Language description and use

DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES
ENGLISH

84–496   Fal'kovich, M. M. Функционально-семантические особенности англ-ийского прилагательного. [Functional-semantic peculiarities of the English adjective.] *Иностранные языки в школе* (Moscow), **5** (1982), 17–20.

Analysis of the adjective in English reveals that it has functions and meanings characteristic of other parts of speech, namely the verb, adverb and noun. In the case of its verbal attributes, a distinction is drawn between static and transient meanings, marked by the impossibility or acceptability of the continuous form in an associated verb. The combination of an adjective with an adverb can also point to its verbal characteristics. Its adverbial characteristics are further seen in its association with nouns which act as verbs, and in situations where it can be used predicatively but not attributively. The existence of adjectives with the more normally adverbial suffix -ly is seen as significant, as also the prevalence of words which are both adjectival and adverbial. The existence of adjectival nouns (*the young, the unexpected*) and the possibility of using nouns as adjectives (*world fame, party policies*) indicate the close affinity between the adjective and the noun.

84–497   Ney, James W. (Arizona State U.). Optionality and choice in the selection of order of adjectives in English. *General Linguistics* (Pennsylvania), **23**, 2 (1983), 94–128.

Quirk *et al.*'s formula for predicting the order of prenominal adjectives both over- and under-generates, since no such rigid ordering exists. Data based on questionnaires indicate that the least frequently used adjectives have the greatest indeterminacy of position. Some orderings of high acceptability (e.g. *little old man*) which nevertheless infringe ordering rules that do apply to other examples may be admissible by virtue of their familiarity as stock phrases. When asked to assign orders to NPs with four or more adjectives, subjects' intuitions varied greatly.

84–498   van Oirsouw, Robert R. (U. of Utrecht). Co-ordinated sentences. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **60**, 2/3 (1983), 135–45.

In an attempt to outline a procedure for characterising semantic properties of co-ordination, the author examines the difference between inference relations brought about by the addition of adjuncts such as *too* and *as well* to co-ordinated and non-coordinated sentences. On the basis of inferences between co-ordinated sentences, co-ordinated sentences are divided into four classes: identity, ordered, concomitant and coincidental.

FRENCH

84–499   De Kock, Josse (Catholic U. of Louvain). De la fréquence relative des phonèmes en français et de la relativité de ces fréquencies. [On the relative frequency of French phonemes and the relativity of those frequencies.] *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **59** (1983), 1–54.

Six published phoneme frequency lists are compared; divergencies are revealed that may be attributed to uncontrolled variables such as transcription systems, speakers' origins and text sources. A further study based on two corpora controlled for such variables is introduced. A 'normal' margin of deviation between speakers is established. The deviations observed between frequencies of a particular phoneme may be due to the predominance of certain grammatical morphemes or to the chance concurrence of grammatical and lexical morphemes containing the same phoneme. Such deviations, even in pathological speech, are to be regarded as normal. [Discussion of the sources of particular deviations.] The speakers display overall regularity of phoneme frequency throughout their interviews, showing that morphosyntactic rather than lexical factors influence the deviations.

84–500   Delbecque, N. and Bas, E. (Catholic U. of Louvain). La syllabation automatique du français parlé. [Automatic syllabification of spoken French.] *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **59** (1983), 99–136.

In spoken French, the rhythmic group (or phonological word) is composed of syllables whose margins may be determined phonotactically. [Historical review of phonetic and phonological studies.] Lehfeldt has developed a system of automatic syllabification based on Pulgram's theories [summarised] extended by the statistical sampling of consonantal groups internal to the phonological word. A computer is programmed to recognise pre-pausal and post-pausal consonantal groups, after which other groups are identified as syllable onsets (*attaques*) or codas, and classified as irregular or regular. The following algorithm was employed: identify units between pauses; cut up provisionally into open syllables as far as possible; where a provisionally identified syllable ends in a vowel not found pre-pausally, reassign as many consonants as needed from the onset of the following syllable to the coda of the syllable in question; where an onset has a cluster of consonants not found post-pausally, reassign one or more consonants to the previous syllabic coda, unless this produces an unacceptable coda, in which case transfer the consonants back to the following syllable (even if this produces an irregular onset). Each vowel is assigned to a separate syllable. [Phoneme frequency table and statistical analysis.]

