Language and linguistics

LINGUISTIC THEORY

76–73   Chandoola, Anoop. An evolutionary approach to sentence forma-
tion. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **150** (1975), 15–46.

A grammar designed to reflect the processes whereby sentences are formed is
presented. This grammar is based on the principle that language grows out of
experience and is shaped by it. Linguistic activity, it is maintained, begins with
experience (imaginary or real) which is differentiated by concepts. These
concepts are selected and coded linearly by grammatical operations to form
words and sentences. The paper rests on the notion of a natural development
whereby concepts compose a word and words compose a sentence. An evolu-
tionary grammar which reflects this process has to be a compositional one in
which smaller units grow into larger units.

The grammatical rules proposed begin with the smallest unit. Rule one, for
instance, tells us that 'word' is a cover name for two terms 'declinable' and
'indeclinable'. Rule two tells us that 'indeclinables' are to be known as 'single
inflectional items' possible exponents of which are items such as *now, but*, etc.
These compositional rules are in direct contrast to current trends in linguistics
which tend to decompose sentences into their constituents, and they also bypass
the traditional compartmentalisation of linguistics into phonology, morphology,
syntax, semantics, etc. The overall aim of the approach is to reveal 'the natural
development' of the sentence, though whether the evolutionary approach is to
be understood psychologically or historically is not made clear.

76–74   Kurmanbaev, N. M. Заметки о картезианских основаниях
генеративной лингвиетики. [Notes on the Cartesian foundation
of generative linguistics.] *Вопросы языкознания* (Moscow), **4**
(1975), 18–23.

Chomsky, sooner than many other scholars, realised that transformational
grammar could not, no matter how much it was perfected, give a satisfactory
account of the creative aspect of language, nor lead to an elucidation of the
mechanisms of speech. At this point he turned to philosophy and acknowledged
the debt that generative grammar owes to Descartes.

Descartes postulates the coexistence and mutual independence of mind and
matter. Fundamental to his rational method is his theory of innate ideas. A
modern variant of this method is Chomsky's hypothetico-deductive method,
which merely advances hypotheses but replaces the principle of empirical

verification with a faith in the power of intuition. A Marxist approach to knowledge denies the possibility of scientific progress outside an empirical framework. By acknowledging a debt to Cartesian philosophy Chomsky is attempting to resuscitate the theory of innate ideas, long since discredited by materialist philosophy.

76–75   Lipka, Leonhard. Re-discovery procedures and the lexicon. *Lingua* (Amsterdam). **37**, 2/3 (1975), 197–224.

In many areas of linguistics old facts and old theoretical constructs can be seen reappearing more or less well adapted in modern theories. For example, it is argued that Halle's work on word formation treats of no problems which have not already been investigated, and offers no original solutions. In addition, Halle has ignored the large amount of previous work on this topic. The term 'discovery procedure' as used in linguistics is far from unproblematic. Detailed examples are presented to illustrate the recent tendency towards the use of various 'tests' to justify theoretical assumptions. While 'rediscovery' of earlier theories has been a powerful stimulus for progress in linguistics, failure to research adequately previous work on a topic leads to floods of publications. Similarly, testing should precede any theoretical postulation; such theoretical claims should be justified by using objectively verifiable evidence, particularly when they concern unobservable underlying elements.

SEMANTICS   *see also abstract* 76–90

76–76   Bouma, Lowell. On contrasting the semantics of the modal auxiliaries of German and English. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **37**, 4 (1975), 313–39.

The author's (1973) model explaining the semantic structure of the German modal system is also generally applicable to the modals of English. The theory underlying the approach is based on the notion of (grammatical) meaning found in Joos (1964) and Jakobson (1971). The modal auxiliary system in both languages is seen as a grammatical category (relative assertion) which stands in specific opposition to the absence of a modal in a sentence (factual assertion). The general grammatical meaning conveyed by the modal auxiliary category is that the speaker sees the event as standing in a potential relation to reality. In both languages there is a scale of probability from precariousness (50/50 probability: KANN, DARF: CAN, MAY) to imminence (near certainty: MUSS, WILL; MUST, HAVE TO, WILL, WANT TO). Both modal systems can also be characterised in terms of the speaker's view of the involvement of the actor (grammatical subject). If the speaker views the actor as the initiator of the realisation of the event he uses

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a subjective modal (e.g. German WILL; English WANT TO), and he uses an objective modal if he views the initiator as an agency outside of the actor (e.g. MUSS; MUST). [References.]

LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS
See also abstract 76–93

76–77   Baker, C. L. The role of part-of-speech distinctions in generative grammar. *Theoretical Linguistics* (Berlin), **2**, 1/2 (1975), 113–31.

Some recent work in generative syntax has proposed that nouns, adjectives and verbs are not distinguished as such in underlying structure, and that transformations operate to create many of the superficial distinctions among the traditional classes. However, it seems that for nouns, at least, rule features are insufficient to describe their difference from other traditional parts of speech, since in English each 'term', each 'thing talked about', must be expressed by a phrase with at least one traditional noun.

Even if an underlying structure is accepted in which there is no overt distinction between nouns and other classes, this constraint must be stated at some point prior to the application of rules deleting nouns under identity, but after those of relative clause formation and reduction. The level at which this noun constraint is stated could be the same as in classical conceptions of English deep structure, if the derivation of adjectives from relative clauses is abandoned; it is shown that the latter derivation involves serious enough problems generally to warrant such a consideration.

76–78   Miloslavskiy, I. G. О соотношении номинативных и .синтагматических ·свойств языкового знака. [On the relationship between the nominal and syntagmatic properties of a linguistic sign.] *Серия литературы и языка* (Moscow), **34**, 4 (1975), 351–61.

A linguistic sign has its denotatum. The collocational properties of the sign are in part dependent on the nature of the denotatum. For example, *зима* can collocate with *холодный* but not with lexemes such as *осенняя*. The same is true at word-level: *предобрый*, but not **пререзиновый*. These examples do not exhaust all possible collocational limitations. The view is refuted, however, that collocations are not possible between elements sharing the same meaning or containing an opposite meaning [details and tables].

Progress in the study of gender in Russian nouns has been possible as a result of the realisation that this category is rooted in the nominal and syntagmatic properties of lexemes [details]. Similar progress is noted in relation to the

category of number. On the other hand, a distinction between the nominal and syntagmatic properties of units has not been noted to the same extent in studies of the Russian verb [details and criticism of current work]. An analysis of various questions in relation to the study of aspect [details] provides additional evidence for the view that the syntagmatic properties of a linguistic unit are relatively independent of its nominal properties.

COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS

76–79   **Martin, W.** Computational linguistics or What's in a name? *ALLC Bulletin* (Stockport, Cheshire), **3**, 2 (1975), 124–32.

The question is posed whether computational linguistics may be regarded as an autonomous subdiscipline of linguistics, like socio- or psycholinguistics, and four main uses of computers in linguistic research are examined, with examples. In the two confirmatory methods of analysis by computer (classification by indexes, reverse lists, etc., and as a calculating machine, using frequency counts of linguistic units, etc.), the linguist is concerned primarily with output, and, more importantly, as the analysis of such output essentially combines 'an amalgam of all possible linguistic research' methods, there is little reason to consider computational linguistics as an autonomous subdiscipline, or to see the computer as other than a tool for a variety of jobs.

It is also suggested, however, that when using computers as controls (to test rules and deviations from observable models) and as simulation machines (to solve the problem of, for example, alphabetisation of a text), special language rules are necessary for the computer, and the interest of the linguist lies not only in output, but primarily 'in the process, the algorithms which form the basis of his analysing or synthesising task'. The answer therefore seems to be that the autonomous subdiscipline lies in the necessity of formulating linguistic rules which can be understood by a computer – a method *for*, and not merely *with* the computer.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

76–80   **Robinson, W. P.** The dialogue of 'deficit' and 'difference' in language proficiency. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **151** (1975), 27–39.

