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Review of Claude Muller (1991) *La négation en français: syntaxe, sémantique et éléments de comparaison avec les autres langues romanes. (Publications romanes et françaises, vol. 198. Geneva: Droz.)*

Rowlett, PA

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feature. There is also a sound, if rather brief appendix on the courteous niceties of commercial correspondence.

A point about both teaching method and lexicographical practice arises from certain entries. Take *télégramme*, for instance. In business 'cable' is undeniably common usage, and translation teachers rightly urge students to guard against automatically transcribing words with obvious counterparts in the two languages. Yet some will wonder about the wisdom of forfeiting the benefits of that first flash of recognition before going on to argue that just writing down 'telegram' may often not be the best course. Likewise, though international companies are likely to use airmail more frequently than planes, is giving 'air' as the prime meaning of *avion* and relegating 'aircraft' to second place really a good decision? *Unité*, to take another example, may indeed mean 'boat, vessel' in certain contexts, but there are many more in which it does not, and offering this interpretation without more explanation could do as much harm as good. The difficulty springs, it seems, from a desire to present the exact word for a given context. Under *mal* Lyne gives not only 'badly' but also 'misunderstand', admittedly with brackets signalling relationships that are not straightforward. But is highlighting this particular meaning, even if it is of particularly common occurrence, really the right way to convey to students the range of possibilities for rendering *mal* in English? Though there is, as Lyne correctly insists, much in business language that is fixed, dictionaries generally serve best by clarifying meaning, leaving alert translators the responsibility of finding the most apt way of expressing it.

Christopher Smith

School of Modern Languages and European History
University of East Anglia

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Muller, Claude, *La Négation en français: syntaxe, sémantique et éléments de comparaison avec les autres langues romanes*. (Publications Romanes et Françaises, 198.) Geneva: Droz, 1991, 470 pp. with index (no ISBN)

This is a revised and abridged version of the author's *doctorat d'État* submitted to the University of Paris VII in 1987. Its declared objective is a functional description of (essentially sentential) negation in contemporary French, and thus follows in the tradition of Gaatone (1971). To its credit, though, this work goes much further than merely describing. Muller may not claim to attain the kind of explanatory adequacy to which much recent work published on negation (following Pollock, 1989) aspires (indeed, while happy to exploit informally the mechanism of syntactic transformation, Muller expresses (p. 3) some (healthy?) cynicism towards current generative work), and while it would be unjust to pit the two researchers against one another, I think it is fair to say that Muller makes more of an effort than Gaatone did to explain the facts reviewed.

The eight chapters are divided into three sections. The three chapters in section 1 introduce basic notions (ch. 1), emphasising that negation, like affirmation and interrogation, is first and foremost a pragmatic concept. Ample reference is made to the work of Grice, Givón and Horn, for example. The author goes on (ch. 2) to make explicit some of the terminology used in the rest of the book, e.g., syntactic vs. morphological negation, sentential vs. constituent negation, polarity, and to bring

out the semantic idea of scope (ch. 3) and the obviously fundamental distinction between this and the syntax of negation, illustrated, for example, by lexical items which allow negative 'raising'. Hard-core syntactic issues relating to sentential negation are introduced in the two chapters of section 2, from synchronic, diachronic and cross-linguistic perspectives. In chapter 4, the distribution of the elements *ne* and *pas* as well as the related *non*, *point*, etc., is discussed. Chapter 5 broadens the field of investigation from the standard dual system of sentential negation in contemporary French by considering how the modern system, with the characteristic absence of preverbal *ne* in certain spoken contexts, fits in with such models as Jespersen's negative cycle, how sentential negation using a single (preverbal) marker has been maintained in restricted contexts in the modern language and how the Latin system has evolved in other Romance varieties. In the final section, the author moves on from 'simple' sentential negation, e.g., *ne . . . pas*, and considers other items often associated with *ne*, e.g., *personne*, *plus*, which Muller terms 'les semi-négations' (ch. 6), the way these elements interact with each other (ch. 7) and, finally, so-called expletive negation (ch. 8).

