

A PHONOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC DESCRIPTION
OF ANIMAL SOUNDS
AS FOUND IN MODERN ENGLISH DIALECTS

BERNHARD DIENSBERG

Universität Bonn

1. Introduction

The word material which I have used comes mainly from the *Basic Material* (Orton, H. et al. 1962—71, henceforth BM) of the *Survey of English Dialects* (henceforth SED), the *Lowman Survey* (Viereck, W. 1975, henceforth LS), the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* (Kurath, H. et al. 1939—43, henceforth LANE), and the *Word Geography of the Eastern United States* (Kurath, H. 1949, henceforth WGEUS). The examples taken from the BM of the SED include the following head-words: *Bellow* (III. 10. 2), *Whinny* (III. 10. 3), *Moo. Moo* (III. 10. 4), *Bleat* (III. 10. 5); *Mew* (III. 10. 6), *Bulls; bellow, etc.* (III. 10. 7), the compounds *screech-owl, screech-owl, shriek(ing)-owl* found under *Owl* (IV. 7. 6), *Shrieking* (VI. 5. 15), *Laughing* (VIII. 8. 7, IX. 2. 14) and the verb *Scream* (VIII. 8. 11). The lexical and grammatical results of the LS were edited by Wolfgang Viereck (1975/I & II), who also takes material from the LANE (Kurath/Hanley/Bloch/Lowman/Hansen 1939—43). In addition to the above publications "older sources" such as the *English Dialect Dictionary* (Wright, J. 1896—1905, henceforth EDD) and the *English Dialect Grammar* (Wright, J. 1905, henceforth EDG) will be drawn upon. For Scottish variants we have the *Scottish National Dictionary* (Grant, W. et al. 1940—76, henceforth SND).

The geographical distribution of the items *bellow, whinny/neigh* is set out in *A Word Geography of England* (Orton, H. and N. Wright 1975, henceforth WGE) M 78 (WGE: 133) and M 129 (WGE: 198) respectively. The compounds *screech-owl, etc.* are entered in M 102: *Owl* (WGE: 162). In addition Viereck

(1975/I: 179 ff., II: Maps 139–142) gives a detailed overview of the occurrences of *bawl* (cows), *low* (cows during feeding time) and *whinny* (horses, especially during feeding time) and their synonyms. He draws not only on Lowman's material, but also on the BM of the SED and Hans Kurath's findings for the Atlantic Seaboard (LANE, WGEUS). Regional distribution of an item will only be given where relevant.

I intend to provide a systematic description of the words for animal sounds (including the same or related items used by humans) seen from *two* aspects. Firstly, to give a phonological description, secondly, to describe the semantic structure with the help of semantic components. In some cases Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME) forms of the verbs in question may be quoted in order to illustrate their phonetic development.

As far as the formal side of the words under discussion is concerned, solid foundations were laid by Hans Marchand, who gave the first systematic treatment of "Phonetic Symbolism" (Marchand 1969: 397ff.) and "Ablaut and Rime Combinations" (Marchand 1969: 429ff.), relating these processes to word-formation. The semantic side of the lexemes involved may prove to be more difficult and leave some questions open. The lexical fields will be determined by the reference of the words concerned, e. g. *bawl*, *beal* (bulls, cows, calves, sheep), *bawl*, *beal* (human beings as 'actors'), *whinny*, *whine*, *whimper* (horses, humans), *scrawl*, *yawl/yowl* (cats, humans), on the one hand. Obviously, the majority of the items used with a human 'actor' were borrowed from the realm of animals. Only a few cases seem to point in the opposite direction, e. g. *call* (cows), *cry* (bulls, cows), *mumble* (horses, cows), *laugh* (horses), *sing* (cows), *mutter* (horses). On the other hand, the *time* and *place* when the animal sounds were produced are also relevant, e. g. *feeding time* (horses, cows), *cowhouse* and *stable* (horses). Of course, characteristic features of the utterances made will be given, e. g. *scream* /+ LOUD, + HIGH/, *mumble* /- LOUD, - HIGH/, *bark* /+ LOUD, - CONTINUOUS/.

2. Phonological Description

For the phonological shape of the verbs under scrutiny a preliminary description may be given by listing the initial formants, e. g. /b-/ symbolizing "the sound made when the mouth is opened and at the same time (may) imitate a softened explosion of sound" (Marchand 1969: 407). This is true for *bawl*, *beal*, *bell*, *bellock*, *bellow*, *belder*, *bawk*, *baw*, *belve*, *boller*, *burr*, and *beller*. As the words in question as a rule consist of two formants, their meaning will often be determined by the second formant, e. g. /-i:k/ "denoting the making of noise, usually high-pitched: *creak*, *speak* (sic!), *squeak*, *shriek*, *scream*." (Samuels 1972: 151); see Marchand, who quotes, in addition to these,

dialectal *peek/peak* 'to squeak' (Marchand 1969: 420). Expressive *l* and *r* (Krahe and Meid 1967: 263f.) as exemplified in *humble*, *nickle*, *mumble* and *beller*, *holler*, *hammer*, *whinner* will be considered as extensions of the roots in question, e. g. *hum* and *bell*. The same view is taken for the suffix *k* (Krahe and Meid 1967: 261–63), e. g. *bellock*, *skelloch*, *whinnock*. Final *-y* and *-o(w)* as in *hummy*, *whinny* and *bellow*, *hollo* (besides *beller* and *holler*) are also considered as mere extensions of the respective roots without any independent meaning of their own. Thus, our word material may be grouped either according to the first or the second formant. At any rate the initial formant seems to bear some relation to the actor with which the verb can be used. In the following I shall give a synopsis of the most important elements involved.

