

Language description and use

DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES

FRENCH

83–515 Ashby, William J. (U. of California, Santa Barbara). The drift of French syntax. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **57**, 1 (1982), 29–46.

A corpus of modern spoken French collected by the author in the Tours region in 1976 was used to test two predictions about the current development of word order in French. Firstly, Harris's (1976, 1978) claim that French is becoming a VSO language, based on examples like *Je dors, moi* (lit. 'I sleep, me') taken from popular French. Ashby's corpus provided no evidence that this change is taking place. Only 17 per cent of the tokens showed the order in the example, and the distributions of these did not vary in a meaningful way among the subgroups of informants.

Secondly, Lambrecht's (1980, MS) observation, based on the contrast between sentences like (a) *mon enfant dort* ('my child is sleeping'); (b) *mon enfant, il dort*; and (c) *il dort, mon enfant*; that types (b) and (c) are increasing (the subject in each case is 'given' information in the sentence). Ashby's data revealed a high incidence of types (b) and (c), as compared to (a), when the subject was 'given', especially among lower-class speakers, which can be taken to support Lambrecht's claim.

83–516 Meleuc, Serge (U. of Paris X). Contraintes sur les règles de mouvement en français. [Constraints on movement rules for French.] *LINX* (Paris), **5** (1981), 7–39.

A transformational account of the movement of nominal groups and proforms is given. Movement in questions, relatives, imperatives and passives is exemplified and described. For all these sentence-types there is a fundamental contrast as to susceptibility to movement between subjects which are formally marked as such in surface structure, and those which are not (S+ *v.* S-). Thus, in yes/no questions, the subject personal pronouns (*je, tu*, etc.) which are S+, can be moved to the right, as in *tu crois à cette histoire?* → *Crois-tu à cette histoire?* Whereas *cela* (S-) cannot be moved: *cela conviendrait pour la pluie?* → **conviendrait cela pour la pluie?* For all the sentence-types considered, it is argued that movement is related to whether S is marked as subject or not. Given this, a unified account, applicable to all the sentence-types, is proposed, and rules are given.

RUSSIAN

83–517 Mel'chuk, I. A. Лично-количественные ('собирательные') числительные в русском языке. [Personal-quantitative ('collective') numerals in Russian.] *Russian Linguistics* (Dordrecht), **6** (1982), 307–34.

A detailed investigation of the possibilities of occurrence of the collective numerals in Russian (rechristened 'personal-quantitative' as being more appropriate to their

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status). They constitute distinct lexemes from ordinary numerals, and conditions are enumerated where they may and may not be used, where they are favoured and disfavoured. These conditions are presented in much detail, and exceptional instances, apparently contradicting textual data, etc., are presented for each case. Finally, a small text is analysed in detail as illustrative of these conditions, and revealing of the further types of information which need to be looked at in detail.

83–518 Rozanova, N. N. О фонетике русской разговорной речи. [On the phonetics of Russian colloquial speech.] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Moscow), 5 (1982), 9–16.

An outline of the phonetic peculiarities of colloquial Russian, with detailed exemplification of many of them. In particular, attention is given to vowel and consonant reduction, increasing neutralisation, the appearance of consonant clusters unknown in standard Russian, etc. All of these phenomena are variable, depending on such factors as accentual position in the sentence, syntactic function and tempo of speech. These factors are considered in some detail, and brief consideration is also given to factors such as degree of informality, spontaneity of speech, etc., which affect all of these phenomena.

SLAVONIC LANGUAGES

83–519 Dunn, J. A. The nominative and infinitive construction in the Slavonic languages. *Slavonic and East European Review* (Cambridge), 60, 4 (1982), 500–27.

An attempt is made to determine the geographical and historical spread of the use of the nominative as object of an infinitive verb in the Slavonic languages, with a view to giving support to some hypothesis about the origin of this construction. Evidence is found that the construction did at one point cover the East Slavonic area, a situation which appears to exclude borrowing from Finnish as the source of this construction. Although somewhat similar phenomena occur in Czech, it is shown that these are probably more reasonably attributed to the influence of German. Nevertheless, it is speculated that the nominative and infinitive construction was probably a characteristic of Common Slavonic, but died out in West and South Slavonic before written records, just as it has receded in the recorded history of East Slavonic.

