

Language description and use

DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES

ARABIC

85–136 Ibrahim, Muhammad H. Linguistic distance and literacy in Arabic. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **7**, 5 (1983), 507–15.

The degree of correspondence between the spoken and written forms of language varies from one language to another. In the case of Arabic the distance between the standard written variety and all of the many spoken varieties is very conspicuous, causing a host of sociolinguistic problems, some of which are discussed in this paper. It is argued that the unique relationship between Islam and Arabic and the fact that literacy training is provided in standard Arabic only are at the bottom of many linguistic and educational problems today encountered in the Arab world.

ENGLISH

85–137 Classen, Peter. Idiosynkratische Züge der syntagmatischen Semantik des Englischen. [Idiosyncratic features of English syntagmatic semantics.] *Linguistik und Didaktik* (Munich, FRG), **42** (1980), 110–21.

The term 'idiosyncratic' is applied to those linguistic phenomena which do not conform in content and/or form to the general expectations of speakers of the language in question or another language, but which – unlike idiomatic expression – can still be analysed. The cases in question are those where practice contradicts the rule and indeed supersedes it. This particular aspect of language presents great problems for the learner and to overcome them requires thorough and systematic analysis.

This article concentrates on examining idiosyncratic phenomena in English syntagmas. Syntagmatic relations between *determinans* and *determinatum* are distinguished from such other phenomena as inflected forms and a typological classification of six types of syntagmas is made. With the aid of this descriptive catalogue, idiosyncratic phenomena in English syntagmas are analysed and illustrated. The descriptive catalogue itself bears witness to the tradition of the word-formation models of Marchand, Kastovsky and Lipka, and demonstrates how analytical differentiation is developing, particularly with regard to morphological-lexical syntagmas and syntactic groups.

85–138 Oakeshott-Taylor, John (U. of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg). Factuality and intonation. *Journal of Linguistics* (London), **20**, 1 (1984), 1–21.

Starting from the well-known difference between *I thought he was married (which he is)* – where the complement is given a factual interpretation – and *I thought he was married (but he isn't)* – which is counterfactual – this article examines the syntactic, semantic, contextual and prosodic conditions under which factual and counterfactual

interpretations can emerge. Factuality is distinguished from factivity, and concerns a person's (usually the speaker's) subjective assessment of whether the propositional content of a sentence or sentence fragment conforms or conflicts with his perception of reality. The modal nature of factuality is stressed, as in the contribution of tense and intonation to the emergence of factuality interpretations.

85-139 Oakeshott-Taylor, John. Factuality, tense, intonation and perspective. Some thoughts on the semantics of 'think'. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **62**, 4 (1984), 289-317.

The approach described in abstract 85-138 is extended to another group of sentences, comparatives, where one term of the comparison is introduced by *think* or *thought*. These sentences often display rather odd acceptability patterns, which are difficult to explain if we take only syntactic facts into consideration. Factuality provides a simple and intuitively satisfactory framework for explaining the way these sentences are interpreted, and the ensuing acceptability judgements. The contribution of tense, intonation and perspective (by which is meant the ultimate source of a person's perception of the world) is also considered.

85-140 Ziv, Yael. Getting more mileage out of existentials in English. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **20**, 11/12 (1982), 747-62.

In addition to the existential and presentative functions which nondeictic *there*-sentences were traditionally claimed to fulfill, they may be used for backgrounding as well as foregrounding pieces of information, for expressing a predicational function, and for conveying impersonal or objective statements. This variety of discourse uses is shown to originate from the maximal utilisation of the syntactic and semantic options offered by this construction, as well as the interaction of these syntactic and semantic properties with general pragmatic and discourse-functional considerations.

FRENCH

85-141 Laroche-Bouvy, Danielle (U. of Paris III). Les formules de clôture de la conversation en français et en portugais. [Formulae for conversational closure in French and Portuguese.] *Contrastes* (Paris), **7** (1983), 49-65.