Marchand's definition of *bl-* "expressing the idea 'blow, blow up, swell'" (Marchand 1969: 407) does not help us very much with the words in this category. Though he admits that "There are several words denoting vocal sounds with the initial /bl/" (Marchand 1969: 407), this formant is clearly "expressive of a discharge of breath or fluid from the mouth after an effort to retain it" (see OED, s. v. *blurt* v.). The verbs *blare*, *blart*, *bleat*, *blawt*, *blodder/blotter* and *blore*, *blort* refer to *bulls*, *cows*, *calves* /+ BOVINE/ as do the two other subgroups: /b-/, e. g. *bawl*, *beal*, etc. (quoted above) and /m-/, e. g. *maw*, *mew*, *moo* (to be discussed below). The formants involved clearly have the phonological features /LABIAL, VOICE/ in common. The words *blore* and *blort* are used in referring to both *bulls*, *cows* and *horses*. This is equally true of *holler* (SED, East Midlands only) and *hollo* (West Midlands, Southern). The SED gives *holler* with *horses* and *sheep* as actors.

Initial *m* "(found) with some words denoting animal sounds where /m/ is, so to speak, an anthropomorphic imitation" (Marchand 1969: 415) appears in *maw*, *mew*, *moan/moon*, *moonge/munge* (variants of *moon*), *moo* (less often *mew*), *moom* (alternating with *moon*). Not much weight can be attributed to *mumble*, *murr* and *murmur* (a reduplicated variant of *murr*) used for both *cows* and *horses* (SED, West Midlands and Northern) in only four localities.

On the other hand the semantic component /EQUINE/ underlies nearly all the items with initial /hw/ (or /w/ for most English speakers). These formants are found "with words denoting noises of air or breath" (Marchand 1969: 415): *whicker* 'to neigh' — "found in a coherent and well defined area" in south-west England (Fischer 1976: 270f., Map 283) — *whine*, *whinny*, *whinnock*, *whinner*, *whistle*, *whipper*, *whimper*, *whitter*, *when* and *whinker* — according to Andreas Fischer a blend between *whinny* and *whicker* which is found in the *whicker* area (Fischer 1976: 271 & 328).

Verbs denoting snorting and sniffing noises are mostly restricted to *horses* (/+ EQUINE/), e. g. *snort* (actor: *bulls*, *horses*; humans), *snuffle* as a variant of *sniffle* (*horses*), *sniff* and *snicker* (*horses*, human beings), *snarl* (*horses*, *dogs*), *snoodle* and *snore* (only humans), *snork* (*horses*, SED: West Midlands). Peter

Genzel (1959 : 248—251) gives *snuffle* — SED, East Midlands (horses), *snort* — SED, West Midlands, Southern (horses), *snortle* like a hog, *snork* — SED, West Midlands (horses). He considers *snork* to be a synonym of *grunt* (pigs), *snurt* as a variant of *snort* and quotes *sneeze* together with its Scottish variant *neeze*. These words refer to *sneezing* (Genzel 1959 : 248ff.), while *blurt*, *rout* and *snort* are given as synonyms of Standard English (StE) *snore*, see High German (HG) *schnarchen* (Genzel 1959 : 109). Marchand does not assign any specific value to /sn-/. He interprets initial *s* as “expressive of frictional noise, chiefly such as are caused by the intake of breath” (Marchand 1969 : 417). This description equally applies to initial *sn*.

Words containing /n-/ followed by /-it, -ik/ or /-ut, -uk/ — see the alternation /I~v/ preserved as such in northern England and corresponding to /I~^/ elsewhere (Marchand 1969 : 429 & 431) — are also typical sounds made by horses. There are *nicker* ‘to neigh’ (Northern, Scotland; see EDD, s. v.) and *nucker*, *snicker* and *snucker*, *nitter* and *nutter* (found in a few instances in the South-West Midlands (Viereck 1980 : 41/Map 6)), *nickle* (a variant of *nicker*). Perhaps even *mutter* (SED, Northern) may belong here. Viereck gives a good overview of the geographical distribution of the above-quoted synonyms of *whinny* (1975/I : 181—83; 1975/II : Map 142).

