis of *Roget's* index, there would be three more words found in *Rodale* only: *poll*, *upper storey*, *double crown*.) *Roget's Thesaurus*, on the other hand, covers a wider field and offers a higher number of related words, in careful sequence, such as *scalp*, *epicranium*, *headpiece*, *brow*.

In addition to the thirteen subgroups, the entry *head* in *The Synonym Finder* contains further five subgroups with synonyms to some idioms, e.g. *head over heels*. *Head* as adjective and *head* as verb are covered by another seven subgroups.

The entry *head* also shows some of the other welcome features of *Rodale's Syn-*

onym Finder: usage labels (slang, informal, dialectal, archaic, etc.), indication of technical terms (such as nautical, chemistry) and even an occasional word from another language, like Latin, French, German. The *Synonym Finder* distinguishes not only between American and British English, but indicates words found in Scottish, Irish, Australian English, in Anglo-Indian, etc.

The second of the reviewed thesauruses is *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*. Based on the files of the Merriam-Webster dictionaries, it supplies the user with synonyms, antonyms, related and contrasted words. There are two types of entry: the main entry, with a short definition of the semantic range of the word in question and with an illustrative example (neither of these features is to be found in *Roget* or *Rodale*), and the secondary entry, with synonyms only. Thus under *head* the first entry is a main entry with a definition and an example (and with a full list of synonyms) and the remaining seven entries are secondary ones, where the first of the synonyms is printed in small capitals, guiding the reader to the required main entry (e.g., GIFT 2, LEADER 2). The list of synonyms for a secondary entry is slightly shorter than the list at the corresponding main entry. Usage directions are simplified, unfortunately, into a single symbol of limited use, so that another dictionary has to be consulted if more information on usage is needed.

The overall number of words in *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus* will be lower than in *Roget* or *Rodale*. The entry *head*, n., contains 81 words, compared to about 200 in *Rodale*. The number of related words in the other two thesauruses will be higher. Taking *head* again as an example, we find only four related words in the meaning of 'part of a body': *brainpan*, *cranium*, *scalp*, *crown*, while *Rodale's Synonym Finder* has also *skull*, *cephalon*, *cap*, etc.

Even with a smaller, though not insufficient, section of the English vocabulary covered, *Webster's Thesaurus* has one advantage over *Rodale's Finder* in that all words appearing as synonyms in the entries are also included as separate entries in their own alphabetical places. A user can 'enter' the thesaurus at *noodle* or *nut* (or any other secondary entry) and will be directed to the main entry (i.e. *head*).

The authors of *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*, were too generous, in the view of the present reviewer, in allotting approximately one sixteenth of the book, corresponding to about sixty pages, to the explanation of abbreviations *syn*, *rel*, etc. The explanation is repeated on every page. Every other page should be more than sufficient.

The name of the third book, *Roget's II: The New Thesaurus*, by the editors of *The American Heritage Dictionary*, indicates that *Roget II* is a new type of thesaurus, different from the well-known *Roget I*. The difference can be seen at first glance and it might be said that of the three thesauruses discussed here, *Roget II* bears the least resemblance to the original *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*. *Roget II* has some features common with *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*. Both are alphabetical, both distinguish between main and secondary entries, offer definitions and examples and provide usage labels. *Roget II*, however, deals with synonyms only, i.e. it does not list antonyms, related or contrasted words.

Roget II has a very distinct lay-out of the pages, with entry words, definitions, examples in the left-hand column and with synonyms and idioms in the right-hand column. Although requiring more space than the usual dictionary lay-out, the new arrangement is very convenient and easy to survey. All expressions suggested as synonyms to the main or the secondary entries have their own alphabetic entries. The meanings of all entries, main or secondary, are always defined. If we look up *head*, n., again, we find ten definitions for the noun, three for the verb and one for the adjective.

To sum up. All three thesauruses are considered to be very useful reference books, each in a different way and, perhaps, for a different type of user. *The Synonym Finder* should be preferred by readers with an intimate knowledge of the English vocabulary, while *Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus* should be found useful by those who do not need very extensive lists of semantically cognate words but who like to get the information structured in a more systematic manner. *Roget II: The New Thesaurus* should prove very adequate as a handy reference book of high quality on English synonyms, and of the three thesauruses reviewed here is very likely to prove most useful to foreign learners of English.

Josef Hladký

Jan Svartvik and Randolph Quirk (Eds.), *A Corpus of English Conversation*, Lund: Lund Studies in English 56, 1980, 891 pp.

The Survey of English Usage (SEU) carried out under the direction of Professor Randolph Quirk at University College London has become one of the most important linguistic projects of the latter half of the twentieth century. Apart from Randolph Quirk's name, it is connected with those of a number of other outstanding scholars, such as Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, Jan Svartvik (who together with Randolph Quirk have written *A Grammar of Contemporary English*), Wolf-Dieter Bald, R. A. Close, David Crystal, Derek Davy and many others. The aim of the project is to offer an overall description and analysis of the grammatical repertoire of adult educated native speakers of British English, taking into account all their written as well as all their spoken linguistic activity. In order to achieve this aim, a corpus representative of the whole range of written and spoken educated British English has been collected and uniformly filed on slips and is being subjected to an overall analysis. In this way a unique collection of classified material has come into existence. One of the many achievements based on the SEU corpus is, for instance, *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, prepared by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik.

