Structuralism as one – structuralism as many

Studies in Structuralisms

Lorenzo Cigana and Frans Gregersen (eds.)

Structuralism as one – structuralism as many

Abstract

This book includes 14 contributions to the study of structuralism as a historical current in the history of European ideas and more particularly in the study of language. The studies combine to contextualize structuralism in both its unity and its diversity, hence the title.

In the first section, the reader is introduced to the broader canvas of disciplines and competing ideas surrounding structuralism. From Claude Lévi-Strauss's anthropological structuralism, via the philosophical Vienna Circle of logical empiricists we arrive at a sustained juxtaposition of structuralism and phenomenology in various guises: Are they really so incompatible? Finally, we get answers to what separated the American version of structuralism from the European mainstream and to various frequent questions of what structuralism was, or rather was not.

The second section views structural linguistics from without and investigates its legacy in relation to contemporary linguistics, analyzing its relationship to functionalism and its forerunners.

The third section explores structuralism from within, with particular attention to a specific output: Louis Hjelmslev's theory of glossematics. This constitutes the focus from where the immediate past within the Danish tradition is reanalyzed and its heritage for today's semiotics and linguistics is discussed.

Structuralism as one
– structuralism as many

Studies in Structuralisms

Lorenzo Cigana and Frans Gregersen (eds.)

Contents

Structuralism as one,
structuralism as many

Lorenzo Cigana and Frans Gregersen
University of Copenhagen

The chapters assembled here originate as titles for planned contributions for a symposium to be held at the Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters entitled *StructuralismS*. The idea was to foster the international discussion about the particular period in the history of linguistics thought to be dominated by structuralist thinking (roughly 1916–1957) by looking into differences between various approaches to linguistics and furthermore to look at the influence of this thinking on neighbouring sciences such as anthropology and philosophy. The symposium was first planned for May 2020 and then had to be progressively postponed until we decided to change its format altogether, collecting the different contributions in a volume, i.e. this volume.

This volume may be seen as an instantiation of those efforts towards a critical reappraisal of structuralism that characterize part of contemporary research in the history of the language sciences and philosophy (for an overview see Léon 2013). But such 'reappraisal' would probably be too limiting, the reason being that we are still trying to reconstitute the debate around unsolved issues that belonged to the structural framework as such.

There is no need to reconstruct here the history of the term itself. Suffice it to point to the publication of Ferdinand de Saussure's path breaking *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), in which both a number of key concepts and a specific perspective on the role of the science of language were introduced. Originating with some of the early proponents themselves, the history of the language sciences has coined the term of structuralism to cover the broad trend which succeeded Saussure. It is as such an umbrella-term, neither invented by de Saussure nor prepared in the *Cours*. Nevertheless,

it captured effectively various related schools or groups, focussed on linguistics as the flagship leading the battle against both historicism and atomistic thinking, while endorsing the adoption of a uniform methodology as their main commonalities. Incidentally, the label was so effective that the post-1960a reception felt the need to reuse it in order to establish its own identity, viz. as 'post-structuralism'.

The label is fraught with all kinds of paradoxes – from the most patent ones, concerning its inadequacy *vis-à-vis* the variety of approaches it assembles under only one umbrella and yet capturing *eo ipso* all those trends, including the more elaborate ones, highlighting that while the inadequacy of such a label is legitimately addressed, it is rarely lamented about other scientific paradigms. Aligning with one or the other facet of these paradoxes is often equivalent to making a statement, yet to dismiss their relevance would be tantamount to dismissing a part of the case-studies presented here. In fact, while it is safe to assume that those paradoxes are an inescapable feature of any disciplinary label, it cannot be denied that this problematization is particularly felt in the domain of structural thinking – something that calls for an explanation.

Just to present one obvious example: Arguably the first structural movement to appear on the scene was the Prague school which soon became tied to a specific conceptualization of what is now generally called phonology. The main names are of course Nikolai S. Trubetzkoy (1890–1938) and Roman O. Jakobson (1896–1982), both of whom we will hear more about in contributions below. Now, it is a striking fact that both Trubetzkoy and Jakobson had serious reservations about central Saussurean dogmas, notably the division between diachrony and synchrony (cf. Jakobson 1976; Vilkou-Poustovaïa 2002). Furthermore, it is a central point in Laks and Goldsmiths magisterial treatment of the Prague School as an incident in the continuous *Battles in the Mind Field* (2019) that Trubetzkoy and Jakobson did not agree on a number of important ideological points (see Sériot 1999). Yet no one questions the definition of the Prague school of linguistics as a significant structuralist trend. This would seem once again to leave open the issue of what may then legitimately be taken to be the defining characteristics of structuralism.

While this issue is explicitly addressed in some contributions presented below, it is also reflected both in the multifarious ways in which the contributors refer to 'structuralism', and in the organization of the book itself, which in turn largely depends on the different angles from which the issue is approached or just taken for granted. Boudon (1968) is right in assuming that when we consider the point to be only a matter of keywords, structuralism is prestidigitation ("structuralisme magique", 159) and he is surely right in claiming that "les révolutions structuralistes datent, non du moment où on a compris que les langues, les personnalités, les marches, les sociétés constituent des systèmes, mais du moment où on a imaginé un outillage mental permettant d'analyser à l'aide de théories scientifiques ces systèmes en tant que systèmes" (ibid.). Yet keywords are important, as they reflect the need structuralists have to identify themselves within a movement. Keywords are shortcuts, but symptomatic ones.

More importantly, Boudon seems to forget that structuralism almost never dealt with one or two terms only ('system' and 'structure') but built upon an interconnected network of ideas (structure, system, associations, oppositions, form, substance): only considering one or two of these keywords we may too easily arrive at the idea of a "structuralisme magique".

The Ariadne thread through the labyrinth of sciences is from the start and remains, patently *language* in its broadest possible sense. No surprise here, given the fact that this topic reverberated across all disciplines between 1890 and 1960 through a series of 'linguistic turns' (see Hirschkopf 2019), thus constituting a feature embedded in the structural *Problemstellung* itself. The centrality of language has also to be read in connection with the role it was deemed to play in how institutions – thus also scientific movements – understand themselves. In other words, keywords and labels that describe cultural or scientific paradigms are themselves too considered *effets du langage*, with all the grammatical consequences and stylistic paradoxes this brings along with it. So, using *structuralism*, either in singular and plural form, may appear as a statement (and in many cases it indeed is), while this is hardly the case if the adjective form is used, as in 'structural linguistics'. That usage

seems to encompass almost every kind of modern linguistics in a huge ecumenical effort.

While not always reflecting an explicit take on the matter, these nuances are more or less correlated to the heterogeneous stances concerning the current status of the paradigm itself: Is it worth continuing, maybe reforming – or is it in fact to be discarded altogether? Or, the final option, is it so engrained in the way we think language now that it is inescapable in some form or other? No matter how readers have been inclined to think before embarking on this volume, we believe they will have digested a healthy diet of food for thought on precisely such matters, when they have finished reading.

In order to establish some order, however arbitrary, to the contributions to this volume, we have decided to divide the volume into three sections, gradually descending from a first general level towards one specific version of structuralism, viz. the theory baptized glossematics, thought out by Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) in a continuous dialogue with Hans Jørgen Uldall (1907–1957). In the first general section, the emphasis is on the transdisciplinary nature of structuralism as such, cutting through, as it were, the domains of anthropology (Hastrup), philosophy, phenomenology and epistemology (Collin, Flack, Stjernfelt) and to American and European linguistics seen as research traditions (Newmeyer, Joseph). This section thus treats what Léon 2013 labels 'generalized structuralism'. The next level concerns the narrower domain of linguistics, in which the structural stance is analysed in contrast to other competing models (Willems & Belligh, Harder, Basbøll). Finally, in the third and last section, we use the first two sections as a backdrop to contextualize a continuous discussion of one specific structrural approach, viz. that of glossematics (Jørgensen, Badir, Graffi, Cigana, Jensen & Gregersen). This section treats structuralisms through the lens of one of the arguably peripheral currents under the umbrella. The treatment might result in a less peripheral status.

Section one thus contains reflections on structuralism at the most general level. We have called it *Structuralism from above*.

Witin this section, Kirsten Hastrup analyses the oeuvre of the French anthropological giant Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009).

She places her emphasis on the quest for grand theory and the explicit universalism of Lévi-Strauss' version of structuralism, thereby delivering another input to the above discussion. An interesting perspective is that Hastrup notes the consistent marginalization of the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss both in contrast to other versions of structuralism in anthropology and in the general intellectual climate: The professional audience gradually lost interest in the grand themes and the inspirations from both psychoanalysis and Marxism.

In the next chapter, Finn Collin considers whether the logical empiricism of the Vienna Circle may legitimately be seen as another version of structuralism. Conventional wisdom would in a sentence featuring both 'structuralism' and 'philosophy' quickly insert the name of Louis Althusser (1918–1990) or refer to the early work of Michel Foucault (1926–1980). Yet Collin argues convincingly that Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970) must be seen as the prototypical logical empiricist and that his programme is thoroughly structuralist (and anti-phenomenological) by stressing the abstract nature of science – a holistic approach and the essential role of formal relations rather than substances. Finally, the fervent anti-historicism of the Vienna Circle reflects the common interests of the contemporary linguists and the philosophical structuralists. We may add that Collin's chapter also highlights the mistrust of the 'subjective' so typical of both logical empiricism and (at least certain strands of) structuralism.

Patrick Flack takes a diametrically opposed track by in the third chapter detailing a number of meeting points in the quickly flowing waters of history between the two currents of thought often thought to be born enemies, viz. phenomenology and structuralism. In Flack's analysis the many meetings have resulted in challenges to the conventional wisdom of both currents. An interesting third party crops up in the discussion of one of them, viz. that of Tran Duc Thao (1917–1993): Marxism. Flack's chapter teaches us to be precise when we use the notions of both structuralism and phenomenology and arguably create a need of plurals for both terms.

Different ways of categorization are the pivot around which Frederik Stjernfelt's contribution revolves. He notes some striking similarities between the ways researchers otherwise so different as

the mathematician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), the founder of phenomenology Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), the linguist Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) and the philosopher and literary theoretician Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) developed their theories of categories. Peirce and Husserl worked independently but Ingarden was a pupil of Husserl and in constant dialogue with his work while the possible influence of Husserl on Hjelmslev is still a matter of debate. The four also differ somewhat in what they categorize, and a question thus arises as to how dependent on the substance categorized the systems are. For the theory of structuralism, Stjernfelt's contribution once again questions how specific it is and how fruitful it is to look at structuralism as a structuralist, i.e. stressing its integrated wholistic character.

The two final chapters of this section may be read as complementing each other. Frederick Newmeyer details the relationship between the American structuralists and the European ones in a *tour de force* covering half a century. Again, we are struck by the fact that the Prague school embodied in Roman Jakobson had such a precarious yet important role in the reception of structuralist ideas in the USA. Newmeyer successfully integrates the history of American linguistics with the general history of the growing independence of American universities and the new self-confidence in a specific American way, also in matters linguistic. The result is that structuralism leads to empiricism in the first half of the 20th century while the so-called Chomskyan revolution introduces a theoretical reorientation which in many ways may be seen as 'European' although this very interpretation was explicitly denied by Noam Chomsky (1928-) himself.

John E. Joseph directly addresses the issue of singular or plural of structuralism in his treatment of what structuralism was and is not. The list of negated propositions range from the notion of subjecthood in structuralism to the alleged anti-historical nature of the doctrine. What emerges from this treatment is that while linguists labeled as structuralists diverge and that some of them have been misunderstood or indeed ridiculed for views which were not held neither by them nor by anyone else there is always some truth hidden behind the negated propositions. This is not only the case in the reception of structuralism in text books or pedagogical net

pieces but also in some cases a consequence of polemical stances taken by adversaries. This is particularly obvious in the reception by American scholars from Paul Garvin (1919–1994) to Noam Chomsky (1928-) of European structuralist works. Joseph's paper thus complements Newmeyer's.

Section two, called *Structuralism and other trends in linguistics* juxtaposes 'structuralism' and other kinds of linguistics. While it it is to a certain degree true that structuralism became hegemonic at least in the period between the world wars and until the global triumph of Chomskyanism, core structuralist tenets seem now to be under attack or to be reinvented or refurbished.

In order for their project to be carried through, Klaas Willems and Thomas Belligh have to detail their understanding of structuralism since they want to delineate the legacy of structuralism in contemporary linguistics, notably both where the linguistic currents treated openly declare their reliance on structuralist research and where the currents treated unwittingly builds on structuralist concepts or methods. Willems and Belligh produce a list of five characteristics that are essential for their project. We want here in particular to highlight the notion of an intermediary level between the traditional Saussurean dichotomy of *langue* and *parole*, viz. that of *norm*. The analysis covers a vast field of linguistic disciplines ranging from pragmatics to lexical semantics and grammar, especially cognitive grammar. Special focus is on the treatment of focus constructions by e.g. Knud Lambrecht where the authors reveal the less noticed structuralist roots. In their final section, the authors invoke Hegel's concept of *Aufhebung* as an approach to integrating the heritage of past linguists into the practice of contemporary linguists. It is striking that the next chapter tries to do just this.

Among the many traditions or schools which are treated in the paper by Willems and Belligh we do not find Functional Grammar as inspired originally by the work of the late Simon Dik (1940–1995). Hence, the paper by Peter Harder may be seen as a logical complement treating some of the same issues but precisely from that vantage point, viz. from the Danish version of Functional Linguistics which was equally inspired by Simon Dik and Louis Hjelmslev. Harder shares the analysis of Willems and Belligh that there are

more traces of structuralism to be found in modern linguistics than meets the eye. Harder foregrounds the notion of function as the motivation for structure but takes pains to explain that there is no royal road from one to the other nor that all structure may be explained by function. The characteristic move in Harder's paper is to explode the idea of autonomy, so dear to the early structuralists, in order to embed language in a broader evolutionary perspective.

Whoever says 'functionalism in linguistics' usually goes on to pronounce the name of André Martinet (1908–1999). Thus Martinet figures prominently in Harder's contribution but he recurs in a different capacity in the third paper of this section. Hans Basbøll addresses the important question of delimiting structuralism from what was before it in the history of linguistics. This is not a question of finding the roots of Saussure's thinking, but rather constitutes a quest for the nuances that more or less sharply sets the structuralists off from previous linguists as a significant change instead of an evolution. The cases treated in the paper are those of Otto Jespersen (1860–1943), on the one hand, who clearly thought of himself as someone who had propagated structuralist ideas before they were known as such, and on the other hand the (at least initially) ardent follower of Prague phonology André Martinet. Otto Jespersen makes his appearance also in the next section's first paper.

Section three, *Structuralism from within*, contains five papers focussing on Glossematics as (one version of) structuralism.

Glossematics was the name Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) and his brother in arms Hans Jørgen 'John' Uldall (1907–1957) adopted for their general theory. What this theory is in fact a theory of, or for, is at the core of several of the papers in this section. The first and the two final papers are results of the research project INFRASTRUCTURALISM (2019–2023) generously financed by the Carlsberg foundation – which incidentally may be one of the main reasons for the existence of this book. The INFRASTRUCTURALISM project has committed itself to making all the published and unpublished papers and relevant letters of Louis Hjelmslev and his circle of collaborators (Hans Jørgen Uldall, Paul Diderichsen (1905–1964), Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (1911–2010), Jens Holt (1904–1973), Francis J. Whitfield (1916–1996), Harry Wett Frederiksen (1916–1974) and

Henning Spang-Hanssen (1920–2002)), available for research in a dedicated infrastructure complete with search facilities and a time-line. We only mention these many names because the project is based on the idea that although we may question whether Louis Hjelmslev let himself be influenced by any other contemporary than Hans Jørgen Uldall (this is actually one of the issues treated in the contribution by Cigana), his ideas were received and transformed in a group of like-minded linguists, arguably a general characteristic of structuralist thought. This was the era of Circles.

Henrik Jørgensen in his paper discusses Louis Hjelmslev's back-ground within the Danish schools of linguistics which preceded him, and which dominated among his teachers at the University of Copenhagen. Jørgensen singles out the two giants in the generation before Hjelmslev, Otto Jespersen and Holger Pedersen (1867–1953) and takes his point of departure in the contrast between the two obituaries Hjelmslev wrote of them. In a thorough discussion, Jør-gensen applies a definition of structuralism to each of the giants' œuvre and the result is that Holger Pedersen exclusively belongs to the long 19th century before the advent of structuralism whereas Jespersen in a number of stated ways forebodes a structural ap-proach without having a full-fledged general theory, at least not a formalized one. Jørgensen's paper obviously complements Basbøll's mentioned above.

Semiotics was the name of the science Saussure in a visionary glimpse sketched out in the *Cours* (Saussure 1916 (1967), 33), a sci-ence that would study the role of signs in society in general, placing linguistics as just a specialized use of signs. Hjelmslev is credited with being the linguist who opened the door fully to such a semi-otics by his reflections on sign systems. Indeed one of three sugges-tions for a first title for what was to end up as his *Prolegomena* (1963) was 'Sign systems'. Sémir Badir's take on the traditional theme of 'influence' in the history of a discipline, here semiotics, in that he neatly distinguishes between on the one hand 'transmission' and 'heritage' and on the other between 'legacy' and 'descendants'. Hjelmslev did not have any semioticians in his immediate circle and thus he has influenced semiotics through his writings only. But that legacy has been passed on. Badir outlines the legacy and

studies the concepts inherited – and in the process reformed – by the semioticians of three generations of French researchers. Badir's contribution both adds to the discussion of Hjelmslev and semiotics in Joseph's chapter and details the reception of glossematics in the Romance world thus complementing Graffi's chapter which comes next.

It is fascinating to follow the fate of glossematics in Italy as detailed by Giorgio Graffi. Graffi neatly distinguishes three periods in the history of reception, an initial period where glossematics (and structuralism in general) was rejected in favour of the traditional Italian historicist linguistics; a glory period in the post war years and especially in the "age of translations", i.e.1965–75 when most of the structuralist canon became available in Italian; and finally the age of abandonment – i.e. in favour of Chomskyan theoretical linguistics. In bringing in the political environment, especially before the war, Graffi broaches a theme which John E. Joseph has also brought up, the relationship between the fate of structuralism and the political currents in which it is embedded. Was and is structuralism seen as politically progressive or not? Was and is structuralism compatible with currents which are more openly political such as Marxism, or not? It is not irrelevant in this connection that generative grammar was universally seen in the 1970s to be progressive, primarily because of Noam Chomsky's (1928-) involvement in the anti-war demonstrations in Washington and his subsequent political engagement.

One of the central concepts inherited by semioticians and linguists alike is the concept of 'connotation'. The concept in fact did not originate with glossematics but it has passed into the history of the disciplines of linguistics and semiotics via glossematics. Lorenzo Cigana in his chapter details the history and development of the term. He shows that the concept originates in discussions between Uldall and Hjelmslev in the early 1940s about how to conceive the relationship between language and the non-linguistic reality referred to. Gradually the concept is worked into Hjelmslev's semiotic theory and operationalized as 'connotators' which simultaneously may enable the linguist to analyze sentences from two or more different languages as having the 'same' meaning (viz. by

'subtracting' the connotator of belonging to two different linguistic systems) and varieties within the same linguistic system belonging to different genres, styles or dialects, pushing the analysis towards progressively more concrete layers and entities. The analysis makes use of the access to unpublished papers and correspondence which has become possible with the new infrastructure of the project INFRASTRUCTURALISM.

We have mentioned Roman Jakobson (1896–1982) above and this towering figure of structuralism is scrutinized from the very particular perspective of his unique relationship, i.e. that of collaboration and competition, with Louis Hjelmslev in the paper by Viggo Bank Jensen & Frans Gregersen. Hjelmslev (and later Hjelmslev and Uldall) started out as collaborators, partaking in the phonological movement. But soon, and the authors detail this development in their paper, Hjelmslev and Uldall develop a markedly critical approach to the Praguians in general and Trubetzkoy in particular. The paper illustrates what both collaboration and competition within the structuralist movement entailed – both in terms of friendship and the opposite, and in terms of theoretically diverging paths: Jakobson branded Hjelmslev's approach as "algebraic"; Hjelmslev on the other hand, denounced the initial psychologism and what he saw as a persistent transcendentalism of the Jakobsonian approach.

We are at the end of this introduction finally ready to offer at least one defining characteristic for all the linguists singled out as structuralists in the contributions assembled here. They all were concerned with what also seemed to have sparked Ferdinand de Saussure's ruminations about general linguistics: The need for an explicit meta-theory of language. We, however, more than a century later than the appearance of the *Cours*, seem to live in a world dominated by some version of inductivism, *pace* Karl Popper's early proof that a strict inductivism is untenable (Popper 1935). That seems to leave preciously little space for general theory or general theories. Structuralists present their own various solutions to this eternal dilemma but they all agree in one respect: In order to see empirical facts as such, we need a guiding theory. It goes without saying, that theories should also be informed by what we see when we do adopt a specific theoretical stance: Empirical work of course

informs both the structure and the content of theories. The various structuralisms discussed in this book should be seen as offers for such guiding theories, offers that remain very real, even today. The contributions invite readers to reflect on what may genuinely be seen as lasting insights and what may be discarded as a theoretical *cul de sac*.

No definitive solution is offered in the volume to the issue of whether structuralism was or is a single well-delimited paradigm or a constellation of stances. As to the latter, we maintain that a multifaceted description is not equal to fragmentation. Our take on the matter is that structuralism can legitimately be considered as both a 'class-as-one' and 'a class-as-many' (Hjelmslev 1943, 92), thus as both equally justified perspectives that reflect structuralism's possible unity *ab externo*, against earlier or coeval trends like atomism, organicism or romantic idealism, and on the other hand its diversity *ab interno*. Once we focus within the delimited boundaries on the different methodological procedures and theoretical stances that were maintained during its (unfinished?) history, we may reveal hitherto hidden or forgotten treasures.

Bibliography

BOUDON, RAYMOND (1968), *À quoi sert la notion de "structure"? Essai sur la signification de la notion de structure dans les sciences humaines*, Paris, Gallimard.

HIRSCHKOPF, KEN (2019), *Linguistic Turns, 1890–1950: Writing on Language as Social Theory*, Oxford, OUP.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1943), *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse*, Copenhagen, Ejnar Munksgaard.

JAKOBSON, ROMAN O. (1976), *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning* (written 1942), Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press 1978.

LAKS, BERNARD & GOLDSMITH, JOHN (2019), *Battles in the Mind Field*, Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press.

LÉON, JACQUELINE (2013), "Historiographie du structuralisme généralisé. Étude comparative", *Les dossiers de HEL* [supplément électronique à la revue *Histoire Epistémologie Langage*], Paris, *SHESL*, 2013, n°3, disponible sur Internet: http://htl.univ-paris-diderot.jussieu.fr/num3/leon.pdf

POPPER, KARL R. (1935), "'Induktionslogik' und 'Hypothesenwahrscheinlichkeit'", *Erkenntnis*, 5, 170–172.

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE (1916), *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris, Payot.

SÉRIOT, PATRICK (1999), *Structure et totalité*, Paris, PUF.

VILKOU-POUSTOVAÏA, IRINA (2002), "Martinet face à Grammont. Une rencontre manquée entre Troubetskoy et Saussure", *La linguistique*, 2 (38), 117–132.

Claude Lévi-Strauss. Revisiting Structuralism in Anthropology

Kirsten Hastrup
University of Copenhagen

Abstract. *Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) was an anthropologist of his own kind. He stumbled into the discipline as a young man, and gradually became the leading figure of French anthropology. His work took off from his own early fieldwork in Brazil (1935–39), and from the publications of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, the founders of French anthropology. During the Second World War, he lived in New York and found a new source of inspiration in the collections of Native American tales and worldviews, assembled by Franz Boas and his students. This moved him towards a comprehensive work on myths, and to his claim that all societies, tribal or modern, American, or not, were built upon the same structures. When back in France, he turned to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jacobson, and Nikolai Trubetzkoy, and structuralism entered anthropology. Here it served to connect very different social organizations, landscapes, and continents, seeing them as versions of a shared basic structure. Lévi-Strauss' comprehensive humanism remains important in contemporary anthropology, even if 'structuralism' as such has faded.*

Keywords: Classification, Myths, The Savage Mind, Environments, Racism

1. Introduction

Structuralism came to anthropology via linguistics; there was sufficient kinship between the two to make a transfer of ideas possible, even if they would take a new turn when moving into other fields. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) was a keyperson in the process of building up an anthropological version of structuralism, although

different versions of structural anthropology were also to emerge. Like other grand ideas it evolved through different disciplines and different minds and continued to do so until it had dissipated into new thought patterns. While never defining anthropology, being always a wide-ranging field of thought, structuralism did invigorate the discipline at a moment in world history, when it was no longer possible to claim the ethnographic innocence that had glued to the early decades of anthropological thinking. Lévi-Strauss very early distinguished himself by his claim that anthropology has a special, favoured place among the sciences.

> The ethnographer, while in no wise abdicating his own humanity, strives to know and estimate his fellowmen from a lofty and distant point of vantage: only thus can he abstract them from the contingencies particular to this or that civilization. The conditions of his life and work cut him off from his own group for long periods together; and he himself acquires a kind of chronic uprootedness from the shear brutality of the environmental challenges to which he is exposed. Never can he feel himself 'at home' anywhere: he will always be, psychologically speaking, an amputated man. Anthropology is, with music and mathematics, one of the few true vocations; and the anthropologist may become aware of it within himself before ever he has been taught it. (Lévi-Strauss [1955] 1961, 58)

This view of anthropology as unique among the sciences by being a true vocation provides an important sounding board for understanding Lévi-Strauss' position in anthropology; he was admired for his audacity in thinking, yet also strangely, and increasingly marginalised from main-stream anthropology. He contributed to important debates and introduced new vistas on the subject matter of the discipline. His work invigorated anthropology in important ways, yet his version of structuralism was on the edge of the discipline – as generally perceived – and produced some antagonism. Other versions emerged, less powerful and less radical, that would gradually fold in onto themselves, while Lévi-Strauss persisted in developing his grand structuralist thinking, increasingly on his own.

2. The Anthropological Landscape

In early 20th century there were three rather distinct schools of anthropological thinking, represented by Franz Boas (1858–1942) spearheading the American version, Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) developing a French school, and finally Arthur R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) assembling a British anthropology that grew out of colonial interests on several continents. Together, these scholars formatted a new anthropological field, building also upon observations by others, who had worked overseas before 'ethnography' or 'anthropology' had appeared in the vocabulary. While the new generation spearheaded different schools of anthropological thinking, there was always a mutual interest – and a general acknowledgement also of earlier writers, be they missionaries or naturalists. The world had become one huge laboratory, opening up new intellectual paths. Sustained anthropological fieldwork was an important part of this often in the wake of missionaries, equally committed to a long-term engagement with 'other' people and their environments.

Lévi-Strauss, our protagonist, began his studies in philosophy but moved to anthropology for his doctorate, taking off from the French intellectual milieu while also increasingly affected by the early American ethnographic tradition. The latter was marked by detailed empirical studies of native Americans in particular, while also gradually looking towards other regions. When Lévi-Strauss entered the anthropological scene, the founders had set their mark on the discipline, and the world was undergoing rapid changes. New tools for generalization and comparison had to be invented to match new concerns. The work of the founders was often shaped by the colonial interests of particular countries, expecting anthropologists to unpack local social structures to facilitate relations. While keen to do fieldwork in the colonies (their being accessible), the anthropologists often went their own way intellectually, adding deeper analysis to documentation, once they found themselves among the people actually living there.

Lévi-Strauss' vision of anthropology was originally influenced by his compatriots, not least Marcel Mauss, who had worked on

ethnographic material across continents (assembled by others) and introduced comparative analysis of world-wide themes, like magic, personhood, gifts, and habitus. Such generalising intellectual ambition differed from both British and American anthropology, where individual fieldwork was increasingly seen as a necessary way of entry to the discipline. While definitely an admirer of this practice, Lévi-Strauss questioned the "idea that empirical observation of a single society will make it possible to understand universal motivations"; here he speaks of Bronislaw Malinowski in particular, but the statement has a general bearing (Lévi-Strauss [1958a:19] 1967b, 14). Lévi-Strauss suggests that all "the historian or ethnographer can do, and all we can expect of either of them, is to enlarge a specific experience to the dimensions of a more general one, which thereby becomes accessible *as experience* to men of another country or another epoch" (ibid.17). History and anthropology do not differ by their subject, their goal or their method, but by their perspectives: "History organizes its data in relation to conscious expressions of social life, while anthropology proceeds by examining its unconscious foundations" (ibid.19). The reference to the unconscious is significant; no natives ever offer rational explanation of any custom or institution.

> When he is questioned, the native merely answers that things have always been this way, that such was the command of the gods or the teaching of the ancestors. Even when interpretations are offered, they always have the character of rationalizations or secondary elaborations. There is rarely any doubt that the unconscious reasons for practicing a custom or sharing a belief are remote from the reasons given to justify them. (Lévi-Strauss [1958a, 25] 1967b:19)

It is in the unspoken that we shall find the deeper structural order, challenging any idea of a strictly empirical, localised anthropology. The inspiration from psychoanalysis is obvious, and in some of Lévi-Strauss' essays on shamanism and sorcery, such as *The Sorcerer and his Magic*, the link between the two points of view is made explicit (Lévi-Strauss [1958c] 1967f). For him fieldwork was never a matter of collecting facts, but of analysing them; as opposed to British

empiricism and American hermeneutics, Lévi-Strauss took off in rationalist philosophy.

Lévi-Strauss found inspiration in other disciplines, like linguistics and psychology, or in other expressive genres, such as music and myth, and of course in the field. His own first fieldwork took place in Brazil in the mid 1930es, and while this was to set his thinking in motion, his impressive oeuvre also drew heavily on ethnographic material assembled by others, not least by American ethnographers focussing on worldviews, myths, and stories of the New World. The American interest was not only a result of his work in Brazil but also of the years spent in New York as a refugee from Europe during the Second World War. In New York he met Franz Boas and his students and collaborators and gained access to invaluable ethnographic reports on native Americans that were to play an important role in his structuralist project.

Already in 1937, Lévi-Strauss had suggested that ethnography was a revolutionary science, in the sense that it potentially offered new ways of thinking about social relations, thus expanding possibilities for social change also in the modern world (Lévi-Strauss [1937] 2016). One had to acknowledge that the so-called primitives were as old as the moderns, and like them they had run through different stages of development. This development included ancient high cultures in America, demonstrating a far from even path when it came to development. No doubt, Lévi-Strauss saw all of his ethnographic subjects as equal.

In the process of reassessing his work, and (re-) reading the many books *on* or conversations *with* Lévi-Strauss that were published during his later years and after his death – I have been overwhelmed by what I had not seen so clearly before, how his *structuralism* was never simply a 'method', ordering the world, but a deep commitment to seeing humanity as a whole. Lévi-Strauss lived long enough to (re-) interpret and subtly redefine his ambition as global realities changed. As a true intellectual, Lévi-Strauss kept expanding his thoughts, and his structuralism was never fixed to a particular set of terms or methods; yet it was always comprehensive, historically and geographically. He saw new things with age and time, keeping an eye on the actualities of global developments – politically and

ecologically. He started out as philosopher, but became an anthropologist by default, deeply affected by the multiplicity of the world and increasingly insisting that there was no 'otherness', just different versions of humanity across the globe.