The phonological shape of the rare *frinny* (SED, La 6, 7, 11 & 13), *rinnny* (SED, La 5, 6 & 10) and *rinner* (SED, La 14) may have been influenced by the more common *whinny/whinner* (\cong StE *neigh*). Words denoting high-pitched sounds made by horses when (sexually) excited or when frightened, e. g. *shriek*, *squeal* and *scrawl*, will be discussed below.

There is a smaller set of words referring both to horses [+ EQUINE/ and bulls, cows [+ BOVINE/]. In addition to the above-mentioned *hollo* (horses, cows; SED, West Midlands, South) and *holler* (horses, sheep; SED, East Midlands), *blore* (bulls, horses, cows; PLACE: stable, cow-house, fields), *blort* (bulls, cows; PLACE: cow-house, fields) and *croon* (bulls, horses; PLACE: fields) may be quoted. The SED shows that both *blore* and the related *blort* are restricted to the Northern and East Midland counties. The OED explains *blore* as ‘to cry out, weep (actor: + HUMAN)’, ‘of animals: to bleat, bray, bellow’, but does not register *blort* as a synonym. The verb *croon* is exclusively Northern (according to the SED). The EDD, s. v. *croon*, v. ‘to roar or bellow like a bull’, also gives instances from Devon and Cornwall in addition to those from the Northern counties and Scotland. The same meaning is found in Modern Scots according to the SND, s. v. *croon/crone/crun(e)* ‘to utter a deep, long-drawn-out sound, as the bellow of a bull, the lowing of a cow’.

Words with tonic vowel followed by nasal consonant like *croon* (bulls, horses), *groan* (cows because of wind), *moan* (sound made by overfed cows) together with *moon* and *moonge* as Northern variants of *moan* refer to a low-pitched continuous sound mostly produced by contented animals after feeding

time. According to the SED the geographical distribution is as follows: *groan* (cows, PLACE: fields, West Midlands), *moan* (cows, PLACE: cowshed, fields, West Midlands; bulls, East Midlands), *moon* (cows, PLACE: cowshed, only Northern), *moonge* (cows, PLACE: cowshed: found only at Nb 8 and 9); see EDD, s. v. *munge*, v. (2) ‘to moan, bellow; to grumble in low, indistinct tones’ (with *moonge* as its variant).

To the above-quoted examples containing mostly a back tonic vowel plus following nasal could be added *hum* (horses, cows), *hummer* (horses, cows) and *hummy*, a variant of the preceding attested only for horses. Marchand takes the formant *-um* [-^m~vum] as a symbol of vibrating sounds (1969 : 424) and gives *hum* and the dialectalism *bum* ‘to hum loudly’ as examples. This interpretation should be extended to include *croon*, *groan*, *moan*, etc. referring to low-pitched, continuous, vibrating sounds made by animals, mostly after feeding time. *Mumble* (horses, cows) — mentioned above — and *murr* (horses, cows) together with *murmur* (cows) may also belong here. Marchand considers *-umble* [-^mbl] as “symbolic of indistinct humming or rumbling noises” (Marchand 1969 : 424) and gives *mumble*, *rumble*, *humble* (obs.) ‘to hum’ and *grumble* as examples (Marchand 1969 : 424). He seems to overlook the fact that these verbs containing *-umble* go back to the formant *-um* enlarged by syllabic *l* and that, consequently, both subgroups are closely related. This is evident from the earlier forms, e. g. ME *momelen* ‘to mumble, murmur’ besides *momble/mumble*; ME *hummen* ‘to hum, buzz, murmur’ besides *humblinge* ‘a humming, faint rumbling’ — see MED, s. v. *momelen*, v., *hummen*, v. and *humblinge*, gerund. According to the SED the geographical distribution of the last quoted words is as follows: *hum* (cows, PLACE: cow-house, West Midlands, North; horses, PLACE: stable, East Midlands), *mumble* (cows, PLACE: cowhouse, West Midlands), *murmur* (cows, PLACE: cowshed, only Y 32), *hummer* (horses, PLACE: fields, stable, East Midlands), *hummy* (horses, PLACE: stable, fields, only Sf 2, Es 10), *murr* (horses, PLACE: stable; cows, PLACE: cowhouse, West Midland counties).

It is not surprising that sounds made by cows can also refer to sheep (because of their biological affinity), e. g. *bawl*, *bellow*, *blare* (see HG *plärren*), *blart*, *bleat*, *blate* and *bleak*. Typical sounds made by sheep are *baa* [ba:], *bae* [be:] and *maa* [ma:], *mae* [me:], which clearly point to sound symbolism (Marchand 1969 : 415). *Bar out* (bulls, W 1 and 3) as a synonym of *bellow* is attested only in these south-western localities. The editors of the BM of the Southern Counties (Orton and Wakelin 1967—68 : 342) give *?baa(out)* as the orthographic representation. This decision cannot be allowed to stand, because *baa* is usually associated with the bleating of sheep (Stadler 1969 : 8), not with the sounds made by bulls. Map 195 of the LANE shows *blat*, *blate*, *blaat*, *blart*, *bleat*, *blare*, *blaa*, *bawl*, *bellow*, *baa*, *cry* and *holler*, used to designate the cry of a calf when it is being weaned. Neither the LS nor the

SED have a question of the type: "Noise made by the calf when it is being weaned. You say the calf began to — — —" (Viereck 1975/I:179). Map 195 of LANE also shows *blat*, *bleat*, *blate* denoting the cry of both calves and sheep. The form *blat*, historically a variant of *bleat* and *blate*, is not recorded by the SED; cp. ME *blatten* 'they stuck out the tongue' (MED, s. v.).

