

The Secret Life of Grammar Translation — Part 2

A Tale of Two Grammars

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1. Introduction

The first part of this paper covered the use of grammar and translation in language teaching as they appeared in Roman education and in the period of the Reformation-Renaissance.¹⁾ Briefly, Roman education was concerned with the formulation of a grammatical framework of sufficient simplicity but nevertheless adequate coverage to teach boys the elements of both Latin and Greek grammar. Reformation-Renaissance education rediscovered this framework and adapted it to the changed social context, adding to it the Humanist passion for translation both from classical writers and from contemporary European sources. What was of significance in that review of two quite separate eras was the commonality of certain social structures: both Roman and Reformation-Renaissance eras were characterized by such factors as (a) a recognition that the model of a better society was to be found in an antiquity whose symbolic foundation was the study of grammar followed by a focus on literature, and (b) a range of social attitudes such as conservatism, elitism and a preference for urban living. In short, the social priorities of these two historical periods influenced classroom practice, resulting in a preoccupation with grammar and translation. The sometimes noble attempts to “break” this “tra-

1) Benson, M. J. “The Secret Life of Grammar Translation — Part 1” *Studies in the Humanities and Sciences*, 30 (1), 225–249. Hiroshima Shudo University. 1999.

dition”, as a recent book terms it,²⁾ did little to alter the grind of grammar and translation that the student had to endure.

Grammar and translation continued into the nineteenth century as the accepted ways to learn a language. As we shall see, even with the arrival of Modern Languages on the curriculum this model was applied wherever languages were taught or studied. Very little changed until the Reform Movement of the 1880s gave language teaching a new, scientific appearance. The work of Passy, Sweet, Viëtor, Jespersen, and others gave prominence to the spoken language, and the new journal *Le Maître Phonétique* (founded in 1889) provided an appropriate academic forum for these ideas.³⁾ With hindsight it can be seen that the enthusiasm with which reform was greeted sprang directly from a pent-up frustration with the existing order, in which the study of grammar and the doing of translation, the *modus operandi* of the Classics, had been foisted on Modern Languages. Voices had long been calling for Reform — for example, Hamilton and Jacotot in the 1820s, Marcel in 1853, Prendergast in the 1860s, plus an influential quartet of teachers in the United States, Heness, Berlitz, Sauveur and Joly — but these had failed to alter practice at school level.⁴⁾ Where Modern Languages were taught, therefore, it was generally by means of close examination of the rules of the foreign language (L2), closely compared with the rules of the first language (L1). All this activity depended heavily on books, both grammars and supporting textbooks. In the absence of other evidence as to how languages were taught in the nineteenth century these provide us with a partial picture of what took place in classrooms. However, before proceeding any further it is necessary

2) D. Musumeci, *Breaking Tradition* (New York, 1997).

3) A. P. R. Howatt, *A History of English Language Teaching* (Oxford, 1984), p. 169.

4) See forthcoming, A. P. R. Howatt and Richard C. Smith, *Foundations of Foreign Language Teaching: Nineteenth Century Innovators* (7 Vols., Routledge).

to look at the whole context of language study and learning at that time.

The spread of literacy in the nineteenth century brought new audiences and new factors to bear on L1 teaching, and these had a major impact on the development of the L1 grammar book and the L1 textbook. During this century literacy touched women, children and workers in a way that had not been seen before, and even by 1850 male literacy in Britain was about 70 percent, and female about 55 percent.⁵⁾ Economic factors also helped the growth of a reading public: fast and cheap printing from the 1830s, the repeal of stamp duty for newspapers in 1855, the abolition of the tax on paper in 1861, and the rise of the circulating library from the middle of the century.⁶⁾ Politically, Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791) had resulted in a self-help literacy movement that saw the rise of Mechanics' Institutes and Corresponding Societies for the dissemination of ideas to working-class people.⁷⁾ University reform aimed to break the ecclesiastical hold of the Church of England and thereby open up Oxbridge as national institutions of higher education.⁸⁾ School reform centered on several Royal Commissions (on elementary education: Newcastle Commission, 1861; on the Public Schools: Clarendon Commission, 1864; on secondary education: Taunton Commission, 1868). In consequence, formal education underwent massive re-orientation during the middle part of the century. Informal education of the kind provided by dames schools and other *ad hoc* arrangements, continued to provide basic literacy until replaced by a

5) Martyn Lyons, "New readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers". In Guglielmo Cavallo & Roger Chartier, *A History of Reading in the West*, pp. 313–344. (Cambridge, 1999).

6) Manfred Görlach, *English in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 21.

7) See Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education 1780–1870* (London, 1960).

8) Simon, *op cit.*, p. 290.

national system from 1870 onwards.⁹⁾

Unfortunately, if the child reached school — and the majority didn't until after 1870 — poor teaching methods were apt to be more disorienting than productive. Vincent cites Innes' primer entitled a *Plain, Pleasing Progressive System* (1835), which began with the alphabet followed by syllables such as “ba, ab, ca, ac,” and then moved on to “columns of monosyllabic words which might have been grouped into sentences of a relentlessly spiritual or moral quality”.¹⁰⁾ Further columns of words, usually hard and unconnected, were used to teach spelling, and little attention was paid to the child's native ability with the language, particularly in the matter of accent.

The authors of grammar books and textbooks were major beneficiaries of this untidy rush towards literacy. A recent bibliography of nineteenth century English grammars lists approximately 2,000 new titles, many of which ran into multiple editions.¹¹⁾ Their authors had two models to copy: the first was the classical model, where the immediate tradition dated back to Lily's *Grammatica Latina* (1540), but in reality all the way back to the Greek grammarians. The second model was evident in the work of English eighteenth century grammarians like Lowth and Priestley — and the further 70 or so lesser-known grammarians listed for that century¹²⁾ — who had also established a parallel working tradition for the construction of English grammar books. The strength of this doubly sanctioned tradition was also evident in the unsurprising fact that the grammars of other European languages followed it. In practical terms, a French or German grammar looked very similar to an

9) See Phil Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England* (London, 1983).

10) David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750–1914* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 76.