3. Tristes Tropiques

Lévi-Strauss' anthropological thinking took off in Brazil, where he was based in the years 1935–1939. He had been invited to work at the new University of São Paulo – inaugurated in 1934, and based on the Brazilian Academy, its predecessor. The Academy had been solidly rooted in a French intellectual tradition going back to Auguste Comte and more recently centring on Émile Durkheim's work. Along with Lévi-Strauss, the French historian Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), who spearheaded a new history of mentalities, focussing on *la longue durée*, and showing how long-term structures formatted societies as much if not more than singular historical events (see e.g. Braudel 1981, 1982, 1984), was also invited. Lévi-Strauss may have found some inspiration from Braudel's thinking, even if there is little indication that they became friends; rather the inverse. In fact, Lévi-Strauss did not have many friends, it seems; he often turned people down if they misunderstood him and from later biographies and published conversations with Lévi-Strauss, we sense a degree of irritation with colleagues who did not see the world eye to eye with him, and implicitly diminished his thinking. I once met him at College de France (around 1990), as president and emissary of the newly established European Association of Social Anthropologists, to ask him to accept an honorary patronage, which he declined. Along with me were a couple of colleagues, and of course we had an appointment; yet, after a few minutes, he withdrew rather ungallantly, "if that was all". He possibly had had enough of such offers and wanted to think in peace; yet I did feel a bit let down. For me he was a hero, and a welcome antidote to (part of) my doctoral work in Oxford (in the mid 1970es), where Rodney Needham chaired colloquia on structuralism, strictly forbidding any mention of Lévi-Strauss, as I learnt soon enough; we shall return briefly to that below.

During his years in Brazil, Lévi-Strauss took time for fieldwork. He had arrived in 1935 in a state of intellectual excitement, feeling like the first travellers discovering a new continent in the 16th century: "For my part I discovered the New World. Everything seemed fabulous to me: the landscapes, the animals, the plants" (Lévi-Strauss & Eribon 1998, 34). Eventually, he would lament the unmistakable traces of the Old World that he found all the way to the interior of Brazil, where he made his first, relatively short fieldwork among the Bororo, collecting numerous masks and adornments that were to serve as the bottom-line for later exhibitions in Paris (ibid. 34–35). It was the beginning of his life-long engagement with masks, seen as a complex language in plastic form, exceeding the limits of a particular place or a particular people (e.g. Lévi-Strauss 1979). Masks offer a kind of universal expression and reveal a human sub-consciousness of shared being.

Lévi-Strauss made three distinct campaigns into the interior of Brazil, asserting that fieldwork not only gave access to knowledge about particular tribes, but also contributed to a deeper sense of a common humanity that was not to be reserved for historians. The farther away the examples were from his own world, the more profound the gains of ethnography, Lévi-Strauss suggested, having invented a technique that made it possible to "integrate the enormous populations, the enormous part of humanity, into the history from where they had been completely excluded" (Lévi-Strauss [1937] 2016, 60). This exclusion was detrimental, he claimed, and went on to suggest that only through exchange and mutual interest would the small, sequestered groups develop and even survive. Human progress rests on contact, not isolation, even if just a contact with neighbours. Here is a first indication of why humanity had to be understood as one whole, and why concerted structural thinking had to replace simple documentation of 'other people'.

To find general truths about humankind, one had to sometimes suspend the complex and deeply entangled histories of modern societies and look behind the curtain, as it were, to find the essence of human life. In low-density communities, the social phenomena presented themselves much more directly to the researchers' gaze (Lévi-Strauss [1937] 2016, 44). While perceptively marginal

and barely known, the small communities in the New World were clearly part of a shared world with a very deep history. The alleged incommensurability between the life-worlds of Brazilian natives and Europeans did not hold up, as he was to discover. However new the world seemed, and however unknown its people, they were never outside of human history.

Arriving in the New World in 1935, Lévi-Strauss found himself in a state of exhilaration of discovering a continent, where everything was truly new to him. Nature itself sat the frame for his fieldwork among the natives, who were somehow part of it. While we cannot delve into his ethnographic work as such, we note how he understood ethnographic work as a profound dialogue, proposing that "the description of indigenous institutions given by fieldworkers, ourselves included, undoubtedly coincides with the natives' image of their own society, but that this image amounts to a theory, or rather a transmutation, of reality, itself of an entirely different nature" (Lévi-Strauss [1958, 135] 1967e, 117). From his fieldwork among the Bororo, he coined the notion of each tribe living with a distinct *style*, expressed in their material culture, and repeated in clothing, body-painting, house-construction etc. (Lévi-Strauss [1955, 203ff] 1963, 160 ff.). His theory of style points towards an emerging structuralist thinking, abstracting larger patterns from quotidian practices, and identifying them athwart genres, languages and social organisations.

When later setting out to study the Nambikwara, further away in the hidden interior of Brazil, Lévi-Strauss was thoroughly disappointed by what he found. However far he penetrated into the jungle, traces of the Modern World were unmistakable; there was no hidden paradise of untouched savages. He recounts how he had gone to the end of the world to discover the barely perceptible advances of the earliest culture, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau had envisaged, but when confronted by reality, Lévi-Strauss refuted to place the Nambikwara on any historical scale (Lévi-Strauss 1955, 376 & 1961, 310). Whether the community was a remnant of an original culture or just a degenerated society, was immaterial. "I had looked for a community, reduced to its most simple expression. With the Nambikwara it had reached a level, where I only saw human beings"

([1955, 377] 1961, 310). In other words, there was no society and no origin, solely a fragile present within a larger, unfathomable world. The stress on *humans* implicitly includes the Nambikwara in a shared humanity. One result of this was that Lévi-Strauss distanced himself from the idea of bounded fieldwork among singular social groups with each their cultural pattern. They might differ, but all of them were part of a larger system of nature-cultures within which they unfolded, if never freely.

While *Tristes Tropiques* – the book – was widely read and in some ways acquired a cultic status in my generation of anthropologists (and beyond), there were sceptics, who could not see the value of a work that was both a travelogue, an ethnography, and a philosophical text. One of them was the American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, who was a grand writer himself, and who saw *Tristes Tropiques* as a mockery of anthropology, difficult to read "not just in the recognised sense that his by now famous rain-forest prose – dripping with steamy metaphors, overgrown with luxuriant images, and flowered with extravagant puns ('thoughts' and 'pansies,' 'ways and voices,' and perhaps, considering the text at hand even 'tropes and tropics') – is so easy to get lost in" (Geertz 1988, 27–28). Geertz' translation of the puns hardly pays justice to Lévi-Strauss' French finesse, but he has a point about the extravagance of the work; for Geertz it was a matter of finding a proper style in reverence for the anthropological metier. In the conversation on his work with Didier Éribon, Lévi-Strauss later admitted that he only wrote that way, because he found himself at a point in time where he had made a cut with his past and reorganised his personal life; and he had written *Tristes Tropiques*, which "he would never have dared publish if he had been in any competition for a university post" (Lévi-Strauss & Éribon 1998, 76). He did get a post later, and he enchanted many anthropologists (and others) with his free style of thinking, mixing personal impressions with pointed analyses.

4. Structural Analysis

Structural analysis as such was to some degree hidden among the leaves and landscapes of *Tristes Tropiques*, also hiding the indigenous peoples of the Brazilian interior. Yet, Lévi-Strauss' early attempts at organizing empirical facts from the field in larger schemes were soon to develop into 'proper' structural analysis, for which he became famous within and beyond anthropology. His first contribution to explicit structuralist thinking was published in 1945 in *Word. Journal of the Linguistic Circle of New York,* and it bears all the marks of his high regard for linguistics.

> Linguistics occupies a special place among the social sciences, to whose ranks it unquestionably belongs. It is not merely a social science like the others, but, rather, the one in which by far the greatest progress has been made. It is probably the only one which can truly claim to be a science and which has achieved both the formulation of an empirical method and an understanding of the nature of the data submitted to its analysis. (Lévi-Strauss [1945] 1967c, 29)

The growth of structural linguistics certainly affected anthropology, and vice versa. In his book, *Course in General Linguistics*, compiled by his students on the basis of their lecture notes, Ferdinand de Saussure explicitly stresses that linguistics borders on ethnology and, conversely, that anthropology may learn from language studies and their deep timeframe (Saussure [1916] 1974, 20 ff. & 223 ff.). Echoing this, Marcel Mauss claimed that "Sociology would certainly have progressed much further if it had everywhere followed the lead of the linguists" (Mauss [1924] 1951, 299), but he had no inkling of its future impact. As terms, ethnology, anthropology, and sociology were still semantically overlapping at the time, but we are in no doubt about the general agreement on the close relationship between anthropology and linguistics.

Once he had read Saussure, Lévi-Strauss began to see culture as a system of contrasting elements, like phonemes in language (Wilcken 2010, 11). Soon, Lévi-Strauss was absolutely certain that linguistics would eventually play "the same renovating role with respect to the

social sciences that nuclear physics, for example, has played for the physical sciences" (Lévi-Strauss 1967c, 31). He identified the future revolution by reference to Nikolai Trubetzkoy and his programmatic statement (of 1933) about four basic operations:

> First, structural linguistics shifts from the study of *conscious* linguistic phenomena to [the] study of their *unconscious* infrastructure; second, it does not treat *terms* as independent entities, taking instead as its basis of analysis, the *relations* between terms; third it introduces the concept of *system* …; finally, structural linguistics aims at discovering *general laws* (Lévi-Strauss 1967c, 31).

Apart from taking inspiration from the general inspiration from the operational system of linguistics, Lévi- Strauss sought a way to take it further, suggesting that langue and culture were one whole. What mattered most to him was not the relation between language and culture as such, but the acknowledgment of their mutual constitution. This not only points towards conversations between people, but to a generic relation between language and culture.

> Language can be said to be a condition of culture because the material out of which language is built is of the same type as the material out of which the whole culture is built: logical relations, oppositions, correlations, and the like. Language, from this point of view, may appear as laying a kind of foundation for the more complex structures which correspond to the different aspects of culture. (Lévi-Strauss 1967d, 67)

A main inspiration from linguistics came from Roman Jakobson (and others from the Praguean phonological circle). Lévi-Strauss met him in New York in the 1940es, where they began to follow each other's courses; it was not until the 1970es that Jakobson's lessons were published, and Lévi-Straus was asked to write the preface, opening with the observation that a "book bearing Roman Jakobson's name has no need of a preface" (Lévi-Strauss 1985c, 138). Lévi-Strauss notices that what had most affected his own thinking was Jakobson's discussion of the phoneme; citing him, Lévi-Strauss says: "The important thing… is not at all each phoneme's individ-

ual phonic quality considered in isolation and existing in its own right. What matters is their reciprocal opposition... within a system" (ibid. 140).

After the passage of years (between the lectures and the book), Lévi-Strauss recognized that among the themes in Roman Jakobson's work, the phoneme has affected him most. It inspired his own view of incest: "Like a phoneme, a device having no meaning of its own but helping to form meanings, the incest taboo struck me as a link between two domains" (ibid. 142). More generally he claimed, that "Structural linguistics taught me... that instead of being led astray by a multiplicity of terms, one should consider the simplest and most intelligible relationships uniting them" (Lévi-Strauss 1985c, 139). Simplicity was not always easy, however, when it came to kinship structures.

In *Les Structures élémentaires de la Parenté* (1949), written in New York, Lévi-Strauss mapped out diverse systems of marriage and exchange of spouses (based on existing ethnographies) and concluded that there were basically two kinds of marriage rules, elementary and complex; in the first, the choice of spouse was built into the system, in the second, it was reduced to a general duality of permitted or forbidden spouses. The incest-taboo was at the core of both systems, marking the boundary between nature and culture. From there, multiple systems of kinship had emerged. In Oxford, Rodney Needham, who had been deeply involved in the editing and translation of *Les Structures élémentaires*, took offence by a remark made by Lévi-Strauss' on a minor detail in Needham's introduction about preferential versus prescriptive rules. Needham had misunderstood that in Lévi-Strauss' view, there was no difference in practice. Yet, Needham saw this as (indirectly) charging himself, the editor, with a 'fundamental misunderstanding' of the subject matter of the book (Needham 1969, xix) – whence the strict ban on mentioning Lévi-Strauss in his colloquia. Other British anthropologists continued to take inspiration from Lévi-Strauss; it was not a general warfare even if there was some puzzlement among anthropologists about the meaning of structuralism (see e.g. Hayes & Hayes 1970; Leach 1970; Goody 1977). There was, indeed, a fault-line between the very general principles and the actual social relations that could not be

effectively calibrated, even though kinship had been high on the anthropological agenda, not least in Britain.

Les Structures élémentaires, being a serious exercise in structural analysis across multiple societies and continents, never really took off beyond a rather narrow anthropological domain; it was too technical for the general public, and too muddled for many anthropologists. While 'kinship' had been a major issue in anthropology, it was soon to recede to back-stage; possibly it was both too general and too indiscernible. Yet, it did have a brief fame among French intellectuals, including Simone de Beauvoir, who in a review praised it as a token of the awakening of French anthropology; she saw it as an unexpected compromise between the questionable metaphysics of Durkheim and the narrow positivism of American Anthropology (Pace 1983, 10f). No doubt, structuralism was a huge intellectual impulse in France at the time; this gave Lévi-Strauss a lot of attention, even if he was a bit of a recluse.

Lévi-Strauss himself was an admirer of the USA, where he wrote the book on kinship based on written sources at his disposal while exiled in New York. Looking back at the work, what now is much more visible than it was then, is the larger discussion of the relation between nature and culture, addressed in the first chapter with the problem of incest at its centre, and implicitly present in the rest. One can see how he had been caught up in too many details to keep a clear analytical focus even in the 1970es. In the twenty-first century, when the categorical boundary between modern and traditional societies has all but disappeared, kinship *systems* are of limited interest to anthropologists – being hardly identifiable under the present global winds. In his preface to the Second Edition (in French 1967; in English 1969) he admits that "On reading the text today, the documentation seems tedious and the expression old-fashioned. If I had been more careful and less hesitant under the weight of my undertaking, I would doubtless have seen from the start that its very bulk would involve certain weaknesses, upon which, in fact, critics have dwelt with some malice" (Lévi-Strauss 1969b, xxvii). What is possibly more interesting than this lament is a statement about the book in a very different and much more general tune: "Once completed, the book becomes a foreign body,

a dead being incapable of holding my attention, much less my interest. This world in which I had so passionately lived closes up against me and shuts me out. At times it is almost beyond my comprehension" (Lévi-Strauss 1969b, xxvii).

When the English translation appeared, a reviewer wrote that the work could not "be ignored by any serious student of society, for its underlying subject matter is the nature of man and the definition of the human situation" (Murphy 1970, 164).

> The contents of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* will be a source of surprise, and even dismay, to the prospective reader who thinks he is to be treated to an anti-Sartre polemic. The bulk of the tome is concerned with the custom of cousin marriage and, more specifically, with the cross-cousins. [...] Given the additional consideration that these forms of marriage occur only in remote and exotic societies, and only in a minority of them, one may wonder why Lévi-Strauss has become a culture hero of the established literati and the subject of a lead article last year in the *New York Times Magazine* (Murphy 1970, 166).

The play with kinship structures was actually a serious attempt at finding equivalents between distant societies and different regions, and at unpacking general structures. Looking back, Lévi-Strauss himself mentions a certain mathematical interest, but makes a stronger claim to have followed principles similar to those applied to linguistics by Roman Jakobson; in both cases one shifts the attention from the terms to the prevailing *relations* between the terms. "Or, that was exactly what I sought to do to resolve the enigma that the marriage rules pose to the ethnologists" (Lévi-Strauss and Éribon 2009, 79). We are back to linguistics and to the attempt at solving a riddle of shared patterns within an endless multiplicity of histories and cultures.

5. The Savage Mind

While, arguably, anthropologists think through the lives of people in particular places (if with different end-goals), Lévi-Strauss thought through categories, whether masks, myths, or kinship-struc-

tures. This thinking challenged established (positivist) ethnographic categories, calling for an invention of new ones. The translation of classic ethnographic material to general figures was part of his scheme. This is obvious in two works, both published in 1962, namely *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* ('Totemism today') and *La Pensée sauvage*, ('The savage Mind') the former seen (by himself) as a historical and critical introduction to the latter. Both seeks to penetrate further into the relation between the mind and the world. Together, they challenge the assumption of the primitive mind being a counterpoint to the modern; 'minds' are deeply connected, even if not equally presented.

Totemism is a specific mode of thinking that testifies to the connection between primitive and scientific classification, serving to identify particular social groups. Franz Boas, the founder of American anthropology, had suggested that mythical thinking seemed to have a "preference for animals, celestial bodies and other personified natural phenomena" (Boas 1940, 490; quoted by Lévi-Strauss 1962b, 178), and believed that it was easier to explain social relations through animals and other natural categories than through undifferentiated humans. For Lévi-Strauss the point was that species were not simply natural categories but human-made classifications, and he took classical Anglo-Saxon anthropology to task for suggesting that totemism was designed to protect certain, useful animals. Against such positivist view Lévi-Strauss wanted to emphasize that animals, and other living species like plants, were much more than useful and edible; they were also good 'to think'.

While totemism now seems to be an arcane interest, at Lévi-Strauss' time it was still part of a larger discussion of classification having evolved since Durkheim and Mauss published their work, *De quelques Formes primitive de Classification,* in *Annee sociologique* (1903). For the two authors, and for later anthropologists, the first task for anthropologists entering a new field was to apprehend the mode of classification that makes sense here. As suggested by Rodney Needham in his extended introduction to the English publication of Durkheim and Mauss' work, the anthropologist who is new to a particular field, "cannot pretend to perceive the phenomena involved in any entirely new way, but he can and must conceptualize

them in this foreign cast; and what he learns to do in each instance is essentially to classify" (Needham 1963, viii-ix). Classification is an important part of the formation of society; as Durkheim and Mauss have it: "to classify is not only to form groups; it means arranging these groups according to particular relations" (Durkheim and Mauss [1903] 1963, 8). As a system of classification "totemism is, in one aspect, the grouping of men into clans according to natural objects (the associated totemic species), it is also, inversely, a grouping of natural objects in accordance with social groups" (ibid. 17–18). In other words, 'totemism' was a way in which the anthropologist not only gained access to tribal organization but also the workings of the human mind, for whom the first categories would have been social categories according to Durkheim and Mauss (ibid. 82).

Lévi-Strauss claims that there is more to totemism than a logic of correspondence between two different groups, social and natural. Rather than a primitive form of classification, totemism is a way of thinking, and of *combining* natural and cultural series. This is where *La Pensée sauvage* takes over from *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui*, in a wider effort to uncover the complexity of human thinking. The question was still about what is given by nature and what is the work of the human mind, but the point of departure was that they were deeply implicated in each other. This question is equally addressed to anthropology working all over the world and to natural science. For Lévi-Strauss, all scholarship concerns 'the concrete', but does so at different levels of abstraction. A case is found in historical scholarship, having to choose (and navigate) between the details of daily life and the development over centuries. This always makes history a history for somebody (Lévi-Strauss 1962b, 341); historical scholarship, therefore, has no proper object and is nothing but a method. Here, 'history' is seen as the opposite of myth; where the latter 'think' themselves without any interference by an author, history, as authored in scholarship, is a method without an object.

La Pensée sauvage is an attempt at uncovering the workings of human thinking in general through a concerted theoretical effort at understanding how knowledge emerges. One of the major problems in discussing knowledge in this vein is to sort out what is given

by nature, and what is the result of human thinking. Clearly, this question applies equally to the natural and the human sciences.

Like other works in his impressive oeuvre, this one contains an important critique of the sciences, human and natural, failing to engage with the all-embracing question of what is owed to nature and what is the work of human thought. Lévi-Strauss is particularly committed to answering this question, which is at the centre of *La Pensée sauvage* (Lévi-Strauss 1962b, Ch. One). As a thinker, Lévi-Strauss himself was in some ways a 'savage', refusing to abide to popular trends and obvious phrases when it came to address particular social or political issues – such as 'race'. He had been called by UNESCO to speak against racism in 1952, having experienced it himself during the Second World War, when he had to flee Nazism in France; yet he chose to talk about multiple cultures but no obvious 'races', hoping to move the discussion away from biological categories to cultural differences; the latter were always changing (Lévi-Strauss 1973b, 379).

In 1971, he was again asked by UNESCO to address racism, and this time he went even further. While obviously declaring himself as a staunch opponent of any kind of racism in practice, he seriously questioned the suitability of continuing the use of a concept with roots in the nineteenth century. Locking 'racism' further up into the vocabulary might hide the fact that 'cultures' had always been dynamic. Politically, Lévi-Strauss abhorred racism, as experienced in Europe during the World War two, yet he insisted that the concept of race was not supported by anthropology, and as a biological category it was deeply questionable (Lévi-Strauss 1983, 21–48). He added a further argument against calling in anthropology to fight against racism per se, namely that humanity as a whole faced another major problem – embedded in its relations to other living species (ibid. 46). It is futile to seek a solution to the problem of race, if we cannot agree that 'life' in a broad sense unites us all. This is where we sense the deeper value of *La Pensée sauvage* (the book), with its motley of life-forms, understandings, and flowery language. If an aged experiment in thinking, it remains a source for wondering.

6. Mythical thinking

A tension between a philosophical and an empirical tradition colours his unsurpassed work *Mythologiques*, published in four volumes (Lévi-Strauss 1964; 1967a; 1968; 1971). They are thought out in a particular mode, marked by his deep interest in music, an interest that was later to be described in detail (Lévi-Strauss 1993). Here, Lévi-Strauss explores the relation between music and words (once again setting off from Roman Jakobson who had compared music to poetry), suggesting that the difference between music and words, was that the former was universal, while the latter rather more local, to put it briefly (ibid. 89). Music has no words, and the notes do not have any meaning of their own; only as it develops does a musical pattern emerge. This takes us back to *Mythologigues* where meaning is never given in individual myths but emerges in the process of 'listening'.

Mythologiques takes off from his fieldwork in Brazil, more precisely in a Bororo myth, but as it develops it embraces an extensive Pan-American body of available myths from both South and North America – with excursions also to Europe and beyond. As Lévi-Strauss says in the first volume, *Le Cru et le Cuit* ('The Raw and the Cooked'), he does not offer an interpretation or a translation of the myths, from one language to the other, but a generalization of their content. The myths have no author; they are incarnated in a tradition that may circulate in language, but which belongs to a separate order, where they think themselves (Lévi-Strauss 1964, 20). The first volume begins and ends with a musical analogy; both myths and music are absorbed through listening, and they awaken shared mental structures in the listeners wherever they live (ibid. 35). There is no obvious goal until we reach the end. It has been suggested that the musical framework shows a thinker in intellectual transition (Pace 1983, 10). There is also a kind of continuation, however, from *Les Structures élémentaires* embedded in the translation of actual social life to a general, all-embracing logic, that has neither been willed nor not willed. It just is. A comparable logic is found in the 'culinary triangle' (raw, cooked, rotten), being a pan-human scheme of consumption.

The second volume of *Mythologiques: De Miel aux Cendres (*'From Honey to Ashes'), has an explicit culinary framework, starting out from the striking interest for honey and tobacco known from all early civilizations and contemporary myths across the world. Again, Lévi-Strauss presents a voluminous catalogue of New World myths, but also includes some ritual meals from Europe, confirming the universality of certain sensorial facts. His analyses go to show how it is not the substances as such that are important, but their properties (Lévi-Strauss 1967a, 407f.). The ethnographic multiplicity, again, testifies to a universal order, which must be uncovered by the anthropologist in minute details – proving this universality, so to speak.

It also applies to the third volume, *L'Origine des Manières de Table* ('The Origin of Table Manners') that Lévi-Strauss seeks and finds links between myths of widely varied provenance. Here he introduces astronomic models in the analysis, expanding the field, so to speak, and adding to the claim that myths find themselves between nature and culture. He also suggests an interesting parallel between serial stories and myths, both drawing on common experiences and reshaping these along the way; the difference is that while the stories must end, the myths never can (Lévi-Strauss 1968, 11, 106). They have their own lives moving from one tribe to the next, floating through the ages, changing a little in response to particular natural environments, stellar bodies, and shifting resources for living and eating. The myths may be transformed and inverted, but always according to a structural logic; in other words, their emergence is far from random.

Arguably, one of the most interesting elements in Lévi-Strauss' mythological travelogue are his thoughts about his own role as author – and by implication any anthropological author. In the Finale to the fourth and last volume of *Mythologiques, L'Homme nu* ('The naked Human'), he describes the role of the author as fundamentally anonymous (Lévi-Strauss 1971, 559 ff.). As author, one has to let the myths simply run through oneself, in search of their own properties and ingrained order; one should not attempt to form them – which is not so easy to avoid, given the necessity to write them down, of course, and thereby to fix them in both time and space.

In a later retrospect, *Le Regard éloigné* ('The View from Afar') consisting of a collection of articles, Lévi-Strauss elaborates on his view of the author (including himself) as passive and receptive, claiming that the author's thought evolves in an anonymous place, where elements – barely seen to arrive from outside – can be organized; during the work with the text, the author is gradually excluded from his (or her) oeuvre and becomes its executor (Lévi-Strauss 1983, 327; 1985, 243). A similar claim can be made for the universal logic of myth, keeping the world together by connecting people within and across groups and between old and new worlds.

This logic is further demonstrated in the three additions to the mythological work that he later wrote, known as 'les petits *Mythologiques*', namely *La Voie des Masques* ('The Way of Masks') 1979, *La Potière jalouse* ('The Jealous Potter') 1986, and *Histoire de Lynx* ('The History of the Lynx') 1991, where Lévi-Strauss pursues more detailed and located themes. Or so it appears; in actual fact he is also attempting to place such details in relation to the place of the earth in relation to the heavenly bodies, given the position of the constellation of stars in all human thinking, from its beginnings until now (Lévi-Strauss 1991, 320). Here the infinitely small connects with the boundless outer space, reminding us that the world is somehow beyond our reach.

When later looking back on the composition of his *Mytholoqiques*, Lévi-Strauss saw how he had unknowingly taken over an idea from the surrealist Max Ernst (1891–1976) directed towards painting, and who had rejected the notion of the 'creative power of the artist'. Authors likewise have a passive role in the poetic creation and become spectators to their own work. Lévi-Strauss asks if this does not also apply to his own studies of myth. Like the paintings and the collages of Max Ernst, he claims that his own work with mythology has also grown through samples taken from outside. In his case the myths themselves have been cut out from numerous images in old books where he found them, and then he "arranged them on the pages as they arranged themselves in my mind, but in no conscious or deliberate fashion" (Lévi-Strauss 1983, 327–28; 1985a, 243). With such deliberations we are deeply embedded in a particular version of structuralist thinking, developing in the course of writing.

While *Les Structures élémentaires* never really made it beyond a rather narrow, and relatively unforgiving anthropological debate on kinship-structures, the *Mythologiques* had a broader appeal to intellectuals from other fields, including visual artists. It also had a longer life in anthropology than the one on kinship structures, yet even so it seems rarely referred to in anthropology today, being possibly too esoteric and literary. One could argue that it still has an important message in connecting the Old and the New World (were it not already an archaic dichotomy), and not least in the insistence on a certain universality through a huge repertoire of specific myths and thoughts, inevitably structured by the interpreter's thinking. One might also claim that the logic of myth *is* structuralist and credit Lévi-Strauss for having proved it, but it is doubtful that such grand thinking will sometime again appeal to the many; yet once it made space for thinking globally – through minute details on the border between nature and culture. There is an urgent need for re-thinking this border, however, to which Lévi-Strauss' original thinking might still contribute, however much the world has changed.

7. Structuralism and Ecology

The major works in Lévi-Strauss' impressive oeuvre have naturally taken up the better part of the debate on structuralism in anthropology, as in my own presentations in this chapter as well as in Danish textbooks (Hastrup 1975, 2020a, b). Here we shall pursue his rather subtle view on the nature-culture connection, which has become alarmingly relevant, and – possibly – better understood today than ever before through its attempt at understanding the place of humans on the edge between them. Above, we saw how he highlighted this theme already in his UNESCO address in 1971, claiming that nature united all humans for better and for worse.

In 1972, he gave a talk in New York on 'Structuralism and Ecology' at Barnard College. He opened by recalling his first lecture there, some 30 years earlier, when he found all the girls knitting while he lectured on the Nambikwara Indians, and he had a distinct feeling that they were utterly unconcerned with what he said. Yet, some did listen as proved by one of the girls coming up to

him afterwards, saying "that it was all very interesting, but she thought I should know that *desert* and *dessert* were two different words" (Lévi-Strauss 1972, 8; 1985, 102). This left him dismayed, but it also showed "that in these remote years I was already interested in ecology and mixing it, at least at the linguistic level, with the culinary art to which I did turn much later for exemplifying some of the structural ways along which the human mind works" (ibid, 9). Thus he turned a linguistic lapse into a theoretical objective.

He continued to refute allegations of idealism or mentalism and claimed that he was "only trying to probe the structure of the human mind and to seek, what they disparagingly call 'Lévi-Straussian universals.' If this were the case, the nature of the cultural context in which mind operates and manifests itself would become unimportant" (ibid.). One understands his heavy sigh, given that he had, indeed, followed the script and worked closely with minute details of the environment, be they ecological, meteorological, botanical, ornithological or celestial, allowing him to assert the huge impact that ecology had upon the mind, and vice versa. On the other hand, it took detailed fieldwork to sort out the principles by which particular people would endow some of them with significance and leave others behind. As he wrote in *La Pensée sauvage,* "the principle underlying a classification can never be postulated in advance, it can only be discovered *a posteriori* by ethnographic observation – that is, by experience" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 58). Detailed ethnographic work allows us to see how the mind works with its natural environment; to cultivate this productively within a larger scholarly field, a close collaboration between the natural and the human sciences is essential (Lévi-Strauss 1985, 104).

Let us follow Lévi-Strauss' into his own field in Brazil in the 1930es, where forests were mostly too tangled to be even 'seen', making people disappear within them. When arriving to people in the dense rainforest, Lévi-Strauss was overwhelmed by the very obscurity of the settlement and reflects back also on others:

> So profound, and yet also so confused, are one's first impressions of a
> native village whose civilization has remained relatively intact that it

is difficult to know in which order to set them down. Among the Ka-
ingang – and the same is true of the Caduveo – extremes of poverty
inspire in the traveller an initial weariness and discouragement. But
there are societies so vividly alive, so faithful to their traditions, that
their impact is disconcertingly strong, and one cannot tell which of
the myriad of threads which make up the skein is the one to follow. It
was among the Bororo that I first encountered a problem of this sort.
(Lévi-Strauss 1963, 198).

The problem was to identify the details, for "these houses were not
so much built as knotted together, plaited, woven, embroidered
and given a patina by long use" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 198). They were
therefore a more or less incomprehensible structure in the jungle,
which Lévi-Strauss only understood when he "proceeded to 'settle
in' in the corner of the huge hutment, where I did not so much take
in these things as allow myself to be impregnated by them. Certain
details fell into place" (ibid. 199).

A similar development can be seen in his response to nature that
always offered particular sensations and spurred certain reflections.
Lévi-Strauss relates how crossing and re-crossing the desert-like
savannas of central Brazil "had taught him to appreciate anew the
luxuriant Nature beloved of the ancients: young grass, flowers, and
the dewy freshness of brakes" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 335). Yet, wherever
he went, the world had to be re-interpreted, and he lamented the
way in which Europeans had settled for less than the dense forest,
having scaled down passions to what was within reach. Nature be-
came part of his life in an unexpected way, and his intellectual in-
terest awakened. We can see both of these processes in the following
observation, where he laments (part of) the historical development
in Europe, where the sense of nature had weakened while societies
had progressed.

But in that forced march we had forgotten the forest. As dense as our
cities, it was inhabited by other beings – beings organized in a society
which, better than either the high peaks or the sun-baked flatlands,
had known to keep us at a distance: a collective of trees and plants that

covered our tracks as soon as we had passed. Often difficult to pene-
trate, the forest demands of those who enter it concessions every bit as
weighty, if less spectacular, than those exacted by the mountains from
the walker. Its horizon, less extensive than that of the great mountain
ranges, closes in on the traveller, isolating him as completely as any of
the desert's empty perspectives. A world of grasses, mushrooms, and
insects lead there an independent life of its own, to which patience and
humility are our only passports. A hundred yards from the edge of the
forest, and the world outside is abolished. One universe gives way to
another – less agreeable to look at, but rich in rewards for senses nearer
to the spirit: hearing, I mean, and smell. Good things one had thought
never to experience again are restored to one: silence, coolness, peace.
In our intimacy with the vegetable world, we enjoy these things which
the sea can no longer give us and for which the mountains exact too
high a price. (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 335)

The initial sensations of a radically different landscape, compared
to his European upbringing mainly in cities, indisputably contrib-
uted to Lévi-Strauss' thinking. His fascination with the New World
never ceased, something that had earlier happened to Alexander
von Humboldt (1851). In both cases the landscape made a new kind
of imagination possible, and for both of these pioneers (if in each
their way and each their century), it opened up for a new way of
thinking through connections, multiplicities, and infiltrations in
and of natural entities. In the case of Lévi-Strauss, this stands out
clearly in *Tristes Tropiques,* but has not always been appreciated as
we saw in Geertz' review above. There is no doubt, however, that
the bodily experience of the tropical landscape contributed to his
understanding of ecology as something more than an outer nature.

