

Studies of particular languages

ENGLISH *See also abstracts* 73-157, -164, -167, -178/9

73-168 Fasold, Ralph. A look at the form 'be' in standard English. *Languages and Linguistics: Working Papers* (Washington DC), 5 (1972), 95-101.

One of the most striking features in nonstandard English as spoken among urban Blacks is the use of the form *be* where standard English calls for the forms *is, are, was* or *were*. A view of language which looks beneath the surface is often capable of showing that major surface differences are really the result of slight variations in the deep structure. Forms of *be* occurring in three kinds of construction in standard English are examined: with adjectives, with predicate nominals and in imperative constructions with negative or emphatic meaning, following *do*. [Examples, and puzzling cases.] It is difficult to find a solution that is wholly satisfactory from the theoretical point of view [Four possibilities investigated and finally rejected as explanations of such clauses as, *if he doesn't be quiet*.] Sentences of this kind are rare in standard English and carry a hortative force, but *be* in nonstandard English is very common as part of the main verb phrase and may derive in some cases from the contraction of the modals *would* and *will*, followed by the deletion of the remaining 'd and 'll by phonological processes. [Short bibliography.]

420 ADN AM

73-169 Pierce, Joe E. A spectrographic study of English vowel phonemes under primary stress. *Linguistics* (The Hague), 84 (1972), 41-84.

Investigators of speech hear what they expect to hear. Instrumental analysis is necessary to establish what the actual differences occurring in the stream of speech are. Accurate information concerning relative quality, gliding, and length of vowels can be got from the spectrograph,

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but the picture obtained must be used to test the validity of hypotheses about language structure.

The problems of English phonology can only be solved if variables are reduced to a minimum. [The author describes an instrumental analysis of occurrences, under primary stress and in selected phonemic environments, of the five vowels and three diphthongs of his own speech, arguing that in the absence of grammatical, contextual or situational clues to aid identification, the distinctive features of each phoneme must be present. Spectrograms were made of numerous words consisting of a CVC pattern. Results, which the author discusses in detail with the help of formant charts and spectrograms, indicated that although each nucleus differed from all others in all environments, the ear used other features to discriminate between them. The differences could not be stated in terms of the absence or presence of an acoustic feature. Further, radically different acoustic qualities were heard as the same: all were spoken and recorded by the author. He concludes that the phoneme is a 'psychological' reality.]

420 AJ

FRENCH *See also abstracts* 73-165, -167, -178

73-170 Gilbert, P. Le néologisme en français contemporain. [Neologisms in present-day French.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **94** (1973), 11-15.

Lexical creativity has been studied by specialists for a long time, and ordinary users of the language are at least aware of the continual appearance of large numbers of new words. The term *néologisme* appeared in French in the early eighteenth century, to characterize an affected (euphuistic) manner of speech. To denote the linguistic tendency to create new words the term *néologie* was used. [Discussion of the subsequent history of these and their derivatives.] In discussing a neologism, one must first determine its earliest appearance and secondly, how long it retains its status as a novelty before being ousted by something newer.

Whether a word is a neologism or not is determined not so much

by the intuition of the individual native speaker, which may be merely idiolectal, but by specialists – dictionary compilers or metalinguists. Lexicographers, however, are to some extent limited in their admission of neologisms by their readership, which is generally purist, especially in France. [Comparison, with examples, of the policy of the dictionaries *Petit-Robert* and *Petit-Larousse*.] If one also considers comments, explicit or implicit, on neologisms in literary texts, the situation becomes even more confused [examples], and one is back with the problem of the reliability of the native speaker's intuition. A series of detailed studies is promised for further issues of the periodical.

440 ALB ALG

73–171 **Faïk, Sully.** Applications stylistiques du schéma bitensionnel de Guillaume. [Stylistic applications of the bitensional scheme of Guillaume.] *Langage et l'Homme* (Brussels), 20 (1972), 15–17.

One of the basic principles of psychomechanics is that for a relationship A – B to be complete it must operate both as a 'closing tension' A → B, from + to –, and as an 'opening tension' B → A, from – to +. The decrease in French in the use of the negative adverb and adjective *point* since the sixteenth century is considered against the closing tension, and the development of its use in different styles is set within the framework of the opening tension. While the former represents a movement towards the obsolescence of an item the latter represents a movement towards archaism. The two tensions (closing and opening) may be used to depict the contrast between style and language (as an image is drawn from the language and then returns to it by becoming a cliché); between the concentration of experience into a unique work and the opening of this work to all possible readers.

440 ADN AHD

GERMAN *See also abstract 73-165*

73-172 Posner, Roland. Zur systematischen Mehrdeutigkeit deutscher Lexeme. Vorschlag eines Forschungsprojekts. [The systematic ambiguity of German lexemes. A suggested research project.] *Linguistik und Didaktik* (Munich), **3**, 4 (1972), 268-76.

