

A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language*

One sign of immaturity [in a science] is the endless flow of terminology. The critical reader begins to wonder if some strange naming taboo attaches to the terms that a linguist uses, whereby when he dies they must be buried with him.

DWIGHT BOLINGER

Aspects of Language, p. 554

What is needed, of course, is a comprehensive lexicographical survey, on historical principles, of twentieth-century terminology in linguistics and phonetics. One could use the techniques, well established, which have provided dictionaries of excellence, such as the OED and Merriam Webster's. The painstaking scrutiny of texts from a range of contexts, the recording of new words and senses on slips, and the systematic correlation of these as a preliminary to representing patterns of usage: such steps are routine for major surveys of general vocabulary and could as readily be applied for a specialised vocabulary, such as the present undertaking. Needless to say, it would be a massive task – and one which, for linguistics and phonetics, has frequently been initiated, but never completed. I am aware of several attempts to work along these lines, in Canada, Great Britain, Japan and the United States, sometimes by individuals, sometimes by committees. All seem to have foundered, presumably for a mixture of organisational and financial reasons. I tried to initiate such a project myself, twice, but failed both times, for the same reasons. The need for a proper linguistics dictionary is thus as urgent now as it ever was; but to be fulfilled it requires a combination of academic expertise, time, physical resources and finance which so far have proved impossible to attain.

But how to cope, in the meantime, with the apparently 'endless flow of terminology' which Bolinger, among many others, laments? And how to deal with the enquiries from the *two* kinds of consumer of linguistic and phonetic terms? For this surely is the peculiar difficulty which linguists nowadays have to face — that their subject, despite its immaturity, carries immense popular as well as academic appeal. Not only, therefore, is terminology a problem for the academic linguist and phonetician; these days, such people are far outnumbered by those who, for private or professional reasons, have developed more than an incidental interest in the subject. It is of little use intimating that the interest of the outside world is premature, as has sometimes been suggested. The interest exists, in a genuine, responsible and critical form, and requires a comparably responsible academic reaction. The present dictionary is, in the first instance, an attempt to meet the popular demand for information about linguistic terms, pending the fuller, academic evaluation of the subject's terminology which one day may come.

The demand has come mainly from those for whom a conscious awareness of language is an integral part of the exercise of a profession, and upon whom the influence of linguistics has been making itself increasingly felt in recent years. This characterisation includes two main groups: the range of teaching and remedial language professions, such as foreign-language teaching and speech therapy; and the range of academic fields which study language as part of their concerns, such as psychology, sociology, literary criticism and philosophy. It also includes an increasing number of students of linguistics — especially those who are taking introductory courses in the subject at postgraduate or in-service levels. In addition, there are the many categories of first-year undergraduate students of linguistics and phonetics. My aim, accordingly, was to provide a tool which would assist these groups in their initial coming to grips with linguistic terminology, and it is this which has motivated my title: a *first* dictionary. . .

COVERAGE

Once a decision about readership had been made, the problem of selecting items and senses for inclusion simplified considerably. It is not the case that the whole of linguistic terminology, and all schools of thought, have proved equally attractive or useful to the above groups. Some terms have been used (and abused) far more than others. For example, COMPETENCE, LEXIS, GENERATE, STRUCTURALISM, MORPHOLOGY and PROSODY are a handful which turn up so often in these students' early experience of the subject that their exclusion would have been unthinkable. On the other hand, *anthropophonics*, *allolog*, *bahuvrihi*, *hyperplexon* and *paraphonology* are unlikely to cause any problems for my intended readership, as they will not encounter them in their initial contact with linguistic ideas. Likewise, some linguistic theories and descriptions have achieved far more popularity than others — generative grammar, most obviously, and (in Great Britain) Hallidayan linguistics and the Quirk reference grammar, for example (cf. references, p xii). The terminology of phonetics, also, is so pervasive that it is a priority for special attention. On the other hand, despite their considerable relevance to the formation of ideas in linguistic theory, the detailed terminology of, say, glossematics, or stratificational

grammar, has not made so direct an impact on the general consciousness of the above groups. While I have included several of the more important theoretical terms from these less widely used approaches, therefore, I have not presented their terminology in any detail. Similarly, theoretical terminology which has developed since the mid-1970s will not be found (but see Preface to the Second Edition, below). The biases of this dictionary, I hope, will be seen to be those already present in the applied and introductory literature — with a certain amount of systematisation and filling-out in places, to avoid gaps in the presentation of a topic (for example, whereas many introductory texts selectively illustrate *DISTINCTIVE FEATURES*, this topic has been systematically covered in the present book).

