

## *Studies of particular languages*

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**ENGLISH** *See also abstract 69–297*

**69–285 Boyd, Julian and J. P. Thorne.** The semantics of modal verbs. *Journal of Linguistics* (Cambridge), 5, 1 (1969), 57–74.

[The authors explain ‘speech act’ and ‘illocutionary force’.] They treat the modal verbs as indicators of the illocutionary potential of the sentences in which they occur. In discussing *will*, they omit first-person examples and make an analysis which distinguishes between statements and predictions. They suggest that the illocutionary force of utterances with *shall* is that of a demand the speaker makes of himself. They postulate three sentential elements in the analysis of *should*, consider sentences with *must* and *may*, which are often ambiguous, and deal also with further complications with negatives and *have to*. Modal and non-modal uses of *can* are distinguished. In analysing *might* and *could*, distinction is made between sentences where they are surface structure variants for *may* and sentences where they are not.

**69–286 Friederich, Wolf.** Schwierige Englische Synonyme. [Difficult English synonyms.] *Idioma* (Munich), 5, 4 (1968), 145–8.

It is very likely that English is the language with the largest vocabulary. [Illustrations from *Englische Synonymik* and the *Grosse Duden*.] Some of the synonyms rejected for various reasons from the revision of *Englische Synonymik* are printed in *Idioma* for the interest of readers.

- 69–287 Gerbert, Manfred.** Über die Effektivität bestimmter grammatischer Mittel im technischen Englisch. [The effectiveness of certain grammatical forms in technical English.] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin), **12**, 11 (1968), 494–8.

Context is very important in enabling the reader to understand the special uses of words in scientific texts. Writer and reader need to have the same background or training for ease of comprehension. The absence of context is the reason for the ambiguity or incomprehensibility of many English and American newspaper captions and titles. Headline syntax and general journalistic style can be compared with the scientific and technical style of English. The use of syntax in technical English in general is examined, the various reasons for its effectiveness and its relationship to semantic factors. Both journalistic and scientific language make good use of brevity and conciseness, deriving from them clarity and incision. There is an absence of variety in style and much repetition in the lexis. The present tense and the passive form account for 80 to 90 per cent of the finite verbs in technical texts. It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of language but it is possible to establish with some certainty which, out of a number of constructions, is the most effective in certain circumstances. [A number of lexical and syntactical examples of technical English are studied.]

- 69–288 Kooij, J. G.** Compounds and idioms. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **21** (1968), 250–68.

Bühler considers that compounds do not represent a gradual development from syntactic expressions. Reichling considers that compounds have a structure of their own and although many ‘standard’ or ‘idiomatic’ expressions function as single words, they are not single words. [Both approaches are investigated and illustrated from English and Dutch idiomatic or compound words and expressions.]

## FRENCH

**69–289 De Kock, Josse.** Quelques réflexions sur la manière de formuler une règle grammaticale: le pluriel des substantifs français en ‘-al’. [Some thoughts on how a grammatical rule may be formed: the plural of French nouns in ‘-al’.] *Linguistique* (Paris), 2 (1968), 21–33.

There are at present several ways of treating the plural of a French noun ending in *-al*. Words which have come into the language recently are categorized according to their plural form but eighteen show no signs of having been used in the plural yet (e.g. *sisal*, *tergal*, *barbital*). The plural adjective is stable because here *-al* is a suffix. In the case of nouns, *-al* is part of the root, which means that its treatment in the plural will be unstable. Nouns in *-al* which have come into the language since the sixteenth century and which make their plural in *-aux* were formerly adjectives, and nouns recently borrowed from adjectives in a foreign language make their plural in *-aux*. The classifying of some words as both nouns and adjectives causes some people to think of *-al* as a noun suffix but this is not so and the common ending does not justify classifying all nouns ending in *-al* together as a group. If proper nouns are taken into account the nouns ending in *-al* which make the plural with *-s* are in the majority. [The classifying of these nouns for learning by native speakers and foreign students and for computer memory is discussed.]