   In 1998, Lévi-Strauss was interviewed by Didier Éribon about
his long life in anthropology. The conversation turned into a book,
where Lévi-Strauss cannot, and does not want to hide his deep
sentiments about America. For him, the first impression of the con-
tact with the New World remained ineffaceable; in the New World
everything was on an incommensurable scale compared to that of
the Old World. Adding to this was the stunning nature, being both
more pristine and more grandiose than elsewhere; nowhere else had
Lévi-Strauss met with a nature where even the wildest appearances

covered the patient work of humans over centuries, even millennia (Lévi-Strauss and Éribon 1998, 83–84). When looking back on his fascination with the New World he expands on his view of America, seeming to have been a permanent source of reflection, and much more so than any other continent.

> Finally, and this is possibly the main reason, the study of no other continent asks for a similar advantage of the imagination. America was essentially populated by people hailing from Asia, traversing the lands that had emerged at the present place of the Bering Strait. But when? The best estimates vary by a margin of 50 million years. And of these repeated passages over different epochs, there is no trace. Because of the variations of sea-level, the itineraries are probably lost either in the high mountains or under the water. And this is not all: America offers a stupefying spectacle of very high cultures neighbouring each other, on a very low technological and economic level. What is more, these high cultures never knew anything but an ephemeral existence: Every one of them was born, developed, and disappeared in a matter of centuries; and those that had disappeared before the arrival of the Spanish were probably more knowledgeable and more refined than the ones now seen in their decline, but nevertheless dazzled them. (Lévi-Strauss and Éribon 1998, 84)

Lévi-Strauss concludes that in truth and in spite of all the accumulated work over a long time, we still do not understand what made America. There is an unfulfilled dream of solving the riddle, like the 19th century scholars hoping for the next find to offer the solution. "This is what renders Americanism so captivating" (ibid. 85).

We can see how Lévi-Strauss engaged with landscapes that were unknowable as wholes but afforded such richness that could not but influence his dreaming; it also fertilised his view of the relations between all living beings. In answer to allegations that his structuralism was overly intellectual, he claimed that it "recovers and brings to awareness deeper truths that have already been dimly announced in the body itself; it reconciles the physical and the moral, nature and man, the mind and the world, and tends toward the only kind of materialism consistent with the actual development of scientific knowledge" (1985a, 119). This is a grand claim, but he had hopes

that neuroscience would eventually confirm what seemed apparent within his own work, teeming with empirical knowledge that sustains his argument. He adds:

> The so-called primitive cultures that anthropologists study teach that reality can be meaningful on the levels of both scientific knowledge and sensory perception. These cultures encourage us to reject the divorce between the intelligible and the sensible declared by an outmoded empiricism and mechanism, and to discover a secret harmony between humanity's everlasting quest for meaning and the world in which we appeared and where we continue to live – a world made of shapes, colours, textures, flavours, and odours. Structuralism teaches us better to love and respect nature and the living beings who people it, by understanding that vegetables and animals, however humble they may be, did not supply man with sustenance only but were, from the very beginning, the source of his most intense aesthetic feelings and, in the intellectual and moral order, of his first and even then profound speculations. (Lévi-Strauss 1985a, 119–20)

This takes us back to ecology as a growing concern in his work, and like any other concern calling for a deep commitment to empirical work; anthropology is, above all, an empirical science. Individual cultures can be understood only through painstaking attention. "Only an almost slavish respect for the most concrete reality can inspire in us confidence that body and mind have not lost their ancient unity" (ibid. 119). The challenge for Lévi-Strauss' version of structuralism has not primarily been to honour this respect, but to convince other scholars that structuralist anthropology could not be practiced piece-meal. It required a deep commitment to a larger vision of humanity as embroiled in more-than-human ecologies.

8. Wild Thinking

When Lévi-Strauss landed in the Bay of Rio in Brazil (in 1935) he did not at first see the landscape and the beauty of its components. As a man of reading, he saw through others' eyes, and he recalled Columbus who wrote about this place:

> The trees were so high that they seemed to touch the sky; and, if I understood aright, they never lose their leaves; for they were as fresh and as green in November as ours are in the months of May; some were even in flower, and others were bearing fruit... And wherever I turned the nightingales were singing, accompanied by thousands of other birds of one sort or another. (Columbus, quoted in Lévi-Strauss 1963, 84)

Lévi-Strauss comments: "That's America: the continent makes itself felt at once". He adds the observation that America is made up by a manifold of presences, shapes, movements, and patches of light that the newly arrived will not be able to single out or even see. For the newcomer these shapes do not stand out in their individuality. "No: it all strikes him as an entity, unique and all comprehending. What surrounded me on every side, what overwhelmed me, was not the inexhaustible diversity of people and things, but that one single and redoubtable entity: The New World" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 84). Imagine a time, when one could still confidently think of the New World.

Lévi-Strauss is very explicit about his relative pleasure in different landscapes. He does not like the sea; he feels diminished by the mass of water that robs him of more than half his universe. What is more, "It seems to me that the sea destroys the normal variety of the earth" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 332), offering only monotony and sameness. He prefers mountains to the sea, although admittedly, "my feelings did not extend to the *high* mountains." Their delights are physical, almost abstract, drawing one's attention "away from the splendours of Nature and entirely engrossed by preoccupations relating rather to mechanics or geometry" (ibid. 333). The landscape of lower mountains, preferably with pastures, is much more to his liking. He surmises: "If the sea presents, in my opinion, a landscape many degrees below proof, mountains offer, by contrast, a world in a state of intense concentration" (ibid. 333–334). While the sea offered only a lifeless surface, the climbs and the shifting, often narrowing vistas offered in the mountains invited him to a kind of conversation. And yet, he eventually had to admit that

> ... although I do not feel that I myself have changed, my love for the mountains is draining away like a wave running backwards down the sand. My thoughts are unchanged, but the mountains have taken leave of me. Their unchanging joys mean less and less to me, so long and intently have I thought them out. (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 334).

The reason I find these thoughts worth sharing is to illustrate how Lévi-Strauss appropriated different landscapes in a very personal, and emotionally charged (if always checked) language. They also clearly mark his calling as an anthropologist, seeking to embrace both culture and nature.

While there is little left of structuralism as such in anthropology today, Lévi-Strauss must still be credited for having opened up important ways of thinking about the anthropological project. He not only theorized the nature-culture relation he also operated on a scale that connected minute local details with major global structures, and he saw actual social events within the long-term development of the human mind. If his thinking is in some sense wild, his writings are often poetic, refusing to abide to conventional, linear arguments. Clifford Geertz took him to task for his free style, which for Lévi-Strauss was part of the argument against any linear thinking that would hide the scale of the matter, as it had first appeared to him in the Tropics.

> The Tropics are not so much exotic as out of date. It's not the vegetation which confirms that you are 'really there', but certain trifling architectural details and the hint of a way of life which would suggest that you had gone backwards in time rather than forwards across a great part of the earth's surface. (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 91)

These remarks, as well as the language of which his works are so full, made Patrick Wilcken call him *The Poet in the Laboratory* (Wilcken 2010). This is to the point, not only by referring to the actual language but also to the mediation between humanities and sciences.

Revisiting structuralism in anthropology has made me realize, that while it was an important inspiration one or two generations ago, it has more or less evaporated in anthropology – at least as of

contemporary interest. Yet, writing this chapter has convinced me (once again) that Lévi-Strauss' singular contribution to anthropological thinking keeps standing. Not only did he signal a change in our view of humanity, but also insisted that anthropological analysis always reached beyond located empirical knowledge; here it is worth remembering how Lévi-Strauss declared having taken inspiration from three particular domains of thinking, viz. geology, psychoanalysis, and Marxism before he became an anthropologist (Lévi-Strauss 1961, 59–62). All of these domains work on 'truths' below the surface, as does structural anthropology.

Lévi-Strauss' legacy to a large academic field and to general intellectual concerns is widely appreciated; his life history was long and expansive and remains impressive (see Loyer 2015). Today, and in defiance of older criticisms of his work as severed from reality, I see his oeuvre as an outstanding contribution to a comprehensive humanism, anchored in an all-inclusive view of the world, where nature and culture are deeply infiltrated.

Bibliography

BOAS, FRANZ (1940), "Mythology and Folktales of the North American Indians", Repr. in *Race, Language and Culture*, New York, Macmillan.

BRAUDEL, FERNAND (1981), *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, New York, Harper and Row.

– (1982), *The Wheels of Commerce*, New York, Harper and Row.

– (1984), *The Perspective of the World*, New York, Harper and Row.

DURKHEIM, ÉMILE & MARCEL MAUSS (1903), De quelques Formes primitives de Classification, *Annee Socioloqique* 1901–02.

– (1963), *Primitive Classification* (Translated by Rodney Needham), London, Cohen & West.

GEERTZ, CLIFFORD (1988), *Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

GOODY, JACK (1977), *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

HASTRUP, KIRSTEN (1975), "Fransk strukturalisme", in: Kirsten Hastrup et al. ed. *Den ny Antropologi*, Copenhagen, Borgen/Basis.

– (2020a), "Strukturalisme", in: Heine Andersen og Lars Bo Kaspersen, red. *Klassisk og Moderne Samfundsteori*. København, Hans Reitzels Forlag (6. Edition), bd.1, 401–432.

– (2020b), "Claude Lévi-Strauss. Antropologien som kald", in Kirsten Hastrup, red. *Klassiske og Moderne Antropologiske Tænkere*, København, Hans Reitzels Forlag, 301–323.

HAYES, E. NELSON & TANYA HAYES, eds. (1970), *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Anthropologist as Hero*, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1943), *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse*, København: Akademisk Forlag.

HUMBOLDT, ALEXANDER VON (1851) [1995], *Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent*, London, Penguin Classics.

LEACH, EDMUND (1970), *Lèvi-Strauss*, London, Fontana.

LÉVI-STRAUSS, CLAUDE (1946), "Family and Social Life of the Nambikwara Indians", in Julian Steward, ed. *Handbook of South American Indians* vol. 3. Washington: The Smithsonian Institution.

– (1948), "La vie familiale et sociale des Indiens Nambikwara", *Journal de la Societé des Américanistes*, tome 37, 1–132.

– (1949), *Les Structures élementaires de la Paranté*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

– (1952), *Race et Histoire*, Paris, UNESCO.

– (1955), *Tristes Tropiques*, Paris, Terre Humaine.

– (1958a), *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon.
– (1958b), "L'Analyse structural en Linguistique et Anthropologie", in: *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon, 37–62.
– (1958c), "Linguistique et anthropologie", in: *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon, 77–92.
– (1958d), "Le sorcier et sa magie", in: *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon, 183–204.
– (1962a), *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
– (1962b), *La Pensée Sauvage*, Paris, Plon.
– (1963), *Tristes Tropiques. An anthropological study of primitive societies in Brazil* (translated by John Russel), London, Atheneum.
– (1964), *Mythologiques I: Le Cru et le Cuit*, Paris, Plon.
– (1966), *The Savage Mind,* (translation of 1962b), Chicago, Chicago University Press.
– (1967a), *Mythologiques II: Du Miel aux Cendres*, Paris, Plon
– (1967b), "History and Anthropology", in: *Structural Anthropology* (translated by Claire Jakobson), New York, Anchor Books, 1–28.
– (1967c), "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology", in: *Structural Anthropology* (translated by Claire Jakobson), New York, Anchor Books, 29–53.
– (1967d), "Linguistics and Anthropology", in: *Structural Anthropology* (translated by Claire Jakobson), New York, Anchor Books, 66–79.
– (1967e), "Social Structures of Central and Eastern Brazil.", in: *Structural Anthropology* (translated by Claire Jakobson), New York, Anchor Books, 116–127.
– (1967f), "The Sorcerer and His Magic", in: *Structural Anthropology* (translated by Claire Jakobson), New York, Anchor Books,161–180.
– (1968), *Mythologiques III: L'Origine des Manières de Table.* Paris, Plon.
– (1969a), *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (*Lés Structures élémentaires de la Parenté*), Translated by James H. Bell, John R. von Sturmer, and editor Rodney Needham), London 1969, Social Science Paperbacks.
– (1971), *Mythologiques IV: L'Homme nu*, Paris, Plon.
– (1973a), *Anthropologie structurale deux*, Paris, Plon.
– (1973b), "Structuralism and Ecology", *Social Science Information* 12 (1), 7–23. (Reproduced in French, in Lévi-Strauss 1983: 143–166, and in English Lévi-Strauss 1985a, 101–120.
– (1979), *La Voie des Masques*, Paris, Plon.
– (1983), *Le Regard éloigné*, Paris, Plon.
– (1985a), *The View from Afar*, (English translation (by Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss) of *Le Regard èloigné*.) New York, Basic Books.

- (1985b), "Structuralism and Ecology", in: *The View from Afar*. New York, Basic Books, 101–120.
- (1985c), "The Lessons of Linguistics", in: *The View from Afar*. New York, Basic Books, 138–147.
- (1986), *La Potière jalouse*, Paris, Plon.
- (1991), *Histoire de Lynx,* Paris, Plon.
- (1993), *Regarder, Écouter, Lire*, Paris, Plon.
- (2011), *L'Anthropologie Face aux Problèmes du Monde moderne. Trois Conférences inédites* (Maurice Olender, ed.), Paris, Seuil.
- (1937) [2016], "Une Science révolutionaire: L'Éthnographie", in: *De Montaigne à Montaigne* (Emmanuel Désveaux, ed.), Paris, Éditions de l'École des hautes Études en Sciences sociales.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude & Didier Éribon (1998), *De près et de loin*, Paris, Odile Jacob.

Loyer, Emmanuelle (2015), *Lévi-Strauss*, Paris, Flammarion (Grandes Biographies)

Mauss, Marcel (1924), "Rapports réels et pratiques de la psychologie et de la sociologie", *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique*, reprinted in *Sociologie et Anthropologie* 1951.

Murphy, Robert F. (1970), "Connaissez-vous Lévi-Strauss?", in: *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Anthropologist as Hero*, E. Nelsom Hayes and Tanya Hayes, eds. Cambridge, Mass. and London, England, The M.I.T. Press, 164–169.

Needham, Rodney (1963), "Introduction", in: *Primitive Classification* (by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, translated by R. Needham), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul,vii-xlviii.

Needham, Rodney 1969. "Preface to the First and Second editions", in: Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, London 1969, Eyre and Spottiswoode.

Pace, David (1983), *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Bearer of Ashes*, London and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Saussure, Ferdinand de (1974), *Course in General Linguistics* (translated from *Saussure* 1916, see below), London, Fontana/Collins.

- (1916), *Cours de Linguistique générale*, Paris, Payot.

Sontag, Susan (1970), "The Anthropologist as Hero", in: E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes, eds. *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Anthropologist as Hero*, Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press, 184–196.

Wilcken, Patrick (2010), *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Poet in the Laboratory*, London, Bloomsbury.

Author: Kirsten Hastrup is Professor emeritus at the Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen. She was President of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters 2008–2016. E-mail: kirsten.hastrup@anthro.ku.dk.

A Philosophical Structuralism

Finn Collin
University of Copenhagen

Abstract*: In philosophy, a version of structuralism was developed by logical positivists, independently of linguistic structuralism. It shares enough features with the linguistic structuralism originating from de Saussure, however, to deserve the designation. Although this philosophical structuralism has a different point of departure, it is shaped by some of the same intellectual forces that produced structuralism within linguistics. First, logical positivist philosophy of science was focused on structure rather than content. Second, the structure in question was linguistic. Third, logical positivist philosophy of science was synchronic rather than diachronic, being studiously ahistorical. These points suggest a deep motivation shared by both kinds of structuralism, viz. their commitment to an ideal of science modelled upon the most abstract parts of natural science, where theories are defined by their purely formal-mathematical features. These methodological commitments, moreover, were also useful in neutralizing some ideological tensions within logical positivism itself. Harking from its early, Vienne Circle days, the movement was split between a physicalist, materialist (and socialist) and an idealist (and liberal) wing. In his monumental early work, Der logische Aufbau der Welt, Rudolf Carnap tried to defuze this conflict by insisting that the systematic "constitution" of the total body of scientific knowledge out of simpler elements is purely a matter of relations (= structure), not of the nature of the relata.*

1. Introduction

Structuralism, as a style of theory formation originating in linguistics, has gained ground in certain sectors of philosophy – although ironically, especially in the form of a *post-structuralism* that overcomes structuralism in the same moment as holding on to some of

its key tenets. Michel Foucault (1926–1984) and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) are the best-known representatives of this trend.

Within philosophy, an indigenous structuralism was developed by logical positivists, independently of linguistic structuralism. It shares enough features with the linguistic structuralism originating from de Saussure, however, to deserve the designation. Moreover, although this philosophical structuralism has a different point of departure, it is shaped by some of the same intellectual forces that produced structuralism within linguistics, in addition to some concerns of its own. Hence, an examination of philosophical structuralism will throw some light upon the roots of linguistic structuralism.

Here are some of the features shared by the two species of structuralism. In the first place, logical positivist philosophy of science was focused on structure rather than content. Second, the structure in question was linguistic. Third, logical positivist philosophy of science was synchronic rather than diachronic, in the sense of being studiously ahistorical. These points suggest a deep motivation shared by both kinds of structuralism, *viz.* their commitment to an ideal of science modelled upon the most abstract parts of natural science, in particular theoretical physics. Theoretical physics aims to articulate laws of universal scope, which is typically taken to mean laws with no temporal or spatial restrictions. From this point of view, the fact of temporal development and history becomes an embarrassment, with no grounding in natural laws in themselves but just an effect of the accidental constellation of objects on which the laws operate (the "initial conditions" of deductive-nomological explanation, in logical positivist lingo). Moreover, to uncover such general truths, it is necessary to neglect the richness and diversity of immediate human experience. The scientific understanding of a phenomenon must necessarily break away from immediate human experience and the everyday conception of the world; that which Husserl would call the "lifeworld". Fourthly, since natural science accords a key role to mathematics and precise logico-formal articulation, mathematics and logic were viewed by both schools as key intellectual tools.

The history of science is largely a story about how the scientific picture of the world would gradually diverge ever farther from the

way it presents itself within the human lifeworld. Quantum Mechanics and Relativity Theory teach us that even space and time are quite other than the way they appear in human experience. In abandoning the phenomenal realm, science achieves greater objectivity, testability, and generality. This has been the formula for success in the natural sciences, and structuralism takes these sciences as its model.

However, logical positivism combined this adoration for natural science with a firm commitment to the experiential basis of science. This went beyond the obligation of science, definitory of the very enterprise, to investigate reality by means of observation and experiment: It was a concern to free science of the deadweight of metaphysical impurities left over from past historical modes of thinking. This agenda represents a continuation of classical British empiricism and its project to get rid of meaningless verbiage and commit any text containing it to the flames (cf. Hume 1748, sect 12, pt 3). Meaningfulness could only be preserved by grounding talk securely in human experience.

It would be tempting to see the split personality of this philosophical school to be reflected in the dual names under which it is known, "logical positivism" and "logical empiricism". However, the history of this double appellation is complex and does not allow such simple explanation. But by any name, logical positivism/empiricism combined what might be termed "scientism" with an epistemology and semantic theory that accorded a key function to elementary sensory experience. The scientist and empiricist aspects represent two somewhat different agendas that could proceed in tandem at the start, but which were soon forced apart by developments within logical positivism/empiricism itself.

Contrary to a popular misconception of logical positivism, the loser in this battle would be the scientistic agenda. Logical positivism is often incorrectly held to express natural scientists' "spontaneous philosophy of science", but the aim of logical positivism was never to reflect scientific practice but rather to reform it. Developments within the school during its heyday moved it ever farther away from the ways of thought of natural scientists, and its suggestions for the regimentation of scientific theorizing were never

seriously considered by working scientists. This increasing distance left a large space into which Thomas Kuhn would later move with his historico-sociological account of scientific practice, later to be followed by an entire movement committed to a strictly empirical investigation of science, under such names as Sociology of Scientific Knowledge or Science and Technology Studies.

2. Rudolf Carnap and the dual agenda of logical positivism

Logical positivism/empiricism is a highly multifarious philosophical tradition, and it is high time that I make a crucial clarification concerning the subject of this article: The above remarks were made with one particular logical positivist in mind, namely Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), and apply in full only to him. Still there is a point in extending this characterization to logical positivism in general, since Carnap is rightly regarded as the quintessential logical positivist. This is so for several reasons. He was a philosopher of considerable stature who exerted a lasting influence upon the discipline through his pupils, a factor strengthened by the long span of his active career, as compared with other key figures of logical positivism such as Moritz Schlick (1882–1936), Otto Neurath (1882–1945) and Hans Reichenbach (1891–1953). Thus, he came to define logical positivism for future generations. Moreover, although Schlick, Neurath and Reichenbach each differed from Carnap on important points, Carnap may be seen as the universal logical positivist in his constant effort to mediate and overcome these differences. He did so through his celebrated *neutralism*, of which structuralism is a main element. Carnap's work constitutes a microcosm of logical positivism, and a suitable object of the investigation I will conduct in the following. The purely technical disagreements among the leading logical positivists were exacerbated by an intermixture with the political schism between liberals and materialist Marxists within the Vienna Circle. Moritz Schlick, the founder of the Circle, would represent the former, while Otto Neurath would be the most prominent exponent of the latter position. These are the special features that give logical positivist structuralism its particular flavour.

As Carnap himself indicates in the programmatic piece "Über-windung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache" (Carnap 1932),[1] logical positivism pursues a negative and a positive project. The negative project is the eradication of metaphysics, to be achieved by strict adherence to the empiricist maxim that all statements about the empirical world must be grounded in experience, and experience only. The positive project is to lay bare, and refine, the structure of (natural) science.

This tidy dual picture is a simplification, however, as the two programmes were inextricably intertwined. A substantial part of the positive programme consisted in eliminating metaphysical aspects of science itself, i.e. elements that did not conform to empiricist strictures upon meaning. Beyond this on the positive side, Carnap made important contributions to the analysis of probabilistic reasoning in science, but this would happen largely in the later phase of his career, after his migration to the USA.

It has become customary in recent literature on logical positivism, and especially on Carnap's contribution, to downplay its continuity with classical empiricism. The trend was initiated by Michael Friedman in an important series of articles, later collected in a volume entitled *Reconsidering Logical Positivism* (Friedman 1999). The supposed connection with classical empiricism is dismissed as largely an artefact of Ayer's rather superficial depiction of logical positivism in his widely read book *Language, Truth and Logic* (Ayer 1936). Instead, it is argued, Carnap's thought was rooted in neo-Kantianism, the main concern of which was the objectivity of scientific knowledge. Now, it is indeed true that Carnap received his academic training in the neo-Kantian intellectual environment dominant in Germany in his youth, and his philosophy may be construed as a meta-logical solution to the neo-Kantian search for objective structures in scientific knowledge. But it is equally true, as also documented in the recent literature,[2] that Carnap fought

---

1. In the following, I quote from the English translation of the article published in Ayer, ed., Logical Positivism. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 60–81, where it is entitled "Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language".
2. Friedman (1996).

vigorously against metaphysical speculation in a way that is intel-
lectually continuous with the efforts of classical empiricism. His
critique of Heidegger's "existential phenomenology" is a famous
(to some philosophers, infamous) and paradigmatic example. This
constituted the negative aspect of the logical positivist agenda,
and it is undeniable that Carnap was aware of its affinity with the
anti-metaphysical efforts of British empiricism, especially Hume.
Carnap mentions the "empiricists of the 19th century" in the open-
ing paragraph of the "Wiederlegung" as a previous instalment of
the same anti-metaphysical effort, although one lacking the logical
instruments needed to succeed. The anti-metaphysical argument
reappears in most of Carnap's major works, including those sub-
sequent to the "Wiederlegung", although it is now an aspect of the
"positive" project of devising suitable languages for the conduct
of science.[3] In more general terms, to deny a link between British
empiricism and the group of German and Austrian philosophers
under discussion here would be to suggest that the name "logical
empiricism" was adopted by them in a state of absentmindedness,
and its implications never reflected upon. There is no reason to
treat the neo-Kantian and empiricist elements of Carnap's thought
as mutually exclusive.

The neglect of the neo-Kantian background to Carnap's phi-
losophy was not a peculiarity of Ayer's presentation and was not
generated by it. Neo-Kantianism, and even Kant himself for all the
admired depth of his thought, were regarded by British philoso-
phers of the early and mid-20th century as a retrograde epicycle in
the history of modern philosophy, a misguided attempt to salvage
something from the bankruptcy of rationalist a priorism. Instead,
the progressive line of modern philosophy was held, with consider-
able Anglocentrism, to be running from Hume (1711–1776) via Mill
(1806–1873) to Russell (1872–1970). Carnap was seen as continuing
Russell's project, a reading made all the more natural by the fact
that Carnap had picked a sentence from Russell's article "The Re-

---

3. For a thorough documentation of this point, see Popper's "Demarcation between
Science and Metaphysics" in Popper (1963). For an account of the same development
in a less polemical tone of voice, see Carl G. Hempel (1964).

lation of Sense-Data to Physics" (Russell 1914) as the motto for the *Aufbau*. This interpretation of Carnap's agenda is further supported by Carnap's "Intellectual Autobiography", which forms the introductory chapter to the volume on Carnap in the *Library on Living Philosophers* (Carnap 1963). Here, Carnap states that "the men who had the strongest effect on my philosophical thinking were Frege and Russell", adding on the next page that "in my philosophical thinking in general I learned most from Bertrand Russell" (*Op. cit.*, 12–13). Incidentally, in the article cited in the previous footnote, Popper writes that "[Russell's] influence upon Carnap and upon us all was greater than anybody else's"). From this perspective, the powerful position of neo-Kantianism in German philosophy at the time would appear as rather irrelevant. Ayer's presentation is an expression of this interpretation of Carnap's work, not its instigator. Incidentally, the influence of logical positivism in Britain would soon be undermined by two arrivals from the continent, Karl Popper (1902–1994) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). Popper's falsificationism would offer a powerful alternative to logical positivist theory of science, regardless of how its philosophical ancestry is understood, while Wittgenstein laid out a totally different and revolutionary perspective upon language.

3. Carnap's negative agenda

Let us first have a look at Carnap's negative agenda, the campaign against metaphysics as presented in "Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language". It offers a particularly stringent version of empiricism, as it declares non-empirical issues to be strictly meaningless, not merely futile. The difference between earlier critiques of metaphysics and the logical positivist one is that the latter is armed with the sharp teeth of formal logic. Logical analysis shows that the vague, "phenomenological" notion of meaning of a sentence is correctly rendered as a question of what other sentences are deducible from that sentence, and what sentences it is deducible from (*op. cit.*, 62). Eventually, in the case of meaningful sentences about empirical matters, such deductive strings will terminate in sentences recording immediate experience. (In formal disciplines

such as logic and mathematics, the deductions – i.e. proofs – terminate in the axioms of the particular formal system adopted.) The totality of observation sentences exhausts the meaning of the original sentence.

4. The positive agenda and structuralism

Next, the positive agenda, the rational reconstruction of science, in which structuralism came to the forefront. The structuralist stance was announced in *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, which was Carnap's first major work. (In the following, I quote from the English translation, *The Logical Structure of the World* published in 1967, which contains a bonus in the form of a new preface from Carnap).

Before I proceed to document the structuralist stance in the *Aufbau*, and analyse the purposes it serves, let me remark briefly upon its historical sources. One is formalist mathematics as developed by David Hilbert, which makes mathematics out to be purely (syntactic) form without content. Another is Frege and Russell's logicism, which aims to derive arithmetic from formal logic and indeed depicts the former as an extension of the latter. The point was given a philosophical underpinning in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, a key thesis of which is the purely formal and structural character of logic and mathematics. The two disciplines have no subject matter of their own but simply reflect the formal framework in which human thought must be articulated. There are copious and generous references to the writings of Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein in the *Aufbau*.

Let me start with a few quotations from the *Aufbau* expressing the structuralist stance. Science is essentially a public, intersubjective mode of knowledge; hence a special strategy is required to make room for it within the framework of a subjectivist epistemology. The solution is structuralism:

> The series of experiences is different for each subject. If we want to achieve, in spite of this, agreement in the names for the entities which are constructed on the basis of these experiences, then this cannot be done by reference to the completely divergent content, but only through

the formal description of the structure of these entities. However, it is still a problem how, through the application of uniform formal construction rules, entities result which have a structure which is the same for all subjects even though they are based on such immensely different series of experiences. This is the problem of intersubjective reality. We shall return to it later. Let it suffice for the moment to say that, *for science it is possible and at the same time necessary to restrict itself to structure statements* (p. 29, Italics in original).

So, at this initial step of the constructionist programme, structuralism serves as the key to making room for an intersubjective reality in the first place. This is a requirement not only for science but also for everyday knowledge. Next, we move to science proper:

> In the following, we shall maintain and seek to establish the thesis that *science deals only with the description of structural properties of objects* (p. 19).
> … *each scientific statement can in principle be so transformed that it is nothing but a structure statement.* (p. 29).

We are reminded of the importance of this in the face of the empiricist semantics:

> But this transformation is not only possible, it is imperative. For science aims at expressing what is objective, and whatever does not belong to the structure but to the material (i.e. anything that can be pointed out in a concrete ostensive definition) is, in the final analysis, subjective (*Ibid*.).

Most observational terms would suffer from being "material" in the sense of the Carnap quote above, i.e. being something that can be pointed to. Such sensory terms as "red" and other colour terms can only be defined by ostensive definition, i.e. by pointing to one of their instances. And this would make them incurably subjective. Thus, they have to be replaced or superseded by structural terms.

Carnap goes on to specify the concept of structure, which adds a further layer of abstraction to the concept of relations:

> In a structure description, only the structure of the relation is indicated, i.e., the totality of its formal properties. ... By formal properties of a relation, we mean those that can be formulated without reference to the meaning of the relation of the type of objects between which it holds. They are the subject of the theory of relations. The formal properties of relations can be defined exclusively with the aid of logical symbols, i.e., ultimately with the aid of the few fundamental symbols which form the basis of logistics (symbolic logic) (p. 21).

It is not for nothing that the title of the book refers to the *logical* structure of the world!

With these steps, the requirements of scientific objectivity (intersubjectivity) have been taken care of: Human experience exhibits robust structural features, which are intersubjectively communicable and hence constitute a shared, intersubjectively verifiable aspect of reality. Hence, they are also open to investigation through the systematic efforts of science. The scientific effort results in theories the concepts of which capture these fundamental structural features of intersubjective reality.

5. Structuralism and political ideology

This step, however, does nothing to ease the ideological tensions within logical positivism between idealists and materialists: Are these structures fundamentally structures of an ideational nature, or are they material? Are they structures in the pool of collective human experience, or in a material reality?

This is the point where Carnap launches his neutralism: His short answer is, *both*, but which of the two is salient depends on the individual scientist's concerns. This is the third point at which structuralism comes to the rescue. The overall constructional system of scientific concepts is structural in a sense that elevates it above the level of its component's concepts (as captured in the previous point). Each node in the system may be filled with different contents, while the overall structural relationships between nodes remain fixed. The main contenders as fillers are, respectively, concepts defined in experiential, observational terms, and concepts couched

in materialistic terms. The formal requirement imposed upon the fillers is *extensional equivalence*, which means that sentences featuring one filler must retain its truth value (true or false) if replaced with one of the alternatives.

Carnap mentions psycho-physical duality as an example of such equivalence (*Op. cit.* 92). At the time, establishing psycho-physical identities was just an optimistic dream, way beyond the reach of the observational techniques of the day, and without any basis in existing theories about the brain's workings, so Carnap provides no concrete examples. During the later revival of psycho-physical identity theory in the 1960s, however, one example gained prominence, viz. the identity between pain and the firing of so-called C-fibres in the brain.[4] This example would have served Carnap well: The relevant slot in the overall construction scheme might be filled alternatively with the phenomenal term "pain" and the materialist, physiological term "firing of C-fibres".

