

A MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

BY

OTTO JESPERSEN

PART V

SYNTAX. FOURTH VOLUME

EJNAR MUNKSGAARD

COPENHAGEN 1940

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Preface.

Volume I of this work appeared in 1909, II in 1914, III in 1927 (with an Appendix to vol. II), IV in 1931, and now vol. V appears in 1940. It will be seen that my Grammar has come out with many interruptions: the intervals have been filled up with other works, thus between II and III "Negation in English and Other Languages" 1917, "Language, its Nature, Development and Origin" 1922, "The Philosophy of Grammar" 1924, "Mankind, Nation and Individual" 1925, and between IV and V "Essentials of English Grammar" 1933 (4th impression 1938), "Linguistica" 1933, and "Analytic Syntax" 1937, not to mention various books in Danish, my British Academy lecture on Monosyllabism 1929, five SPE tracts and several papers in Danish and foreign periodicals.

But though this Grammar has thus been interrupted for several long periods, my work on it has gone on continually, my drawers filling constantly with quotations and observations for use in future instalments. When looking through the manuscript of this volume before sending it to the printers I cut out hundreds of quotations, and I am afraid I should have omitted many of those that were left. My consolation is that I have often been assured by fellow-students that they were glad to have so many quotations in the previous

volumes, and I may perhaps hope the same will prove true of this volume, especially with regard to illustrations of unorthodox grammar.

In my endeavours to place grammatical phenomena in a true light I have been obliged to discard some of the traditional terms such as "absolute construction" and replace them with really descriptive terms, but I trust that my innovations will cause no serious trouble.

I may repeat here some passages from previous prefaces. "It has been my endeavour in this work to represent English Grammar not as a set of stiff dogmatic precepts, according to which some things are correct and others absolutely wrong, but as something living and developing under continual fluctuations and undulations, something that is founded on the past and prepares the way for the future, something that is not always consistent or perfect, but progressing and perfectible — in one word, human" (Vol. I). "I may remind British and American readers that it is not my business to tell them what is correct or pure English, but only to register and, if possible, to explain the actual facts of English usage in various periods. But it is my impression that it would be a good thing if what might be called a Grammar of Relativity could be everywhere substituted for the Grammar of Rigidity taught in most schools all over the world" (Vol. III). "The arrangement of grammatical matter is sometimes extremely difficult on account of the numerous cross-associations which determine the structure of a language" (Vol. II). I take here one instance only of this: the infinitive as adjunct belongs under the theory of adjuncts (Vol. II) as well as under the theory of infinitives (Vol. V). Similar examples are frequent; overlappings are inevitable and have necessitated a great

many cross-references to other chapters and other volumes. But in taking up again matters previously dealt with I have been able to avail myself of new material and sometimes of new points of view as well.

Many chapters of a big volume of Morphology, written partly by myself, partly by three young scholars on the basis of the material collected by me during fifty years are nearly ready for printing. A few instalments of my work have already appeared, on the ending *-ster* in *Modern Language Review* 1927 (and *Linguistica*), on back-formations in *ESTn* vol. 70, 1935, and on *-en* in *Acta Linguistica* 1939.

As I have not the same instinctive feeling for English usage as a native, I have often been obliged to consult English friends. To these I offer my best thanks, as well as to three successive English lecturers in the University of Copenhagen, Ian Maxwell, F. Y. Thompson, and A. F. Colborn, who have each of them read some of my chapters and offered me much valuable information and criticism. (But some parts of the book have not been thus revised.) I owe a debt of gratitude also to Niels Haislund, who has transcribed most of the manuscript and now has assisted me in reading the proofs very carefully. I am also indebted to the printers for the rapidity and care with which they have set up my work.

Last, but not least, I must thank the directors of the Carlsberg Foundation, who by their generous subvention have enabled me to pay my assistants and to have this volume printed in my own country at a time when it would have been impossible to print it in any of the belligerent countries.

Lundehave, Helsingør (Elsinore), in March 1940.

Otto Jespersen.

Additions to the List of Abbreviations in vol. IV.

(Several books of ephemeral interest, quoted only a few
times each, are not included in this list).