11) Manfred Görlach, *An Annotated Bibliography of Nineteenth-Century Grammars of English* (Amsterdam, 1998).

12) See Görlach, *op cit.* (1998). Appendix 0.

English one, and needed only the addition of exercises to make it into a “pedagogical” grammar. So, for example, Lindley Murray’s *Grammar*, which is a major focus of this paper, was adapted to suit Dutch, German, and Japanese audiences, while de Lévizac’s French *Grammar*, also a focus of the paper, was adapted for English and American students. The rampant plagiarism of the time unwittingly paid tribute to the strength of the underlying tradition.

This paper looks at the structure of two representative grammars, the first being Lindley Murray’s *English Grammar, Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners* (first published 1795), which was reprinted 54 times in England, and rather more in the United States, with countless unnumbered and pirated editions in places such as Dublin, Sydney, Tokyo, Amsterdam, and many other capitals.¹³⁾ Total production of this book in Britain and the United States can be estimated at three million copies. R. H. Robins describes it as “an example of a successful teaching grammar of English”.¹⁴⁾

The representative L2 grammar is *A Theoretical and Practical Grammar of the French Tongue* by Jean Pons Victor Lecoutz de Lévizac, which was first published London, in 1799. It went through many editions, for example one edited by S. Pasquier in 1819,¹⁵⁾ and another for the boys of Eton by J. C. Tarver (21st, London, 1840). In addition to being used in Britain, the de Lévizac text was very popular in Canada and the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁾ For example, A. Bolmar edited the 29th edition (New York, 1849). Its traditional structure demonstrates the standard, pre-

13) See Görlach, *op cit.* (1998). See also Charles Monaghan, “Lindley Murray, American”. In Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade (ed.), *Two Hundred Years of Lindley Murray* (pp. 27–43), (Münster, 1996).

14) R. H. Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics* (London, 1967), p. 139.

15) In Kelly, *25 Centuries of Language Teaching* (Rowley, MA., 1969), p. 422.

16) See *Modern Language Instruction in Canada, Part 1*, pp. 21–22. [Modern Foreign Language Study, Vol. 6, Toronto, 1928].

Reform view of how a foreign language should be approached.

The structure of such pre-Reform grammars is of considerable interest. It consisted of a fourfold division dating back to the Roman *ars grammatica* and more immediately to Lily in the sixteenth century: Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody. Michael gives the fullest account of Orthography:

Orthography meant the study of letters of the alphabet, which were enumerated, and classified as consonants, vowels, diphthongs, an often into more refined categories still. The sounds which each letter could represent were usually described. Letters compose syllables, syllables compose words; the structure of a word was therefore shown by the syllables into which it could be divided. Spelling was conceived as the division of a word into syllables, according to rules, and not simply as the enumeration of its letters.¹⁷⁾

The heading "Orthography" dates back to Sextus Empiricus in the second century A.D.¹⁸⁾ It was the subject of a text by Verrius Flaccus, *De orthographia*, and Quintilian discusses it, including matters of spelling and the gap between spelling and pronunciation.¹⁹⁾ Lily's *Grammar* (1651) divided Orthography into "Letters", "Syllables", "Right Utterance", and "Points of Sentences". By the seventeenth century Orthography was a prominent topic among grammarians, writers, and printers due to the irregularity of spelling and to the diversity of dialect forms.²⁰⁾ In the United States, Cheever's *Short*

17) Ian Michael, *English Grammatical Categories and the Tradition to 1800* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 184.

18) Fred W. Householder, "Dionysius Thrax, the *Technai*, and Sextus Empiricus". In E. F. K. Koerner & R. E. Asher (Eds.) *Concise History of the Language Sciences* (pp. 99-103), (Oxford, 1995).

19) Daniel J. Taylor, "Roman Language Science in the Early Empire". In E. F. K. Koerner & R. E. Asher (Eds.) *Concise History of the Language Sciences* (pp. 107-110), (Oxford, 1995).

20) Vivian Salmon, "Effort and Achievement in 17th-Century British Linguistics". In *Language and Society in Early Modern England* (Amsterdam, 1996), p. 12.

Introduction to the Latin Tongue (1713) for use in the Boston Latin School had an introductory section called “Of the Latin Letters, Points, etc.” which covered the alphabet, capital letters, vowels and consonants, punctuation, numbers, and syllabification. In short, orthography’s position as one of the standard elements of grammar was never questioned, though the scope of the term altered across centuries and languages.

Etymology referred to the study of the “classification and inflections of words”,²¹⁾ rather than to word histories, as it does today. This too was a major part of grammar, dating back to at least Donatus (fourth century B.C.). His *Ars Maior* contained the following sections:

Fig. 1. Contents of the *Ars Maior* of Donatus.²²⁾

1. On voice	8. On Nouns	15. On interjections
2. on letters/sounds	9. On pronouns	16. On barbarisms <i>(barbarismus)</i>
3. On syllables	10. On verbs	17. Syntactic faults <i>(soloecismus)</i>
4. On metrical feet	11. On adverbs	18. On other errors
5. On accents	12. On participles	19. On irregularities
6. On punctuation	13. On conjunctions	20. On rhetorical figures <i>(schema)</i>
7. On parts of speech	14. On prepositions	21. On tropes

Etymology involved numbers 7–15, which in fact was the contents of Donatus’ *Ars minor*. In Fig. 1 we can also see Orthography (Nos. 1–6), and after the

21) Michael, *The Teaching of English* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 357.

22) From Even Hovdhaugen, “Roman *Ars Grammatica*, including Priscian”. In E. F. K. Koerner and R. E. Asher (Eds.), *Concise History of the Language Sciences* (pp. 115–118), (Oxford, 1995), p. 116.

23) Michael, *op cit.*, (1987), p. 324.

parts of speech we move on to Syntax (Nos. 16–19). Michael describes Syntax as follows:

Syntax, in the teaching of elementary Latin, comprised rules relating to concord (e.g. the agreement between adjective and noun in gender, number and case) and government, or construction, which determined the case of nouns and pronouns ‘governed’ by particular verbs or prepositions.²³⁾

Last came prosody (Fig. 1, Nos. 20 and 21), which often consisted of intonation plus an introduction to metrics. As Michael points out, in the eighteenth century the intonation side was taken over by elocutionists, and the metrics side remained “inappropriately” with the grammarians.²⁴⁾

The basic structure of our two representative grammars may now be shown:

Table 1. Weightings of Murray’s and de Lévizac’s grammars (number of pages).