We may clarify Carnap's notion of construction by assimilating it to the more familiar and closely related concept of *reduction*. The empiricist aspect of construction corresponds to the reduction of complex terms to simpler ones by definition, and we may refer to this as *definitional* reduction (or construction). The scientistic aspect of construction corresponds to the reduction of observational terms, or at least terms from the "lifeworld", to the theoretical terms of science. A familiar example would be the reduction of water to H_2O. We may refer to this as *explanatory* reduction (or construction), since it depends on the possibility of explaining the "lifeworld" phenomenon in terms of its theoretical twin, e.g. explaining the observable properties of water in terms of nuclear chemistry.

Intuitively, the two kinds of construction proceed in opposite directions, which we may term "downwards" and "upwards", respectively. Definitional construction moves *upwards* from simple terms and concepts towards complex ones. To satisfy the empiricist strictures of the constructivist programme, such construction must start out from the level of simple observational concepts. This follows from the verifiability criterion, which requires meaningful

---

4. See for instance Smart (1959).

theoretical terms to be translatable into observational terms. *Downwards* construction is the explanation of observational phenomena in terms of their counterparts within higher-level theories. This is the derivation of the observable properties of "water" from its theoretical sibling "H_2O", in combination with chemical theory, and of the observational property "colour" from its theoretical counterpart, "light of such-and-such wavelengths". This is the scientistic aspect of the programme.

In terms of Carnap's philosophical project in the *Aufbau*, however, this difference in direction is irrelevant. At each level of the constructed conceptual hierarchy, whether traversed in the upwards or downwards direction, the experiential and the materialist descriptions of its occupant will be extensionally equivalent. A sentence referring to one occupant will retain its truth value (true or false) if a reference to an appropriately selected alternative occupant is substituted.

Thus, the constructional system, which organizes the entire body of scientific concepts, is a structure of nodes, or slots, that allow alternative fillings. Different types of filling serve different projects within the overall scientific enterprise. What is philosophically important is the system of nodes, not the actual fillings. This is the key point of Carnap's structuralism, which, to him, serves the important additional purpose of reconciling the two factions of the neo-positivist movement.

But is there still not an additional issue to be pondered, i.e. what reality is like in itself, independently of any particular scientific investigational aim? In particular, it might appear that definitional construction in experiential terms would imply an idealist ontology, whereas explanatory construction would indicate a physicalist or at least materialist ontology. Don't we have to choose between them? Carnap's answer is an emphatic *no*. Any such verdict would be metaphysical, in the strict logical sense of being beyond possible verification and hence being meaningless. Carnap impresses this point upon his reader in the final section of the *Aufbau*.

In the meantime, Carnap had worked out the position in detail in the article "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology" from 1950. Here, he introduced a distinction between internal and external

questions that may be raised with respect to any scientific theory. Truth is an *internal* property of a theory, which means that the truth value of any sentence articulated within it is decided in terms of the specific methods of the theory, and the resulting truths are couched in the vocabulary of the theory. Questions as to whether a true theory "corresponds" to reality are external, as they cannot be answered within the framework of the theory itself. Nor can they be answered by any other scientific theory, which means that they are metaphysical and hence strictly empirically meaningless.

6. Definitional construction runs into trouble

Now back to the *Aufbau*. So far, we have dealt mainly with the methodological preamble to the book, and with its concluding anti-metaphysical section. In the bulk of the book, Carnap focused upon what I called "definitional" construction. Still, what was launched in the *Aufbau* was just a programme, and in the process of unfolding this programme over the following years, the tensions inherent in logical positivism from the start would gradually surface.

Let us examine how this programme slowly ran into trouble. A problem inherent in its very foundations came to a head in the article "Testability and Meaning" from 1936–37. Here, Carnap introduced a relaxation of the definitional link between scientific terms and their empirical basis. This move was forced upon him as a side-effect of his commitment to a purely extensional analysis of language. The difficulty manifested itself even with such simple terms as "soluble in water". Intuitively, this could be translated as

x is soluble in water = x will dissolve if placed in water

If we read the right-hand side of this equation extensionally i.e. as the material implication

a is placed in water $\Rightarrow$ a dissolves

it is formally equivalent to the disjunction

a is not placed in water $\vee$ a dissolves.

This sentence is true for any x that is not placed in water, which means that the definition makes anything that is not placed in water soluble, including sticks, stones, cars and mountains. This is of course unacceptable.

To get around this problem, Carnap introduced the technical device of "reduction sentences". This is a sentential structure consisting of a bi-conditional specifying the observational criterion for the defined property, embedded in a material conditional, the antecedent of which specifies the experimental setting for the test, thus:

x is placed in water $\Rightarrow$ (x is water soluble $\Leftrightarrow$ x dissolves).

Thereby, the test criterion is restricted to items that are placed in water, thus avoiding making everything not so placed soluble. This comes at the price, however, of failing to tell us what it means for a thing not placed in water to be water soluble. Hence, the logical positivists' "operational" definition of dispositional terms could only be partial.

This problem stemmed solely from the meaning-theoretical strictures of logical positivism. Soon, other problems would crop up that reflected genuine features of the subject matter under investigation, i.e. the nature of theoretical concepts. Carnap would grapple with these problems in a sequence of publications stretching from the late 1930s to the mid-1960s. The ultimate formulation of his position is given in *Philosophical Foundations of Physics* from 1966, which is a transcript of lectures Carnap held in the late 1950s, subsequently edited and published by Martin Gardner with extensive collaboration from Carnap.

One problem addressed in this sequence of texts is that theoretical concepts have multiple operational criteria. This is a consequence of the fact that theoretical concepts integrate a plurality of different phenomena under one conceptual heading, each of which conversely serves as evidence of the theoretical construct. For instance, there are many different tests for establishing that an object is electrically charged. For each of these, a separate reduction sentence must be provided, stating the specific test conditions in its antecedent. Hence, each reduction sentence delivers only part

of a fuller definition of a theoretical term into observational ones. The partial definition issue represented a technical challenge to the formalization of scientific theories but hardly worried Carnap as a substantial problem in the philosophy of science, as extant definitions could be supplemented with additional clauses whenever new kinds of evidence emerged. The problem would eventually vanish with the articulation of a complete and all-encompassing *Einheitswissenschaft*.

7. The interdefinition of theoretical terms

Carnap would gradually come to realize that there is an even deeper source of the need for partial definition of theoretical terms in science. When it comes to the most abstract terms at the core of physics and other advanced scientific theories, they are not individually translatable into observation terms, but only collectively. No observational implications follow if only one theoretical parameter is tied down, values must also be assigned to the other key parameters of the theory. The cluster of terms at the core of a physical theory are tied together by a network of logical implications. These constitute *implicit definitions* of those terms, which are then collectively tied to observational test conditions by what Carnap called "correspondence rules".

An example – not Carnap's own – might be Darwinian evolutionary theory. We may conveniently start with the familiar slogan of the theory, "survival of the fittest". This is often suspected of being a tautology, since the *fittest* must be defined as those who *survive*. This is correct so far as it goes, but it is not the full story, since Darwinian theory requires that the superior fit of the surviving individual can be traced back to an anatomical or behavioural *feature* that sets it apart from the *co-specific individuals* who did less well in the *competition* for survival. If this feature is *inheritable*, it will be passed on to the offspring of the successful specimen, who will thus inherit the *evolutionary advantage* enjoyed by their ancestor, and the superior gene will eventually come to dominate the *gene pool*. In time, this will lead to the formation of an entirely new *species*, construed as a population of *interbreeding animals*.

The above text specifies the content of Darwinian evolutionary theory, with the interdefined theoretical terms indicated in italics. Notice that this definitional feature does not make the theory true by definition: There is the stage where you define your terms, and the stage where you take your terms and definitions out into the field and check whether anything out there corresponds to them. This applies to the intricately interdefined terms of a scientific theory as much as it applies to the simple definitional truth of "unicorn = horse-like creature with a long spiralled horn on the front of its head". This definitional truth notoriously does not guarantee the existence of unicorns.

In the context of scientific practice, the formal-semantic points made above mean that until the theoretical work is completed, we do not really know what we are talking about when using the theoretical terms of the theory, such as "atom", "quark" or "spin". They refer to something-we-do-not-fully-know-what, but which we get to know ever better through our efforts of theoretical elaboration and experimental testing.

This may be compared to the way police, during their investigation of a particular horrendous string of murders, may refer to the killer as "Jack the Ripper". That term is really shorthand for "The person, whoever that may be, who did this to victim 1, that thing to victim 2, yet another thing to victim 3 … all the way down to victim n". There is an assumption made in this that goes beyond the naked evidence, i.e. that all of this was the work of one person. To put it in logical terms, this is really an existentially quantified sentence saying "There is one and only one person who did this to victim 1, that thing to victim 2 etc."

8. Carnap adopts Ramsey sentences

In the case of science, what we are looking for is not a "thing" or entity, however, but a structure. Structures, as we learn from Carnap, are abstractions from systems of relations, and the pure structure shines forth when we remove all substantial fillings from its nodes (as we are obliged to do by Carnap's ontological "neutralism"). We can bring out the point in terms of our little toy example above,

since it is already relational: The murderer's gruesome molestations of his victims are, logically speaking, just as many relations between murderer and victims. We can "neutralize" the London Police's conjecture about the identity of the culprit by replacing all relations and all individual references with variables, all within the scope of nested existential quantifiers. The result is along the lines of "There is an x and a y and a z … and relations R and S and T… such that xRy and xSz … etc".

When completely and correctly formalized in predicate logic and the logic of relations, the result is a so-called "Ramsey sentence", named after the British philosopher Frank Ramsey (1903–1930). Ramsey suggested this format in an analysis of some earlier similar work by Bertrand Russell, and Carnap adopted it, with some technical modifications that are not relevant here.

Carnap's espousal of a Ramsey-style articulation of scientific theories highlights the formalistic, language-oriented nature of his approach. When talking about structure, Carnap does not have in mind the kind of spatial structures that would once be referred to a "primary qualities" of things, to be contrasted with the "secondary qualities" which are only bestowed upon them by our human senses. To the extent that reality possesses spatial properties (which is probably the case), they figure in the theory as fillers (arguments) in the slots in the Ramsey sentence that articulates it. The fundamental structure of the world is linguistic, and the language in question is that of the logical calculi, including the logic of relations. This point is indeed already foreshadowed in the Introduction to *Aufbau*, where Carnap declares that the aim of the project may equally be described as the construction of *concepts* as of *things*. Talking about the structure of the word and talking about the logico-linguistic structures in which we capture it basically comes to the same thing. Carnap's understanding of scientific theories has rightly been described as *syntactic*, where the syntax in question is that of formal logic.

Hence care should be taken when translating the Ramsey sentence into ordinary language. The standard reading of the existential quantification would go along the lines of "There exists something that has the following structure …" This would invite speculation as to what this something is – is it e.g. a material thing, or an ide-

ational manifold? But this would mean falling into the metaphysical trap. Instead, the Ramsey sentence merely asserts the existence of a certain structure, which, innocuously, may be thought of simply as the structure of the sentence itself, as displayed in any concrete token of it.

9. Philosophical and linguistic structuralism

Let us now take stock, summarizing the points on which logical positivist philosophy of science (as developed by Carnap) resembles structuralism within linguistics. In the first place, it deals with structures. Secondly, it is strongly focused on language: The structures articulated by science are fundamentally logico-linguistic, rather than, say, spatio-temporal. Third, there is great emphasis upon structural interdefinition of terms. Fourthly, logical positivist philosophy of science is synchronic, with no regard for the history of science or for the social process though which a particular theory emerges victorious. True, Carnap would grant that we are not yet in possession of a finished *Einheitswissenschaft*, which means that partial definition must play a large role in our analysis of the scientific edifice. But this shortcoming will disappear in the fullness of time. Fifthly, the entire enterprise is inspired by an (idealized) conception of natural science and in particular theoretical physics.

As we wait for the final unifying "theory of everything", there are no rational steps we can take to speed up the progress of research beyond cleansing extant science of metaphysical residue. Logical positivists labelled the dynamic aspect of science as the "context of discovery" and put it aside as basically a-rational and hence outside the scope of philosophical analysis. The Carnapian analysis of science may thus fairly be called retrospective, since it basically limits the scientific enterprise to the regimentation of experiential data already garnered. Every other aspect is a-rational and hence really a-scientific. The context of discovery is a part of the *praxis* of science, which in general resists rational analysis. It is so to speak the *parole* of science, to be kept strictly apart from its *langue*, which alone permits rational reconstruction.

10. Late logical positivism and the Kuhnian revolution

Gradually, however, second-generation logical positivists would begin to strain against the shackles of this narrow analysis. It was felt by such figures as Ernest Nagel (1901–1985) and Carl G. Hempel (1905–1997) that something could be said, philosophically, even about the dynamic aspect of science. Theoretical concepts have a function beyond organizing what we already know, as they also serve to guide us towards further possible discoveries. In brief, theories have a *heuristic* role. Moreover, Hempel and Nagel would begin to recognize the function of theoretical *models* at this point. As scientists themselves would report, they do not grasp theories only in terms of an abstract linguistic formulation (and certainly not in terms of the abstract Ramsey formula), but typically also in terms of an analogical model. This model captures what is known so far but possesses additional traits that point towards further aspects of reality, to be explored through subsequent development of the theory and testing in future experiments. Models support a type of *analogical reasoning* that serves an important heuristic function in science. These ideas would emerge in the writings of Hempel and Nagel in the late 1950s and early 60s.[5]

The final phase of logical positivist theory of science of the early 1960s, in which these changes took place, is richly deserving of examination in its own right, but I have to bypass it here for lack of space. Instead, I will shift focus towards a celebrated figure in 20th century philosophy of science who radicalized and fused many of the novel ideas emerging within late logical positivist theory of science, and in so doing finally eclipsed the latter. That figure is Thomas S. Kuhn (1922–1996).

Let me swiftly run through Kuhn's celebrated paradigm theory to indicate where it contradicted logical positivist orthodoxy. First, logical positivism's a-historical, synchronic approach: Kuhn made a "historical turn", introduced in the very opening paragraph of the book:

---

5. Cf. Hempel (1958), Nagel (1961).

> History, if viewed as more than a repository for anecdote or chronology, could produce a decisive transformation in the image of science by which we are now possessed. That image has previously been drawn, even by scientists themselves, mainly from the study of finished scientific achievements as these are recorded in the classics and, more recently, in the textbooks from which each new scientific generation learns to practice its trade. ... This essay attempts to show that we have been misled by them in fundamental ways. Its aim is a sketch of the quite different concept of science that can emerge from the historical record of the research activity itself.

We may rightly see what is announced here as the reverse of the movement by which Saussurean structuralist linguistics broke away from its historically oriented forebears.

Another key point on which Kuhn reversed logical positivist orthodoxy concerns the programme of "construction" of theoretical concepts in terms of observational ones. According to Kuhn, it is rather the other way around: Observational terms are heavily saturated with theoretical assumptions, hence cannot be used for neutral construction of theoretical terms.

Finally, Kuhn made room for scientific *praxis* within the compass of the philosophy of science, reversing the exclusive focus of logical positivism upon the abstract final product of scientific activity, the linguistic articulations of scientific theories. This was Kuhn's celebrated analysis of "normal science" as inevitably producing a growing number of "anomalies", leading first to "extraordinary science" and eventually to a scientific revolution and a paradigm shift. By this broadening of scope, the "parole" of science was made a legitimate part of the philosophy of science alongside its "langue".

Thus, the opening paragraphs of Kuhn's text may fairly be called a declaration of war on the logical positivist picture of science. Logical positivism is not mentioned in these paragraphs, however, nor anywhere else in the treatise. The reason probably is that Kuhn did not have a very precise picture of logical positivism, but only what he would later call "an everyday image" of it, and it was against this he rebelled (Cf. Andersen 2001, 11f.). In the Introduction to *Structure*, Kuhn states that the picture of science which he hopes to

overturn has been presented "even by scientists themselves". This hints that this picture mainly originated among people who were not scientists or at least had no practical experience with scientific research, and that it is surprising that scientists would adopt it. But Kuhn does not reveal who these other people are.

It is a well-known fact that Kuhn's tract was originally published in the *Foundations of the Unity of Science*, the series instituted by Carnap and other leading positivists to serve as an outlet for their publications on the unification of science. Kuhn would later confess that he was not really familiar with Carnap's writings, in which case he would no doubt have recognized an anticipation of his views about truth in scientific theories in Carnap's "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology" (Cf. Andersen 2001, 12). Like Carnap, Kuhn rejected as meaningless the question whether or not our theories, even the best among them, are *true* of reality:

> A scientific theory is usually felt to be better than its predecessors not only in the sense that it is a better instrument for discovering and solving puzzles but also because it is somehow a better representation of what nature is really like. One often hears that successive theories grow ever closer to, or approximate more and more closely to, the truth. Apparently generalizations like that refer not to the puzzle-solutions and the concrete predictions derived from a theory but rather to its ontology, to the match, that is, between the entities with which the theory postulates nature and what is "really there".
>
> Perhaps there is some other way of salvaging the notion of "truth" for application to whole theories, but this one will not do. There is, I think, no theory-independent way to reconstruct the notion of 'really there'; the notion of a match between the ontology of a theory and its "real" counterpart in nature now seems to me illusive in principle (Kuhn 1962/1970, 206).

This reads like a page straight out of Carnap's 1950 article, which does not, however, diminish the magnitude of Kuhn's divergence from logical positivist doctrine on the points previously mentioned. Moreover, unlike Carnap, Kuhn did not arrive at his conclusions through the logical analysis of the constraints on semantic meaningfulness, but instead through reflection on the

history of science, "viewed as more than a repository for anecdote or chronology".

In the view of most modern philosophers of science, Carnap's long detour through logico-linguistic ("syntactic") considerations was a distraction and a waste of intellectual resources better employed elsewhere. This had been Karl Popper's main complaint about the programme all along, going back to his discussions with Carnap in the earliest days of the Vienna Circle. The point is accepted even by those who do not subscribe to Popper's scientific realism, but share Carnap's anti-realist or a-realist conception of science. I will end with a quote from a prominent modern philosopher of science, Bas van Fraassen (1941-), whose "constructive empiricism" shows considerable points of similarity with Carnap's view:

> Perhaps the worst consequence of the syntactic approach was the way it focussed attention on philosophically irrelevant technical questions. It is hard not to conclude that those discussions of axiomatizability in restricted vocabularies, 'theoretical terms', Craig's theorem, 'reduction sentences', 'empirical languages', Ramsey and Carnap sentences, were one and all off the mark–solutions to purely self-generated problems, and philosophically irrelevant. (1980, 56)

This assessment of the merits of Carnap's structuralist-syntactic approach to the philosophy of science is probably correct. To do justice to Carnap's place in 20th century philosophy, however, we have to keep in mind that to him, the analysis of science was part of a grander project, i.e. the promotion of a "Wissenschafliche Weltauffassung" to serve as an antidote to the intellectual obscurantism and political radicalization he witnessed in Austria and his native Germany. To assist him in the cause, he had joined a circle of like-minded people, the *Wiener Kreis*, and he was instrumental in expanding it into an international movement under the name of "logical positivism". Apart from their shared commitment to a mode of political rationality inspired by the standards of natural science, the members of this movement had rather divergent political and intellectual convictions. Carnap's neutralist, syntactic and structuralist analysis of science must also be viewed as an attempt

to overcome these internal differences, thereby keeping together a group of brilliant academics in their good fight against the dark political forces that were gaining strength in Europe. This is an effort for which one cannot fail to feel deep sympathy.

Bibliography

ANDERSEN, HANNE (2001), *On Kuhn*, Belmont, CA, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

AYER, ALFRED J. (1936), *Language Truth, and Logic*, London, Gollancz.

– (ed., 1959), *Logical Positivism*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press.

CARNAP, RUDOLF (1932), "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache", *Erkenntnis*, vol. II, 1932. English translation, "Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language", in Ayer, Alfred (ed.), *Logical Positivism*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 60–81.

– (1928), *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag. English translation: *The Logical Structure of the World*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

– (1936/1937), "Testability and Meaning", *Philosophy of Science* 3, 1936, and 4, 1937.

– (1950), "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, vol 4, No. 11, January 1950.

– (1963), "Intellectual Autobiography", in Schilpp, Paul Arthur (ed.): *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap. Library of Living Philosophers*, Vol. XI, La Salle, Illinois, Open Court.

– (1966), *Philosophical Foundations of Physics*, New York, Basic Books.

FRIEDMAN, MICHAEL (1996), "Overcoming Metaphysics: Carnap and Heidegger", in: Giere, Ronald and Richardson, Alan (eds), *Origins of Logical Empiricism*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

– (1999): *Reconsidering Logical Positivism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

HEMPEL, CARL G. (1958): "The theoretician's dilemma", in: Feigl, Herbert, Scriven, Michael and Maxwell, Grover (eds), *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 2, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1958.

– (1964). "Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance: Problems and Changes", *Aspects of Scientific Explanation*, New York, The Free Press, 1964.

HUME, DAVID (1748): *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, London, J.B. Bebbington.

KUHN, THOMAS (1962/1970), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, Chicago U.P.

NAGEL, ERNEST (1961), *The Structure of Science*, San Diego, Harcourt, Brace & World.

POPPER, KARL R. (1963), "Demarcation between Science and Metaphysics", *Conjectures and Refutations*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Russell, Bertrand (1914), "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics", *Scientia*, 1914.

Smart, John Jamieson Carswell (1959), "Sensations and Brain Processes", *Philosophical Review*, 68, 141–156.

Van Fraassen, Baas C. (1980), *The Scientific image*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Author: Finn Collin, Professor emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Co-
penhagen, Adjunct Professor at Aalborg University. E-mail: collin@ikp.aau.dk

Many Meetings. An overview of historical encounters between structuralism and phenomenology

Patrick Flack
University of Fribourg

Abstract. *We offer here a panoramic overview of the many, but little-known, concrete historical encounters between the traditions of structuralism and phenomenology. In particular, we evoke no less than five examples of such meetings in the works of the Moscow Linguistic Circle, Hendrik Pos (1898–1955), Kita Megrelidze (1900–1944), Tran Duc Thao (1917–1993), and Giovanni Piana (1940–2019). Our objective hereby is to strengthen the case for an understanding of structuralism that is attuned more to its common achievements and shared theoretical aims with phenomenology than to the two traditions' punctual disagreements and differences. This choice of a broad, contextualising method is not meant to avoid or to divert from the question of the precise conceptual intersections and synergies (or divergences and incompatibilities) between structuralism and phenomenology: it is motivated rather by the need to set this crucial, potentially productive question in a context in which their various interactions over the course of the 20th century are freed from the distorting, anachronistic effects imposed as much by the powerful framing we have inherited from the 1960s than by our usual focus on a limited number of canonical figures and themes.*

1. Introduction

The relations of structural linguistics and structuralism with the "phenomenological movement" (cf. Spiegelberg 1960) can be characterised as *contested,* in at least two ways. Firstly, they were defined

in the 1960s by well-known and often fierce debates, through which proponents of both traditions sought to distance themselves from the other (Michel Foucault's rejection of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, Paul Ricoeur's or Emmanuel Levinas' criticism of Claude Lévi-Strauss' formalism and atheism respectively). But, secondly, the disjunctive framing that has resulted from these antagonistic interactions is *itself* a matter of historiographical debate. Instead of seeing the two movements as competing, opposed traditions, several major structuralists (Roman Jakobson) and phenomenologists (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jan Patočka) explicitly sought to build bridges between them. A critical trend initiated by Elmar Holenstein in the 1970s (Holenstein 1975), moreover, has brought forward ever more convincing arguments in defence of the hypothesis that structuralism and phenomenology, far from being polar opposites, share some of their most fundamental methodological aims, as well as a common, entangled history (cf. Parret 1983, 2018, Puech 1985, 2013, Schmidt 1985, Cadiot & Visetti 2001, Coquet 2007, Avtonomova 2009, Rosenthal & Visetti 2010, Bondi & La Mantia 2015, Sonesson 2015, Stawarska 2015, 2018, 2020, Piotrowski 2017, Aurora 2017, 2020, Aurora & De Angelis 2018).[6]

My objective here is to strengthen the case for an understanding of structuralism that is attuned more to its common achievements and shared theoretical aims with phenomenology than to the two traditions' punctual disagreements and differences. To do so, I opt for a historical, panoramic approach that highlights and contextualises half a dozen figures in whose work structuralism and phenomenology met in constructive fashion. This choice of a broad, contextualising method is not meant to avoid or to divert from the question of the precise conceptual intersections and synergies (or divergences and incompatibilities) between structuralism and phenomenology: it is motivated rather by the need to set this crucial, potentially productive question in a context in which their various interactions over the course of the 20th century are freed from the distorting, anachronistic effects imposed as much by the powerful

---

6. For the sake of full disclosure as much of self-interest, I add my contributions, summarised in Flack (2018).

framing we have inherited from the 1960s than by our usual focus on a limited number of canonical figures and themes.

Given the immense reception and prominence achieved by the likes of Foucault, Ricoeur, Derrida, Deleuze, or Chomsky, there is no need to go into too much detail regarding the fact that their views have been foundational in informing our current perception of structuralism's and phenomenology's allegedly difficult relations. It is useful, however, to remind ourselves that the theories of all the above-mentioned thinkers were themselves formulated in some form of inner polemical confrontation with either structuralism or phenomenology (or indeed with both) and that the post-war reception and transmission of these two traditions, especially in France and in the United States, was anything but neutral. The 1960s overall constitute an uneasy, historiographically problematic moment that was concerned less with hermeneutic faithfulness and tradition than with the creative, idiosyncratic, even iconoclastic appropriation of the profoundly ambiguous intellectual legacy of the interwar period – and with the formulation of its own, radically new paradigms and socio-political frameworks. This is enough, I think, to intimate that the confrontational framing of the relation of structuralism and phenomenology that was produced at that particular juncture in time should not be taken as a final, objective point of reference, but rather as a very particular, specific point of view that is open not only to criticism, but to a complete reassessment.

Next to the well-known antagonistic debates of the 1960s, another barrier or limitation to a positive reappraisal of structuralism's entanglement with phenomenology has been an excessively narrow, piece-meal focus and a disproportionate emphasis on certain selected episodes or arguments in the existing literature on the subject. Most of the ink spent so far on rehabilitating the fundamental compatibility and entanglement of phenomenology and structuralism, indeed, has usually been devoted to one of the key figures of either movement (usually Ferdinand de Saussure or Roman Jakobson for structuralism, Edmund Husserl or Maurice Merleau-Ponty for phenomenology) and to a careful analysis and staking out of the extent to which their ideas either depended upon or were influential for the other tradition. Most often, the compar-

ison is narrowed down to the concrete reception of one figure by another – e.g. Merleau-Ponty's reading of Saussure (Puech 1985, Stawarska 2015, Piotrowski 2017) or Jakobson's interpretation of Husserl's mereology and theory of *foundation* [*Fundierung*] (Holenstein 1975, Aurora 2017).

This has of course the advantage of allowing for very precise arguments both on the concrete modalities of the historical encounter between the two thinkers under discussion in each specific case. But a significant drawback of this method is that it usually fails to embrace structuralism and phenomenology in their own diversities[7] and thus often reduces the general problem of their compatibility or common programme to technical details that are specific to the two authors under discussion. As such, it also opens up space for criticisms on these points of detail, which can then reinforce the view that structuralism and phenomenology are fundamentally incompatible traditions (e.g. Steiner 1975, Chiss & Puech 1980, Swiggers 1981, as well as all the bilateral feuds of the 1960s). Such criticisms, no doubt, are often warranted and interesting, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the relation between individual thinkers. There is certainly a case, for example, for thinking that Holenstein overstates the extent of Jakobson's debt to Husserl, or for seeing in Merleau-Ponty's reception of Saussure not an appropriation of his linguistics, but a creative, "unfaithful" reading not unlike that of Derrida. But the point remains that these punctual flashes of disagreements are only isolated aspects of what could and should be broached as a much broader, fundamentally diverse and complex relation.

My general point, in this sense, is that one would do well to move away from bilateral contrasts (whether negative, i.e. Sartre – Foucault, Lévi-Strauss – Ricoeur, or positive i.e. Husserl – Jakob-

---

7.   To take just the case of phenomenology, there are for example marked differences already between the early and the late Husserl, and even more so between the ontologico-existential path pursued by Heidegger or Sartre, the sociological approach of Alfred Schutz, or more recent attempts to bring phenomenology closer to the cognitive sciences (Varela, Gallagher, Zahavi). Obviously, the relation of each of these strands of phenomenological philosophy to structural thought is very different.

son, Saussure – Merleau-Ponty) when dealing with the relations between structuralism and phenomenology, and to focus instead on the multilateral processes of exchanges and dialogues between them. One is only helped in doing so, I contend, by shifting from the tutelary, canonical figures and their specific choices of theoretical emphasis to the dense network of secondary figures who took part in the development and institutionalisation of phenomenology and structuralism. Such a shift in focus, indeed, has the doubly virtuous effect of providing a wider context to both traditions, centering not authorial figures and individual texts but the networked, entangled structure of both movements.[8]

A final ingredient justifying the comparative approach I advocate is simply the astonishing quantity of marginalised and neglected historical cases where phenomenology and structuralism productively met. Without seeking to be either truly exhaustive and systematic, I will focus here on no less than five such examples, listed more or less chronologically: the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* – in particular Gustav Špet (1879–1937), Rozalija Šor (1894–1939), Maksim Königsberg (1900–1924) –, Hendrik Pos (1898–1955), Kita Megrelidze (1900–1944), Tran Duc Thao (1917–1993), and Giovanni Piana (1940–2019).[9] In passing, one can note that the national and linguistic diversity of this list (Russian, Dutch, Georgian, Vietnamese, Italian) provides a first hint as to the reasons behind their long-standing neglect and the absence, up to now, of an attempt to bring them together. As I will try to outline in the following pages, however, they are not as disparate and unrelated as first meets the eye: all of them share more or less direct and conscious relations with the contexts of the early Soviet Union and of interwar Czechoslovakia, which themselves should therefore be considered as the main "theatres" of the productive encounters of structuralism and phenomenology.

---

8. Such effects have been achieved by Spiegelberg (1960) for phenomenology, by Goldsmith & Laks (2019) for the human sciences in general, and to a limited extent by myself (Flack 2016) for structuralism.

9. To these, one could add Aaron Gurwitsch (1901–1973), Jacques English, Giovanni Stanghellini, which I leave aside here, both out a lack of space and of appropriate knowledge.

2. The Moscow Linguistic Circle: Špet, Šor, Königsberg

The *Moscow Linguistic Circle* was one of the two key institutions of Russian formalism (along with the *Society for the Study of Poetic Language* [*OPOJAZ*]) and is well-known as having contributed to fundamentally transform linguistics and literary studies, in particular by advocating for a more scientific, methodologically specific approach to literature and the poetic dimension of language.[10] The *Moscow Linguistic Circle* is both an obvious and a slightly provocative choice to begin an overview of structuralism's encounters with phenomenology. The obvious reason for including the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* is that it is clearly linked to structuralism, not only through the person of Roman Jakobson, its most famous member, but also through its role as an inspiration for the *Cercle linguistique de Prague,* as well as its status as an institution of Russian formalism, a movement that is recognised as one of the main laboratories of structuralist thought. The phenomenological dimension of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*, whilst less known, is also self-evident: Gustav Špet, a student and translator of Husserl as well as the philosopher who introduced phenomenology in Russia, was a regular member of the circle. Špet's interest in Husserlian phenomenology also influenced the linguist Rozalija Šor and the verse specialist Maxim Könisgberg, two further members of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*.