**69–290 Hutchinson, Joyce A.** Le désordre des mots: la place de l’adjectif. [Lack of word order: the position of the adjective.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), 62 (1969), 15–23.

It is agreed that the adjective and the adverb are the most mobile elements in a French sentence. The current tendency to search for more striking or shocking forms of expression affects word order. International English also affects French word order. [After a brief historical review of the position of the adjective, a study is made of present-day trends by examining adjective and noun together, assuming that context decides on the position of the adjective.]

## STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES

An adjective placed after the noun serves to classify, and define. The resulting description is objective, on the intellectual level.

Placed before the noun, the adjective expresses emotion, moral judgement. Change of position is rendered possible or impossible by the noun being qualified and by the whole context. Style and psychology will affect the positioning of the adjective. In any language there is a tendency towards automatic and fixed usage but those adjectives which have a traditionally fixed position gradually lose their force and become little more than prefixes or suffixes. Monosyllables (which have been erroneously supposed always to precede nouns) gradually lose their individuality. Adjectives of comparison are usually found after the noun while superlatives appear more frequently in front of the noun. The supposedly English habit of piling up adjectives before the noun was also used by Montaigne. Where adjectives are distributed before and after the noun they are usually to be found in an expected place; this suggests that though French adjectives cannot really be said to have fixed positions, the choice is nevertheless not arbitrary. [Bibliography.]

**69–291** Levitt, Jesse. Spelling-pronunciation in modern French: its origin and its functional significance. *Linguistics* (The Hague), 42 (1968), 19–28.

It is only since the Revolution that education has been available to all in France. A mark of the semi-educated was to pronounce words which they met for the first time in print according to the spelling. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spelling had been optional but with universal education the orthography of the Academy was accepted. Since the mid-nineteenth century there has been no further effort to bring orthography into line with present pronunciation. [Examples follow of changes in pronunciation which have not been followed by spelling reform and of the restoration of sounds not pronounced in earlier centuries because of the influence of the written form.] The fact that pronunciation follows spelling in foreign or learned words is not surprising but the appearance of this tendency in words of ordinary conversation is more so. The latter may possibly

reflect the pronunciation of an older competing form. The desire to eliminate ambiguity also appears to influence spelling pronunciation. It helps to safeguard the language against disintegration by contractions to monosyllabism and contributes to clarity by reinforcing the link between the word and its derivative.

It seems that in spite of the present emphasis of linguistics on the spoken word, it is unrealistic to describe contemporary French without reference to the orthographic factor and its influence.

**69–292 Saunders, H.** The evolution of the French narrative tenses. *Forum for Modern Language Studies* (University of St Andrews), 5, 2 (1969), 141–61.

Teachers outside France have a difficult task in teaching the use of the past historic and imperfect tenses as present-day practice differs so widely from the academic rules. The seventeenth century favoured the historic sequence but the narrator used the historic present as a variant. The system based on the past definite and its natural sequence of tenses was too narrow for survival, especially when the past definite became obsolete in daily speech. Guillaume and Imbs have begun to talk in terms of aspect taking precedence over rules of time. The effect of the spoken word may be definitive in the drift towards a vague and present narrative, and cinema and television have contributed to the actuality of narrative. [Quoting from the *nouveau roman*, the author illustrates the use of tenses and compares them with Old French epic usage, which shows a similar disregard for sequence in time.] The French classical novel stemmed, not from the epics but from the narrative of the historian, which preserved the Latin historic sequence of tenses until the present climate of uncertainty and interest in existential reality ousted it. The imperfect tense has, however, expanded in use because of its ability to combine with any other tense. The imperfective aspect can express many nuances [illustration from Imbs]. It is increasingly taking on a preterite role. The composite preterite has not been able to take over the role of the past historic tense since its combination of a perfective and imperfective aspect is a contradiction in logic.

69–293 **Schane, Sanford A.** On the abstract character of French 'e muet'. *Glossa* (Simon Fraser University), 2, 2 (1968), 150–63.

