TRENDS IN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN LINGUISTICS 1930–1960

EDITED ON THE OCCASION OF
THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF LINGUISTS
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
27 AUGUST–1 SEPTEMBER 1962
FOR THE PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF LINGUISTS
BY

CHRISTINE MOHRMANN, ALF SOMMERFELT
AND JOSHUA WHATMOUGH

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PREFACE

When the *Comité International Permanent des Linguistes* proposed to have in its budget a sum enabling them to publish this volume in good time before the 9th International Congress of Linguists, they were in the first place guided by the desire to record, briefly, the recent achievements of European and American linguists. There was a period, due to the last war, when the two groups seemed to drift apart. That fortunately now belongs to history; the 8th International Congress had more American members than any of the previous ones, and it is to be hoped that the 9th which will take place at Harvard in 1961 will have a large number of Europeans.

We have had to limit our task to an exposé of the main trends in general linguistics and have not been able to deal with other linguistic disciplines. Therefore no review of the achievements of the different countries in which linguistic research is carried out will be found in the book. We have tried to get the characteristic 'schools' represented, but regret that there are important lacunae, as far as Europe is concerned, such as, for example, the socalled Prague School and British research centred round Daniel Jones, J. R. Firth and others. We intend, however, to complete our task in a second volume for which we hope to get the necessary subvention.

One cannot understand the present situation in our science without some knowledge of how it developed. It is therefore that our volume also contains contributions mainly of historical interest.

CHRISTINE MOHRMANN
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LINGUISTIC PROSPECTS IN THE UNITED STATES

MARTIN JOOS

This chapter responds to the request to prepare a programmatic chapter. Because no program can be prescribed, the chapter consists of guesses; and because guessing is possible only within the range of personal acquaintance, it is confined to a single nation. The immense variety of American linguistic activities has been documented in other chapters, so that readers can guess what continuations may be expected in nearly every case; the bibliographic information there provided makes it unnecessary to give many references here. In short, this chapter is speculative; moreover, it is confined to linguistic theory in the narrower senses of the term.

However, it is expedient to list some of those more or less urgent practical concerns which are stimulating the development of linguistic theory among us, especially because the typically American developments have nearly always emerged from practical tasks, and again because the nature of the stimulus helps us to guess the direction of the theoretical developments. Three of those practical concerns will serve here as necessary and almost sufficient background: Mechanical Translation, Linguistics in Psychiatry, and the teaching of foreign languages (including English when taught as a foreign language).

The Mechanical Translation[1] work being carried on in many places has involved, among other things, detailed elaboration of the new descriptive procedure called Transformation Grammar or Generative Grammar, and, partly separately and partly together with the new procedure, somewhat new ways of dealing with Meaning. The application of linguistic theory to psychiatric research has especially stimulated development of the theory of paralanguage. The two topics mentioned in this paragraph will be deferred while the third is considered.

The teaching of foreign languages has recently become very im-

1) See further Mr. Plath's chapter on Mathematical Linguistics. —Edd.

portant to American linguistics. The National Defense Education Act of late 1958, an enactment of the national government (intervening for the first time in an area which has always been controlled by the fifty States individually and by their subdivisions), is designed to strengthen public education in natural science, in mathematics, and in foreign languages; it calls for improvements in language teaching as well as for expansion. Meeting the new requirement for adequate learning, within the relatively small amount of school time that American circumstances allow, calls for an untraditional efficiency in school methods. The solution must come from a new cooperation between pedagogy and linguistics. The linguists have all been exposed to the current patterns in pedagogy; the pedagogues have, with few exceptions, not been exposed to current doctrine in linguistics. The double burden, theoretical and diplomatic, of bringing the two together, therefore falls upon the linguists. Fortunately, there is one (though hardly any other) open door in current American pedagogy where the linguist can enter. Audio-visual methods (the use especially of tape-recorders and of cinema, also of tapes together with still pictures either projected or on placards) are increasingly being accepted in many lines of school instruction; accordingly, there is likely to be more acceptance than resistance when materials and methods developed under linguistic guidance are introduced through these channels. Programs for using them clearly call for fresh planning of associated books and of associated (classroom) procedures also, for use in the remainder of the learner's time when the audio-visual equipment is not in use, or when only placards (and perhaps books) are in use.