The provocative aspect of using the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* as an example of an encounter between structuralism and phenomenology lies, perhaps surprisingly, with the term "structuralist" itself. At the time of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*'s activities – which started in 1915, before the publication of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916) – the name itself was not in use. In many ways, the methodological approach of the circle, grounded in folklore studies and dialectology, was still *philological* and can be considered "structuralist" only prototypically or retrospectively, as containing germs or intuitions that were developed and formalised later. In this sense, the habitual classification of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* as belonging to Russian *formalism* rather than Russian *structuralism*

---

10. For a brief introduction to the *Moscow Linguistic Circle,* cf. Glanc 2015, Šapir 1994.

is both telling and very much correct. True, if one takes the later phase of the work of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*, which happened in *parallel* and with numerous exchanges with the activities of the *Cercle linguistique de Prague* (cf. Jakobson & Tynjanov 1966), this problem of definition is watered down. The separation between the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*'s formalism and structuralism is certainly not very strict: it itself underwent a process from the one to the other, as personified by the intellectual evolution of its most prominent members (Jakobson, Trubeckoj, Bogatyrev) and their (nearly seamless) transition to "Prague" structuralism.

The distinction between the formalist and structuralist emphasis of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*, however, cannot be so easily brushed aside when it comes to the phenomenologically-inclined members of the circle. Both Špet and Šor, indeed, were critical of the evolution and impulses given by Jakobson to the circle, a position that lends a complex, polemical form to the relations between phenomenology and formalism/structuralism within the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*. In this sense, the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* was not a forum where "phenomenologists" such as Špet and Šor dialogued with the "structuralists" Jakobson and Trubeckoj, but rather an open, contested field where the former had recourse to phenomenology to problematise some of the options taken by the latter on the basis of formalist theory (cf. Sapir 1994, Glanc 2015). The most significant and instructive demonstration of these complex constellations are Šor's articles "The formal method in the West" [Formal'nyj metod na zapade, 1927] and "Expression and signification" [Vyraženie a značenie, 2016[1927]], where she uses the phenomenological theory of expression exposed by Husserl in the *First Logical Investigation* (Husserl 1901) to indirectly criticise Jakobson's formalist theory of expression – which, as we know from later texts (Jakobson 1960), was central to his entire conception of structural linguistics and poetics.

For both Šor and Špet, the central bone of contention and point of criticism of Jakobson's formalist-centred theory of language, which foregrounds the reflexivity of language as an autotelic expressive medium, is the need to anchor language in the socio-cultural, historical process of the constitution of meaning. Whereas the struc-

turalist-functionalist model considered and refined by Jakobson takes root in his emphasis on the autonomy of linguistic expression, its capacity for the hierarchical, distinctive organisation of its own verbal material, Šor and Špet have recourse to a different conception of the articulation of language, namely the Humboldtian concept of *inner form*. Inner form is reinterpreted by Špet in *Appearance and sense* (1991[1914]) through the lens of Husserl's theory of intuitions, in order to provide a triadic account of the constitution of meaning both in language and in experience in general (Dennes 2006b). Language and linguistic expression, for Špet, is not the functional hierachisation of verbal material, but the correlate of intuitive acts of interpretation that produce a synthesis or an inner articulation between a material and an eidetic intuition, between an external form and a formal meaning, which are progressively sedimented and stabilised in a historical process and horizon of culture and communication. In that sense, Špet's "structuralism" owes more to Hegel and Schleiermacher than to Saussure or Russian formalism (cf. Dennes 2006a, Tihanov 2009).

Two elements further complicate this picture of the apparently competing positions of structuralist and phenomenological thought within the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*. Firstly, one cannot but recall that the notion of *inner form* is also central to Anton Marty, the Prague-based Brentanian philosopher of language whose *Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Grammatik und Sprachphilosophie* (1908) were of signal importance *both* to Husserl and the Prague Linguistic Circle, including Jakobson. As such, Jakobson and Špet, despite their diverging focus, clearly drew from common sources. Secondly, one can find a re-convergence of the Špetian and Jakobsonian poles within the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* itself, namely in the work of Maksim Königsberg, a young philologist close to Špet who died at the young age of 24. Applying Špet's method to the study of verse, he produced a theory which resembles and inspired that of another Russian formalist, Jurij Tynjanov, whose own proto-structuralist theory of verse was a core inspiration for Jakobson's later functional approach to poetics (cf. Ehlers 1992).

In short, the story of phenomenology and structuralism within the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* is one of convergences as well as diver-

gences, of a sustained and multipolar debate that was made more difficult by external circumstances and that was centered on the interplay and theoretical importance of the key notions of expression, meaning and form in language. What is particularly striking is the shared recourse to Husserl, Marty, and to a lesser extent, to Saussure (who is invoked most favourably, because of his emphasis on the role of social factors in language, not by Jakobson, but by Šor). Jakobson, Špet and Šor refer to a common set of authorities that they understood not in terms of two separate schools (Šor, for instance, refers to Husserl as a representant of a "logical tradition" [logičeskoe napravlenie], Saussure as a representant of a "social theory of language"), but of general "orientations" defined above all by their "Western" character. What this episode also underlines is the *immediate* intertwining of phenomenological and structuralist approaches in the Soviet context, right at the inception of structuralism and at the very beginning of the international reception of phenomenology in the 1910s and 20s.

3.1 Hendrik Pos

Leaving the Soviet Union but not the 1920s, we turn to Hendrik Pos (1898–1955), a Dutch linguist and philosopher, a student of Husserl, of the neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert, as well as of the linguist Antoine Meillet. The little that is generally known of Pos is his role as the first to provide a philosophical analysis of Prague phonology (Pos 1939c, Fontaine 1994), and indeed to be invoked by certain Prague linguists, above all Jakobson (1974), but also Trubeckoj (1936) as a philosophical warrant of their linguistic models. In reality, Pos provided much more than this, formulating what amounts to a general theory of linguistics (cf. Willems 1998, Daalders 1999) in his dissertation *Zur Logik der Sprachwissenschaft* (1922) – a text of distinctly neo-Kantian, Rickertian flavour, but which echoes in many aspects the intuitions and the structure of Saussure's *Cours* (cf. Salverda 1991), without ever citing it. While Pos should probably not be categorised as a structuralist as such, he contributed to the formulation and development of one of its key notions, that of *opposition* (Pos 1938a) – a contribution whose importance was

underlined by Jakobson –, and provided several texts (Pos 1933, 1939, 1950, 1954) which emphasize the systematic, articulated nature of language in a way that cannot but be considered structuralist. Corroborating this impression, one can add finally that Pos's dissertation was highly regarded by yet another structuralist, namely Louis Hjelmslev (cf. Willems 1998).

Pos's interest in phenomenology takes a parallel form to his involvement with structuralist thought: while he cannot be considered a phenomenologist *per se*, he studied with Husserl and, to a lesser extent Heidegger, and provided one of the first phenomenologically oriented theories of literature in his *Kritische Studien über philologische Methode* (1923). As with structuralism, his main contribution consists in a critical discussion of the relevance of phenomenology's methodological tenets for the study of language. His most interesting or relevant production in that perspective are *Phénoménologie et linguistique* (1939) and *Valeur et limites de la phénoménologie* (1952), two texts that were not without influence on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of language (Merleau-Ponty 1952).

Rooted in Rickert's transcendental idealism, Pos's thought occupies an interesting position *between* structuralism and phenomenology, neither endorsing nor rejecting either. His dabbling in both traditions, moreover, happens in an interestingly parallel way, as a progressive assimilation of two external points of view that Pos felt inclined to probe and inspect, without fully adopting them. Pos's position in the Netherlands, a country that developed its specific traditions of structuralism (de Groot, Reichelt, van Ginneken) and phenomenology (Plessner, Buytendijk, Linschoten), none of which can be considered central to their respective core movements, is further revealing of his insider-outsider status. What also bears mentioning is that, for Pos, phenomenology and structuralism were themselves multipolar constellations, which he probably did not even consider as united schools: it is quite clear, for example, that to him someone like Ernst Cassirer (cf. Pos 1939b), and possibly Jakobson, were in fact much closer to the tradition of phenomenology than Heidegger, whom Pos saw as the author of an "irrational" philosophy (Pos 1938b), at odds with his own and indeed with Husserl's philosophical aims.

The key theme informing much of Pos's thought and much of his interest in both phenomenology and structuralism, is the methodological problem of the relation between the objects of knowledge [Gegenstand der Erkenntnis] as expressed in a scientific theory or model, and our subjective experience of the given reality conceptualised in such theories. In a certain way, Pos anticipates here the debate of the 60s over the priority of the constitutive subject over objective structures (or vice versa). The difference is that Pos does not take a side in this debate, positing *a priori,* that these two aspects are *de facto* part of any theory, of any model of the world or of a domain of objects (Pos 2013 [1925], 43–44). In that sense, Pos never finds himself arguing for or against the supreme role of the subject or of the objectivity of structures, but rather comes back to the co-existence of these two as poles or extreme positions in the ways we can formulate knowledge and articulate our experience. In a way, one can see him exploring as many avenues as possible to resolve and make sense epistemologically and methodologically of this dichotomy (Flack 2013).

The constant hesitation of Pos over the question of the respective importance of the subjective, experiential pole and its objectively constituted model is instructive of a dilemma that is in fact inherent to both structuralism *and* phenomenology: in other words, neither phenomenology nor structuralism are in a position *on their own* to thematise the paradoxical co-existence of subjective, existential elements and of objective structural features in our experience. Pos's profound intuition is that trying to use the one or the other separately in order to answer or foreground one of these aspects in isolation is thus bound to fail, and indeed to impoverish each tradition. Indeed, Pos's entire work and its positive echoes both amongst structuralists (Jakobson, Trubeckoj, Hjelmslev) and phenomenologists (Merleau-Ponty), goes a long way towards showing that the major point of contention at the heart of the antagonism of the 1960s is not one that *separates* structuralism and phenomenology, but one to which they were *both* trying to give an answer.

3.2 Konstantin Megrelidze

Pursuing the idea suggested by Pos that structuralism and phenomenology can be synthetically combined rather than pitted against each other, we return now to the Soviet Union to discuss Konstantin Megrelidze (1900–1944). A Georgian psychologist and philosopher who studied with Edmund Husserl in Freiburg and Max Wertheimer in Berlin, Megrelidze is today almost completely forgotten – indeed, he was never acknowledge at all beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. A tragic figure who fell victim to the persecutions of the Stalinist regime, his intellectual influence was precluded during his own lifetime and in the Soviet Union itself by the fact that his magnum opus, *Major problems of the sociology of thought,* written in 1936, was published only in 1965, after a forced process of editing that, among other, made him cut out long passages devoted to Nikolaj Marr and to change the title from the original *Social phenomenology of thought* (cf. Zedania 2014, 77). His work, maybe more than any of the figures mentioned here, deserves to be included because, along with the better known efforts of Tran Duc Thao, it is one where phenomenology and structuralism are both explicitly mobilised, with direct references to the works of Husserl, Saussure, as well as to Gestalt psychology.

In one of the very rare articles in English on Megrelidze, Giga Zedania captures the source and inspiration behind Megrelidze's theoretical project as follows:

> Megrelidze developed a theory of human consciousness, which was both part of the historical context of early Soviet epistemology and attempted to break out of its limitations. Megrelidze's thought originated at the intersection of different disciplines and disciplinary traditions: phenomenology (in its Husserlian form), Gestalt psychology, Marrism .... Another important current of thought, which had influence on Megrelidze's conception, was the French sociological tradition, together with nascent structuralism. E. Durkheim, L. Levi-Bruhl and F. de Saussure are authors often referred to in the book. Megrelidze's aim was to show – in contrast to the traditional empiricist approaches – the social nature of human consciousness. The above-named authors were

interesting for him, first of all, because they went beyond the empiricist tradition, which entailed a reduction of consciousness on sensory data and association mechanisms. (Zedania 2014, 80).

Fundamentally, as Zedania also correctly notes, *Major problems of the sociology of thought* is also "a book that wanted to present itself as standing firmly on the ground of orthodox Marxism" (*ibid.* 80).

To summarize, Megrelidze's ambition is to provide an explanation of human consciousness that is both founded in and completely compatible with Marxism *and* that recognizes the fundamental autonomy of the subject and the independence of the realms of culture and history. His main tools to contest the naïve Marxist theory of consciousness as a reflection of reality, all while preserving the materialist grounding of consciousness in the social activity of work, are Husserl's concept of the *noema* on the one hand, the concept of *Gestalt* of Köhler and Wertheimer on the other. In his analyses of language, which he layers on top of his concept of consciousness (cf. Friedrich 1993), Megrelidze resorts to Saussure and to the linguistics of Marr, for whom the Humboldtian notion of *inner form* and of the historical sedimentation of linguistic and cultural forms (along the lines of the theory developed by Špet) played a central role.

This is not the place to reconstruct Megrelidze's arguments in further detail. But even on this summary basis, his work allows us to make a number of interesting comments on the relations between structuralism and phenomenology. The most obvious point is of course to underline how both traditions are solicited by Megrelidze as epistemological tools that can contest naïve empiricism, all while providing theories that can fit in what is a profoundly historically and sociologically-oriented model. As Zedania emphasises, moreover, Megrelidze's "sociological" framework is in fact more correctly called an "inter-subjective" one, since his focus is in fact the possibilities of emergence and constitution of an *individual, subjective* **consciousness** in the material and social conditions described and prescribed by Marxist philosophy. As such, it is to the age-old problem of the link between the subject and the objective conditions of his experience that Megrelidze brings us back – and it is precisely to

answer this conundrum that he makes use of both phenomenology and structuralism.

A striking aspect of Megrelidze's thought, in this context, is the specific recourse he makes of both traditions to construct his theory of a Marxist consciousness that is free to orientate itself in a subjective, cultural and historical world that is not over-determined by the materialist structures of work and sociality. Megrelidze, indeed, inverts the traditional roles attributed to phenomenology as a transcendental theory of subjectivity and to structuralism as a formalist model of objective structures. Instead, Megrelidze uses Husserl's phenomenological concept of the *noema* as an explanation for the processes of the *objective* constitution of contents in consciousness, and for the *material* process of the crystallisation of conscious representations; conversely, he proposes an interpretation of the notion of *Gestalt* that underlines the degree of subjective variation and indeterminacy in the process of the structuration of the objective forms of consciousness that it allows. According to Megrelidze, all objects of consciousness are instituted as noemas but in the form of *Gestalts*, i.e. as wholes that derive their unity of structure from their appearing to a subject.[11]

As we can see, for Megrelidze, it is a recourse to the structuralist paradigm that allows him to reintroduce a subjective element in a theory that is otherwise overdetermined by its materialism and the conditions of the material emergence of consciousness. In complete opposition to the debates of the 60s, structuralism is the paradigm of subjectivity in Megrelidze's thought. Phenomenology, conversely, provides the theoretical explication of the material-objective conditions of emergence of consciousness, and is thus the guarantor of the objective pole of knowledge: its main role is to allow Megrelidze to introduce the notion of intentionality, whose potential to introduce a subjective pole is then only deployed through the structural notion of Gestalt. Megrelidze, in other words, does not only offer an example of convergence between structuralism and

---

11. Megrelidze's "subjectivist" use of Gestalt psychology to productively criticise and complement Husserl's theory of the noema is of course not unlike that of Merleau-Ponty's in *Phenomenology of perception*.

phenomenology on the problem of consciousness and subjectivity, but the illustration that their role can be *reversed*. If nothing else, this underlines how neither of the two traditions are bolted to a certain perspective (subjectivist or objectivist) but are indeed dealing with a core epistemological problem that they can *both* broach from one or the other end.

3.3 Tran Duc Thao

While there doesn't seem to be direct evidence that our next hero, the Vietnamese dissident and philosopher Tran Duc Thao (1917–1993), knew of Megrelidze's work, there are many interesting convergences and similarities between their works, which we will mobilise here to confirm some of the perspectives just evoked. Perhaps the best known in the gallery of neglected figures presented in this paper, Tran Duc Thao is widely acknowledged as having played a significant role in the early development of phenomenology in France in the post-war era, attracting in particular the interest of Jacques Derrida (Giovannangeli 2013). Several publications have recently been devoted to the Vietnamese philosopher (Espagne & Benoist 2013, D'Alonzo & Feron 2021) and it is notable that his main works, including *Marxism and phenomenology* (2009 [1946]), *Phenomenology and dialectical materialism* (1986 [1951]) and *Investigations into the origin of language and consciousness* (1984 [1973]) have been translated into English (the originals, in French, were in any case much more widely available than the works in Russian of Špet, Šor or Megrelidze, or some of the outputs in Dutch by Pos).

The most obvious parallel between Tran Duc Thao and Megrelidze is that they both explicitly and unreservedly ground their approach in Marxist philosophy. Just like Megrelidze, moreover, Thao also seeks to explicitly thrush out an interpretation of the conditions of emergence of consciousness in a Marxist perspective with the help of phenomenology, and in particular of Husserl. Just like Megreldize, finally, he integrates structuralism to his framework, in this case through a recourse to Saussure's general linguistics. As pointed out by Feron (2013) or D'Alonzo (2017), Thao's entire work, not unlike that of Pos, is a repeated attempt to solve a single, given

problem, with the successive but neither exclusive nor decisive recourse to a number of different frameworks, namely Marxism, phenomenology, and structuralism. As with Pos, this repetition itself, far from being a tedious sign of stubborn failure, contributes to a slow blossoming, aconceptual maturing, and, retrospectively, allows for a convincing comparative contrast of the different methods.

Not unlike what is the case in Megrelidze's approach, Husserl's phenomenology constitutes a sort of first relay to establish the fundamental framework of the emergence and constitution of consciousness, and – what is particularly significant for Thao – its relation to the material world of work and social activity. Saussure's structuralism intervenes only at a later stage, when Thao seems to have exhausted the possibilities of both Marxism and phenomenology: he then turns to an analysis of language to help him out of the apparently unresolvable paradoxes into which the transcendental idealism of Husserl's phenomenology and the blind materialism of Marxist philosophy repeatedly lead him (cf. D'Alonzo 2017). In Thao's philosophy, to simplify, the problem of the origins of language thus slowly replaces the more direct and apparently general question of the origins of consciousness, a displacement that is both possible and plausible because of Thao's constant obsession with the problem of "meaning", and in particular the "meaning of the real world" (*le sens du réel*) (cf. Flack 2021).

Again, without going into the details or the merits of Thao's arguments, we witness here a synthetic, even dialectic recourse to phenomenology and structuralism as tools to expand, correct, and ground a Marxist philosophy. Thao's theory, in other words, is one where phenomenology and structuralism are not used against each other, but together. As was the case with Megrelidze, moreover, the paradigm of subjectivity and of the possibility of cultural and historical expression, is structuralism, not phenomenology. It is only by invoking Saussure's conception of the arbitrary sign and by elaborating a complex theory of the origins of language from the gesture of indication, indeed, that Thao is able to formulate a theory that allows him to link linguistic or symbolic meanings (that are subjective and culturally constituted) with the "meanings of the real world" in a way that is not strictly deterministic. Whereas

phenomenology offered only a shift from the objective structures of the real world to the absolute meanings of the transcendental subject, Saussure's arbitrary sign provides a gap where the historical moment of the emergence, constitution and sedimentation of language can be conceived as a subjective process.

On this specific point, it is also interesting to compare Thao with Pos: in his later years, the Dutch philosopher also turned regularly to Marxism and socio-historical interpretations and, in particular, also wrote about the problem of indication and the progressive constitution of ideal meanings in language from communicative gestures (cf. Flack 2021). As I have argued, Pos's answer is superior to Thao in that it takes into account the creative, symbolic moment of gestures (whereas Thao only concentrates on their imitative character). Be that as it may, the crucial point is the convergence of three quite different approaches and biographies (Thao, Megrelidze, Pos) both on a given set of problems (the emergence of consciousness and language) and on the methodological frameworks needed to find a solution to it, namely Marxism, phenomenology and structuralism.

3.4 Giovanni Piana

The final figure I will evoke here is the Italian phenomenologist Giovanni Piana (1940–2019). A student of Enzo Paci (1911–1976) and a member of the "Milan School" – a research group at the University of Milan that was the main vector of the implantation of phenomenology in Italy in the post-war years (cf. Buongiorno 2020) – Piana was an influential voice in contemporary Italian phenomenology, as witnessed by the vibrant homage paid in the recent volume devoted to his memory (Caminada & Summa 2020) by many of today's prominent Italian phenomenologists (Roberta de Monticelli, Carlo Sarra, Vincenzo Costa, Andrea Staiti, etc.). Piana's body of work is large and varied, touching upon the philosophy of perception, Gestalt theory, epistemology, aesthetics, philosophy of mathematics, logic and mereology, as well as to interpretations of other philosophers (Hume, Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, Cassirer, Bachelard). Despite this variety, it is unified by two constants: a

life-long commitment to a careful reading and discussion of Husserl on the one hand, the refinement of his own practice of the phenomenological method into what he himself called a "phenomenological structuralism" on the other.

Caminada & Summa provide an apt summary of Piana's particular approach to phenomenology in their introduction to the aforementioned volume: "[Piana's] contribution is not only remarkable for the way in which it clarifies complex issues in Husserl's work–particularly valuable, in this sense, is the discussion of Husserl's theory of wholes and parts, published as "Introduction" to the *Third* and *Fourth Logical Investigation*. It is also important because it operatively shows that phenomenology is primarily a philosophy that departs from speculations in favour of the logic of display. In this sense, Piana's work on philosophers not belonging to the phenomenological tradition (notably Plato, Schopenhauer, Hume, Wittgenstein, etc.) often suggests that – if we consider phenomenology fundamentally as a method and not as an already formed theory – we should be able to recognize that, at least implicitly, an implicit phenomenology can be retraced also in the texts of other philosophers" (Caminada & Summa 2020: 10).

Despite his status at the very institutional heart of Italian phenomenology (both through his direct connection to Enzo Paci and the Milan School and his inspirational impact on the current generation of scholars), Piana was also a highly private, self-reflexive kind of intellectual figure, a Socrates preoccupied by the constant re-examination and idiosyncratic development of this own themes, rather than noisy public debates and front-line polemics. While this might seem an anecdotal point of detail, I believe Piana's particular attitude to the practice of philosophy is in fact typical of several other figures mentioned in these pages (Pos, Tran Duc Thao, but also Holenstein or Natalia Avtonomova) and goes some way to explaining the absence of their moderate approach to the relation between structuralism and phenomenology in the face of the vociferous, high-drama polemics conducted by Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida and the likes.

Piana's place in the present enumeration of encounters of structuralism with phenomenology is best exemplified by a text pub-

lished in 2013, "The idea of phenomenological structuralism" [L'idea di uno strutturalismo fenomenologico]. In this short essay, Piana seeks to clarify his use of the term phenomenological structuralism in reference to his own ideas. Piana's reticence to engage in the usual polemics between structuralist and phenomenological positions is reflected particularly clearly in this text and in the back-story to two points of clarification Piana makes right at its start. Despite the title, which seems to promise a direct discussion of phenomenology and structuralism, Piana starts indeed with the following remark:

> First of all, it should be noted that my perspective does not derive from a blending of phenomenology with structuralism, understood here as the specific philosophical and cultural tradition that derived its methods from linguistics. Similarly, it is not concerned with the presence of phenomenological themes in the context of that specific tradition (Piana 2020).

Rather, Piana's continues, "What my phenomenological structuralism stands for, really, is the possibility of discerning in the German word Wesen a nuance of meaning which – if we can manage to free ourselves from the habitual philosophical terminology – is expressed by the term structure better than essence" (*ibid.*).

Piana's dissociation from the tradition of structural linguistics can safely be taken at face value: none of the major structuralists appear in his essay, or indeed in any significant way in his work. Similarly, the account he provides of his conception of the structure as arising from his direct engagement with the work of Husserl is both honest and conceptually revealing: as mentioned, Piana's entire work, including its expression in the original, synthetic form of a "phenomenological structuralism" takes the form of a helicoidal reflection on the foundational works of Husserl. For instance, the intuition of translating *Wesen* by *structure* came to Piana when translating Husserl's *Logical Investigation* into Italian, and its hermeneutic function is very much to provide an immanent interpretation of the Husserlian text itself, to deploy its own meaning, not to invest or contaminate it with another point of view. If anything, as Piana remarks, it is the standard translation of *Wesen* by *essence* that con-

veys to Husserl's analyses a Platonic meaning which they do not necessarily carry.

As truthful and convincing as Piana's own distancing from structuralism may sound and actually be from the strict perspective of the inner development of his own thought, a contextual approach suggests however that, at the very least, one should not understand Piana's reticence as an explicit rejection of structural thought as a whole, but rather of the specific moment of structuralism's "French" period in the 1960s. Indeed, when Piana proposed the translation to his master Paci, his suggestion was rejected "with horror" (cf. de Monticelli 2020) because of the probable association with French structuralist theories. If one turns, however, to the definition of structure that Piana provides after the two above-mentioned comments, however, one sees no such dramatic contrast:

> The word 'structure' implies here the idea of a skeleton, of an internal schema, a sort of internal constitution–in short, the idea of a characteristic form which, in my opinion, directly prescribes its goal to all phenomenological research.

Or again: "the phenomenological method seeks to characterise acts of experience by outlining their differences in structure". Such a definition could have been voiced by Jakobson or Hjelmslev, and the concepts of "structural method" and "structural research" could replace "phenomenological" here without problem.

My point here is not to force a structuralist origin or the use of structuralist references into Piana's work but simply, as was the case with the other figures mentioned here, to outline a certain way in which these two traditions effectively met. In Piana's case, his inclination towards structuralism seems to have happened in a way that is almost entirely immanent (but with some help from Gestalt psychology) to his conception of phenomenology as a method of laying bare the structures of experience. This in itself is of course a powerful argument in favour of a general compatibility and commonality of aims and methods between structuralism and phenomenology. Piana, indeed, shows that it is possible for the exponent of one of the traditions, rooted what is more in an exposition and

development of that tradition through dialogue and self examination, to land upon the formulation of a theory that expresses general and fundamental aims that are deeply connected, if not identical in spirit with those of the other tradition.

4. Prague and its Russian emigration

I would like to conclude this paper by tying the figures and works considered and compared so far from a conceptual point of view to a common historical context and geographical space. The reason for providing this context at the end rather than at the beginning of this paper is that I do not wish to present it as the causal framework or vector of the encounters between structuralism and phenomenology. Rather, the relevance of this context appears as an after-thought, as a result of noticing the conceptual convergences between the *Moscow Linguistic Circle*, Pos, Megrelidze, Tran Duc Thao and even Piana and asking if they might not have something more in common than their double interest for structuralism (or structural thought more generally) and phenomenology. The hypotheses I offer here are thus nothing more than an invitation to think about their common context in further detail and to thus potentially discover further essential features of the historical encounters between the two paradigms (which for lack of space and research, I cannot yet fully provide here). In that sense also, my suggestions are certainly not exclusive, they hint only towards the existence of *at least one* concrete historical time and space where phenomenology and structuralism consistently interacted.

The common context of all the mentioned thinkers is the intellectual milieu of interwar Prague (1918–1938), and in particular, the strong but often overlooked presence there of Russian émigrés. The most famous of these émigrés was of course Jakobson himself, one of the key organisers of Prague structuralism. Jakobson allows us to tie all the actors of the *Moscow Linguistic Circle* (Špet, Šor, Königsberg) as well as Pos firmly to the Prague context, two connections that are well established and which we mentioned as such above. Further, the polemics between Špet, Šor and Jakobson over the role of expression and social factors in language, and the general con-

text of early Soviet debates around language also provide a direct link to Megrelidze. The same applies, although in a much more indirect manner to Tran Duc Thao, who was keenly interested in Soviet debates on language (cf. d'Alonzo 2017). Albeit in differing ways and perhaps not always with direct knowledge of parallel efforts, one can tentatively suggest that almost all attempts before WWII to bring structuralism and phenomenology together were linked to the Soviet intellectual revolutions of the 1920s (Russian formalism, Michail Bachtin, Valentin N. Vološinov, Nikolaj J. Marr, Lev S. Vygotskij) and their explorations of new ways to think about language and the historical constitution of meaning.

This diagnosis seems to hold also for post-war attempts: this is true of Merleau-Ponty, who was profoundly influenced by Pos, Lévi-Straus and Jakobson. But it also seems to apply to Piana. One can start by noting Piana's concern for art and aesthetics, which places him spiritually close to Jakobson's poetics. But one also finds many direct links to the Prague context: one such link is the Russian émigré philosopher Boris Jakovenko (1884–1949). A student of Windelband and Rickert, he produced a philosophy which, through critical studies of Husserl and Hegel, transformed basic Neo-kantian tenets in the direction of a so-called "transcendental intuitivism". Jakovenko himself lived in Italy for almost a decade and kept close contacts with prominent Italian philosophers and intellectuals (e.g. his correspondence with Benedetto Croce, cf. Renna 2004). Of particular interest to us here is his activity as the editor of the Prague-based journal *Der russische Gedanke* (*Russian thought),* the first two volumes of which were dedicated to Masaryk (Jakovenko 1930) and in which one finds contributions by Italian philosophers such as Benedetto Croce, Antonio Aliotta and, most importantly to us, Piero Martinetti, one of the founders of the Milan School. If nothing else, this combination of Jakovenko's relations with Italy (which also include his involvement as editor of the journal Logos, published in German, Russian and Italian versions), the interest of Croce and Martinetti for Masaryk, and Masaryk's own ties to Brentano and Husserl certainly constitute an interesting background to the early story of Italian phenomenology.

As mentioned, these connections on their own do not mean anything and should not be taken as the condition for justifying the conceptual convergence of structuralism and phenomenology. They do however strongly emphasis the multilateral, entangled and persistent character of structuralism's and phenomenology's many encounters, their constant recourse to foundational texts such as Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and Marty's *Untersuchungen,* as well as general tendencies (a strong focus on the epistemic role of art, on aesthetics, on the notions of expression and form, and a frequent engagement with neo-Kantianism, a sensitivity to the inter-subjective, social aspects of consciousness). The fragile, often fluctuant and evanescent quality of the network of "structural phenomenology" also underlines under how much political and ideological pressure it came, having to face directly the disastrous impact of the Russian Revolution, Stalinist repression, the two World Wars and the Cold War.

Bibliography

AURORA, SIMONE (2017), *Filosofia e scienze nel primo Husserl: Per una interpretazione strutturalista delle Ricerche logiche*, Padova, Cleup.

– (2020), "The early Husserl between structuralism and transcendental philosophy", in: Apostolescu Iulian (ed.), *The subject(s) of phenomenology*, Dordrecht, Springer, 31–43.

AVTONOMOVA, NATALJA (2009) *Otkrytaja struktura: Jakobson, Bachtin, Lotman, Gasparov*, Moskva, Rosspen.

BENOIST, JOCELYN & ESPAGNE, MICHEL (eds., 2013), *L'itinéraire de Tran Duc Thảo: Phénoménologie et transfert culturel*, Paris, Armand Colin.

BONDÌ, ANTONINO & LA MANTIA, FRANCESCO (2015), "Phenomenology and semiotics: Crossing perspectives", *Metodo* 3 (1), 7–18.

BUONGIORNO, FEDERICA, COSTA, VINCENZO & LANFREDINI, ROBERTA (eds., 2020), *Phenomenology in Italy: authors, schools and traditions*, Dordrecht, Springer.

CADIOT, PIERRE & VISETTI, YVES-MARIE (2001), *Pour une théorie des formes sémantiques: Motifs, profils, thèmes*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France.

CAMINADA, EMANUELE & SUMM,A MICHELA (eds., 2020), *Giovanni Piana: in memoriam* Phenomenological Reviews 1.

CHISS, JEAN-LOUIS & PUECH, CHRISTIAN (1980) "Derrida lecteur de Saussure", *Linx* 2, 339–359.

COQUET, JEAN-CLAUDE (2007), *Phusis et Logos*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes.

D'ALONZO JACOPO (2017), "L'origine del linguaggio e della coscienza: Storia di un libro mai pubblicato: dal carteggio inedito tra Ferruccio Rossi-Landi e Tran-Duc-Thao", *Acta Structuralica* 2, 87–151.

D'ALONZO, JACOPO & FERON, ALEXANDRE (eds., 2020), *Genèse, origine, récapitulation. Trần Đức Thảo face aux sciences du langage*, Histoire Épistemologie Langage 42 (2).