The verb *bray* refers both to sounds made by a donkey (SED, So 13) and a horse (Viereck 1975/I:182; see EDD, s. v.). It is astonishing that StE *neigh* (horses) and *low* (cows) cannot be related to sound symbolism. This may be due to the Late OE simplification of the initial clusters *hl/χl/* and *hn/χn/* in OE *hl-ōwan* and *hn-āzan* corresponding to Modern English *low* and *neigh* (ODEE, s. vv.). C. T. Onions quotes Northern *neigher* (16th century), *nicher* (17th c.) and *nicker* (18th c.), so that the apparent gap between StE *neigh* (ODEE, s. v.) and the dialectalism *nicker* can be bridged.

There are very few verbs common to both cows and pigs, e. g. *grunt on* (Nb 5, cows, SED), or to dogs and bulls, e. g. *growl* (bulls, East Midlands, SED), or to dogs, foxes, and calves, e. g. *bark* recorded by Lowman for Dorset (Viereck 1975/I:179f.) cp. *bay* 'to bark: deep, continuously, of dogs' (Stadler 1969:17). The SED gives *squeal* with pigs and horses as actors, *mawl* referring to sheep and cats (only Southern).

Initial *y* /j/ occurs in some words denoting the cries made by cats, e. g. *yawl* /ja:l, jɔ:l/, *yowl* /jəʊl/, *yell* (only East Midlands) and *yow* /jəʊ/ (East Midlands and Northern). Marchand does not assign any value to /j-/, which may be paralleled with the /w-/ occurring in *wow* /wəʊ/ (SED, East Midlands and Northern) denoting the cry of the cat; see EDD, s. v. *wow*, v. (1) 'to mew as a cat; to howl or bark as a dog' and EDD, s. v. *wew*, v. 'to mew, as a kitten'. These examples show that the two approximants /w-/ and /j-/ may stand for noises — mostly high-pitched and short /— CONTINUOUS/ — made by both cats and dogs; cp. *yap* '(of dogs) utter short, sharp barks'. It comes as no surprise that words with initial *y* /j/, e. g. *yawl*/*yowl* 'to shout', *yawn* and *yark* (West Midlands) and *yarm* as its northern synonym can also refer to human beings as actors. Wright records *yawl*, v. (1) 'to howl; to bawl, shout' (EDD, s. v.) and *yarm*, v. 'of a sheep: to bleat; of a cat: to whine, to mew', to utter a loud, discordant noise' (EDD, s. v.), but does not register *yawn* and *yark* denoting sounds made by animals or humans.

In addition to *mew* [mju:], the standard form denoting the cry of the cat, dialectal *mow* [maʊ] and *miaow* [mjəʊ] are recorded; see Modern Scottish *maw*, v. (2) 'to mew as a cat' (SND, s. v.). In fact, south-western dialects show *mew* [mju:] at two localities (SED, W 4; Ha 1) to refer to the lowing of cows. This is, undoubtedly, a variant of the common *moo* [mu:]. Kurath records both mewing [mju:ɪ] and mooing [mu:ɪ] for "the gentle noise cows make at feeding time" (WGEUS: 62). The cry of the cat is not recorded at the communities in question neither in LANE nor in WGEUS. It is certainly

not identical with the lowing of cows, as *miaow* [mjəʊ] recorded at the SED localities in question (W 4, Ha 1) makes clear. The verb *mawl*, which denotes cries made by both sheep and cats (SED, only Southern), has been mentioned above. It may be a variant of *miaul* 'to call or cry as a cat' (see Modern French *miauler*; OED, s. v.). The related *mewl* 'to cry feebly like an infant', 'to mew like a cat' (OED, s. v.) may be an extension of common *mew* by adding an expressive *l*.

Verbs showing the initial clusters /skr-/, /kr-/ and /skw-/, /kw-/ (including /sw-/ and /w-/ due to northern simplification of these groups; see Jacobsson (1962:258ff.) have mostly birds as their referents, especially owls and seagulls, or cows. Quite a few of these verbs denoting mostly high-pitched, unpleasant sounds can be used with human beings as actors. The cluster /skr-/ as exemplified by *scream*/*screech*, *scrawk*, *scrawl* (cats), *skrike* (pigs) and *screet* is interpreted by Marchand as "an initial symbol with words denoting unpleasant sounds" (Marchand 1969:411). The elements *screech* (notice *scritch*/*scrigh* as its phonological variant) and *screet* appear in the compounds *screech-owl* and *screet-owl*, which are found in contemporary English dialects (WGE: 162/M 102). The SED has *shriek-owl* and *shrieking-owl* only at one single locality (Es 7). Kurath records *scrigh-owl*, *scrooch owl*, *squich owl* and *squinch owl* besides *shivering/shiveling owl* and *winnering owl* (WGEUS: 73 and Figure 136). The element *winnering* is related to *whinner*, a variant of *whinny* 'to neigh'.

