RANDOLPH QUIRK

A GRAMMAR OF

SIDNEY GREENBAUM

CONTEMPORARY

GEOFFREY LEECH

ENGLISH

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PREFACE

The first attempts at producing a grammar of English were made when there were less than ten million speakers of English in the world, almost all of them living within 100 miles or so of London. Grammars of English have gone on being written during the intervening 400 years reflecting a variety (and growing complexity) of needs, while speakers of English have multiplied several hundredfold and dispersed themselves so that the language has achieved a uniquely wide spread throughout the world and, with that, a unique importance.

We make no apology for adding one more to the succession of English grammars. In the first place, though fairly brief synopses are common enough, there have been very few attempts at so comprehensive a coverage as is offered in the present work. Fewer still in terms of synchronic description. And none at all so comprehensive or in such depth has been produced within an English-speaking country. Moreover, our *Grammar* aims at this comprehensiveness and depth in treating English irrespective of frontiers: our field is no less than the grammar of educated English current in the second half of the twentieth century in the world's major English-speaking communities. Only where a feature belongs specifically to British usage or American usage, to informal conversation or to the dignity of formal writing, are 'labels' introduced in the description to show that we are no longer discussing the 'common core' of educated English.

For this common core, as well as for the special varieties surrounding it, we have augmented our own experience as speakers and teachers of the language with research on corpora of contemporary English and on data from elicitation tests, in both cases making appropriate use of facilities available in our generation for bringing spoken English fully within the grammarian's scope. For reasons of simplicity and economic presentation, however, illustrative examples from our basic material are seldom given without being adapted and edited; and while informal and familiar styles of speech and writing receive due consideration in our treatment, we put the main emphasis on describing the English of serious exposition.

When work on this *Grammar* began, the four collaborators were all on the staff of the English Department, University College London, and jointly involved in the Survey of English Usage. This association has happily survived a dispersal which has put considerable distances between us (at the extremes, the 5000 miles between Wisconsin and Europe). Common research goals would thus have kept us in close touch even without a rather large unified undertaking to complete. And

though physical separation has made collaboration more arduous and time-consuming, it has also – we console ourselves in retrospect – conferred positive benefits. For example, we have been able to extend our linguistic horizons by contact with linguists bred in several different traditions; and our ideas have been revised and improved by exposure to far more richly varied groups of students than would have been possible in any one centre.

It will be obvious that our grammatical framework has drawn heavily both on the long-established tradition and on the insights of several contemporary schools of linguistics. But while we have taken account of modern linguistic theory to the extent that we think justifiable in a grammar of this kind, we have not felt that this was the occasion for detailed discussion of theoretical issues. Nor do we see need to justify the fact that we subscribe to no specific one of the current or recently formulated linguistic theories. Each of those propounded from the time of de Saussure and Jespersen onwards has its undoubted merits, and several (notably the transformational-generative approaches) have contributed very great stimulus to us as to other grammarians. None, however, seems yet adequate to account for all linguistic phenomena, and recent trends suggest that our own compromise position is a fair reflection of the way in which the major theories are responding to influence from others.

As well as such general debt to our students, our contemporaries, our teachers and our teachers' teachers, there are specific debts to numerous colleagues and friends which we are happy to acknowledge even if we cannot hope to repay. Five linguists generously undertook the heavy burden of reading and criticizing a preliminary draft of the entire book: Dwight L. Bolinger, Bengt Jacobsson, Ruth M. Kempson, Edward Hirschland and Paul Portland. His many friends who have been fortunate enough to receive comments on even a short research paper will have some idea of how much we have profited from Professor Bolinger's deep learning, keen intellect, incredible facility for producing the devastating counter-example, and – by no means least – readiness to give selflessly of his time. The other four critics had qualities of this same kind and (for example) many of our most telling illustrations come from the invaluable files assembled by Dr Jacobsson over many years of meticulous scholarship.

Colleagues working on the Survey of English Usage have of course been repeatedly involved in giving advice and criticism; we are glad to take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to Valerie Adams and Derek Davy, Judith Perryman, Florent Aarts and Michael Black, as also to Cindy Kapsos and Pamela Miller. For help with specific parts, we are grateful to Ross Almqvist and Ulla Thagg (Chapters 3, 4 and 12), Jacquelyn Biel (especially Chapters 5 and 8), Peter Fries (Chapter 9),

A. C. Gimson (Appendix II) and Michael Riddle (Appendix III). The research and writing have been supported in part by grants from HM Department of Education and Science, the Leverhulme Trust, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Longman Group, the Graduate School Research Committee of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the University of Göteborg, the University of Lund and University College London.

