Language description and use

DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES
ENGLISH

83–109 Gold, David L. (U. of Haifa). **An introduction to English in Israel.** *Language Problems and Language Planning* (Berlin, FRG), **5**, 1 (1981), 11–56.

This article surveys the legal status of English in Israel before and since the country became independent; attitudes towards the language; its use in schools, by the media, as a vehicle of creative writing, and its use in other domains; the influence of English on Hebrew; the kinds of English used; and related topics. Although official domestic use of English declined to nearly zero in 1948, English has been played an ever greater role since then: (*a*) it now rivals Yiddish as the chief non-Hebraic influence on Modern Hebrew; (*b*) it is now Israel's chief link language with the non-Israeli world (and even with Jews outside Israel); and (*c*) on the whole, it is now the most studied, the most prestigious, and the best known foreign language in Israel. The kinds of English used in Israel are discussed (how the different kinds of English brought from other countries have influenced one another, how local languages have influenced them, and what local innovations have emerged).

83–110 Goldsmith, John (Indiana U.) **and Woisetschlaeger, Erich.** The logic of the English progressive. *Linguistic Inquiry* (Cambridge, Mass), **13**, 1 (1982), 79–89.

An account of the non-aspectual senses of the progressive in English is offered, centring on a distinction between structural and phenomenal descriptions. Rather than expressing a generalisation based on individual occurrences, a statement such as *Bill walks to school* is based on a knowledge of the structure of the world. By contrast, *Bill is walking to school* simply describes an observable phenomenon. This account therefore makes no references to time or to states v. activities, and the authors argue that several uses of the progressive or non-progressive, previously thought to be 'exotic' or problematic, are predictable within their theory. These include the expression of an attitude held by the speaker (as in *Old Lilly is always feeding the pigeons in the park*); the 'programmed future' use of the non-progressive in, for example, travel plans and timetables; and the non-progressive description of such activities as magic tricks in the course of performance (*Now I take the flask of sodium nitrate...*).

83–111 Herskovits, Annette (Stanford U.). On the spatial uses of prepositions in English. *Lingvisticae Investigationes* (Amsterdam), **5**, 2 (1981), 303–27.

An artifical intelligence approach to language comprehension and production does not provide as good an account of the spatial uses of prepositions as is often claimed. Such an approach, using simple co-ordinates in some system of reference, cannot fully interpret and generate locative predictions. A number of object characteristics beyond

shape and a number of contextual factors which bear on the truth and appropriateness of locative predications are identified and described. As an instance of the former, we see that different geometric descriptions can be made of the same basic situation resulting in different prepositions as in (1) *The train is at Victoria Station* where the station is viewed as a point on a travel trajectory, and (2) *The train is in Victoria Station* in which the station is seen as a three-dimensional enclosure. Similarly, function, typical physical or geometrical context and relative mobility of objects need to be taken into account. With regard to contextual factors, varying viewpoint on the object may be important – a road may be seen as a strip (3) *a truck on the road*, or a line (4) *a village on the road to London* [other examples given].

Ideal prototypical 'core meanings' for topological and projective prepositions are proposed. The use of locative predication cannot be fully explained in terms of core meaning and inferences drawn from object knowledge; one must also take into account how objects appear to the experiencer of a situation.

83–112 Langendoen, D. Terence (Brooklyn Coll. and CUNY Graduate Centre). **On a class of not ungrammatical constructions.** *Journal of Linguistics* (Cambridge), **18**, 1 (1982), 107–12.

A grammar of English satisfying condition 'M' (which states that no syntactic rule is able to make use of the morphological structure of lexemes) can be constructed to generate (1) *a not unhappy person* but not (2) *a not sad person*. This is done by limiting the introduction of pre-nominal adjectives following *not* by means of selection restrictions. The distribution of the selectional features $[+not\_N]$ and $[-not\_N]$ among English adjectives is discussed.

83–113 Yule, Valerie. An international reform of English spelling and its advantages. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* (Tenerife), **4** (1982), 9–21.