The cluster /kr-/ introducing "words denoting jarring, harsh, or grating sounds" (Marchand 1969:410) is exemplified by *creak*, *croak*/*crake* (Northern). Because of their phonetic similarity both *cry* and *croon*, which have been briefly discussed above, may be included. The alternation /skr-/~|kr-/ is based on the presence or absence of prothetic *s*, which may have been used as a means of word-formation (Marchand 1969:427). The verbs *squeak*, *squeal* (horses), *squawk* and *squall* (cats) exemplify initial /skw-/ introducing "words expressive of discordant or discordantly eruptive sound" (Marchand 1969:414). Its counterpart without prothetic *s*, which is found in *queak*, v. beside northern *weak*, v. (EDD, s. v.), may be quoted in support of Marchand's assumption that "A few words suggestive of harsh bird sounds are introduced by /kw-/" (Marchand 1969:414). The isolated *skelling* 'screaming' (only Northern, SED) could provide the link which connects /sk-/ (as a variant of /skw-/) both "with verbs implying quick, brisk movement" (Marchand 1969:410) and with unpleasant high-pitched sounds uttered at short intervals. The verb *skell* 'to shriek, scream, yell, to cry aloud' is, in fact, recorded for Yorkshire by Wright (EDD, s. v. *skell*, v., 2). The SND (s. v. *skell*, v., 2) gives the meaning 'of surf: to break on the shore, ripple' with the actor /— ANIMATE/.

I would like to connect /tw-/, exemplified in *twining* and *twisting*, ("old", only Northern) signifying 'screaming', with the above-mentioned *kw*-group

because of the fact that Modern English dialects often have /tw-/ instead of /kw-/ (see Jacobsson 1962 : 261f. who gives *twill* and *twilt* for *quill* and *quilt* etc.). Marchand takes /tw-/ to symbolize among other things "small sounds", "tremulating sounds of birds" (Marchand 1969 : 414) which would have to include high-pitched, unpleasant sounds of the type *screaming*. Finally, *shriek(ing)* with reference to horses (only East Midlands) and pigs (Lancashire) should be quoted here and included in the present subgroup because of the historical relatedness of /ʃr-/ *shr-* (not mentioned by Marchand) to /skr-/. In fact, *shriek* is related to dialectal *scream* (see ODEE, s. v. *shriek*).

3. Semantic Description

The semantic description of the verbs referring to sounds made by human beings and animals has to take different factors into account. The first is the nature of the so-called 'actor', i.e. the source: /±HUMAN/, /±ANIMATE/ from which the sound production originates (syntactically: the subject of the clause). As has been shown above there is a close connection between 'actor' and 'predicate' (verb which denotes the 'action', i. e. sound production) in most cases. This phenomenon was termed "lexikalische Solidaritäten" by Eugenio Coseriu (1967 : 296), e. g. *horse* — *to neigh* (StE), *whinny/whinner*, etc. (dialectal); *dog* — *to bark*; *bull* — *to bellow, beal*; *cat* — *to miaow/mew* (see Kastovsky 1982 : 105). The next step consists in finding out semantic components or features which characterise the contents of these verbs as precisely as possible.

Reference has been made above to the manner of the utterances and physical qualities of the sounds produced (see Gimson 1980 : 21ff., chap. 3), i. e. *pitch* (high/low tones), *loudness* or *prominence* (loud/low), *length* or *duration* (long/short), *continuity* (continuous/interrupted or repeated), *perception* (clear/distinct vs. indistinct/subdued). Perhaps also judgements reflecting the listener's attitude, e. g. *pleasant/unpleasant* sounds (noises), should be included (see Lipka 1972 : 136 and footnote 124). For the sake of brevity I will use binary notation with these source features, e. g. ±HIGH (*pitch*), ±LOUD (*prominence* or *intensity* of the sound production). It is quite obvious that the features in question are to a large extent determined by perception of the sounds by the listener. The so-called source features involving the semantic components (*pitch, loudness, duration, etc.*) may be termed 'inherent features' of the sounds in question, while features relating to the actor (BOVINE, EQUINE, etc.) are to be classified as 'contextual features' in our description (see Kastovsky 1982 : 105). Leonhard Lipka (1979 : 194ff.) distinguishes between 'denotative semantic features' as the most central ones on the one hand, and 'connotative and inferential features' on the other.

