

Descriptive studies of particular languages

English

88–249 Crowley, Tony (U. of Southampton). Description or prescription? An analysis of the term 'Standard English' in the work of two twentieth-century linguists. *Language and Communication* (Oxford), **7**, 3 (1987), 199–220.

The author examines references to 'Standard English' in the writings of Daniel Jones and, more extensively, Henry Wyld, and shows how their views developed in the period 1907–19 (Jones) and 1907–34 (Wyld). Both claimed to be neutral, scientific describers of language, but Crowley argues that both in fact tended to favour and promote the dialect of a particular social group, a

tendency culminating in Wyld's *Claim for the superiority of received Standard English*. This work uses three arguments: that 'Standard English' is spoken by the 'best people', that it has wide currency, and that it is intrinsically best (sonorous, distinct, etc.). The author argues that the first claim is purely subjective, the second false and the third meaningless.

French

88–250 George, K. E. M. (London School of Economics). The language of French adolescents. *Modern Languages* (London), **67**, 3 (1986), 137–41.

French adolescent language shares many features with adult colloquial usage, but is distinguished by an extensive vocabulary of its own, created by: (i) adding or changing a suffix: *duroche* (*dur*), *vulgos* (*vulgaire*); (ii) abbreviation: *dég* (*déqueulasse*), *gol* (*mongolien*); (iii) 'verlan', reversing the order of syllables: *tromé* (*métro*), *chelaioim* (*lache-moi*); (iv) borrowings from English: *la new-wave hard*, *le fun*; (v) calques from English: *herbe* (marijuana), *neige*

(cocaine); (vi) borrowings from underworld slang: *licher* (to drink), *mater* (to look at); (vii) hyperbole: *ultraringard* (really square), *macroflip* (giant freak-out); (viii) litotes: *pas mal*, *pas sale*, *différent* in favourable senses; (ix) contradiction: *méchant*, *haineux*, *ça fait mal* in favourable senses. This language is constantly changing: by the time the general public discover a word or phrase, its devotees are already abandoning it.

German

88–251 Ulvestad, Bjarne. Potentiale modalisierung der deutschen Zukunftsäusserung. [Potential modalisation of the German future tense.] *Deutsche Sprache* (Berlin, FRG), **15**, 3 (1987), 226–36.

Leading German Germanists classify the auxiliary verb *werden* as a modal, one of the strongest supporting arguments being that potential modal adverbials more frequently combine with the future tense (*werden* + inf.) than with the present tense in utterances with future time reference (Brons-Albert,

Vater). An investigation of approximately 60000 dialogue utterances in recent bestsellers and telephone conversations leads to the rejection of this position. Potential modal adverbials co-occur in most cases with the present tense.

Translation

88–252 Gross, Maurice (U. of Paris). La traduction automatique: bilan des descriptions en course. [Automatic translation: assessment of current research.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number 8/9 (1987), 40–8.

The problems posed by translating by machine are examined and research attempts to solve them are

described. Detailed syntactical and lexical analysis is seen as a prerequisite for automatic translation.

Existing dictionaries are incomplete and suit human users, not computers. Many words whose meanings are obvious are missed out. Recently created words, in areas such as data processing, are also missing. New dictionaries need to be compiled and kept up to date. The problems of syntax are described in relation to the French language. The study has assessed 12000 verbs so far. Other parts of

speech have yet to be attempted, but the difficulties involved are evaluated, with particular regard to compound words. An inventory of technical terms needs to be made; here, again, there is the problem of compound words.

It is concluded that there are so many difficulties and so much work still to be done, that it will be a long time before translation by machine is a reality.

88-253 Lederer, Marianne (U. of Paris III). La théorie interprétative de la traduction. [The interpretative theory of translation.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **211** (1987), 11-17.

The interpretative theory defines the aim of translation as the production of a text which has the same effect cognitively and emotionally on the reader as the original text had on its readers. It is a process which transcends the narrowly linguistic and in which the knowledge and understanding which the translator brings to translation are crucial. Between an initial stage of comprehension of the

message and a final stage of reconstruction of the text in the new language, lies an intermediate wordless stage of awareness of the author's intentions – these stages can be more clearly distinguished in simultaneous oral interpretation. The key to successful translation is the interpretative process within the mind of the translator.

88-254 Sager, J. C. (U. of Manchester Inst. of Science and Technology). Automation in translation. *Modern Languages* (London), **68**, 2 (1987), 128-33.

This article reports on increasing automation in translation, which has led to greater choice concerning both the final product and working methods. At the Commission of the European Communities, with probably the largest translation department in Europe, the reader can select from three types of machine translation output: a raw translation obtained almost immediately from a computer, output which has been edited rapidly by a translator, or output which has been checked, corrected, typed, and returned by conventional means. A fourth option is the text prepared by a translator. Working methods, too, offer several choices. A translator may choose to use a machine translation system and edit the output, or do a conventional, but possibly time-consuming translation. In addition, he has at his disposal an extensive specialised technical dictionary. As a result, he is able

to provide a diversified product with various combinations of speed, quality, and reader requirements.

New systems benefit increasingly from research into the translation process, and translation studies now belong to an interdisciplinary field which includes information science, computational linguistics, and lexicography. Increasing automation has caused professional translators to diversify in expertise in fields such as printing, publishing, and marketing in order to provide a complete language service from conception to the finished product.

The article concludes with a progress report on research projects at the Centre for Computational Linguistics at UMIST, two in machine translation and one in the creation of automated technical dictionaries.