I found that the data reviewed were, on the whole, reliable (and extremely useful for my own research, e.g., *JFLS*, 3.1: 39-69). On pp. 124-125 and p. 149, Muller makes a contribution to an issue which seems to be becoming somewhat controversial, namely the existence of the construction *pour ne pas que* S. Rickard (1989: 147) claims that this construction is 'incorrect' (whatever that means) but common in 'uneducated speech'. Gallagher, in his review (*JFLS*, 3.1: 119-121) of Rickard's book, says (p. 121) that the claim is untrue, since the *ne* is always omitted. Meanwhile, Muller claims not only that the construction is an exception to the descriptive generalisation that *ne . . . pas* cannot be used in non-verbal contexts, but a frequent exception no less! Can anyone resolve this issue once and for all?

A point on which I (and the numerous native speakers I have consulted) disagree with Muller is with respect to the interpretation of the construction discussed on p. 126. According to Muller, a sentence like *Il ne faut pas que Pierre parte* is ambiguous, interpretable either as *Il faut que Pierre ne parte pas* or as *Il n'est pas obligatoire que Pierre parte*. My own investigations suggest that the second interpretation is not in fact available.

However, much more annoying than the odd mistake like this was the frustratingly large number (in the hundreds) of typographical gremlins which have crept into the work, and not just simple typing errors. Mistakes of this kind are particularly unfortunate when they occur in non-French text examples. Given that one can take for granted familiarity with French on the part of the reader, typographical mistakes in the French text are relatively unobtrusive. However, the reader may well be none the wiser when it comes to mistakes in, say, English, e.g., *pose* instead of *pause* (p. 146). This unprofessional work by the typesetter leaves the reader with the impression, quite wrongly, I feel, that it is Muller who is the amateur.

This gripe aside, then, this is, in general, an admirable effort which, on the whole, and within its own terms of reference, quite comprehensively covers what is, after all, a vast field.

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Paul Rowlett
Department of Modern Languages
University of Salford

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Sampson, Rodney (ed.), *Authority and the French Language. Papers from a Conference at the University of Bristol*. Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1993, 134 pp. 3 89323 244 3

The seven papers published in this volume were delivered at a conference held under the auspices of the Department of French at the University of Bristol in March 1990. In the intervening period, versions of two of them have also appeared elsewhere (see below). However, both of the papers in question range widely over important pertinent issues and without them the volume would have been seriously incomplete.

R. A. Lodge, 'Ideology of the standard language in France, 1500-1800' (pp. 9-22) (a shorter version of his article 'Authority and the French language' published in *JFLS*, 1, 1991: 93-111), identifies social aspects of standardization (first selection of forms, then acceptance throughout society) and linguistic aspects (codification of form, elaboration of function); concentrating thereafter on social aspects, he distinguishes three phases in the evolution of dominant social attitudes to language, viz. 1500-1660, 1660-1789, and the post-1789 period. P. Rickard, 'Linguistic authority in seventeenth-century France' (pp. 23-32), distinguishes between and discusses such types of authority as that of the king in deciding that, in given circumstances, French and not Latin or a regional tongue should be used, that of influential individuals (in particular Malherbe, Vaugelas, Bouhours, and Ménage) in determining the kind of French to be adopted, and the authority exercised by the Académie française. Wendy Ayres-Bennett, 'The authority of grammarians in seventeenth-century France and their legacy to the French language' (pp. 33-45), focuses more closely on the extent of and the reasons for the success of Vaugelas's *Remarques* (which ran to over twenty editions in the ninety years following its original publication in 1647), and draws attention to the responsibility of grammarians both for the gap that exists between the written and spoken registers of French and for 'the image the French have of their language'. R. Ball, 'The purist and the elusive norm: prescriptivism in modern French' (pp. 47-61), is primarily concerned with assessing the activity, judgements, and influence of Abel Hermant, but also looks at a score of other commentators, among them (in chronological order) Thérive, Moufflet, Piéchaud, Le Gal, Dupré, Thévenot, and Cellard. Anne Judge, 'Linguistic legislation and practice' (pp. 63-73), is essentially the same article, though in a slightly shorter form, as her contribution, 'French: a planned language?', to Carol Sanders (ed.), *French Today: Language in its Social Context* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); she traces the history of direct linguistic legislation in France from the *Ordonnances de Villers-Cotterêts* and surveys recent measures taken and corporate bodies set up not only in France but also in other parts of *la Francophonie* to defend and further the cause of the French language. T. D. Hemming, 'Authority and orthography' (pp. 75-85), considers the ways in which authority has been exercised (or in some cases has failed to be exercised) in the field of