American linguists are finding their chance to work here especially by offering their specific answer to the traditional 'difficulty' of foreign-language learning, which looms much larger on the American scene (and in similar circumstances, as in Australia) than in other countries. Certain factors of this difficulty are inherent in the current epoch of American culture, notably the (subjective, hence especially powerful) remoteness of other-language communities, and the negativism towards them inherited from the 'melting-pot' phase of history when the clearly expedient (and supposedly desirable) rapid acculturation of immigrants involved rejection of the 'old-country' languages by the immigrants, still more strongly by their children, and now today, in only slowly lessening degree, by their great-grandchildren. Rapidly built up when expedient, these now inexpedient attitudes seem to be taking ten times as long to fade out again; meanwhile, we must live with them while they fade, and can only hope that they will fade faster

if not directly attacked (which would presumably exacerbate them) but left to die away in a new atmosphere created by successful foreign-language teaching. Linguists accordingly are leaving those factors to be taken care of by future history, and are concentrating on their favorite theoretical point: that the difficulty of foreign-language learning arises entirely out of conflicts between the new structure of language-habits to be developed in the learner and the persisting native language structure of habits; in other words, that a language is difficult only as a competitor.

The practical task is to find the conflicts and define them so clearly that the pedagogical procedures become obvious. To find the conflicts, it is necessary to know the structure both of the language being learned and of the native language. Of the two, the native-language structure is the more important to pedagogy, simply because the whole native structure is always present and ready to create conflicts, while the foreign structure can be dealt with piecemeal. Accordingly, the contributions to linguistic theory or description which are to be expected here will mostly be advances in our understanding of English structure.

Any theoretic advance in our understanding of English may of course constitute an advance in general linguistic theory. For a swift survey of the possibilities, we need a perspicuous frame of reference. The frame used here was first delineated by George Trager and will be found in an article of his in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14.162E (1956); it is repeated here as first completely filled out in Studies in Linguistics 13.55 (1958), but with slightly different wording:

(0) Matrix
Phonology: (1) Phonation
(2) Allophonics
(3) Phonemics
Grammar: (4) Morphophonemics
(5) Morphology
(6) Syntax
Semology: (7) Collocation
(8) Notation
(9) Reference
(10) Hypostasis

Here (0) and (10) lie outside of linguistics proper; (0) consists of the biological and other material bases of speech; and (10) is the world, real and mythical, to which utterances refer and which common sense treats as exactly replicated by language. This common-sense view has

governed most linguists also, notably the twenty-odd contributors to the 68 pages on Meaning in the Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Linguists, so that the only systematization envisaged there is of the sort that can be codified in conceptual dictionaries (dealing with the different words that compete as carriers of more or less similar meanings) and no attention is paid to determining what structure there may be inside the language itself: the relations among the different meanings of single words. For an early attempt at such a truly linguistic approach to meaning, see Studies in Linguistics (loc. cit.). It is too soon to guess what may come of that attempt, but at least the distinction between meaning-structure outside of language (in the hypostasis) and inside of language (in the semology) has been established.

It will be convenient to use this frame of reference to characterize the historical development of American linguistic theory during recent decades (as detailed in other chapters of this volume). For the most part, it has progressed from the smaller toward the larger numbers appearing on our chart, though with occasional backwards steps. The interest in Acoustic Phonetics since 1947 is a step back from (1) to (0) after more than two decades. Morphophonemic theory (4) since 1942 has occasioned frequent new visits to phonemics (3). Other backward steps are to be mentioned below; the reason why they have been so few is simply that very few groups have tried to go beyond (6) step by step, so that there is little room for them to return. One important group, without going farther, is working vigorously on (5) and (6) under the title 'Tagmemics,' while a professionally related group is working on (10) without any clear theory of what lies between.

Among these step-by-step advances, the Discourse Analysis of Zellig Harris was a notable example of a single firm forward step: from (6) syntax to (7) collocation. But those workers, instead of taking the next steps, have since devoted themselves to incorporating their gains from (7) into their theory of grammar; see later. Thus semology still remains very little explored, and it offers the most promising area for future step-by-step advances. Some of these are being prepared by workers on English grammar, who need semology for describing what may be called 'inaudible form' in language after they have taken care of directly audible forms by (4), (5), and (6). Here the stimulation of the foreign-language-teaching task is especially important, but at least one group (Smith and Trager) is working without that.

