Language and linguistics

GENERAL LINGUISTIC THEORY

68–254 **Kohler, K.** Firthian linguistics and the generative approach.
Phonetica (Basle), **17**, 4 (1967), 193–201.

The basic principles of Firthian linguistics are examined, and under-
stood as a well-justified reaction against the tenets of behaviourist
linguistics. According to Firth, language is an *activity* not an *object*,
but he and his followers study it as an object because they do not
relate it to the *speaker's* competence to form sentences, but to the
linguist's competence to analyse them. Some of the difficulties arising
are discussed and a solution sought in the generative approach and
reliance on the native speaker's intuition. A distinction is introduced
between language description representing the native speaker's com-
petence and linguistic evaluation procedures which are the linguist's
operations designed to lead to a language description. Neither should
be belittled and linguists should constantly ask themselves whether
what they put forth is part of a language description or simply a further
step in linguistic procedures.

LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

68–255 **Hill, Archibald A.** The promises and limitations of the
newest type of grammatical analysis. *TESOL Quarterly*
(Washington, DC), **1**, 2 (1967), 10–22.

After sketching a brief history of the development of linguistics
through the early part of the twentieth century, the author considers
in greater detail the 'structuralist' and 'transformationalist' schools
and attempts to define the 'new linguistics' in simple terms, noting
the grammatical works of pre-Bloomfieldian linguistics, the tendency
to a use of formulae by transformationalists and the reasons for this,

and the building of inverted tree-diagrams to describe language structure. The author sees transformational analysis as a major linguistic revolution enabling complete, precise and economical statements to be made about syntax which had not been possible before. Teaching has profited from transformational analysis, as it is possible to present a great part of the structure of the target language as a series of processes by which a starting sentence is transformed. Composition classes can profit since transformational explanations and drills can be an aid to acquiring conscious control of sentence patterns. The goal of fully developed transformational analysis would be a study of the acquisition of native-speaker grammar, and the achievement of such an understanding would mean understanding the nature of man himself.

Some criticisms can be levelled at transformational analysis as it exists at the moment: at the theory that phrases containing prenominal adjectives have been 'derived' from predicate sentences, at the understanding of phonology [considerable detail given], and at the description of the perfect grammar. [Chomsky here deviates from the opinion of other transformationalists in thinking that the perfect grammar would not only generate all the grammatical sentences, but would provide a description of any ungrammatical sentence showing exactly how it departed from the grammatical.]

PSYCHOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

68–256 Schlesinger, I. M. A note on the relationship between psychological and linguistic theories. *Foundations of Language* (Dordrecht), **3**, 4 (1967), 397–402.

The psychological study of language behaviour has been stimulated by Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*. The relationship between psychology and linguistics needs to be clarified.

[The author discusses criticisms of Braine's theory of language acquisition made by Bever, Fodor and Weksel.] Possibly surface structures are acquired in the first stages of learning, in the manner Braine describes, while the underlying structures are acquired as a second stage.

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Some of the mistakes produced by children show that they are applying grammatical rules other than those applied by adults.

There are two possible approaches towards distinguishing between linguistics and psychology. Linguistics may be viewed as an entirely autonomous discipline, concerned with the description of observable linguistic output. Some linguists, e.g. Chomsky, do not accept this view, and see linguistics as only a part of the total theory of language behaviour.

The psychologist's task, according to Bever and others, is to explain what makes the linguistic model work. It is unreasonable, however, to give primacy to the linguistic model. A makeshift statement regarding 'what' may serve for a time, before being reconsidered in the light of results regarding 'how'.

Some of the simplicity of explanations currently provided by linguists may have to be sacrificed for the sake of the simplicity of an over-all theory of language behaviour. Psychologists should not let themselves be held in leash by linguistic theory.

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

68-257 von Essen, O. Einfache statistische Rechnungen in der Phonetik. [Simple statistical computation in phonetics.] *Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung* (Berlin), **20**, 1/2 (1967), 3–59.

The author presents a short introduction to statistical methods in as far as they are needed by the linguist. The author has realized that without the application of statistical methods no clear, valid and acceptable judgements can be made concerning linguistic and phonetic phenomena collected and observed in the field. Apart from elementary knowledge, no mathematical training has been assumed; using a large number of examples, the author shows the computation of the mean, variance, standard deviation and correlation coefficients of a sample, and explains in simple language how they can be used to present or interpret linguistic data. [Bibliography.]

PHYSIOLOGY OF SPEECH

68-258 Pike, K. L. Tongue-root position in practical phonetics. *Phonetica* (Basle), **17**, 3 (1967), 129-40.

This article complements one previously written by J. M. Stewart relating the articulatory basis of West African vowel harmony to the position of the root of the tongue (advanced or unadvanced).

In previous publications the author had given exercises to control the openness of the throat with resultant voice quality changes (hollow when the tongue-root is fronted, choked when backed). In the present article he integrates such drills with others which alter the general position of the blade of the tongue, thus altering the 'vowel triangle' as a whole.

The two kinds of change—of root versus blade—are in general independent. Some restriction however occurs: it is difficult to move the root and blade of the tongue in opposite directions, but simple to move them in the same direction. This leads to some conditioning of phoneme variants.

Pedagogically, it is more efficient to use drills which teach general kinds of articulatory change leading to sets of allophones than it is to attempt to induce the same result by a conscious summation of many (apparently) distinct allophonic rules.

