

Studies of particular languages

ENGLISH *See also abstract 81–31*

81–45 Ransom, Evelyn N. Definiteness and animacy constraints on passive and double-object constructions in English. *Glossa* (Burnaby, BC, Canada), **13**, 2 (1979).

In English, the acceptability of passive and double-object constructions is affected by the definiteness and animacy of the noun phrases. Because these constructions involve, in the terminology of Relational Grammar, the advancement of one noun phrase and the demotion of another, the constraint can be stated on the relative animacy and definiteness of the advanced and demoted noun phrases: sentences are less acceptable if the advanced noun phrase is lower on the definiteness and animacy hierarchies than the demoted noun phrase. This constraint can be found in other languages. It reflects not just linguistic strategies for dealing with the linear ordering of grammatical relations but also strategies for the order in which we perceive objects and strategies for the order with which we control the attention of the hearer in discourse.

81–46 Schane, Sanford A. The rhythmic nature of English word accentuation. *Language* (Baltimore, Md), **55**, 3 (1979), 559–602.

English word stress is analysed in terms of rhythm – of alternating strong (S) and weak (W) syllables. A set of S-placement rules assigns S's to words. A set of rhythmic constraints defines well-formed configurations of S's and W's. The interaction of rules and constraints determines the accentual patterns of most words, whether simple or morphologically complex. The analysis accounts for all 'stress shifts' in morphologically related forms (e.g. *solid*, *solidity*), as well as certain phrasal stress shifts (e.g. *thirteen students*). The relation between S/W and degrees of stress is explored. Similarities are noted between the rhythms of discourse and those of verse. The analysis is compared to that of Liberman and Prince 1977, who also make use of alternating strong and weak syllables.

FRENCH *See also abstracts 81–14, –16*

81–47 Bruxelles, S. and others. 'Décidément': la classification dissimulée. ['Décidément': the implicit classification.] *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **3**, 2 (1979), 127–49.

The French adverb *décidément* can be used in isolation and then constitute by itself a statement-like type of utterance. It is also used to introduce – and comment on – the utterance that follows. Examples of

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these two functions are presented and explained within a unified semantic description that accounts for the diversity of effects observed in different discourse situations. The speaker depends on an implicit classification which he forces upon the addressee. This cognitive process is described by using Prieto's approach to communication and the concept of argumentation. This study is based on the assumption that a semantic description cannot be separated from a pragmatic account of the linguistic object.

81-48 Kenning, Marie-Madeleine. Intonation systems in French. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* (London), **9**, 1 (1979), 15-30.

An analysis of French intonation is presented, analogous to that proposed by Halliday for English. The basic unit of intonational organisation is the tone group, which contains one or more rhythmic groups and comprises a 'tonic' together with an optional 'pretonic'. Intonation patterns are analysed in terms of three sets of choices: 'tonality' – the segmentation of the utterance into tone groups; 'tonicity' – the location of the tonic syllable in the tone group; 'tone' – the pitch pattern of the tone group. A further option is the location of 'accents d'insistance'. [Description of the various possibilities available under tonality, tonicity, and tone.] An informal account is given of the meanings associated with the various intonation patterns.

81-49 Martinet, Hanne. Les épithètes en '-ant' en français contemporain. [Epithets in '-ant' in contemporary French.] *Linguistique* (Paris), **15**, 2 (1979), 55-68.

Many adjectives in *-ant* are traditionally described under the heading of present participles and are called verbal adjectives (*une façade d'un blanc éclatant; des catastrophes retentissantes dans la production industrielle*). The usage of such adjectives is described with a particular view to determining what distinguishes them from present participles. They may be used in nominal constructions (*des personnes ignorantes des questions d'ensemble*) or in verbal constructions (*porte donnant sur la voie*); it makes no sense to speak of them as being to some extent nominal or to some extent verbal. Three categories may be distinguished: (1) those always recognised to be adjectives even in isolation (e.g. because they have no corresponding verb): *poignant, aberrant*; (2) those whose sense only becomes clear in context: *reconnaissant, charmant*; (3) those which may function only as present participles: *lisant, achevant*. The composition of these groups is not fixed; any present participle (category (3)) may acquire an adjectival use, and thus transfer to category (2). Agreement with nouns is also considered.

GERMAN

- 81-50 Helbig, Gerhard.** Probleme der Beschreibung von Funktionsverbgefügen im Deutschen. [Problems in the description of expanded verbal structures in German.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig, GDR), 16, 5 (1979), 273-85.