One of the most perplexing problems within French phonology has been the treatment of *e muet*. It is the unique neutral vowel. Within the word there is an intimate relation between word stress and the position of the *e muet*. Its occurrence or non-occurrence often depends on dialect considerations, stylistic effect, rapidity of speaking, etc. The paper attempts to show that the *e muet* is totally different from the other vowels of French. It is not sufficient to recognize it only in those places where it actually occurs phonetically. Only by recognizing underlying *schwas* is it possible to account for otherwise aberrant facts of French phonology. Points considered are (1) liaison, (2) consonant deletion, (3) rule for *schwa* deletion, (4) rule for devoicing of word final stops, (5) vowel nasalization.

Other morpheme internal *e muets* must be postulated if the phonotactic rules of the language are to reveal generalizations concerning permitted consonant clusters. The so-called *h aspiré* provides additional evidence for postulating underlying *schwas*.

Although it may seem that phonetically the *e muet* is losing ground, nonetheless as a structural feature of modern French it is quite stable. Underlying representations for French are quite close to the standard orthography and the rules for interpreting phonetically the underlying representations are precisely those used by anyone who reads French. This means that French spelling is highly morphophonemic and apart from obvious archaisms is quite satisfactory for the contemporary language.

## GERMAN

- 69–294 **Delattre, Pierre and Margaret Hohenberg.** Duration as a cue to the tense/lax distinction in German unstressed vowels. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), 6, 4 (1968), 367–90.

In stressed German syllables the tense/lax type of vowel distinction functions by means of two physical correlates—vowel colour and vowel duration. The question raised is whether duration affects the tense/lax oppositions in unstressed syllables. A two-part investigation was conducted by physical measurements and by perceptual testing of response to variations of vowel duration in unstressed syllables using controlled synthetic speech to be identified by ear. The perceptual test showed that vowel duration can contribute to the tense/lax contrast even in unstressed syllables and the close correspondence found between the two test results suggested that vowel duration does contribute to distinguishing unstressed-lax from unstressed-tense vowels in German.

- 69–295 **Fomina, N. P.** Wortfügungen und Wortstellung in der deutschen Sprache der Gegenwart. [Groups and word order in present-day German.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig), 5, 6 (1968), 321–5.

The writer sees as inseparable the problem of word order and the division of the sentence into syntactic groups. Word order is pre-conditioned by certain semantic-structural and communicative principles. The former is of great importance in the formation of new words. The communicative principle is manifest in the fact that the first position in a sentence is occupied by that group which is connected with what has gone thematically before; in this way the thread of the narration is continued. The last position in the sentence is taken by that group which conveys something new and important: it points forward to what is to come in the next sentence. The tendency is for those elements of the sentence which form the core of the utterance to move close to the finite verb. Where there are two adverbial phrases, that of place usually forms an element of low communicative value

(theme), and that of direction the core of the utterance (rheme). The writer has observed two forms of predicative bracketing. First, there is 'inclusive bracketing'; here the predicate is split into two or more elements, between which are placed different groups, such as the adverbial group or prepositional phrase or accusative and infinitive. The verbal group may consist of a finite verb + prepositional phrase, and the two may be separated by, for example, the object of the verb and an expression of time. This separation of the two elements of the verb has often led to the formation of a new separable verb, which may take on a different meaning from the literal meaning of the original phrasal verb. 'Exclusive bracketing', on the other hand, does not split the elements of the phrasal verb, but rather isolates the excluded group. This group then has its own intonation pattern and its own semantic function. In this type of compound German sentence the verb may be of low communicative value and the core of the utterance in the predicate. [Examples. Bibliography.]

**69–296 Hackel, Werner.** Präpositionen mit Substantiven ohne erkennbaren Kasus. [Prepositions and nouns with unmarked case.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig), 5, 6 (1968), 325–9.

