Language description and use

Descriptive studies of particular languages

French

91–390 Pons-Ridler, Suzanne and Quillard, Geneviève. Quelques aspects de la négation: comparaison de l'anglais et du français. [Some aspects of the negative: a comparison of English and French.] *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Ont), **47,** 2 (1991), 327–40.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the use of negative elements is very different in French and English. French speaking people tend to use a lot of negative forms; for example, negative questions are very common in everyday speech (' *Tu n'as pas vu mes clefs?*', '*Cette place n'est pas prise?*') and impersonal phrases such as *Il n'en est pas moins vrai que*, *Il n'en demeure pas moins que* frequently appear in written texts. Besides, the study of a number of translations shows that a lot of words, which have a positive equivalent in French, are often translated by a negative word or phrase: for instance, rather than *bientôt*, 'soon' is often translated as *ne pas tarder à*, *ne pas mettre longtemps à*. Sometimes negative forms are used in English which would be expressed in French by a positive sentence, as in the exclamatory questions ('*Isn't he cute!*'), but this does not happen as often.

Italian

91–391 Bazzanella, Carla (U. of Turin, Italy). 'Modal' uses of the Italian 'indicativo imperfetto' in a pragmatic perspective. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **14,** 3 (1990), 439–57.

Some atypical uses of the Italian *indicativo imperfetto* are listed in the first section of the paper. They are unified under their assumed common function, the modal one, for the most part according to Bertinetto (1986). Emphasis is placed on the *imperfetto di pianificazione*, a dub here proposed to cover a recent use, characterised by a planning component, which is becoming widespread in every-day spoken Italian. Having briefly touched on aspectual values, background function, and 'Temporal Distance' in order to motivate the 'modal' uses of the *indicativo imperfetto*, 'Displacement' and 'Negative Politeness' are discussed in relation to some of the above-mentioned uses.

Russian

91–392 Bondarko, A. V. О значених видов русского глагола. [About the meanings of aspects of the Russian verb.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), **4** (1990), 5–24.

The differences in meaning of the aspects of Russian verbs and the theoretical basis of such an analysis are discussed. Initial principles concerning the meaning of aspects of Russian verbs, including a definition of aspect, which form to use, and the characteristics of categorial differences of meaning, are listed. The category of aspect in Russian includes all verbs and verb forms and arises from the grammatical system of the language. Different structural types are described.

The problem of the choice of the perfective or imperfective aspect for speakers of 'non-aspectual' languages and the complexity of the theoretical problems of knowledge and use of aspect are considered. The semantic natures of the perfective and imperfective aspects are very different. The particular categories of meaning describing the perfective and imperfective aspects are studied in detail. It is necessary to confine the analysis of aspectual meaning to particular areas, such as aspectual systems.

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Translation

91–393 Resta, Simonetta. A linguistic approach to non-literary translation. *UNESCO ALSED-LSP Newsletter* (Copenhagen, Denmark), **13,** 3 (1991), 28–51.

The translator must be competent in both source and target languages at linguistic and communicative levels, and needs special abilities to read a text, infer meaning, and make assumptions. He/she is required to process the structure, lexis, and register of a text in order to communicate its meaning. Aspects of the text such as field, tenor and mode, its function, and its coherence and cohesion have to be established. Text-types such as expositive, argumentative and instructional, must be determined.

In the case of scientific language there are special problems and the translator should work with a subject specialist. As to legal language, this also presents special problems, relating to (*a*) the difference between the ordinary use of a word and its legal use, (*b*) grammatical features which involve a high frequency of passives, and listing of nouns, and (*c*) a lack of cohesive devices so as to avoid ambiguity. As in the case of scientific language, the translator should work with a subject specialist.

Different legal texts have different but definite structures and understanding this could assist the translator in following their logic. The responsibility of the translator is to bear in mind the following: the obligatory nature of the legal text, the clarity and ambiguity of legal language, and differences in legal systems.