It will certainly be very difficult to provide a complete semantic descrip-

tion by using the source features mentioned above, even if the nature of the 'actor' (/± HUMAN, ± MALE, ± ADULT/) is taken into account, e. g. *groan* /± HUMAN, ± MALE, ± ADULT; — HIGH, — LOUD/. In the BM *groan* is given with reference to cows, e. g. /+ BOVINE/ (because of wind). This shows that additional factors denoting the cause of the sound production' i. e. uneasiness/pain in the case in question, have to be taken into account. I have already referred above to *time* and *place* of the sounds produced by domestic animals, e. g. horses, cows — during feeding-time, horses — in the stable or in the fields, cows in the cowhouse/cowshed or in the fields, cows at milking time.

The factors of *time* and *place* of the sounds made by animals are mostly included in the questionnaire, e. g. "Now tell me your words for the usual cries animals make. Horses, during feeding-time in the stable, ... And in the fields they ..." (SED, III. 10. 3), which is used to elicit the key-words *whinny* or its variants; "Noise made by the cow when the calf is being weaned. You say the cow began to — — —" (LS, see Viereck 1975/I : 179f.), which is meant to elicit *bawl* or its synonyms. Kurath gives *moo* (*mew*), *low* (*loo*), *boo*, *moan*, *hum*, *bawl*, *blare*, *bellow* and *roar* (LANE, Map 194 : *moo*), which were used by the informants in New England to designate the sound made by a cow during feeding, when crying to be fed or under other circumstances. This shows that the factors *time, place* and *circumstances* (e. g. cause of the sounds made by domestic animals, e. g. pain as described above in the case of *groan* of cows: because of wind) cannot provide a sufficient description on their own.

Cause and circumstances of the sound production by animals can, of course, be further elaborated. This leads to a scale *A — E* which comprises physical and emotional causes of the animal cries:

- A* hunger, thirst, e. g. *moan, moon* (cows, at feeding-time)
beal (cows, at milking time)
murmur (cows, after feeding)
- B* pain, uneasiness, e. g. *groan* (cows: because of wind), *humming* (of cows: murmuring contentedly), *moaning* (low noise made by overfed cows)
- C* (sexual) excitement, e. g. it'll *moo* a lot if it's a-bulling (reference: a cow, SED, Y 17), if a mare's a-horsing (i. e. in season) and there's an entire (horse) it'll *croon* (SED, La 1)
- D* anger, fury; discontent, e. g. *croon* (of a bull, when bad-tempered), *belve, blare, blake* (out) (of cows, when discontented, uneasy)

E joy, content, e. g. *humming* (of cows: murmuring contentedly, SED, La 7), *humming* (of cows: low contented noise, La 6), *moaning* (of sound made by cows getting fat, ready for slaughtering, Y 24)

Likewise there is not much information found in the BM (of the SED) regarding the above-mentioned components *pitch*, *loudness*, *duration*, *continuity* and *perception*. Only in a few localities do we find remarks by the informants about the semantic components in question, e. g. (horses) *neighing* (not so loud as *whinny*, SED, L 10), (cows) *humming* (low, soft noise — Y 27), (horses) *shrieking* (very loud, Nf 12), (horses) *whinny* (a lower noise, MxL 1). In order to obtain a fuller description I shall likewise plead for generalisation of the features in question, e. g. \pm HIGH (*pitch*), \pm LOUD (*intensity*), \pm LONG (*duration*), \pm CONTINUOUS (*continuity*), \pm DISTINCT (*perception*).

Coming back to the SED questionnaire, a distinction is made with both horses and cows (III. 10. 3 & III. 10. 4) for sounds produced during feeding time in the stable (horses) or in the cowhouse (cows) compared with sounds made in the fields, in particular when the animals want attention (cows). With horses the standard language differentiates between *whinny* (during feeding time, in stable) and *neigh* (in the fields). In fact, StE *whinny* is paraphrased as 'to neigh softly or gently', while StE *neigh* is explained as 'the high-pitched cry of a horse', see *The new Collins concise English dictionary* (McLeod and Hanks et al. 1982, s. v. *neigh*, v. and s. v. *whinny*, v.). According to the BM, English dialects do not make this distinction in the majority of the localities, i. e. 187 out of 306 (ca. 61%), compared with 119 (ca. 39%) which do. For cows StE does not distinguish lexically between whether the sounds are made during feeding time in the cowhouse/cowshed or in the fields. The key-word is *moo* (III. 10. 4) in both cases. Unlike with horses most English dialects do make a distinction as regards the sounds made by cows, i. e. 171 out of 305 localities (ca. 56%) compared with 134 localities (ca. 44%) which do not. It seems that semantic components such as PLACE and TIME of the cries made by animals are more decisive on the lexical level than the other factors discussed above. This is not true, however, of the actor, i. e. \pm BOVINE, \pm EQUINE, which plays a very important part on the lexical level as well.