Bearing in mind the background of the above groups helped to simplify the selection of material for inclusion in a second main way: only terms or senses which have arisen because of the influence of twentieth-century linguistics and phonetics have been included. This dictionary is therefore in contrast with several which have appeared in recent years, where the aim seems to have been to cover the whole field of language, languages and communication, as well as linguistics and phonetics. My attitude here is readily summarised: one does not need to include such terms as *alphabet*, *abbreviation* and *acronym*, because these are terms whose general sense any good dictionary would handle routinely; *as terms*, they owe nothing to the development of ideas in linguistics. Similarly, while such terms as *reinforcement*, *rhyme-scheme* and *runic* are more obviously technical, their special ranges of application derive from conceptual frameworks other than linguistics. None of these terms therefore has any place in the present dictionary. Likewise, proper names of languages and language families (such as *Chinese*, *Indo-European*) and any associated fields of study (e.g. *Chinese linguistics*) have been excluded. On the other hand, I devote a great deal of space to the many 'harmless-looking' terms which are used by linguists, where an apparently everyday word has developed a special sense, often after many years of linguistic debate, e.g. *FORM*, *FUNCTION*, *FEATURE*, *ACCENT*, *WORD*, *SENTENCE*. These are terms which, perhaps on account of their less technical appearance, cause especial difficulty at an introductory level. Particular attention is paid to them in this dictionary, therefore, alongside the more obvious technical terms, such as *PHONEME*, *BILABIAL*, *ADJUNCTION*, *MORPHOPHONEMIC* and *HYPONYMY*.

Several other constraints on coverage have been introduced, to preserve the dictionary's coherence. In particular, four categories of terminology have been excluded:

(a) The technical terms of traditional language studies (i.e. pre-twentieth century), unless they have been the focus of attention in linguistics and phonetics. For example, classical rhetorical terms are not included, such as *anaptyxis*, *prosiopesis* and *alliteration*. Similarly, most of the *detailed* terms of traditional grammatical description have been excluded as separate entries (though many of them are referred to as part of some larger entry), e.g. *masculine*, *feminine*, *neuter* (but cf. *GENDER*).

(b) The technical terms that properly belong to other disciplines, unless linguistics or phonetics have introduced a special sense, or a fresh dimension to their use. Acoustic phonetics, for example, uses many terms from physics (*spectrum*, *amplitude*, etc.), but, as no special sense is involved, these terms have been excluded. A similar principle applied in relation to the terms of information theory (e.g. *noise*),

audiology (e.g. *audiogram*), and the detailed terminology belonging to logical and philosophical analysis of language. On the other hand, the formalisation of linguistic ideas initiated by Chomsky has introduced several terms from philosophy, logic and mathematics which have become fundamental to thinking in grammar and semantics (AXIOM, ALGORITHM, PROPOSITION, CALCULUS, etc.), and thus the more important of these have been included.

(c) Terms which relate primarily to the various fields of applied language studies, such as foreign-language teaching (e.g. *transfer*) and language pathology (e.g. *aphasia*).

(d) The classical terminology of comparative philology (e.g. *umlaut*, *ablaut*).

There are no proper names in the dictionary, save in a few cases where major schools of thought have developed, e.g. CHOMSKYAN, BLOOMFIELDIAN, PRAGUE SCHOOL.

On this basis, the first edition of this dictionary contained just over 1000 entries (boldface headwords). Within an entry, technical phrases involving the headword appeared, and these accounted for a further 1000 boldface items. Second edition statistics are given below.

TREATMENT

I remain doubtful even now whether the most appropriate title for this book is 'dictionary'. The definitional parts of the entries, by themselves, were less illuminating than one might have expected; consequently it proved necessary to introduce in addition a more discursive approach, with several illustrations, to capture the significance of a term. Most entries accordingly contain encyclopedic information, about such matters as the historical context in which a term was used, or the relationship between a term and others from associated fields. At times, owing to the absence of authoritative studies of terminological development in linguistics, I have had to introduce a personal interpretation in discussing a term; but I hope this has been balanced by the further context provided through bibliographical references at the end of every entry — a chapter from one of a small number of basic textbooks (listed on p. xii). I have used several well-established introductory texts, as well as a few more advanced ones. These references do not usually constitute the original sources of terms but act as a convenient locus where one may obtain further information about the framework of ideas from which the terms derive their significance. That is why the references are to chapters and not to pages.