AF = Anglo-French.

Allen A = Hervey Allen, Anthony Adverse. L 1934.

AmSp = American Speech (Periodical). Baltimore 1925 ff.

AnalS(ynt) = Otto Jespersen, Analytic Syntax. Copenhagen
1937.

BDS = My Best Detective Story (Anthology). L 1931.

Carlyle E = Thomas Carlyle, Essays. Blackie & Son. L.

FR = — The French Revolution. Nelson. L.

Chesterton D = Gilbert K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens.

T = — The Man Who was Thursday.

Christie Cards = Agatha Christie, Cards on the Table. L 1936.

LE = — Lord Edgware Dies. L 1933.

3A = — Three-Act Tragedy. Albatross 1935.

Benson D2 = E. F. Benson, Dodo the Second. T.

DB = — David Blaize. L n. d.

Bentley O = E. C. Bentley, Trent's Own Case. L 1936.

BJo Gr = Ben Jonson, Grammar.

P = — The Poetaster, ed. J. H. Penniman.
Boston 1913.

Brett Young PC = Brett Young, Portrait of Clare. L 1929.

Burke Am = Burke, Speech on Conciliation with America.
Ed. Hammond Lamont. Boston 1898.

Crofts Ch = Freeman Wills Crofts, The Cheyne Mystery.

G = — Inspector French's
Greatest Case.

St = — The Starvel Tragedy.

All in Inspector French's Case Book. L n. d.

Cronin C = A. J. Cronin, *The Citadel*. L 1938.

H = — *The Hatter's Castle*. L 1931.

Curme S = G. O. Curme, *Syntax (A Grammar of the Engl. Lang. III)*. Boston 1931.

Decker, read Dekker.

Di Am. Notes = Charles Dickens, *American Notes*. Everyman.

Dickinson in Forster, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson. L 1934.

Galsw EC(h) = John Galsworthy, *End of the Chapter*. L 1935.

FCh = — *On Forsyte 'Change*. L 1930.

FS = — *The Forsyte Saga*. L 1925.

MW = — *Maid in Waiting*. L 1931.

Tat = — *Tatterdemalion*. L 1920.

Gamelyn = *The Tale of Gamelyn*. Ed. Skeat. Oxf. 1884.

Gibbs BR = Philip Gibbs, *Blood Relations*. L

Graves IC = Robert Graves, *I, Claudius*. L 1936.

Greene J4 = Robert Greene, *James the Fourth in Manly's Specimens*.

GS = Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*. Lpz.

Earle M = John Earle, *Micro-cosmographie* (L 1628). Arber.

EK = Otto Jespersen, *Studier over engelske kasus*. København 1891.

EStn = *Englische Studien* (Periodical). Lpz.

ESts = *English Studies* (Periodical). Amsterdam.

Ford = John Ford, ed. Havelock Ellis in *Mermaid Series*. L.

Forster = John Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*. Chapman and Hall.

Freeman Th = R. Austin Freeman, Dr. Thorndyke. L. n. d.

Froude RC = James Anthony Froude, *Relations with Carlyle*.

Hankin = St. J. Hankin, *Three Plays*. L 1927.

Harpfield M = Harpfield's *Life of More*. E.E.T.S. 186. L 1932.

Harris Shaw = Frank Harris, *Bernard Shaw*. L 1931.

Hemingway FA = Ernest Hemingway, *Farewell to Arms*. Penguin.

AHuxley PCP = Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point*. L 1931.

Juliana = Juliana, ed. William Strunk. Boston 1904.

Karpf Sch = Fritz Karpf, *Syntax in den Werken Chaucers*. Wien 1930.