At the beginning of my article I had some reservations about the completeness of the semantic description of the word material under scrutiny. The fact that a sizeable number of the verbs found in the BM occur together with a particle, e. g. *beal out* (bull, SED, Y 8), *bellow* and *bawl about* (bull, Ha 3), *mutter out* (of a horse, in stable, Du 3), *whinny out* (horse, Y 34), *grunt on* (cows, in cowhouse, Nb 5), directs our attention to Leonhard Lipka's *Semantic structure and word-formation* (Lipka 1972), which provides a semantic

description of Phrasal Verbs with *out* and *up*. Starting from clauses such as *to bellow out* (orders/commands, etc.) and *to whine out* (requests) Lipka (1972: 120 and 124, footnote 97) proposes generative rules of the type:

NP₁ UTTER/EXPRESS NP₂ like bellowing/whining →
NP₁ (actor) + V (predicate) + P (particle) + NP₂ (goal)

Of course, NP₂ (object, goal) will have to be left out in our material, because nearly all verbs found in the BM are intransitive. Nevertheless, the underlying sentence UTTER/EXPRESS sounds or noises in different ways (as to *pitch*, *loudness*, *length*, *continuity*, *perception*) can be retained. The particles mentioned above seem to intensify the expressive character of the words in question. As already stated above, *time*, *place* and *causes* (A — E) of the cries made by the animals must be taken into account, together with a semantic description of the source or actor, i. e. the animal which actually produces the sounds.

Rudolf Stadler (1969) bases his collection of Present-Day English verbs denoting noises, or utterances made by human beings, animals, birds and inanimate things on British and American literature after 1940 and on newspapers, periodicals, and journals issued from 1957 to 1959. Stadler gives the context of the items quoted — he has collected 14,900 examples from the above sources — in order to illustrate the meanings and to justify his sub-entries. The results are listed alphabetically, and, although Stadler's standpoint seems to be onomasiological (Stadler 1969 : 3—7), we regard a comparison of our material with his findings as a most welcome addition to our short study.

There is no doubt that the subheads in Stadler's work reflect not only the nature of the actor, or source of the utterances, or noises produced, but also the above scale A — E, which shows the causes of the sounds. Thus, for *bellow* Stadler (1969 : 20—22) gives *excitement* (C) and *pain* (B) as causes of the bellowing of oxen and buffaloes; *bellow* /+ HUMAN/ — with a deep and loud voice — has *pain* (B), *anger* (D), *excitement* (C) as its causes. Where these factors are not discernible from the context, the *loudness* of the human voice giving orders to a subordinate — here Lipka's formula given above will obtain — comes into the foreground. With inanimate things (e. g. aeroplane engines, cannons, mobile guns) the short, deep and intensive noise made by these is focussed upon.

Unlike our material, which was taken from English and American dialects, the collection established by Stadler also includes judgements about the noises expressed by the listener. Thus *blare* (of a radio, a loudspeaker) is perceived as very loud, unpleasant, deafening and disturbing (Stadler 1969: 22f.). Consequently, in addition to the physical qualities of the sounds produced, i. e. *pitch*, *loudness*, *duration*, *continuity*, and *perception*, a component reflecting the listener's attitude (pleasant/unpleasant) could be adduced.

The semantic component *duration* (+ LONG) is often expressed redundantly by particles such as *about*, *away*, and *on*, which may follow the verbal element, e. g. StE *to yap away* (of a dog) 'to make a continuous noise', (of a human being) 'to talk without stopping' (Courtney 1983 : 733a). The SED gives *grunt on* (cows, in cowhouse, Nb 5), *twining on* (actor: + HUMAN) as a synonym of *shrieking* (northern). Furthermore, *bellow and bawl about* (bull, Ha 3), *mutter out* (of a horse, in stable, Du 3) and *whinny out* (horse, Y 34) may be quoted. The aspectual value of the particle *out* is not always discernible from the material. There are quite a few examples which point to the component *loudness* being redundantly expressed by *out*, e. g. *beal out* (bull, Y 8), *blate out* (cows) as the second form besides *blate* (Y 26, cows in pasture), or *shriek/squall/squawk out* (actor: + HUMAN) as synonyms of *scream*. Here the particle *out* clearly serves as an intensifier of the meaning of the verbal element.

4. Conclusion

I hope to have shown that a systematic description of sounds produced by animals (and humans) is possible along the lines of a detailed phonological treatment of the verbs in question combined with a semantic description based on semantic components and features. While the phonological description showed a close connection between 'actor' and 'utterance', the semantic interpretation of our word material proved to be more difficult. It has, however, demonstrated the existence of important factors like *time* and *place* of the utterances. In addition semantic components like *pitch*, *loudness*, etc. and the *circumstances* of the sounds made by humans or animals (see scale A — E above) must be taken into account. Only in a few cases does the BM of the SED contain informants' remarks concerning *pitch*, *loudness*, etc. or *circumstances*. Consequently, the semantic description will remain somewhat sketchy as long as it is based on the dialect material available so far.

Note: Abbreviations of the county names (before 1974) follow SED usage: Du = Durham / Es = Essex / Ha = Hampshire / L = Lincolnshire / La = Lancashire / MxL = Middlesex and London / Nf = Norfolk / Sf = Suffolk / So = Somerset / W = Wiltshire / Y = Yorkshire.