In German, prepositions, whether accepted as such by traditional grammar or not, are now being used with nouns whose case is unmarked. Sometimes the prepositional phrase may perform the function of another part of speech and thus the noun or nominal group remains uninflected. In some instances there has been an extension from the use of preposition + feminine noun, where the case is unmarked, to masculine and neuter nouns used after the same preposition. Any consideration of the word *statt* is complicated by the fact that it is both a preposition and a conjunction. [Examples of three different constructions.] The noun is also uninflected where the prepositional phrase is in apposition to a preceding noun, and where a pair of nouns is used [e.g. von Mensch zu Mensch] there is no inflection. Many adjectives [e.g. *westlich*] are now being used as prepositions followed either by inflected or uninflected nouns. In con-

clusion *voll* and *voller*, both of which are losing some of their adjectival characteristics, are examined as prepositions; the contrasting syntactic structures of the two words are noted. [Examples. Bibliography.]

**69–297 Kirkwood, Henry W.** Aspects of word order and its communicative function in English and German. *Journal of Linguistics* (London), 5, 1 (1969), 85–107.

The order of elements in German and English is governed by grammatical and syntactic criteria. Permutations of the syntactic norm are possible to express a particular intention. English word order is an important means of expressing grammatical relations. In German there is greater freedom, and word order may have an important communicative function. The Prague linguists have investigated the communicative function of word order using the terms ‘basis’ (sentence opening), ‘theme’ (elements with low communicative value) and ‘rheme’ (the communicative core). The terms ‘topic’ and ‘comment’ are used by American linguists for ‘theme’ and ‘rheme’. The topic-comment criteria may decide the choice between two alternative constructions and in many languages it is an important determinant of word order. The grammatical structure of the language limits the extent to which word order can be freely manipulated. [Developed with German and English examples throughout.] Further investigation may reveal other patterns in the ordering of elements in addition to those discussed and consideration should be given not only to what is grammatically possible but also to what motivates the choice between alternatives in the communicative process. [Bibliography.]

**69–298 Salmon, Paul.** The German verb: some structural and semantic approaches. *Forum for Modern Language Studies* (University of St Andrews), 5, 2 (1969), 126–40.

A simplified structural statement about the German auxiliary verb system, with some discussion of ways in which this may be refined, leads to the semantic investigation of the German verb. The structural formula (stated in detail with examples) is considered adequate to

## STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES

describe the formation of German compound tenses, but it contains no indication of its relationship to the rest of German grammar or of the way it is to be used. It is in order to illustrate this that Bierwisch divides verbs into thirty-eight subclasses. [Sketch of the distinguishing features.] These distinctions are made within the phrase structure part of grammar. They represent the sorting of the material before transformations are applied. Glinz's structural analysis of German and Brinkmann's classification of verbs according to *Satzwert* (syntactic value) and *Inhaltswert* (semantic value) are explained and contrasted with comments on the particular terminology used by each writer. The interaction of transformational theory and semantic study is noted with some of the particular problems which each entails.

**69–299 Schmidt, Wilhelm.** Ist das deutsche Perfekt ein Vergangenheitstempus? [Is the present perfect in German a tense that expresses the past?] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig) 5, 4 (1968), 197–204.

For a number of years the presentation of the system of tenses in traditional German grammar has been criticized as inadequate, not corresponding to actual use, and depending too much on the Latin system. One reason for the difficulty involved in defining tenses in German is that they express not only time—although this is their main function—but also the aspect and mood of the verb.

The present perfect is examined in this context. The views of various grammarians are discussed, in particular those of Walter Flämig, who contends that the main function of the present perfect is to express a completed action, which need not be situated in the past, and that therefore it is a means of denoting the aspect of the verb rather than the tense. His views are, however, not supported by any of the other authorities quoted.

In commenting on Flämig's interpretation the author points out that the grammatical category of tense is not identical with the ontological category of time. Tenses represent actions from the point of view of the person speaking or writing, therefore even if the action ex-

pressed by the present perfect is objectively taking place in the future, it is still seen by the speaker as being in the past.

