This essay consists of the analysis of the metalanguage of linguistics with particular regards to the process of word-formation known as ‘shortening of words’. The type of abbreviation dealt with the so called acronym which is often closely related with another similar process known as initialism/alphabetism. As these shortenings are much favored in modern languages, it is necessary to proceed to give a clear definition to acronym in comparison not only with initialism, alphabetism but also with another process strictly connected to that is blend. The aim of this work is therefore to classify these technical terms used by scholars and to define their proper meanings in order to fix their position in the field of modern study. The proliferation of acronyms is essentially a modern development and their increasing role as a process of word formation is largely due to their presence not only in special languages but, nowadays, also in the standard language.

The neoclassical element pseudo-, whose origin is Greek and whose function is related to word formation, belongs to an ancient tradition within linguistic research, where it designates classes of elements whose configuration appears to be anomalous. For example, some cases of pseudo-+[meta-linguistic] show morphological features, or a structure, which appear to be incoherent with relation to their semantic or pragmatic function. This is the case of Italian discourse markers such as guarda, ascolta (‘look’, ‘listen’), which can not be properly defined as imperative, even if their structure is that of such mood. Another example is the pseudo-adjective, which shows a non-prototypical derivation of the structures. Different is the case of pseudo-words or pseudo-articles, expressions which are coined “ad hoc” in experiments.

This paper is a first essay coming from a broader study in progress. It presents several cases of pseudo- and – aiming to outline a first synoptic taxonomy – starts accounting for definitions and examples largely attested in the literature, but handled in a sporadic and heterogeneous way in dictionaries and linguistics encyclopedias.

This paper deals with the synchronic parallel use of the terms lexical field and semantic field. In most contemporary Dictionaries of Linguistics, the two concepts are not distinguished, they are tagged as synonyms. However, if we observe their use from the beginning of field theory, we can see that their meanings were intended to be very different. Our intent is to propose a reading of the principal texts by Jost Trier, the founder of field theory in order to highlight the conceptually different positions we find behind the denominations Wortfeld and Bedeutungsfeld, i.e. the two German original definitions. The word field was coined in 1924 by Gunther Ipsen and adopted by Jost Trier 1931 in his field theory, although the concept of the field itself goes back to A. von Humboldt, who said “die Gliederung ist das allgemeinste und tiefste Merkmal aller
Sprache”. The new view enables us to realize what Trier really meant and how the different denominations received a new or distinct meaning in the subsequent development of the theory (from Weisgerber to Coseriu, from Porzig to Minsky). What actually changed was the conceptual idea of the field, which for Trier, as for von Humboldt, indicated the possibility to implement a pure concept (Sinn) through a sign, but which was already in Ipsen and Porzig a level for the description of semantic relations.

Francesca M. Dovetto

SUMMARY

Although silence is considered a pure absence of sound, it is instead a part of linguistic interaction: as a figure of speech and especially as a figure of thought, it expresses the intention to say something: this is the reason why it has an argumentative function. Silence, like pauses and interruptions, is an expressive resource often found in spoken communication, where it is used to convey multiple meanings. Because of its multifunctional and multifaceted nature, it is accompanied by a terminological chaos and by heterogeneous classifications in various fields. Particularly, phonetics is recently giving its attention to the manifestations of silence and generally to disfluences.

Fabiana Fusco

SUMMARY

This paper intends to analyse the reasons why Georges Lüdi, a brilliant professor of French Linguistics at the University of Basel, decides to coin the hyperonym marques transcodiques to refer to different ways of getting bilingual. His perspective considers the individual and the social plurilingualism the default case which exploits in an optimal way the human language faculty. He also thinks that each theory of language should, to be valid, acknowledge the ways a plurilingual exploits the totality of his/her linguistic resources for socially significant interactions in different forms of monolingual and plurilingual speech.

José Polo

SUMMARY

Thirty years after publishing his “orthographic” work par excellence, the author brings up from that work a series of expressions astride common language and technical language, as an illustration of basic and stylistic graphic metalanguages. This material is accompanied by an inventory of other studies by him referred directly or indirectly to the realm of visual codes as well as to the technique for the presentation of a written piece of work.
Wolfgang Schweickard

SUMMARY

This paper deals with *romano* and *romanesco* as designations for the dialect of Rome. The analysis of their use from the beginnings until today shows that they do not imply any stable semantic difference (neutral vs. pejorative). Both forms are nearly always interchangeable. Unlike other glottonyms in -esco, *romanesco* has survived until today because *romano* as the potential alternative is too ambiguous.

Salvatore Claudio Sgroi

SUMMARY

The author illustrates the following concepts: diachronic (or historical) vs. synchronic (or static or descriptive) etymology; retrospective (or regressive) vs. perspective (or progressive) etymology; and remote vs. immediate (or close or near) etymology as applied to the history of XIX- and XX-century French and Italian linguistics.

Fiorenzo Toso

SUMMARY

The essay considers the concept of “polynomic language”, elaborated in 1983 by the French sociolinguistic Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi, and critically examines about it, through the definition, the innovative aspects of this category into the discussion about the theme of linguistic variability.

The analysis of the applications of the category of ‘polynomic’ (pluricentric) language concerns particularly some aspects of the applied linguistics, but mostly his reception in minority contests; this allows also to develop some general reflections on the subject of standardization, exemplified by the mechanisms of the accomplishment of the polynomic model in Corsica and his interpretation in other, specially Italian and French, regional contents.