Subcultural differences in the use of the units and structures of languages have been variously interpreted as stemming from genetic and/or environmental differences and/or deficiencies, or dismissed as methodological artefacts. Some of the polarisations in the associated controversies have arisen because research workers have themselves failed to be explicit and precise in their own use of

language. A reconciliation of oppositions would, on present evidence, be most simply achieved if the lower-working-class performance were referred to as manifesting a relative deficiency in the referential function of language, attributable to differential learning opportunities. The factors most likely to be responsible for this will affect not only mastery of language but also the acquisition of first and second order knowledge and the motivation to acquire more. [References.]

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

76–81   Blakar, Rolv Mikkel and Rommetveit, Ragnar. Utterances *in vaccuo* and in context: an experimental and theoretical exploration of some interrelationships between what is heard and what is seen or imagined. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **153** (1975), 5–32.

Much recent psycholinguistic experimentation suffers from the fact that utterances presented out of context tend to have imaginary contextual frames constructed for them by the subject; that this strategy is used must be taken account of in psycholinguistic experimentation involving utterances *in vaccuo*. It is demonstrated from experiment that an utterance is much more efficiently remembered and retrieved if it has been presented in association with a meaningful pictorial context.

From these two conclusions, it is argued that in such experimental conditions the subject employs a strategy of nesting new information into what is previously known (or imagined) to be the case. Construction of an imaginary context when absent and the dramatic increase in memory efficiency when a context is presented are both held to support this view.

76–82   Oksaar, Els. Psycholinguistics, language and changing social structures. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **151** (1975), 41–58.

Starting from the viewpoint that psycholinguistics has to take into account the interaction of language and social structure in order to explain the emergence and choice of alternative linguistic forms, some cases of up- and downgrading of concepts and the change of a morphological rule are discussed. These cases can be categorised as linguistic indices of changing social attitudes and systems [examples from German and Swedish from the occupational and professional field]. The main questions are: How are the changing social relations and attitudes verbalised in the hierarchically typed occupational sector? What are the conditioning factors which determine the choice and creation of new professional designations (when the occupation is not a new one) and the semantic change of the former ones? Some of the competing designations are

analysed by means of the semantic differential technique in order to show its applications in inter- and intralingual language confrontations. [References.]

76–83 Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana. Techniques and instrumentation: laboratory experiment in psycholinguistics. I. A device for the study of verbal stimuli in experimental complex situations. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **153** (1975), 71–9.

In laboratory experiment, the use of models which represent analogically a real situation is implicit in the procedure. Analogy involves the problem of fidelity to the object reproduced by the model. Theoretical principles are propounded to inform the choice between use of a laboratory model suspected of incongruence with reality and the study of reality as such, renouncing the selectivity and control of laboratory investigation. The tachistoscope offers the subject an oversimplified and artificial presentation of verbal stimuli. A programme was undertaken to develop a device which would represent a more appropriate model of the real situation, offering perceptual conditions more complex than those allowed by the classical tachistoscope.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

76–84 Stewart, Jean and Sinclair, Hermine. Comprehension of questions by children between five and nine. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **151** (1975), 17–26.

Children distinguish questions from other types of utterances addressed to them from a very young age, probably from the onset of speech (Ervin-Tripp, 1970). This study examines the comprehension of *Wh*-questions in English in children between the ages of five and nine. The subjects of the experiment were either of English mother tongue (39) or spoke a different language at home but always used English perfectly fluently at school (7). Recent research both on *Wh*-questions and on auxiliary verbs indicates that both structural subsystems pose problems for children below the age of five. The present study shows that these difficulties are not yet overcome by the age of nine. A tentative interpretation is given, but comparative research in different languages is necessary before the results of the experiment can be generalised.

76–85 Thieman, Thomas J. Imitation and recall of optionally deletable sentences by young children. *Journal of Child Language* (London), **2,** 2 (1975), 261–9.