Each entry is self-contained: that is, there are no obligatory cross-references to other entries to complete the exposition of a sense. Nor have I made use of the convention 'See Y' following an entry. Given the interdependence of so much terminology (COMPETENCE-PERFORMANCE, DEEP STRUCTURE-SURFACE STRUCTURE, etc.), to put all the information under one of these terms, with a mere 'See. . .' under the other, involves an arbitrariness of organisation that can cause a reader much frustration. I have preferred to work on the principle that, as most dictionary-users open a dictionary with a *single* problematic term in mind, they should be given a satisfactory account of that term as immediately as possible. I therefore explain *competence* under COMPETENCE, *performance* under PERFORMANCE, and so on. As a

consequence of the interdependence of these terms, however, this procedure means that there must be some repetition: at least the salient characteristics of the term *performance* must be incorporated into the entry for COMPETENCE, and vice versa. This repetition would be a weakness if the book were read from cover to cover; but a dictionary should not be used as a textbook, and, while the result has been a somewhat longer volume than would have been the case if the 'See. . .' convention had been used, I remain convinced of the greater benefits of look-up convenience and entry coherence.

Within an entry, the main terms being defined are printed in boldface (along with their main inflectional variants). Any other terms and phrases, less central to the exposition of the headword, are printed in quotation marks. Terms defined elsewhere in this dictionary are printed in small capitals — but only on their *first* appearance within an entry, and only where their technical status is important for an appreciation of the sense of the entry.

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I have been fortunate in having several colleagues in my department who have given generously of their time to read the text of this dictionary, in whole or in part, advised me on how to proceed in relation to several of the above problems, and pointed out places where my own biases were intruding too markedly. I have benefited enormously from their comments, and I wish only that there had been more time to go into the large number of points of interpretation which emerged in the process. Such discussions have confirmed me in my view that there is an urgent need for the job to be done properly. In the meantime, I thank them all for their perseverance, and apologise if I have not done their comments justice in my revisions. I would dearly like to have had all my errors eliminated in this way: the responsibility for those that may be left is mine, and I would welcome comments from readers about weaknesses which might be taken account of in any future edition. I am most grateful, accordingly, to Ron Brasington, Paul Fletcher, Michael Garman, Arthur Hughes, Frank Palmer and Irene Warburton, for all their help. And to my wife, lastly, who typed the entire manuscript (much of it, more than once), and who still claims she enjoyed it: her support and encouragement have been crucial.

David Crystal
Reading, December 1978

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

More than any other form of publication, dictionaries date. In the present case, the datedness of the first edition is apparent, even after only five years, not so much in the terms it included but in those excluded. Topics which a few years ago would have seemed out of place in a *first* dictionary of linguistics and phonetics are now obligatory candidates for entry, as they are increasingly being encountered in courses and textbooks. I have continued to use my three-year-rule – only to include something if it is still being talked about three years later! – but even the rigorous application of this rule permits the inclusion of 125 new boldface head words or abbreviations and a further 100 or so boldface terms within entries; a further 100 or so entries have also been expanded to take account of new senses. Perhaps surprisingly, I was unable to find cases where I could delete a term on the grounds that it was no longer used. In short, the second edition is about a sixth larger than the first, in terms of entry coverage. It won't go on like this, will it?

More specifically, most of the new entries will be seen to cover such areas of (relatively) recent development as transformational grammar of the late 1970s (e.g. filters, binding, X-bar syntax), alternatives to TG (e.g. co-representational grammar, generalised phrase-structure grammar), phonological theory, pragmatics, discourse analysis and text linguistics. I was surprised to find hardly anything to add in the field of phonetics. Thanks to the critical eyes of reviewers and colleagues, I have been able to make good some stupid omissions and inconsistencies from the first edition, and made innumerable modifications to points of phrasing within individual entries, which I hope have sharpened the dictionary's cutting edge. I have expanded the number of bibliographical references a little, but I have not changed my policy of citing only secondary sources – a policy which some reviewers have criticised. The purpose of the references, however, is pedagogical, not lexicographical – to point the student in the direction of relevant further reading, and not to provide information about the original historical source of a term, for which a much larger dictionary would be required.