Area	Murray	de Lévizac
Orthography	27	83
Etymology	95	197
Syntax	86	205
Prosody	32	—
Other	16 (punctuation)	59 (“Free Exercises”)
	66 (“Remarks...”)	—
Total	340	545

Table 1 shows that these four parts were not of equal value; in particular, the two areas of Etymology and Syntax dominated grammar instruction, and this general trend was to continue. As grammars changed in the latter part of the nineteenth century Orthography and Prosody were frequently omitted, par-

24) Michael, *op cit.*, (1987), p. 269.

ticularly from international editions. Both involved pronunciation, which appeared first in Orthography as the sounds of individual letters, and again under Prosody as an introduction to literature. Nevertheless, OESP was the “standard arrangement”,²⁵⁾ for the construction of grammars until as late as 1887, when T. W. Harvey published in New York his *Practical Grammar of the English Language for the Use of Schools of Every Grade*. This grammar is generally believed to be the last one set out in the OESP format.²⁶⁾ Harvey therefore brought to an end a tradition that had favoured a cultural and literary approach to language, especially in its inclusion of prosody, which took in both pronunciation and versification.²⁷⁾

The grammatical structure of these texts is of interest because it implied linguistic and pedagogic norms, suggested ways to approach language, and implied techniques and strategies in the days before teacher training was commonplace. Further, since a grammar book in a nineteenth-century classroom was very likely a more potent force than its equivalent would be today, its structure had a determining effect on what took place. For example, the ubiquity of “parsing” in the classroom²⁸⁾ was both a result of this type of structure, and a rationale for its continued use in the production of new grammars. Likewise, exercises in “false syntax”, where the student had to correct sentences containing mistakes, maintained a classroom atmosphere of detailed attention to the written word. In L2 grammars, both parsing and false syntax were subsumed under translation, which thereby took on heightened importance.

25) Ian Michael, *English Grammatical Categories and the Tradition to 1800* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 37.

26) See Görlach, *op cit.*, p. 167.

27) Michael, *op cit.*, (1970), p. 184.

28) See Görlach, *English in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 19.

2. **A Nineteenth Century L1 Grammar: Lindley Murray's *English Grammar Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners, with an Appendix Containing Rules and Observations, for Assisting the more Advanced Students to Write with Perspicuity and Accuracy.* (York, 1795).**

For Murray, English Grammar is an “art”:

English Grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English Language with propriety. It is divided into four parts, viz. orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody.

This is the traditional definition of grammar (Lily: *recte scribendi atque loquendi ars*) except for the words *with propriety*, which suggest social aspirations in place of methodical correctness. In finer detail he continues:

This division may be rendered more intelligible to the student, by observing, in other words, that Grammar treats, *first*, of the form and sound of the letters, the combination of letters into syllables, and syllables into words; *secondly*, of the different sorts of words, their various modifications, and their derivation; *thirdly*, of the union and right order of words in the formation of a sentence; and *lastly*, of the just pronunciation, and poetical construction of sentences.²⁹⁾

In the following sections it is proposed to look at the four major divisions of the *Grammar* and to identify those areas which rendered the whole book typical and successful.

(a) Orthography

Murray's Orthography (“Orthography teaches the nature and powers of let-

29) Lindley Murray, *English Grammar, Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners* (43rd edn., York, 1829. 1st edn., 1795), p. 13.

ters, and the just method of spelling words”, 1829, p. 13) shows the letters of the alphabet and then moves on to the 12 vowels and 22 consonants. The simple sounds of the letters are shown (e.g., “b” as heard in “bay”, “tub”), and there is discussion about the status of *w* and *y*. Consonants are divided into “mutes” and “semi-vowels”. Each letter is then described, for example:

Figure 2. The letter *K* from Murray’s *Grammar* (1829 edn., p. 26)

K has the sound of *c* hard, and is used before *e* and *i*, where, according to English analogy, *c* would be soft; as, kept, king, skirts. It is not sounded before *n*; as in knife, knell, knocker. It is never doubled; except in Habakkuk; but *c* is used before it, to shorten the vowel by a double consonant; as, cockle, pickle, sucker.

Following the phonetic description of the letters, the terms *labials*, *dentals*, *palatals* and *nasals* are introduced, though in the small font that Murray used for matters of more academic interest. The next major section concerns syllables, and how to identify them for purposes of dividing words (as in “ex-amine”, “com-plete”). Last come rules for spelling words in English. Osselton has suggested that the Orthography section of Murray’s *Grammar* attempted to give the idea of a system to its readers, since to the casual observer English spelling appeared to be a chaotic mess.³⁰⁾ Murray’s spelling rules all suggest a fundamental order, though with many exceptions. For example:

Figure 3. Spelling Rule IX, from Murray’s *Grammar* (1829 edn., p. 39)

Able and *ible*, when incorporated into words ending with silent *e*, almost always cut it off: as, blame, blamable; cure, curable; sense,

30) N. E. Osselton, “Lindley Murray and English Spelling”. In Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade (ed.), *Two Hundred Years of Lindley Murray* (Münster, 1996), pp. 135–144.

sensible, &c.: but if *c* or *g* soft comes before *e* in the original word, the *e* is then preserved in words compounded with *able*; as change, changeable; peace, peaceable, &c.