A set of sentences written in either an expanded or optionally deleted form were read for imitation and delayed recall to a group of nursery school children. A

similar set of sentences had been presented for recall to adults. The older children and adults tended to recall the sentences in deleted forms, regardless of their input form. The youngest child tested, however, recalled the sentences in a fully expanded form, even when they had been presented and imitated in deleted form. The results offer support for the hypothesis of memory for non-linguistic ideas by both children and adults, as well as a demonstration of Slobin's (1973) universal operating principle that when children are first gaining control of an optionally deletable linguistic entity they will often produce only its full form.

76–86   Townsend, David J. and Erb, Melinda. Children's strategies for interpreting complex comparative questions. *Journal of Child Language* (London), **2**, 2 (1975), 271–77.

Fifty-four children aged between three and six were asked questions such as 'Which box is Xer than it is Z?' where Xer was *taller*, *shorter*, *fatter*, or *thinner* and Z was *tall* or *fat*, in the context of five rectangles of varying dimensions. For most questions, the largest rectangle was chosen most often as an answer, regardless of the adjectives used. The older children often chose the Xest rectangle in the array, indicating interpretation of only the first clause of the question. After providing feedback on incorrect answers for the five-year-old children, a post-test showed a decrease in frequency of choices of the largest rectangle, no change in frequency of choices of the Xest rectangle, and, for some questions, an increase in the frequency of choices of the correct rectangle. The results are interpreted to mean that the linguistic strategy of attending to the first clause is more resistant to change than the more primitive non-linguistic preference for choosing the largest object without interpreting the sentence.

76–87   Vorster, Jan. Mommy linguist: the case for motherese. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **37**, 4 (1975), 281–312.

It is argued that approaches to problems of language acquisition rooted in a transformational generative perspective have consistently underestimated the importance of the linguistic environment to the child learning language. By characterising this environment as degenerate and composed of ill-formed data, transformational generative approaches have thereby reinforced their claims concerning innate linguistic universals.

However, data is cited and recent research work reviewed to show that the linguistic input to the child is by no means uniformly degenerate. Adults adapt their input to the child and do so progressively to match the child's development. Though adult speech to the child may not take account of specific and qualitative aspects of the child's development, utterance length, for instance, increases with

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increase in the age of addressee, and adult-to-child speech in general is shown to be simplified, repetitive, and idealised. These findings are shown to obtain across all groups in society and at all socio-economic levels. Even a three- or four-year-old is capable of reading accurately the cues for appropriate input to a two-year-old. The significance of these findings for unlocking the process of language acquisition and ascertaining the role of innate universals remains to be explored.

PHONOLOGY   *See also abstracts* 76–94, –136

76–88   **Bulygina, T. V.**   Проблемы теории и практики морфонологического описания. [Problems of theory and practice in morphonological description.] *Серия литературы и языка* (Moscow), **34**, 4 (1975), 328–40.

Problems of morphology, neglected during the 1940s and 50s, have once more become a central interest to linguists. The central task of morphonology is to describe morphemic variation more economically than is possible by a method which simply lists the allomorphs of each morpheme separately and the conditions specifying their occurrence. The widespread tendency to regard morphological variation as being conditioned by grammatical position is criticised, together with the tendency to contrast sharply purely phonetically motivated variation with variation describable only by reference to morphological data [details]. Morphonological solutions are offered for various problems of morphological variation which have remained unsolved: (1) the inclusion in a morphonological inventory of two distinct units {y} and {i} (in opposition to the proposal of the Moscow phonological school which regards [и] and [ы] as phonematically equivalent) permits the handling of the following data: *дарить ~ дары, глупши ~ глупыш, боярин ~ боярыня*; (2) an analogous solution to problems in relation to the description of the so-called 'flying vowel' is offered by the postulation of the two distinct morphonemes {ъ} and {ь}; and (3) a morphonological explanation is offered for phenomena such as variation between e/a, velars and affricates/fricatives in verb and adjective stems, the distribution of conjugational endings, and the conjugational anomaly of *бежать.*

76–89   **George, H. V. and Neo, B. C.** A theory of stress. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **5**, 1 (1974), 50–63.