From this initial analysis a procedure for automatic syllabification is drawn up which will identify 93 % of syllabic boundaries. The next stage of the study will be to concentrate on the 'irregularities' in the remaining 7 % of the cases. This step-by-step inductive method is intended to provide a means of comparing any two linguistic systems (including disturbed speech).

84–501 Fleischman, Suzanne (U. of California at Berkeley). From pragmatics to grammar. Diachronic reflections on complex pasts and futures in Romance. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **60**, 2/3 (1983), 183–214.

This paper re-examines in diachronic perspective two complex verb structures in Romance and English, the so-called 'perfect' (Fr. *j'ai fait*, Engl. *I have done*) and the 'go-future' (Fr. *je vais faire*, Eng. *I'm going to do*), with a view to demonstrating the striking parallelism in their development from exponents of ASPECT, whose principal function was to identify the situation described by the verb as being of 'present relevance', to exponents of TENSE. In the process, the complex structures both moved into the functional territory of existing simplex tense forms, which in certain dialects they ultimately supplanted or are in the process of so doing. These developments in the verbal system are ultimately brought to bear on the topical question of the pragmatic origins of grammar.

GERMAN
84–502 Köpcke, Klaus-Michael (U. of Hannover) **and Zubin, David A.** (SUNY, Buffalo). Die kognitive Organisation der Genuszuweisung zu den einsilbigen Nomen der deutschen Gegenwartssprache. [The cognitive organisation of gender attribution in German monosyllables.] *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* (Berlin, FRG), **11**, 2 (1983), 166–82.

Counter to the widely accepted view that gender distribution in German is largely arbitrary, the hypothesis is formulated and tested, by presenting nonsense monosyllables to native speakers for gender judgement, that certain phonological, semantic and morphological principles determine the allocation of gender to such word forms. In particular, a study of existing monosyllables shows semantic (class membership) and morphological (type of plural formation) information to be hierarchically ordered prior to phonological rules. Nonsense syllables, without such information, reveal a tendency to obey a simple set of phonological rules based on the distribution of gender in the language. As this is only a tendency, it is claimed that the governing principle is one of relating forms to 'prototypes' rather than employing a watertight rule system, though the latter might apply in other cases, e.g. with certain derivational suffixes.

JAPANESE
84–503 Hinds, John. Contrastive rhetoric: Japanese and English. *Text* (Amsterdam), **3**, 2 (1983), 183–95.

This paper presents an analysis of Japanese rhetorical organisation. Kaplan (1966) correctly identifies an alien organisational schema for Orientals; his classification 'Oriental' has both merits and demerits. A major rhetorical style in Japanese which does not exist in English is termed *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu*. In this style 'ki' introduces the

topic, 'shoo' develops the topic, 'ten' forms an abrupt transition or a vaguely related point and 'ketsu' concludes the topic. Potential problems for ESL learners are 'ten', since it introduces information considered irrelevant by Western audiences, and 'ketsu', since it is defined differently in Japanese than conclusion is in English.

84–504 Holden, Nigel (Manchester Business Sch., U. of Manchester). The Japanese language: a partial view from the inside. *Multilingua* (Amsterdam), **2**, 3 (1983), 157–66.

This paper argues that an appreciation of the Japanese language as an inalienable facet of Japanese behaviour can give insight to those whose task it is to communicate themselves and their objectives into the Japanese frame of reference. The Japanese language is treated as an elaborate human communication system which, in terms of its structure and effects, throws great light on (1) how the Japanese co-operate among themselves and (2) the nature of the 'communications gap' between the Japanese and the outside world. The paper examines five familiar misconceptions about the Japanese language: (*a*) its alleged difficulty; (*b*) its relation with Chinese; (*c*) its alleged vagueness; (*d*) respect language; (*e*) the word for 'yes' in Japanese. Having put the record straight on these points with illustrations from western authors and Japanese sources in translation, attention is next focused on three major aspects of Japanese communicative behaviour: (i) the writing system; (ii) Japanese difficulties in mastering foreign languages, notably English; (iii) non-verbal communication. Some tentative conclusions are drawn as to the use of Japanese as a control mechanism in Japanese organisations, which suggests that the study of the Japanese language may be particularly valuable for commentators on Japanese management.