Five categories are recognised among the most frequent ritualised sequences for ending conversations: (1) greetings, (2) good wishes, (3) thanks, (4) excuses, and (5) greetings to persons absent. Contrasts noted between French and Portuguese include a lower frequency of formulae of thanking and of greetings to others in Portuguese. Good wishes formulations mentioning God have completely disappeared from French, while they are still current in rural Portugal, and in mother-child speech in Brazil. Contrasts between Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese usage are also described, notably a tendency for simplification in the number of formulae available.

In both French and Portuguese, closure sequences are composed of paired utterances spoken by different participants.

85–142 Leon, M. (Victoria U., Toronto), Erreurs et normalisation: les liaisons fautives en français contemporain. [Errors and normalisation: unwanted liaisons in contemporary French.] *Revue, de Phonétique Appliquée* (Paris), **69** (1984), 1–10.

Unwanted liaisons like *mille-z-étudiants*, noticed by Henri Frei at the beginning of the century, used to occur only in the lower social class. In 1983, they are conspicuously noticeable among the élite, especially in stressful situations like those generated by radio or television studios. From a linguistic point of view, they can easily be linked by analogy to compulsory liaisons like the *-z* plural or the *-t* of the third person. From a psychoanalytical point of view, they can be categorised as prestige pronunciation characteristics, tied to higher class standards, which are used to project a self-gratifying image. As unwanted liaisons become more frequent, inside definite grammatical structures, they are on the verge of becoming an accepted part of the language.

85–143 Lucci, Vincent (U. of Grenoble III). Prosodie, phonologie et variation en français contemporain. [Prosodic features, phonology and variation in present-day French.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **60** (1983), 73–84.

Features of French such as rhythm, pause, intonation, stress, ‘mute’ *e*, liaison and phonemes vary interdependently and systematically to realise socio-situational messages. For example, the ‘didactic’ (emphatic) accent is characteristic of speakers addressing audiences rather than individuals. Statistically it is more likely to be found on: longer words, those with an initial CCV-structure, those initial in a longer rhythmic group or preceded by a non-initial pause, which itself signals lexical search and originality. Certain lexical items (e.g. *‘gigantesque, essentiel’*) are more likely to be stressed, as are comparatives, numerals and adverbs, while adverbs of manner (*‘bêtement’*) are more likely to be stressed than other sub-categories of adverb (*‘maintenant’*). The accent is also found initial of set phrases (*‘dans un premier temps’*) and of terms of an enumeration, in antitheses and in quoted forms (*‘oral inverted commas’*). Potential (mute) *e* is realised in initial syllables of words carrying emphatic stress and in final syllables before a pause. Realisation of optional liaisons may be seen as a signal of continuity and does not coincide with intonational boundaries; their absence coincides with other boundary markers, but in formal rather than informal speech.

Speakers who are most communicatively competent vary such features most skillfully; there is a plurality of norms. Particular interactions of features may trigger off language change (e.g. new syllabic types arising from the suppression of optional liaison before stressed word-initial syllables may eventually change the phoneme system).

GERMAN

85–144 Kirkness, Alan. *Fremdwort und Fremdwortpurismus: Lehren aus der Sprachgeschichte für den Deutschunterricht. [Foreign words and the Purist Movement: lessons from the history of language for the teacher of German.] Sprache und Literatur* (Munich, FRG) [formerly *Linguistik und Didaktik*], **52** (1983), 14–29.

The first part of the article deals with the history of purism with regard to foreign loan words in German. The nationalistically inspired movement of loanword purism dates from the turn of the 19th century. The German standard language became the bond that united all regions and classes against other peoples. The term *Fremdwort* 'foreign word' dates from 1815.

The article details the early contributions made by Campe, Kolbe, Krause, Jahn, etc. in the campaign to purify the German language. Numerous societies which aimed at furthering the cause of a purified German language were founded. With the foundation of the German Empire large organisations like the postal system, the Imperial railways and the army introduced official 'German' terms to replace their foreign predecessors. 1885 saw the founding of the General German Language Society. It was effective on a practical level. The article traces its influence and that of its successors through the First World War and the Third Reich to the post Second World War period.

