DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES
ENGLISH

84–137   Bublitz, Wolfram. Conducive yes–no Questions in English. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **19**, 9/10 (1981), 851–70.

There is a prevailing uncertainty with respect to the assessment of the notion of the 'expected answer' to a conducive yes–no question. In order to clarify this notion the rather complex interrelationships between the speaker's old and new assumptions, the form of the question and the answer are discussed at some length. The analysis of different types of negative (and positive) yes–no question leads to the distinction between (*a*) the answer which the speaker expects the hearer to give and which he either does or does not desire and (*b*) what is called the expectable answer which the question itself points to. No precise statement may be made as to the expected answer. What is decisive for the prediction of the expectable answer to a conducive yes–no question is the (polarity of the) speaker's assumption that led to the question, with which the hearer is expected to agree. There is no direct relationship between the expectable answer to a conducive yes–no question and the polarity of the sentence form. Of the two possible answers the expectable answer is the agreeing answer, and according to the type of question and the polarity of the assumption expressed this means either *yes* or *no*. To shed some light on the relation between conduciveness and negation two proposals are mentioned in the final paragraph, both of which look upon negative conducive yes–no questions as kinds of so-called indirect speech acts.

84–138   Flege, J. E. and Brown, W. S., Jr. (U. of Florida). Effects of utterance position on English speech timing. *Phonetica* (Basle), **39**, 6 (1982), 337–57.

Eight speakers of American English produced utterances consisting of one to five disyllables ([bábə] or [pápə]). Vowel and stop closure intervals were defined by variations in supraglottal pressure, sensed through a thin tube inserted in the mouth. Closure was always longer for /p/ than /b/ in utterance-medial positions. In utterance-initial position, however, /b/ lengthened more than /p/ so that no duration difference between /p/ and /b/ was observed. Utterance-initial position did not influence vowel duration. In contrast, utterance-final position affected only vowel duration, lengthening both final-syllable unstressed vowels and stressed vowels in penultimate syllables.

84–139   Hendrick, Randall (U. of North Carolina). Reduced questions and their theoretical implications. *Language* (Baltimore, Md), **58**, 4 (1982), 800–9.

English questions lacking an auxiliary (e.g. *You happy now?*) fail to occur in certain tenses. The first part of this paper suggests that the phenomenon derives from the

interaction of the Recoverability Condition (Chomsky, 1965) with markedness conventions for tense structures. The second part shows that reduced yes–no questions differ from reduced WH-questions as regards their sensitivity to person, number, morphological redundancy, and contraction. It is argued that reduced yes–no questions and reduced WH-questions do not constitute a unified phenomenon, and that the asymmetries in the two classes reflect properties of distinct components in the grammar.

84–140   Standwell, G. J. B. Genitive constructions and functional sentence perspective. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **20**, 4 (1982), 257–61.

There are two possible genitive constructions in English: the *s*-genitive (*John's book*) and the *of*-genitive (*the roof of the house*). Grammars of English offer little help in distinguishing the two. There is a rule of thumb that the *s*-genitive is used for animate nouns and the *of*-genitive for inanimates, but this does not explain why it should be so. On the other hand, the *s*-genitive is found with inanimates, e.g. *the car's engine*, *the play's philosophy*. The difference between the *s*-genitive and the *of*-genitive is explained here in the light of a simple theory of functional sentence perspective: if the noun in the genitive has the value of something already 'given', the *s*-genitive is used; if on the other hand the noun in the genitive is giving new information it is attached to the principal word by means of *of*.

84–141   Wierzbicka, Anna (Australian National U.). Why can you 'have a drink' when you can't 'have an eat'? *Language* (Baltimore, Md), **58**, 4 (1982), 753–99.

This paper argues that sentences in the *have a V* frame are not a jungle of idiosyncrasies, but exhibit orderly and systematic behaviour, governed by strict semantic rules. These rules can be stated in precise formulae with full predictive power. Ten subtypes are singled out: each has a slightly different semantic formula, but all have a common core, which is a semantic invariant of the *have a V* frame. These semantic formulae, which account for differences both in acceptability (*have a drink* and **have an eat*) and in meaning (*drink* and *have a drink*), are stated not in terms of *ad hoc* features or labels, but in an independently justified semantic metalanguage based on natural language.

FRENCH

84–142   Genouvrier, E. (U. François-Rabelais, Tours). Des français devant la langue maternelle. [Attitudes of French people to the mother tongue.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **54** (1982), 56–67.

Sixty interviews in central France seek to elucidate what the term 'mother tongue' means to those questioned. This term, so well known to linguists, is unfamiliar to many and rarely opposed to a foreign language. The emotive resonance of 'mother' is strong and links *maternelle* with the country of one's birth (*ma terre*), i.e. it is the language into which one was born, in which one feels at home. For some there is a contrast

and even a clash between the language first spoken in the home and that acquired later, whether it be a highly educated priest now in a working-class area, country people brought up in a *patois* for whom 'proper French' learnt at school means prized membership of the common national language, others again for whom the 'mother tongue' recalls the Breton heard from grandparents but never learnt. Common to them all is the feeling that the mother tongue is a deep and intimate part of their being.