For what Fredson Bowers has called 'authorial fair copy expressing final intention', the publisher received from us something more resembling the manuscript of Killigrew's *Conspiracy* in 1638: a 'Foul Draught' full of 'Corrections, Expungings, and Additions'. We owe it largely to Peggy Drinkwater's unswerving concentration that this has been transformed into orderly print.

March 1972

RQ SG GL JS

SYMBOLS AND TECHNICAL CONVENTIONS

Since our use of symbols, abbreviations, bracketing and the like follows the practice in most works of linguistics, all that we need here is a visual summary of the main types of convention with a brief explanation or a reference to where fuller information is given.

AmE, BrE:
American English, British English (*cf* Chapter 1.19 *ff*).

S, V, O, C, A, O_i etc:
See Chapter 2.3 *ff*, 3.9 *f*; when italicized, strings of these symbols refer to the clause types explained in Chapter 7.2 *ff*.

a BÈTter ˈone:
Capitals in examples indicate *nuclear* syllables, and accents indicate the *intonation*, and verticals indicate *stress*: see Appendix II.3 *ff*, 12.

when DO is used:
Capitals in description indicate basic forms abstracted from the set of morphological variants ('we *do*', 'she *does*', 'they *did*', . . .)

*a more better one:
A preceding asterisk indicates an unacceptable structure.

?they seem fools:
A preceding question mark indicates doubtful acceptability; combined with an asterisk it suggests virtual unacceptability.

Help me (to) write:
Parentheses indicate optional items.

Help me with my work [42]
Bracketed numerals appear after examples when required for cross-reference.

4.37; App I.12:
Cross-references to material other than examples are given by chapter (or appendix) and section number.

Bolinger (1971a):
References to other published work (see 2.27) are expanded in the Bibliography, *pp* 1085 *ff*.

He came $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{to}\\\text{from}\end{matrix}\right\}\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{London}\\\text{New York}\end{matrix}\right\}$
Curved braces indicate free alternatives.

$\begin{bmatrix}\text{He}\\\text{She}\end{bmatrix}$ does $\begin{bmatrix}\text{his}\\\text{her}\end{bmatrix}$ best:

Square brackets indicate contingent alternatives; *eg* selection of the top one in the first pair entails selection of the top one in the second also.

{His [expensive (house insurance)]}:

Contrasting brackets can be used to give a linear indication of hierarchical structure.

[ɸju] 'phew':

Square brackets enclose phonetic symbols; the IPA conventions are followed (*cf* Jones (1969), *pp* xxxii *ff*).

/justə/ 'used to':

Slants enclose phonemic transcription, with conventions generally as in Jones (1969) and Kenyon and Knott (1953), but the following should be noted:

/e/ as in *best*, /ɪ/ *bid*, /i/ *beat*, /ɒ/ *hot*, /ɔ/ *law*, /ɑ/ *father*, /ʊ/ *full*, /u/ *fool*, /ɜ(r)/ *bird*, parentheses here denoting the possibility (*eg* in AmE) of 'postvocalic *r*'.

CONTENTS

ONE
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The importance of English

Criteria of 'importance'

1.1

English is the world's most important language. Even at a time when such a statement is taken as a long-standing truism, it is perhaps worthwhile to glance briefly at the basis on which it is made. There are, after all, thousands of different languages in the world, and it is in the nature of language that each one seems uniquely important to those who speak it as their native language – that is, their first (normally sole) tongue: the language they acquired at their mother's knee. But there are more objective standards of relative importance.

One criterion is the number of native speakers that a language happens to have. A second is the extent to which a language is geographically dispersed: in how many continents and countries is it used or is a knowledge of it necessary? A third is its 'vehicular load': to what extent is it a medium for a science or literature or other highly regarded cultural manifestation – including 'way of life'? A fourth is the economic and political influence of those who speak it as 'their own' language.

