Studies of particular languages

ENGLISH

68–90 **Bolinger, Dwight.** Adjective comparison: a semantic scale. *Journal of English Linguistics* (Washington), 1 (1967), 2–10.

[The author excludes several types of comparison, e.g. of adverbs proper, and of *more* transformed from a verb phrase.]

Adjectives that can take the comparison form are also modifiable by adverbs of degree other than *more*, can be phonologically lengthened, and are freely used as predicate adjectives. Comparability is a semantic feature co-extensive with 'having different degrees' or 'susceptible of being laid out on a scale', and is tied not to a class of adjectives but to a class of adjective meanings. It is the meaning, not the adjective, that is scaled. The notion of scale informs us about whether a 'having the quality of' meaning is amenable to comparison. Comparability depends on whether the meaning covers a range on the scale or only a point.

[Many examples are given.]

68–91 **Gutschow, Harald.** Der Artikel im Englischen. [The article in English.] *Idioma* (Munich), 4, 2/3/4/5 (1967).

The articles are the determinants of nouns and in contrast to other determinants—for instance, possessives—have a primarily grammatical meaning. Generally both the definite and indefinite articles are unstressed.

The uses of the definite and indefinite articles are studied with illustrations in the first article, the zero form or absence of article in the second, proper names with and without articles in the third, and finally the emphasized article, which is of marginal interest to the teacher of English, appearing rarely and on emotive occasions.

There are also minor problems attached to the use of *a* and *an*,

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particularly in the case of words such as *hotel* and before initials, *an MA* but *a MS*. Other difficulties in the use of the article with names of newspapers, the variable position of the article in a sentence: *too firm a hold*, *a too intimate gesture*, *half-a-crown* but *a well-earned half-crown* are noted and considered. Complications with the substantivized article are illustrated from contemporary literature. [A list of books and periodicals used for illustration is appended.]

68–92   Corder, S. Pit. Imperative sentences: subjects, vocatives and tags. *Englisch* (Berlin), 4 (1966), 106–9.

Five examples are given of very common sentences spoken in a class-room which never appear in textbooks as these generally draw their examples from the written form of the language. The simple, em-phatic and negative imperative sentences are commonly taught, occasionally with a question tag, 'please', an exclamation, or a vocative word or phrase. [Examples.] Further imperative sentences are examined showing that although the vocative element and the subject of an imperative sentence must refer to the same person, it is very important to be able to recognize the difference since meaning will depend upon it. The use of the third-person pronoun in question tags when a group is being addressed is noted and illustrated. Reference is made to the now acceptable use of the plural form *they* to stand for *he* or *she*, because English has no singular pronoun which can refer to male and female. The inclusive *we* of tags in imperative sentences is described and its expansion into *you and I* or *John and I*. The use of negative or positive form in the question tag is complicated after an imperative sentence; rules and illustrations are given for use with a note that grammarians have not yet been able to state rules in every case. Meaning affects usage. Intonation also plays a part: the tag to a positive sentence has a rising tone and the tag to a negative sentence has a falling tone.

68–93   Laver, John. Assimilation in educated Nigerian English. *English Language Teaching* (London), **22**, 2 (1968), 156–60.

It is in sentence features that the English heard in Nigeria deviates most from an ostensibly RP model. There exists a widespread form of English which has become institutionalized.

[The author gives examples of assimilation forms occurring in the speech of a number of speakers, with various mother tongues.] The different mother tongues had no apparent effect on the types of assimilation used. The assimilations are chiefly regressive; they never involve manner of articulation alone; and there is no progressive assimilation of voice. Educated Nigerian English (ENE) differs from RP in allowing regressive assimilation of voice. Such an assimilatory type is found in educated Scots.

There is less assimilation in ENE than in RP. Hardly any of the assimilations in ENE detract seriously from intelligibility. It is otherwise with rhythm and intonation.

68–94   Pocheptsov, G. G. Syntagmatic types of the English verb and their classroom study. *Language Learning* (Michigan), **17**, 1/2 (1967), 27–32.

