

Descriptive studies of particular languages English

93–381 Gupta, Anthea Fraser. The pragmatic particles of Singapore Colloquial English. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **18**, 1 (1992), 31–57.

Eleven pragmatic particles, loans from Southern varieties of Chinese, are used in Singapore Colloquial English. They express varying degrees of commitment to an utterance, and can be arranged on a single scale of assertiveness. They fall into three main groups: contradictory, assertive, and tentative. This paper uses data from natural conversation in the home, from, between, and with children acquiring Singapore Colloquial English as a native language. The pragmatic particles are acquired early and without error.

Previous analyses of the Singapore Colloquial English particles suggest that analysts disagree on the functions of the particles. Each particle appears to have a wide range of multiple functions. These apparently disparate functions can be reconciled if the pragmatic particles are examined in terms of a system of marking degree of assertion, which results in different functions when the same particle is used in sentences of different types. No pragmatic particle in Singapore Colloquial English is associated with only one sentence type.

93–382 Andrews, Barry (Macquarie U., Australia). Aspect in past tenses in English and French. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **30**, 4 (1992), 281–97.

The question of aspect in past tenses of English and French verbs is inadequately treated in most grammars, which even if they describe the main ‘values’ of each tense form, certainly do not sufficiently stress (i) the importance of the notion of aspect, and (ii) the fact that the linguistic systems of English and French differ greatly in their capacity to express aspect through verb forms. French has one form that is used for perfective situations, and a separate form that accounts for all non-perfective, i.e. imperfective situations, and this distinction holds good for all verbs. However this apparently straightforward situation is complicated by the way French can combine lexical aspect with verbal

aspect; for instance, it is possible for punctual verbs, which are inherently perfective, to be used with the endings of the *imparfait* to refer to an imperfective situation, while the same verbs can be used with the same endings in narrative contexts (= *l'imparfait pittoresque*) to express a ‘perfective’ meaning. To render the first case English must use a form that is imperfective in meaning, while for the second case it would use the Simple Past to convey the perfective aspect. There is seldom a single case where form and aspectual function correspond exactly in English and French, which of course causes many problems for learners of the two languages.

French

93–383 Chevalier, Gisèle (U. of Moncton). Le nom et la modalisation. [Nouns and modality.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **13**, 2 (1991), 51–68.

Recent studies on modality show that the speaker’s relationship to what he/she says (certainty, doubt, approval, etc.) is marked more by the terms which introduce the statement than by the mood of the verb. These terms can be verbs (*he claims that...*), adjectives (*it is unfortunate that...*), adverbs

(*surely...*), or nouns (*the idea that...*). The role of this latter class is often understated. This study attempts to clarify the role of nouns in modality and compares this role to that of the other classes. The presence of different modal qualifiers in a number of journalistic texts is also considered.

93–384 Saint-Gelais, Yves and others (U. of Quebec at Chicoutimi). Le fonctionnement de l’anaphore démonstrative dans le texte scientifique. [The function of lexical demonstrative anaphora in scientific texts.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **13**, 2 (1991), 95–111.

This study is part of a research project examining the linguistic and discourse features of scientific

texts. Here the focus is on the demonstrative as discourse connector in texts published by acknow-

ledged researchers and in texts produced by university students in their science courses. The published texts serve to provide a model for assessing students' ability to use the demonstrative for anaphoric reference. Reference problems arising in the students' texts reveal a lack of mastery of the discourse strategies involved. The use of *ceci* and *cela*

(*this* and *that*) as virtual reference forms in the student productions illustrates this point. A study of the lexical demonstrative anaphora of the type *le N...ce N* (*the N...this N*) and *le N₁...ce N₂* (*the N₁...this N₂*) points to further linguistic and discourse skills that may not be part of the students' competence.

Japanese

93–385 Hendry, Joy. Honorifics as dialect: the expression and manipulation of boundaries in Japanese. *Multilingua* (Berlin), **11**, 4 (1992), 341–354.

The paper addresses the question of change in the use of honorifics in Japanese, to some extent parallel to changes in European languages. Derived from a social anthropological study using participant observation in the world of housewives, the paper works with collective ideas about the classification of people through observations of language use to make direct comparisons between honorifics and

the use of local dialect. Both serve to express social boundaries within a society which is too often described as homogeneous, and while honorifics are still concerned with power relations, they may be used as much to express allegiance to informally ranked social groups as to identify individual differences of status.

Translation

93–386 Stansfield, Charles W. (Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC) and others. The measurement of translation ability. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **76**, 4 (1992), 455–67.

A project designed to measure the ability to translate from Spanish to English was carried out for the FBI at the Center for Applied Linguistics. FBI linguists are required to work on texts concerning narcotics, terrorism, theft, etc. Texts involve everyday and technical language.

Preliminary tests revealed that some translators working into their mother tongue produced translations which were grammatically correct but inaccurate in terms of content, while others working into their second language produced translations which were accurate in terms of content but grammatically incorrect. It was, therefore, decided to assess form and content separately.

Results revealed that regardless of whether translators were working into English or Spanish, accuracy levels of form and content do not necessarily correlate. Both form and content were found to be valid measures of translating ability, but of the two accuracy of content appeared to be more reliable. Levels of proficiency in both languages influenced the quality of translation. Knowledge of Spanish (source language) tended to influence accuracy of content, while knowledge of English (target language) influenced accuracy of form.