In bringing under consideration the results of exploiting linguistics for the benefit of psychiatry (and vice versa), we find it expedient to

abandon step-by-step progress through the charted sequence of linguistic categories. In fact, it may be said that the step-by-step connection is characteristic of linguistics proper, as the theory of language in the strict sense; and connections over greater intervals are characteristic of what is beginning to be called by other names, as the various theories of a still unknown number of other communication-systems associated with language in various ways. Of these, paralanguage, with paralinguistics as its theory, seems to be the extreme case: here there seems to be a direct connection from (0) and (1) to (9) and (10), independent of all that lies between.

How is this theoretically possible? If Phonology completely controlled (0), Grammar completely controlled Phonology, Semology completely controlled Grammar, and (10) the hypostasis (including the particular messages to be delivered currently) completely controlled Semology and thereby all the rest, this would not be theoretically possible at all. But none of these determines *all* of anything; each determines only some details and leaves the speaker (so far) free to vary the rest. The reason is that the controlling, or determining, is restrictive, not creative: when the phonology has obeyed the grammar completely, there is still room for the phonation to vary; it does vary, in fact, in ways popularly specified by mentioning for example "a tired tone of voice" or "laughing as he spoke". Such phenomena – and there seem to be a great many of them – are treated as 'paralanguage' by the workers in 'paralinguistics'. It is here proposed that the proper limits of this field are as stated above: that none of (2) to (8) inclusive can be affected, so that all of them may vary under still other controls. For a first statement of what seems to be involved, with a tentative systematization, see Studies in Linguistics 13.1 (1958) where there is mention also of the implications for psychiatry, among other things.

There are of course also other implications; one deserves mention because of our former topic: foreign-language teaching. Paralinguistic communication is open to study by linguists, of course, only on the supposition that it is conventional (cultural) rather than merely biological. We already know that this is true to a very great extent, perhaps almost exhaustively true. For example, it is theoretically sound to hold that a child *learns* how to speak tiredly: that this is not an automatic biological mechanism. Conversely, the child learns, as part of his general task of enculturation, how to react categorically, conventionally, culturally, to the arbitrary signals of tiredness, codified in the culture, which he hears in another's voice. Now in our first considera-

tion of the difficulty of learning foreign languages, it was remarked that certain factors of this difficulty are at present inherent in American culture; and our present point is that these factors currently influence the child-learner through paralinguistic signals which he hears, not only in the voices of all sorts of people talking about foreign-language learning, but also in the teacher's voice in the classroom. Too much of our schooling is conducted in an atmosphere of unreality which is continuously signalled to the children by the teacher's voice in the paralinguistic code of the community. A frontal attack on this problem in the foreign-language classroom will not only make more genuine the model utterances which the teacher offers; starting from there, it can lead ultimately to a general improving of all teaching.

It was proposed above that the field of paralanguage and paralinguistics is theoretically to be confined to the most extremely distant linkage readable from the master chart: from (0) and (1) down to (9) and (10) without any connection between either and any of (2) to (8) inclusive; that is, that pure paralanguage conveys messages directly by phonation and quite unphonologically, ungrammatically, and unsemologically. This raises the question of other, less distant linkages: are there any, and what shall we call them?

A linkage from all of semology to all of phonology has been discussed repeatedly by anthropologists and others, notably in describing the special phonologies of singing, of myth-narrating (with special phonologies for particular characters in the story), and so on; one from grammar (including morphophonemics) to semology is obvious in our English of prayer and liturgy; the list is not exhaustive, and the problem of categorizing them all is left untouched here while we consider one candidate.

This is what was discussed by John S. Kenyon, College English 10.31-6 (1948), under the term Functional Varieties. On various occasions, and according to the roles which he may be playing, a speaker employs different combinations of the possibilities still open to him under his phonology, his grammar, and his semology. The function of these functional varieties clearly is to help define the occasion; so that the listener will know what kinds of messages to expect and need not cast about among the vastly greater number of messages possible among all occasions together, seeking to understand which message this one might be. For example, the speaker says 'perhaps' on one occasion but 'maybe' on occasions of other types; he freely splits infinitives in certain types of social frame but never does it in others; he even unconsciously revises his phonology according