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The adjective category in English

Introduction

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Introduction

Vincent Hugou and Vincent Renner

- 1 This thematic issue presents a collection of six papers devoted to the adjective category which illustrates the breadth of current research interests found in the French/Belgian community of English linguistics scholars. The first article, written by **Daniel Henkel** (Université Paris 8), offers a quantitatively documented overview of five semantic families of adjectives (age, size, color, modality, emotion) that demonstrates that the items within each family share a distinctive syntactic profile and that the profiling approach is also well-suited to observe a number of significant differences between certain quasi-synonyms.
- 2 **Stéphanie Bélignon** (Sorbonne Université) analyzes the different adjectives modifying the substantives *emotion* and *feeling* in contemporary American and British English. The study shows that in spite of their semantic similarities, the two lexemes correspond to different visions of affects, since *emotion* refers to pre-semantic experience whereas *feeling* designates affects that have been the object of a more elaborate cognitive treatment.
- 3 Next, **Philippe De Brabanter** (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and **Saghie Sharifzadeh** (Sorbonne Université) question the categorial status of composite color strings such as *dark green* and *bright pink* as adjectives or nouns. They show that a syntactic analysis does not always elicit a clear and definitive answer, that in a number of contexts it should be accepted that the two competing accounts are more or less equally defensible.
- 4 **Jean Albrespit** (Université Bordeaux Montaigne) also looks at categorial boundaries in his in-depth study of -ED deverbal adjectives. He assesses the relative degree of adjectivization of past participles on the basis of six features (attributiveness, predicativeness, postpositiveness, gradability, premodification, comparativeness/superlativeness) and concludes that the reference to agentivity in these new adjectival forms can never be fully suppressed – it is only demoted –, which explains why they constitute a class of adjectives that remains distant from the prototype of the category.
- 5 In the following paper, **Grégory Furmaniak** (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) investigates the textual properties of the modal construction *(be) likely*. Within an

integrative framework, he shows that the construction, although relatively monosemous, displays some semantic, pragmatic and discursive variation according to the discourse mode in which it is used. A multi-factorial analysis, based on a quantitative and qualitative description of spoken and written data, shows that the construction exhibits quite distinct profiles of use, the properties of which are partly inherited from the discourse mode in which they appear.

- 6 In the last article of the thematic section, **Mathilde Pinson** (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) supports the hypothesis of the adjectival origin of *likeAS* IF. By documenting its geographic, semantic, and syntactic expansion, her study suggests that the disappearance of the attributive use of the adjective for reasons of isomorphism triggered the constructionalization of *likeAS* IF.
- 7 To close the issue, a seventh paper by **Teckwyn Lim** (University of Nottingham Malaysia) has been added in the “Varia section”. Lim reports on a detailed and richly informed investigation of the etymology of the noun *gibbon*. The converging evidence that has been amassed leads the author to conclude that the noun most likely comes from the Northern Aslian subgroup of Mon-Khmer languages, which geographically corresponds to inland areas of Peninsular Malaysia, and that it made its way into English through Malay and French.

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