1.2

None of these is trivial but not all would unambiguously identify English. Indeed the first would make English a very poor second to Chinese (which has double the number of speakers) and would put English not appreciably in front of Hindi-Urdu. The second clearly makes English a front runner but also invites consideration of Hebrew, Latin and Arabic, for example, as languages used in major world religions, though only the last mentioned would be thought of in connection with the first criterion. By the third criterion, the great literatures of the Orient spring to mind, not to mention the languages of Tolstoy, Goethe, Cervantes and Racine. But in addition to being the language of the analogous Shakespeare, English scores as being the primary medium for twentieth-century science and technology. The fourth criterion invokes Japanese, Russian and German, for example, as languages of powerful, productive and influential communities. But English is the language of the United States which – to take one crude but objective measure – has a larger 'Gross National Product' (both in total and in relation to the population) than any other country in the world. Indeed the combined GNP of the USA, Canada and Britain is 50 per cent higher than that of the remaining OECD countries (broadly speaking, continental Europe plus Japan) put together: *cf* Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Main Economic Indicators*, June 1971.

What emerges strikingly about English is that by any of the criteria it

is prominent, by some it is pre-eminent, and by a combination of the four it is superlatively outstanding. Notice that no claim has been made for the importance of English on the grounds of its 'quality' as a language (the size of its vocabulary, the alleged flexibility of its syntax). It has been rightly said that the choice of an international language, or lingua franca, is never based on linguistic or aesthetic criteria but always on political, economic and demographic ones.

Native, second, and foreign language

1.3

English is the world's most widely used language. It is useful to distinguish three primary categories of use: as a *native* language, as a *second* language, and as a *foreign* language. English is spoken as a native language by nearly three hundred million people: in the United States, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Caribbean and South Africa, without mentioning smaller countries or smaller pockets of native English speakers (for example in Rhodesia and Kenya). In several of these countries, English is not the sole language: the Quebec province of Canada is French-speaking, much of South Africa is Afrikaans-speaking, and for many Irish and Welsh people, English is not the native language. But for these Welsh, Irish, Québecois and Afrikaners, English will even so be a *second* language: that is, a language necessary for certain official, social, commercial or educational activities within their own country. This second-language function is more noteworthy, however, in a long list of countries where only a small proportion of the people have English as their native language: India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kenya and many other Commonwealth countries and former British territories. Thus, a quarter of a century after independence, India maintains English as the medium of instruction for approximately half of its total higher education. English is the second language in countries of such divergent backgrounds as the Philippines and Ethiopia, while in numerous other countries (Burma, Thailand, South Korea and some Middle Eastern countries, for example) it has a second language status in respect of higher education. It is one of the two 'working' languages of the United Nations and of the two it is by far the more frequently used both in debate and in general conduct of UN business.

1.4

By *foreign* language we mean a language as used by someone for communication across frontiers or with people who are not his countrymen: listening to broadcasts, reading books or newspapers, commerce or travel, for example. No language is more widely studied or used as a

foreign language than English. The desire to learn it is immense and apparently insatiable. American organizations such as the United States Information Agency and the Voice of America have played a notable role in recent years, in close and amicable liaison with the British Council which provides support for English teaching both in the Commonwealth and in foreign countries throughout the world. The BBC, like the USIS, has notable radio and television facilities devoted to this purpose. Other English-speaking countries such as Australia also assume heavy responsibilities for teaching English as a foreign language. Taking the education systems of the world as a whole, one may say confidently (if perhaps ruefully) that more timetable hours are devoted to English than any other subject.

We shall look more closely in the next section at the kind and degree of demand, but meantime the reasons for the demand have surely become clear. To put it bluntly, English is a top requirement of those seeking good jobs – and is often the language in which much of the business of 'good jobs' is conducted. One needs it for access to at least one half of the world's scientific literature. It is thus intimately associated with technological and economic development and it is the principal language of international aid. Not only is it the universal language of international aviation, shipping and sport: it is to a considerable degree the universal language of literacy and public communication. Siegfried Muller (former Director of the Languages-of-the-World Archives in the US Department of Education) has estimated that about 60 per cent of the world's radio broadcasts and 70 per cent of the world's mail are in English. The great manufacturing countries Germany and Japan use English as their principal advertising and sales medium; it is the language of automation and computer technology.