The flexibility of a language – that is, the fact that an unlimited number of communication situations can be expressed with a limited number of words and syntactic structures – is to a considerable extent due to the systematic ambiguity of lexemes. On the basis of research into fields of words, distribution analysis and the generative theory of semantics, certain types of contexts can be defined in which a given lexeme assumes various meanings. Classes of lexemes can then be determined which are disambiguated by the same type of context.

Ambiguity is illustrated through the use of the word *Tee* in different contexts. [Detailed analysis is provided. The disambiguating role of the contextual lexeme is explained.] The presupposed type of lexical characteristic plays a more important part in interpreting and disambiguating lexemes than the explicit type [reasons given]. Semantic characteristics are also of considerable help. The author proposes an enquiry into the ambiguity of lexemes in German, for which he makes detailed suggestions [listed]. Such an enquiry could benefit fields such as general semantics, lexicography and syntax research. Fields of application are suggested for the expected results, some of them outside linguistics. The ideal team for the suggested enquiry would consist of a lexicologist and a specialist on syntax. **430 ABL ADF**

73-173 Radvila, Regula. Die Pronominalisierung im Deutschen. [Pronominalization in German.] *Linguistische Berichte* (Braunschweig), **22** (1972), 1-11.

The problem of how to pronominalize in German is investigated with the aid of a generative-semantic system and a theory of models which

determines the interpretation of deep structures. The pronoun is defined in general and divided into two categories: genuine pronouns where the pronominalized noun phrase and the antecedent are identical, and pronouns that cannot be rendered referential, where this identity is not found. These two categories are analysed in detail, examples are given and deep structures are illustrated. Special problems exist when pronouns are used in conjunction with non-transparent verbs, such as *wollen*, *glauben*, *hoffen*, *wünschen*, *mögen*, and the future tense with *werden*, as well as the verb *suchen*. A number of borderline cases are also dealt with. However, many questions remain unanswered and require further research. **430 ADN**

RUSSIAN

73–174 Derbyshire, William W. Homonymic secondary imperfective verbs in Russian. *Journal of Russian Studies* (Lancaster), **24** (1972), 24–33.

Homonymy in the Russian verb may be full or partial. Full homonyms coincide orthographically and phonetically and in all forms of the given verbs; partial homonyms coincide in only a limited number of morphological forms. An important factor in the formation of homonyms is phonetic change. The paper discusses formation of secondary imperfectives with the suffix *ivat'* and lists derivations from imperfective stems, from a perfective and an imperfective stem, and from perfective stems. [Appendix classifying examples, and bibliography.] **491.7 AKD ALR**

73–175 Pino, Octavio. Some aspects of the syntax of the Russian noun: a transformational analysis. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **86** (1972), 47–82.

This study applies to some of the recent notions of generative grammar to some aspects of Russian syntax, relying heavily on a description of the Russian nominal complex, and adopting the model of generative grammar that was proposed by Chomsky in *Aspects of the Theory of*

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Syntax. [Five sections follow, dealing with: (1) a general theory of grammar, (2) Russian nouns: towards a theory of categorization, (3) the base component, (4) the transformational subcomponent, (5) the phonological component. Numerous examples are provided throughout. A brief sample lexicon is given in the appendix, and a bibliography.]

491.7 ADN AK

73-176 **Ward, Dennis.** Appositional compounds in Russian. *Slavonic and East European Review* (London), 51, 122 (1973), 1-10.

In their surface structure appositional compounds comprise two substantives linked by a hyphen; in writing both constituents usually decline, whereas in speaking only the first declines. In their deep structure they derive from subordinating endocentric constructions. This distinguishes them from *dvandvas*, and other compound substantives, which emanate from coordinating endocentric constructions, with the result that both constituents in these compounds have equal status. In appositional compounds, however, the meaningful ordering of the constituents is important, since the first constituent embraces all the properties and functions of the second, but, in addition, contains some not shared by the second. The second constituent defines more closely the first and is totally identified with the referent of the first.

Both structural and stylistic criteria account for the creation of appositional compounds. The deep structure of all other types of compound substantives in Russian is non-appositional; hence they do not convey the same type of relationship in the field of meaning. [An adjective in the place of the second constituent would be inappropriate, either semantically or structurally. A new entity comes about with the creation of an appositional compound, rather than a modification to a first constituent noun by a second constituent attribute.] Appositional compounds also achieve economy of expression.