RUSSIAN

84–505 Admoni, V. G. Нулевая связка, связочный глагол и грамматика зависимостей. [The null copula, copular verbs and dependency grammar.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), **5** (1983), 34–42.

An analysis of copulative sentences in Russian and German, discussing the various possibilities of absence of overt copula, and of types of replacement copula, in connection with the functions of such sentences as representing class inclusion, identification or attribution of a property. An argument is developed, to the effect that the null copula is incapable of carrying out the communicative functions of a full verb, and that an approach to sentence analysis which is based on the valency of verbs therefore misses out a central component of the syntactice structure of sentences.

84–506 Arutyunova, I. D. Сравнительная оценка ситуаций. [Comparative evaluation of situations.] *Серия пимерамуры и языка* (Moscow), **42**, 4 (1983), 330–41.

A general discussion (with data from Russian) on implicit and explicit comparison in evaluative sentences. The centrality of basic words (such as *good* and *better*, *bad* and *worse*) is shown by the fact that comparative sentences interchangeably use positive

and negative words here, but not with other evaluative adjectives ('He is more brilliant than the others' is not equivalent to 'The others are stupider than him').

Particular attention is paid to the use of evaluative comparatives as propositional connectives, and detailed discussion is devoted to the differences between 'basic' uses of comparative adjectives and these uses; in particular, the reversibility with opposite-polarity comparatives does not work in these latter cases. The lessons of this analysis for the logic of everyday reasoning are discussed.

84–507 Lomov, A. M. Временные формы русского глагола и закономерности их фуикционирования. [Rules governing the functioning of the tense forms of the Russian verb.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **3** (1982), 70–6.

Applying the vector principle to tense, one can place the zero point in real time, that is, at the moment of speech or writing. This is fixed in normal monologue or dialogue. In written language, however, a vector point may be established, for example by a direct or oblique temporal reference, which establishes an artificial zero point, from which the use of present, past and future tense forms follows. The distinction between 'historical' and 'prophetic' statements is drawn, as also between 'static' and 'dynamic' contexts. The stylistic functions of tense in creative writing are examined as basic tools of the writer, with the suggestion that while the historic present has lost much of its expressiveness due to the frequency of its use, other deviations from the norm remain stylistically powerful.

84–508 Morozova, T. S. О фразеологичности семантики производных слов (на материале отглагольных существительных). [On the phraseological nature of the semantics of derived words (deverbal nouns).] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Moscow), **3** (1983), 15–20.

Russian words are defined as falling into three groups: morphologically simple, hence semantically opaque, words; morphologically complex and semantically transparent words (i.e. where the meaning follows entirely from the morphemes composing the word); and morphologically complex, but not entirely semantically transparent words. This latter set of words make up the vast majority of derived words, and their semantics is termed 'phraseological'.

A number of subcategories of this type is delimited. The derived word may take only one of the meanings of its root; a polysemous prefix or suffix may have only one interpretation; the meaning of the root may be altered; the use of the derived word may be limited in some way over and above what might be expected. [Examples of all of these types are given.]

84–509 Nikolaeva, T. M. Функциональная нагрузка неопределенных местои-мений в русском языке и типология ситуаций. [The functional load of indefinite pronouns in Russian and the typology of situations.] *Серия лимерамуры и языка* (Moscow), **42**, 4 (1983), 342–53.

Some of the serious problems of describing the functions of the various indefinite pronouns in Russian are surveyed, along with the various meanings that the individual

indefinite pronouns can convey in different contexts. It is shown that there are clear relationships with indefinite articles in other languages, and the relevance of features such as possibility of individuation, animacy, etc. is demonstrated.

