# Language and linguistics

## DICTIONARIES

**69-1**  **Lang, Ewald.** Vorschläge für ein linguistisches Wörterbuch. [Suggestions for a linguistic dictionary.] *Linguistics* (The Hague), 37 (1967), 52–7.

No sooner does a new academic discipline establish itself than a need is felt for a dictionary of its terminology. A dictionary of linguistic terminology must be restricted to a particular theory or school in order to explain its vocabulary fully. It ought to do more than give references to further documentation so that from each entry a link can be seen with the whole system. The definitions of a term should be so arranged that the varying uses by standard writers are reflected along with the historical changes in the corresponding theory.

Useful additions to such a dictionary would be a bibliography of pertinent standard works, and an introduction to the theory with reference to its development and present position among the various schools of thought. This undertaking would help considerably to make linguistics an exact discipline and would ease communication with other sociological sciences.

Other problems are listed which normally arise in the compilation of dictionaries of terminology. The author raises the problem of the translation of terminology into another language, suggesting that this may mean the creation of a new word. Where possible such new words should conform as closely as possible to the original term without violating phonetic and other word-patterns of the target language. Preferably such new words should be forged only in consultation with the researchers in the particular field in question.

## GENERAL LINGUISTIC THEORY

**69-2**    **Chomsky, Noam.** The current scene in linguistics: present directions. *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund), **15**, 1 (1968), 169.

Two traditions are distinguishable in modern linguistic theory: that of 'universal' or 'philosophical' grammar, and that of structural or descriptive linguistics.

Universal grammar was concerned with general features of language structure. Grammar was expected to offer an explanation of the data of usage and to establish principles applicable to all languages and based on intrinsic properties of the mind. The tradition of universal grammar came to an end in the nineteenth century. Universal grammar was not interested solely in writing, nor was it based mainly on a Latin model. Its assumptions have not been refuted by anthropological linguistics. To say that universal grammarians were wrong to try to explain rather than merely to describe usage is to misunderstand all rational inquiry. Contemporary linguistics should take their concept of language as a point of departure.

Structural linguistics grew out of the concepts that emerged in Indo-European comparative study. Its fundamental assumption is that procedures of segmentation and classification can isolate and identify all types of elements in a particular language and the constraints they obey. By enriching the range of factual material it has made possible a return to the universal grammarians. There has been a real advance in universal phonetics.

A synthesis of the two major traditions is possible. The linguist is concerned to report data which are of interest in so far as they throw light on the mechanisms of sentence construction. He is concerned to state the grammatical principles of a language, and this statement is interesting only for the light it sheds on universal grammar. A general theory of linguistic structure is primarily of interest for the information it gives about intellectual structure. The linguist is concerned with explanation.

[The author describes two unsolved problems in the grammar of English.] There are few well-supported answers, at the level of either particular or universal grammar.

GENERAL LINGUISTIC THEORY

A descriptive grammar is one aspect of a full generative grammar. With descriptive grammar, the units are logically prior to the grammar; with generative grammar, the opposite is true.

Students should be taught grammar in a less mechanical way and be introduced to the tantalizing problems of language.

**69–3    Herdan, Gustav.** Götzendämmerung at MIT. [The twilight of the false gods at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.] *Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung* (Berlin), **21**, 3/4 (1968), 223–31.

Although Chomsky claims to be creating a new science of linguistics, he is only concerned with trying to make a computer speak grammatically. His theories lack the generality characteristic of science. Neither Harris nor Chomsky has given a clear definition of a kernel sentence, and although these minimum sentences and their statistical distribution among all the sentences in the English language underlie his theory of generative grammar, Chomsky has declared that statistics are not applicable to a description of grammar. As a result America has taken no part in the development of statistical linguistics during the last decade. Instead, a school of mathematical linguistics arose in the United States using mathematical logic instead of numerical mathematics. The author's own development of statistical linguistics, however, greatly simplifies what often appears an unmanageable complex of relations. Chomsky's disciple, Katz, has confused the philosophy of language with the language of philosophy. His phrase-markers are algorithms for computer use in machine translation, not part of a philosophy of language.

## SEMANTICS

**69–4    Darbelnet, J.** Composantes sémantiques. [Semantic components.] *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* (Toronto), **13**, 1 (1967), 15–19.

Having asked a group of French-Canadian students in a course of lexicology and semantics to define ten words, the author found that,

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800001324 Published online by Cambridge University Press

for a variety of reasons, the students had difficulties and results were poor, the commonest error being to confuse association of ideas with an analysis of semantic components. [Correct definitions of the words are given.] The exercise forced the students to analyse the words rigorously and gave them a basis for a critical use of dictionaries.

