Language and linguistics

HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS

70–92   **L'Hermitte, René.** La linguistique soviétique. [Russian linguistics.] *Langages* (Paris), 15 (1969), 3–13.

The article (introductory to a complete issue on 'linguistics in the USSR') gives an historical survey of linguists in Russia since the eighteenth century, their particular contributions, and the effect upon their work of the régime under which they lived. The importance of the modern trends in thought, summarized as structuralism, is noted together with the relevance of mathematics, statistics, and research on machine translation. There is great variety now in methods of approach. The variety of languages spoken in the Soviet Union offers a wide field for the study and description of language. [Bibliography.]

LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

70–93   **Fry, D. B.** The linguistic evidence of speech errors. *Brno Studies in English* (Brno), 8 (1969), 69–74.

The complete process of speech-generation is so complex as to be at present beyond our understanding. Errors made in native speech (of the kind referred to as 'slips of the tongue', 'spoonerisms', etc.) therefore depend on a more intricate mechanism than can be described in the present state of our knowledge. The purpose of the paper is simply to show that a variety of errors is made in the generation of speech, and that these indicate that speakers operate with a linguistic system similar to that arrived at by linguistic analysis. [Examples taken from English.]

70–94   Mulder, Jan W. F. On the act of definition, the double articulation of language, and some of the consequences. *Forum for Modern Language Studies* (University of St Andrews), 5, 2 (1969), 103–17.

Definitions of language are often lacking in theoretical as well as practical value. The author criticizes in some detail a definition of a language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group cooperate and interact. A satisfactory definition is that of Martinet, who says that language has a double articulation. Definitions of language cannot be arrived at inductively; they must be selective rather than descriptive. Double articulation is described in linguistic textbooks as a first articulation into elements having both form and meaning. These elements are then further articulated into those having form only, the ultimate elements of the second articulation being phonemes or 'distinctive features'. The concept of double articulation is fundamental to the theories of the 'functionalists' or 'neo-Prague' linguists. This description is inconsistent with Saussure's concept of a 'sign'. A 'sign' is the conjunction of a particular expression with a particular content, but not a conjunction of logically unrelated entities. If, however, the interpretation is slightly changed, contradictions are removed and a parallelism between phonology and grammar revealed. As a result, the relevant concepts both in phonology and grammar gain in clarity and exactitude.

STATISTICAL LINGUISTICS

70–95   Muller, Charles. La statistique lexicale. *Langue Française* (Paris), 2 (1969), 30–43.

Machines are now available to help with statistical analyses of a language but first linguists must be sure that there is value in statistical linguistics as even with machine help statistical work is slow and costly. A norm must be chosen, a 'word' defined, an index made, frequency distributions drawn up. Two distinct lines will then develop serving linguistics and stylistics. Comparison of the richness

of vocabulary of texts of different length submitted to statistical investigation can be very difficult. Additional calculation must be used to estimate the content of the shorter text had it been of the same length as the other. Calculation can also be used to study the increase in vocabulary in the course of a work.

Such work can throw light on problems of authorship or the dating of work, and can also be used for partial analysis to study the occurrence of a particular form in a text or texts. There are nevertheless many problems where statistical aid cannot help and, in any case, few linguists have the necessary mathematical training to use the methods, although only a few months would enable them to acquire sufficient expertise once they were convinced of their value.

LEXICAL STUDIES

70-96   Jankowsky, Kurt R. On scope and methods of lexicology. *Orbis* (Louvain), **18**, 1 (1969), 173–85.

Few linguists feel at home with the term 'lexicology'. Some feel that such a composite term would include the non-linguistic aspect, semantics. But lexicology has much more to offer than simply semantics, morphology or stylistics. In Russia it has a clearly defined place within linguistic science and comes close to the traditional German *Wortkunde*. A better theoretical foundation has been worked out by Romance scholars in France, Switzerland and Germany though the term is only used widely in France.

A fresh definition is offered, taking terms from the OED definition of *meaning, form, word* and *history*, which are summed up as 'grammatical context'. 'Conceptual context' is added, described as the arrangement of lexical meanings of a particular language at a particular time. 'Situational context' is illustrated from the varying speeds of comprehension of partners in a conversation caused by the difference in their background information about a certain situation. This is not an intellectual factor but simply a full understanding (or lack of it) of the situation under discussion. [Bibliography.]

