

Descriptive studies of particular languages English

92-230 Delbridge, Arthur. Australian English. *Vox* (Canberra, Australia), **5** (1991), 67–71.

The National Policy on Languages (1987) gives full recognition to the national character of Australian English. Australian English may be grouped with British, American, Canadian and New Zealand Englishes in that they are all native varieties: they all evolved through a relatively undisturbed succession of native speakers for whom English has been the mother tongue. Like American, it is a transported native variety, but the settlement and development of Australia has resulted in only one dialect for the whole country, a homogeneity of language that is often remarked on by dialect scholars. The first settlers reached the colony in 1788 and the shock of the new environment and the horrors of life there immediately began to change the transported language. By about 1830 visitors to the colony had commented on the distinctive speech of the native-born Australian population. Australian English has been developing steadily since then. Thanks in part to the work of Professor A. G. Mitchell of Sydney University earlier this century in establishing Australian English as a subject for university research and teaching and championing its use in literature, education and broadcasting, it is now the natural medium in all the main streams of Australian life

and can also be used confidently on the international stage. It is the Australian accent and voice quality that has attracted most attention in the past and caused so many Australians to feel ashamed of their own speech. The vowels and consonants of spoken Australian English are similar to those found in the received pronunciation of English, but the realisations of them are different, the vowels being systematically fronted. There is also a pattern of variation within the Australian vowel system itself, with a range of interesting correlations with personal and socio-economic characteristics of the speakers. Australian phonology shows a tendency to omit, assimilate or neutralise some vowels and consonants, and Australian intonation has some noticeable features, such as the high rising tone on declarative clauses. Borrowings from the Aboriginal languages and from community languages of recent immigrants have led to the expansion of the vocabulary of Australian English. Australian institutions now give full recognition to Australian English as the national dialect for all the purposes they serve, and the *Macquarie Dictionary*, first published in 1981, has become the definitive dictionary for Australian English.

French

92-231 Péry-Woodley, Marie-Paule (U. of Manchester). French and English passives in the construction of text. *Journal of French Language Studies* (Cambridge), **1** (1991), 55–70.

The aim of the article is to explore a small corner of the interface between micro-characteristics of texts – such as sentence syntax – and the macro-property of textual coherence, in the context of second-language academic writing. French and English passives are analysed in terms of their information-packaging role in essays in English L1, and French

L1 and L2. The analysis provides insights into the role of passives in academic writing in both languages and into some specific problems for English-speaking learners of French: in particular it throws some light on the excessive – and often erroneous – use of *on*, regarded as a substitute for the English passive.

Italian

92-232 Napoli, Donna Jo and Vogel, Irene. The conjugations of Italian. *Italica* (Madison, Wis), **67**, 4 (1990), 479–502.

This paper addresses the question of how many conjugations there are in the Italian verbal system from a morphological standpoint. Attention is restricted here to what can be called standard Italian.

The verbal systems of regional varieties of Italian and of dialects often vary considerably and merit systematic study in their own right. This paper considers such factors as productivity and the way in

which verbal forms participate in various word formation processes, as well as certain historical developments and the usual issues of stress placement and the presence of *-isc-*. Despite interesting points

in favour of more or even fewer conjugation classes, it is concluded that the most convincing evidence nevertheless requires three classes to be posited.

Lexicology

92–233 Greenbaum, Sidney (University Coll., London). ICE: the International Corpus of English. *English Today* (Cambridge), **7**, 4 (1991), 3–7.

Although the standard varieties of British and American English are the most firmly established, other English-speaking countries have begun to claim linguistic independence, looking to their own varieties for what is correct or appropriate. At this stage, research can have practical applications in language planning by preventing the national standards from drifting too far apart, thus helping to preserve the international character of at least written English. It was in this context that an international corpus of English (ICE) was proposed in 1988. The corpus is being compiled from samples of spoken, manuscript, and printed English in countries where English is a first language and also where it is an official second language. The purpose is to facilitate comparative studies across national varieties of English, and research teams in about 20 countries are involved in the project. In addition to the regional components, four specialised corpora are being planned: they deal with written translations into

English from EC languages, spoken communication in English between speakers of different nationalities, writing by advanced learners of English and 'Euro-English' (the English used in official publications of the European Commission). The Survey of English Usage at University College London has been developing software for the ICE project to allow concordance building, sub-corpus selection, corpus searching and markup conversion. The aim of the British team is to compile and computerise the British corpus, tag each word, and parse each syntactic structure. An interactive concordance browser will permit high-speed retrieval of words, phrases and collocations. The spoken texts include ordinary conversation, broadcast material (scripted and unscripted), classroom lessons and legal cross-examinations. The written texts are both printed (e.g. press reports, novels) and non-printed (e.g. student essays, business letters).