In order to make the collection of prosodically transcribed readings of the SEU corpus available to all scholars interested in spoken English, a sister project, the Survey of Spoken English (SSE), has been started under the direction of Professor Jan Svartvik at the University of Lund. The work of the Lund group is already bearing fruit as well. In collaboration with Randolph Quirk's team, Jan Svartvik's group has prepared a volume containing 34 'texts', each of 5,000 words (170,000 words in all), of genuine face-to-face conversation by native English speakers. Moreover, thanks to the Lund group the material is now available also in machine-readable form on computer tape and ready for computer processing. (Computational studies of the material have already been started at Lund.)

In reproducing the conversations, the volume, which is the main concern of the present note, uses an orthographic non-phonetic representation wherever possible. It is, however, consistent in employing a special prosodic transcription, which is sensitive to such basic distinctions as tone unit, nucleus, booster, onset and stress. The transcription can be read with ease thanks to a number of special devices. For instance, the end of a tone unit is indicated by a conspicuous black little square; a word bearing a nucleus is printed in capitals, its nuclear syllable carrying an arrow indicating pitch direction; empty triangles of three different sizes mark three different degrees of rise in pitch.

The very detailed information offered by the SEU slips has been intentionally reduced, especially a number of paralinguistic features (tempo, loudness, various features connected with voice quality) having been omitted. The omissions heighten the readability without impairing the linguistic interpretation. Special investigations of paralinguistic features and their relationship to linguistic phenomena will have to fall back on the slips of the SEU.

It is worth adding that the prosodic transcription used in the volume is in perfect conformity with the transcription used on the SEU slips. It is in fact based on the system employed by Quirk et al. in *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. The volume contains a table in which the symbols used are listed together with the corresponding symbols on the SEU slips and the corresponding codes employed on the computer tape.

The publication of *A Corpus of English Conversation* will be welcomed by all scholars who are engaged in the inquiry into the spoken form of educated British English. It makes an important part of the SEU corpus accessible to them and provides them with a wealth of valuable genuine material. Such material will be highly appreciated, for instance, by researchers into English intonation who are not native speakers of English; it will free them from having to collect their own material and to analyze it tonetically. (True enough, English texts tonetically transcribed by prominent British phoneticians exist and can and will be used by investigators. It must, however, be borne in mind that these texts are primarily meant for the learner and do not record genuine spontaneous conversation.) *A Corpus of English*

Conversation provides a 'text' that can now be analyzed by various individual research workers and research teams all over the world and in this way be subjected to an overall description. A challenge worth taking up.

Jan Firbas

Christopher Gillie, *Longman Companion to English Literature*, London: Longman, 1978, 889 pp.

The Companion is meant primarily, though not exclusively, for students whose mother tongue is not English and who take courses in English literature at non-English universities outside Great Britain. It is concerned with English, or rather British, literature only, not including information about American or Commonwealth literature, but paying considerable attention to foreign influences. The space of time covered is that from 1066 down to the present day.

The book consists of two parts, the first containing three essays devoted in succession to English history, society and thought, and four essays dealing in their turn with the development of English narrative literature, drama, poetry and critical thought. The second part is constituted by a reference section with alphabetically arranged entries. A wide range of subjects related to English literature is covered: English writers, synopses of their works, English philosophers, foreign writers and philosophers who have exerted some influence on English literature, characters from English and world literature, literary movements, technical terms employed by literary theory, various items of background information, historical, political, social, philosophical, educational, etc., etc. A comparatively dense network of cross-references within the Companion greatly heightens its usefulness. The value of the reference work is then further enhanced by the author's successful endeavour to deal with the historical, social and political issues in an unbiased and well-balanced way.

The lucid presentation of the material and the wealth of background information will appeal to a wider readership than one composed merely of students of literature. Being closely related to the outer history of the English language, the information offered by the Companion cannot fail to attract the interest of the linguist. (The author of the present note himself is not a literary historian, but a linguist.)

Seen from a linguist's point of view, it is perhaps a pity that the entry dealing with the English language and the entry dealing with Anglo-Saxon (Old English) literature have not been expanded into essays and transferred to the first section of the Companion. (The entry concerning the English language correctly emphasizes and characterizes the changes that in the course of historical development have taken place in the English stock of words, but does not pay attention to the vital changes that have affected the grammatical structure.) The author is certainly right in maintaining that in important respects Anglo-Saxon literature is distinct from the literature of the later periods and can be regarded as a separate field of study (cf. p. 387), but it used an older form of English as its vehicle, a strong enough argument for giving it full treatment in a companion to English literature. An author, however, has always the legitimate right to limit the scope of his interest and cannot be criticized for it.

Another linguistic note may be added concerning the phonetic transcriptions accompanying some entry titles the pronunciation of which may cause difficulty. This helpful practice could have been extended to cover other titles, such as *Hercules*, *Holmes*, *Hop-o'-my-thumb*, *Igdrasil*, *Inchbald*, *Jacobin*.

To sum up, *The Longman Companion to English Literature* is a highly serviceable book of reference, admirably suited for foreign students of English. Moreover, it is a very attractive publication owing to its general lay-out and the copious illustrations. It will be acclaimed not only by those who specialize in English literature, but even by those who are interested in the English language and English culture in general.

Jan Firbas