The study of semantic components can be pursued in the field of differential lexicology, which is the study of the meaning and value of words in two given languages. The analysis of semantic components results from reflection on the thought rather than on the form of the word in question.

**69-5    Schippan, Thea and Karl-Ernst Sommerfeldt.** Die Rolle des linguistischen Kontextes. [The role of linguistic context.] *Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung* (Berlin), **20**, 5/6 (1967), 489–529.

Context research underlies the method which distributional linguistics in the Soviet Union and the USA has developed. Recent publications show that context problems have been examined from many aspects which no linguistic developments can afford to ignore. Neubert referred to the collocation test as a promising investigation. As in grammar, where morpheme groups exist which do not conform to a system, so in semantics, word combinations which do not fit into a pattern are revealed by a collocation test. The concept of semantic congruence is a basic principle of semantic research. The semantic rules of a language are a reflexion of the abstractions of relationships and facts of objective reality. Panzer's article *Kontextdetermination und Morphembedeutung* is also quoted as relevant to this theme. It notes the difficulty of grasping and classifying a context, including the difficulty of describing polysemic words so that they can be indicated in a dictionary. Schmidt's definition of main and secondary meaning is well illustrated.

The clarification of meaning by the juxtaposition of a noun or adjective, a substantive attribute, an attributive infinitive, prepositions, etc., and grammatical context, including morphological, semantic and constructive terms, are illustrated and examined.

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## LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

**69-6**    **Revell, E. J.** Sign and sound in the study of written texts. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* (Toronto), **13**, 1 (1967), 24-33.

The increased interest in speech brought about by the development of modern linguistics has resulted in a diminution of regard for written texts as a manifestation of language. This raises a query as to the relationship of speech to grammar. Spoken sounds are not part of the grammar of a language, but a means of representing it. The concept of 'phoneme' is a tool designed to permit the simple and clear description of the way in which this representation is achieved, but phonemic transcription is not the ideal writing system, being far more complex than is desirable and restricted to space and time. Writing represents the morphemes of a language sufficiently well for a trained reader to recognize them. Graphemes and phonemes thus form independent systems of representing the grammar of a language. It is false to reject writing as an object of linguistic study on the grounds that it gives an inadequate representation of spoken language. [Details of the argument are illustrated.]

## PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

**69-7**    **Wardhaugh, Ronald.** Three approaches to contrastive phonological analysis. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* (Toronto), **13**, 1 (1967), 3-14.

The first approach to contrastive phonological analysis is essentially a theoretical one. The second is essentially not theoretical because it uses the evidence provided by interference as its starting point and works from such evidence towards relationships between systems.

The transformational-generative system leads into the third possible over-all approach in which contrast might be achieved through the use of generative phonologies of the two languages, specifically when those two phonologies are taken to be part of transformational-generative grammars of the languages. [A definition of a generative

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phonology follows.] It is, however, very difficult to see how an approach to contrastive phonological analysis may be made through generative phonologies of the languages. This does not imply that the transformational-generative theory itself is incorrect, but that while the theory serves many useful purposes in linguistics, other theories are necessary and more appropriate for other purposes.

## VOCABULARY STUDIES

**69-8    Halbauer, Siegfried.** Elektronische Rechenanlagen im Dienste fremdsprachlicher Unterweisung. [Computers in the service of foreign language teaching.] *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund), **15**, 1 (1968), 53–60.

Since the beginning of this century, there have been many investigations into lexis, often taking the form of word counts and recently assisted by computers. The article summarizes work done in this field, mentioning also work done in the Technical University of Hanover on machine translation.

## PARALINGUISTICS

**69-9    Abercrombie, David.** Paralanguage. *British Journal of Disorders of Communication* (London), **3**, 1 (1968), 55–9.

The term 'paralanguage' is potentially misleading. Paralinguistic phenomena are culturally determined and differ from one social group to another. Sometimes the differences cut across linguistic boundaries. Paralinguistic phenomena must both communicate and be part of a conversational interaction. Not all non-verbal communication is paralinguistic. The word 'paralinguistic' should be applied to both movements and sounds. There are elements which can be independent of the verbal elements of conversation, and others which are dependent on them. Much dependent visible paralinguistic behaviour comes under the heading of posture, or 'body semantics'.

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The distance between those conversing is important. Gesture is superimposed on posture. Gesture and facial expression supply the independent visible elements. Audible elements are also either dependent or independent. Interjections are independent. Tones of voice are dependent.

Comparative study of the full range of paralinguistic phenomena is needed.

Cultural groups differ in the way the same total of meaning is distributed between linguistic and paralinguistic elements. [Bibliography.]