DAALDER, SASKIA (1999), *H.J. Pos (1898–1955): studies over zijn filosofie vaan taal en taalwetenschap*, Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit.

DE ANGELIS, ROSSANA & AURORA, SIMONE (eds., 2018), *Phenomenology and structuralism* Acta Structuralica Special Issue 1.

DE MONTICELLI, ROBERTA (2020), "Wholes and values: an application of Giovanni Piana's phenomenological structuralism", *Phenomenological Reviews* 1.

DENNES, MARYSE (2006a), "Le renouveau de l'herméneutique à travers la reprise en compte de l'oeuvre de Gustav Shpet", *Chroniques slaves* 2, 2006.

–   (2006b), "De la "structure du mot" à la "forme interne" chez Gustav
     Špet", *Revue germanique internationale* 3, 77–92.

EHLER, KLAAS-HINRICH (1992), *Das dynamische System: zur Entwicklung von
     Begriff und Metaphorik des Systems bei Jurij N. Tynjanov*, Frankfurt am
     Main, Peter Lang.

FERON, ALEXANDRE (2013), "De la phénoménologie au matérialisme dialec-
     tique: Comment régler ses comptes avec sa conscience philosophique
     d'autrefois?", in: Espagne, Michel & Benoist, Jocelyn (eds.), *L'itinéraire
     de Tran Duc Thảo*, Paris, Armand Colin, 164–185.

FLACK, PATRICK (2013), "Hendrik Pos: une philosophie entre idée et vécu",
     in: Pos Hendrik, *Ecrits sur le langage*, Genève-Lausanne, sdvig press,
     9–26.

–   (2016), "Roman Jakobson and the transition of German thought to the
     structuralist paradigm", *Acta Structuralica* 1, 1–15.

–   (2018), *Idée, expression, vécu : la question du sens entre phénoménologie et
     structuralisme*, Paris, Hermann.

–   (2020), "Le «sens du réel» et l'indication chez Trần Đức Thảo. Une com-
     paraison critique avec Hendrik Pos", *Histoire Épistémologie Langage* 42
     (2), 49–62

FONTAINE, JACQUELINE (1994), "Le Cercle linguistique de Prague au car-
     refour des cultures", *Revue germanique internationale* – ancienne série 1,
     183–192.

FRIEDRICH, JANETTE (1993), *Der Gehalt der Sprachform: Paradigmen von Bach-
     tin bis Vygotskij*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag.

GIOVANNANGELI, DANIEL (2013), "Husserl entre Tran Duc Thao et Derrida:
     Un moment de la phénoménologie en France", in: Espagne, Michel
     & Benoist, Jocelyn (eds.), *L'itinéraire de Tran Duc Thảo*, Paris, Armand
     Colin, 133–146.

GLANC, TOMAS (2015). "The Russian Formalists as a Community". In: Grish-
     akova, Marina & Salupere, Silvi (eds.), *Theoreticals Schools and Circles
     in the Twentieth-Century Humanities. Literary Theory, History, Philosophy*.
     London, Taylor & Francis, 1–22.

GOLDSMITH, JOHN & LAKS, BERNARD (2019), *Battle in the mind fields*, Chicago,
     University of Chicago Press.

HOLENSTEIN, ELMAS (1975), *Roman Jakobsons phänomenologischer Strukturalis-
     mus*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp.

HUSSERL, EDMUND (1901), *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Theil: Untersu-
     chungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, Halle (Saale),
     Niemeyer.

JAKOBSON, ROMAN (1960), "Linguistics and poetics", in: Sebeok, Thomas
     (ed.), *Style in language*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 350–377.

– (1974), *Main trends in the science of language*, New York, Harper.

JAKOBSON, ROMAN & TYNJANOV, JURIJ (1966), "Problems of literary and linguistic studies", *New Left Review* 37, 59–61.

JAKOVENKO, BORIS (ed., 1930), *Der russische Gedanke* 1 (1).

MARTY, ANTON (1908), *Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Grammatik und Sprachphilosophie*, Halle (Saale), Niemeyer.

MEGRELIDZE, KONSTANTIN (1965), *Osnovnye problemy sociologii myšlenija*, Tbilisi, Sakartvelo.

MERLEAU-PONTY, MAURICE (1952), "Sur la phénoménologie du langage", in: Van Breda Herman Leo (ed.), *Problèmes actuels de la phénoménologie*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 89–109.

PARRET, HERMAN (1983), "La sémiotique comme projet paradigmatique dans l'histoire de la philosophie", in: Trabant, Jürgen & Eschbach, Achim (eds.), *History of semiotics*, Amsterdam, Benjamins,3 71–386.

– (2018), "La phénoménologie comme toile de fond de la sémiotique structurale", *Acta Structuralica* 1, 9–28.

PIANA, GIOVANNI (2013), "L'idea di uno strutturalismo fenomenologico", in: Piana Giovanni, *Strutturalismo fenomenologico e psicologia della forma*, Morrisville, NC, Lulu Press, 5–15.

PIOTROWSKI, DAVID (2017), *Morphogenesis of the sign*, Berlin, Springer.

POS, HENDRIK (1922), *Zur Logik der Sprachwissenschaft*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter.

– (1923), *Kritische Studien über philologische Methode*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter.

– (1933), "Quelques perspectives philosophiques de la phonologie", Archives néerlandaises de phonétique expérimentale VIII-IX,226–230.

– (1938a), ""La notion d'opposition en linguistique"", in: *Onzième congrès international de psychologie*, Paris, Alcan.

– (1938b), "Het hedendaagse Irrationalisme", *Leven en Werken* 2, 12–21.

– (1939a), "Phénoménologie et linguistique", *Revue internationale de philosophie* 1 (2), 354–365.

– (1939b), "Cassirer's symbolische theorie der taal", *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte en Psychologie* 32, 307–313.

– (1939c), "Perspectives du structuralisme", in: *Etudes phonologiques dédiées à la mémoire de M. le Prince Trubetzkoy*, Prague, Jednota Československých Matematiků a Fysiků, 71–78.

– (1950), "Quelques réflexions sur le problème de l'origine du langage", Acta Psychologica 7 (2–4), 352–364.

– (1952), "Valeur et limites de la phénoménologie", in: Van Breda Herman Leo (ed.), *Problèmes actuels de la phénoménologie*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 31–52.

–   (1954), "Betekenis als taalkundig en als wijsgerig fenomeen", *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte en Psychologie* 46 (1), 248–253.

–   (2013), *Ecrits sur le langage*, Genève-Lausanne, sdvig press.

PUECH, CHRISTIAN (1985), "Merleau-Ponty. La langue, le sujet et l'institué: la linguistique dans la philosophie", *Langages* 77, 21–32.

–   (2013), "Est-il temps de faire l'histoire des structuralismes?", *Dossiers d'HEL* 3, 1–12.

RENNA, CATIA (2004), "Boris Jakovenko e la cultura filosofica europea: una ricostruzione biografica", eSamizdat 2 (3),97–105.

ROSENTHAL, VICTOR & VICTOR, YVES-MARIE VISETTI (2010), "Expression et sémiose: Pour une phénoménologie sémiotique", *Rue Descartes* 70, 24–60.

SALVERDA, REINER (1991), "The contribution of H.J. Pos (1898–1955) to early structural linguistics", in: Fenoulhet, J. & Hermans, Theo (eds.), *Standing clear*, London, UCL, 220–237.

ŠAPIR, MAKSIM (1994), "M.M. Königsberg i ego fenomenologija sticha", *Russian Linguistics* 18, 73–113.

SCHMIDT, JAMES (1985), *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: between phenomenology and structuralism*, London, MacMillan.

SONESSON, GÖRAN (2015), "Phenomenology meets semiotics: Two not so very strange bedfellows at the end of their cinderella sleep", *Metodo* 3 (1), 41–62.

ŠOR, ROZALIJA (1927), "Formal'nyj metod na zapade: Škola Seufferta i "retoričeskoe" napravlenie", Ars Poetica 1, 127–143.

–   (2016), "Expression and signification: The logicist trend in modern linguistics", *Metodo* 4 (2), 15–44.

ŠPET, GUSTAV (1991), *Appearance and sense: Phenomenology as the fundamental science and its problems*, Dordrecht-Boston-London, Kluwer.

SPIEGELBERG, HERBERT (1960), *The phenomenological movement: A historical introduction* vol. 1, Den Haag, Nijhoff.

STAWARSKA, BEATA (2015), *Saussure's philosophy of language as phenomenology: Undoing the doctrine of the course in general linguistics*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press.

–   (2020), *Saussure's linguistics, structuralism, and phenomenology: the course in general linguistics after a century*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

STAWARSKA, BEATA & FLACK, PATRICK (eds., 2018), *Merleau-Ponty and structuralism*, Acta Structuralica special issue 2.

STEINER, GEORGE (1975), "Review: Holenstein Elmar, Roman Jakobson's approach to language", *Semiotica* 15, 393–395.

SWIGGERS, PIERRE (1981), "The relationship between phenomenology and structuralism", *Ars Semeiotica* 4 (3), 263–268.

TIHANOV, GALIN (ed., 2009), *Gustav Shpet's contribution to philosophy and cultural theory*, West Lafayette, Purdue University Press.

TRÂN DUC THAO (1984), *Investigations into the origin of language and consciousness*, Boston-Dordrecht, Reidel.

– (2009), "Marxism and phenomenology", Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 30 (2), 327–335.

– (1986), *Phenomenology and dialectical materialism*, Dordrecht, Reidel.

TRUBECKOJ, NIKOLAJ (1936), "Essai d'une théorie des oppositions phonologiques", *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* 33, 5–18.

WILLEMS, KLAAS (1998a), "Edmund Husserl und Hendrik J. Pos: Phänomenologie, Sprache und Linguistik", *Phänomenologische Forschungen* – Neue Folge 3 (2).

ZEDANIA, GIGA (2014), "Konstantin Megrelidze's Theory of Consciousness", *Identity Studies in the Caucasus and the Black Sea Region* 5, 77–86.

Author: Patrick Flack is senior lecturer in the History of Ideas of Eastern and Central Europe at the University of Fribourg, as well as managing director of the open access academic publisher sdvig press. His research is focused in particular on the study of the network of intellectual exchanges between Germany and Central and Eastern Europe during the interwar period. E-mail: patrick.flack@unifr.ch

The Riddle of Dependences. How to connect entities, across pragmatism, phenomenology, and structuralism

Frederik Stjernfelt
University of Aalborg

Abstract. *Dependence relations between units analyzed play a central role in many versions of structuralism. This paper investigates such dependences with the point of departure in the simple, three-type calculus of unilateral dependence, mutual dependence and independence, occurring in both Husserl's Logical Investigations (1900) and Hjelmslev's Prolegomena (1943). The main aim of the paper is to chart three further developments of the three-dependence scheme, in Peirce, in the Hjelmslev of the Resumé (1973), and in Ingarden. Each of them constructs considerable complications of the simple scheme deemed necessary to chart basic structures of categories and meaning which the paper sets out to compare.*

1. Introduction

It is a strange fact that several important scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries preoccupied with issues of meaning and existence placed calculi of *dependences* at the center of their doctrines. The immediate reason is that they all recognize that in the world, in meanings claiming to refer to it, or in both, phenomena occur which are possible only if other phenomena also occur. The relation between such phenomena is one of *dependence*, and attempts to formalize it are seen, by such researchers as Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), and Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) as a crucial theoretical endeavor. Thus, the formalization of dependencies

is located at the epicentre of their respective doctrines. The special place of the five researchers mentioned here may be indicated by the fact that none of them clearly belongs to the two main schools of thought diverging through the 20th century, i.e. continental and analytical theory. To adherents of the continental school, dependence calculi would soon seem too formal, whereas the overarching theories of the five appeared to be too ambitious or even metaphysical to analytically minded researchers.

A central locus connecting ontology and meaning in dependences is Husserl's 3rd and 4th Investigations in his 1900–1901 classic *Logische Untersuchungen*, introducing an elementary triad of dependency types. This demonstrably influenced Ingarden, and to some degree also Jakobson. The influence on Hjelmslev may be more indirect, while Peirce, as in many other respects, was working independently. I shall begin by briefly covering Husserl's argument for an elementary triad of dependency relations, which can be found, in different garbs, in all of the gang of five. But my main issue in this paper is to scrutinize how three of the figures mentioned, viz. Peirce, Hjelmslev, and Ingarden, went on to take this elementary triad much further, each in their idiosyncratic way, to form more complicated and ambitious systems of dependences and dependence-related categories in logic, linguistics, and ontology. In all of the five, the relevant dependences are structural, simultaneous or synchronous relations, e.g. between an object and its properties, or between a sentence and its constituents.

It should, however, be stated clearly at the outset that the relations charted are not those of temporally extended cause-and-effect chains which might, sometimes, also be called "dependences".

2. Husserlian dependences

Edmund Husserl's early masterwork *Logische Untersuchungen* consists of a large Prolegomena and six investigations.[12] The former lays out Husserl's fundamental antipsychologism: what he aims at is general, logical, and phenomenological structure, not properties

---

12. Husserl 1975, 1984, Eng. version Husserl 1970.

of the human psyche in particular.[13] The six investigations form one overarching argument: Beginning by 1) distinguishing signs endowed with meaning from signs merely indicating objects, Husserl goes on to 2) consider abstractions as a special subclass of the former, and 3) to make a crucial distinction within the set of abstract concepts, that between *parts* and *moments*. The former, also called "genuine" parts, are characterized by being separable, such as a leg of a table. The latter, "unechte Teile", or moments, are inseparable, such as the surface of a table. The latter, as against Aristotle, include what is normally called properties, simple or relational, described by predicates.

These distinctions give rise to three different possible relations between parts and wholes: they may be *independent, unilaterally dependent,* or *mutually dependent*.[14] A moment, for instance, is unilaterally dependent upon the object of which it is a part, or, as Husserl puts it, it is *founded* on that object. This theory of formal ontology is immediately put to use to frame a novel theory of the *a priori*, viz. that a priori conditions are precisely relations of foundation. The Husserlian theory of the a priori radically differs from the Kantian idea that the a priori consists in subjective conditions of thought, in that Husserl locates the a priori conditions in the object. This is why we may be in the wrong about a priori structures. As objects have form and matter, this paves the way for Husserl's distinction between formal and material (or regional) ontologies – the former charting a priori structures of all possible objects; the latter charting a priori structures of specific regions or domains of existence.[15] Special sciences, then, are founded on structures of regional ontological

13. This section summarizes parts of ch. 7–8 and 11 of my dissertation *Diagrammatology* (2007) where I claimed, in ch.7, that Hjelmslev's further dependence calculi "necessitates further research surpassing the scope of this chapter". In a sense this old debt is what I hope to pay a part of in the present paper.
14. Husserl 1984, 264–65, cf. also Smith (ed.) 1979; Smith 1994.
15. Husserl himself distinguished, top-down, three large fields of a regional ontology, the physical, the biological, and the psychical, while some of his important students rather worked bottom-up in devising regional theories of "social acts", particularly judicial utterances (Adolf Reinach) or pure intentional objects, particularly literary fictions (Ingarden). On Husserl's notion of the a priori, cf. Smith 1996.

concepts, which develop and are clarified along the development of those sciences, ultimately organized in foundation or dependence structures. In investigation 4, Husserl immediately elaborates his new ontological theory to focus on the ontology of grammar with noun and sentence, respectively, as the units on which other linguistic phenomena depend. In investigation 5, the same conceptual machinery gives birth to the first version of his *theory of intentionality* with the conscious, intentional act having four defining moments, its *quality, matter, representative content,* and *object*. The very starting spark of Roman Ingarden's momentous work, to which we return below, can be said to be the issue whether the object is in fact a *moment* of the intentional act (leading to idealism), or rather a *genuine part* of the act (leading to realism). So, the part/moment distinction may carry huge metaphysical implications. The long investigation 6 by Husserl develops an entire phenomenological epistemology based on these prerequisites, and was subject to a series of later revisions, again much contested exactly by Ingarden.

As to the issue of how to found these relations of foundation, our other four protagonists diverge. Peirce had developed his own doctrine of dependences and categories long before Husserl, ever since the 1860s, but he got hold of a copy of the *Logische Untersuchungen* briefly after its publication. Adopting Husserl's term "phenomenology" (later "phaneroscopy", and much else), Peirce rearticulated his category and dependence doctrine as an investigation of elementary categorical possibilities, bracketing existence in a phenomenological reduction. In the mature version of his three-category doctrine beginning in the 1880s, Peirce enriched that theory by a theory of "degeneracy", boosting it to hold a total of six categories. This had serious consequences for metaphysics and semiotics alike. Roman Jakobson was influenced by Husserl's third and fourth investigations in his linguistic structuralism, as has been argued by Elmar Holenstein.[16] He coined the notion of "structuralism" in the late 20s, and his conception of struc-

16. The degree and timing of the influence of the *Logische Untersuchungen* on Jakobson, however, is contested. Koerner 1997 argues that explicit references to Husserl is found in Jakobson only beginning in the late 1930s so that the influence may be

ture, particularly his asymmetric binarism summed up in his and Troubetskoy's *marked/unmarked* distinction, is informed by Husserl's dependence calculus. Hjelmslev, of course, was Jakobson's friend – and antagonist – in the nascent international linguistic structuralism of the 1920–30s (cf. Jensen and Gregersen, this volume). It is well-known that Hjelmslev's increasingly austere, formal and would-be autonomous version of structuralism, possibly inspired by logical positivism, was inimical to Jakobsonian theory. Issues were Jakobson's binarism as well as his metaphysical inspirations from primarily Husserl and Peirce. Still, Hjelmslev's work *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* of 1943 (*Prolegomena,* 1953/1961) actually defines exactly the same triad of dependences as those we found in Husserl's third investigation. This was pointed out, inter alia, by Paul Diderichsen.[17] Hjelmslev, in fact, does not refer to Husserl, so it is not known whether he got the idea from indirect inspiration or whether he independently came to the same result. Already in his works of the 1930s, like *Sprogsystem og sprogforandring* (originally 1934) and *Catégorie des cas* (1935–37), Hjelmslev had elaborated further on dependences. And in the full-blown theory (only being published, in an English version, in the 1975 *Résumé of a theory of language)*, to which *Prolegomena* was the prolegomena, his dependence calculus had diversified into a complicated structure with seven different opposition categories to which we shall return below. Finally, Ingarden was a direct pupil of Husserl's during the 1910s, in which period he gradually diverged from his master's increasing idealism. Actually, most of Ingarden's impressive work has its origin in an attempt to refute, from within the phenomenological tradition, that idealism. Ingarden adopted from that tradition, however, precisely the groundwork of the dependence calculus, which he, in the wartime first volume of his masterwork *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*, elaborated to diversify it into four different "existential" dependence types. So, both Peirce, Hjelmslev, and Ingarden radically developed and diversified an originally simple

---

one of affinities discovered by Jakobson "post rem" after the development of his own brand of structuralism in the 1920s-30s (Koerner 1997, 156).

17. Cf. below.

three-dependency theory. Why did they do that, and how do their improvements compare?

3. Peirce

Peirce famously took as the metaphysical basis of his philosophical system three basic categories, which he had developed already in the 1860s, in one of the many versions called *Quality, Relation* and *Representation*. Later, this was generalized to *First-, Second-* and *Thirdness*. These categories were derived from the structure of propositions – Peirce's theory thus being a sort of logical, rather than linguistic, structuralism. Three three aspects of proposition structure were 1) the Predicate, 2) the Subject, and 3) their mutual relationship in Propositions, following the Kantian idea that the development of metaphysical concepts should be allowed on the basis of logical concepts only.[18] Ontologically, the three categories chart three different kinds of being, sometimes called *possibility, actuality,* and *reality*, later *may-bes, existence,* and *would-bes*. Importantly, the ability to tell these categories apart lies in a capacity of *distinctions* of which Peirce very early named three ("On a New List of Categories"1867): *dissociation, prescission,* and *discrimination*.[19] The idea is that there are three modes of separation between parts which may be undertaken in the analysis of a phenomenon: If we start with the most coarse, i.e. being able to distinguish *independent* qualities, e.g. red from blue (*dissociation*), we may go on to distinguish what may be supposed to *exist* without the other, e.g. space from color (*prescission*) and end with the most subtle, viz. being able to distinguish what may only be *represented* or *thought of* separately, e.g. colour from space (*discrimination*). This terminology remains constant in Peirce, and in the *Syllabus* (1903), the three modes of separation are directly connected to the definition of the three categories:

18. Cf. Stjernfelt 2021. On criteria for relations between logical formalisms and ontology: Smith 2005. On Peircean logic representations: Pietarinen 2006.
19. Cf. CP 1.549. References to *Collected Papers* are given by CP plus vol. and paragraph, to *Essential Peirce* by EP plus vol. and page.

> In order to understand logic, it is necessary to get as clear notions as possible of these three categories and to gain the ability to recognize them in the different conceptions with which logic deals. Although all three of them are ubiquitous, yet certain kinds of separations may be effected upon them. They correspond to the three categories. Separation of Firstness, or Primal Separation, called Dissociation, consists in imagining one of the two separands without the other. It may be complete or incomplete. Separation of Secondness, or Secundal Separation, called Prescission, consists in supposing a state of things in which one element is present without the other, the one being logically possible without the other. Thus, we cannot imagine a sensuous quality without some degree of vividness. ... Separation of Thirdness, or Tertial Separation, called discrimination, consists in representing one of the two separands without representing the other. If A can be prescinded from, i.e. supposed without, B, then B can, at least, be discriminated from A. (EP II, 270).[20]

To sum up, *dissociation* distinguishes independent parts, *prescission* distinguishes a founding part from a founded part, while *discrimination* distinguishes all that can be represented in isolation, such as founded parts, be they in unilateral or mutual dependences – to rephrase Peirce's distinction types in Husserlian foundation lingo. Not only are the three distinction types defined 1–2–3 with reference to the categories; these distinguishing abilities are also what make the very separation of Peirce's basic categories possible in the first place. None of the three may be dissociated, however, but:

> It is possible to prescind Firstness from Secondness. We can suppose a being whose whole life consists in one unvarying feeling of redness. But it is impossible to prescind Secondness from Firstness. For to suppose two things is to suppose two units; and however colourless and indefinite an object may be, it is something and therein has Firstness, even if it has nothing recognizable as a quality. Everything must have some nonrelative element; and this is its Firstness. So likewise it is possible to

---

20. Such abstractions in the sense of attention focusing signs differ from Peirce's "hypostatic" abstraction creating a new, second order object out of a predicate; see Stjernfelt 2007, ch. 11 and Stjernfelt in press a.

prescind Secondness from Thirdness. But Thirdness without Secondness
would be absurd (ibid.).

Thus, as there is a foundation relation between first and second, and
between second and third, the lower categories can be prescinded
from the higher while the higher may be discriminated from the
lower only. Even if presented in quite a different clothing and with
the emphasis on the epistemological-logical tools to track depen-
dences, the structure of the dependence calculi at the bottom of
Peirce's metaphysical categories and Husserl's refoundation of the
a priori are, in short, identical.

Peirce, however, went on to refine this category table by an
additional apparatus of *genericity*. It is mentioned already in his
first formalization of predicate logic, the second of the papers on
the "Algebra of Logic" of 1880/1885, and is raised into ontological
prominence in his first comprehensive sketch of a metaphysics in "A
Guess at the Riddle" 1887. From then on, they become a standard
part of his architectonic, featured e.g. in the "Pragmatism Lectures"
of his *annus mirabilis* 1903, his Letters to Lady Welby 1904–8, etc.

A concise way of presenting the conceptual machinery is pre-
sented in the "Guess at the Riddle":

> ... the whole book being nothing but a continual exemplification of
> the triad of ideas, we need linger no longer upon this preliminary ex-
> position of them. There is, however, one feature of them upon which it
> is quite indispensable to dwell. It is that there are two distinct grades
> of Secondness and three grades of Thirdness. (CP 1.365)

Peirce goes on to explain how he generalizes the notion of genericity
from the geometry of conic sections (ellipses, hyperbola, circles,
parabola, etc.). The generic cases are ellipses and hyperbola, while
parabola and circles only appear as limiting cases with singular
variables of conic equations. Still "rarer" or more degenerate are
the single point or two parallel lines, which may appear when still
more variables vanish. So, there are *degrees of degeneracy*. Peirce
develops this analogy in the following passage:

> Nearly in this same way, besides genuine Secondness, there is a degenerate sort which does not exist as such, but is only so conceived. The medieval logicians (following a hint of Aristotle) distinguished between real relations and relations of reason. A real relation subsists in virtue of a fact which would be totally impossible were either of the related objects destroyed; while a relation of reason subsists in virtue of two facts, one only of which would disappear on the annihilation of either of the relates. Such are all resemblances ... (ibid.)

Peirce mentions the example of two persons being alike in being Americans. This may be dissolved into two independent facts, each of them being an American. Not so the relation of Cain killing Abel – it may not be dissolved into two independent facts, i.e. that of killing and being killed. So, the former relation is degenerate, the latter not so. Contrasts and comparisons similarly are degenerate relations of reason.

Going to Thirdness, now, "... there are two degrees of degeneracy. The first is where there is in the fact itself no Thirdness or mediation, but where there is true duality; the second degree is where there is not even true Secondness in the fact itself." (3.166). A pin fastening together two things is degenerate in the first degree – if either of the two is annihilated, the pin and the other will still exist in a real, dual relation. All sorts of mixtures are of this same nature, so-called "accidental thirds". Even more degenerate are

> ... thirds degenerate in the second degree. The dramatist Marlowe had something of that character of diction in which Shakespeare and Bacon agree. This is a trivial example; but the mode of relation is important. In natural history, intermediate types serve to bring out the resemblance between forms whose similarity might otherwise escape attention, or not be duly appreciated. In portraiture, photographs mediate between the original and the likeness. In science, a diagram or analogue of the observed fact leads on to a further analogy. The relations of reason which go to the formation of such a triple relation need not be all resemblances. Washington was eminently free from the faults in which most great soldiers resemble one another. A centaur is a mixture of a

man and a horse. Philadelphia lies between New York and Washington.
Such thirds may be called intermediate thirds or thirds of comparison.

Even if obviously the most degenerate of cases, the examples go to
show that they are regarded as important by Peirce for their possible
role in processes of reasoning and investigation.

This extension of Peirce's elementary category list to one of six
which may be numbered 1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, respectively, proved
to become an important motor, not only in classifying and relat-
ing empirical sciences such as in the "Riddle", but also in Peirce's
further theory development. Thus, Peirce's classic trichotomy of
symbol-index-icon may be reinterpreted so that indices and icons
are first and second degree degenerates of symbols, respectively,
or that propositions and terms (Dicisigns and Rhemes) may be
first and second degree degenerates of arguments.[21] The degener-
acy apparatus may even drive theoretical innovation, particularly
in the fertile years after 1903, such as when Peirce derives, from
genericity categories, the idea that while there is only one main
type of Abduction, there must be two of Deduction (corollarial
and theorematic)[22] and three of Induction (simple, quantitative,
and qualitative). Or when he elaborates his original semiotics by
saying that a sign must have two objects (immediate and dynamic)
and three interpretants (immediate, dynamic, and final). In Hus-
serlian terms, the degenerate cases would be those in which no
real founding dependence relation is at stake, despite the fact that
it seems, on the surface, to be the case. The relata of degenerate
relations are, in fact, independent. But that does not imply that
they are only irrelevant surface phenomena – they are still brought
together by generic forms. Instead, they give rise to the idea that
all Secondness and Thirdness phenomena must have two and three
subtypes, respectively.

To sum up, Peirce's development of his elementary calculus of
dependencies to yielding six instead of three categories is a formal

21. Cf. Stjernfelt 2015. On the central role of logic and propositions in Peirce's
semiotics, cf. Bellucci 2017, Stjernfelt 2014, 2019; in press.
22. Cf. Stjernfelt 2014, ch. 10

move motivated by introducing a new constraint into the system, viz. that of genericity. It is formal in the sense that it does not, in itself, predict the content matter of the new subcategories, which derives, rather, from the specific semantic domains of Second- and Thirdness concepts subjected to the enlarged dependence calculus.

4. Hjelmslev

While Peirce first generalized his categories from the structure of logical propositions – and then developed them in scrutinizing the relations between the categories – Hjelmslev's use of the three dependences is explicitly meant as a central descriptive tool of his structuralist theory of language, i.e. glossematics. The *locus classicus* is the *Prolegomena* of 1943 where the presentation is couched in a proliferation of new terminology even surpassing Peirce in numbers. To Hjelmslev, linguistic form is sharply distinguished into two independent fields, expression and content, and each of these two fields should be charted by analysing them into systems of units, so-called functives. The functives are connected by dependence functions.

Exactly as in Husserl, three possible dependences between two functives are listed: *determination, interdependence,* and *constellation*, respectively (cf. *Résumé*, 60), the latter being independence or the absence of dependence). Simple dependence is at stake when one part requires another for its presence, but not vice versa. Interdependence appears when two parts mutually require the presence of each other and consequently only appear together. Constellation, finally, occurs when the occurrence of two parts is free, and both of them, one of them, or none of them are possible appearances. The identity of this dependence calculus with Husserl's 1900 system is striking.[23] The central role of dependences is evident from the often

---

23. There is no any mention in Hjelmslev as to the roots of his triad of dependences which is merely "predicted" in the quasi-logical language of the Prolegomena. While the co-founder of the Copenhagen circle and opponent Viggo Brøndal may refer to Husserl, just like their common disciple Paul Diderichsen would do decades later, there is no mention of any phenomenological inspiration in the *Prolegomena*. Diderichsen several times remarks upon the similarity between the "three main

repeated idea that objects are really "nothing but intersections of bundles of dependences" (Prol. 23).

Hjelmslev further applies this three-dependence system in two variants, pertaining to *process* and *system,* respectively. Process and system are defined by *both-and* and *either-or* relations, respectively, that is, what is traditionally referred to as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations.[24] In these two fields, the three-dependence system is specified as *selection, solidarity, combination*, and *specification, complementarity, autonomy*, respectively (*Prol.*, 37; *Résumé*, 60). *Selection*, one-sided dependence in linguistic linearisation, may be in evidence, for instance, in the relation between main clause and relative clause (a relative clause may not occur without a main clause, while the opposite is not the case). *Solidarity*, two-sided dependence, occurs for example at the sentence level between the category of noun phrases and verb phrases, and *combination*, pure compatibility, is found e.g. between two main clauses or the two parts of a compound noun.

Linguistic analysis is pursued, now, by beginning with the discourse as an undivided whole, going through successive phases of partitioning discourse into invariant parts, the functives, registering the internal functions holding between them. Having exhausted this description at a given level, analysis goes on to repeat the procedure

---

types of grammatical connexion" in structural linguistics and Husserl's mereological analyses from *Logische Untersuchungen* (Diderichsen 1966, 107 (1947); 137 (1948); 207 (1952)) but he gives no indication as to any relationship between Husserl and Hjelmslev, and the only early reference to Husserl in Hjelmslev is pejorative. Three possible interpretations (at least) seem to compete. One is, of course, that Hjelmslev came upon the idea of a dependence grammar independently; another is that the absence of references is due to the radical and autonomy-claiming linguistics he strives to found. Unlike his companion Brøndal, much more Jakobsonian in spirit in his reference to the philosophical tradition and to a multiplicity of sources for his version of structuralism, Hjelmslev wants to liberate himself from any metaphysics, inspired as he is by logical positivism, especially in Carnap's version. Maybe he would see too much metaphysical heritage in a reference to phenomenology? A third possibility would be influence via an intermediate (so as for instance Anton Marty; both Jakobson and Brøndal seem unlikely in that role) or from a common source of inspiration (possibly Brentano?).

24. Hjelmslev would call such relations "functions"; for the sake of comparison, we stick to the notion of "relations".

as to the internal structure of the elements found at a given level. The open inventory of possibilities at the higher levels makes place for smaller, closed paradigms of correlated morphemes and syntagmatic relations at the lower levels inside sentences, and the procedure is supposed to be repeated until a level of simple "figurae" is reached in each of the two domains. This level, then, is where the clear distinctions of bound articulation cease to hold. In the consistent parallelism between the analysis of content and expression, the entire descriptive apparatus is taken to be pertinent to both. The very first partitioning is supposed to give the two mutually dependent functives *expression* and *content*, thereafter would follow (e.g.) periods, sentences, paradigms, morphemes, etc. The system of paradigms of morphemes on the content side of language, such as those found in his large study of case, particularly occupied Hjelmslev.