Fläming is criticized for not considering the statistical frequency with which the present perfect is used as a tense denoting the past. A thesis on this aspect is quoted according to which the present perfect expresses the objective past in over 90 per cent of the observed cases. In less than a quarter of all the cases, non-verbal temporal-context elements are found; where the present perfect expresses the past, these elements are, strictly speaking, superfluous, whereas if the tense expressed is the future, they are essential.

## RUSSIAN

**69–300 Albin, Alexander.** The nominal suffix ‘-ba (-oba)’. *Russian Language Journal* (Michigan), **22**, 81/82 (1968), 14–21.

The nominal suffix *-ba (-oba)* is entirely unproductive in modern Russian. Almost all nouns in *-ba* are deverbatives. [Discussion of the phonology and formation of deverbative nouns in *-ba*.] Most of these nouns denote the process of the action of the verb from which they are derived. Some have acquired new and often more specific meanings, however, which either coexist with the primary ones or have replaced them. [Examples.] There are three nouns in modern Russian which have lost their association with the verbal base from which they were originally derived.

The nouns in *-oba* (a variant of *-ba*) are, by contrast, not uniform in their formation. These may be de-adjectival, denominative or deverbative. The derivation of these nouns is often obscure since the bases have disappeared from the modern language. Consequently many can no longer be regarded as derived forms; the original stem and suffix must be viewed as one morpheme. There are only nine examples of nouns in *-oba* in the modern literary language. [Discussion of the formation, history and meanings of these nine nouns.]

- 69–301 Friederich, Wolf.** Zur Wortbildung im Russischen. [On word formation in Russian.] *Russisch* (Munich), 2, 1/2 (1968), 6–10 and 29–30.

In common with other Indogermanic languages, Russian has many more words than word-roots. There are basically three ways of forming new words, which appear as derivations, compounds and artificial words. Whilst it is impossible to know all the words in a language, it is both possible and desirable to know the remarkably small number of affixes which are used in some word formations. The meaning of a given word may not necessarily be revealed by simply taking the meanings of the affix and root together. Words are not, however, usually considered in isolation and normally a combination of affix, root and context gives their meaning. Unlike vocabulary, stress, and aspects, affixes receive scant attention in Russian grammars and courses. [Discussion of the formation of masculine nouns with sixteen suffixes from various other parts of speech includes numerous examples and notes on stress.]

- 69–302 Rybakova, T.** О расчлененных в речи сложноподчиненных предложениях [The subdivision of the complex sentence in speech.] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Moscow), 4 (1968), 10–14.

‘Parcelling’ is the splitting of a formally structured utterance into several sentences, each separated by a full stop. [Thus, several logical stresses are created rather than one.] It is particularly effective when lexical-grammatical structure is subordinated to a contrast of ideas, designed to convey satirical or comic effect, since this device intensifies elements of contrast or unexpectedness. Whereas in a formally structured sentence minor modal meanings are subordinated to the main general meaning, ‘parcelling’ permits emphasis to be placed at will on desired nuances of modal meanings. It also frees parts of the sentence from intonational relationships, which are normally governed by the general intonational contour of the sentence, and, thereby, allows for freer expression of varied emotional overtones. This device

also makes for smoothness in rhythm and, when linked with well-chosen lexis and grammar, may convey lyrical feeling, or effectively underline concessive or temporal circumstances. 'Parcelling' is not suitable in all contexts, but where it is appropriate, it is always linked to the communicative possibilities of expression. It is common nowadays in journalism and in children's literature and should be taught as a means of expression in the study of speech. [Illustration.]

**69–303 Shmelev, D. N.** Семантические признаки слов. [The semantic characteristics of words.] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Moscow), 5 (1968), 15–21.

Subdivision into semantic groups on the basis of common and differentiating features constitutes a possible approach to the study of the lexical structure of a language.

Some parts of a lexis are more easily subjected to systematization than others, thus giving rise to microsystems, formed by words of given groups. While genuine linguistic meaning can be ascribed to certain categories of lexis—verbs, qualitative adjectives, abstract nouns, etc.—lexis comprising mainly concrete nouns often escapes linguistic analysis, through the abundance of individual semantic characteristics ascribed to it.