The second part of the article puts the notion of 'foreign word' into linguistic perspective and demonstrates its complexity. In particular, the language-international mechanisms which have given rise to 'loanwords' are examined, e.g. loan translations, the extension of meaning of loan words, etc. The author aims to correct the misleading view which is still propagated in schools and elsewhere by the numerous dictionaries of foreign words which still abound in Germany.

85–145 Pfeffer, J. Alan. *Die modalen vergleichskonjunktionen 'als', 'als ob', 'als wenn', 'wie wenn' in wort und schrift. [The comparative modal conjunctions 'als', 'als ob', 'als wenn', 'wie wenn' in spoken and written German.] IRAL* (Heidelberg), **22**, 1 (1984), 53–8.

This article on the comparative modal conjunctions *als*, *als ob*, *als wenn*, *wie wenn* in spoken and written German arrives at the following conclusions: (1) In the written language *als* is the most frequently used comparative conjunction (60% of the examples) followed by *als ob* (28%), *wie wenn* (7%) and *als wenn* (5%). (2) In the spoken language *als ob* occurs most frequently (41%). This is followed by *als wenn* (28%), *als* (12%) and *wie wenn* (9%). (3) In most of the written examples the conjunctions *als*, *als ob* and *als wenn* are followed by the second subjunctive. The first subjunctive is found in approximately 35% of the examples after *als*, in about 30% of the examples after *als ob* and in about 20% of the cases after *als wenn* and *wie wenn*. The indicative is never found after *als*. It is, however, often met with after *wie wenn* and occasionally after *als ob* and *als wenn*. (4) In the spoken language the second subjunctive is encountered in the majority of examples after *als* and *als ob*. The indicative never

occurs after *als*. However, it is found in about 33 % of the examples after *als ob* and in more than 75 % of the cases after *als wenn* and is always present after *wie wenn*.

RUSSIAN

85–146 Bethin, Christina Y. (State U. of New York). The '-ely' adjectives in contemporary Russian. *Russian Linguistics* (Dordrecht), 7, 3 (1983), 219–33.

Russian adjectives in *elyj* are seen in traditional Russian grammars as a productive subclass of the largely unproductive class of adjectives with the suffix *-l*. Here this opinion is disputed; firstly the historical fate of these forms has been to lose ground to the synonymous past active participle. Secondly, there is some inconsistency in the possibility of deriving this form from a number of verbs, although successful derivations are more normal with resultative meaning. Thirdly, a survey of native speakers shows that participial forms are strongly favoured in normal speech over forms in *-elyj*, although there was much disagreement among speakers. It is concluded that they do not form a productive pattern, and also that they are much more likely to be used in poetic or emotionally highly coloured speech.

85–147 Chesnokova, L. D. Выражение категории количества глагольными формами современного русского языка. [The expression of the category of quantity by verbal forms in contemporary Russian.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), 6 (1983), 82–90.

Three aspects of quantity are determined as being relevant to the grammatical categories of the Russian verb – number of actions, number of agents, and number of patients. These are inter-related, insofar as the number of agents may determine the number of actions involved. The formal expressive devices involved in these categories include lexico-grammatical ones such as the use of aspectual prefixes, the purely morphological agreement markers, and the use of special quantity words. Various special cases of these expressive devices are examined further, e.g. the interaction with collectives, paired nouns and *pluralia tantum*, the ambiguity of some quantity words (such as *mnogo*) between adverbial use and use as a quantifying article, and the effect of combining distinct expressions of quantity.

85–148 Nikulescu, R. I. От безвидового языка к видовому. [From an aspectless language to one with aspects.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), 2 (1984), 115–21.

A comparison of the development of aspectual categories in Russian with that of English, French and German, with the conclusion that they are all developing in a similar direction, but that Russian has 'progressed' furthest in generalising the category of aspect while simplifying the tense system. This is seen as being in sharp contrast with the development of nominal morphology, where Russian is the most 'conservative' of the four languages.

It is suggested that a variety of modifications to the basic meaning of aspectual forms

in historical times have been responsible for this process of generalisation: inherently punctual verbs required interpretation as iteratives for imperfective aspect to be possible; conversely, states and processes acquired inchoative or terminative meaning with the perfective aspect. The comparison of these and other languages in terms of their 'stage of development' is claimed to be an important consideration in assessing the difficulty of learning a language.