The syntactic environment of a verb may be obligatory or optional. Obligatory environment is an integral property of the verb in the sentence. Verbs with identical obligatory environments belong to one syntagmatic type. Optional environment is not structurally indispensable.

Obligatory environment must be given a central place in practical language study. There are no serious learning difficulties when a foreign construction has a direct counterpart in the learner's native language. It is a different matter when verbs close in meaning have dissimilar obligatory environments in the two languages.

Different languages also have unique syntagmatic types. This fact is a source of frequent mistakes, and the learner also tends to avoid such constructions.

[The author gives an outline of the syntagmatic types of English

verbs, classifying them according to obligatory environment into verbs of non-directed and directed action.] In particular contextual and situational conditions the obligatory environment can be omitted.

The instructor must assume that the learner's task is not so much to acquire a knowledge of the system of syntagmatic types of the verb as to learn verbs in their typical environment.

68–95   Roggero, J. 'Whose' et 'of which'. *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **61**, 4 (1967), 405–15.

One of the difficult points of grammar for students of English is the problem of when to use *whose* and when *of which*. School textbooks usually give only part of the picture and their information is drawn largely from previous grammars. The article studies the use of the relative genitive in works published between 1955 and 1966. Some note is taken of the spoken language through contemporary plays and a law-suit. It appears that small use is made of these relatives although *whose* is the commoner. Neither relative appears in two plays; *whose* appears once and *of which* twice in the account of the law-suit, from which it appears that the two forms are extremely rare in spoken English, but increase in use in the more formal registers and particularly in written English. The uses of *whose* and *of which* with personal and impersonal antecedents are examined in detail and a case is noted where the two forms, though grammatically interchangeable, would produce different meanings. *Of which* can appear at the head of its clause and also after its determiner.

The problem is also considered in the translations of recent French novels, where it appears that *dont* and *duquel* are fairly common in French.

This examination tempts one to conclude that the teaching of these two relatives can be left fairly late. *Whose* should be taught first, but eventually the usage of both forms must be made clear. Machine translations will be chiefly concerned with scientific texts; in these *of which* will more often be an accurate translation than *whose*.

68–96   Schneider, Gilbert D. West African Pidgin-English—an overview: phonology–morphology. *Journal of English Linguistics* (Washington), 1 (1967), 49–56.

The article is based on field notes made since February 1947. Pidgin is spoken as a lingua franca throughout West Africa from Sierra Leone to Gabon and is a medium of communication for African people with no first language in common, for white men of various ethnic backgrounds and for West African working men, traders and transients. It is not merely a simplification of English but a separate, describable language, with various dialects all mutually intelligible to those who use it.

The shared sound features of speakers with differing first-language backgrounds are noted and illustrated. Twenty consonant and seven vowel inventories represent the primary sound system of pidgin English. A secondary system of terminal markers, two of tone and one of open transition, is also illustrated. The morphology is limited and grammatical information is conveyed by tone, reduplication, word composition and the syntactic system. [Illustrations.]

A specimen hospital conversation in pidgin with a woman who was suffering from an ulcer completes the observations. The conversation is taken from a Peace Corps training manual of 1963.

68–97   Suzuki, Tadao. Facts about the English words of Japanese origin. *English Teachers' Magazine* (Tokyo), **16**, 7 (1967), 72–3.

Although English has been influenced by many languages it might be expected that the absence of linguistic affinity in sound system, graphic notation and syntactic structure between English and Japanese, coupled with the lack of trading and cultural contact through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, would mean that few words of Japanese origin would appear in the English language. Nevertheless numerous words are listed, arranged according to the approximate year of importation and classified into the categories fine arts, music, clothing, food, religion, political–social matters.

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68–98   Wood, Frederick T. 'Fairly', 'rather' and 'pretty' as adverbs of degree. *Englisch* (Berlin), **2**, 4 (1967), 116–19.

