Language description and use

Descriptive studies of particular languages
English

89–268 Berns, Margie (Purdue U., West Lafayette, USA). The cultural and linguistic context of English in West Germany. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **7**, 1 (1988), 37–49.

After a review of the history of the influence of English on German and various attempts to resist what is seen, especially since World War 2, as a 'linguistic invasion' and 'inundation', the nativisation of English in West Germany is discussed in terms of instrumental, interpersonal and imaginative/innovative functions. The use of English in education and research constitutes the instrumental function while its use in the job market and as a lingua franca with other foreigners reflects the interpersonal function. Borrowings may be classified in terms of a cline which allows for gradations and differences among speakers according to different variables. Borrowings are nativised in that they are integrated into German phonological, morphological and syntactic systems, frequently resulting in innovation (e.g. native English *pullover* – German English *Pulli*), or hybridisation (*show business – Showgeschäft*). The motivations for borrowing include naming new products/ideas, communicating exclusivity or solidarity and register-specific, e.g. computer science and international law. The English spoken by West Germans is a mixture of British and American or is regionally marked, often as a result of German teachers spending their year abroad in different parts of the English-speaking world. The nativisation of English has important pedagogical implications.

89–269 Hirtle, Walter H. Events, time and the simple form. *Revue Québécoise de Linguistique* (Montreal, Canada), **17**, 1 (1988), 85–106.

This is an attempt to discern more clearly the underlying or potential meaning of the simple form of the English verb, described in Hirtle (1967) as 'perfective'. Vendler's widely accepted classification of events into Accomplishments, Achievements, Activities and States is examined from the point of view of the time necessarily contained between the beginning and end of any event, i.e. Event Time as represented by the simple form. This examination justifies the well known dynamic/stative dichotomy by showing that event time is evoked in two different ways, that, in fact, the simple form has two actual significates. Further reflection on the difference between the two types thus expressed – developmental or action-like events and non-developmental or state-like events – leads to the conclusion that the simple form provides a representation of the time required to situate all the impressions involved in the notional or lexical import of the verb.

89–270 Mair, Christian (U. of Innsbruck). Ways of expressing potential modality in English and German subject clauses. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, FRG), **26**, 3 (1988), 217–28.

The marked structural differences between complement clause types in English and German are taken as one illustration of the way these two languages have diverged over the last thousand years. Such differences have been the usual focus of treatments of complement clauses. Nevertheless, the author identifies an area in which there has been convergent development at a functional-semantic level. German *wenn*-subject clauses and English *for*-infinitival subject clauses both enable speakers to avoid committing themselves to the truth of the proposition contained in those clauses. They can therefore be regarded as means of expressing potential modality.

This area of convergence is thought to result from common communicative needs rather than from the shared heritage of the two languages.

89-271 Mesthrie, Rajend (U. of Cape Town, South Africa). Toward a lexicon of South African Indian English. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **7**, 1 (1988), 5–14.

The aim of this paper is two-fold. Firstly, it reports on the lexical characteristics of a hitherto little studied 'New English' variety – South African Indian English. It points to lexical affinities with, and divergences from, other varieties of English in South Africa, at least one of which has been well studied in terms of its lexis. It also focuses on lexical similarities between English in India and the South African dialect under scrutiny. Preliminary comparisons with pidgins and creoles world-wide as well as with other expatriate Indian Englishes are offered. Secondly, the study suggests some useful ways in which a lexicographer of a New English variety that has arisen out of a process of language shift might proceed, especially in situations involving several 'ancestral' languages, and consequently several subjects varying according to domain, speaker background, formality etc.

89-272 Nelson, Cecil L. (Indiana State U.). The pragmatic dimension of creativity in the other tongue. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **7**, 2 (1988), 173–81.

Authors of literature in new Englishes reach out to a multi-national audience through the conscious choice of English as their medium of presentation. New-English authors exhibit a range of nativisation in their English. They present new elements and structures within a matrix of internationally 'standard' English, allowing the reader to accept the presentation in a more or less readable way. Texts may be seen as possessing the qualities of intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability. Passages such as 'During this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan' [Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958: 7)] are marked for the non-African reader, but attractive in part because of that. Structures such as 'you are a know-God man be' [Okara, *The Voice* (1964: 30)] are at an extreme of the cline of acceptability for most readers, and such texts raise the question of what the limits of 'Englishness' are. This study explores various pragmatic dimensions of creativity in selected contexts of English in the Outer Circle.

89-273 Sahgal, Anju and Agnihotri, R. K. U. of Delhi). Indian English phonology: a sociolinguistic perspective. *English World-Wide* (Amsterdam), **9**, 1 (1988), 51–64.

The English speech in formal and casual styles of 45 informants selected from the South Delhi elite was studied in respect of four phonological variables: $\langle t \rangle$, post-vocalic $\langle r \rangle$, $\langle ɔ: \rangle$ and $\langle w \rangle$. Correlations of particular variants with the sociolinguistic variables of education, age and sex were investigated. The retroflexion of the alveolar stop was found to be infrequent in all educated urban speakers. Younger and female speakers used an r-less pronunciation more than older and male speakers. (This might be indicative of a linguistic change in progress). $\langle ɔ: \rangle$ is typically realised in casual speech as more open and less rounded than the R P realisation, which is, however, found in reading styles, no doubt due to corrective pressures. The IndE realisation of $\langle w \rangle$ as a labio-dental frictionless continuant [v] is widespread, the [w] realisation having no particular prestige.

