Language description and use

DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES
ENGLISH
82–378 Maclaren, Rose. On two asymmetrical uses of the demonstrative determiners in English. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **18**, 9/10 (1980), 803–20.

Paradigmatic demonstratives are deictic to the physical context and are accompanied by a demonstration which identifies the referent (*Look at that dog*). In the two uses of the demonstrative determiners discussed here their referents are not presupposed to be in the context and thus a demonstration is not possible. 'Presentational' *this/these* (*There's this new store downtown*) and 'restrictive' *that/those* (*Those members in favour of the motion raise your right hand*) are found to differ from the more straightforward uses and from each other in that the former is indefinite and specific while the latter is definite and non-specific. Finally this difference is related to the familiar proximate/distal contrast.

82–379 Stump, Gregory T. (Ohio State U.). The interpretation of frequency adjectives. *Linguistics and Philosophy* (Dordrecht), **4**, 2 (1981), 221–57.

The aim is to establish the connection between two different uses of frequency adjectives – adjectives such as *occasional*, *frequent*, *sporadic*, *periodic*, *hourly*, *monthly*, *annual*, etc. which intuitively specify the frequency of some event. It is shown that: (1) For any frequency adjective f, there is an element of meaning common to both the adverbial and the generic usage of f; this is a function f' from propositions to truth-values such that $f'(\phi')$ is true at an interval i iff $\check{}\phi'$ is true at subintervals of i distributed through i in a certain way. (2) In an adverbial use of f, f' functions like the corresponding frequency adverb. (3) In a generic use of f, f' quantifies the time intervals at which a specified object is realised by some stage. (4) In their adverbial usage, frequency adjectives are not regular attributive adjectives at the level at which interpretation takes place, but are perhaps determiners. And (5) in their generic usage, frequency adjectives are adjectives at the level at which interpretation takes place.

FRENCH
82–380 Anis, Jacques (Lycée Claude Bernard). Écrit/oral: discordances, auto-nomies, transpositions. [Written French/spoken French: contrast, autonomy and transfer.] *Études de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris), **42** (1981), 7–22.

French shows great differences between the spoken and written forms. Various principles accounting for these differences are outlined, and the elements of an autonomous description of the writing system (graphemics) are sketched out: the simplest distinctions might be between minimal contrastive units (graphemes) that

can form syllables on their own, e.g. e, é, è, ê, ë, and those that cannot. From a communicative point of view, writing, which lacks the paralinguistic aids to understanding of the spoken language, is more explicit; from a sociological point of view, the institutional normative agencies, such as the *Académie Française* and the education system, have had a stabilising and conservative influence. The registers of spoken French and their phonetic, syntactic and lexical features are described and correspondences proposed with registers of written French. These and other distinctions should be systematically taught.

82–381   Burston, Jack L. (Monash U., Australia). Body parts in French: the determination of identity. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **19**, 2 (1981), 129–36.

The usual pedagogical difficulties associated with definite article as opposed to possessive usage in the context of body-part nouns stem not from any inherent arbitrariness or irregularity, but from an inadequate comprehension of the phenomenon. The alternation between the definite article and possessive is made possible as a natural consequence of their similar identificatory function. Likewise, the general condition under which the definite article may be employed in place of the possessive is quite predictable: the definite article occurring when the semantic feature which distinguishes the possessive, i.e. the presence of a referential entity, is contextually inferable. This happens, in particular, when the noun denoting the body part is a constituent of the verbal complement, providing that the verb is interpreted as affecting the body part and providing that the body part referred to is construed as standard. In the simplest case, that involving verbs which are interpreted physiologically, the object of the verb is of necessity consubstantial with the subject and, consequently, is obligatorily identified with the latter. If, however, the verb is not of this variety but is interpreted rather as externally affecting the body part, identification with the referential entity is achieved by means of an indirect object pronoun: reflexive when the identity is with the verbal subject, non-reflexive otherwise.

82–382   Placentini, Jacques Antoine (U. René Descartes, Paris V). La création des synthèmes publicitaires et leur intégration dans le langage courant. [The creation of compounds in the language of advertising and their integration into current usage.] *Linguistique* (Paris), **17**, 1 (1981), 49–77.

Advertising language frequently includes newly created compounds (*les spécialistes-laine, le shampooing-beauté, bien-aise*). The form of these compounds is found to conform to a number of basic patterns: (1) omission of an overt structural marker (*stylo à bille → stylo-bille*); (2) asyntactic collocation, especially noun-noun (*cuisine-liberté*); (3) replacement of an element of a fixed expression (*prêt-à-porter → prêt-à-raser*); (4) verbal constructions (*chauffe-liquides*). [Discussion of more complex types with three or more elements.] Once created, such forms may become more or less accepted and integrated into current usage, depending on various factors (phonological, semantic, etc.) and may subseqently enter into the production of still further creation (*cuisine presse-bouton*).

