KEYNOTE LECTURE

It is to wyt… sciendum est…
Supralocalisation Processes in a Historical Multilingual Environment

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This talk looks at the multilingual environment in which local documents were produced and received. Traditionally, and from an Anglo-centric perspective, languages other than English would be approached as sources of language contact phenomena. The effects of contact, such as lexical borrowing, have typically been studied with a diachronic lens, looking at interactions in the past leading to outcomes in the present (e.g. Durkin 2014). It is a relatively recent realisation that the communicative environments in which texts were produced were synchronically multilingual, with multiple languages – most often Latin and the local vernacular – interacting in complex ways in a particular communicative situation (Pahta *et al.* (eds.) 2018). Similarly, foreign language influence on the development of supralocal linguistic patterns is another recent addition to the historical linguistic research agenda (Wright ed. 2020). In this presentation I concentrate on the linguistic effects of the co-existence of Latin and the vernacular in medieval and early modern Scotland from these two perspectives: diachronic and synchronic, and on how those effects relate to standardising processes in language use.

In my research I have mostly worked with legal genres, such as laws, administrative records or protocol books, which are particularly pertinent to the early urban context. Vernacular writing in these genres is not only steeped in the Latin tradition but it also draws on Latin concurrently. Therefore, from a diachronic perspective, this talk will look at the impact of Latin on textual standardisation in Scots, i.e. the emergence of repetitive chunks of text which perform a particular function. From a synchronic perspective, I will look at multilingual practices on the page, where the interaction between Latin and the vernacular reflects the contemporary multilingual repertoire of the writer and, potentially, the intended audience. I will make reference to the Structural Model of Multilingual Practice which is designed to capture the division of labour between linguistic resources and any non-linguistic cues which indicate changes in the resource.

The Scottish context is illustrative of similar linguistic strategies across medieval and early modern Europe where vernacular languages interacted with the then *lingua franca*, Latin. We are still trying to understand how this relationship contributed to the processes of standardisation and supralocalisation and what it tells us about linguistic repertoires, practices and the wider socio-cultural context.

Selected references:

Durkin, Philip. 2014. *Borrowed words: A history of loanwords in English*. Oxford: OUP.
Pahta, Päivi, Janne Skaffari and Laura Wright (eds.) 2018. *Multilingual practices in language history: English and beyond*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
Wright, Laura (ed.) 2020. *The multilingual origins of Standard English*, Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.