Adjectives are not derived from appositional compounds through a lack of the appropriate deep structure. Compound adjectives with

the connecting vowel *o* or *e* formed from more than one item have a single grammatical category; but in appositional compounds each constituent retains its grammatical category in terms of case, number and gender, such that no adjective emerges. Speculation on hypothetical adjectives derived from appositional compounds leads to the conclusion that the relationship and order of constituents in these constructions and their consequent meanings would be misconstrued. [Numerous examples illustrate the text.] **491.7 AKD**

CHINESE

73-177 Cooper, Arthur. The Chinese method of writing and plans for a new dictionary. *Incorporated Linguist* (London), **11**, 3 (1972), 66-70.

Chinese is unique in being written by a method that does not analyse the sounds of words but represents them as entities of sound and meaning together. [Brief history of Chinese script.] Because it is not based principally on analysing speech sounds, Chinese is both inter-temporal and interlingual [examples from other languages, and a description of the way in which Chinese influenced Korean and Japanese]. Chinese is a highly analytical language, monosyllabic and uninflected; it lost inbuilt grammar in prehistoric times and replaced it with grammar that makes only voluntary contribution to the clarity of the speaker's intention. Examples of homophones are given from Chinese and other languages to illustrate the greatest difficulty that Chinese script presents, in that it provides no such precise and reliable placing of words in dictionaries and indexes as alphabetical order. [Positive advantages of the script for writing the particular language for which it was evolved.] The Japanese, who chose to adopt the Chinese script for their language, claim the highest figure among the developed nations for literacy and for the production of books. Advances in electronics may remove some of the inconveniences of a non-alphabetical script for mechanical processes.

A dictionary sufficiently comprehensive to explore the range of civilization in China must cover classical and colloquial Chinese and

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expand the pithy coinages and abbreviations in which both are fertile. The large dictionaries are expensive and cumbersome, and each has its own system of arranging the contents. [Details given of the method of compilation of *A quick access dictionary of Chinese characters*, and a specimen page of the *Quick access index of Chinese characters* that will precede it.]

495.1 ADN ALG

LANGUAGES IN AFRICA

73-178 Collins, Beverley and Jill Rodd. English pronunciation problems of francophonic West Africans. *English Language Teaching* (London), **27**, 1 (1972), 79-88.

Basing their remarks on the pronunciation of thirty-six African students studying in England, the authors first summarize the phonological features which many West African languages have in common, then describe the impression made by the students' French on educated native speakers of French with phonetic training. [Finally they describe the students' pronunciation of English in some detail under the headings: (1) pure vowels, (2) diphthongs, (3) consonants, (4) consonants in context, (5) stress and rhythm, (6) weak forms, and (7) intonation.] Students from francophonic West Africa who are learning English cannot be treated in the same way as speakers of standard French. Interference from the native African language is stronger at phonological level than interference from French as a second language.

(420) AJT 966.1

73-179 Duminy, P. A. Language as a medium of instruction, with reference to the situation in a number of Ciskeian secondary schools. *Comparative Education* (Oxford), **8**, 3 (1972), 119-32.

A language survey was made with Xhosa pupils from eleven secondary schools in two areas of the Ciskei, Eastern Cape Province. Xhosa is the mother tongue of all the children included in the experiment, and English and Afrikaans are the two official languages. Replacing the

mother tongue of young Bantu children by a language operating with concepts foreign to them has a disastrous effect on their educational progress. If the language used by the teacher is partly unintelligible or too abstract and unrelated to life, the child can memorize and reproduce information, but is handicapped in abstract thinking. All over Africa there is a new appreciation of the value of mother-tongue studies, which should be continued through the secondary school. [Twenty-two tables are given of responses to a multiple-choice questionnaire on languages heard at home, understanding the language used by the teacher, reading magazines at home, the language preferred when difficult work is explained and the relationship between the choice of English or Xhosa and the father's occupation, reasons for liking the three languages, and the method of study as related to the amount of English/Xhosa heard at home.]

It is clear that the home language is Xhosa, but that English is more commonly heard at home than Afrikaans. Only half the pupils always understand their teacher's English, and only a quarter always understand their teacher's Afrikaans. If Bantu teachers are themselves not fluent in the official languages, the medium of instruction may become wholly unintelligible. Xhosa is preferred to English for the explanation of difficult work, though English retains its prestige as a language traditionally associated with education and examination systems. In a survey made in 1939 respondents made no reference to magazines in the vernacular. Now vernacular magazines are more popular than English magazines written for the Bantu market. (Magazines in Afrikaans lag behind.) Pupils liked the official language for vocational reasons but liked Xhosa because it was intelligible and easy. Children who hear nothing but Xhosa at home are more likely to memorize the words of their textbooks exactly than those more familiar with the official languages. [Extract from questionnaire.]

(420) AFG EFG 968