Opponents of spelling improvement mistakenly assume that reform would be purely phonemic (fonemic), would change the appearance of printed English drastically and would involve immense costs; they ignore our international responsibilities, though native speakers of English are greatly outnumbered by those who speak it as a foreign language. Spelling reform could retain and extend such advantages as English spelling has, while removing the difficulties of inconsistency, unpredictability and excess letters.

The present system causes many difficulties. Everyone must learn two English languages, the spoken and the written. English is one of the few major orthographies which have not been updated in the last hundred years. An international spelling reform backed by economic, social and technical interests, could introduce changes in international communication, in the first place through parallel alternative spellings which would then be adopted at home by common preference. The 1981 Edinburgh conference on spelling research and reform recommended that any future reform should take into account the international aspect. The ultimate aim should be a perfectly consistent system of writing based on the general principle of phoneme–grapheme correspondence. For the greatest efficiency, the principle of sound-symbol

correspondence needs to be modified in consistent ways. Only 20–30 per cent of the spelling needs 'cleaning up', but it is this percentage which wrecks the system. Important criteria are continuity with present English spelling, international recognisability, economy, operating towards an international system, and minimum special cases and rules to maintain grammatical markers; abbreviate the commonest function words, distinguish homofones shown to be confusable in practice, and govern a reduced range of ways to represent vowels. The first steps could be taken now: adopting *f* for *ph* and *e* for the short *e* (as in *bet*, i.e. *meny* for *many*).

FRENCH

83-114 Bécherel, Daniele (U. of Western Brittany). A propos des solutions de remplacements des anglicismes. [On replacing anglicisms.] *Linguistique* (Paris), **17**, 2 (1981), 119–31.

French has traditionally been hostile to neologisms, out of concern for linguistic purity and correctness. The 'linguistic superego' has inhibited creativity, resulting paradoxically in a greater acceptance of foreign borrowings. However, attitudes towards neologisms are changing and there is a movement to replace the growing numbers of anglicisms, particularly in scientific and technical language, numerous in spite of the problems of pronunciation, etc., posed by their adoption. New terms can be formed by derivation, confixation, or composition; they may be calques (translations of English expressions); or already existing French words may be proposed as substitutes for English ones. Acceptance of the new terms, if official control is rejected, depends on the user. Anglicisms which are well established or very familiar are unlikely to be replaced.

83-115 Bécherel, Daniele (U. of Western Brittany). Différenciation morpho-sémantique des suffixes nominalisateurs de l'adjectif. [Morpho-semantic comparison of nominalising adjectival suffixes.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **38**, 1 (1981), 45–59.

A study of the comparison of the suffixes entering into the composition of abstract nouns denoting quality: *-ance, -eur, -esse, -erie, -ise, ité, -itude*. Given the possibility of coinage, what is the range of choice? How to account in Modern French for the distribution of such endings which were all to be found in Old French? Do there exist any morphological affinities between a given base and its derivative? Are they all equally transparent and available for new formations? (cf. the diachronic investigation which has been conducted into their respective ranges of productivity). Are they semantically specialised? Thus *-eur* seems to be restricted to coinages denoting physical features (*blancheur*), *-esse* to formations denoting positive moral qualities (*sagesse*), whereas *-ise* and *-erie* are endowed with negative emotional meaning (*vantardise, poltronnerie*) and *-itude* enters the formation of words denoting a state of being (*solitude*). On the other hand, *-ance, -ie* and *-ité* seem to be devoid of any precise semantic particularity. But, since *-ance/-ence* is to be found exclusively in connection

with -*ant*/-*ent* (*élégant*/-*ance*) and -*ie* is to be encountered in combination with learned root morphemes (-*logie*, -*graphie*), -*ité* remains the least marked and hence the most readily available and productive for innovative use.

83–116 Wenk, Brian J. and Wioland, François (U. of Strasbourg). Is French really syllable-timed? *Journal of Phonetics* (London), **10**, 2 (1982), 193–216.