- Kemp N(ine)DW = Kemps Nine Daies Wonder (1600), ed. Dyce 1840.
- Kipling DW = Rudyard Kipling, *The Day's Work*. T. V = Collected Verse. N.Y. 1917.
- Kyd = *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, ed. Boas. L 1901 (page).
- Lang Ban & AB = Andrew Lang, *Ban and Arrière Ban*. L 1894.
- Locke CA = William J. Locke, *The Coming of Amos*. L 1924.
- HB = — *House of Baltazar*. L 1920.
- LondE = *A Book of London English 1384—1425*, ed. R. W. Chambers and M. Daunt. Oxf. 1931.
- Lyly E = John Lyly, *Euphues*. Arber.
- Macaulay WH = Thomas B. Macaulay, *Warren Hastings*. L. n. d.
- Macdonell E = A. G. Macdonell, *England, Their England*. Albatross 1934.
- Mannin ChE = Ethel Mannin, *Children of the Earth*. Penguin.
- Conf = — *Confessions and Impressions*. L 1932.
- M = — *The Magician*. L 1931.
- RS = — *Rose and Sylvie*. L 1938.
- W = — *Women also Dream*. L 1937.
- Maugham AK = W. Somerset Maugham, *Ah King*. L 1933.
- Alt = — *Altogether (Collected Stories)*. L 1934.
- C = — *Cakes and Ale*. L 1930.
- FPS = — *Six Stories Written in the First Person Singular*. L 1931.
- HB = — *Of Human Bondage*. L 1929.
- MS = — *The Moon and Sixpence*. T.
- Pl = — *Plays 1—4*. T.
- Maxw(ell) ChNight = W. B. Maxwell, *Children of the Night*. L 1925.

XIV Additions to the List of Abbreviations.

Maxw(ell) HR	=	W. B. Maxwell, Himself and Mr. Raikes.
		T.
ML	=	— A Man and his Lesson.
		L 1919.
WF	=	— We Forget Because We
		Must. T.

Medwin S = T. Medwin, Life of Shelley, ed. Buxton Forman.
Oxf. 1913.

Mitford OV = Mary Russell Mitford, Our Village. L 1906.

Moore EW = George Moore, Esther Waters. Penguin.

Orrm = The Ormulum, ed. R. Holt 1878.

Peacock M = Peacock's Memoirs of Shelley. Ed. Brett-Smith.
L 1909.

PhilGr = Otto Jespersen, The Philosophy of Grammar. L
1924.

Priestley A = J. B. Priestley, Adam in Moonshine. L 1927.

AP = — Angel Pavement.

F = — Faraway. L 1932.

Russell Ed = Bertrand Russell, On Education. L 1926.

FO = — Freedom and Organisation.
L 1934.

SE = — Sceptical Essays. L 1928.

SR (or SocReconstr) = — Principles of Social Re-
construction. L 1917.

Sayers GN = Dorothy M. Sayers, Gaudy Night. L 1935.

NT = — The Nine Tailors. Albatross 1934.

UnnD = — Unnatural Death. L
1935.

Scott O or OM = Walter Scott, Old Mortality. Oxf. 1906.

Selden = John Selden, Table Talk (1689). Arber.

Shaw Ms = George Bernard Shaw, Misalliance, The Dark
Lady, Fanny's First Play.
L 1914.

TT = — Too True to be Good. T.

Sherriff F = R. C. Sherriff, A Fortnight in September. T.

Sitwell M = Miracle on Sinai. Albatross 1934.

Southey L = Robert Southey, Letters, ed. Fitzgerald. Oxf.
1912.

Stephen L = Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen. L 1906.

Sterne M = Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*. MM 1911.

Towneley = *The Towneley Plays*. Ed. George England. E.E. T.S. 1897.

Walpole Cp = Hugh Walpole, *Captives*. L 1920.

RH = — *Rogue Herries*. L 1930.

Wells EA = H. G. Wells, *An Experiment in Autobiography*. L 1934.

Inv = — *The Invisible Man*. L 1924.

OH = — *Outline of History*. L 1920.

U = — *Modern Utopia*. L 1905.

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Chapter I.

Introductory.

1.1. My grammatical system has not sprung ready-made at once from my brain. It has developed gradually and, though in its essential features unchanged, has been modified in minor points, as has also my terminology, which in several points deviates from what is generally accepted. The chief stages in this development are found in the following works: *Sprogets logik* 1913, *A Modern English Grammar*, vol. II 1914, *De to hovedarter av grammatiske forbindelser* 1921, *The Philosophy of Grammar* 1924, *Essentials of English Grammar* 1933, *The System of Grammar* 1933 (also as part of *Linguistica*), *Analytic Syntax* 1937. Some points have also been touched upon in vols. III and IV of my *Grammar*, 1927 and 1931.