The demand for English

1.5

The teaching of English

The role of chief foreign language that French occupied for two centuries from about 1700, therefore, has been undoubtedly assumed by English – except of course in the English-speaking countries themselves, where French is challenged only by Spanish as the foreign language most widely studied. Although patriotism obliges international organizations to devote far more resources to translation and interpreter services than reason would dictate, no senior post would be offered to a candidate deficient in English. The equivalent of the nineteenth-century European 'finishing school' in French now provides a liberal education in English, whether located in Sussex or in Switzerland. But a more general equivalent is perhaps the English-medium school organized through the state

education system, and such institutions seem to be even more numerous in the Soviet Union and other east European countries than in countries to the west. More general still, of course, is the language work in the ordinary schools, and in this connection the introduction at the primary (pre-*lycĕe*, pre-*Gymnasium*) level of foreign language teaching has meant a sharp but almost accidental increase in English teaching and in the demand for English teachers. That is, if a foreign language is to be taught at the primary level, what other language should the French or German schools teach but English? And if children already have some English before entering secondary education, what more obvious than to continue with this particular foreign language, making any other language at secondary level a lower priority option, learned to a less adequate degree?

To take France as an example, in the academic year 1968–69, English was being learned as first foreign language by 80 per cent of secondary school pupils, the nearest rival being German with 16 per cent. When we include those who study it as their second foreign language, we have a total of over two million teenagers studying English in France, a country with a tradition for teaching several other European languages – Spanish in the south-west, Italian in the south-east and German in the north-east.

1.6
A lingua franca in science and scholarship

We might refer also to an inquiry recently made into the use of foreign languages by the learned community in French-speaking territories. It transpired that 90 per cent found it necessary to use books in English – and this percentage included scholars whose research lay in the field of French literature. Perhaps even more significant: about 25 per cent preferred to publish their scholarly and scientific papers in English. The latter point is strikingly paralleled in Italy and Germany. About 1950, the Italian physics journal *Nuovo Cimento* decided to admit papers in languages other than Italian: in less than 20 years the proportion of papers published in Italian fell from 100 per cent to zero and the proportion of papers published in English rose from zero to 100 per cent. A German example: between 1962 and 1968 alone the proportion of articles published in English in *Physikalische Zeitschrift* rose from 2 per cent to 50 per cent. In both these cases, the change may in part be due to the editors' acceptance of papers by American, British and other English-speaking physicists, but for the most part one would surely be right in thinking that it reflects the European scientists' desire to share their research most efficiently with their colleagues all over the world by means of the twentieth-century lingua franca. Telling evidence of this is pro-

vided by the European journal *Astronomy and Astrophysics* in which two-thirds of the contributions by French scientists are in English, and by the official publication of the Agence Internationale de l'Energie Atomique, *Nuclear Fusion*, where *all* articles are in English, despite the fact that the Agency is subsidized by the French Government.

1.7
International character of English

For the foregoing observations, we have deliberately drawn heavily on the work of an outstandingly qualified Frenchman, Denis Girard, Inspecteur Régional de l'Académie de Paris, in order to insure ourselves against the danger of overstating the importance of English, and to assure ourselves of seeing English measured in terms of international values. Not that one is tempted to do otherwise. English, which we have referred to as a lingua franca, is pre-eminently the most international of languages. Though the mention of the language may at once remind us of England, on the one hand, or cause association with the might of the United States on the other, it carries less implication of political or cultural specificity than any other living tongue (with French and Spanish also notable in this respect). At one and the same time, it serves the daily purposes of republics such as the United States and South Africa, sharply different in size, population, climate, economy and national philosophy; and it serves an ancient kingdom such as Britain, as well as her widely scattered Commonwealth partners, themselves as different from each other as they are from Britain herself.

But the cultural neutrality of English must not be pressed too far. The literal or metaphorical use of such expressions as *case law* throughout the English-speaking world reflects a common heritage in our legal system; and allusions to or quotations from Shakespeare, the Authorized Version, Gray's *Elegy*, Mark Twain, a sea shanty, a Negro spiritual or a Beatles song – wittingly or not – testify similarly to a shared culture. *The Continent* means 'continental Europe' as readily in America and even Australia and New Zealand as it does in Britain. At other times, English equally reflects the independent and distinct culture of one or other of the English-speaking communities. When an Australian speaks of *fossicking* something out (searching for something), the metaphor looks back to the desperate activity of reworking the diggings of someone else in the hope of finding gold that had been overlooked. When an American speaks of *not getting to first base* (not achieving even initial success), the metaphor concerns an equally culture-specific activity – the game of baseball. And when an Englishman says that something is *not cricket* (unfair), the allusion is also to a game that is by no means universal in the English-speaking countries.