The widespread supposition that French is 'syllable-timed' is examined closely and found, in the light of instrumental and perceptual evidence, to deny just those facts which make it possible to speak and understand the language. An attempt is made to discover those features of linguists' conceptual and perceptual systems which conspire to straitjacket standard French into such a framework. Finally, an analysis proceeding from a set of principles that govern temporal relations at the abstract rhythmic level is seen to explain a range of significant facts in the language and so to support a proposed alternative typology.

GERMAN

83–117 Öhlschläger, Günther. Zur deutschen Orthographie und ihrer Reform – ein Forschungsbericht. [Research report on German orthography and its reform.] *Germanistische Linguistik* (Marburg), **5/6** (1979) [publ. 1982], 71–116.

Despite repeated attempts to reform German orthography since the Berlin Orthography Conference of 1901 where the rules now obtaining were laid down, no reforms have been achieved [the main attempts at reform are outlined]. In recent years, of the German-speaking countries, it is Austria which has taken the lead and been most assiduous with regard to discussing orthographical reform, though the GDR has also been very active recently.

A critical review of eight recent publications on the subject of orthographical reform is made. There seems to be more objectivity about the discussions nowadays; while the problem of capitalisation is still the central issue, other issues such as how to write foreign words, where to hyphenate, and punctuation, are also being raised. Any agreement about capitalisation is far off; theoretical suggestions ignore practicalities. The sole aim of any othographical reform should be to ensure understanding and avoid problems of comprehension [Bibliography: see *Bibliographies* section.]

RUSSIAN

83–118 Corbett, Greville G. (U. of Surrey). Gender in Russian: an account of gender specification and its relationship to declension. *Russian Linguistics* (Dordrecht), **6**, 2 (1982), 197–232.

A detailed discussion of criteria for gender assignment in Russian. The various suggestions as to the number of distinct declensional paradigms in Russian are

examined critically (the conclusion being that no very convincing criteria exist to distinguish between the postulation of two, three, four or more paradigms). Two approaches which attempt to derive information about declensional paradigm from information about gender are criticised.

The remainder of the article is devoted to presenting and explaining an algorithm for the assignment of gender given certain information about declensional class, combined with information about sex, where this is applicable. A whole range of data including some problematic cases (e.g. affective forms, indeclinable nouns) is shown to follow from this algorithm. This is further seen as support for a four-paradigm approach to Russian declension, as this forms the basis for the declensional information in the algorithm.

83–119   Khukhuni, G. T. Основные тенденции развития русской грамматической мыисли первой половины XX века. [The basic tendencies of the development of Russian grammatical doctrine in the first half of the twentieth century.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), **6** (1981), 63–73.

A sketch of the history of Russian grammar in the first half of the twentieth century. Three periods are distinguished, each focusing on a single major problem – the first two decades focus on the arguments against 'school grammar' and for 'scientific grammar'; the 'twenties centre round a debate on the nature of 'formal' linguistics, and the period up to the mid-1950s seeing a rejection of formal linguistics in favour of a more semantically-based grammar.

The history of this period is traditionally seen as involving arguments between two schools of thought (professing allegiance respectively to Potebnya and Fortunatov). Here, however, it is shown that things are much more complex than that, and that the key figures (such as Shakhmatov, Peshkovsky, Shcherba and Vinogradov) relate to each other much more closely than the traditional account allows.

TRANSLATION

83–120   Lurquin, G. (Centre de Terminologie de Bruxelles). Le Centre de Terminologie de Bruxelles. *Langage et l'Homme* (Paris), **47** (1981), 38–66.

The Centre de Terminologie de Bruxelles (CTB) functions within an advanced school for training translators and interpreters. Research into scientific terminology is integrated with teaching and training. Students present a thesis on some aspect of terminology for their doctorate. The expertise of the CTB is available to outside translators. Indexes of recognised terms are compiled and the Centre runs a consultancy service. The CTB publishes a review, information sheets, newsletters and glossaries. It collaborates with other terminological units and documentation centres and takes part in international seminars and conferences. [List of studies in terminology presented by CTB students 1979–81; glossary on company law.]