It should be remembered that the primary audience for Murray's *Grammar* was at such an elementary level that these rules would have been most useful. Literacy was mainly achievable either through what Vincent calls "the domestic curriculum" (education in the home), or "official schooling". He mentions how working-class parents would buy primers and grammars whenever possible — he cites William Cobbett's *Grammar* of 1818, which had sold 100,000 copies by 1834. William Mavor's *English Spelling Book* was in its 322nd edition by 1826.³¹⁾

It is against the background of this physical and theoretical mess that grammar books such as Murray's and Cobbett's need to be seen. Although Murray's *Grammar* aimed socially *up*, and Cobbett's socially *down*, both tried to apply rules and principles to help teachers and their pupils make sense of spoken and particularly written English, which to most ordinary people appeared to be a "foreign language".³²⁾

(b) Etymology

Etymology was not limited to the historical derivation of words as it is today, but, in Murray's words, "the different sorts of words, their various modifications, and their derivation".³³⁾ Derivation, in fact, occupied only one chapter of seven pages, as against the 10 chapters comprising 89 pages for the "different sorts of words" and their "modifications". The word "Etymology," as used in a nineteenth-century grammar, therefore meant overwhelmingly the parts

31) David Vincent, *op cit.*, p. 68.

32) Vincent, *op cit.*, p. 82.

33) L. Murray, *op. cit.*, (1829), p. 41.

of speech, with some minor comments on derivation.

Murray adopted a “Latin system” of classification, which contained articles, substantives, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections, making nine in all.³⁴⁾ Some 45 grammars of the eighteenth century also adopted this system, including Lowth and Samuel Johnson; an even greater number—53—had essentially the same divisions, except that they separated “verb” and “participle,” thereby arriving at 10.³⁵⁾ The exact number of these divisions was of some importance to grammarians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and much ink was spilled on the topic.³⁶⁾ In the classroom, however, it is doubtful how much attention was paid to this debate, and the conservative nature of Murray’s classification no doubt helped his popularity even if it lowered his esteem among philosophical linguists such as Monbodo and Horne Tooke. Murray’s own comment on his classification was that “We have followed those authors, who appear to have given them the most natural distribution”.³⁷⁾

The etymology of each of the nine parts of speech was then set out in turn, starting with the etymology of the article. Figure 4 shows approximate coverage provided by Murray.

34) See Michael, *op cit.* (1970) for the division of 18C grammars into “Latin systems” and others (p. 210). Murray falls into System 10 (p. 225).

35) Michael, *op cit.* (1970), p. 223.

36) See Michael, *op cit.*, Ch. 8 for a comprehensive analysis.

37) Murray, *op cit.* (1829), p. 43.

Figure 4. Coverage of Etymology in Murray's *Grammar*.

Part of Speech Defined	Coverage	Remarks
<p><u>1. Articles</u> "An Article is a word prefixed to substantives, to point them out, and show them for their significations, as <i>a gar den</i>, <i>an eagle</i>, <i>the woman</i>".</p>	<p>a vs. an; the "h" problem; zero article; influence of adjectives; the "few" and "many" problem; comparatives & superlatives.</p>	<p>each; gender; cases.</p>
<p><u>2. Substantives</u> "A Substantive or Noun is the name of any thing that exists, or of which we have any notion: as, <i>London</i>, <i>man</i>, <i>virtue</i>."</p>	<p>Proper vs. common; Gender: M, F, & N; List of terminations, Master vs. Mistress, etc.; Number: S & Pl.; Foreign words like <i>datum</i> & <i>data</i>; Cases = 3: Nom., Possessive, & Objective.</p>	<p>Neuter, e.g., <i>a field</i>, <i>a house</i>. Long discussion about Gr. & Latin cases, and their relation to English.</p>
<p><u>3. Adjectives</u> "An Adjective is a word added to a substantive to express its quality: as, 'an <i>industrious</i> man,' 'a <i>virtuous</i> woman,' 'a <i>benevolent</i> mind.'"</p>	<p>Eng. adjs. don't vary by the gender, number, or case; comparative forms; irregular adjs. (<i>good</i>, <i>better</i>, <i>best</i>); cardinal & ordinal numbers; vagueness of some adjs.</p>	
<p><u>4. Pronouns</u> "A Pronoun is a word used instead of a noun, to avoid the too frequent repetition of the same word: as, 'The man is happy; <i>he</i> is benevolent; <i>he</i> is useful.'"</p>	<p>Personal, Relative, & Adjective Pronouns. Sing. & Pl. forms of</p>	<p>Adjective Pronouns: Possessive, Distributive, Demonstrative, Indefinite.</p>

5. Verbs

“A Verb is a word which signifies to be, to do, or to suffer; as, “*I am, I rule, I am ruled.*”

Active, Passive, & Neuter; Regular, Irregular & Defective; Auxiliaries; Imperatives; Number; Person; Mood; Tense; Examples of all tenses, Lists of irregular and Defective verbs.

“Neuter” verbs = neither action nor passion, but state of being: *I sleep*; Potential Mood³⁸ = *may, can, would hould*; Tenses include “second future” = *I shall have had*. Latin & Greek verbs.

6. Adverbs

“An Adverb is a part of speech joined to a verb, an adjective, and sometimes to another adverb, to express some quality or circumstance respecting it: as, ‘He reads *well*,’ ‘A *truly* good man,’ ‘He writes *very correctly*.’”

Number; Order; Place; Time; Quantity; Manner; Doubt (*perhaps*); Affirmation (*truly*); Negation (*No*); Interrogation (*why*); Comparison (*better*).

7. Prepositions

“Prepositions serve to connect words with one another, and to show the relation between them. They are, for the most part, put before nouns and pronouns: as, ‘He went *from* London *to* York;’ ‘She is *above* disguise;’ ‘They are instructed *by* him.’”

Compound verbs, etc. (e.g., to fall on)

L. M. connects Eng. prepositions with cases or noun endings in other languages. Notes the confusion between prepositions and adverbs.

38) See Michael *op cit.* (1970, p. 434) on the Potential Mood, which was used by 40 grammars in the period 1710–1800, and the same author’s discussion of the Potential vs. Subjunctive Moods pp. 424–425. This area is particularly illustrative of how English grammarians were tied to the Latin classifications.

8. Conjunctions

“A Conjunction is a part of speech that is chiefly used to connect sentences...It sometimes connects only words.”

Copulative vs. Disjunctive.
Interjectional Phrases
(‘Peace be with you!’)

L. M. notes the confusion between conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositions.

9. Interjections

“An Interjection is a word used to express some passion or emotion of the mind: as, ‘Oh! I have alienated my friend; alas! I fear for life.’”