As some of my views have been, partly misunderstood, partly even misrepresented (e. g. by Funke in *Englische Studien* vol. 60 and by Ehrling in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 1939) it will not be amiss here briefly to recapitulate my system in what I have no doubt will be its final shape.

I think we must keep strictly apart three things, which present, it is true, certain points of similarity, but which are nevertheless three distinct planes, as it were, and should not be mixed up, as is too often done. I call them here **A**, **B**, and **C**.

1.21. **A**. *Word-classes*, or, as is often said, *Parts of Speech*. Here my classification deviates but little from

that found in most grammars. I maintain that everything should be kept in view, form, function and meaning, though form is here, perhaps, the fundamental criterion. Thus I arrive at distinguishing nouns (with the subclasses substantives and adjectives), verbs, and particles, which latter class comprises adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions, prepositions being essentially adverbs governing nouns, and conjunctions being essentially adverbs governing clauses. Besides these classes we have pronouns, which form what the Danish grammarian Wiwel terms a "tværklasse", a "transverse" class running as it were across the distinction of substantives, adjectives, and adverbs. And finally we have interjections, capable of forming a sentence by themselves, which is done by the other words only exceptionally. All these classes are difficult to define sharply and exhaustively, pronouns more than the others; nevertheless in practice the classification itself rarely offers occasion for doubt.

1.2a. In distinguishing substantives and adjectives we meet for the first time the notion of *specialization*, for I point out that in those cases in which we have words of the two classes corresponding to one another, e. g. *American* sb. (with the plural *Americans*) and adj., *Spaniard* and *Spanish*, *black* sb. (with the pl. *blacks*) and adj., *philosopher* and *philosophic*, the former denotes more special ideas than the latter. As the notions denoted by substantives comprise generally more qualities than one and are thus more "substantial" than those covered by adjectives, which single out one quality possessed by a greater number of things, I maintain that substantives are "on the whole" and "broadly" (this restriction found in PhilGr 75 and 81, is often overlooked) more special than adjectives. There is, as expressly indicated (ib. 75), an important exception to this rule, namely nexus-substantives, whether verbal such as *arrival* or adjectival such as *pride* or *cleverness*.

These are words *sui generis* and make difficulties whatever view we may hold of the principle of classification.

While A deals with isolated words—a dictionary indicates whether a word is a substantive or an adjective, etc.—the planes B and C deal with words in connected speech.

1.31. B. Junction, i. e. a combination of words which does not denote predication, but which serves to make what we are speaking about more precise. Here we meet with the distinction of ranks. A *very poor widow* contains a tertiary (*very*), a secondary (*poor*) and a primary (*widow*); corresponding examples are *extremely cold weather*, *a furiously barking dog*. In other combinations we may have quaternaries or quinaries, e. g. *a not (5) particularly (4) well (3) constructed (2) plot (1)*.

But though in these examples the substantives are primaries, the adjectives secondaries, and the adverbs tertiaries or belong to still lower ranks, the distinction has nothing to do with word-classes as such. A substantive may in some combinations be a secondary (*class prejudices*) or a tertiary (*we travel third class*); an adjective may be a primary (*the brave deserve the fair*), and an adverb occasionally figures as a secondary (*the above remarks*). Similarly with pronouns (see vol. II ch. XVI, which should have the superscription Ranks of Pronouns instead of Functions of Pronouns): some pronouns are always primaries, e. g. *I, me, who*, others may according to circumstances have different rank; *the* is secondary in *the book*, tertiary in *so much the better*: *this* is primary in *this is good*, secondary in *this book*: *any* is a primary in *you may take any of them*, a secondary in *any book* and a tertiary in *is this any better?*, and a quaternary in *Is that any less true than the opposite?*

The distinction of rank applies not only to single words, but also to word-groups: *after dinner* is a secondary in *his after-dinner pipe*, and a tertiary in *he*