It is therefore a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance of those reviewers, colleagues and students of mine who have provided me with suggestions for the improvement of this dictionary – in particular, K. V. T. Bhat, Colin Biggs, Georges Bourcier, René Dirven, Dušan Gabrovšek, Gerald Gazdar, Francisco Gomez de Matos, Lars Hermerén, Rodney Huddleston, Neil Smith, Irene Warburton, John Wood and Walburga von Raffler Engel. In the light of their comments, and having recently trawled again the depths of the linguistics journals to see what terms I could

catch, I remain more than ever convinced of the need for a major terminology project on historical principles, which I referred to in my first preface. The need for standardisation is as urgent now as it ever was — perhaps even more so these days, given the multiple directions in which fields such as semantics and pragmatics are moving. It is the development of novel, idiosyncratic terminology which worries me most — especially when authors seem unaware of previous terms and senses which deal with the same phenomena. This dictionary is only an introductory one, but I hope it none the less will continue to draw people's attention to the existence of the problem, and thus contribute a little to its solution.

It will perhaps be noted that the word 'first' has been dropped from the title of the book, at the suggestion of the publisher. No alteration of level or scope is reflected in the change, but simply the view that, in the absence of a 'second-level' dictionary with which it might be compared, the adjective was unnecessary. I have concurred, as my use of the word was intended only to make a point (p. vi), and now that the dictionary has come to be used quite widely, it is probably no longer necessary to lay stress upon it.

David Crystal
Holyhead, October 1984

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A

A An abbreviation sometimes used for ADJECTIVE (especially in GENERATIVE GRAMMAR), and sometimes for ADVERB(IAL) (especially in grammars written within the STRUCTURALIST tradition). In the generative theory of GOVERNMENT and BINDING, it stands for ARGUMENT: 'A-binding' is contrasted with 'Ä-binding' (= non-argument binding).

ablative In languages which express GRAMMATICAL relationships by means of INFLECTIONS, this term refers to the FORM taken by a WORD, usually a NOUN or PRONOUN, typically used in the expression of a range of LOCATIVE or INSTRUMENTAL meanings. English does not have an 'ablative CASE', as did Latin, but uses other means (the PREPOSITIONS *with*, *from* and *by* in particular) to express these notions, e.g. *He did it with his hands*. See Lyons 1968: Ch. 7; Palmer 1984: Ch. 2.

abrupt A term sometimes used in the DISTINCTIVE FEATURE theory of PHONOLOGY, as part of the phrase **abrupt release**; it refers to a sound released suddenly, without the acoustic turbulence of a FRICATIVE, as in PLOSIVE CONSONANTS. Its opposite is **DELAYED release**, used to characterise AFFRICATES. See Hyman 1975: Ch. 2.

absolute (i) A term used in TRADITIONAL GRAMMATICAL DESCRIPTION, and occasionally in LINGUISTICS, to refer to a SENTENCE CONSTITUENT which is isolated from or abnormally connected to the rest of the sentence. English displays an absolute use of ADVERBS and ADJECTIVES in sentence-INITIAL position, e.g. *However, he arrived later, Happy, she went to sleep*. In Latin, there are such EXOCENTRIC constructions as the 'ABLATIVE absolute', as in *hoc facto* (= 'this having been done'). See Palmer 1984: Ch. 1.; Quirk et al. 1972: Ch. 11.

(2) In recent linguistic theory, the term refers to a type of UNIVERSAL. An **absolute universal** is one which characterises all languages, without exception; it contrasts with RELATIVE universals. See Radford 1981: Ch. 1.

absolutive A term used in the GRAMMATICAL DESCRIPTION of some languages, such as Eskimo and Georgian, where there is an ERGATIVE system. In this system, there is a FORMAL parallel between the OBJECT of a TRANSITIVE VERB and the SUBJECT of an intransitive one (i.e. they display the same CASE), and these are referred to as 'absolutive'; the subject of the transitive verb is then referred to as 'ergative'. See Palmer 1984: Ch. 2.

2 accent

accent (1) The cumulative auditory effect of those features of a person's pronunciation which identify where he is from, regionally or socially. The LINGUISTICS literature emphasises that the term refers to pronunciation only, and is thus distinct from DIALECT, which refers to GRAMMAR and VOCABULARY as well. **Regional accents** can relate to any locale, including both rural and urban communities within a country (e.g. 'West Country', 'Liverpool') as well as national groups speaking the same language (e.g. 'American', 'Australian'), and our impression of other languages ('foreign accent', 'Slavic accent'). **Social accents** relate to the cultural and educational background of the speaker. Countries with a well-defined traditional social-class system, such as India and Japan, reflect these divisions in language, and accent is often a marker of class. In Britain, the best example is the regionally neutral accent associated with a public-school education, and of the related professional domains, such as the Civil Service, the law courts, the Court and the BBC – hence the labels 'Queen's English', 'BBC English', and the like. RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP) is the name given to this accent, and because of its regional neutrality RP speakers are sometimes thought of as having 'no accent'. This is a misleading way of putting it, however: linguistics stresses that everyone must have an accent, though it may not indicate regional origin. The popular label 'broad' accent refers to those accents that are markedly different from RP. See Trudgill 1984: Ch. 1.