SCIENTIFIC LANGUAGE

70–97   Reinhardt, Werner. Zum Wesen der Fachsprache. [The nature of specialized language.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig), **6**, 2 (1969), 91–7.

The article is based on a symposium held at the Institute of Applied Linguistics of the Technical University in Dresden. An attempt at defining specialized technical and scientific language is made. Although its main element is a specialized vocabulary, such a language is characterized by more than simply terminological peculiarities. Attention must also be given to its special style and syntax. In recent writings on the subject these seem to have been given more and more consideration.

Scientists and technologists are becoming increasingly aware of the important role that language plays in their work. They tend to criticize the inadequacies of normal language and look for an un-changing, unambiguous means of communication tailored to their needs. Such an ideal language will probably never exist, but the normal language will continue to adapt itself to specialized purposes. [Various ways of adaptation listed.] Linguistic research into the vocabulary and syntax of specialized language should make the greatest possible use of statistical methods. In some fields of science and technology the specialized language has become more formalized than in others. The degree of formalization is an important criterion in distinguishing between the specialized languages of various disciplines. In one and the same field there can be a great difference between the specialized language used by the theoretician and that used by the practical worker. [Diagram of relationship of various elements of specialized language given to illustrate concluding definition.]

TRANSLATION

70–98   Buzzelli, Giovanni Emilio. General problems in scientific and technical translation. *Babel* (Avignon), **15**, 3 (1969), 140–6.

Scientific translation includes the transference of the material of both pure and applied science. Its problems are extremely complex apart from the questions of terminology and polysemy.

Scientific language is interconnected with the language of emotions, dreams and the arts. The barriers between scientific and humanistic culture will disappear but there are at present many information gaps. It is the aim of all scientific disciplines to arrive at precisely defined terms. Consequently technical multilingual dictionaries and glossaries are of little use to translators. The only place to find the precise meaning of a term is in a glossary where the term is accurately defined and even then the meaning is of little use before it is analysed in its context.

When approached with the tools of traditional linguistics, the natural language of science appears as a micro-system structurally. But, on the higher levels of structural analysis, scientific language presents more problems than other languages and meaning must be approached separately. It also embodies extensive symbolic systems which may be seen as specific methods of expression or as separate languages.

70–99   Nida, Eugene A. Science of translation. *Language* (Baltimore), **45**, 3 (1969), 483–98.

Insights from linguistic theory have been helpful to those interested in the scientific analysis of translation, showing that translating is not a process of matching surface structures but a more complex procedure involving analysis, transfer and restructuring. The linguistic procedures of transformation and componential analysis provide better bases for translation than have existed in the past. Scientific analysis of translation may be recognized as a significant branch of comparative linguistics, providing a dynamic dimension with a focus

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upon semantics. The scientific study of translation can give linguistic science new insights into structure, and improved methods for testing hypotheses. Theories about language often remain within the realm of a single language. Such theories can be more effectively checked by a thorough comparison of languages on a level of dynamic equivalence, which will test the potentiality of compared structures and not merely provide a parallel description of two fixed corpora.

CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS

70–100   Berndt, Rolf. Lexical contrastive analysis. *Brno Studies in English* (Brno), **8** (1969), 31–6.

Hadlich considers the application of 'contrastive analytic procedure to vocabulary learning...harmful' (English-Teaching Abstracts 1039), but he is more concerned with language-teaching techniques than with lexical contrastive analysis, which is in no way confined to bringing to light 'problem pairs'. Ideally it would provide material for complete new dictionaries, but a more rational investigation would cover the 3,000 or 5,000 most frequent words and their foreign language equivalents. These would be examined, their full semantic range defined and the whole segmented into individual semes, subvariants and submeanings. Fine discriminations will reveal partial synonymy. The poorer dictionaries show one-to-one meaning where there is only partial correspondence. [Examples from English and German bilingual dictionaries.] Lexical contrastive analysis is not only concerned with minimal semantic simplexes, which are also grammatically simplexes, but also with compounds, phrases, idioms and figurative expressions, differences in distribution or connotation of the meaning units.