TRANSLATION/INTERPRETING

83–520 Billmeier, Reinhard (SYSTRAN Inst., Munich). Zu den linguistischen Grundlagen von SYSTRAN. [On the linguistic bases of SYSTRAN.] *Multilingua* (Amsterdam), 1/2 (1982), 83–96.

The article describes the linguistic organisational principles ('grammar') on which the SYSTRAN machine-translation system is based, how this grammar may be represented by means of a simple sentence structure output program, and thus checked, and how the current capacity of the system may be extended (without any radical changes to the data) into a comprehensive description of the surface structure and deep structure of the sentence.

Verb valences, simple and complex argument structures and subordinate clauses are considered from the point of view of their surface and deep structures. The description is accompanied by several actual translation examples (print-outs) showing the basic sentence structures as currently produced by the system.

83–521 Chau, Simon S. C. (U. of Edinburgh). Three models of translation teaching: a proposal. *Language Learning and Communication* (New York), 1, 2 (1982), 137–49.

This paper examines the various approaches to the teaching of translation, and analyses the theoretical bases which underlie them. The main body of instruction in a translator training programme is made up of components belonging to one or more of three teaching models. In some respects these models are mutually exclusive, yet in practical teaching they could well be made complementary.

The sentence *This is a red rose* is used to illustrate the various ways of looking at the process of translating, distinguishing the 'syntactic model', which regards language as a grammatical code for information transfer and is empirical, anti-mentalistic, and objective, from the 'cultural model', which sees language primarily as a cultural manifestation: every word embodies a world and a history unique to the culture it belongs to. Thus neither *red* nor *rose* can ever be adequately represented by the closest term in the TL for the same physical phenomenon. This is the main premise of the 'cultural model'. Recently, linguistics has begun to focus more on the non-empirical sphere, and this trend is reflected in translation theory. Instead of translating *langue*, the translator is told that meaning only comes with context. The question to be asked is 'What does the author do with this text, and how should I say this now for my audience?' Text analysts concentrate on interpreting the ST's social context, trying their best to gauge the meaning of the utterance by a thorough study of its background. Those of the Hermeneutics school emphasise the personal, existential, and creative aspects of human communication, and deny the possibility of an authorised reading. To them, translating is a process of sympathising, communion and co-creation, just as language is our being's being. Both of these views belong to the 'communicative model'.

Naturally, teachers of translation do not usually adopt a single model and teach only the areas it covers. The awareness of these different approaches to translation should enable the course designer and teacher to have a panoramic view of his task, and become more rational in picking the elements worth teaching to form his own mix.

83–522 Cooper, Cary L. and others (U. of Manchester Inst. of Science and Tech.). Interpreting stress: sources of job stress among conference interpreters. *Multilingua* (Amsterdam), 1/2 (1982), 97–107.

A total of 33 interviews were carried out in Strasbourg, Brussels and Geneva to investigate sources of stress experienced by conference interpreters at work. The subject also kept 'stress logs' over a 5-day period. Four general sources of stress were identified: (1) physical environment: size and ventilation of booths, acoustics, lighting and seating, frequently failed to meet established standards; (2) task-related factors: (a) pressure to complete the job there and then, however tired or ill the

interpreter may be feeling, (b) lack of consideration by delegates who often fail to supply papers beforehand and treat interpreters as part of the 'technical equipment', (c) poor prospects of promotion, (d) frequent travel, (e) lack of feedback; (3) interpersonal factors: relationships with colleagues (particularly working with unco-operative colleagues), superiors (if any) and delegates; (4) home/work interface, particularly frequent absences from home which disrupt family life.

Based on the interviews, a 14-page questionnaire [given in appendix] was developed and sent to 1400 AIIC members throughout the world. The overwhelming majority (83%) of the respondents were freelance interpreters aged between 30 and 60. The majority (69%) were female. Their responses indicated high levels of job stress though most were fairly satisfied with their jobs.

83-523 Coveney, J. (U. of Bath). The training of translators and interpreters in the United Kingdom. *Multilingua* (Chalfont St Giles, Bucks), 1, 1 (1982), 42-5.

The provision for the training of translators and interpreters at the university level in the United Kingdom differs from that obtaining in continental Europe: there is no equivalent of the continental university's interpreter/translator school or institute. Instead, programmes for the training of translators and interpreters have been established, nearly always at postgraduate level, in university departments of modern languages.