The article analyses a number of problems of description posed by expanded verbal structures of the type *zur Aufführung kommen* 'to be performed'. It investigates the nature of these structures and how they differ both from free concatenations and from phraseological units. Other aspects discussed include their morphological types, operational criteria for their investigation, their valency characteristics, subclasses and specific functions (particularly in expressing types of action).

SPANISH

- 81-51 Bergen, John.** The semantics of gender contrasts in Spanish. *Hispania* (Worcester, Mass), 63, 1 (1980), 48-57.

A previous study (*Hispania*, 61, 4 (1978), abstract no. 79-397) showed that the rules governing the gender of Spanish nouns were phonemically not semantically based. However, evidence for widespread semantic utilisation of the Spanish gender system can be found. Nine derivational suffixes are used to form feminine gender nouns from masculine gender nouns and analysis reveals that the grammatical category gender is used to express 13 contrasting semantic notions (e.g. male/female, large/small, trees/their fruit, natural state/alterd state) by means of pairs of nouns of opposite gender, both derivationally related and derivationally unrelated.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that such semantic contrasts constitute an explanation of grammatical gender in Spanish. The gender classification of nearly all the pairs of nouns expressing these oppositions is determined by the suffixes and terminal phonemes of the nouns themselves in accordance with the rules relating to Spanish nouns in general. [Table.]

PORTUGUESE

- 81-52 Brakel, Arthur.** Infinitives, subjects, word order and case in Portuguese and Spanish. *Hispania* (Worcester, Mass), 63, 1 (1980), 85-91.

An internal grammatical motivation for the personal or inflected infinitive, a feature peculiar to Portuguese and which does not occur in Spanish, is to be found in the relation of constituent word order and grammatical case to person/number agreement of subject and verb.

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Subject postposing, a reversal of the standard sentence pattern (SVO), weakens the necessity for agreement and, where subject upgrading (objectivisation) occurs, eliminates it.

Whereas Spanish indicates human direct object with the preposition *a*, medieval Portuguese and modern Brazilian Portuguese fail to indicate even pronominal direct objects except by placing them in postverbal position – a tradition which must have contributed to making subject upgrading optional in Portuguese but obligatory in Spanish.

The inflected infinitive allows nominative subjects to be placed immediately before infinitive forms of verbs. The traditional use of nominative case pronouns as direct objects along with the homophony and semantic similarity between the personal infinitive and the regular forms of the future subjunctive assisted the form to evolve.

RUSSIAN *See also abstract 81–5*

81–53 Jurčenko, V. S. Структура предложения и система синтаксиса. [The structure of the sentence and the system of syntax.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), 4 (1979), 77–89.

It makes more sense to regard individual sentences as deviations from some ‘maximal’ structural schema, with some omitted constituents, than to regard them as expansions of a minimal structural schema. The author argues for the basic status of the binary subject-predicate structure, such sentence-types as subjectless sentences and verbless sentences being regarded as deviations from this basic pattern.

An analysis is presented of copulative constructions and impersonal sentences in Russian. The change of verbal constituent from full verb to (empty) copula is shown to be gradual rather than a simple dichotomy. Impersonal constructions are subdivided in terms of whether the presupposed subject is personal or inanimate, but once again it is claimed that the distinction between subject-predicate sentence and subjectless ones in Russian is gradual rather than discrete.

81–54 Padučeva, E. V. and Uspenskij, V. A. Подлежащее или сказуемое? [Subject or predicate?] *Серия литературы и языка* (Moscow), 38, 4 (1979), 349–60.

This article deals with the problem of how to identify the subject noun phrase in sentences (chiefly equative sentences) with two noun phrases in the nominative case in Russian. A syntactic definition is shown to be inadequate, and a semantic approach is developed, using the notion of referentiality. A scale is defined: noun phrases may be referential (and if so, definite, indefinite or attributive), quantified or predicative. The position of a noun phrase on this scale may be determined either by its syntactic context – e.g. if it satisfies the valency of some other element it cannot be predicative – or by its intrinsic form – e.g. personal pronouns

must be referential. The subject is the more referential of the two noun phrases.

A range of examples is discussed, including some difficult cases. In the small number of instances where both noun phrases are referential and definite, the structure of the sentence is said to be indeterminate. Ambiguities arising from these differences are discussed [e.g. a sentence such as *Эта женщина – его жена* is shown to be three-ways ambiguous].