Grammar and the study of language

Types of linguistic organization

1.8

Sounds and spellings

The claim is, therefore, that on the one hand there is a single 'English language' (the grammar of which is the concern of this book), but that on the other there are recognizable varieties. Since these varieties can have reflexes in any of the types of organization that the linguist distinguishes, this is the point at which we should outline these types of organization (or 'levels' as they are sometimes called), one of which is 'grammar'. When someone communicates with us by means of language, he normally does so by causing us to hear a stream of sounds. We hear the sounds not as indefinitely variable in acoustic quality (however much they may be so in actual physical fact). Rather, we hear them as each corresponding to one of a very small set (in English, /p/, /l/, /n/, /i/, /ð/, /s/ . . .) which can combine in certain ways and not others. For example, in English we have *spin* but not **psin*, our use of the asterisk here and elsewhere in this book denoting non-occurring or unacceptable forms. We similarly observe patterns of stress and pitch. The sounds made in a particular language and the rules for their organization are studied in the branch of linguistics known as PHONOLOGY, while their physical properties and their manner of articulation are studied in PHONETICS.

Another major method of linguistic communication is by visual signs, that is, writing; and for English as for many other languages there has been developed an alphabetic writing system with symbols basically related to the individual sounds used in the language. Here again there is a closely structured organization which regards certain differences in shape as irrelevant and others (for example capitals versus lower case, ascenders to the left or right of a circle – *b* versus *d*) as significant. The study of GRAPHOLOGY or ORTHOGRAPHY thus parallels the study of phonology in several obvious ways. Despite the notorious oddities of English spelling, there are important general principles: *eg* combinations of letters that English permits (*tch, qu, ss, oo*) and others that are disallowed (**pfx, *qi, *yy*) or have only restricted distribution (final *v* or *j* occurs only exceptionally as in *Raj, spiv*).

1.9

Lexicology, semantics, grammar

Just as the small set of arabic numerals can be combined to express in writing any natural numbers we like, however vast, so the small set of sounds and letters can be combined to express in speech or writing respectively an indefinitely large number of WORDS. These linguistic units en-

able people to refer to every object, action and quality that members of a society wish to distinguish: in English, *door, soap, indignation, find, stupefy, good, uncontrollable,* and so on to a total in the region of at least half a million. These units of language have a meaning and a structure (sometimes an obviously composite structure as in cases like *uncontrollable*) which relate them not only to the world outside language but to other words within the language (*good, bad, kind,* etc). The study of words is the business of LEXICOLOGY but the regularities in their formation are similar in kind to the regularities of grammar and are closely connected to them (*cf* App I.1 *ff*). Meaning relations as a whole are the business of SEMANTICS, the study of meaning, and this therefore has relevance equally within lexicology and within grammar.

There is one further type of organization. The words that have been identified by sound or spelling must be combined into larger units and it is the complex set of rules specifying such combination that we refer to as GRAMMAR. This word has various common meanings in English (as in other languages: *cf: grammaire, Grammatik*) and since it is the subject matter of this book some of its chief meanings should be explored.

The meanings of 'grammar'

1.10

Syntax and inflections

We shall be using 'grammar' to include both SYNTAX and the INFLECTIONS (or accidence) of MORPHOLOGY. The fact that the past tense of *buy* is *bought* (inflection) and the fact that the interrogative form of *He bought it* is *Did he buy it?* (syntax) are therefore both equally the province of grammar. There is nothing esoteric or technical about our usage in this respect: it corresponds to one of the common lay uses of the word in the English-speaking world. A teacher may comment

John uses good grammar but his spelling is awful

showing that spelling is excluded from grammar; and if John wrote *interloper* where the context demanded *interpreter,* the teacher would say that he had used the wrong word, not that he had made a mistake in grammar. So far so good. But in the education systems of the English-speaking countries, it is possible also to use the term 'grammar' loosely so as to include both spelling and lexicology, and we need to be on our guard so that we recognize when the word is used in so sharply different a way. A 'grammar lesson' for children may in fact be concerned with any aspect of the use, history, spelling or even pronunciation of words.

When *grammar* is prefixed to *school* (as it is in several English-speaking countries, though not always with reference to the same type of