The concept of 'stress' should be associated with 'force'. Stress is unimportant in English as a means of distinguishing the meanings of words. Stressed syllables occur at widely differing intervals of time. A connection between

sentence stress and form classes or parts of speech has been pointed out, but the function of stress has not been adequately studied. The theory of functional perspective developed by the Prague School casts some light on problems of stress and links meaning, attitude and grammar.

An experiment is described to test the hypothesis that the degree of stress on a language item is inversely proportionate to the degree of predictability of the item. Results indicate that a language item is predictable according to its frequency of occurrence, either generally or in a particular register or context, its likelihood of occurrence as a semantic item in a semantic context, and its likelihood of occurrence as a member of a word class in a syntactic context. Stress rating correlates with the amount of information communicated and with item length and item position in a syntactic construction. The association between predictability and stress is complicated. There is an increasing tendency to stress prepositions in any formal speech context, and relative pronouns and the modal or auxiliary items in verb groups. Learners of English cannot read effectively unless they know how information is distributed in English sentences. Understanding of stress is a means to this awareness.

LEXICOGRAPHY

76–90   **Sommerfeld, K.-E. and Schreiber, H.** Zu einem Wörterbuch der Valenz und Distribution der Substantive. [Thoughts on a dictionary of the valency and distribution of nouns.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig), **12**, 2 (1975), 112–19.

Recent publications on valency, which have been increasingly geared to the practical side of language teaching, have mainly dealt with verbs; here, Bondzio's research on the valency of nouns is used as a basis for investigating groups of mainly abstract nouns expressing activity, process, state, quality and information. The nouns examined [examples] range from zero- to tri-valent forms. Semantic valency is investigated, particularly those elements that fill vacancies of the uni-, bi-, and tri-valent noun. The relationship between the valency of the verbal substantive and that of the verb on which it is based is studied. Referring to research done by Schippan, seven groups of nouns are set up [examples]. Syntactic valency is also considered in nouns expressing process and quality, which are derived from verbs and adjectives. Valency models of groups of nouns are discussed. [List of models, divided into categories according to the number of vacancies that can be filled.] The choice of material and method of description is discussed, taking *Annahme* as an example, with abbreviations based on the *Wörterbuch zur Valenz und Distribution deutscher Verben.*

TRANSLATION

76–91   Goldman-Eisler, Frieda and Cohen, Michèle. An experimental study of interference between receptive and productive processes involving speech. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **151** (1975), 5–16.

The question of the interference between the reception and production of speech is basic to an understanding of the processes involved in simultaneous translation. An experiment is described which was designed to throw light on this problem by controlling the level of interference between decoding and encoding speech, using hesitancy as an indicator of interference. This proved effective in discovering the levels at which interference takes place. Encoding without processing did not interfere with the monitoring of even highly complex intellectual material, but encoding involving complex processing did so in proportion to the hesitancy of the input. Such encoding was facilitated at the end of monitored sentences and inhibited while they were being monitored.

STYLISTICS

76–92   Cook, Walter A. Stylistics: measuring style complexity. *Georgetown University Working Papers on Language and Linguistics* (Washington DC), **11** (1975), 106–20.

A process is outlined for measuring the style complexity of a text, concentrating on the ways in which sentences are structured in terms of clauses. Clauses are recognised as the unit of information in speech processing, although further investigation suggests that the speech processor processes not only single clauses, but also clause clusters centred on a single main clause. Clauses are, then, the units of information communicated in blocks clustered around each independent clause.

In analysis, a text is written as separate clauses; blocks containing a main clause are identified, and the nature of the relationship between one main clause and another is indicated. A direct measure of the number of clauses per sentence is not useful; a more valid measure is given by the average number of clauses per information block, i.e. a measure of the amount of information processed per block. This index is further modified to incorporate a measure of the degree of embedding. Such a measure of style complexity is of relevance both to literature teaching and to English composition.