
SGL Newsletter

Society for Germanic Linguistics Vol. 17, No. 2, Fall 2005

SGL News and Reports

GLAC 2005

The Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference XI took place at the University of California/Davis on April 21–22, 2005. There were 43 paper presentations and two invited lectures. The first speaker was Richard Wiese whose talk was entitled “German schwa revisited”. The second speaker was Paul Kiparsky from Stanford who spoke on “Syllable structure and grammaticalization: the weak preterite”. The conference participants included 38 faculty and 24 graduate students. There were 9 international participants representing the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Canada. The conference was generously supported by the Society for Germanic Linguistics and the Max Kade Foundation. On the last night of the conference the Executive Committee of the SGL was treated to a dinner by Orrin Robinson of Stanford.
(Carlee Arnett and Will Benware)

SGL Annual Business Meeting

At the 2005 Annual Business Meeting it was reported that Tom Shannon and Mark Southern had been elected to the Executive Committee for terms running from 2005–2007. An increase of annual dues to \$40.00 US in order to cover increasing expenses and maintain the Society’s reserve fund was announced. The Executive Committee announced the following future meeting venues:

2006 University of Illinois,
Champaign–Urbana
2007 Pennsylvania State University
2008 University of Wisconsin–Madison
2009 Calgary (Banff)

SGL Website

Many thanks to Webmaster David Fertig of SUNY Buffalo for resuscitating the SGL website (<http://www.germaniclinguistics.org>) after a hiatus of two years!

Journal of Germanic Linguistics

With the publication of *JGL* 17.3 your new editorial team has already been in the saddle for a year. A highlight of the present period is our negotiation of a new five-year contract with Cambridge University Press, who has reaffirmed its commitment to the *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*. Dealing with the enthusiastic and supportive CUP staff is one of my great pleasures as editor. Some highlights of the new contract are:

- Increased student funding in support of the Editorial and Production Assistant. This full-year funding is essential since the editorial team supplies the final PDF files to CUP.
- A modest one-time capital budget for computer hardware and software.
- Direct electronic access to the *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* for Society members through the Cambridge Journals Online web site.
- A 10% discount on all CUP books for Society members.

As always, the editor encourages members of the Society for Germanic Linguistics and the Forum for Germanic Language Studies to continue submitting their highest quality work to the Journal.
(Robert Murray, Editor)

GLAC-12

12th Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference

The University at Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
April 28–30, 2006

We invite colleagues at all levels (faculty, graduate students, and independent scholars) to submit abstracts for 20- or 30-minute papers (plus 10 minutes of discussion) on any linguistic or philological aspect of any historical or modern Germanic language or dialect, including English (to the Early Modern period) and the extra-territorial varieties. Papers from a range of linguistic subfields, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, language acquisition, contact, and change, as well as differing theoretical approaches, are welcome. Please specify whether you would prefer a 20-minute or a 30-minute slot for your presentation.

Papers will be selected for the program by a broad-based committee in a double-blind process. Please send to the address below a one-page abstract in a 12-point font. Abstracts should fill an entire page. In the upper left-hand corner of the abstract, include your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, phone/fax numbers, and e-mail address. This information will be concealed when the abstract is copied for distribution to the selection committee, but it will appear in the conference program. Abstracts may be sent either as hard copy or as PDF files. Electronic abstracts will be accepted only in the form of PDF files sent as e-mail attachments to (schwink@uiuc.edu). Please use "GLAC-12 abstract (PDF)" as the subject line. Submissions must be received by January 2, 2006. Notifications of acceptance will be distributed by February 2, 2006.

Program Profile

German Linguistics at the University of Manchester

by Martin Durrell

With 11 tenured faculty, German Studies in Manchester is one of the largest such units in the United Kingdom. Following recent restructuring, it is no longer a separate department, but forms part of the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures together with French, Italian, Russian, Spanish & Portuguese, Linguistics & English Language, and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as the Language Centre. This structure means that there is considerable collaboration between the various language and literature based discipline areas at all levels. Most of our undergraduates major jointly in two languages, our M.A. programs are School-based, and many of our doctoral students have an interdisciplinary focus.