GRAMMAR

68-259 Motsch, Wolfgang. Können attributive Adjektive durch Transformationen erklärt werden? [Can attributive adjectives be explained by transformations?] *Folia Linguistica* (The Hague), **1**, 1/2 (1967), 23-48.

In W. Winter's article 'Transforms without kernels?' (*Language*, 41, 1965) Chomsky's T_{adj} rule in *Syntactic Structures* was criticized as over-generalized; proceeding from this, the whole of Chomsky's transformational theory was claimed to be inadequate and based on false notions of the character of human language. The author regards Winter's criticism as only partly justified. He believes that in any

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adequate description of a language the transformation theory is a necessary tool for determining relations between linguistic structures.

For an adequate description of German or English a much more precise definition of this transformation is needed. There are in both languages a small number of adjectives that can only be used predicatively. These can be dealt with by re-defining T_{adj} and limiting its application to adjectives that can be used in both ways, or by classifying the exclusively predicative adjectives as idiosyncratic exceptions.

Not all attributive adjectives can be derived from predicative ones, and therefore not every structure T-adj-N has been generated by T_{adj}. Although a contrived kernel sentence could be conceived and T_{adj} used mechanically, this is rejected for empirical reasons and because the kernel sentence is no longer considered to be of great importance by the experts. Instead, idiosyncratic characteristics are cited as an explanation.

Chomsky's basic rule does not work in the case of derived German adjectives, e.g. those with the suffix -lich or -isch, that can only be used attributively. They can, however, be explained in terms of transformational grammar by substituting a relative clause with a widely applicable verb, and bearing in mind their idiosyncratic nature.

Examples of attributive adjectives used by Winter to demonstrate the inadequacy of Chomsky's rule are either dismissed as irrelevant or explained by extending the original rule.

The conclusion is that T-adj-N is an ambiguous surface-structure phrase which is based on various deep structures and can be analysed and expressed via rules explaining the apparent ambiguity.

In the final section methodological questions, in particular the adequacy of linguistic theory and grammatical description, are discussed.

68–260 Dik, S. C. Some critical remarks on the treatment of morphological structure in transformational generative grammar. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **18**, 4 (1967), 352–83.

The author outlines what is meant by a linguistic description and especially by morphological structure. He gives reasons for the comparative neglect of morphology by transformational generative

grammar. He distinguishes between the terms 'generative' and 'transformational', and considers whether a complete generative description of morphological structure is possible. He gives reasons for thinking that the psycholinguistic interpretation of 'generative grammar' is untenable as a basis for linguistic description and theory. He examines Chomsky's treatment of 'irregular' and non-productive formations, and concludes that the same problems are encountered as in other linguistic theories. He also considers the views of Katz, Lees and Motsch. In considering particular analyses proposed for derivational and compound structures, he stresses the fundamental difference between the different types of generative rule involved. He gives reasons for saying that, in the field of morphological structure, transformational generative grammar has achieved less of value than its proponents often claim.

LEXICOLOGY

68–261 Pocheptsov, G. G. Syntaktische Wortvarianten: zur Frage der Typen der Wortvariierung. [Syntactic word variants: on the problem of the typology of word variation.] *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* (Leipzig), **15**, 1 (1967), 32–43.

Modern lexicology exhibits growing interest in words, not as entries in dictionaries, but as dynamically functioning elements in speech. This had led to the discovery that structural variation is possible within words, a typology of word variants being proposed. There are still many areas to be explored, including the problems presented by complexes which exhibit identity of form and paradigm, but variation in function and semantic implication. He proposes the addition of two new types of word variation: syntactic and lexico-syntactic, and aims to establish these concepts and to give the results arising from research into them in the field of English verbs.

Semantic individuality in word variants can be established by collocation, given common syntax, or by variant syntax, where lexical content is irrelevant. But words can occur with varying syntactic structures and yet exhibit no semantic individuality. Some verbs may

be both transitive and intransitive with optional distribution. They represent the middle range of a scale of directed/non-directed actions. If a verb from one part of the scale is used in circumstances typical of another part syntactic variation is produced. If lexical variation also occurs in this situation we have lexico-syntactic variation, without overstepping the boundaries of lexico-semantic identity. It is in this area that grammar and lexis can most clearly be seen to overlap.

In English there are verbs whose function ranges from purely auxiliary to completely independent, with a consequent growth of lexical content from nil to full, i.e. have, be, do. On semantic grounds these are sometimes treated as one, two or more homonyms, but the author feels they are best treated as syntactic variants of one word. Examples of syntactic variation include: to make someone do something (to make something), and of lexico-syntactic variation: to walk a dog (to walk).

CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS

68-262 Krzeszowski, Tomasz. Fundamental principles of structural contrastive studies. *Glottodidactica* (Poznan), **2**, 1967, 33-9.

One of the main principles of contrastive language studies is that only comparisons of *structures* of particular systems are possible. It is impossible to compare two language systems as wholes and before any comparison can take place existing descriptions of the systems to be compared must be studied in order to establish comparability. Equivalence is the most crucial criterion for selecting particular constructions for comparison. Pairs of texts and their components may be considered as equivalent if they have been translated from one to the other. When the equivalence of constructions has been established, formal comparison may be made.

The main object of contrastive studies is to constitute a rational basis for preparing material for teaching. Contrastive analyses must be exact and strict and the aims will be (1) to find contrasts in L_2 which have no equivalent contrasts in L_1, (2) to find contrasts in L_2 reflecting meanings signalled in L_1 but by different media.

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