In a previous article the consideration of meanings of *fairly* was begun. The present article considers *fairly* with the meaning of *completely* and leads to a consideration of the closely allied but more neutral meaning expressed by *rather*. *Rather* will also express comparison, usually indicating 'more than one would expect'.

Unlike *fairly* and *pretty*, *rather* can either follow the indefinite article or precede it.

Pretty is the strongest of the three qualifiers for both favourable and unfavourable impressions. It is also the most colloquial. Neither *pretty* nor *fairly* can be used with a comparative. *Pretty* cannot be used with a verb though in speech *pretty well* is followed by a verb. [Detailed illustrations of these and other points are incorporated in the text of the article.]

FRENCH

68–99   Chevalier, J.-Cl. La grammaire générale de Port-Royal et la critique moderne. [The Port-Royal grammar and modern criticism.] *Langages* (Paris), 7 (1967), 16–33.

The Port-Royal grammar was the foundation-stone which really established the French language as an entity on its own. Brunot attempted to note and classify French grammar independently of forms originally imposed by Latin. This is why his *Histoire de la Langue Française* contains so little on the history of the language. Today there has been a return to historical linguistics, particularly in *Les Mots et les Choses* by M. Foucault (1966), *Cartesian Linguistics* by N. Chomsky (1966), *La Pédagogie en France aux dix-septième et dix-huitième Siècles*, a thesis by G. Snyders (1965). The sixteenth century was only concerned to *identify* the signs of language; the seventeenth century was ready to *analyse* and to ask how the sign was linked to the significant. Foucault observes this transition and notes that opacity enters into the transition from one language to another because idiom

is an essential path in each language by which reflexion communicates with representation. Each language is an imperfect apprehension of knowledge and therefore it is of little value to establish the relations between languages but of great value to establish their typologies. Foucault judges that, by the eighteenth century, languages were seen as machines becoming constantly more perfect and gradually submitting to one central principle, thereby becoming intermediaries, means of transformation.

Chomsky's 'deep' and 'surface' structures compare with the 'syntax' and construction of the *Encyclopédie*. He realized that language could innovate. No mechanical explanation could take account of novelty in speech. Chomsky comments on the Port-Royal grammar that 'a deep structure is proposed that does convey the semantic content, but the basis for its selection is generally unformulated'. Neither Foucault nor Chomsky pays any attention to the practical pedagogical purpose of grammars from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Snyders has examined this pedagogical purpose, noting the swing from the predominantly Jesuit education in seventeenth century France to the more outgoing, exploratory education of the eighteenth century. This affected the teaching of grammar. French grammar was written in French, resulting in a transformation in the teaching of languages. Words retreated as scientific studies inculcated a habit of abstract thought. Language became a tool.

The richness of Latin morphology as opposed to multiple vocabulary to express case and mood in some primitive languages was seen as a mark of the expressiveness of the language and consequently the French grammarians were anxious to display the richness of the French language in declension and conjugation. A system of noting parallelism in structures was one element in a system of 'substitutions' carried as far as possible. The *colloques* by which the children were taught have a great similarity to the pattern drills of today.

The cult of usage and the study of foreign languages, other than those of the Greek and Latin family, with different grammatical structures, such as Hebrew, brought about the remarkable change of the Port-Royal grammar. [Attention is paid to the currents of thought underlying the Port-Royal grammar.] A question not solved by Port-

Royal is the relationship between grammatical structure and thought forms. The grammarian too readily accepted the results of formal grammar without submitting them to a critical analysis. By this examination, one can see clearly what the contribution of modern linguistics can be and particularly Chomsky's. The Port-Royal grammar crushed the efforts of formal grammarians to establish the specificity of each language. The move towards a universal principle was made too quickly. In this is a lesson which modern linguistics can learn.

68-100 Klare, Johannes. Das Inversionsproblem im Aussage- und Fragesatz des modernen Französisch: (1). [The problem of inversion in affirmative and interrogative sentences in modern French: (1).] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin), **11**, 1/2 (1967), 66–70 and 88.

