

in the study of words derived from cardinal numbers, which reveals interesting gaps, which may, however, be filled when the context requires it, hence the occurrence of (*) *treizaine* on the Web. Other interesting facts also emerge: words such as *douzaine* may refer either to an exact or an approximate number, whereas *septaine* always refers to an exact number and *huitaine* to an approximate number. Such oddities often point to deeper morphological considerations.

Other chapters deal with compound nouns, without having recourse to the concept of underlying syntax, the single chameleonic 'evaluative' suffix – *et* as opposed to the numerous prefixes of the *méga* or *hyper* type, and, in the context of the nominalisation of verbs, the establishment of a 'hidden root' –*at* as in *admirer/admir-at-ion*, or *louer/loc-at-ion*, which is shown to go back to Latin.

This is but a small sample of the areas covered in a book which is, on the whole, easy to read since the authors had to start at the beginning and adopt a clear form of expression in order to get their message across. Otherwise no converts! As a result it can be read equally well by amateur morphologists, fascinated by the 'secret life' of French derivational morphology, and by morphologists in search of new horizons to explore. It is, taken as a whole, a worthwhile book.

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Les consonnes doubles: féminins et dérivés is the first volume of a series of 'Etudes pour une rationalisation de l'orthographe française', under the editorship of Claude Gruaz. The book takes the form of a general introduction, common to all future volumes, laying out the rationale for change to the spelling system, a discussion of the particular question of geminate consonants in feminine and derived forms, lists of words concerned, and a study of usage.

The 1990 reform of French spelling was particularly weak in its recommendations concerning double letters, an area repeatedly fingered as a source of confusion for writers. Simplification in this area concerned a handful of words in *-olle*, and a proposal that new derivations from words in *-on* should not see the *n* doubled – hence, for example *variationisme*. In other areas, the reform added new geminates, aligning *chaussetrappe*, *charriot* and *combattif* with *trappe* (despite *attraper*), *charrier* and *combattre*, tidying up given lexical paradigms at the expense of overall uniformity. This volume's historical overview of proposals for geminate reform shows clearly how previous reforms, such as the officially commissioned reports by Faguet (1905) or Beslais (1965) consistently favoured the simplification of non-functional geminates. This work is therefore a welcome attempt to set out a comprehensive statement of how geminates might form the basis of a future reform, if and when such a reform is undertaken.

The rule proposed, based on a tendency identified in the study of usage, is the following: 'La consonne graphique finale d'un mot n'est pas doublée dans le féminin et les dérivés. Cependant le doublement existant est maintenu lorsque cette consonne est précédée de *e*' (31). Its impact is illustrated in a series of lists, the first of which (33–50) has all geminate feminine and derived forms grouped by derivational source, and marks words already lexicalized without a geminate with an asterisk. Hence 'teuton / **teutone** / **teutonique***'. The verb *battre* and its prefixal forms *ébatte*, *embattre* and *rebattre* have no lexical entry to act as a derivational source (**bat*, **ébat*, **embat*); however since such forms may be derived by analogy with *combat*, *débat*, etc. (presumably *ébats* is ruled out for its plurality), these are grouped in 'analogical series' (50). Series such as *teuton*, above, and indeed the list as a whole, form a potent illustration of the scale of irregularity. Regrettably, Gruaz et al. do not present their corpus, though it covers several dictionaries, since the asterisk mentioned above is bracketed to indicate competing forms (e.g. '*embatre**'). However, if a source as uncontroversial as the *Nouveau Petit Robert* (1993) dictionary is used, then they have underestimated the irregularity, since at least all the following entries require asterisks: *abatage*, *abatant*, *cariste*, *courbatu*, *courbature*, *courbaturé*, *courbaturer*, *débats*, *ébats*, *fayoter*, *folâtre*, *folâtrer*, *folâtrerie*, *folichon*, *pifer*, *pifomètre*, *sacoche*. It is unclear why the plurals *ébats* and *débats* are in the list at all.