Murray’s Etymology may be taken as a norm for the period during which his book was influential (1795-c. 1860). The pupil, in many cases, would have been expected to learn these definitions off by heart as a first step, and then to apply them to the exercise of parsing. Murray himself divides parsing into etymological parsing and syntactical parsing,³⁹⁾ and gives examples of each. Here he shows etymological parsing:

Figure 5. Etymological Parsing, from Murray’s *Grammar* (1829, p. 216).

“Time flies, O! how swiftly.”

Time is a common substantive, of the neuter gender, the third person, the singular number, and in the nominative case. (*Decline the noun.*) *Flies* is an irregular verb neuter, the indicative mood, present tense, and the third person singular. (*Repeat the present tense, &c.*) *O!* is an interjection. *How* and *swiftly* are adverbs.

The instructions in italics gave the teacher guidance on how to incorporate review into the parsing exercise. This review process is particularly clear in

39) See Michael, *op cit.* (1970), p. 470.

the higher level parsing, syntactical parsing, which often demanded that the syntactical Rules be repeated, as in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Syntactical Parsing, from Murray's *Grammar* (1829, p. 217).

“Vice produces misery.”

Vice is a common substantive, of the neuter gender, the third person, the singular number, and in the nominative case. *Produces* is a regular verb active, indicative mood, present tense, the third person singular, agreeing with its nominative “vice,” according to Rule 1, which says; (*here repeat the rule.*) *Misery* is a common substantive, of the neuter gender, the third person, the singular number, and in the objective case, governed by the active verb “produces,” according to Rule XI, which says, &c.

(c) Syntax

The leap from Etymology to Syntax was the leap from word to sentence. For Murray, Syntax “treats of the agreement and construction of words in a sentence”. This definition also necessitated his defining a sentence, which is “an assemblage of words, forming a complete sense”.⁴⁰ As with many other grammars, Murray presents English Syntax as a series of Rules, for example:

Figure 7. Syntactical Rule from Murray's *Grammar* (1829, p. 146).

Rule III

The conjunction disjunctive has an effect contrary to that of the conjunction copulative; for as the verb, noun, or pronoun, is referred to the preceding terms taken separately, it must be in the singular number: as, ‘Ignorance or negligence *has* caused this mistake;’ ‘John,

40) Murray (1829), p. 137.

James, or Joseph, *intends* to accompany me; 'There *is*, in many minds, neither knowledge nor understanding.'

These are the Rules that the pupil would have been expected to learn by heart, as indicated in Figure 6. The example in Fig. 7 is a well-known rule that has been the subject of many TOEFL questions since the inception of that exam. Many of Murray's Rules in fact cover still-contentious aspects of English, for example,

Rule IV: Mass Nouns: "The council *were* divided in *their* sentiments."

Rule V: Pronouns: "This is the friend *whom* I love."

Rule XV: Adverbs: "He must not expect to find study *always* agreeable."

Rule XVI: Negatives: "His language, though inelegant, is *not ungrammatical*."

Rule XVII: Prep. before Relative: "*To whom* wilt thou give it?"

Rule XVIII: Conjunctions: "The master taught both *her and me* to write."

Rule XX: Qualities, using *than* or *as*:: "Thou are wiser than I." (= than I am).

Murray was willing to confront the difficult areas of English, the only apparent exception being the split infinitive. Nowhere does he comment specifically on split infinitives, though he is scrupulous in his own writing never to split one. At times, however, his desire for elegance outruns his semantic sense, as when in Rule XXI, he condemns "A beautiful field and trees" as being "not proper language". Instead he suggests either "Beautiful fields and trees", or "A beautiful field and fine trees" (both of which offer a different semantic interpretation).

(d) Prosody

Murray divides Prosody into the two traditional areas of pronunciation and versification. The earlier work on syllables — see Orthography above —

reappears as “accent” and “quantity”, and subsequently dominates the whole discussion on versification. Murray first deals with “accent” (word stress), “quantity” (long and short syllables), “emphasis” (intonation), and “pauses” (articulation). Under “tones” he deals with the correct modulation of the voice to convey emotions, for example when reading aloud. “Versification” brought the student into contact with poetical feet, such as trochees, spondees, and so forth. Within the nineteenth-century classroom this section would have provided opportunity and guidance for reading aloud and reciting, which remained a staple of English classes into the 1960s. It also pointed the way towards literature.

The features of the “Murray tradition” may now be set out, as they formed the basis not only of L1 grammars, but also, as we shall see, for the construction of L2 grammars as well. Grammar was presented to the student as a body of rules to be learned, and was therefore deductive in its approach. These rules were to be applied to the essential components of the language (nouns, verbs, etc.), and, like scientific laws, would always hold true. The *pedagogic* application of the rules followed the sequence: letters—sounds — syllables — words — sentences, and the mastery of these rules and their application in practice constituted literacy in the mother tongue.

The teaching methods varied, as now, with the skill of the teacher, but almost certainly included the following:

1. memorizing (rules, passages for recitation);
2. imitation (oral and written);
3. paraphrasing (oral and written);
4. correcting false English (to demonstrate knowledge of syntactic rules);
5. parsing (the parts of speech and their syntactic combination);
6. conversation, debating, making speeches;
7. reading aloud (prose and verse; required understanding/comprehen-

sion);

8. writing (letters, essays).

Michael has outlined these methods for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, indicating considerable stability until about 1850, and varying degrees of innovation after that.⁴¹⁾ The most pervasive teaching technique was memorizing the Rules, which was still being strongly advocated in 1854, though by this time criticism of the practice was also to be heard, especially in America.⁴²⁾ Innovative exercises also appeared at this time, for example “elliptical exercises”, which looked remarkably like the modern rational cloze test (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. An “Elliptical exercise” from B. H. Smart, *Grammar...* (1847, p. 51)⁴³⁾

“The older our habits, the greater the difficulty ____ changing them. We find little difficulty ____ changing new habits... But every day fastens a habit more strongly ____ us, and renders us less capable ____ not complying ____ our inclinations, whether good or bad.”