This first part of a discussion of the stylistic function of inversion in modern French deals principally with its role in affirmative sentences. The structures of the written language are not the same as those of the spoken one. The written speech norms of literary French became fixed in the seventeenth century, when it adopted as its models the somewhat stylized language of the court and of the educated *élite* of the capital. Colloquial oral speech, however, has continued to develop organically from the patterns inherited from Old French, and the divergence between colloquial and literary usage is shown by analysing their respective treatment of inversion.

The colloquial tradition has always tended to select and retain non-inverted forms which to the literary ear often have 'common' or 'peasant' overtones. The modern novel faithfully reproduces these in passages of everyday dialogue where it only introduces inversion into affirmative statements as a stylistic device to suggest pedantry or affectation on the part of the speaker.

In contrast to this, inversions are an increasingly favoured stylistic feature of descriptive narrative in the modern novel, both in main and dependent clauses where, for reasons of emphasis or meaning, the verb does not need to take the main stress. This is especially so where a main clause has no direct object or where there is an introductory

adverbial expression of time. An analogous process can be seen at work in dependent clauses with noun subjects where there is an introductory temporal conjunction or adverbial expression or where the main clause consists of a subject and verb of saying or thinking.

In modern poetry, the inversion of subject and verb in the affirmative is part of an intentional process of modification of word order to achieve poetic or emotional impact. In stage-writing, it appears, perhaps with the same ultimate motive, in the stage directions; and, in the language of administration and specialist definitions, inversion is frequently used when the verb group serves a whole series of subject noun groups.

GERMAN

68–101 Siliakus, H. J. Computer-aided word research. *Babel* (Melbourne), **3**, 2 (1967), 19–21.

The University of Adelaide has just undertaken a computer-based word count for German. A list drawn up in 1964 of the thousand most useful words was used as a basis for the evaluation of the vocabulary content of elementary readers as it was felt that when a student was practising structures his attention should not be distracted by unfamiliar vocabulary. A 1,000-word basic list will cover 85–90 per cent of elementary readers and it has been established that a very considerable expansion of the basic word list is needed to increase the text coverage substantially. After mastering a basic vocabulary, students would have to learn vast numbers of additional words to achieve real reading fluency.

Specialized word lists for students of history, geography, psychology and literary criticism are planned. In planning these it is hoped not only to aid arts students but to collect a large sample of at least half a million words from which a basic list of up to 2,000 words could be compiled. Present indications are that a list of 2,000 general words and a special subject list of some 500 specialized terms would give a 90 per cent text coverage. The specialist music list will be undertaken first and the general frequency list last. [Bibliography.]

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RUSSIAN

68–102 Das Lesen von Bruchzahlen. [The reading of fractions.] *Russisch: Zeitschrift für eine Weltsprache* (Munich), **1**, 3 (1967), 39–42.

Numerals, which occur very frequently in Russian texts, are an obstacle to fluent reading. A knowledge of the declension of numerals is indispensable, but in the case of simple and decimal fractions this is insufficient, and other factors have to be taken into account. The author offers a brief note, lavishly illustrated, on simple fractions, nouns dependent on numerals, mixed numerals with dependent nouns, decimal fractions and the numerals полтора, полтораста.

68–103 Der Objektakkusativ nach unpersönlichen Ausdrücken. [The object accusative after impersonal expressions.] *Russisch: Zeitschrift für eine Weltsprache* (Munich), **1**, 2 (1967), 24–5.

D. I. Butorin asserts in his essay 'Об особых случаях употреблении винительного прямого обьекта в современном русском литера турном язьке' [Special instances of the use of the accusative direct object in contemporary literary Russian] in *Нормы современного русского лутературного словоупотребления* [Contemporary Russian Literary Usage], Nauka, Moscow–Leningrad, 1966, that the statement 'the accusative case is used only in combination with verbs' of the Academy Grammar is imprecise. In his discussion of the words жалко, жаль; видно, слышно; надо (бно), нужно; долой, прочь, the author indicates that the accusative, sometimes interchanging with the genitive, is used in impersonal expressions.