(2) (**-ed, -ual, -uation**) The emphasis which makes a particular WORD or SYLLABLE stand out in a stream of speech – one talks especially of an **accented** sound/word/syllable, or the 'accent(ual) pattern' of a PHRASE/SENTENCE. The term is usually found in a discussion of metre (METRICS), where it refers to the 'beats' in a line of poetry – the accented syllables, as opposed to the **unaccented** ones. But any style of spoken language could be described with reference to the relative weight (**accentuation**) of its syllables: one might talk of the 'strongly accented' speech of a politician, for instance.

Technically, accent is not solely a matter of LOUDNESS but also of PITCH and DURATION, especially pitch: comparing the VERB *record* (as in *I'm going to record the tune*) and the NOUN (*I've got a record*), the contrast in **word accent** between *record* and *record* is made by the syllables differing in loudness, length and pitch movement. A similar use of these variables is found in the notion of **sentence accent** (also called 'contrastive accent'). This is an important aspect of linguistic analysis, especially of INTONATION, because it can affect the ACCEPTABILITY, the MEANING, or the PRESUPPOSITIONS of a sentence, e.g. *He was wearing a red hat* could be heard as a response to *Was he wearing a red coat?*, whereas *He was wearing a red hat* would respond to *Was he wearing a green hat?* The term STRESS, however, is often used for contrasts of this kind (as in the phrases 'word stress' and 'contrastive stress').

The total SYSTEM of accents in a language is sometimes called the **accentual system**, and would be part of the study of PHONOLOGY. The coinage 'accentology' for the study of accents is not usually found in linguistics. See Bolinger and Sears 1981: Ch. 2; Gimson 1980: Ch. 9.

acceptability (acceptable) The extent to which linguistic DATA would be judged by NATIVE-SPEAKERS to be possible in their language. An 'acceptable UTTERANCE' is one whose use would be considered permissible or normal. In practice, deciding

on the acceptability of an utterance may be full of difficulties. Native-speakers often disagree as to whether an utterance is normal, or even possible. One reason for this is that INTUITIONS differ because of variations in regional and social backgrounds, age, personal preferences, and so on. An utterance may be normal in one DIALECT, but unacceptable in another, e.g. *I ain't, I be, I am*. Much also depends on the extent to which people have been brought up to believe that certain forms of LANGUAGE are 'correct' and others are 'wrong': many do not accept as desirable those sentences which the PRESCRIPTIVE approach to GRAMMAR would criticise, such as *I will go tomorrow* (for *I shall go*), or *This is the man I spoke to* (for *... to whom I spoke*). To a LINGUIST, all such utterances are acceptable, in so far as a section of the community uses them consistently in speech or writing. The analytic problem is to determine which sections of the community use which utterances on which occasions. Within a DIALECT, an utterance may be acceptable in one CONTEXT but unacceptable in another; cf. the contrast between colloquial and FORMAL speech, between spoken and written language, between legal, religious, scientific and other VARIETIES of language.

Linguistics has devised several techniques for investigating the acceptability of linguistic data. These usually take the form of experiments in which native-speakers are asked to evaluate sets of utterances containing those language features over whose acceptability there is some doubt (**acceptability tests**). It is necessary to have some such agreed techniques for judging acceptability as, especially in speech, very many utterances are produced whose status as sentences is open to question. In one sample of data, someone said, *I think it's the money they're charging is one thing*. The job of the linguist is to determine whether this was a mistake on the speaker's part, or whether this is a regular feature of his speech SYSTEM; if the latter, then whether this feature is idiosyncratic, or characteristic of some social group; and so on. Such investigations by their nature are inevitably large-scale, involving many INFORMANTS and sentence patterns; they are therefore very time-consuming, and are not often carried out.