Abbreviations of the great English Dictionaries follow common usage: MED = Kurath, H. et al. 1952ff. *Middle English dictionary*, ODEE = Onions, C. T. 1966. *The Oxford dictionary of English etymology*, OED = Murray, J. A. H. et al. 1933. *The Oxford English dictionary*.

REFERENCES

- Coseriu, E. 1967. "Lexikalische Solidaritäten". *Poetica* 1. 293 - 303.
- Courtney, R. (ed.). 1983. *Longman dictionary of phrasal verbs*, Burnt Mill, Harlow/Essex: Longman.
- Fischer, A. 1976. *Dialects in the south-west of England. A lexical investigation*. The Cooper Monographs. English Dialect Series 25. Bern: Francke.
- Genzel, P. 1959. *Die Lebensfunktionen der Menschen und Säugetiere im Spiegel der englischen Sprache*. Halle: VEB Max Niemeyer.
- Gimson, A. C. 1980³. *Introduction to the pronunciation of English*.
- Grant, W., Murison, D. and A. J. Aitken (eds.) 1940 - 76. *The Scottish national dictionary*. 10 Vols. Edinburgh: The Scottish National Dictionary Association.
- Jacobsson, U. 1962. *Phonological dialect constituents in the vocabulary of Standard English*. Lund Studies in English 31. Lund: Gleerup.
- Kastovsky, D. 1982. *Wortbildung und Semantik*, Studienreihe Englisch, 14, Düsseldorf: Schwann.
- Krahe, H. and W. Meid. 1967. *Germanische Sprachwissenschaft*, Vol. 3: *Wortbildungslehre*. Sammlung Göschel. 1218/1218a/1218b. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Kurath, H., Hanley, M. L., Bloch, B., Lowman, G. S. and M. L. Hansen (eds.). 1939 - 43. *Linguistic atlas of New England*. 3 Vols. in 6 Parts. Providence/R. I.: Brown University, repr. New York: AMS Press, 1972.
- Kurath, H. (ed.). 1949. *A word geography of the Eastern United States*. Ann Arbor/Mich.: The University of Michigan Press, 1966³.
- Kurath, H., Kuhn, S. M. and R. E. Lewis (eds.). 1952ff. *Middle English dictionary*, Ann Arbor/Mich.: The University of Michigan Press.
- Lipka, L. 1972. *Semantic structure and word-formation, verb-particle constructions in contemporary English*. International Library of General Linguistics. 17. München: Wilhelm Fink.
- Lipka, L. 1979. "Semantic components of English nouns and verbs and their justification". *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok/Hungarian Studies in English*. 12. 187 - 203.
- Marchand, H. 1969³. *Categories and types of present-day English word-formation*, München: C. H. Beck.
- McLeod, W. T. and Hanks, P. (eds.). 1982. *The new Collins concise English dictionary*, London/Glasgow: Collins.
- Murray, J. A. H. et al. (eds.) 1933. *The Oxford English dictionary. Being a corrected re-issue (...) of A new English dictionary*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, repr. 1961/7 Off.
- Onions, C. T. (ed.). 1966. *The Oxford dictionary of English etymology*, Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, repr. 1967ff.
- Orton, H. et al. (eds.). 1962-71. *The Survey of English Dialects. (B). The Basic Material*. Leeds: Arnold.
- Vol. 1. H. Orton and W. J. Halliday (eds.). 1962-63. *The six Northern Counties and the Isle of Man*. Parts 1-3. Leeds: Arnold.
- Vol. 2. H. Orton and M. V. Barry (eds.). 1969-71. *The West Midland Counties*. Parts 1-3. Leeds: Arnold.
- Vol. 3. H. Orton and P. M. Tilling (eds.). 1969-71. *The East Midland Counties and East Anglia*. Parts 1-3. Leeds: Arnold.
- Vol. 4. H. Orton and M. F. Wakelin (eds.). 1967-68. *The Southern Counties*. Parts 1-3. Leeds: Arnold.

- Orton, H. and N. Wright (eds.). 1975. *A word geography of England*. London: Seminar Press.
- Samuels, M. L. 1972. *Linguistic evolution with special reference to English*. Cambridge Studies in Linguistics, 5, Cambridge: CUP.
- Stadler, R. 1969. *Die Bezeichnungen der Geräusche im Neuenglischen*. Luzern: Raeber, Phil. Dissertation, Zürich.
- Viereck, W. (ed.). 1975. *Lexikalische und grammatische Ergebnisse des Lowman-Survey von Mittel- und Südenland*. 2 Vols. München: Wilhelm Fink.
- Viereck, W. 1980. "The dialectal structure of British English: Lowman's evidence (to the memory of Professor Harold Orton & Guy S. Lowman, Jr.)". *English World-Wide*. 1. 25—44.
- Wright, J. (ed.). 1898—1905. *English dialect dictionary*, 6 Vols., London: Henry Frowde.
- Wright, J. 1905. *English dialect grammar*. London: Henry Frowde: Oxford: OUP, repr. 1968.