The chief focal areas of the German Studies section are now in Classical/Romantic Literature (2 faculty), Modern German Literary and Cultural Studies (4 faculty), Modern German Historical Studies (2 faculty) and German Linguistics (3 faculty). Manchester has long been unusual in the UK in its emphasis on German linguistics. Many departments of comparable size and standing do not offer linguistics, or have only one faculty with a linguistics specialisation, whereas Manchester has normally had two since 1964, and three since 2002.

Linguistics within German departments in the UK tends to be data-oriented, if not exclusively, but there is a clear emphasis on sociolinguistics, historical linguistics and corpus linguistics. The three current faculty in Manchester are Wiebke Brockhaus-Grand, whose principle work has been in phonology, although she also has interests in sociolinguistics, Martin Durrell, whose main focus is in dialectology and sociolinguistics, although he has worked on corpus-based descriptive grammar, and Maeve Olohan, whose field is corpus-based translation studies.

Typically about 80 undergraduate students a year are admitted to major in German. All but a handful of these have at least four years German from high school (fewer than 10% take the *ab initio* pathway), and at least half of these take the introductory courses in German linguistics, which cover phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and register variation. Up to thirty take each of the two second year courses on aspects of the contemporary language, and the development of German since the Middle Ages. In the final year (which for most students is a fourth year, the third having been spent in Germany or Austria), courses can be offered on German dialects, German phonology, comparative Germanic linguistics, the morphology and syntax of modern German and modern German sociolinguistics. The latter course is usually the most popular, with up to 20 takers each year. In addition, students within the German program can elect to take general courses in linguistics or translation theory in their second or final year.

There are no subject- or language-specific M.A. programs. The School has three M.A. programs which can include courses in German, one in literary and cultural studies, one in translation studies and one in linguistics. As with most M.A. programs at universities in the UK, the degree is completed within a single year. All these involve general courses, e.g. in advanced aspects of linguistics, research methods in linguistics, or translation studies, which are taken by all students on the program, alongside elective courses in specific aspects of individual languages. In practice all students intending to continue to take a Ph.D. in German linguistics take the compulsory general courses together with an elective course in those aspects of German linguistics which interest them, and their M.A. thesis topic is frequently a preparatory study for their eventual Ph.D. topic.

The sole requirement of the Ph.D. program is the writing of a thesis (i.e., no further courses need be taken, and there is no comprehensive or qualifying examination), and this is normally completed within three years. Since the securing of more satisfactory funding opportunities in the late nineties the Ph.D. program in German has been buoyant, particularly in modern cultural and intercultural studies and linguistics. In German linguistics there have been seven Ph.D. graduations since 2001, and four Ph.D. students are currently registered. Typically, given the structure of the School, students with an interest in theoretical aspects of German (syntax, lexical semantics) have been advised jointly by a colleague in German and one in Linguistics, whilst those who have worked on comparing the historical development of English and German (lexical semantics, mood) have had a joint advisor in English Language. Other topics covered in this period have been on notions of linguistic correctness (anglicisms, stylistic prescription) and Germanic loans in Frankish. Current Ph.D. students are all working with monolingual or bilingual corpora, on word formation, East German vocabulary, and translating technical language.

More detailed information is to be found on the website:

<http://www.lc.manchester.ac.uk/SubjectAreas/GermanStudies>

News and Announcements

HiSoN: Historical Sociolinguistics Network

The Bristol conference “Language History From Below: Linguistic Variation in the Germanic Languages 1700–2000” saw a proposal to establish the Historical Sociolinguistics Network (HiSoN). A webpage now exists (<http://www.bered.de/hison>) and there are attractive plans for those looking to fill their summer calendar: a summer school will run in the first two weeks of August 2006 on the island of Lesbos. Teachers include Peter Trudgill and Dennis Preston. Contact: Nils.Langer@bristol.ac.uk.