An utterance which is considered unacceptable is marked by an asterisk; if 'marginally acceptable', usually by a question mark, as follows:

*the wall was arrived before

?the wall was arrived before by the army sent by the king

These conventions are also used to indicate ungrammatical or marginally grammatical sentences. In linguistic theory, though, the difference between the acceptability and the GRAMMATICALITY of a sentence is important. A sentence may be grammatically correct, according to the RULES of the grammar of a language, but none the less unacceptable, for a variety of other reasons. For example, owing to the repeated application of a rule, the internal structure of a sentence may become too complex, exceeding the processing abilities of the speaker: these PERFORMANCE limitations are illustrated in such cases of multiple EMBEDDING as *This is the malt that the rat that the cat killed ate*, which is much less acceptable than *This is the malt that the rat ate*, despite the fact that the same grammatical operations have been used. In GENERATIVE linguistic theory, variations in acceptability are analysed in terms of performance; grammaticality, by contrast, is a matter of COMPETENCE. See Lyons 1968: Ch. 4; Huddleston 1976: Ch. 1.

4 accessibility

accessibility (1) A term derived from psychology, and used in PSYCHOLINGUISTICS to refer to the extent to which a speaker can retrieve a linguistic unit from memory. Problems of accessibility are evident in 'tip-of-the-tongue' and TONGUE-SLIP phenomena, as well as in the varying times it takes someone to react to STRUCTURES involving different degrees of COMPLEXITY. See Clark and Clark 1977: Ch. 12.

(2) In RELATIONAL GRAMMAR, the term is used as part of the phrase **accessibility hierarchy**, to refer to a postulated LINEAR series of DEPENDENCIES between NOMINAL entities, which controls the applicability of SYNTACTIC RULES. In the hierarchy, each entity in the series more freely undergoes syntactic rules than the items to the right. For example, the nominal operating as a SUBJECT is said to be 'more accessible' than that operating as DIRECT OBJECT; the direct object is more accessible than the INDIRECT object; and so on. The notion has been applied to several grammatical areas (e.g. RELATIVE CLAUSE formation, the use of REFLEXIVES, and QUANTIFIERS), but the full application of this principle remains to be explored. See Matthews 1981: Ch. 6.

accidence Most TRADITIONAL GRAMMARS recognise accidence as one of their main subdivisions, along with GRAMMAR. It refers to the variations in WORD STRUCTURE which express grammatical MEANINGS, such as CASE, TENSE, NUMBER and GENDER. In English, for example, the reason for the difference between *walk*, *walks*, *walking* and *walked* or between *boy*, *boys*, *boy's* and *boys'* would be described as part of the accidence section of a grammar. In LINGUISTICS, this term is rarely used, as these phenomena are handled under the heading of MORPHOLOGY, where they are seen as one process of WORD FORMATION alongside several others. See Matthews 1974: Ch. 4.

accusative In languages which express GRAMMATICAL relationships by means of INFLECTIONS, this term refers to the FORM taken by a WORD, usually a NOUN or PRONOUN, when it is the OBJECT of a VERB. In Latin, for example, *I see the man* would be *Video hominem* and not **Video homo*, and *hominem* would be referred to as being 'in the accusative CASE'. LINGUISTS emphasise that it is not clear to use terms such as 'accusative' in languages which do not inflect words in this way. In English, for instance, whether a word is the object of the verb or not usually depends on word ORDER, as in *Dog bites postman*, where the recipient of the action is plainly the postman. Some traditional grammars would say here that postman is therefore 'accusative', but as there is no formal change between this word's use as object and its use as SUBJECT (*Postman bites dog*) linguists argue that this is a misleading use of the term, and avoid using it in such contexts. The only instance of a genuine accusative form of a word in English is in some PRONOUNS, e.g. *He hit him*, *She saw her*, *The man whom I saw*, and even here many linguists would prefer to use a neutral term, such as 'OBJECTIVE case', to avoid the connotations of TRADITIONAL GRAMMARS. See Lyons 1968: Ch. 7; Quirk et al. 1985: Ch. 6.

acoustic feature/cue A characteristic of a speech sound when analysed in physical terms, e.g. FUNDAMENTAL frequency, amplitude, harmonic structure. Such analyses are provided by ACOUSTIC PHONETICS, and it is possible to make acoustic classifications of speech sounds based upon such features, as when one classifies

VOWELS in terms of their FORMANT structure. The acoustic properties of a sound which aid its identification in speech are known as **acoustic cues**. In the DISTINCTIVE FEATURE theory of PHONOLOGY of JAKOBSON and Halle, acoustic features are the primary means of defining the BINARY oppositions that constitute the phonological SYSTEM of a language. See Ladefoged 1982: Ch. 8; Catford 1977: Ch. 4.

