

Descriptive studies of particular languages English/French

90–260 Hummel, Kirsten M. (U. Laval). Some remarks on punctuation differences between English and French. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **45**, 2 (1989), 357–61.

French makes greater use than English of commas, most strikingly between related independent clauses; of periods (full-stops), e.g. after sentence fragments for stylistic effect; and of colons, to announce an enumeration, explanation or conclusion. English makes greater use of the dash, where French may

have a colon (summarising clause), comma or semi-colon (added phrase) or ellipsis points (unfinished sentence). Direct speech is commonly indicated by quotation marks in English, a dash in French. [Further examples of similarities and differences.]

Russian

90–261 Sankaran Unni, K. P. Иерархичность словообразовательных значений глагольной приставки в современном русском языке. [The hierarchy of word-forming meanings of the verbal prefix in contemporary Russian.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **4** (1989), 75–7.

Can bound morphemes, including verbal prefixes, have their own independent meanings? This question has hitherto been posed from the point of view of native speakers; for foreign learners, the question is more complex. The writer believes they can, and, citing evidence from many examples, suggests that textbooks should distinguish more rigorously be-

tween prefixes and other structural components of a word. A prefix attached to a verb stem may or may not involve a semantic shift. E.g. *V* attached to *pisat'* (*vpisat'*) 'to register one's name', carries both meaning components, whereas in *V+khodit'* 'to enter', *v* carries only one of the meaning components.

90–262 Vsyevolodova, M. V. (U. of Moscow). Коммуникативные механизмы синонимии. [Communicative mechanisms of synonymics.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **4** (1989), 67–74.

The complexity of the communicative mechanisms of synonymics is discussed in detail, illustrated by many examples. Firstly, the term 'situation' is defined, in one sense, as an event reflected in the content of the expression and not linked directly with the spoken behaviour of the speaker. Sentences are analysed to reveal two particular types of 'situation'. A model type of situation is envisaged which is defined as a reflection in our linguistic consciousness – and in the language – of some summarised form of an outside linguistic event.

The semantic relationships between the sentence's various word forms are considered. The syntactical arrangement of the sentence which results from

how the speaker wishes to portray the semantic centre of the sentence is discussed.

Levels of communicative importance in the sentence are suggested – the highest being that of the subject, followed by the substantive predicate and then the object. The high communicative importance of these three positions suggests that the constructive basis of the Russian sentence appears to be the substantive, and not the verb. The conclusion acknowledges the complexity of the subject's presentation, but says that only by understanding it can simple methods of presentation of linguistic mechanisms be realised.



Lexicography

90–263 Rey, Alain (Literary director of 'Robert'). Le français et les dictionnaires aujourd'hui. [The French language and present-day dictionaries.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number, Aug/Sept (1989), 6–17.

The 1960s saw the old encyclopaedia-type dictionaries, which had predominated since the beginning of the century, superseded by three new extensive dictionaries of the French language. These are reviewed together with other dictionaries of different types published during the '60s, '70s and '80s: multi-volume and single volume (shorter dictionaries pose special problems), for learners, for children, for particular groups of learners, bilingual or monolingual. Nevertheless, French remains less

well served by its dictionaries than English, and, Quebec excepted, dictionaries of regional and overseas varieties of French are rare or inadequate.

Computers facilitate the lexicographer's task, and much useful and innovative work is being undertaken both inside and outside France. Dictionaries, however, reflect the needs and the preconceptions of their own times: there can be no definitive dictionary.

Lexicology

90–264 Chetouani, L. (U. of Annaba, Algeria). Un nouveau type de vocabulaire de base: le VGES. De la quantification à l'usage pédagogique. [A new kind of basic vocabulary: the VGES (general vocabulary for teaching science). From quantification to pedagogic use.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **54**, 1 (1989), 83–103.

As part of an on-going examination of teaching and learning French as a foreign language it has been found particularly useful to look into science-oriented discourse with a view to establishing an efficient linguistic tool, though of limited scope. That is what this study sets out to do, starting out from an investigation of spontaneous oral expression of secondary school science teachers. Their lessons were recorded and various lexical counts were made

in view to selecting a general vocabulary for teaching science (VGES). The VGES is inspired by the work of CREDIF and comes somewhere between *français fondamental* (basic common French needed for all French language acquisition), and the *vocabulaire général d'orientation scientifique* (common core vocabulary for the exact sciences).

The VGES as suggested here is presented in alphabetical order, by theme and by frequency.