Language Reform Project: Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)

Researchers from Bergen, Bristol, UIUC, Leeds, Manchester, Oslo, Sheffield, and UW, Seattle are working to engender a better understanding of language reform in the past and thus to inform language reform activities of the future. A bid to the Leverhulme Trust to set up a formal scholarly network is being made, with potential partners in Britain, the USA, Norway, France, Canada, the Netherlands, and Germany. An on-line searchable database of prescriptive statements in the period 1800–2000 is envisaged, as are a series of publications with Continuum Books. Plans are in the works for a conference with tentative title “Perfecting Language” in 2006/2007. Contact: Andrew Linn, University of Sheffield: A.R.Linn@sheffield.ac.uk.

e-LALME: Electronic Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English

Researchers submitting a proposal to create an electronic version and extension of the Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English are looking for input from the scholarly community as part of the funding application requirements. To receive information on the proposal and submit comments, contact Dr. Margaret Laing at the Institute for Historical Dialectology, University of Edinburgh (M.Laing@ed.ac.uk).

Conference Report

Report on the XVIIth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, held at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, July 31–August 5, 2005

by Patrick Honeybone

This was a great conference. I thought it succeeded on all fronts – the organisation, the location and, most importantly, the (large majority of the) talks were all first-rate. And, while a satisfyingly wide range of languages were represented among the talks, there was a feast for those interested in the history of Germanic languages, which is hardly surprising given the host university’s reputation in this area. As well as this intellectual context, Madison provided a great location and fine weather, with the talks held in a pleasant conference suite on the banks of Lake Mendota, at the edge of the university campus and close to the hotels where most participants stayed (and this just about made the 8.00 and 8.30 starts bearable!) The pre-conference and on-site organisation was very friendly and well-nigh flawless, so thanks are due to the organisers for that.

There were four parallel sessions throughout the five days of the conference, apart from the customary Wednesday afternoon off for sightseeing trips, and there were seven invited plenary speakers, who addressed a nice variety of topics (syntax, morphology, phonology, dialectology, sociolinguistics) and language families (Germanic, Romance, Athapaskan, Aramaic). I can naturally only report here on those talks that I attended, and only from my bias as a Germanist and Anglist historical phonologist (so apologies here to those of other linguistic persuasions for the phonological bent of this report...). From my perspective, apart from a classic by William Labov, two of the plenaries stood out – those by Michele Loporcaro and B. Elan Dresher. These were important and challenging for historical and non-historical phonologists alike (although, from an SGL perspective, I should report that only Dresher used Germanic data, working with considerable quantities of Old English, as did Ans van Kemenade, a distinguished syntactic plenarist).

While they had quite different assumptions and aims, Loporcaro and Dresher had in common the considered integration of the entities and frameworks of phonological theory with historical data from careful philology. Their starting points were arguably diametrically opposed: Loporcaro argued that historical linguistics should not see itself as primarily a means of testing linguistic

frameworks (but still showed that detailed dialectological accuracy can provide answers to issues in historical analysis and in phonological theory), while Dresher used a careful analysis of historical evidence to argue that such work can cast doubt on the value of certain recent ‘evolutionary’ approaches to phonology and linguistics in general (namely those which dismiss UG out of hand), thus using historical data to make a point about linguistic frameworks. It didn’t seem to me, though, that the two approaches were incompatible—historical work can indeed have far-reaching consequences for theory building (in the way that Dresher argued), but it needn’t. And Loporcaro clearly showed that work which focuses on the data and its philological and dialectological background is vital and valuable in its own right.