TRANSLATION

85–149 Loffler-Laurian, Anne-Marie (CNRS, Paris). Traduction automatique et périphériques: évaluation, post édition, attitudes, formation. [Machine translation and associated issues: evaluation, post-editing, attitudes, training.] *Contrastes* (Paris), **A4** (1984), 43–67.

Machine translation is considered to be still very far from the goal of perfect translation, here defined as that which expresses exactly the same content, suggests precisely the same connotations and provokes the same set of reactions as the original. Two systems currently in operation are described and evaluated: TITUS, a limited syntax system developed at the French Institute of Textiles, and SYSTRAN, a free syntax system developed by the US Air Force and adapted for use at the European Commission in Luxembourg. SYSTRAN can cope with any syntactic structure and has a large dictionary. One disadvantage which it shares with most other current systems is that it operates on pairs of languages; hence treating even a few languages is immediately very complex (e.g. 4 languages = 12 pair combinations). The European Economic Community is funding the development of a system which analyses and generates each language separately (the EUROTRA Project) rather than working in pair combinations. The current products of MT need to undergo post-editing; this is described, with examples.

85–150 Ravaux, Françoise (U. of Richmond). Tentative de saisi et de reproduction du sens. [Attempting to capture and to reproduce sense in translation.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **61** (1984), 100–20.

Translation involves three stages: source text, meta-text (intermediary), and target text. Of these the meta-text, on which the translator bases his composition of the target text, must be the most complex, marking what can be drawn at every level of signification from the source text. A difficult and important passage from Proust's *In search of time past* and its published English translation are examined in detail, using a multi-level approach to the analysis of text developed by Greimas, which is a valuable tool for the successful understanding of a source text in translation. Examples discussed include the different personages encompassed by *je* in the chosen text, and the effects of the use of the *passé composé*.

85–151 Vidalenc, Jean-Louis (U. of Pierre et Marie Curie). Traduction automatique, analyse linguistique et didactique des langues. [Machine translation, linguistic analysis and language teaching methodology.] *Contrastes* (Paris), **A4** (1984), 121–39.

Analysing errors in machine translation and in students' assignments presupposes and validates a linguistic theory. A machine translation from French to English (by SYSTRAN) is studied from a syntactic point of view [several examples]. Students are invited to consider the role of the 'post-editor' in correcting an initial translation based on a rough-and-ready grammar similar in many ways to the students' own. Problems such as the lack of correspondence between English and French 'tenses' (verb forms), modals, attitudinal markers, *-ing* forms, articles and prepositions, point to the inadequacy of accounts of English current in school and university language courses and in linguistics itself.

LEXICOGRAPHY

85–152 Trescases, P. (U. of New Brunswick). Aspects du mouvement d'emprunt à l'anglais reflétés par trois dictionnaires de néologismes. [Aspects of the process of borrowing from English reflected in three dictionaries of neologisms.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **42** (1983), 86–101.

The recent publication of three French dictionaries of neologisms and more particularly of anglicisms invites an evaluation of the present state of English language influence on French. The author examines those anglicisms without a direct English model, or differing notably from this model; he studies the possibilities of derivation and composition of English elements, and evaluates the productivity of English influenced morphology and syntax, the latter concerning mainly word order. The result of this investigation would seem to indicate a slowing down in the process of anglicisation, though different approaches among the dictionaries do not make strict comparison possible.

LEXICOLOGY

85–153 Lyne, A. A. Word-frequency counts: their particular reference to the description of languages for special purposes and a technique for enhancing their usefulness. *Nottingham Linguistic Circular* (Nottingham), **12**, 2 (1983), 130–40.

Beyond their first few hundred items, word frequency lists, especially those based on 'general' texts, suffer from well known limitations. However, using a more specialised and homogeneous corpus and the notion of 'registral value' (R-value), a rank listing of items characteristic of the register can be obtained by relating their frequency in the specialised corpus to that in another 'general' corpus, used as a control. R-value provides a measure of the degree of certainty that an item genuinely has a higher probability of occurrence in some specialised register than in a sample of 'general' language use.