Language description and use

Descriptive studies of particular languages

English

96–404 Cheshire, Jenny (U. of Neuchâtel, Switzerland). That jacksprat: an interactional perspective on English *that*. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **25**, 3 (1996), 369–93.

This paper analyses the use of English 'that' in a range of socially distinct discourses. The uses that are conventionally considered to be nonstandard or colloquial express interpersonal, affective meanings by co-ordinating the speaker's and the addressee's attention on those points in the discourse where a shared perspective is assumed to exist. Other uses of 'that' in the corpus analysed here, including the relativizer and the complementizer, also have a primarily interactive function in discourse. When seen within this perspective, several problems that previous scholars have noted in the analysis of deictic 'that' no longer appear problematic, but instead follow a regular pattern of use. This pattern reflects the ways in which speakers and addressees co-operate in order to manage the cognitive and social constraints on their joint creation of discourse.

Translation

96–405 Chang, Nam Fung (Lingnan College, Hong Kong). Towards a better general theory of equivalent effect. *Babel* (Budapest, Hungary), **42**, 1 (1996), 1–17.

On the premise that translating is communicating, Nida puts forward a theory of dynamic equivalence based on the principle of equivalent effect, which lays a great emphasis on the response of the receptor, but there are some fuzzy areas in his theory, such as whether cultural adaptations are legitimate. Newmark criticizes the theory for being too considerate to the readers at the expense of the author. Refusing to accept Nida's premise, he asserts that a more faithful approach should be adopted in translating expressive texts even if it results in incomprehension by the reader. Though an exponent of Nida's theory, Jin also criticizes him for not paying enough attention to the actual facts of the original. Commenting on the debate, this paper argues that dynamic equivalence does not necessarily mean making it easy for the reader, but it should not be the only proper method of translation, that the importance of actual facts is not always paramount, and that cultural adaptations are legitimate to a greater extent than Nida would allow. In an attempt to develop a more sophisticated, more open-minded and more descriptive general theory of equivalent effect, it is suggested that there should be different emphases for different types of texts, that the purposes of translation should be taken into account, and that translators should have the freedom to choose a certain degree of dynamic equivalence, and to decide for themselves on some important questions, such as whether to bring their own personality traits into play and whether to improve upon the original.

96–406 El-Yasin, Mohammed K. (Yarmouk U., Jordan). The passive voice: a problem for the English-Arabic translator. *Babel* (Budapest, Hungary), **42**, 1 (1996), 18–26.

This paper starts by discussing the importance of word order in translation. As an example, the passive-active relation is given to illustrate the importance of word order. It is shown that the word order in this case is an integral part of the meaning in the wider sense of meaning. This relation, moreover, is discussed in Arabic and English which do not exhibit parallel behavior. The mismatches between the two languages necessitate structural adjustments in translation if natural equivalence is to be achieved. It is noticed that Arabic tends to use less passive than English and, furthermore, does not have a natural method of expressing the agent in a passive sentence. However, an active construction (namely, the topic-comment construction) allows for a word order in which the effect of the English passive word order is achieved without having to use the passive in Arabic. Therefore, an English 'x is done by y' is rendered as 'x, y does it' in Arabic where 'it' is a resumptive pronoun referring to 'x'. Here, the 'x-y'

order is maintained and the passive is avoided in Arabic where it is rather unnatural. The agent is expressed as the subject of the comment which is an active sentence that naturally allows the agent to be explicitly stated. In this position, it follows the patient which is the desired order that reflects the original English order. A standard procedure for translating English passives into Arabic is proposed as a conclusion to the present study.