83–121 Neubert, Albrecht (Karl-Marx U., Leipzig). Translation, interpreting and text linguistics. *Studia Linguistica* (Lund, Sweden), **35**, 1/2 (1981), 130–45.

The paper looks at the question of how insights in linguistics and related research can be used to improve communication skills and the teaching of them. With the current proliferation of information facilities, the transfer of messages into other languages ('language mediation') is being carried out in innumerable ways, from simultaneous interpreting to literary translation. The product of language mediation is never the result of direct experience put into language; it is always a secondary product or a 'text-induced text'. The main problem is how to achieve a target text which can serve as an adequate replica of the source text. Much of the original impact is lost in a translation because a source text is rooted in the communicative matrix of the source-language community. Text linguistics suggests that it is the supra-sentential macro-structures which are responsible for 'textness'. A source text is embedded in, and differentiated from, what might be called 'background texts'. A target text is similarly automatically related by its comprehender to its new target-language background.

An awareness of the text as a unit of translation will shed light on the nature of the source text as well as on any attempt to 'process it for target-language consumption'. Language mediation can tell no more about the original than a reader or listener of the original is consciously aware of, particularly where textual arrangement (structural features) is concerned. Solving the problems of bilingual mediation comes down to isolating these subtextual units which help to carry over relatively discrete items of information – these units often transcend sentence boundaries.

Simultaneous interpreting is an area in which language mediation is particularly difficult; because the interpreter has to react immediately, macrostructures are hard to locate. A realistic unit of translation must take into account, or vary with, the communictive situation: some elements become variables, others remain invariant. Texts can be made compatible, whereas the source and target language are incompatible. A target text represents the reconstruction of a source text under the communicative conditions of another language community. Training in translation and interpreting is training in awareness of intertextuality – a phenomenon that a communicatively equivalent translation shares with its source.

LEXICOGRAPHY

83–122 Gross, G. (U. of Paris XIII). Lexicographie et grammaire. [Lexicography and grammar.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **39**, 2 (1981), 35–46.

Lexicographical practice is examined from a syntactic point of view. The elaboration of dictionaries is, in fact, based on the discrimination between lexicon and syntax. This dichotomy does not allow one to account for important regularities in the language. The meaning of a word depends partly on information that is only brought out by sentence structure. Because of the preliminary absence of syntatic analysis which should normally precede the lexicographical treatment, dictionaries will often classify

the different meanings of a word unsatisfactorily or omit some regular use of a given word class. The notion of '*locution figée*' has never been exactly studied and determiners have therefore been overlooked. Lexicographical research, which is based on the idea of word categories, has insufficient exactness in the definition of these categories. By way of definition of an item, the use of the notion of 'operator verbs' will allow an important regularisation in lexicographical treatment.

83–123   Buzon, C. (TLF, CNRS) **and others.** Un exercise dictionnairique: **(1) Les données du problème.** [An exercise in the use of the dictionary: (1) Presentation of data.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **36**, 1 (1980), 111–18; **(2) Solutions et discussions.** [Solutions and discussions.] Ibid., **38**, 1 (1981), 60–100.

This double article displays three different ways of resolving a methodological problem: how to deal with a word in a dictionary. The three solutions to the problem are: (1) presenting the meanings of *flamber* according to the different syntactic structures of the verb; this leads to a definition of four 'actants' (similar to cases): agent, object, source, locative. (2) A critical analysis of syntactic and casual methods, which shows their limits and the doubts which arise, particularly when dealing with unusual structures. A descriptive pattern resulting from oppositions is proposed. (3) A solution from a pragmatic point of view, which studies the semantic deep-structures of contexts, and which builds up a model of description based upon meaning.

Four proposals are made for a scientific and accurate conception of lexicography.