acoustic phonetics (acoustic(s)) The branch of PHONETICS, also known as **acoustics**, which studies the physical properties of speech sound, as transmitted between mouth and ear. It is wholly dependent on the use of instrumental techniques of investigation, particularly electronics, and some grounding in physics and mathematics is a prerequisite for advanced study of this subject. Its importance to the phonetician is that acoustic analysis can provide a clear, objective datum for investigation of speech – the physical ‘facts’ of utterance. In this way, acoustic evidence is often referred to when one wants to support an analysis being made in ARTICULATORY or AUDITORY PHONETIC terms. On the other hand, it is important not to become too reliant on acoustic analyses, which are subject to mechanical limitations (e.g. the need to calibrate measuring devices accurately), and which are often themselves open to multiple interpretations. Sometimes, indeed, acoustic and auditory analyses of a sound conflict – for example, in INTONATION studies, one may hear a speech melody as RISING, whereas the acoustic facts show the FUNDAMENTAL frequency of the sound to be steady. In such cases, it is for the phonetician to decide which evidence he will pay more attention to; there has been a longstanding debate concerning the respective merits of physical (i.e. acoustic) as opposed to psychological (i.e. auditory) solutions to such problems, and how apparent conflicts of this kind can be resolved. See Ladefoged 1982: Ch. 8; Catford 1977: Ch. 4.

acquisition In the study of the growth of LANGUAGE in children, the term refers to the process or result of learning a particular aspect of a language, and ultimately the language as a whole. **Child language acquisition** is the label usually given to the field of studies involved. The subject has involved the postulation of ‘stages’ of acquisition, defined chronologically, or in relation to other aspects of behaviour, which it is suggested apply generally to children; and there has been considerable discussion of the nature of the learning strategies which are used in the process of acquiring language, and of the criteria which can decide when a STRUCTURE has been acquired. Some theorists make a distinction between ‘acquisition’ and ‘development’, the former referring to the learning of a linguistic RULE (of GRAMMAR, PHONOLOGY, SEMANTICS), the latter to the further use of this rule in an increasingly wide range of linguistic and social situations. Others see no clear distinction between these two facets of language learning, and use the terms interchangeably. In GENERATIVE linguistics, the term **language acquisition device (LAD)** is used to refer to a model of language learning in which the infant is credited with an INNATE predisposition to acquire linguistic structure. This view is usually opposed to those where language acquisition is seen as a process of imitation-learning or as a reflex of cognitive development.

‘Acquisition’ is also used in the context of learning a foreign language: ‘foreign’ or ‘second-language’ acquisition is thus distinguished from ‘first-language’ or ‘mother-tongue’ acquisition. See Bolinger and Sears 1981: Ch. 8; Clark and Clark 1977: Chs 8–10.

6 **acrolect**

acrolect(-al) A term used by some SOCIOLINGUISTS, in the study of the development of CREOLE languages, to refer to a prestige or STANDARD VARIETY (or LECT) against which it is possible to compare other lects. It is contrasted with MESOLECT and BASILECT. See Bolinger and Sears 1981: Ch. 9.

active A term used in the GRAMMATICAL analysis of VOICE, referring to a SENTENCE, CLAUSE, or VERB FORM where, from a SEMANTIC point of view, the grammatical SUBJECT is typically the actor, in relation to the verb, e.g. *The boy wrote a letter*. It is contrasted with PASSIVE, and sometimes with other forms of the verb, e.g. the 'middle voice' in Greek. See Quirk et al. 1985: Ch. 3; Lyons 1968: Ch. 8.

actor-action-goal A phrase used in the GRAMMATICAL and SEMANTIC analysis of SENTENCE patterns, to characterise the typical sequence of FUNCTIONS within STATEMENTS in many languages. In the sentence *John saw a duck*, for example, *John* is the actor, *saw* the action, and *a duck* the goal. On the other hand, languages display several other 'favourite' sequences, such as Welsh, where the UNMARKED sequence is action-actor-goal. The phrase is widely used, but not without criticism, as the semantic implications of terms such as 'actor' do not always coincide with the grammatical facts, e.g. in *The stone moved*, the SUBJECT of the sentence is hardly an 'actor' in the same sense as *John* is above. See Lyons 1968: Ch. 8.

actualisation (actualise) A term used by some linguists to refer to the physical EXPRESSION of an abstract LINGUISTIC unit; e.g. PHONEMES are 'actualised' in PHONIC SUBSTANCE as PHONES, MORPHEMES as MORPHS. Any UNDERLYING form may be seen as having a corresponding actualisation in substance. REALISATION is a more widely used term. See Lyons 1968: Ch. 2.