The universities of Bath, Bradford and Salford, and the Polytechnic of Central London, provide postgraduate courses in both interpreting and translating. The University of Bath's programme is specifically designed as a preparation for posts in international organisations. The University of Kent has a postgraduate course for training translators. The only undergraduate degree course in interpreting and translating is offered by Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. A recent innovation in this field is the MA course in Translation and Linguistics for Arabic speakers introduced by the University of Bath in 1980.

Institutionalisation of the training of translators and interpreters in the United Kingdom at university level has occurred during the last 15 years. A danger of over-production exists in view of the fact that there is a relatively small demand for translators from commerce and industry in the United Kingdom, and that the only career for interpreters is in international conference interpreting, one of the smallest professions in the world.

83-524 Königs, Frank G. (Ruhr U., Bochum). Zentrale Begriffe aus der wissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit Übersetzen. [Main concepts from the science of translation.] *Lebende Sprachen* (Heidelberg, FRG), 27, 4 (1982), 145-50.

This article is the first of five contributions in a new series on translation. *Übersetzungswissenschaft* or the 'science of translation' is very much an applied linguistic science in which theory and practice are of necessity united. The article introduces terms used in translation under the general heading of basic terminology used in translation method: back-transformation – the transformational relation of source-language elements which are not adequately translatable; covert translation – geared towards the conventions of the target language and not recognisable as translation; overt

translation – geared towards the source language and recognisable as translations; one-to-one translation; translation into one's mother tongue; translation into a foreign language; multiple-stage-translation – approximation by stages towards the best translation; rank-bound-translation – which achieves idiomatic equivalence in the target language; translation method; process of translation; between text and translation; comparative translation; the one-way nature of the translating process; and word-for-word translation.

83-525 Lytinen, Steven L. and Schank, Roger C. Representation and translation. *Text* (Amsterdam), 2, 1/3 (1982), 83-111.

The paper discusses the failure of machine translation systems which attempt to translate without understanding the input text. Examples are presented on which such systems would be likely to fail, and an understanding-based translation system is argued for. A representational theory, MOPs (Memory Organisation Packets), is proposed: the general idea behind MOPs is to store knowledge which is common to many different situations in only one processing structure, and then to make this processing structure available in all the different situations in which it applies. This theory is presented as part of an understanding theory for use in a translation system. A system currently being implemented, called MOPTRANS, is then described.

83-526 Seleskovitch, D. Traduction et compréhension du langage. [Translation and understanding of language.] *Multilingua* (Amsterdam), 1, 1 (1982), 33-41.

The fundamental principle discussed in this paper is that the transmission of meaning by an individual act of speech on the one hand reduces the polysemy and ambiguity inherent in isolated words and sentences, and on the other hand comprises extralinguistic elements which supplement the fixed concepts corresponding to given language signals. The meaningful units of speeches and texts transcend the semantic value of linguistic signs, but can in their entirety be understood and expressed in another language.

Translation, both oral and written, sheds new light on the mechanisms of language, by demonstrating that the cognitive content of a speaker's message is not limited to the semantic content of his words.

The theory of meaning outlined here is put into practice during the training of interpreters and translators at the University of Paris III.

LEXICOGRAPHY

83-527 Hirshberg, Jeffrey. Towards a dictionary of Black American English on historical principles. *American Speech* (Alabama), 57, 3 (1982), 163-82.

A dictionary of Black American English on historical principles could usefully make a systematic comparison of black speech and white over identical sociolinguistic domains, a project similar in many respects to the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (DARE), which has a computerised main file of written sources and also a data summary of responses to questions asked throughout the USA over a five-year period, covering common aspects of daily life. Black and white speech can thus be compared

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across the same sociolinguistic domains, and characterised with respect to geographical or social distributions. [Sample glossary with, for each entry, a usage label; indication of pronunciation and etymology; regional and social features of distribution; sense/s chiefly or uniquely regional or Black.]

The most salient characteristics of the glossary are not illustrated by zero-derivations, African cognates, or semantic redundancies, but rather by the restricted or unique senses attached by blacks to words known or used by virtually every other speaker of the language; and the combinations of similarly common words to create new phrases and expressions largely unknown to the non-black community.