84–143   Jacquemin, Denise and Lucci, Vincent (U. of Grenoble). Orthographe et prononciation: contribution à l'étude statistique de l'orthographe française. [Spelling and pronunciation: contribution to the statistical study of French spelling.] *Bulletin de l'Institut de Phonétique de Grenoble* (Grenoble), **10/11** (1981/2), 71–99.

An improved version of Léty's grammar for automatic transcription from spelling to phonetic representation is presented. It consists of a set of ordered, contextually specified rules of the general form (*left context*) + *letter(s)* + (*right context*) → [sound]. The rules permit automatic transcription of texts [example], typological grouping of rules [table] and statistical study of the frequency of application of individual rules and rule-types, the degree of phonographic correspondence and so on [tables]. Study of texts shows the overwhelming phonographic regularity of the French spelling system. Such results have implications for the teaching of reading and writing and for psycholinguistic studies of the reading process.

84–144   Lurquin, Georges. Langue speciale des informaticiens. [The language of information scientists.] *Langage et l'Homme* (Paris), **50** (1982), 56–89.

Information science evolved in England and America. Consequently the language of the speciality comprises, in addition to terms derived from Greek and Latin, a high percentage of English words and expressions. Many of these are vivid and expressive, highly colloquial and difficult to translate adequately into French. The monosyllabic nature of many English words is well suited to computer terminology. Computer languages have in addition their own syntax, and here again the concision and brevity of English and the structure of the language renders it especially appropriate.

New technical terms should not be seen as a threat to the integrity of a language. Ironically many English terms derive from French. Though some computer science terms may be untranslatable and though French, unlike English, is reluctant to coin new words, carefully researched language planning could make French, too, an internationally used language among information scientists.

GERMAN

84-145 Helbig, Gerhard. Probleme der Subklassifizierung der deutschen Nebensätze nach Form und Inhalt. [Problems in the subclassification of German subordinate clauses according to form and content.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig), **19**, 4 (1982), 202–12.

German subordinate clauses are generally categorised according to form into conjunctional clauses, relative clauses, and indirect questions, but there are problems of delimitation and intermediate types. The problems arise because the three categories are established by three different criteria: type of introductory word, syntactic function, and semantic content. Each criterion alone would give a different categorisation. Traditional categories of content confuse functional classes (subject, object, adverbial) with semantic classes (temporal, causal, local, etc.). Examples are given to illustrate the difficulty of distinguishing between many of these latter classes, which are inadequate because they conceal complex concepts with different kinds of semantic characteristics, and because the categories are not alternatives but have relations of hierarchy and inclusion. Thus, conditional relations are also temporal, and causal relations are conditional (but not vice versa), while temporal relations are of many different kinds. Furthermore, many of the conjunctions are polysemous.

JAPANESE

84-146 Takemoto, Shozo (Otaru U. of Commerce, Japan). Cultural implications of language contrasts between Japanese and English. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **20**, 4 (1982), 263–78.

The geographical situation of Japan has had a profound influence on the development of Japanese civilisation. Its narrow secluded valleys fostered self-sufficiency and a closed society; social and family life was mainly routine and demanded the minimum use of language for mutual understanding. Non-verbal communication is given preference in Japan – smiles, bows and silence are important. In Western Europe, on the other hand, living conditions were more harsh and uncertain, so hostility and independence became the norm in human relationships. When communication is hazardous, people speak their minds as explicitly as possible, hence in Western Europe verbal language is highly valued.

Japanese lacks the grammatical subject as we understand it in English; word order is much more flexible than in English, though the verb always comes at the end of a sentence. In some examples, word-order in Japanese and English sentences is completely asymmetrical, probably because of the opposite world-views held by the two countries. Japanese characteristics of dexterity, insight and intuitiveness may be said to result from living in secluded valleys; Westerners living in a wide, open environment have a macroscopic viewpoint, tending to be stereotyped and abstract. Japanese does not distinguish singular and plural; family members cannot be mentioned without consideration of their comparative ages.

RUSSIAN

84-147 Giusti, Francesca. Нереферентные показатели имени нарицатель-ного. [Non-referential markers of the common noun.] *Russian Linguistics* (Dor-drecht), **7**, 1 (1982), 3–19.

An analysis of non-referential noun phrases in Russian (contrasted with those of Italian), and of the role in these of determination and quantification. Indefinite referential markers (such as *один, какой-то*) are contrasted with markers of non-referentiality (especially *какой-нибудь*). The latter is analysed as a quantifier, and it is shown that the same distinction of referentiality applies also to other quantifiers. 'Non-referentiality' is seen as indicating the speaker's indifference to the question of which particular member of a set is at issue. This feature can be extended from a quantitative one to a purely qualitative (negative) evaluation of an object. [Many Russian examples.]

