

## Language description and use

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### DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES OF PARTICULAR LANGUAGES ENGLISH

**86–585 Cannon, Garland.** Functional shift in English. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **23**, 3 (1985), 411–31.

This data-based paper is based on a more extensive semantic and linguistic analysis of the main entries in the two Barnhart dictionaries of new words and new meanings and of Merriam's 9,000 *Words* (a hardcover expansion of the 1981 Addenda section to the newly reprinted *Webster's Third*). It categorises and describes the 567 functional shifts in the total corpus of 13,804 written items, in terms of a review of the literature (including scholars like Jespersen, Poutsma, Krusinga, Marchand, and Quirk, who have written extensively on functional shifts), and of what the features and parameters of these shifts mean to change in the English language. It considers the structures, inflections, and other formal features of the items converted, as well as borrowings since 1825, labels like *slang*, duplication in both a Barnhart book and Merriam (and the new *OED Supplement*), syntactic constraints, semantic parameters, form class, etc. By comparing percentages of other categories (like semantic shift, back-formation, abbreviations, borrowings, blends, etc.), it assesses the role and efficacy of functional shift in written English today as a means of adding new items to the lexicon, within a context of the history of functional shift in English. There is no two-type conversion today, and there is a rather high proportion of slang items. Conversion is quite productive, including many unrecorded oral items, but is contributing only 4% of the new written items.

### FRENCH

**86–586 Fink, Robert.** French adjective morphophonemic patterns: their generalisation and representation. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **23**, 4 (1985), 567–96.

This study investigates the validity and predictive value of two competing linguistic analyses of the morphophonemics of French adjective gender by means of an experiment administered to monolingual speakers of French ranging in age from three years to adulthood. A nonce-word technique was used in which subjects were required to vary novel adjectives for gender as well as to derive related verbs in two different types of situation, one an interactive communicative one and the other a metalinguistic one. The amount of rule use and generalisation differed significantly in the two situations, with few adjectives being varied for gender in the communicative situation, thus leading to the conclusion that language learners do not represent their linguistic

knowledge in terms of a homogeneous, integrated grammar based on maximal generalisation. Therefore neither analysis adequately accounts for the subjects' behaviour. Rather, the data support the notion of two parallel representational systems, one overlaid upon the other, with access to one or the other being determined by sociocultural factors. The failure of subjects to generalise and apply apparently exceptionless morphophonemic rules in the communicative situation is explained in terms of the dominance of morphological patterning over morphophonemic patterning.

## SPANISH

**86–587 Lipski, John M.** Creole Spanish and vestigial Spanish: evolutionary parallels. *Linguistics* (The Hague), 23, 6 (1985), 963–84.

Structural similarities among (Africanised) creole Spanish dialects, from the 15th century to the present day, have led to hypotheses of common origin and/or mutual influence. This study examines the opposite phenomenon, vestigial or 'dying' Spanish, in areas free from direct African influence (Trinidad; St Bernard Parish, Louisiana; the Philippines; vestigial Cuban, Mexican, and Puerto Rican Spanish in the United States) and demonstrates the existence of significant parallels in terms of syntactic, morphological, and phonological evolution. Parallels include partial neutralisation of nominal and verbal inflection, reduction of prepositional usage, and reduction in the use of articles. These similarities are explained through the existence of parallel configurations of imperfect language learning, and it is suggested that monogenetic theories of Hispanic creole formation be tempered by the possibility of spontaneous generation in geographically separated areas, using quasi-universal patterns of 'semi-Spanish'.

**86–588 Patterson, William T.** Lexical borrowings in Spanish: function, length, genealogy and chronology. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), 42, 3 (1986), 629–34.

Lexical borrowings account for more than 41 % of the basic Spanish vocabulary. Latin contributes the greatest number of loan words, followed by French, Italian, Greek, and Arabic. The language has also been enriched by words from Provençal and Catalan. Latinisms continued to exert a great influence on the lexicon until the 16th century. The Renaissance opened the Spanish language to numerous outside influences, especially to Italian. All the borrowed words comprise 24 % of the first 500 words (based on frequency) and 35 % of the first 1000 words. This study is part of a broader investigation of the fundamental properties (functional, physical, statistical, genealogical, chronological) of the first 5000 Spanish words, established by Juilland and Chang-Rodriguez in their *Frequency dictionary of Spanish words*.

## TRANSLATION

**86–589** **Dániel, Ágnes.** Equivalence en matière de traduction. [Equivalence in translation.] *Acta Linguistica* (Budapest), **34**, 1/2 (1984), 107–33.

Brief passages from longer texts of differing types are analysed by means of schematic diagrams in order to bring out their underlying structure and identify potential problems for the translator. The translations are then studied in order to ascertain how successfully the intention of the original has been conveyed. The principal languages involved are Hungarian and French.

Where an expression in the original has no real equivalent in the target language or if the original itself is deficient in some way, the translator has to find a solution, perhaps by explaining or paraphrasing or creating a new term, always bearing in mind the nature of the text and the public envisaged, which may differ in the case of the target language from that envisaged for the original work. The translator's art does not consist of an attempt to unite irreconcilable opposites. It is, rather, a question of compensating for certain inevitable losses by the application of an appropriate and consistently applied strategy of translation. Equivalence in translation implies that every facet of the original can be traced in the new version in the target language. [Appendix gives two of the texts studied.]