A variation on the elliptical exercise was to show the student a sentence like *Put the doll ____ her bed*, and ask what part of speech would fill the blank.⁴⁴⁾

The introduction of examinations had an influence on what was taught, and likewise practice had an influence on the questions that were set. The first London Matriculation paper on English asked the following questions.

Figure 9. London Matriculation Paper in English: October, 1839.⁴⁵⁾

1. (Sounds of the vowels, organic formation of consonants, incon-

41) Michael, *op cit.* (1987), p. 347.

42) Michael, *op cit.* (1987), p. 347, 349.

43) From Michael, *op cit.* (1987), p. 361.

44) Michael, *op cit.* (1987), p. 361.

45) From Michael, *op cit.*, (1987), p. 359.

sistencies of English orthography)

2. What is the probable origin of the indefinite and what of the definite article?
3. Define a Verb. Explain the origin of the form of the preterite tense in English, and point out accurately its signification, distinguishing it from the aorist.

Give the preterites and perfect participles of the following verbs...

Of what verbs are *sodden* and *fraught* the participles?

Mention Wallis's well-known rule for the use of *shall* and *will* in the different persons; and give a full explanation of the meanings of these verbs.

Is it correct to say "He says he shall go", "Do you suppose you shall go?"

Do the phrases, "He thought he should go" and "He thought he would go" mean the same thing?

Does the line of Byron, "I ought to do and did my best" appear to you to contain a solecism?

Would "I ought to have done" necessarily imply that I have *not* done?

Are such phrases as "The performing a promise" inaccurate and why?

What is the difference of meaning between "I intended to write" and "I intended to have written"?

3. A Nineteenth-century L2 Grammar: De Lévizac's *Theoretical and Practical Grammar of the French Tongue* (1799; 21st edn., 1840, J. C. Tarver, ed.)

Several points should be made at the outset of this section. The first concerns the notion of completeness, which Howatt remarks was a feature of many grammar-translation courses.⁴⁶⁾ The Tarver-Lévizac *Grammar* sets out to be

46) Howatt, *op cit.*, p. 143.

a complete grammar of French, rather than a “pedagogic” one, and, as with Murray’s *Grammar*, it is set out in the OESP format. Like Murray, de Lévizac regarded grammar as an “art”, whereas later nineteenth century grammarians viewed it as a “science”.⁴⁷⁾ The second point is that the grammar aimed to be morally elevating, since its example sentences, “(being selected from pure and unexceptionable writers) must necessarily leave moral impressions of a beneficial nature on the mind of the young learner, improve his taste, and enlighten his mind” (Tarver, Preface, p. i). The final point concerns the almost total lack of French, or at any rate of connected French. At no point in the 545 pages does the student encounter normal written French; the hundreds of example sentences hardly make up for this deficiency.

The structure of the Tarver-Lévizac *Grammar* is as follows (Fig. 10):

Figure 10. Contents of De Lévizac’s *Grammar of the French Tongue*.

Introductory matter:

The French Alphabet, Pronunciation, Accentuation, Vowels, Consonants, “Practical” exercises (e.g., pronunciation of monosyllables, dissyllables, three syllables), Gender, Vocabulary (in 23 chapters by subject, e.g., “Flowers,” “Quadrupeds”), Introduction to the Exercises. (This takes the student to p. 83)

Part I. Of words considered in their nature and inflections

Nine Parts of Speech: Substantive (Noun), Article, Adjective, Pronoun, Verb, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, Interjection.

(Each part is dealt with in detail, taking the student to p. 280.)

Part II. Syntax or Grammatical Construction of Words in French

(The syntax of each part is set out, taking the student to p. 486.)

Additional Matter:

“Promiscuous Exercises” on the nine Parts of Speech. Grammatical

47) See Charlotte Downey, “Trends that Shaped the Development of 19th Century American Grammar Writing”. In Gerhard Leitner, *English Traditional Grammars* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 27–38.

Construction (Inversion, Ellipsis, Pleonasm, Syllepsis, Grammatical Discordances, Amphibologies, and Gallicisms), Free Exercises (passages for translation from literary sources, e.g., Samuel Johnson, Pope).

Sentences on grammatical points, to be learnt by heart. (to p. 545, the end)

Figure 10 shows that “Introductory Matter” covered the traditional Orthography material, but with the addition of 23 chapters of vocabulary. This vocabulary section gave the pupil a selection of words related to the subject area, but mixed simple and useful terms such as *ville*, *rue*, *théâtre* with oddities as *agriotage*, *pyramide*, and *solitude* all under “Of the city”.⁴⁸⁾ The lack of alphabetical order, together with the fact that the pupil is never in fact required to compose freely, render this section superfluous; its only possible usefulness may have been in terms of rote learning. The section also contains material on genders, articles, and a curious section “Introduction to the Exercises”, which in a modern grammar might be termed “Preparing to Learn French”. Certainly, some of its material is necessary before even a beginning in French can be made — for example the *le-la* gender distinction.

Etymology begins with the substantive, and continues through nine parts of speech:

Figure 11. Selected Coverage of Etymology in De Lévizac’s *Grammar*.

Part of Speech Defined	Coverage	Translate
1. <u>Substantive (or noun)</u> “The substantive is a word which serves to name a person, or thing, as <i>Pierre</i> , Peter; <i>livre</i> , book, etc.”	Genders, number, plurals.	Exercise: The flowers of the garden; the niceties of the languages; the works of those architects; etc.

48) The useful/useless distinction is also made by Howatt (*op cit.*, p. 137) in his analysis of an 1834 German grammar.