SWEDISH

84-148 Gårding, Eva (Lund U., Sweden). Swedish prosody: summary of a project. *Phonetica* (Basle), **39**, 4/5 (1982), 288–301.

The paper summarises project work on Swedish accents and intonation. One major goal was the development of a generative model for intonation. The input of the model is a text with markings for word and sentence prosody and dialect. The output is a realistic intonation contour. The model was first set up for statement intonation in isolated sentences from five prototype dialects. It was later applied to interrogative intonation, to transitional forms between the prototype dialects, to Greek and French intonation and to prosodic transfer in a foreign accent.

TRANSLATION

84-149 Choul, Jean-Claude (Dalhousie U., Canada). Semantisation, inference et paraphrase dans la traduction. [Semantising, inference and paraphrase in translation.] *Glossa* (Burnaby, BC, Canada), **16**, 1 (1982), 3–12.

Paraphrase is used as an interpretation device or more less spontaneously and more or less successfully. It must be distinguished from definition (whether *ad hoc* or lexicographic) and from synonymy, before we can attempt to establish how it is carried out. Moving from one utterance to its paraphrase is similar to inference in the sense of global or unspecified reasoning, with semantic values or properties being handled instead of truths. Since the object of paraphrasing is a satisfactory equivalent, the analogical link of inference could be a condition of this equivalence.

Paraphrase also processes the values assigned to the original utterance; we must thus determine why this value rather than another is assigned to the elements perceived. Semantising, then, will be the link which connects one utterance to its translation,

whether or not it is carried out on semantic blanks. As a semiotic function, semantising is considered as a preliminary inference, which may or may not subsequently be confirmed.

LEXICOGRAPHY

84–150 Ilson, Robert (University Coll., London). Etymological information: can it help our students? *ELT Journal* (London), **37**, 1 (1983), 76–82.

Monolingual dictionaries for foreign learners rarely offer any etymological information. Such as there is is limited to the search for etyma and cognates: for the sources of words in earlier stages of the same language and for words in other languages related in form to the word being defined. A broader conception of etymology is suggested which provides at least four types of information: (1) etyma and cognates, including borrowings and loan-translations (calques); (2) morphological analyses of lexical units in terms of (*a*) their constituent structure, (*b*) processes of word-formation, and (*c*) the cognitive procedures (e.g. metaphor) of their formation and development.

All the above types of etymological information may have a pedagogical role. The various types may also be combined. Etymological information can disambiguate, relate, illuminate and motivate.

84–151 Werner, Reinhold. Zur Reihenfolge der Definitionen bzw. Über-setzungsäquivalente im Worterbuchartikel (mit besonderer Berücksichtigung spanischer Beispiele). [On the order of definitions or translation equivalents in dictionary entries (with special reference to Spanish examples).] *Lebende Sprachen* (Heidelberg, FRG), **27**, 4 (1982), 150–6.

Criteria for the ordering of definitions in dictionary entries have rarely been discussed. Dubois and Dubois suggest three principles: 'historical', 'logical' and 'frequency-based', to which Hausmann adds the 'distributional' criteria. The validity of these criteria is considered: ordering according to chronology gives priority to what is synchronically peripheral, and grouping according to etymological relationships would be preferable. 'Logical' categories of meaning need to be justified in terms of the linguistic sense of the speaker, while 'frequency' conflates relative importance with frequency of occurrence, and differs for different varieties, styles, etc. The distributional criterion groups meanings according to syntactic context, but does not provide a principle for ordering the meanings themselves.

The problem is also considered in relation to two-language dictionaries, and it is concluded that no criterion alone is satisfactory. Several criteria need to be combined, but a fixed order of priority for the criteria is necessary.

LEXICOLOGY

84-152   Johansson, Stig. Studying British and American English by computer. *Språk og språkundervisning* (Oslo, Norway), **4** (1982), 48-53.

Examples are given from current work on word frequencies in British and American English being carried out at Oslo University in co-operation with the Norwegian Computing Centre for the Humanities and various universities in England, the United States and Sweden. Three major corpora of modern English texts are available: the Brown corpus of printed American English (about 1,000,000 words); matching British English material, the Lancaster–Oslo/Bergen (LOB) corpus; and the London–Lund corpus of educated spoken British English (87 texts of about 5,000 words).

The examples given are based on a comparison of the Brown corpus and the LOB corpus. They cover differences in spelling, word-form, grammar and style, and vocabulary. The examples in the latter area reflect cultural differences rather than alternative labels, for example, male forms are more frequent in the American material and female forms in the British material. Both corpora show a higher frequency for. *he* and *man* than for *she* and *woman*.