Advanced French Grammar

This reference grammar, written for advanced students of French, their teachers, and others who want to improve their understanding of the French language, combines the best of modern and traditional approaches. Its objective is not only practical mastery of the language, but familiarity with its structure. Taking into account modern linguistic research, the Grammar approaches the French language primarily through the study of syntactic structures, but without excessive emphasis on formalism. It provides a generous number of examples, based on the author's own experience of teaching French to foreigners, to help the student to understand the different meanings of apparently similar syntactic alternatives. The norms of 'correct expression' are given, together with current usage and deviations, and appendixes provide information on the 1990 spelling reforms and on numbers. A substantial index of French and English words and of topics provides easy access to the text itself.

Monique L’Huillier is a Senior Lecturer in French at Royal Holloway, University of London. After studying theoretical linguistics in Paris, she obtained an MSc in computer science in England, with a dissertation on machine translation, and went on to teach at Bradford and Brunel universities. She has published extensive computer-assisted language learning software for the study of French grammar and articles in French linguistics and grammar.
Advanced French Grammar

MONIQUE L’HUILLIER
To Dizzy, Lizzy and G-M
# Contents

Acknowledgements  ix

Introduction  1

1 Framework

1. Parts of speech  5
2. Syntax and grammatical functions  20
3. Pronunciation, spelling, registers, punctuation  46

2 Verbs

4. Introduction to verbs  65
5. Present indicative  77
6. depuis and other tense markers  92
7. Future  104
8. Imperfect  115
9. Perfect  126
10. Past historic  139
11. Other past tenses  148
12. Subjunctive  153
13. Conditional and the expression of hypothesis  183
14. Imperative  192
15. Infinitive  202
16. Present participle  221
17. Past participle  234
18. Active and passive voices  237
19. Impersonal verbs and the impersonal voice  252
20. Pronominal verbs  262
21. Modals: devoir, pouvoir, vouloir  273
22. savoir and connaître  293

3 Determiners and prepositions

23. Articles  303
24. Possessive adjectives, possession, attribution  336
25. Demonstrative adjectives  350
26. Prepositions  354
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 Nouns, pronouns and modifiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27. Nouns 387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Qualifying adjectives 410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Adverbs 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Comparatives and superlatives 461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Personal pronouns 488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Relative pronouns 517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Possessive pronouns 533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Demonstrative pronouns 538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. c'est/il est 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Indefinite words: adjectives, pronouns, adverbs 559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Numbers 592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Sentences and text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38. Negative structures 621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Interrogative and exclamative structures 636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Coordination and juxtaposition 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Reported speech 672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendixes

1. Les rectifications de l’orthographe (1990) 683
2. Cardinal and ordinal numbers 685

Bibliography 688

Index 691
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all the friends and colleagues who have given me their support while writing this book, in particular Juliet Laxton, who read the manuscript with the fresh outlook of an enthusiastic student and contributed to the explanations given, Peter Flake, who read the manuscript with a non-linguist’s eye and kept the jargon under control, and Dominique Lagorgette, who reminded me that there is more to the pronunciation of French than a Parisian accent.

Most of all I would like to thank Mary-Annick Morel, for her patience and dedication in answering my innumerable questions over the years of the preparation of the book, and Marina Yaguello, whose linguistics seminars at the Institute of Romance Studies in London were an endless source of inspiration.

I would like to thank the following for giving permission to quote: Le Monde, Libération, The Economist and Radio Times (various extracts); M. Alain Reynaud-Fourton for quoting from his play Monsieur Amédée, Editions Gallimard for quoting from Albert Camus, L'étranger and L'excil et le royaume, Michel Tournier, Le roi des Aulnes, Jean Cocteau, Les parents terribles, Proust, Du côté de Guermantes, Charles Baudelaire, Petits poèmes en prose, Tableaux parisiens and L'invitation au voyage, Librairie Plon for Raymond Devos, Oui-dire; Editions Christian Bourgois for Georges Perec, Tentatives d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien; Chatto and Windus for Richard Hughes, In Hazard and Iris Murdoch, Nuns and Soldiers, Editions Albin Michel for Paul Guth, Le naif amoureux; Editions Tallandier for Christian Melchior-Bonnet, Grand livre de l'histoire de France; Faber and Faber Ltd for George Steiner, Language and Silence.

In addition, permission was obtained from The Society of Authors as the literary representative of the estate of L. P. Hartley to quote from L. P. Hartley, The Hireling; from the Estate of Georges Simenon to quote from Georges Simenon, Maigret et la jeune morte.

Extracts from Keep the Aspidistra Flying (Copyright © 1936 by George Orwell) and Animal Farm (Copyright © 1945 by George Orwell) are reproduced by kind permission of Mark Hamilton as the Literary Executor of the Estate of the Late Sonia Brownell Orwell and Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.

Every possible effort has been made to trace and acknowledge ownership of copyright; I apologise for any omissions and would welcome these being brought to my attention.