Three types of lexis are possible. First, all words may be divided into particular groups, under the semantic characteristic of category; second, integral characteristics divide the categories into classes and subclasses; and, third, differentiating characteristics organize the given semantic units inside these classes and subclasses.

[In lexis denoting concrete objects, the meaning can depend either on an aggregate of characteristics—integral semantic characteristics—or on differentiating characteristics, based on contrast between the semantic components of words related in meaning.] There is not, however, a clear boundary between semantic types of lexis. [Words with the most general meanings are not defined by strictly differentiating characteristics, since their meanings often coincide with semantic elements found in words with more specific meanings.] Moreover, in addition to the differentiating elements of a group of words, there is

## STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES

usually found an indivisible, integral characteristic common to all words of the group.

Any attempt to describe semantic links in lexis is complicated by the existence not only of various types of lexical meaning, but also of personal meanings imparted to words by individuals.

**69-304 Vitek, A.** Grammar and lexicon: the word class of adverbs in Russian lexicons. *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **12**, 1 (1968), 59-69.

The traditional word classes recognized in a language, such as substantives, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, present various grammatical problems which lexicology attempts to treat and resolve by giving specific information in dictionaries under the individual lexical entries. Occasionally the attempt to record deviating properties results in confusing and insufficient dictionary presentation and this is true of the traditional word class of adverbs in the Russian lexicons. The very existence of this word class is subject to dispute. [The author assumes a separate word class of adverbs and discusses the lexicological treatment accorded to individual lexical entries.]

## SPANISH

**69-305 Cressey, W. W.** Relative adverbs in Spanish: a transformational analysis. *Language* (Baltimore), **44**, 3 (1968), 487-99.

Adverb clauses containing such words as *donde*, *cuando*, *como*, *en cuanto que*, etc. can be analysed as transformed versions of relative clauses. Such analysis leads to a simplification of the rules for the use of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses.

Variants of the locative sentence: *salió del lugar donde estaba* such as *salió de donde estaba* and *salió del lugar en el cual* (*en el que*, *en que*) *estaba* can all be derived from the two simple sentences *Estaba en cierto lugar* and *Salió del lugar* by various transformational procedures. Analyses support the general view that adverbs such as *aquí*,

*entonces*, etc. can be derived from prepositional phrases such as *en este lugar*, *en ese tiempo*, etc. This would mean that no symbol *ADV* would be introduced by phrase structure rules.

The use of the subjunctive or indicative in the subordinate clause is determined by whether the deleted antecedent (*lugar*, *manera* or *tiempo*) refers to a specific place, manner or time, or to a hypothetical one.

**69–306 Davis, J. Cary.** ‘A’ and ‘de’ in Spanish: more observations. *Hispania* (Wisconsin), **51**, 4 (1968), 860–2.

The author remarks on the study by H. Dowdle (abstract 68–286), suggesting additional uses of *a* and *de* and offering a slightly different interpretation of some of the categories in which prepositions are placed.

Verbs and nouns referring to sensory perception and followed by *a* and *de* are examined. *Olor a rosas* tends to mean a ‘rose-like smell’ whereas *olor de rosas* means ‘smell of certain roses’. [Other examples of this type.]

The *de* of *acordarse de* seems to be more than Dowdle’s ‘structural connective’. *De* and *por* after *seguido* do not seem to be just a matter of position. *Pintado* can be followed by *con*, *de*, or *a*. *Cubierto* has *con* with construction materials as opposed to *de* with accidental conditions. *De pie* needs to be contrasted with *a pie*; *por la tarde* is more indefinite than *de la tarde*. *De lejos* and *de cerca* can be explained as like the English *from afar* and *from near at hand*. *A pie* implies manner and position as well as instrumentality. *Temor a* seems to be more common with live objects than *temor de*. It is hard to distinguish between *hacer caso a* and *hacer caso de*, although *no me hizo caso* is *He paid no attention to me* where *no hizo de mí* is closer to *He didn’t consider me worth notice*.

A definitive work on prepositional usage is urgently needed.