French

89-274 Ashby, William J. (U. of California, Santa Barbara). The syntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics of left- and right-dislocations in French. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **75**, 2/3 (1988), 203–29.

Aspects of the syntax, pragmatics and sociolinguistics distribution of left- and right-dislocation in a corpus of spoken French are treated. Most tokens of both types have clear pragmatic motivation, two functions being common to both, with other functions particular to one or another type. The social distribution of weakly motivated tokens does not support the view that, as French moves toward verb-initial typology, dislocated subjects are being grammaticalised as ordinary subjects.

89–275 Lafontaine, Dominique (U. of Liège, Belgium). Le parfum et la couleur des accents. [The perfume and colour of accents.] *Français Moderne* (Paris), **56**, 1/2 (1988), 60–73.

The evaluation of four French accents (educated Parisian, *provençal*, *bruxellois* and *liégeois*) by speakers born and brought up in Liège was investigated through a semantic differential test consisting of eight bipolar scales (ample/meagre, cold/warm, masculine/feminine, nondescript/picturesque, colourful/colourless, hard/soft, gloomy/cheerful, coarse/refined). As anticipated, all non-standard accents were perceived as more ample, warm, masculine, picturesque, colourful, soft, cheerful and coarse than the Parisian accent; both Belgian accents were perceived as more ample and coarse than the French regional accent; the accent of Liège was perceived as warmer and softer than the other non-standard accents, *bruxellois* in particular. Informant judgements are explicated in terms of an 'official marketplace', where public values of culture, refinement and so on hold sway and a 'private market-place' where personal, attitudinal values are predominant. There is some evidence that attitudes to provençal are coloured by the association of the Midi in French-speakers' minds with holidays, sun and the novels, films and plays of writers such as Pagnol.

Sign language

89–276 Swisher, M. Virginia (U. of Pittsburgh). Similarities and differences between spoken languages and natural sign languages. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **9**, 4 (1988), 343–56.

It is argued here that the study of natural sign languages can enhance our understanding of what language is. Sign languages are different in some ways from spoken languages because of the constraints and possibilities afforded by the visual-gestural modality, yet they remain fundamentally similar to spoken languages in many ways. Sign languages like spoken ones have syntactic, semantic, morphological, and phonological levels of analysis, and they are used to accomplish the same communicative functions. Although some signs have iconic ('pictorial') origins, form–meaning associations are culturally determined, as they are for spoken languages, and the form of signs tends to evolve in the direction of greater arbitrariness over time. Salient differences relate to sign languages' use of visual space, which makes possible, for example, spatial mapping of persons and places in narrative for clarity of reference. Other differences from spoken languages may be related to differences in speed of the articulators, coupled with the need to get information across at a rate suited for processing, as well as the need to reduce the effort of using large muscles for language transmission. Mechanisms such as spatial indexing, pronoun incorporation, and classifiers help the addressee keep referents straight, use visual space in a way that makes visual sense, and also save time and effort by presenting some information simultaneously which spoken languages would transmit linearly.

Translation

89–277 Gémar, Jean-Claude (U. of Montreal). Pour une méthode générale de traduction: traduire par l'interprétation du texte. [Towards a general method for translation: translation based on text interpretation.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **10**, 1 (1988), 59–72.

It is generally assumed that human beings 'read' what they hear, see and feel through the process of sense-reading. Translators operate the same way: once a translator has read a text, or a part thereof, he is ready to give it his own interpretation. He then engages in the process of sense-giving. The success of his response will rest, to a large extent, upon his personal range of knowledge. However, it will also greatly depend upon the use he makes of it. Graduate-level translator training has three main objectives: (1) the reinforcement of linguistic skills (source language and target language); (2) the acquisition of the minimum general knowledge required of a translator; and (3) the development of the reflexes needed to optimise the skills stated in (1) and (2). These competence and performance ob-

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jectives demand highly diverse training methods applicable to all kinds of texts, that respond more adequately to the great diversity and complexity of the translation process. These methods should also take into greater account the progress accomplished in linguistics as well as in the fundamental sciences. This is the aim of a method for training translators based on the superior level of text interpretation, i.e. text construction.

Lexicology

89–278 Bolton, Sibylle (Indiana U.). A comparative study of basic German vocabulary lists. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **72**, 2 (1988), 196–200.

This article contrasts the results of traditional and more recent methods of compiling FL basic word lists. A comparison is made between Pfeffer's *Grundstufe*, and the Council of Europe *Kontakt-schwelle Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. The former was compiled primarily on the basis of word frequency, and the latter by reference to the speech acts, general notions, and specific notions contained in the learning objectives. Despite having similar target groups the two lists show little overlap beyond elementary high frequency items and grammatical words. Of 2,594 entries in the *Kontaktschwelle* about half were not contained in the *Grundstufe*. Many of the areas under-represented involve everyday concepts, such as vocabulary for giving personal information. Of the words contained in the *Grund-stufe*, 300 were not in the *Kontaktschwelle*. These were frequently associated with themes such as living things and occupations.

The author concludes that frequency lists are less likely to serve the aims of communicative language teaching than a criterion-oriented approach based on the communicative needs of a defined target group.