It turns out, however, that the distinct triad of dependences is only the superficial and derivative upper level of a much more complicated structure informed by *participation*. This comes from Hjelmslev's career-long insistence that languages, even if possessing logical features and, among other things, facilitating reasoning, are not at all logical through-and-through; they are informed by, even structured by, what some have called 'magical thinking'. Hjelmslev took the notion of participation from the French anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939) and, influenced by his notion of "prelogical" thought, Hjelmslev coined the notion of "sublogic" to refer to linguistic structure making both logic and prelogic possible. In Lévy-Bruhl, "prelogical" thought was exemplified in the idea that some person may be, simultaneously, identical and non-identical, with some particular parrot in the woods. In Hjelmslev, participation is defined by the phenomenon that opposed terms may share content – and making it a general prerequisite to linguistic dependences, he stripped the term of Lévy-Bruhl's evolutionism (supposing a development from a primitive pre-logic to a more sophisticated logic) to make it an elementary phenomenon at the basis of all language and thought.[25]

---

25. This step in Hjelmslev may be compared to contemporary ideas such as in Cassirer whose system of primitive, mythological "Ausdrücke" only give rise to

Participation, again, holds for both content and expression, and in the content side of language, the participation idea is formalized in a calculus of so-called "concept zones", developed in books such as *Sprogsystem og Sprogforandring* (originally 1934) and *La Catégorie de Cas* (1935–37). As mentioned above, Hjelmslev was particularly interested in understanding the implicit semantics of the large morphological categories of languages, such as case, tense, gender, number, etc. Such concept zones approximately correspond to "semantic domains", and Hjelmslev's Saussurean idea is that such domains are basically grasped by means of oppositions: they are divided into opposing end zones framing a middle neutral zone. This gives us three zones but that is only the simple structure. The three zones are subjected to a series of possibilities of *weighting*. The whole of the concept zone is seen as a sort of "ballot" which may be filled out in different ways, resulting in terms with different emphases across their zones. As Lorenzo Cigana has convincingly shown in his 2014 Ph.D. dissertation (2014a, now see Cigana 2022) and collateral publications (2013, 2014b, 2019), the formalization of these "sublogical" participation phenomena occupies a central axis of Hjelmslev's synthesis of glossematics in the spartan algebra of his compact chef-d'œuvre *Résumé of a Theory of Language* (originally in Danish, only published in 1975 in an English translation). We cannot do full justice to the details of this complicated theory with hundreds of definitions in this context (Cigana 2022, §§ 2.5 ff.) but let us give an outline focusing upon the relation between participation and dependences.

In the *Résumé*, the more detailed linguistic analyses of the 30s are left behind in presenting a general theory of linguistic categories. The book contains long series of sparse definitions interrupted only by rules and notes and it is only very sparingly adorned with linguistic exemplification. Thus, even if providing a condensation of

---

clear, truth-claiming propositions with the development of "Darstellung" to achieve scientific status in "Reine Bedeutung". Also here, the "Ausdrücke" corresponding to a mythical worldview, will never be left behind in the development of civilization but remains as an indispensable prelogical basis for all further articulations, cf. Cassirer 1923–29; Stjernfelt 2000.

Hjelmslev's mature theory, the book counting as the final (though unfinished) presentation of the glossematic system, never reached a large audience. Appearing posthumously at a date when Chomsky-anism and other currents had long since overtaken structuralism as being cutting edge linguistics, its status is rather that of a hidden bible of formal glossematics.

The long development of "sublogical" structure in the *Résumé* is followed by a briefer development of the more uncontroversial, well-defined level resulting from going passing from a primordial level of "free articulation" to "bound articulation". Here, sublogical participation phenomena may give rise to "exclusions" where shared content between opposites is ruled out. In the analytical procedure, however, the starting point is always the more restricted, bound articulations. Cigana, arguably the most thorough interpreter of this fundamental part of glossematic theory, aptly calls the relevant paragraphs *Ggb3.1–2 in the first half of the *Résumé* a "path through a labyrinth" (457). Sublogical participation, however, is not a diffuse swamp of floating content, but possesses its own structures to be described.

This description takes place in five steps, and we cannot go into details here but only attempt to give a picture of the relation of the dependence calculus to the participation phenomena. The steps are as follows: 1) The three possible parts of the concept zone are described by the Latin letters *a* and *b* for opposed contents, and *c* for the intermediary neutral zone. Then, 2) two levels of *emphasis* on different parts of the zone are indicated by filling in the ballot by striking through the related concept zone part by a diagonal if covered, by two crossing diagonals if covered with insistence. This calculus of semantic weightings, 3) gives seven different possible types of structuring the concept zone, named by the Greek letters α, A, β, B, γ, Γ, Γ2 as follows (*Résumé,* 29):[26]

---

26. The three vertical dots notation indicates the units considered are in the *system* side of language built from correlations; the opposite, the process side built from relations, is indicated by an R.

:α   :A   :β   :B   :γ   :Γ   :Γ₂

:a

:c

:b
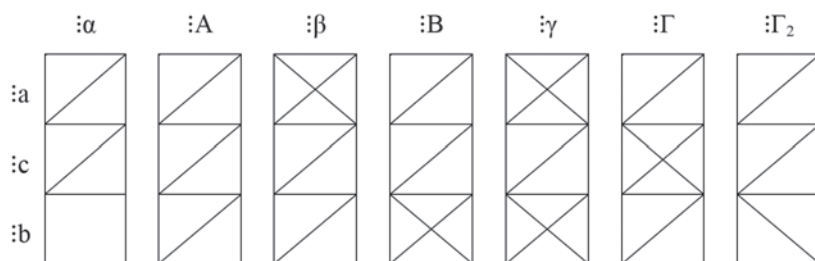
The first two, the Alphas, taken together, indicate the opposition between a simple concept covering one end of the zone and a complex one, covering all parts of the zone with equal insistence. If the former is the adjective "poor" and the second "rich", participation is given by the fact that "rich" may be taken in a simple sense ("He's rich", covering one end of the zone) as well as a complex sense which also covers its opposite of poverty and the neutral zone between them ("How rich is he?" – Hjelmslev's example from *Forelæsninger over Sprogteori,* cf. Cigana 2014a: 498). This overlap between the semantics of "poor" and "rich" is participation.[27] "Extreme participation" is the participation in which the "Participants have the highest possible number of common Variants" (*Résumé*, 25). In extreme participation, it cannot be decided whether the neutral middle zone is included or not. The two Beta categories taken together, in turn, signify a contrary opposition of participation (exhausting the zone with emphases on contrary fields); the two first Gamma categories signify a contradictory, exhaustive opposition of participation, while Γ_2 indicates a change between emphasis on a and b in different contexts. All of them, however, remain "sublogical" because signification is still shared between terms over parts of the concept zone, even if with more emphasis in certain zones.

These seven types of sublogical forms may, in turn, 4) be coupled in different combinations in order to give possible paradigm

---

27. Thus, this example is a version of Jakobson's marked-unmarked distinction. Hjelmslev denied the overaching binarism stemming from generalizing such two-term systems and insisted on non-binary derivation of multi-term systems.

systems with any number of members, pertinent for different morpheme systems across languages, e.g. the different case systems of *La Catégorie des Cas*. These seem to be the significant background material, motivating the much more general theory of the *Résumé*. In the *Sprogsystem og Sprogforandring*, such combinations up to paradigms with six members are listed; in the *Résumé*, combination possibilities up to 13 members are meticulously computed.[28] The seven types result from solidarity laws restricting free combination: Certain members among the total of seven necessarily occur together and certain couples of elements occur along with other couples.[29] Moreover, 5) another complicating development results in the pairwise combination of content types into "polarities" which define linguistic categories, yielding 9 possible pairs.

Until now, we have considered the complications of sublogical structures, but concept zones articulated by participation may also be simplified and made "logical-exclusive" (in parts of languages themselves, not as a result of linguistic analysis) by the important process of *exclusion*: "Any participation (participant-correlation) can be transformed into an exclusion (field-correlation)" (*Résumé*, 23). In the transition from the vast amount of sublogical possibilities in free articulation and to the narrower sets of possibilities of bound articulation, all participation is reduced to exclusion characterized by clear category members no longer sharing content. Thus, "Any contradictory exclusion can be transformed into a contrary participation, and any contrary participation into a contradictory exclusion", just as the converse transformation between contrary exclusion and *contradictory* participation holds (*Résumé*, 24–25).

---

28. The resulting lists, however, differ considerably, cf. Cigana 2022, 190 ff.. Here the possible combinations members of categories of the *Résumé*, up to seven members: 1) Γ2; 2) α A; 3) α A Γ2, βB γ, β B Γ, 4) β B γ Γ, β B γ Γ₂, β B Γ Γ₂; 5) α A β B γ, α A β B Γ, β B γ Γ Γ₂; 6) α A β B γ Γ, α A β B γ Γ₂, α A β B Γ Γ₂; 7) α A β B γ Γ Γ₂.
29. Rg. 16 in the *Résumé* (rendered like this in Cigana 2022, 274): "(α ↔ A) | (β ↔ B) ↔ (γ | Γ) | Γ₂", where "↔" is solidarity and "|" the converse, autonomy, meaning that the Alphas must be present both, as must the Betas, while the Gammas may occur together or not. A level higher, the Betas and Gammas, as pairs, must appear together, while their relation to the Alphas is optional. The motivation for this crucial "Law of solidarity" is not easy to fathom.

In this way, sublogical categories where contents overlap, may be cleansed by exclusion. At the bottom, importantly, all correlates are by principle assumed to remain participative (*Résumé*, Reg 11, 12, 23).

While the sublogical "Free Articulation" takes place without reference to any particular dependence function, "Bound articulation" takes place with reference to one among the three dependence functions. And the step from sublogical Free to logical Bound articulation implies that the "most" sublogical pair, with extreme participation, viz. *a* and *A,* is excluded completely, while, in the Beta-Gamma elements, reduction to exclusive content zone boxes not sharing content with other such boxes, gives a much simpler picture. The main such reduction results in the simple set of four possibilities β-Γ of three-content zones with simpler emphases only:
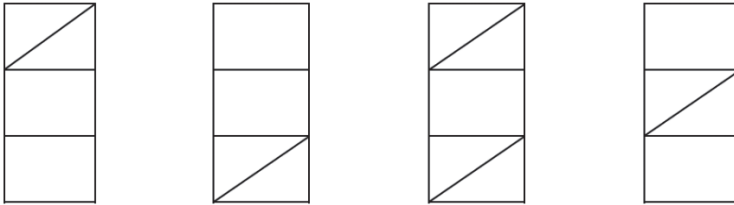
(*Résumé* 50–51; simplified graphics adopted from Cigana 2014a: 559).[30] Now, these elements chart the logical possibilities of *a, non-a,* both *a* and *non-a*, neither *a* nor *non-a*. Here, the first three elements may directly show the relation between the three main dependence types of *interdependence, constellation, determination*, while the fourth concerns the non-applicability of any function. Furthermore, each of the three dependence functions may be mapped after the same four-category scheme, such that functives involved in systematic *selection* (*determination* in the process realm) may be sorted after: 1) selected, 2) selecting, 3) both selecting and selected, 4) neither,

---

30. A simpler, contradictory version with four possibilities β-Γ of two-content zone combinations needs not occupy us here (*Résumé*, 51):

respectively. The resulting "bound articulation" is, as Cigana says, the field for the standard glossematic methodology (551) with its logical-exclusive correlations between members of paradigms.[31] But it is only relevant: 1) from a point in the ongoing analysis process where the open series of chapters, sections, sentences including indefinitely many members in larger text parts cease to prevail, and consequently closed, finite paradigms appear in the analysis. And, 2) at the utmost point of analysis where the final level of glossemes are again subject to free articulation. So, the realm where bound articulation with the three simple dependences holds, is a sort of mesoscopic realm of sentence grammar. It is bounded from above by the more open macroscopic, transphrastic realm, and from below by a microscopic realm of the final inventory of elements, in which we do not consider which functive presupposes the other, but rather how functives are distributed within a category.

Thus, at this intermediary level of bound articulation only, with exclusive concept zone boxes and with bound paradigms with a small, finite number of interrelated category members, the standard three dependences operate. After the arduous, sublogical description of participation types in the *Résumé*, the standard system of dependences across process and system, relation and correlation, is derived as a result (51) and summed up schematically (60). Thus, in Hjelmslev, the dependence calculus shared with Husserl is presented as logically exclusive and pertinent only to a mesoscopic level of analysis addressed by traditional linguistics, but possible only as nested within a more basic, yet also more comprehensive, foundation of sublogical participation. A central issue in this amazing theory is that clear principles for which concept zone combinations are rendered possible are never made explicit (step 2) above). The same goes for any clear principles for which combinations of sub-

---

31. Cigana compares bound and free articulation, in a strong metaphor, with macroscopic Newtonian physics and microscopic quantum mechanics: the former holds sway in standard analysis but must yield when a microphysical level is reached in which quantum phenomena necessitate other descriptions. In the same sense, dependence descriptions of bound articulation is taken to be the standard procedure having to yield, however, to sublogical-participation description when necessary.

logical contents into systems of paradigm members (step 4) above) are allowed. Statements are given but they are not clearly motivated. These systems thus remain a seductive and challenging torso.

If bound articulation to be studied by means of dependences is indeed the main glossematic analytical approach, it must, however, yield to participation whenever it proves insufficient, cf. the rule Rg 24 of the *Résumé* (49): "If it is impossible to identify unambiguously each correlate under a category through bound articulations, the result of the free articulation provides the only designation of the correlates". Thus, the designation of correlates as sublogical participants "can be introduced everywhere where it is impossible to identify each correlate unambiguously through a bound articulation" (ibid.). So, it cannot be determined beforehand how much of linguistic structure will obey clear dependences between exclusive units – participation phenomena like syncretisms, overlapping, gradualism, etc. may, in many cases, prove ineradicable. Precisely for this reason, an extreme participation is postulated as the default state of any system, since participation "can" be reduced to exclusion, but not vice versa. While sublogical structuring is taken to be basic and giving rise to logical dependence structuring as a secondary derivative, analysis has to proceed in the opposite direction, charting as much structure as possible by exclusive logic, but still ready to admit participation when failing to reach exclusive definitions.

This is not the place to penetrate the difficult issue of the transformation from free to bound articulation and vice versa in Hjelmslev's algebra, occupying hundreds of pages in Cigana's reconstruction. Suffice it to say that the three dependence types so central to glossematics are not, unlike what we have shown to be the case with Peirce or Husserl, taken as primitives, but rather are seen to be the result of a theoretically crucial process of emergence taking us from the vast fauna of sublogical systems to the much more restricted set of logical possibilities between which clear dependences hold.

In a certain sense, however, on a very general level, some resemblances between Peirce's and Hjelmslev's doctrines may be noted. Both of them find, beyond the level of clear categories between which dependences hold, a level of more primitive categories de-

fined by a relaxation of restrictions required at the upper level. In Peirce: degeneracy in which parts of the definitions of Second- and Thirdness concepts cease to hold and give place for vaguer, but still indispensable concepts. For Hjelmslev: the realm of sublogic where exclusion ceases to hold and gives space for participation in all of its proliferating subtypes. In Peirce, degeneracy yields simpler subtypes of generic notions (such as icons and indices from symbols) which, at the same time, may form *parts* of those generic notions (icons and indices typically forming parts of symbols). Taken in isolation, doubly degenerate concepts such as icons, if considered in isolation, are but vague, and the distinction between them and their object may become fluid. Moreover, Peirce's general insistence upon the metaphysical priority of continuity over discrete phenomena[32] indicates the possibility of continuous transformations between concepts referring to the latter – in a certain sense corresponding to the fusion and merging phenomena in Hjelmslevian sublogic.

In Hjelmslev, the relaxation of exclusion gives rise to participation phenomena appearing in discourse even if not subject to strict dependence relations – syncretisms, overlappings, and polarities within a category.

A decisive difference, however, remains that Peirce the logician studying how people *ought* to think, would take the degenerate categories to be understandable only on the basis of their generic "ancestors" derived from logic, while Hjelmslev, the linguist, would see logic as a derived product of the primitive, non-normative, condition of participative thought and language, such structures facilitating *all* thought including its many non-logical varieties.

Still another development of the three dependences may be found in one of Husserl's closest disciples, Roman Ingarden.

5. Ingarden

As mentioned, the recurring theme of Roman Ingarden's long career as a philosopher grew out of a disagreement with his phenomenological master already when he was in Germany in the 1910s.

---

32. Cf. Stjernfelt 2007, Appendix.

The first generation of Husserl scholars – besides Ingarden, Adolf Reinach (1883–1917), Edith Stein (1891–1942), and others – seem to have immediately experienced Husserlian phenomenology based in the *Logische Untersuchungen* as a realist position. Consequently, they were surprised to see indications of a more subjective idealist direction with the publication of Husserl's *Ideen* in 1913. During the following years, Ingarden became convinced that he had to develop phenomenology in a realist direction as against Husserl's nascent "transcendental phenomenology", and so his first book *Essentiale Fragen* (1925) began what would turn out to be a lifelong struggle with the realism/idealism issue. The idealism, which Ingarden felt compelled to attack, was not objective idealism, the issue of the reality foundation of general concepts, but modern, post-Cartesian, subjective idealism claiming that what appears as the real world is in fact, at bottom, the product of subjective intentional acts. Ingarden's most well-known work, the 1931 *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, constitutes a major argument in this strife: by developing the regional ontology of intentional objects, with fictitious objects as his main example, Ingarden wished to show that their ontological structure differs on a number of counts from those of real world objects. The latter, so the argument goes, could not be, like the former, mere products of intentions.[33]

So, apart from proving to be one of the seminal works of 20th century literary theory, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* develops the general notion of "pure intentional objects" to cover objects understood as *moments* – rather than *parts* – of intentional acts. That theory, in turn, would contribute to inform the central achievement of Ingarden's career, the magisterial, if unfinished, multivolume work of *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt* (1947–74).

The first two volumes of the work were written in Polish during the extreme conditions of WW2 in Poland, only to be rewritten in German by the author himself and appearing in Germany in the 1960s, while an English version of the first volume came out in 2013, and the remaining volumes are only currently being translated. The overall structure of the book follows a number of basic

---

33. Ingarden 1965; see also Smith 1979, 1980; Stjernfelt 2007, ch.17.

Ingardenian distinctions, namely those of Existential Ontology, Formal Ontology, and Material Ontology, respectively. Every possible object has an existential mode, a formal structure, and material qualities. The two latter concepts, of course, stem from Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, where they address structures shared by all possible objects vs. structures shared by objects belonging to a certain region of being. Existential Ontology, Ingarden's addition, has nothing to do with existentialism, nor indeed with ontology in the narrow sense of a doctrine of what actually exists. Rather, it approaches eidetic phenomenology or Peircean phaneroscopy, or, again, conceptual analysis in analytical philosophy, in the sense that it scrutinizes the totality of merely possibly existing object categories – under a phenomenological bracketing of existence, as it were. All of the project's initial two volumes, then, pertains to what *may* exist, while metaphysics proper, the general description of what *really* exists in this world, was the purported task of the third volume which never properly came into being.[34] A large chunk of it, however, appeared much later, in 1974, dealing with the causal structure of the real world.

In the first volume of the *Streit,* however, the main thrust of Ingarden's argument rests on a generalization and further subarticulation of Husserl's dependence calculus. Possibly existing objects must be defined, so Ingarden argues, on the basis of which dependence relations they have to other objects. Their place in such dependence structures defines which types of "existential moments" they possess. This is developed in the first part of the book, adding, in the second part, a detailed analysis of time. Here, Ingarden claims that the past, present, and future must be described as all of them existing, albeit endowed with different modes of being: Actuality, Post-Actuality, Empiricial Possibility, and Non-Actuality, respectively. This parallels Ingarden's distinction between three kinds of temporal entities: enduring objects, extended processes,

---

34. On this phenomenology-metaphysics issue, Ingarden resembles Peirce who also took phenomenology to generally study all what could possibly appear while metaphysics was a dependent endeavour studying general aspects of *this* world, cf. Stjernfelt 2016.

and momentaneous events. Furthermore, distinctions pertaining to types of temporal existence are drawn between the monadic moments of Fissuration, Non-Fissuration, Fragility, and Persistence.[35] Finally, Ingarden distinguishes three types of ontological domains: ideal qualities, individual objects, and ideas – remarkably close to Peirce's three realms of Firstness qualities, Secondness individual objects or reactions, and Thirdness general ideas or patterns.[36] All of these different possibilities of existential moments, of course, are partially independent and may be combined; the resulting ontology is impressive in its width and its detailed categorization of possible types of existence.[37]

We shall in what follows focus upon the elementary calculus of dependences from the first half of *Streit*'s vol. I.

Let us go directly to discussing the four different versions of three-type dependences Ingarden found it necessary to develop to chart all possibly existing objects. He distinguishes between:

1) *Autonomie vs. Heteronomie* – which is: an entity having its whole foundation of being within itself, vs. the dependence of an entity for its existence and its entire repertoire of qualities on another entity.[38]

2) *Ursprünglichkeit vs. Abgeleitetheit* – which is the inability of an entity to be created or destroyed by another entity, vs. the dependence of an entity on another in order to come into existence.

---

35. Cf. Johansson 2009, 2013, Millière 2016; fissuration/non-fissuration refers to whether an object's existence takes place in the flow of time or not, while fragility/persistence pertains to whether an object – like multi-cellular organisms – will perish or not.

36. Ingarden 1947–74 I, 39; II,1, 60. As in Peirce, ideas–- or representations – are two-sided and possess an aboutness regarding some content.

37. Peter Simons has synthesized all of Ingarden's distinctions and ontological subtypes in one impressive, drop-shaped diagram, "Ingarden's tear", with 15 interdefined regions of being, summing up the products of all the distinctions mentioned. The diagram is published as an appendix to Johansson 2009; also in Stjernfelt (in press).

38. Ingarden 1947–74, Eng. version of vol. I, *Time and Modes of Being*.

3) *Selbständigkeit vs. Unselbständigkeit* – which refers to the lack of requirement, in an entity, to form a whole with other entities in order to be existent, vs. the dependence of an entity that can only exist if it coexists with something else within the confines of a single whole; and, finally

4) *Unabhängigkeit vs. Abhängigkeit* – which is when an entity is not only *selbständig* but also does not require the existence of any other *selbständige* objects, vs. the dependence of an entity on another in order to remain in existence.

I initially presented the four dependence types in German as they have been translated in different ways in English.[39]) In what follows, I shall, however, stick to the English translations of Ingarden 1964: 1) *autonomy vs. heteronomy;* 2) *originality vs. derivation;* 3) *separateness vs. inseparateness;* 4) *self-dependence vs. contingency*.

   The first distinction comes out of the ontological effort undertaken in *Das literarische Kunstwerk* in so far as "heteronomy" is what characterizes "purely intentional objects", like that of fictional characters or, indeed, all objects as they are immanently described in and by intentional acts. Heteronomy is also the form of being of future, empirical possibilities. All heteronomous objects are characterized by Ingarden's famous "Unbestimtheitsstellen", that is, spots of indeterminacy. There are a lot of properties of Donald Duck or of the cake I am about to bake tomorrow, which are indeterminate. Properties of Donald not mentioned in the canon of Walt Disney, Carl Barks, etc. are simply indeterminate, just like the issue of whether my apple pie will be burnt in the oven or not – given that the future needs not, on the ontological level, be determinist (whether that is the case in reality is an issue for later, metaphysical investigations). Thus, heteronomous objects are in a sense the "weakest" among dependent objects; even dependent objects in the other three dependencies are autonomous, such as, for instance, the contingent moment of red color in an object, which, by the first dependence character, are autonomous.

---

39. Ingarden 1965–74, 27–30.

In the next dependence, originality pertains to objects, which cannot have been created. Examples are the personal God, or a Platonic idea of the Good (the examples are Johansson's); other examples may be ideal relations such as those of mathematics. Objects lacking originality, by contrast, are said to be derived. This dependence relation largely distinguishes ideal objects, states-of-affairs and relations from actual ditto, the latter taken to be dependent upon the former.

In the third dependence, separate entities may exist in themselves, while inseparate objects are dependent upon some other objects for their existence. This comes close to Husserl's original distinction between parts and moments where the latter comprehend properties of objects. Properties and events, e.g., are inseparable from objects and processes, respectively.

Finally, in the fourth dependence, any organism possesses, as such, the moment of self-dependence. The very same organism, however, as a parent holds the moment of contingency, because its parenthood depends upon the existence of progeny. As Johansson says, this is an ontological way of distinguishing monadic from relational, polyadic predicates. Past, present, and ideal objects are separate.

These four versions of dependence contribute a large deal of structure to Ingarden's ontological zoo of beings. The only possible entities being independent in all the four senses of dependency, are monotheist Gods, maybe Spinoza's universe of which everything else is but modes. Ingarden's ontology, however, does not address the metaphysical issue *whether* such absolute beings exist, only that they belong to the realm of the ontologically possible.

The general combination of the four dependences with Ingarden's series of other existential modes gives rise to four overall categories of entities – again, without taking it to be the task of ontology to decide whether any of them actually exist in our world. They may exist "(A) Absolutely (and be absolute entities), (B) Extratemporally (or ideally, and be ideal entities), (C) Temporally (or really, and be real entities), (D) Purely Intentionally (and be fictional entities)", (as resumed by Johansson 2009). They are only, however, the general framework for a much more detailed fauna

of possible ontological beings adding further distinctions. Thus, dependences are taken as a very central tool by Ingarden in order to chart elementary relational predicates of possible forms of being – while temporal and endogenous properties of the same beings are taken care of by monadic predicates.

6. Perspective

The three scholars discussed here take their overlap with Husserl's elementary triad of dependences in very different directions. However, in all of them, the dependence calculus remains at the heart of their doctrines, and further developments of it are crucial to the sophistication and idiosyncratic character of all the three of them.[40]

Peirce's combination of dependences, charted by his triad of attention-focusing abstraction types, with the degeneracy idea permitting the partial relaxation of relational characteristics of dependence-defined categories, gives him a tool, which serves at least two purposes: to integrate the growing number of triadic distinctions of his theory as not just the repetition of the same metaphysical schema over many different areas and problems, but also an inter-

---

40. An argument against the comparison of this chapter may say: are the similarities between the dependency theories mentioned not superficial only. Is there not an enormous difference between investigating dependences in reality and in language? Is it not completely different ontological and epistemological aims, respectively? I think not. Any attempt at "epistemologizing" away ontological issues invariably ends by facing the issue of the very nature of the devices of knowledge they claim lie behind what is naively conceived as real. Be it language as in Hjelmslev and much of structuralism, be it societal structures as in social constructivism, be it cultural norms in social anthropology, be it inherited brain structures in evolutionary psychology – the prioritizing of such sources of knowledge exalts a particular selection of reality to ontological prominence: language, society, culture, biology. Bottom line, such attempts are no less ontological than the assumedly naive realism they started out attacking; rather, they are *reductionist* ontologies because they presume that all of reality really depends on one of its subsets only: language, or society, or culture, or biology. Moreover, they are themselves dependence theories in their claim that knowledge *depends* upon language, society, culture, or biology exclusively. The upshot seems to be that no matter how many epistemological manoeuvres one might make, you still will not be able to escape dependences and ontology.

nal, rational, generation of subtypes of Secondness and Thirdness phenomena. In Peirce's monism, those categories are immediately taken to be relevant for mind as for nature alike, finding the six resulting categories both in reality and in its representations. Peirce stuck to the Kantian principle that metaphysical categories should be derived from logic only, granting that the six-category scheme with its roots in mathematics and logic would immediately deliver categories applicable in metaphysics as well as in the empirical special sciences.

Hjelmslev rarely, if ever, spoke explicitly about ontological issues, and with his inspiration from logical positivism, he obviously sought to minimize ontological commitments. Still, forming part of the linguistic turn, he elevated language and linguistic distinctions to a high and central position to which other observers might ascribe ontological prominence, particularly when he, in his famous, ambitious conclusion to the *Prolegomena*, predicts that glossematic linguistics will be the entrance to all other articulated knowledge and thereby realize the goal of "humanitas and universitas". So, elementary distinctions drawn at the bottom of glossematics still may end up as crucial structures if not of the world itself, then in any possible understanding of it.

To Ingarden, disciple of Husserl, yet taking his philosophy in a realist direction not so alien to Peirce's, Husserl's dependences of the *Logische Untersuchungen* remain a central tool in the construction of ontology and hence, any possible metaphysics. His diversification of dependence relations into four elementary types bears witness to an attempt to rationally distinguish between possible ontological domains such as deities, ideas, objects, properties, purely intentional objects, etc., requiring specified dependence types with different scope and strength for their description. The wanting metaphysical part of material ontology of his investigation, however, leaves open how these dependences would prove to incarnate in the real world of metaphysics and the special sciences.

A vain hope of this paper would have been to reach a common level of description where the dependence theories of Peirce, Hjelmslev, and Ingarden could be articulated in a metalanguage making possible if not their integration, then at least their clearer

comparison. That remains, for now, a desideratum. Suffice it to say that with the continental and analytical schools seemingly being about to exhaust their separated development possibilities and, after a century apart, approaching mutual communication if not reunification, dependence calculi for the charting of what is and what could be, in reality, signs, or both, provide a resource in the archives of 20th century thought which might once again prove valuable.

Bibliography

Bellucci, Francesco (2017), *Peirce's Speculative Grammar.* Logic as Semiotics, N.Y. and London.

Cassirer, Ernst (1923–29), *Philosophie der symbolischenFormen*, 3. Vols. Berlin, Bruno Cassirer.

Cigana, Lorenzo (2013), "The linguistic crucible: the role of the deuxième 'Congrès International des Linguistes' in Hjelmslev's theory of participative oppositions", Proceedings of the *19th International Congress of Linguists (July 21–27 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)*, online publication.

– (2014a) *La nozione di "partecipazione" nella Glossematica di Louis Hjelmslev*, Ph.D. dissertation Universitá della Calabria/Université de Liège, unpublished (see Cigana 2022).

– (2014b) "La notion de 'participation' chez Louis Hjelmslev: un fil rouge de la glossématique", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 67, 191–202.

– (2019), The formalisation of grammatical meanings in Copenhagen structural linguistics. Some remarks. *History and Philosophy of the Language Sciences*. https://hiphilangsci.net/2019/06/14/formalisation_copenhagen

– (2022), *Hjelmslev e la teoria delle correlazioni linguistiche*, Roma, Carocci.

Diderichsen, Paul (1966), *Helhed og struktur*. ["Whole and Structure"] Copenhagen, Gad.

Hjelmslev, Louis (1928), *Principes de grammairegénérale*. Copenhagen, Høst og Søn.

– (1935), *La Catégorie des Cas.* Étude de grammaire générale. Première partie. (*Acta Jutlandica* VII 1.) Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget.

– (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse*. Copenhagen, Munksgaard (Eng. version: *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, 2nd. ed. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press 1969).

– [1934] (1972), *Sprogsystem og sprogforandring* ["Language System and Language Change"], Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag (1972).

– (1975), *Résumé of a Theory of Language*, Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag (original written approx. 1943).

Holenstein, Elmar (1975), *Roman Jakobsons phänomenologischer Strukturalismus*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.

Husserl, Edmund (1968), *Briefe an Ingarden mit Erläuterungen und Erinnerungen an Husserl* (ed. R. Ingarden), Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff.

– (1970), *Logical Investigations* (transl. J.N.Findlay), London and Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

– (1971), *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie*, drittes Buch [Ideen III] Husserliana vol. V Tübingen, Max Niemeyer
– (1973), *Experience and Judgment*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
– (1975), *Logische Untersuchungen* [LU] I, Hua XVIII, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, (1900).
– (1980a), *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie*, [Ideen] Tübingen, Max Niemeyer (1913).
– (1984), *Logische Untersuchungen*| [LU] II, I.-II. Teil (Text nach Hua XIX/1–2), Hamburg, Felix Meiner (1900).
– (1985), *Erfahrung und Urteil* [EU], Hamburg, Felix Meiner 1985 (1939).
– (1991), *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie*, zweite sBuch [Ideen II] Husserliana vol. IV Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.