A further aspect of the meaning of these words is that, in addition to their basic, neutral meaning, they also have an additional evaluative or modal meaning. Where an indefinite description is possible, it is claimed, the basic meaning of these words holds: but in a type of situation where a definite description is required, the evaluative meaning is attributed to them. An attempt is made to describe the sorts of situations which require one or other interpretation.

84–510   Pete, Istvan (Egyetem U., Szeged, Hungary). Обозначение движения транспортных средств. [Terms for the movement of means of transport.] *Russian Language Journal* (Michigan), **37**, 126/7 (1983), 52–60.

An analysis of the words used to describe movement of means of transport, especially of the choice between *idti* and *exat'* in Russian, and their prefixal derivatives. The major factors favouring *idti* are found to be the meaning of arrival or departure, the regularity of the route taken by a means of transport (e.g. trains, but not taxis), plus various special uses. A whole variety of special cases is analysed as well.

84–511   Wierzbicka, Anna (Australian National U.). The semantics of case marking. *Studies in Language* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), **7**, 2 (1983), 247–75.

The existence of alternative genitive allomorphs for certain masculine nouns in Russian is semantically motivated, though the motivation is different for singular and plural. Some English zero-marked plurals (measure words such as 'foot' in some dialects, 'sheep', 'duck', etc.) are similarly motivated. In Polish, the genitive-like marking of the accusative of inanimate masculine nouns can be linked with certain genitive construction, and allomorphs of the nominative plurals of some human masculine nouns (in particular, the *-owie* forms) can be accounted for if case-marking is viewed as semantic. Such a theory is in opposition to the 'discriminatory' theory proposed by Comrie. On the basis of the Polish and Russian data, predictions can be made as to the sort of meanings that can be expected to be associated with particular cases.

SPANISH

84–512   Cunningham, Una (U. of Nottingham). Aspects of the intonation of Spanish. *Nottingham Linguistic Circular* (Nottingham), **12**, 1 (1983), 21–54.

Earlier research by Navarro (1918 and 1944) and Stockwell and Bowen (1965) is reviewed, and numerous divergences from these scholars are noted. In particular, this study identifies pitch movement rather than pitch level as significant and no arguably 'unclear' stress in the phrase is detected. Lexical stress was not found to be relevant to intonation, so only sentence stress is discussed.

By analysing intonation patterns of two Spanish informants from Oviedo reading prepared passages in formal Castillian Spanish, a set of rules is deduced that defines what form a pitch contour may or may not take given its environment, position in sentence, etc. Rules are made for two classes of intonation pattern: a stress group, consisting of a stressed syllable and any unstressed syllables that follow it; and an *a* group, consisting of any unstressed syllables before the first stressed syllable of a phrase.

Stress groups can be rising, falling, or level, with occasional fall–rise patterns and a tendency for the last stress group in a phrase to be falling. The falling pattern can be disturbed into an apparent rise under the influence of neighbouring stressed syllables. By contrast, monosyllabic *a* groups must be lower than the first stressed syllable of the first stress group, while polysyllabic *a* groups are usually on a level tone or, at least, not higher than the initial stressed syllable of the phrase. No consistent relationship between function and intonation emerged from a study of question and negative types; so the functional approach to intonation is discounted as uninformative.

TRANSLATION

84–513 Loffler-Laurian, Anne-Marie (CNRS, Paris). Pour une typologie des erreurs dans la traduction automatique. [Towards a classification of errors in machine translation.] *Multilingua* (Amsterdam), **2**, 2 (1983), 65–78.