GERMAN

82–383 Zimmermann, Gerhard. Konvergente Tendenzen vom englischen zum deutschen Satzbau Diskontinuität und Schachtelung. [Convergent tendencies of English and German syntax: discontinuity and 'Chinese box' constructions.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **80**, 3 (1981), 208–23.

The general characterisation of English sentence structure as 'analytic' or 'lining up its elements attributively, in coherent sequence', in contrast to the fundamental German sentence frame depending on 'synthesis' or 'splitting up the verb phrase', will not bear a closer examination of present day usage. There is, obviously, no such invariable borderline between the two languages: one cannot fail to notice certain converging syntactic tendencies – in German speech towards a syntax less intricately woven, in English towards more complex sentence patterns. These tendencies should be judged in close relation to the inherent character of each of the two languages. Their elementary bounds cannot be transgressed.

JAPANESE

82–384 Hakuta, Kenji (Yale U.). Grammatical description versus configurational arrangement in language acquisition: the case of relative clauses in Japanese. *Cognition* (Lausanne), **9**, 3 (1981), 197–236.

Sentences can be described in terms both of the linear order of their constituents and of the configurational relationships between them. The results of experiments based on English have been inconclusive because of the rigidity of English word order, and the contribution of these aspects of sentences to understanding is examined here through experimental studies of Japanese children's comprehension of sentences containing relative clauses. Four experiments are reported, in which linear order and configuration are manipulated independently of each other. The results indicate strongly that it is sentences with complex configurational structures that are most complex, i.e. hardest to interpret or to imitate, and this suggests a somewhat secondary role for particles in the processing of complex sentences and a greater reliance on configurational patterns. The pattern of evidence for relative clauses within SOV languages may show interesting variation depending on the extent of interaction between the inflectional system and word order. It is possible that flexible word order may be a device invented by languages suffering from complex configurational structures.

RUSSIAN

82–385 Golanova, E. I. О некоторых тенденциях и способах номинации в современном русском языке. [On some tendencies and means of nomination in modern Russian.] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Moscow), **4** (1981), 14–19.

Nomination – defined as the use of language to reflect the outside world – uses a variety of formal means to this effect, in particular, affixal word-formation, compounding, the formation of complex names, and semantic shift.

The semantic field of terms related to the automobile is chosen, and each of these means is exemplified in some detail from modern Russian. Further classification of these types is given: compounds may have a determining root which is either nominal or verbal [*микроавтобус* v. *вездеход*], complex names may be either Adjective-Noun formations or Noun-Genitive formations, and semantic shift may involve either metaphor or metonymy. All of these types are illustrated copiously.

82–386 Nirenburg, Sergei (Jerusalem). Способ описания семантики предложных сочетаний. [A means of describing the semantics of prepositional constructions.] *Russian Linguistics* (Dordrecht), **5**, 3 (1981), 245–65.

It is claimed that an interesting description of prepositions can be given if prepositions governed by verbs are ignored, and each meaning of each preposition is considered a separate preposition. The following features can then be used: the extralinguistic situation which correlates with the use of each preposition; the semantic class of the predicate, of the word governed by the preposition, and of the object of the predicate, if there is one; and the range of grammatical categories which can govern each preposition. Such a classification is shown with reference to two prepositions.

Corresponding to the analysis of prepositions into their meanings, an attempt is made to present a synthetic procedure starting from the meaning and ending up with the appropriate preposition. A detailed typology of temporal prepositions is formulated to illustrate this.

SPANISH

82–387 Studerus, Lenard H. (U. of Texas-Arlington). A Spanish twilight zone: mood, syntax and post temporal reference. *Hispania* (Worcester, Mass), **64**, 1 (1981), 97–103.

A solely conceptual or a solely structural/syntactic model are alike inadequate to explain the contexts of mood usage in Spanish. A model consisting of five subjective determining matrices can be shown to be useful if Spanish mood usage rules are to be applied to a past temporal framework. The subjunctive triggering categories (doubt, uncertainty, comment, optative, and imperative) require to be validated by syntactical evidence and temporal reference information: habituality, perfectivity, subsequence, anteriority, simultaneity and backshift. Mood usage rules cannot be applied automatically to past reference situations. A conceptual/syntactic/temporal model is indicated.