68–104 Neue Wendungen und Ausdrücke im Russischen. [New phrases and expressions in Russian.] *Russisch: Zeitschrift für eine Weltsprache* (Munich), **1**, 1 (1967), 14–16.

A series of new phrases and expressions collected from recent newspapers were published in the article 'О новых устойчивых сочета-

ниях' [New set expressions] by V. P. Felitsina, which appeared in the book *Нормы современного русского литературного словоупот-ребления* [Contemporary Russian Literary Usage]. The phrases examined in detail are: цепная реакция, стартовая площадка, взять старт, выйти на старт, финишная прямая; на финишной прямой; выйти на финишную прямую, вывести на орбиту, выйти на орбиту кого-н; чего-н, получить (постоянную) прописку, на уровне кого-н; на высшем уровне.

68–105 **Rejmankova, Ludmila and Radko Purm.** Untersuchungen zu strukturellen und lexikalisch-strukturellen Eigenarten russischer Dialoge. [The investigation of structural and lexical-structural features of Russian dialogue.] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin), **11**, 4 (1967), 141–8 and 158.

The natural use of dialogue plays an important role in teaching oral skills. Research has recently been conducted in Czechoslovakia into the syntactic structure of Russian dialogue and so-called 'dialogue units' (pairs of responses consisting of stimulus and reaction), and the lexical–structural features of dialogue. The research undertaken by I. Camutaliova into dialogue units is based on the assumption that the basic components of dialogue are stimulus and response. Accepting a classification of sentences into statements, questions, exclamations and commands, Camutaliova arrives at sixteen possible combinations of stimulus and response. This classification is of interest to the methodologist since it could be used for developing exercises.

An examination of the incidence of individual phenomena reveals some structural features of Russian dialogue. The frequency with which the grammatical forms of individual structures occur, the extent of the omission of components, etc., can be investigated. [Results of the research into sentence structures are then presented.]

Some features of Russian dialogue can thus be established from structure analysis, but since some of its attributes emerge from the immediacy, expressiveness and economy of its linguistic means, they cannot all be comprehended by syntactical analysis and represent a connexion between structural and lexical factors. Lexical–structural

features of dialogue are bound up with its linguistic structure. In the simplest unit of dialogue, consisting of a stimulus and reaction, there is a contextual and linguistic connexion between stimulus and response and in most cases the structure and lexical content of the response is determined by the stimulus. [The authors discuss in some detail and with lavish illustration the lexical and structural features of various types of stimulus and response.]

Two conclusions are drawn. (1) The precise description of the structural and lexical–structural features of Russian dialogue is a very important task. It is necessary to work out the linguistic basis for the acquisition of oral skills, bearing in mind that Russian structure should be contrasted with its equivalent in the native language. A thorough linguistic investigation of the characteristic features of Russian dialogue is the prerequisite for any scientific choice of structures to be taught. (2) In choosing teaching material and working out exercises to develop oral skills, the results of research into the structural and lexical–structural features of Russian dialogue should be applied more consistently.

68–106 Rosental, D. Morphologische Varianten in der russischen Sprache der Gegenwart. [Morphological variants in contemporary Russian.] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin), **11**, 4 (1967), 135–41 and 153.

In contemporary literary Russian there are variant forms which appear in some instances as alternatives and which are identical or almost identical and, more frequently, others which differ only in semantic or stylistic nuances. The formation of morphological variants is bound up not only with the laws which govern the formation of separate grammatical categories but with general processes and tendencies which can be observed in the development of contemporary literary Russian. Four factors can be observed: the tendency towards linguistic economy, the influence of analogy, the tendency towards standardization, and the interaction of various styles of speech.

[The author demonstrates the presence of these four factors in an illustrated discussion of various parts of speech.]

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