Machine translation systems are now frequently producing translations which are usable almost in the raw state for rapid information purposes. Errors still occur, and human post-editing is required to produce accurate or elegant texts. The study of errors is intended on the one hand to improve the system and on the other to make it possible to distinguish between the documents which are suitable for machine translation and those which are not. To be effective, in this context, human intervention must be reduced to the minimum. The study presented here therefore provides a classification based on linguistic, and thus observable and quantifiable, criteria of the errors corrected during post-editing. A table of corrections may be drawn up for each document giving a 'linguistic spectrum' of the text. Appropriate use of the table should make it possible for the user who knows in advanced the approximate quantity and probable types of corrections to be made, to decide whether a document would be translated more quickly by the traditional human means or by computer followed by post-editing.

84–514 van Bergeijk, D. (International Translations Centre, Delft). The WORLD TRANSINDEX, a data base on existing scientific translations; an aid to overcome the language barrier. *Multilingua* (Amsterdam), **2**, 1 (1983), 27–31.

A number of aids have been developed to overcome the language barrier when a search is made for scientific literature. When a document is retrieved which is written in a language the user cannot read, a translation prepared with or without computer assistance is needed.

Translations are costly in terms of both time and money. Existing translations should therefore be re-used. For finding existing translations the unique WORLD TRANSINDEX data base is a good aid. A short description of this data base is given, together with its possibilities and limitations. Short-term projects and a long-term plan are described.

The development of machine translation systems will not affect the need for the WORLD TRANSINDEX as a tool for overcoming the language barrier.

LEXICOGRAPHY

84–515 Vigner, G. (IDEN, Troyes). Pour un nouveau dictionnaire. [Towards a new dictionary.] *Études de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris), **49** (1983), 174–91.

Questioning the arbitrary practice of arranging dictionaries alphabetically, the author advocates dictionaries ordered specifically for the purpose they serve. Some alternative modes of organisation are considered with a view to devising language dictionaries for teaching purposes.

A first distinction is made between encyclopaedias, which may be alphabetical or arranged by themes; and language dictionaries, which list words for two types of reader, the cultured native speaker and the language learner. Existing dictionaries are merely empirical inventories aimed at verification, not discovery. It should be possible to produce semantic dictionaries organised by topic or by notion. The topic dictionary might ape the mail-order catalogue and bring together the vocabularies relating to topics intuitively identifiable within a culture. The notion dictionary would list the various lexical incarnations of the same concepts – time, space, change, etc. – such as Piaget has revealed to have psychological reality for humans in his studies on genetic epistemology. Yet even these would require supplementation with other types of information differently organised, and the dictionary ultimately envisaged would have four parts, each satisfying a different criterion of analysis.

LEXICOLOGY

84–516 Taylor, Charles V. Structure and theme in printed school text. *Text* (The Hague), **3**, 2 (1983), 197–228.

Some 700,000 words of printed English from 18 high-school textbooks in six subjects were analysed with computer assistance. Various syntactic, lexical and semantic measures revealed salient characteristics. Few of the syntactic characteristics proved significant, but some semantic profiles were related to type of text, in particular general semantic structure and transitivity. Lexical collocation proved interesting in suggesting bases for ESL practice material. Ways of conveying objectivity in educational language were distinguishable.

Of greater interest were the features of theme types, theme variation and theme thread, i.e. the movement of theme–rheme along the text. Science and history proved

to have identifiably different theme types and thematic organisation. The implication is that foreign learners need instruction in recognising characteristic theme movements in specific school subjects, especially where objectivity is the writer's intention.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

84–517   Span, Hijlco. José Belgers: 'Wij zijn meedenkers, beslist géén alwetende hulpverlerners'. [José Belgers: 'We'll help you find a solution, but we definitely don't know all the answers'.] *Levende Talen* (The Hague), **379** (1983), 83–4.

An interview with José Belgers, the director of the new Information Centre for Modern Languages in Amsterdam. French, English and German are the main languages covered by the Centre, but it is hoped to increase this coverage in the near future. The Centre offers a variety of support services for teachers – evening meetings on particular topics, book exhibitions, study groups, as well as a counselling service. The Centre is actively involved in the production of materials, its most notable success to date being a project on French songs. It also functions as an informal meeting place for teachers. It is located at Prinsengracht 303te 1016 GX Amsterdam, tel. 020-230931, and is open in the afternoons and evenings.