One thing that Loporcaro and Dresher had in common was the importance they both placed on the role of underlying or abstract forms, representations and linguistic levels in accounting for phonological change. These are things that are commonly argued to be indispensable in historical work, but are oddly questioned in much contemporary non-historical work, especially in surface-oriented frameworks such as OT. This focus on underlying forms and representations was also apparent in several of the Germanicist papers from the standard sessions, such as Marc Pierce’s use of underspecified archiphonemes in a very interesting reanalysis of exceptions to Siever’s Law in Gothic and Laura Catharine Smith’s use of invariant prosodic templates to account for a range of data from the history of West Germanic languages. These two papers were arranged together in a group session on ‘Sound Change’ among the general papers, along with impressively data-rich Germanic work from such scholars as Kurt Goblirsch and Richard Page.

There were several other such grouped sessions of interest members of the SGL, such as ‘Germanic verbal morphology’, ‘Germanic verbal syntax’ and ‘Germanic gender’, and there was also a good representation of Germanicist work in other (cross-linguistic) grouped sessions, on Old English, Middle Low German, Insular Scandinavian, Afrikaans, Swedish and Dutch among others. In amongst the plenaries and phonology papers, I caught some interesting Germanic sociolinguistic work, such as that by Nils Langer on cross-period attitudes to what constitutes ‘Bad German’, Wim Vandenbussche on language choice in Flanders in the 19th century (showing a surprisingly common use of Dutch) and Bruce Spencer on attempts to model urban interactions in Early Modern Germany quantitatively.

In short, I thoroughly enjoyed the conference, as did others that I spoke to, especially those with a Germanic bent. It matched the pace of previous conferences in the ICHL series, but was not quite as overwhelming as those that had many more parallel sessions going on at once. The next two in the series—eagerly awaited if you’re like me—were arranged at the business meeting for Montreal in 2007 and Nijmegen in 2009.

Conference Calls

14th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics

This conference will be held in Bergamo, Italy from August 21–25, 2006. Keynote speakers include Markku Filppula (Joensuu), Andreas Jucker (Zurich), Ans van Kemenade (Nijmegen), and Margaret Laing (Edinburgh). Deadline for submissions: November 30, 2005
<http://www.westerni.unibg.it/anglistica/slin/14icehl-home.html>

28. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Sprachwissenschaft (DGfS)

This year the conference theme is “Sprachdokumentation und Sprachbeschreibung.” The conference is to take place at the Universität Bielefeld from February 22–24, 2006.
<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/dgfs2006/>

Messages from the Editors

Expansion of the Editorial Team

I am delighted to announce that Dr. Mary Grantham O'Brien of the Department of Germanic, Slavic, and East Asian Studies at the University of Calgary is joining me as co-editor of the Newsletter. I have long been grateful for her involvement in producing the Newsletter and welcome her on behalf of the membership in her new role. (*Amanda Pounder*)

Call for News and Information

You will notice that we have introduced a new section to the Newsletter, "Program Profile". We'd like to feature a program, small or large, each Newsletter. In addition, we're hoping to make "Conference Reports" a more regularly appearing feature. Please consider volunteering for a write-up on your program or a conference you attended!

We solicit news and other information that may prove valuable to Germanic linguists including but not limited to job postings, conference announcements, and departmental news. Please send your information to Mary Grantham O'Brien (mgobrien@ucalgary.ca). The deadline for the next Newsletter is January 15, 2006.

To join the SGL or report a change of address, fill out the form below and send it with a check, money order, or transfer receipt to:

Robert Howell
German Department
818 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
University of Wisconsin
MADISON, WI 53706-1558

Name: _____
Address: _____

Email: _____

I would like to become a member of the Society for Germanic Linguistics.
 Please note my address change.

Membership category:
 regular member (\$40.00)
 student member (\$15.00)
 joint membership (\$45.00)
 emeritus member (\$15.00)
 sustaining member (\$60.00)

Members in Europe: Please pay Euro 15,00 (student), Euro 30,00 (regular), Euro 40,00 (joint), Euro 15,00 (emeritus), or Euro 50,00 (sustaining) to Volksbank Freiburg, Routing Number 680 900 00, Account 25598202. Submit your payment receipt with this form.

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