

Introduction

This volume reports studies of English past and present, all based on empirical work and illuminated by a variety of theoretical and methodical approaches. Its range and eclecticism makes it a fitting tribute to Nils-Lennart Johannesson, Professor of English Linguistics, Department of English, Stockholm University, on the occasion of his 67th birthday. In addition to knowing him as a wise and supportive colleague, we have all experienced him as a dedicated teacher and some of us even as a brilliant fellow-student.

Nils-Lennart first came to our department in the late 1960s as an undergraduate student. After proceeding quickly through the undergraduate as well as the graduate courses, and having spent a fruitful period of study at Yale University under the wings of Professor Sydney Lamb, he was ready to present his doctoral dissertation, *The English Modal Auxiliaries: A Stratificational Account*, in 1976. After a brief period as Research Fellow at Lund University, he returned to our department in 1978, first as Research Fellow, then as Docent and Senior Lecturer. In 1991 he left the department for the University of Trondheim, where he served as Professor of English Linguistics for almost a decade. In the year 2000 he returned to Stockholm, having been appointed to the Chair at our department in succession to Magnus Ljung.

It is a daunting task to describe Nils-Lennart's multi-faceted contributions to the department: as a distinguished and productive scholar, committed teacher, organizer of symposia, editor, administrator, and mentor to students as well as colleagues. The following text does not presume to do justice to his complete oeuvre and achievement.

His scholarly work has above all been concerned with historical linguistics, culminating in a passionate, long-standing commitment to the Middle English twelfth century homily collection *Orrmulum*, written by the Augustinian canon Orm from Lincolnshire. The ultimate aim of Nils-Lennart's research on *Orrmulum* is the production of a new text edition, based on a new transcription of the existing manuscripts. Since

nobody can improve on the creator's own account of the project, the reader of this preface is referred to the excellent website www.orrmlum.net. Over the years Nils-Lennart has delighted the language seminar at our department with glimpses of his ongoing research within the *Orrmulum* project, characterized by linguistic stringency, wide-ranging use of all technical support, and rich cultural and historical depth.

It should not be forgotten, however, that this is just one of many interests. Above all, he is a leading expert on Old English syntax, regularly presenting papers at international conferences. He has contributed greatly to studies on dialect in fiction, with special reference to J.R.R. Tolkien, and he takes a great interest in linguistic as well as literary aspects of figurative language, which is reflected in his active role as co-organizer of our department's annual 'Metaphor Festival' and an editor of the festival's proceedings.

He has been a model for us not only as a researcher but also as a teacher and supervisor. His students are always impressed by his conscientiousness and creativity, marked by the production and constant improvement of challenging text material for his courses. He is a painstaking and selfless editor and the co-producer of most handbooks, festschriften and conference volumes published by our department (with the obvious exception of the present volume).

We all know him to be unusually knowledgeable in a number of other fields: he is a fine musician, known to play the bagpipe as well as the flute; he is extremely well read, often quoting Galsworthy and Dorothy Sayers by heart, and has published beautiful translations of works by the Orcadian writer George Mackay Brown. To at least one of us he is even known to be very knowledgeable about the intricacies of traditional knitting.

For a number of years Nils-Lennart served as Head of Department – a complicated and strenuous function which he carried out in a democratic spirit with fairness, care and great commitment. Many of his colleagues and students are deeply grateful for his help and advice in difficult situations, personal as well as academic.

The common thread of the volume is empirical work on English based on actual data, often from corpora and often diachronic. The first five chapters deal with Old and Middle English phonology, syntax, lexis and text editing, forming an overview of current issues in the study of older stages of the language. Cole shows, very much in the spirit of Johannesson's close examination of the *Orrmulum* manuscript, that the glosses in the Lindisfarne gospels provide evidence of linguistic change

in progress. Stenbrenden examines a corpus and challenges aspects of the established phonological history of English. Dahl suggests that the unexpected similarities between standard Scandinavian languages and English are evidence for ‘reverse’ influence of English on Old Norse under Canute’s empire. Calle Martin provides an edition of a previously unedited text. Moreno questions the established interpretation of a plant name in a Middle English text.

The next six contributions look at Early Modern and Modern English from a historical point of view, using the variety of methods associated with Nils-Lennart’s work. Wright looks through everyday texts for early references (going back to the sixteenth century) that illuminate the etymology of the place-name *Isle of Dogs*. Smitterberg and Kytö discuss the complexity of the notion of genre, which they show is central to historical corpus design. The others all adopt a corpus approach to samples of more or less literary texts. Tottie and Johansson examine the development of a non-standard structure in the drama section of the *Corpus of English Dialogues, 1560–1760*. Melchers looks at representations of dialect in nineteenth century novels while Dossena and Shaw both use corpora and closer reading to examine attitudes to respectively, the Scottish landscape, and foreign languages in nineteenth-century writing.

Nils-Lennart has for many years been interested in the work of J.R.R. Tolkien and the next two chapters describe aspects of Tolkien’s scholarly work. Kuteeva looks at Tolkien’s concepts of myth and myth study while Zettersten draws on his own personal friendship with Tolkien to illuminate the work.

The remaining chapters discuss aspects of Modern English, the first four once again using corpora, one of the tools which Nils-Lennart pioneered in the 1980s. Minugh examines aspects of register as revealed by corpora of different genres. Aijmer and Egan both make use of parallel multilingual corpora. Aijmer looks at developing meanings of *must*, and Egan examines a central topic in comparative language studies, the expression of the components of motion, here in English and French. Peter Sundkvist shows how a phonological topic which cannot be examined via available corpora can nevertheless be elucidated using the affordances of the internet.

The last three chapters also cover topics related to Nils-Lennart’s many-faceted work. He began his career working with Sydney Lamb on the non-generative modelling of syntax, and this theme is taken up by Ursini, who shows how preposition-stranding can be handled

in type-logical syntax. Later he became interested in pragmatics, and Erman and Lewis take this up in their paper on the vocabulary use of advanced second-language users of English, including their use of pragmatic markers. Finally, along with the late Christina Alm-Arvius, Nils-Lennart was a founder and organizer of Stockholm University's annual Metaphor Festival, and it is fitting that the book closes with a chapter based on her unpublished work.

In view of the richness and quality of the contributions, inspired by Nils-Lennart's interest and erudition in various fields of linguistic and literary studies, this volume will be of interest to a wide academic audience. Many – if not most – of the contributions offer new and challenging approaches to English studies and linguistics in general, such as reassessments of the dramatic sound change known as the Great Vowel Shift and new theories concerning the complicated English–Scandinavian language contact situation. The importance of English literature as data for linguistic studies is brought to the fore in many articles, most of which demonstrate the value of new and ambitious corpora. The internet, another topical source of linguistic data, is used in innovative and sophisticated ways by some of the contributors.

It is our hope that this collection of texts – in addition to serving as a tribute to a much–esteemed colleague – may contribute to inspiration, discussion and research in a number of linguistic fields, such as historical linguistics, variationist studies, sociolinguistics/dialectology, syntax, phonetics/phonology, pragmatics, corpus design and studies, and language typology.

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