

Descriptive studies of particular languages

English

92-104 Ferguson, Gibson (U. of Edinburgh). Conditionals and the expression of regret and relief: towards a fragment for a communicative grammar. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh), **2** (1991), 62–75.

The paper begins with an outline of some desirable properties of a communicative–pedagogical grammar. This serves as a theoretical point of reference for the subsequent description of a narrowly bounded semantic area, that of regret and relief. Conceptual analysis reveals a systematic relationship between the two emotions, which is grammaticalised through the so-called ‘unreal conditional’. The paper then investigates the pragmatic and discursal circumstances that encourage the selection of a conditional exponent for the expression of regret. There is, finally, a brief discussion of pedagogical implications arising from the preceding description.

92-105 Ivanič, Roz (U. of Lancaster). Nouns in search of a context: a study of nouns with both open- and closed-system characteristics. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **29**, 2 (1991), 93–114.

The aim is to identify some of the characteristics of words like ‘purpose’, which are here called ‘carrier nouns’. One important characteristic of such nouns is that, unlike other abstract nouns, they are common in the plural. They belong to the category of ‘container nouns’ which can take a noun clause or nominalisation as complement. This complement can be found either in the same sentence, or elsewhere in the discourse. Beyond sentence boundaries carrier nouns operate like pronouns, but they refer to verbal elements: ideas, facts and events rather than objects. They can be more informative signposts than pronouns, and can also carry commentary on the portion of discourse they refer to. Their interpretation requires sophisticated processing strategies. The characteristics and functions of carrier nouns are illustrated with examples from the L.O.B. corpus of written English.

French

92-106 Gaatone, D. (U. of Tel Aviv). Note sur la pseudo-synonymie de ‘il s’agit’ et ‘il est question’. [A note on the quasi-synonymy of ‘il s’agit’ and ‘il est question’.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **56**, 1 (1991), 81–91.

In spite of the almost identical definitions given in dictionaries and a certain similarity in construction, the essentially impersonal expressions *il s’agit (de)* and *il est question (de)* are not quite identical in their syntactic behaviour nor really equivalent or even very close from the semantic viewpoint. The syntactic differences become obvious when the two expressions are used with the substitute *en*, and also in the mood of the subordinate verb. The difference in meaning is made manifest in the incompatibility of either one or the other in certain contexts, as permutation is not always possible. Finding sufficiently restrictive contexts makes it possible to bring out their basic semantic properties and to explain why the opposition is blurred in certain cases to the point of fostering the illusion of quasi-synonymy.

92-107 Melby, A. K. (U. of Provo). Des causes et des effets de l’asymétrie partielle des réseaux sémantiques liés aux langues naturelles. [Some causes and effects of partial asymmetry of semantic networks connected with natural languages.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **56**, 1 (1991), 5–43.

This paper, derived from a series of lectures delivered at the Collège de France in February, 1990, makes a radical proposal concerning the nature of semantic networks. Previously, it has been assumed that words of general vocabulary and terms from a technical domain are associated with different nodes of the same network. This paper suggests that humans use two fundamentally different kinds of

semantic networks, one called a general network and the other called a domain-specific network. Most technical documents contain both lexical and terminological units so these two networks are easily confused. However, general networks are based on dynamic metaphor and analogy, while domain-specific networks are based on precise set-theoretic categories.

This paper first explores various kinds of asymmetry between roughly corresponding lexical units of pairs of languages. Then it proposes an explanation for this asymmetry based on the general/domain distinction. Finally, it examines some important consequences of the distinction.

92-108 Stein, Barbara. Probleme der Beschreibung von Phraseologismen (Beispiel Französisch). [Problems in describing fixed expressions (taking French as an example).] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **90**, 3 (1991), 242-58.

French binomials are used to illustrate the wide variety of linguistic phenomena that have to be taken into consideration when describing the complex cognitive-conceptual, objective, communicative and situational links of fixed expressions as a whole. The analysis of idiomatic aspects and

reciprocal relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic meanings of phrases plays a major role. Because fixed expressions are an important part of colloquial language, the respective observations are also particularly relevant to communicatively-oriented foreign language teaching.

German

92-109 Hoffmann, Ludger. Anakoluth und sprachliches Wissen. [Anacoluthia and knowledge of linguistic structure.] *Deutsche Sprache* (Berlin, Germany), **2** (1991), 97-132.

The last time anacoluthia was treated comprehensively was in the great traditional grammars (for instance those of Paul and Behagel). Since then it has mostly been treated as an irregular phenomenon of performance which is beyond the scope of a systematic grammatical analysis. This article

attempts to reconstruct the traditional phenomenon and to show that anacoluthia are the result of complex verbalisation processes. It is of particular grammatical interest to see in what way speakers make specific use of their knowledge of linguistic structure in these processes.

92-110 Küper, Christoph. Geht die Nebensatzstellung im Deutschen verloren? [Is traditional word order in German being lost?] *Deutsche Sprache* (Berlin, Germany), **2** (1991), 133-58.

It is demonstrated that the tendency in modern spoken German to use SVX instead of SXV is subject to severe pragmatic restrictions. SVX is only possible if the utterance contains its own topic

and comment and if it is used as an illocutionary act. Therefore, SVX and SXV should, in contrast to prevailing theories, be considered as different basic structures in German.

Spanish

92-111 Meseguer, Alvaro G. Gender-sex clashes in Spanish: a semantic typology of animated nouns (a contribution to the study of linguistic sexism). *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **15**, 5 (1991), 445-63.

In this article a systematic typology of all possible cases relating the word's grammatical gender (m, f) to sex of referent (M, F) is proposed. The research has identified 13 cases (six m, six f and one mf). Comments dealing with sex-gender clashes are added to each case. Two sexist mistakes connected with the subject (the 'semantic jump' and the 'male optic') are also presented. At the end of the article,

the relations between gender (m, f) and sex (M, F) are clarified and some (perhaps surprising) conclusions are suggested. A list of classified nouns is given in the appendix. Although the study focuses exclusively on Spanish, the findings are applicable to other languages, in particular to those derived from Latin.

Lexicology

92-112 Huiskens, Lucie and others (U. of Nijmegen). Developing a tool for the description of language acquisition. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **29**, 3 (1991), 451-79.

In this paper, a new method is proposed for the description of language-acquisition data by means of context-free affix grammars. These affix grammars can easily be implemented on a computer in order to generate powerful parsers. These parsers can be put to use by linguists in order to explore large corpora or to test the adequacy and consistency of language-acquisition theories.

92-113 Kjellmer, Göran. On some characteristics of the English lexicon. *Studia Linguistica* (Lund, Sweden), **44**, 2 (1990), 126-54.

A study of the English word-stock as it is represented in Roget's famous *Thesaurus* indicates that the lexical side of English, and arguably of any language, may be structured to a higher degree than has traditionally been taken for granted. Roget's method of organising lexical matter also provides a convenient way of assessing, if only very tentatively, the extent to which competing lexical domains attract the interests of speakers and writers. It is suggested that success in that competition can partly be accounted for by the presence in those domains of a limited number of very general semantic factors.