2. Article

<p>“The <i>Article</i> is a small word prefixed to substantives, to determine the extent of their signification.”</p>	<p>Gender, partitive article (some = <i>du, de la,</i> etc.)</p>	<p>Give me <i>some</i> bread and butter. I hear <i>some</i> noise. Do not give me <i>any</i> bread. etc.</p>
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3. Adjective

<p>The adjective is a word, which is added to a substantive to express its quality.”</p>	<p>Feminine adjs., irregular adjs., <i>tout, quelque,</i> plurals, comparatives & superlatives, concord, numbers (<i>dix, dixième, dizaine,</i> etc.)</p>	<p>This pear is too ripe. This woman is <i>jealous</i> and <i>deceitful</i>. Your style is a great deal <i>better</i> than that of his brother.</p>
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4. Pronoun

<p>“A <i>pronoun</i> is a word substituted in the place of a noun.”</p>	<p>Personal, reciprocal, relatives <i>en, y,</i> possessive, demonstrative, relative, indefinite.</p>	<p>Is it your temper or <i>hers</i>, that hinders you from living well together? You <i>whom</i> every body respects, hasten to (show yourself).</p>
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(The remaining parts of speech Verb, Preposition, Conjunction and Interjection are omitted here due to length.)

It should be noted that at this point of de Lévizac’s *Grammar* —p. 142—the verb has still not been formally introduced. The exercises shown in Fig. 12 were set out in such a way as to provide the student with all the difficult words, including verbs. The pattern was: Rule, Examples, Exercises. A typical exercise took the following form:

Figure 12. The Article, Rule, Example, Exercise.

[Rule] 38. In French, the article always agrees in gender and number with the substantive to which it relates.

EXAMPLES

<i>le livre que je cherche</i>	the book I am looking for
<i>la femme que je vois</i>	the woman whom I see
<i>les hommes qui étudient</i>	the men that study

EXERCISE

The father and the mother, the brothers and the sisters, the
père m. *mère* f. *frère* m. pl. *sœurs* f. pl. art.
uncles and the aunts, and several other relations were
oncles m.pl. art. *tante* f. pl. *plusiers autres parent* m. pl. *étaient*
present.
présens.

This interlinear method was well known even before Locke advocated it in 1693 for the learning of Latin, and was popular in eighteenth-century France as a technique to teach reading.⁴⁹⁾ De Lévizac exploited its potential for the teaching of grammar by the use of blanks, as in Fig. 12 where the pupil's job was to insert the six correct article forms. Further, the format shown in Fig. 12 obviated the need for the student to consult the dictionary for new vocabulary, and allowed complete concentration on the application of the rule. A final point may be noted from Figs. 11 and 12: the translations were all from the L1 to the L2, never in de Lévizac the other way round.

The third part of the Tarver-Lévizac *Grammar* is Syntax, where all the parts of speech previously dealt with are now shown in functional form. Using the sentence *Le père aime ses enfants* Tarver-Lévizac explain: "*Le père* is the subject, or governing word, or nominative case; and *enfants* is the governed word, or regimen, or accusative case. *Ses enfants* is also called a direct case,

49) See L. G. Kelly, *op cit.*, p. 147.

because there is no preposition intervening between it and the verb *aime*” (p. 282). Dative and ablative cases are soon introduced using *Le père envoie un présent à ses enfants* (The father sends a present to his children), and *Les enfants reçoivent une lettre de leur père* (The children receive a letter from their father).

Following the analysis of the article (see Fig. 12 above), we can look at how the article reappears in the Syntax section. Here the work becomes more complicated (Fig. 13).

Figure 13. Syntax of the Article Definite

[Rule] 180. The definite article is used in French, (*but omitted in English*) before substantives spoken of in a general sense; that is before *names of species, virtues, passions, sciences, metals, etc., etc.*, taken in the abstract.

EXAMPLES

l'homme se repaît trop souvent	<i>man too often feeds on vain fancies</i>
de chimères	
l'or est un métal précieux	<i>gold is a precious metal</i>
évitons la paresse	<i>let us avoid idleness</i>

Before nouns specified by an adjective or some particular and individual circumstance.

EXAMPLES

les hommes à imagination sont toujours malheureux	<i>men of imagination are ever unhappy</i>
l'homme dont vous parlez est instruit	<i>the man of whom you speak is well informed</i>

voici la maison de mon père	<i>this is my father's house</i>
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In addition to Rule 180 (Fig. 13), Rules 181–187 also deal with aspects of the definite article in French. They cover adjectives used substantively (*le riche*),

proper names of countries, provinces, islands, and so forth (*les Pays-Bas au nord*), omission of the article in some cases where one is needed in English (*George Quatre*), omission before substantives preceded by pronominal adjectives (*toute nation a ses lois*), and omission before proper names of deities, men, and animals (*Rome est une ville d'une grande beauté*). The exercises that accompany such Rules and Examples require the pupil to translate passages like the following:

Figure 14. Translation Exercise on Syntax of the Article
(Tarver-Lévizac, p. 291).

The moment *elegance*, the most visible image of fine *taste*, appears, it is universally admired; *men* differ respecting the other constituent parts of *beauty*, but they unite without hesitation in acknowledging the power of *elegance*.

[Notes] The moment, *du moment que*; fine, *délicat*; appears, *se montrer*; is, *elle est*; respecting, *sur*; constituent, (*which constitute*); hesitation, *hésiter*; in, *pour*.

[Translation: *Du moment que l'élégance—l'image la plus visible d'un goût délicat—se montre, elle est universellement admirée; les hommes ne s'entendent pas sur les autres parties qui constituent la beauté, mais ils s'unissent sans hésiter pour reconnaître le pouvoir de l'élégance.*] ⁵⁰

By this time the pupil has moved into the heart of grammar-translation work, though indeed the exercise is neither the most difficult one nor is it the culmination of the book, in which some 250 pages remain to be done. Clearly it would not be easy to do such a translation without a teacher, particularly as no answers were available. Further, the grammatical content of the passage is high even with the help of the Notes, and assumes successful mastery of many earlier Rules, for example how to handle the long adjectival phrase in “the

50) My thanks to Noelle-Veronique Serpollet (University of Lancaster) for this translation.

other constituent parts of *beauty*" (*les autres parties qui constituent la beauté*). Last, it should be noted that considerable productive ability was required to turn this kind of sentence into French.

