

SELIM OLD ENGLISH LINGUISTICS ONLINE SEMINAR
in collaboration with TOEBI (Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland)

PROGRAMME

May 19 (Thursday) 4 pm

Elzbieta Adamczyk, Bergische Universität Wuppertal

Futurate presents in early English: Patterns of distribution and change in the Old English Bible translations

The focus of this presentation is on the use of *futurate presents*, i.e. the present tense verb forms with a future reference, which served as the primary means of expressing future tense in Old English. With the emergence of lexically-based future constructions in the grammaticalization process, i.e. *shall* (OE **sculan*) and *will* (OE *willan*), and their subsequent dissemination, the use of futurate presents tended to gradually decline. The aim of this study is to examine (a) in what way the development of periphrastic future markers affected the functional domain of futurate presents at this very early stage when **sculan* and OE *willan* were only emerging future tense markers, retaining much of their modal flavours, and (b) to identify the factors conditioning the use of futurate presents and the dynamics of the redistribution of future reference forms. A range of potential factors is considered to account for the (re)distribution, including morphosyntactic features, such as person, number, mood, syntactic features, such as transitivity of the verb, pronominality of the subject, semantic features (*Aktionsart*), as well as pragmatic ones (temporal adverbial and temporal proximity). The material for the quantitative analysis comes from the tenth-century Bible translations, *Lindisfarne* and *Rushworth Gospels*, where the overt marking of the future tense in Latin serves as a diagnostic for identifying the use of the present tense for the future contexts. The findings of the study indicate that the distribution of futurate presents and the emerging periphrastic constructions in Old English was determined by a combination of semantic and formal criteria, with person, telicity, sentence type and morphological complexity of the verb emerging as pivotal.

About the author

Elżbieta Adamczyk is Junior Professor in the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Wuppertal (Bergische Universität Wuppertal) in the area of English historical linguistics and varieties of English. She received her PhD in English linguistics from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland) where she had worked as Assistant Professor until 2015. Her research interests concentrate on English historical linguistics, especially historical morphology, comparative Germanic linguistics, language contact in medieval Europe, and historical multilingualism. She is the author of a monograph published in 2018 on the nominal inflection in Northern West Germanic languages (*Reshaping of the Nominal Inflection in Early Northern West Germanic*, John Benjamins), a co-editor of an online Electronic Repository of Greater Poland Oaths (<https://rotha.ehum.psnc.pl/>), and recently a co-editor of a volume on historical multilingualism (Włodarczyk, M., Tyrkkö, J., Adamczyk, E. (eds.) 2022. *Multilingualism from manuscript to 3D: Intersections of modalities from medieval to modern times*. Routledge). Her most recently pursued research path involves the evolution of future tense in English with a focus on the interaction between temporality and modality in expressing future reference. The topic is investigated within the Research Unit “Diachronic Typology of Future Tenses in the Languages of Europe and Asia” at University of Cologne.

May 19 (Thursday) 5 pm

Judith Huber, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

Talking about Motion in Old English

This talk takes a look at Old English from the perspective of motion typology (Talmy 1985, Slobin 2004). The typology classifies languages according to how their speakers typically express intransitive motion (e.g. E *William sails across the Channel* vs. F *Guillaume traverse la Manche*), pursuing questions such as which information is typically expressed in the verb (e.g. manner in *sail*, path in *traverse*), and which element is typically used to express path (*across*, *traverse*).

After discussing in how far the extant Old English texts are suitable for these questions, I will present three studies on how motion is expressed in Old English (Huber 2017):

1. Which verbs are attested in motion expressions? An analysis of the inventory of Old English verbs (ca. 190 verbs) used to talk about intransitive motion, compiled on the basis of the *Thesaurus of Old English*, *DOE* and *BT*, suggests that Old English is a rather manner-salient language (cf. also Fanego 2012) and that it has hardly any pure path verbs. It also shows that a range of verbs such as *feohtan* ‘fight’, *sēcan* ‘seek’, which don’t express motion on their own, are attested in motion uses, suggesting that the Old English intransitive motion construction can flexibly be used to accommodate non-motion verbs.

2. Which verbs and which patterns are frequent in motion expressions? An analysis of all motion expressions in selected Old English texts (excerpts from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, *Ohthere* and *Wulfstan*, *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints*) shows that while the frequency of path verbs is low throughout, the frequency of manner verbs as opposed to more neutral *cuman*, *faran*, *feran* strongly depends on style – a factor usually neglected in motion typology studies. Pattern-wise, path satellites clearly dominate the picture. These mostly come as adverbs and prepositions, while prefixes such as *oð-* ‘away’, *tō-* ‘apart’ are highly marginal in motion expressions (cf. also Thim 2012).

3. How are Latin path verbs translated to Old English? Since studies (1) and (2) have shown that Old English has only few path verbs and that, moreover, these are used only rarely, I investigate how Old English Bible translators render Latin path verbs like *ascendere* or *intrare* – do these trigger an increased use of path verbs? Is path information always retained in the Old English translation?

The results will briefly be contrasted with the situation in Middle English, where the borrowing of French path verbs (e.g. *entrer*, *descend*) obviously brings a great change to the inventory of motion verbs, but not so much to their use.

About the autor

Judith Huber works as a lecturer in English historical linguistics at the *Department für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) Munich. Before this, she was assistant professor for English historical and variational linguistics at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität (FAU) Erlangen-Nürnberg (2017-2022) and lecturer in English linguistics at LMU (2013-2017) and Katholische Universität (KU) Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (2008-2013). She studied English and Romance linguistics and literature at the University of Hamburg and LMU Munich and holds a PhD in English linguistics from LMU Munich (supervisor: Ursula Lenker). Judith’s research focuses on variation and change in the history of the English language, particularly historical syntax, lexicology and pragmatics. She has done extensive research on the expression of motion events in Old and Middle English from a construction-grammar and language contact perspective (2021, 2017a, 2017b, 2013, 2012), has analysed variation in perfect auxiliaries in Middle English (2019), and together with Christine Elswailer and Julian Mader has worked on the role of morphosyntactic simplification and dialect contact in the loss of *thou* (2021, in prep.). Most recently, she has started a project on polar answers in the history of English.

Judith has co-organized the *Historical Sociolinguistics Network Conference 2021* at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg and is one of the founders and editors of the series *Advances in Historical Linguistics* at Language Science Press.