acute One of the features of sound set up by JAKOBSON and Halle in their DISTINCTIVE FEATURE theory of PHONOLOGY, to handle variations in PLACE OF ARTICULATION; its opposite is GRAVE. Acute sounds are defined articulatorily and ACOUSTICALLY as those involving a medial articulation in the VOCAL TRACT, and a concentration of acoustic energy in the higher frequencies; examples of [+acute] sounds are FRONT VOWELS, and DENTAL, ALVEOLAR and PALATAL CONSONANTS. See Hyman 1975: Ch. 2.

address The general use of this term, in the sense of 'the manner of referring to someone in direct linguistic interaction', has provided SOCIOLINGUISTICS with a major field of study. **Forms of address** have been analysed between different types of participant in different social situations, and RULES proposed to explain the speaker's choice of terms, e.g. governing the use of first names, titles, intimate PRONOUNS, etc. Social psychological concepts, such as power and solidarity, have been suggested as particularly significant factors in understanding 'address systems', i.e. the SYSTEM of RULES used by a speaker or group, governing their use of such forms as *tu* and *vous* (T FORMS and V FORMS). See Gumperz and Hymes 1972: Ch. 7.

adequacy (adequate) A term used in LINGUISTIC theory as part of the evaluation of levels of success in the writing of GRAMMARS. Several sets of distinctions based on this notion have been made. **External adequacy** judges a grammar in terms of how well it corresponds to the DATA (which are 'external' to the grammar); **internal adequacy** is a judgement based on the 'internal' characteristics of the grammar, such as its SIMPLICITY, elegance, etc. From a different point of view, grammars are said to be **weakly adequate** if they GENERATE some desired set of SENTENCES; they are **strongly adequate** if they not only do this, but also assign to each sentence the correct STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION. An alternative formulation recognises three levels of achievement in grammars: **observational adequacy** is achieved when a grammar generates all of a particular sample (CORPUS) of data, correctly predicting which sentences are WELL FORMED; **descriptive adequacy**, when a grammar goes beyond this, and describes the INTUITIONS (COMPETENCE) of the language's speakers; **explanatory adequacy** is achieved when a principled basis is established for deciding between alternative grammars, all of which are descriptively adequate. See Huddleston 1976: Ch. 1; Lyons 1968: Ch. 6.

adessive A term used in GRAMMATICAL DESCRIPTION to refer to a type of INFLECTION which expresses the meaning of presence 'at' or 'near' a place. The adessive case is found in Finnish, for example, along with ALLATIVE, ELATIVE and several other cases expressing 'local' temporal and spatial meanings. See Lyons 1968: Ch. 7.

adjacency pair A term used in SOCIOLINGUISTIC analyses of conversational interaction to refer to a single stimulus-plus-response sequence by the participants. Adjacency pairs have been analysed in terms of their role in initiating, maintaining and closing conversations (e.g. the various conventions of greeting, leave-taking, topic-changing), and constitute, it has been suggested, an important methodological concept in investigating the ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION. See Clark and Clark 1977: Ch. 6; Gumperz and Hymes 1972: Ch. 12.

adjective (adjectival) A term used in the GRAMMATICAL classification of WORDS to refer to the main set of items which specify the attributes of NOUNS. From a FORMAL point of view, four criteria are generally invoked to define the class in English: they can occur within the noun PHRASE, i.e. they function in the 'attributive' position, e.g. *the big man*; they can occur in a post-verbal or 'predicative' position, e.g. *the man is big, he called it stupid*; they can be PREMODIFIED by an INTENSIFIER, such as *very*, e.g. *the very big man*; and they can be used in a COMPARATIVE and SUPERLATIVE form, either by INFLECTION (e.g. *big, bigger, biggest*) or PERIPHRASTICALLY (e.g. *interesting, more interesting, most interesting*). However, not all adjectives satisfy all these criteria (e.g. *major*, as in *a major question*, does not occur predicatively – cf. **The question is major*), and the sub-classification of adjectives has proved quite complex. Both narrow and broad applications of the term 'adjective' will be found in grammars. In its broadest sense it could include everything between the DETERMINER and the noun, in such a phrase as *the vicar's fine old English garden chair*; but many linguists prefer to restrict it to the items which satisfy most or all of the above criteria (to include only *fine* and *old*, in this example), the other items being called 'adjective-like', or 'adjectivals'. Adjectives may also be the HEADS of phrases ('adjective