This productive ability was a feature of the examinations of the period, which have already been looked at in regard to the L1. "Local" exams in foreign languages in the nineteenth century made almost exclusive use of translation both ways, a fact that gave credence to grammars structured accordingly. Figure 15 shows two examples:

Figure 15. Junior and Senior French Translation: University of Glasgow (1879).⁵¹⁾

Junior Certificate:

Translate into French—

- (a) He told me to wait for you and then go to meet him and his wife.
How long do you think he has been there?
I have a grudge against him and his father.
I would rather have to deal with a fool than an idler.
- (b) Thus perished at the age of thirty-nine the best but the feeblest of monarchs, after a reign of sixteen years passed in seeking how to do good. His ancestors bequeathed to him the revolution. He is, perhaps, the only prince who had no passion, had not even the passion for power, and who united the two qualities that make good kings — fear of God and love of his people.

Senior Certificate:

Translate into French—

- (a) A week afterwards he resolved to resign his claim.
In order that your work may do good, there must be harmony between you and your king.
He says we are to go in summer to some watering place.

51) I am indebted to A. P. R. Howatt (University of Edinburgh) for photocopies of these exam papers.

He will be angry with me for having made him wait so long.

- (b) Shortly afterwards a discussion arose regarding the ownership of church property. The bishop of Autun proposed to the clergy to surrender it in favour of the nation which would employ it for the maintenance of the altars and for payment of their debts. He proved the justice and propriety of this measure, and showed the great advantages which would result from it to the state. Etc.

The same papers contained equally literary French-to-English translation. A selection of grammatical points was also tested: (Junior) “Donnez le pluriel des adjectifs *gris, épais, heureux, doux*. Comment forment-ils leur féminin?” (Senior): Donnez l'imparfait du subjonctif et le passé défini (preterit) des verbes *cueillir, et boire*. This introduction of specific grammar questions may have been the result of the string of negative reports that emerged from Oxford and Cambridge Locals in the 1860s and 1870s on the quality of the students' answers. One result of these reports was that in 1874 Cambridge decided that no student would pass Latin, Greek, French or German unless he knew the accidence of the language. In 1878 unseen passages were introduced in Cambridge Locals, with disastrous results on exam marks.⁵²⁾ Such reassessment and modification of the modern language exams gave new direction to grammar translation from the mid-1850s, and continued to shape language teaching into the later years of the century.

4. Conclusion

Within the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the OESP structure, inherited from the classics, made complete sense. A book such as Murray's *Grammar* offered the basics of English—and this occurred in most

52) John Roach, *Public Examinations in England 1850–1900*. (Cambridge, 1971), p. 157.

other European languages too—to learners who needed a thorough (“complete” was used in many titles) account of the written form. In his or her Murray, the learner could find instruction in the sounds and shapes of letters, in the pronunciation of syllables and words (Orthography), and in the names and functions of words (Etymology). Next came, in the section traditionally called Syntax, how to combine these words in literate and meaningful sentences. Under Prosody the now-advanced learner could find out about more about the intonation and even the names of poetic syllables. Finally, the rules for writing with “perspicuity and accuracy” rather than just correctly, were also given. It was a course in literacy for the millions, sensibly structured so that it could be used either as a programme of instruction or as a reference book. The publication of his *English Exercises* (1797) and his *Abridgement* (1797) with further exercises, attests to the success of his *Grammar* as a coursebook; as a reference book its remarks on punctuation and style still form about 90 percent of modern literary habits.

The Latinate division of language into nine or 10 parts of speech is still more accessible to learners than transformational grammar. It is therefore not surprising that the basic OESP structure made more sense in the context of a foreign language than it did when applied to an L1, as in Murray. OESP had developed in the context of L2 teaching ever since Roman boys had used it to learn Greek. In a grammar such as de Lévizac’s, Orthography offered a section mandatory for anyone learning a foreign language: the possibly unfamiliar letters, their shapes and sounds, vowels and consonants, elementary pronunciation instruction, and so forth. Etymology gave a metalanguage which equated L1 and L2 parts of speech such as articles, nouns, and so on. Syntax taught combinations of words up to the level of the sentence, again a necessary requirement in languages that have a different word order from the pupil’s L1. Prosody, though not particularly in de Lévizac, typically revis-

ited pronunciation and took it from elementary areas such as stress and intonation to the advanced skills needed for verse recitation. Above all, until the era of mass travel and modern communications, the OESP stress on the written word answered the practical needs of foreign language learners, and grammar translation allowed non-native teachers to cope under difficult circumstances.

However, the limitations of the grammar-translation method are well known, and have been set out at length in the histories of language teaching.⁵³⁾ Nor have the translators been kind either. Newmark argues that the traditional grammar-translation course “left little of no time for anything else”. After positioning translation as a “craft”, he suggests that unless handled extremely carefully in early language learning, translation is “a waste of valuable time”. At a higher level—possibly after four initial years of learning—it may be used, but then only with realistic materials such as notices, letters, and reports written in “straightforward modern language”, and not to test “difficult grammar points or obscure vocabulary”.⁵⁴⁾ Not all translators have adopted such negative views. In an excellent summing-up of the pros and cons of using grammar-translation techniques in the modern classroom, Malmkjær sets out a series of reasons *for* its (modified) use, concluding that “translation might profitably be used as one among several methods of actually *teaching* language, rather than as mere preparation for an examination”.⁵⁵⁾

53) See, for example, Howatt, *op cit.* J. C. Richards & T. S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (Cambridge, 1986); H. H. Stern, *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (Oxford, 1983); Renzo Titone, *Teaching Foreign Languages: An Historical Sketch* (Washington, 1968); H. D. Brown, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (New Jersey, 1980).

54) Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (London, 1988), pp. 183-184.

55) Kirsten Malmkjær, “Introduction”. In Kirsten Malmkjær (ed.), *Translation and Language Teaching* (Manchester, 1998), p. 9.

Within the context of nineteenth-century L1 schooling there is consensus that OESP grammars exhibited a “stifling form of analysis” and only offered the student “a tight descriptive and analytical system, dogmatically taught”.⁵⁶⁾ The same might be said of L2 grammars such as de Lévizac’s. The parallel structure of the two grammars shows the extent to which both vernacular and modern language teaching remained influenced by the Latinate model.

56) Ian Michael, “More than Enough English Grammars”. In G. Leitner, *English Traditional Grammars* (Amsterdam, 1991; pp. 11–26), p. 11.