The vast majority of the series proposed are uncontroversial, though one may take issue with the salience for language users of *car* as a derivational source for *cariole*, *cariste* and *carosse*: for such a derivation *car* would need to be thought diachronically anterior to *cariole*, with *autocar* an expansion of *car*. This question of morphemic visibility applies also to derivations such as *débonaire* from *bon*. Finally the inclusion of the recent anglicism *panel* under the lexical entry *pan* seems a little cheeky, though the resultant graphical unification of the semantically close *pan*, *paneau*, and *panel* is undeniably elegant.

The volume finishes with a statistical analysis of the normative spelling of lexical groups by ending for derived forms in *-n*, *-l*, and *-t*, the bulk of the words concerned here, and of usage as revealed by a questionnaire survey and by Google searches. Though the normative forms are in the majority (frequently nearing 100%), the statistics indicate that users are highly unlikely to double normatively single-lettered words, while they are more likely to do the opposite. This, however, is not true for words with penultimate *e* (e.g. **électricienne*), for obvious reasons.

Les consonnes doubles has the merit of consistency, where the exceptions granted in 1990 (*colle*, *folle* and *molle* among *-olle* words, for example) compromised its transparency. No such failure of nerves here: *anée*, *batre*, and *doner* happily rub shoulders with *échelonner*, *garroter*, and *cristalotypie*. The consistency reflects the aim of producing a rule 'aussi simple et générale que possible' (20), though that rule nonetheless contains a (phonetically justified) exception for penultimate *e*. This phonetic underpinning leads one to wonder whether a more radical initial hypothesis would not have produced a yet simpler and more general rule, such as 'La consonne graphique d'un mot n'est doublée que si ce doublement revêt un caractère phonétique'. This would add to the 1500-odd words modified here, such items as *attrister*, *personnage* and *tranquillité* (which 42% of internet users understandably write *tranquilité*, but which is excluded because its derivational source, *tranquille*, does not end in a consonant) while retaining *masse*, *mourrai* and *suggérer*, and giving French gemination a functional basis. Whether the francophone nations (and above all France), or the ordinary writers of French, have the stomach for Gruaz's radical proposal, not to mention my yet more radical one, is another question. However, with the internet now awash with the generally misspelt writing of ordinary

citizens, and the school system's emphasis on discourse skills rather than the vagaries of orthography having a measurably detrimental effect on youngsters' spelling (Manesse 2007), the problem is not one which is likely to go away soon.

REFERENCE

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Homage volumes do not always succeed in either reflecting the work of the honorand, or in conveying a real sense of his her or her achievements and why the volume has been put together in the first place. This one does both and it does them very well. It is a fitting tribute to one of the leading figures in medieval and modern French linguistics but who also (as the subtitle and indeed the coverage in the volume suggests) has produced remarkable work in literary and historical studies. One of the strengths of the collection (as of its dedicatee) is precisely that the linguistic and the literary remain (as they should be) inseparable. The search for meaning requires proper understanding of the former, and sensitivity to the latter. The volume is divided into four major sections. (I) Morphologie et syntaxe; (II) Corpus et variation; (III) Énonciation et texte; (IV) Littérature et histoire. To each area Christiane Marchello-Nizia has made a major contribution: for example, under (I), her study of the complexities of OF *si*; for (II), the establishment of the Base de Français Médiéval at Lyon; in (III), a range of definitive books on different aspects of OF and Middle French grammar; as to (IV), editions of important texts and studies of many more. The whole range of the history of French is covered in this collection from participial agreement in spoken French to the exclusively medieval, but more often than not, the rich and well-informed contributions are genuinely diachronic in that they seek to explore how and why change has occurred. There are thus (for example) studies of verbal periphrasis, deverbals in *-ant*, and syntactic variation which all introduce a diachronic dimension. Medieval usages and texts are examined in the case of particular expressions (*c'est mon*, etc.) or the representation of 'étrangeté'. The literary-historical section deals with romance, knighthood and sodomy, the sun in the *Roland* and *Hervis de Mes*, and the role of dreams in Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence's life of Thomas Becket. The flavour of the collection is thus wide-ranging and deliberately inclusive, including also two