INGARDEN, ROMAN (1925), "Essentiale Frage. Ein Beitrag zu dem Wesensproblem", in *Jahrbuchh für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, 7. Band, Halle a.d. Saale, Max Niemeyer, 125–304.
– (1964), *Time and Modes of Being*, Springfield, Ill., C.C. Thomas.
– (1965), *Das literarische Kunstwerk* [LK], Tübingen 1965, Max Niemeyer (1931, Eng. version The Literary Work of Art, Evanston 1973: Northwestern UP).
– (1947–74), *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt* I-III, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.

JOHANSSON, INGVAR (2006), "Proof of the Existence of Universals – and Roman Ingarden's Ontology", https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225561945_Proof_of_the_Existence_of_Universals-and_Roman_Ingarden%27s_Ontology, (Preprint version of a paper published in *Metaphysica. International Journal for Ontology & Metaphysics* (2009) 10, 65–87).
– (2013), "The Basic Distinctions in Der Streit", published online 2013–04–06 by *Semiotica*. DOI 10.1515/sem-2013–0025 *Semiotica* 194, 137–157.

KOERNER, KONRAD E.F. (1997), "Remarks on the Sources of R. Jakobson's Linguistic Inspiration", *Cahiers de l'ILSL*, N° 9, 151–168.

MILLIÈRE, RAPHAËL (2016), "Ingarden's combinatorial analysis of the realism-idealism controversy", In Sébastian Richard & Olivier Malherbe (eds.), *Form(s) and Modes of Being. The Ontology of Roman Ingarden*. Bern and New York, 67–98, https://philpapers.org/archive/MILICA-6.pdf

PEIRCE, CHARLES S. (1992), *The Essential Peirce*, vol. I. (1867–1893) [EPI] (eds. N. Houser and C. Kloesel), Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

–   (1998), *Collected Papers* [CP, references given by volume number and paragraph], I-VIII, (ed. Hartshorne and Weiss; Burks) London, Thoemmes Press (1931–58).

–   (1998a), *The Essential Peirce*, vol. II (1893–1913) [EPII] (eds. N. Houser and C. Kloesel), Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

PIETARINEN, AHTI-VEIKKO (2006), *Signs of Logic*, Dordrecht, Springer.

SMITH, BARRY (ed., 1982), *Parts and Moments*. München, Philosophia Verlag.

SMITH, BARRY (1979), "Roman Ingarden: Ontological Foundations for Literary Theory", in J. Odmark (ed.) *Language, Literature & Meaning I*, Amsterdam, Johns Benjamins, 373–90.

–   (1980), "Ingarden vs. Meinong on the Logic of Fiction", in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 16, 93–105.

–   (1992), "An Essay on Material Necessity", inHanson and B. Hunter (eds.) *Return of the A Priori* (*Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Supplementary* Vol. 18).

–   (1994), *Austrian Philosophy*, Chicago, Open Court 1994.

–   (1996), "In Defense of Extreme (Fallibilistic) Apriorism", in *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 12, 179–192.

–   (2005), "Against Fantology", in M. Reicher and J. Marek (eds.) *Experience and Analysis*, Vienna, ÖBV & HPT.

–   (2019), "Co-localization as the Syntax of Elementary Propositions: An Amazing Peircean Idea and Some Implications for the Semiotics of Truth", in *Bloomsbury Companion to Contemporary Peircean Semiotics*, ed. Tony Jappy. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 419–458, 482–485.

–   (2021), "Peirce as a Truthmaker Realist: Propositional realism as backbone of Peircean metaphysics", in Blityri, *Studi di storia delle idee sui segni e le lingue*, IX, 2, 123–36.

–   (In press), "Peirce's Theories of Assertion", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*.

–   (In press), "Conscious Self-Control as Criterion for Reasoning", in *Cognitive Semiotics*, 14.1.

STJERNFELT, FREDERIK (2000), "Die Vermittlung zwischen Anschauung und Denken bei Kant, Cassirer und Peirce", in *Zeitschrift für Semiotik*, Band 22, Heft 3–4, 341–68.

–   (2007), *Diagrammatology. An Investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics*, Dordrecht etc., Springer.

–   (2014), *Natural Propositions: The Actuality of Peirce's Doctrine of Dicisigns*, Boston, Docent Press.

–   (2015), "Dicisigns", in *Synthese* 192 (4), 1019–1054.

–   (2016), "Phenomenology and Logic in Peirce", *Journal Phänomenologie*, 21–38.

– (in press), *Sheets, Diagrams, and Realism in Peirce*, Berlin, De Gruyter.

WACHTER, DANIEL (2005), "Roman Ingarden's Ontology: Existential Dependence, Substances, Ideas, and Other Things Empiricists Do Not Like", in Arkadiusz Chrudzimski (ed.), *Existence, Culture, and Persons: The Ontology of Roman Ingarden*. Frankfurt, ontos, 55–82.

Author: Frederik Stjernfelt, professor of semiotics, intellectual history and philosophy of science, Aalborg University Copenhagen. Latest publication: *The World's First Full Press Freedom: The Radical Experiment of Denmark-Norway 1770–1773* (with Ulrik Langen, Berlin 2022: De Gruyter). E-mail: stjern@hum. aau.dk

American structuralism and European structuralisms: How they saw each other

Frederick J. Newmeyer
University of Washington, University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University

Abstract. *This paper examines how American structural linguists and their European counterparts saw each other from roughly the 1920s to the 1960s. American linguistics had deep roots in Europe, though by the late 1930s, most American structuralists had turned their back on the old continent. Attitudes towards the Europeans started to warm in the late 1940s and into the 1950s. Prague School conceptions had a major influence on generative grammar (at least as far as phonology is concerned) and on the nascent functionalist movement in the United States. From the European side, there was some, but not a great deal, of interest in American theorizing until the late 1940s. A real rapprochement was underway in the 1950s, which was derailed by the appearance of generative grammar, an approach that at the time most European structuralists rejected.*

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the complex interactions between European and American structural linguists between the 1920s and the 1950s.[41] In fact, in this period a majority of the linguists in the world who identified as 'structuralist' were located in Europe. In Prague, Ge-

---

41. I would like to thank Stephen R. Anderson, Hans Basbøll, Julia Falk, Louis de Saussure, and Klaas Willems for their input on this paper. Errors are my own. The following abbreviations are used: *LSAB* (*Linguistic Society of America Bulletin*); LSAA (Linguistic Society of America Archives at the University of Missouri); TSA

neva, Copenhagen, Paris, London, and elsewhere there were major centers of structural linguistics, each embodied with its own distinctive traits and in some cases its own academic journal. However, the purpose of this paper is not to present, contrast and evaluate the various versions of European structuralism. A number of books have appeared that do just that, and I have no desire to repeat what they have had to say (I particularly recommend Lepschy 1972). Rather, I focus on the reciprocal relations between structural linguists in Europe and the United States. That is, I examine how practitioners of the two geographical varieties of structuralism saw each other, what their mutual influences (or lack of influences) were, and how all of this changed in the time period under discussion.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides the necessary background, by overviewing the state of linguistics in the United States in the mid-twentieth century.

Section 3 shows how indebted American linguists were to Europe in the early years of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), while section 4 documents the Americans' increasing isolation in the following years. Section 5 reviews European attitudes towards work carried out in the United States and section 6 documents the increasing American appreciation of European theorizing that began in the late 1940s. Section 7 describes the European reaction to early generative grammar and section 8 the Prague School influence on American functional linguistics. Section 9 is a brief conclusion.

2. American linguistics in the mid-twentieth century

American linguistics in the late 1940s and early 1950s was dominated by the intellectual heirs of Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949) and Edward Sapir (1884–1939). As far as synchronic studies are concerned, the majority of synchronic linguists based in the United States were 'structuralists', or 'structural linguists'. Put simply, their goal was

(Thomas Sebeok Archives at Indiana University); and RJA (Roman Jakobson Archives at MIT).

to elucidate the structural system at the heart of every language.[42]
Bloomfield's classic work *Language* (Bloomfield 1933) set the tone for
most mainstream American linguists in the mid-twentieth century.
Bloomfield was by the 1930s quite anti-mentalist and was in touch
with the logical empiricist philosophers of the Vienna Circle.[43] He
contributed a monograph on linguistics to their *International Ency-
clopedia of the Unified Sciences*. This monograph, *Linguistic Aspects of
Science* (Bloomfield 1939a), is the clearest statement in print on the
intimate relationship between empiricist philosophy, behaviorist
psychology, and structural linguistics. Bloomfield united all three
in the following famous passage:

> If language is taken into account, then we can distinguish science from
> other phases of human activity by agreeing that science shall deal only
> with events that are accessible in their time and place to any and all
> observers (strict BEHAVIORISM) or only with events that are placed
> in coordinates of time and space (MECHANISM), or that science shall
> employ only such initial statements and predictions as to lead to definite
> handling operations (OPERATIONALISM), or only such terms that are
> derivable by rigid definition from a set of everyday terms concerning
> physical happenings (PHYSICALISM). (Bloomfield 1939a, 13)

Given such strictures, it follows that "the only useful generaliza-
tions about language are inductive generalizations" (Bloomfield
1933, 20). That in turn led Bloomfield to be sceptical that meaning,

---

42. Many American linguists at the time preferred the self-designation 'descriptivist'
to 'structuralist'. Confusingly, however, not all linguists whose goal was to describe
languages saw them as integrated structural systems. Franz Boas (1858–1942), for
example, was a descriptivist, but not a structuralist.

43. Much earlier, however, his work was grounded in Wundtian (mentalist) psy-
chology, which is reflected in his book *Introduction to the Study of Language* (Bloom-
field 1914). Sources agree that his turn to behaviorism was in large part a result of
discussions with his Ohio State colleague, the psychologist A. Weiss (1879–1931).
Even in the 1930s, Bloomfield did not deny the existence of mental life or meaning
or deny that linguistic forms have meanings. He felt, though, that an account of
those meanings must necessarily involve an encyclopedic knowledge of the world
that was quite inaccessible to linguistics. For discussion, see Anderson 2021, §12.2.

"the weak point in language-study" (p. 140), could play a central role in grammatical analysis. But Bloomfield felt quite conflicted here. While he was adamant that "The study of language can be conducted without special assumptions only so long as we pay no attention to the meaning of what is spoken" (p. 75), he felt that "as long as we pay no attention to meanings, we cannot decide whether two uttered forms are 'the same' or 'different'." (p. 77) and hence inevitably "phonology involves the consideration of meanings" (p. 78). Nevertheless, "linguistic study must always start from the phonetic form and not from the meaning" (p. 162).

Sapir was no less a structuralist than Bloomfield; indeed, papers such as Sapir (1925) and Sapir (1963 [1933]) probably did more to lay the foundations for structural linguistics in the United States than did Bloomfield's *Language*. In the opinion of Zellig Harris (1909–1992), one of the leading mid-century American linguists, "Sapir's greatest contribution to linguistics, and the feature most characteristic of his linguistic work, was [...] the patterning of data" (Harris 1951b, 292). Unlike Bloomfield, however, Sapir was not an empiricist. One has to describe him as more 'intuitive' than Bloomfield, whereby flashes of genius led him to a brilliant analysis of some linguistic phenomenon, but without some particular philosophy of science that gave that analysis a theoretical and methodological underpinning.[44] Sapir's bucking the empiricist tenor of the times and his untimely death at the age of fifty-five resulted in his having less influence than Bloomfield over the next generation of linguists.

The most influential tendency within American structural linguistics at mid-century followed Bloomfield's theoretical pronouncements, though often not his actual practice. Linguists customarily included in this group are Zellig Harris, George Trager (1906–1992), Bernard Bloch (1907–1965), Martin Joos (1907–1978), Henry Lee

---

44. Sapir and Bloomfield had deep respect for each other, but with certain reservations. Sapir admired Bloomfield's ability patiently to excerpt data and to file and collate slips until the pattern of the language emerged, but spoke deprecatingly of 'Bloomfield's sophomoric psychology'. Bloomfield was dazzled by Sapir's virtuosity and perhaps a bit jealous of it, but in matters outside of language referred to Sapir as a 'medicine man' (Jakobson 1979, 170).

Smith, Jr. (1913–1972), and (at least at as far as his earlier work is concerned) Charles Hockett (1916–2000).[45] Bloomfield's view of science, which members of this group adopted enthusiastically, pointed to linguistic descriptions that were essentially catalogues of observables and generalizations extractible from observables by a set of mechanical procedures: "The overall purpose of work in descriptive linguistics is to obtain a compact one-one representation of the stock of utterances in the corpus" (Harris 1951a, 366), that is, the requirement that all distinctive elements in a corpus be analyzed in the most efficient economical way. Given their subjective nature, informants' judgments were looked upon with suspicion, except perhaps for the judgment as to whether two words or utterances were 'the same' or 'different'. Analyses embodying underlying representations and derivations involving rule ordering were indeed mooted from time to time (see Swadesh & Voegelin 1939, Bloomfield 1939b, Wells 1949, and, for discussion, Newmeyer 2022, ch. 4), though they were never a popular view, given that they appeared to be incompatible with empiricist strictures. Charles Hockett wrote that he could not conceive of any meaning to 'ordering' but an historical one:

> If it be said that the English past-tense form *baked* is 'formed' from *bake* by a 'process' of 'suffixation', then no matter what disclaimer of historicity is made, it is impossible not to conclude that some kind of priority is being assigned to *bake*, as against either *baked* or the suffix. And if this priority is not historical, what is it? (Hockett 1954, 211)

For the most empiricist of the descriptivists, the idea was to arrive at a grammar of a language by performing a set of operations on a corpus of data, each successive operation being one step farther removed from the corpus. These operations, later called 'discovery

---

45. See Hymes & Fought (1981, 128; Murray 1983, 173; Hall 1987, 59; and Koerner 2002a) for an (often conflicting) breakdown of American structural linguists into various categories. The views of Hockett and many others evolved over the years, making it sometimes difficult to pigeonhole particular individuals as being in particular 'camps'.

procedures', aimed at the development of "formal procedures by which one can work from scratch to the complete description of the pattern of a language" (Hockett 1952a, 27). It followed then that the levels of a grammatical description had to be arrived at in the order: first, phonemics, then morphemics, then syntax, then discourse: "There is no circularity; no grammatical fact of any kind is used in making phonological analysis" (Hockett 1942, 20).[46] In actual practice, however, few if any linguists followed a set of (cumbersome) step-by-step procedures that were, in principle, necessary to arrive at a full grammar (for discussion, see Ryckman 1986, ch. 2). Rather, they presented analyses which, in retrospect examination, *could have been* arrived at by means of these procedures.[47]

The order of discovery of each level of the grammar was reflected, not surprisingly, in the number of publications devoted to each level. There were many more papers on phonemics than on morphemics, and many more on morphemics than on syntax or discourse. As Robert A. Hall, Jr. (1911–1997) explained: "Descriptive syntactic studies have also been rather rare; but, since they normally come at the end of one's analysis, the tendency is perhaps to hold them for incorporation into a more complete description" (Hall 1951–1952, 120).

Three groupings existed that were less influenced by a rigid empiricist methodology than the mainstream. One was made up of Sapir's students, most of whom were based at some distance from the American East Coast and were focused more on the description of indigenous languages than on debates about procedures. Morris

---

46. By the late 1940s it was widely recognized that phonemic analysis could be simplified by appeal to (higher level) morpheme and word boundaries. The problem was that while such boundaries were at times signaled phonetically (cf. *nitrate* and *night rate*), most of the time they were not (cf. *minus* and *slyness*). There was no general consensus on how to deal with this problem.

47. Appeals to meaning in phonemic analysis were commonplace: 'The basic assumptions that underlie phonemics, we believe, can be stated without any mention of mind and meaning; but meaning, at least, is so obviously useful as a shortcut in the investigation of phonemic structure — one might almost say, so inescapable — that any linguist who refused to employ it would be very largely wasting his time' (Bloch 1948, 5).

Swadesh (1909–1967), Mary Haas (1910–1996), Charles Voegelin (1906–1986), and Stanley Newman (1905–1984) were part of this group. Morris Swadesh, perhaps the most brilliant of Sapir's students, saw "the evidences of a struggle between realistic fact and mechanistic [i.e., Bloomfieldian – (FJN)] fetishism: particularly between the fact that meaning is an inseparable aspect of language, and the fetish that anything related to the mind must be ruled out of science" (Swadesh 1948, 254).

Others approached linguistics as a tool to aid missionary work, and included such linguists as Kenneth Pike (1912–2000), Eugene Nida (1914–2011), and William Wonderly (1916–1988). For these linguists practical concerns typically outweighed theoretical ones, as is illustrated by the subtitle of Pike's book *Phonemics*, namely *A Technique for Reducing Languages to Writing* (Pike 1947b). Pike and his followers had no compunction about 'mixing levels' in a grammatical analysis, that is, appealing to morphological and syntactic information to arrive at a phonemicization of a particular language.

By the 1950s, there was also a considerable presence of linguists who had been members of the Prague School or influenced by it, including Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), John Lotz (1913–1973), Thomas Sebeok (1915–2001), and Paul Garvin (1919–1994). Jakobson had arrived in the United States in 1941 as a refugee from Europe and within ten years he had built a significant American following. The Prague School linguists were rationalist in their epistemology and not loath to base formal analysis to an extent on semantic criteria.[48] They advocated constructs that were shunned by the more empiricist-minded Bloomfieldians, such as universal categories, binary distinctive features, and markedness distinctions.

Historical studies, and in particular those of Indo-European languages, were far more prominent then than they are today. To illustrate, in the 1949 volume of the journal *Language*, over half of the articles dealt with diachronic themes. The journalist H.L. Mencken (1880–1956) even complained that *Language* devoted more

---

48. The first three groups of linguists discussed, though not those identified with the Prague School, were often referred to as 'post-Bloomfieldians' or 'neo-Bloomfieldians'.

space to Hittite than to American English![49] For the most part, American-based historical linguists were practicing neogrammarians (as had been Sapir and Bloomfield themselves). In brief, the neo-grammarian position is that sound change is regular and operates on distinct classes of sounds (later called 'phonemes'):

> It can only be regarded as fortunate that the later work of wise and historically well-trained linguists like Hoenigswald of Pennsylvania, showed that neogrammarian formulations were closely similar to those of twentieth century structuralists, and that the consonant pattern of Grimm's law were a firm foundation for phonemic statement, instead of a merely happy intuition'. (Hill 1966, 4–5)

Furthermore, the positivist outlook of many leading linguists was deeply compatible with neogrammarian views, as well as the idea that one could make profound generalizations about language structure and history without taking into account the culture or other societal aspects of the speakers. Some descriptivists (including both Bloomfield and Sapir) applied neogrammarian assumptions to working out the historical development and genetic classification of the indigenous languages of the Americas.

The application of the results of linguistics to language teaching had been given a great impetus by the war (see Newmeyer 2022, ch. 1). By the early 1950s, American linguists had also started to branch out into subfields that had received very little attention in earlier years, such as sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (two terms that had been coined in the 1930s, but were only just beginning to pass into current use), as well as information theory, discourse analysis, and translation theory (for discussion, see Carroll 1953 and Hamp 1961).

---

49. The full Mencken quote is somewhat off-topic, but amusing enough to merit reprinting: "[T]he Linguistic Society has given a great deal more attention to Hittite and other such fossil tongues than to the American spoken by 140,000,000-odd free, idealistic and more or less human Americans, including all the philologians themselves, at least when they are in their cups or otherwise off guard" (Mencken 1948, 336).

3. The early American linguists' debt to Europe

Many American linguists in the 1920s and 1930 had European backgrounds (§3.1), and there were particular ties to the Prague School (§3.2) and the Geneva School and other linguists based in Switzerland (§3.3).

3.1 The European background of many American linguists

Until the mid-1930s or so, there was nothing particularly distinctive about American linguistics, as opposed to European linguistics. It is true that major figures in American linguistics, such as Boas, Sapir, and Bloomfield, were strongly focused on Amerindian languages,

Year	President	Born	Studied
1925	Hermann Collitz	Germany	Germany
1926	Maurice Bloomfield	Austria-Hungary	USA
1927	Carl Darling Buck	USA	USA, Greece, Germany
1928	Franz Boas	Germany	Germany
1929	Charles H. Grandgent	USA	USA
1930	Eduard Prokosch	Austria-Hungary	Austria-Hungary
1931	Edgar H. Sturtevant	USA	USA
1932	George Melville Bolling	USA	USA
1933	Edward Sapir	Germany	USA
1934	Franklin Edgerton	USA	USA, Germany
1935	Leonard Bloomfield	USA	USA, Germany
1936	George T. Flom	USA	USA, Denmark, Germany

Table 1: The European background of the first LSA presidents

but then, so were many Europeans.[50] In fact, all three linguists had strong European connections: The first two-named were born in Europe, and Bloomfield had been a student there. Indeed, as Table 1 illustrates, of the first twelve presidents of the LSA, nine had either been born in Europe or had spent some university time there:

Of the seven members of the LSA Executive Committee in 1936, five had studied in Europe: President George Flom (1871–1960; Copenhagen and Leipzig), Vice President Harold H. Bender (1882–1951; Berlin), Secretary and Treasurer Roland G. Kent (1877–1952; Berlin and Munich), Executive Committee Member Samuel E. Basset (1873–1936; Athens), and Executive Committee Member Albrecht Goetze (1876–1946; Munich and Heidelberg).[51]

3.2 American linguists and the early Prague School

Perhaps the most influential school of European structuralists was the Prague Linguistic Circle, known more often in English as the 'Prague School'. Its founders in 1926 included the distinguished linguists Roman Jakobson, Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1891–1938), and Vilém Mathesius (1882–1945), who was its first president. The former two were pioneers in structuralist phonological studies, the latter in functionally-oriented syntax. In April 1928 at the First International Congress of Linguists held in The Hague, the Prague linguists introduced a 'manifesto' outlining the tasks of phonology:

(1) To identify the characteristics of particular phonological systems, in terms of the language-particular range of significant differences; (2) To specify the types of such differences that can be found in general, and in particular to identify 'correlations', or recurrent

---

50. The supposed lack of interest on the part of European linguists in American indigenous languages has been greatly exaggerated. In 1924, the 21st International Congress of Americanists was held in two parts, in The Hague and in Göteborg. The organizers of the first part were all Dutch, and Americans were a fairly small part of the attendees. In fact, between the first Congress (in 1875 in Nancy) and 27th (in 1939 in Mexico City and Lima) only three were held in the United States.

51. Editor of *Language* George M. Bolling (1871–1963) completed all of his studies in the United States, but was awarded the gold cross of the Knights of the Redeemer by the Greek government in 1920 for his Homeric research (Hoenigswald 1964, 329).

differences that serve to characterize multiple pairs of elements (as e.g. voicing separates p from b, t from d, etc.); (3) To formulate general laws governing the relations of these correlations to one another within particular phonological systems; (4) To account for phonological change in terms of the phonological system (rather than the individual sound) that undergoes it, and especially to construe such changes as teleologically governed by considerations of the system; (5) To found phonetic studies on acoustic rather than an articulatory basis. Wording aside, this was a remarkably modern document (viewed from today's standpoint), going well beyond what American structuralists had specified in the late 1920s.

Taking into account the difficulties of inter-continental communications at the time, relations between early American structuralists and their Prague colleagues were cordial. Roman Jakobson has written:

> From the beginning there was a close connection between the Linguistic Society of America and the Prague Linguistic Circle. [...] N.S. Trubetzkoy's letters (Jakobson 1975) reveal some new data on the manifold ties between American linguists and the 'école de Prague'. At the end of 1931, Trubetzkoy, at that time immersed in the study of American Indian languages, emphasized that "most of the American Indianists perfectly describe the sound systems, so that their outlines yield all of the essentials for the phonological characteristics of any given language [...]". Trubetzkoy had a very high opinion of the American linguist whom he called 'my Leipzig comrade'. This was Leonard Bloomfield, who in 1913 shared a bench with Trubetzkoy and Lucien Tesnière [1893–1954] at Leskien's and Brugmann's lectures. Bloomfield (Hockett 1970, 247) praised "Trubetzkoy's excellent article on vowel systems" of 1929 and devoted his sagacious 1939 study on 'Menomini Morphophonemics' (Hockett 1970, 351–362) to N.S. Trubetzkoy's memory. (Jakobson 1979, 162)

Furthermore, Robert A. Hall, Jr. notes that George Trager addressed the Yale Linguistics Club in the early 1940s on various Prague School concepts and recalls overhearing the Americans Clarence E. Parmenter (1888–1982), a phonetician, and Manuel J. Andrade (1885–1941), an anthropological linguist, discuss the Prague concept of the phoneme in 1936 (Hall 1991, 160–161).

3.3 American linguists and the early Geneva School and Swiss linguists in general[52]

Switzerland is of particular interest because it was the home base of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), generally acknowledged as the major inspiration for structuralist studies of language. His posthumous *Cours de Linguistique Générale* had been published in 1916 (Saussure 1916) and by a decade later was being heralded as a landmark work of linguistic theory, at least in Europe. Saussure's colleagues and their students had established a major school of linguistics in Geneva (henceforth the 'Geneva School') and, elsewhere in Switzerland, linguistics was thriving as well.[53] The question is to what extent Swiss linguistic research was of interest to scholars in the United States. This question is in part addressed in a noteworthy historiographical study by Julia Falk (Falk 2004), in which the author documents the lack of impact that Saussure's book had among American researchers. While it is not my intention to dispute any of Falk's findings, one might be tempted, after reading her paper, to draw the conclusion that the work of the Geneva School was either unknown to or ignored by American practitioners. What follows is a corrective to that possible conclusion. Without wishing to exaggerate American interest, I show below that there was regular notice taken of the work of the Geneva School by American linguists in the interwar period.

A broader question also arises that is not addressed in the Falk paper: To what extent was Swiss linguistics *in general* of interest to American scholars in that time period. This question is complicated by the fact that there was not then, nor is there now, a homogenous school of linguistics in Switzerland, with uniform goals and methodologies. The linguists of Geneva did not have a great deal of contact with their co-federationists to the east. In the pe-

---

52. A much more detailed version of this section has been published as Newmeyer (2015).

53. For simplicity of exposition, I include the work of Saussure himself as part of the output of the 'Geneva School', even though the term was not coined (as far as I know) until after his death.

riod under consideration, French-speaking linguists in Switzerland were best known for their grammatical and stylistic studies, while German-speaking linguists built their reputation primarily around historical linguistics and dialectology. However, I need to stress that I use the terms 'Swiss linguists' and 'Swiss linguistics' in a purely national and geographical sense, not as a reference to a particular approach to the study of language. I hope to illustrate below that there was a remarkable degree of recognition accorded to Swiss linguists by their American counterparts.

Let us begin by re-examining Falk (2004). As we have seen, the two most important American linguistic theorists in the interwar period were Edward Sapir and Leonard Bloomfield. As Falk points out, "there is no evidence that Sapir was directly influenced by the *Cours*; he certainly never cited it in his work" (2004, 110). Nor, as far as I have been able to determine, did he cite any Geneva school linguists. Bloomfield, on the other hand, referred to the *Cours* on a number of occasions and even reviewed its second edition (though, again, there appear to be no citations to the work of other members of the Geneva School). One of Bloomfield's first references to the *Cours* was highly positive. In a review of Sapir (1921), Bloomfield (1924, 143) remarked that the *Cours* is a book "which gives a theoretic foundation to the newer trend of linguistic study, [...] in which restriction to historical work is [considered] unreasonable and, in the long run, methodologically impossible". However, as Falk notes, Bloomfield's review of the *Cours* was less inclined to attribute complete originality to the ideas expressed there:

> Bloomfield [in *An Introduction to the Study of Language* = Bloomfield 1914] wrote of the 'social character of language' and noted that a speech utterance "depends for its form entirely on the habits of the speaker, which he shares with the speech community. These habits are in a sense arbitrary, differing for the different communities [...]" (Bloomfield 1914, 17, 81–82). It should come as no surprise, then, that when Bloomfield reviewed the second edition of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* in 1924, he was to say: "Most of what the author says has long been 'in the air' and has been here and there fragmentarily expressed (Bloomfield 1924, 318)". (Falk 2004, 108)

Falk then points out that this "seems to be the only review of the *Cours* published in any American journal until new editions were prepared in the second half of the twentieth century" (p. 109). She goes on:

> Bloomfield admired Saussure and on several occasions referred his readers to the *Cours*, but he did not adopt Saussurean terms. He viewed most basic Saussurean concepts as ideas that had been set forth by other, earlier scholars' (p. 111). Despite the above, in a postcard dated 15 January 1945 to J Milton Cowan (1907–1993), the Secretary-Treasurer of the LSA between 1941 and 1950, Bloomfield wrote that "[t]here is a statement going round that de Saussure is not mentioned in my *Language* text book (which reflects his *Cours* on every page)" (Cowan 1987, 29).[54]

Finally, Falk is certainly correct when she writes that "as in Bloomfield's own work after 1933 [the leading American linguists of the 1930s] rarely, if ever referred to Saussure or the *Cours*" (p. 112). In fact, Charles Hockett, arguably the most important American linguist between Bloomfield and Noam Chomsky, wrote to Falk that he "didn't read the *Cours* until after [he] retired from Cornell in 1982 [...]" (quoted in Koerner 2002b, 10).

Falk's claims are in need of a bit of nuancing, however. The most important American-written introduction to general linguistics in our time period, after Bloomfield's *Language* (Bloomfield 1933), was Louis H. Gray's *Foundations of Language* (Gray 1939). Gray (1875–1955), one of the preeminent Indo-Europeanists of the period, served as LSA President in 1938. In their lengthy review of this book, Zellig S. Harris and Donald C. Swanson (1914–*post* 1967) noted that "Gray speaks of three aspects of language (pp. 15–18), basing himself on the langue-parole dichotomy of de Saussure and many Continental linguists" (Harris & Swanson 1940. 228). Some years earlier, in the *American Journal of Philology*, Gray had written in a review of Louis Hjelmslev's (1899–1965) *Principes de grammaire générale* (Hjelmslev 1928) that "Adhering in general to the prin-

---

54. See Joseph 2019 for compelling arguments that Bloomfield's remark was not intended to be interpreted ironically.

ciples so brilliantly enunciated by the Franco-Swiss school of de
Saussure and his followers, M. Hjelmslev has not only summarized
everything of importance that had previously appeared upon his
theme, but has made a very appreciable advance" (Gray 1931, 77).
The same issue of *Language* in which the review of Gray appeared
saw a review by Holmes (Holmes 1940) of *Mélanges Bally* (Faculté des
lettres de l'Université de Genève 1939). His wording suggests that
the readers of *Language* had at least basic familiarity with Geneva
School contributions.

In fact, there were no fewer than 25 articles and reviews in *Language* between 1925 and 1940 that referred to Saussure. The majority
concerned his contributions to historical linguistics, but more than a
few noted the *langue-parole* distinction and other dichotomies found
in the *Cours*. Saussure's synchronic work was cited in other American journals of language-related study from the period, including,
as noted above, *American Journal of Philology*, and also *International
Journal of American Linguistics* (Uhlenbeck 1927), *Modern Language
Journal* (Bloomfield 1924, Zipf 1938), and *Modern Philology* (Field
1927). Other members of the Geneva School were not ignored in
Language. For example, Henri Frei's (1899–1980) *La grammaire des
fautes* (Frei 1929) was given a highly positive review by Reinhold Eugene Saleski (1890–1971) (cfr. Saleski 1930). Saleski informed readers
that "the Geneva School (de Saussure, Brunot, Bally, Sechehaye)
is interested not in the history of language as such but in the value
of language to the individual speaker and hearer and no doubt to
the society concerned" (p. 91).

Charles Bally (1865–1947) also received a mention in an article by
Urban T. Holmes (Holmes 1931). Holmes (1900–1972) was Professor
of Romance Philology at the University of North Carolina and was
later to become a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur. He wrote that
"Charles Bally is not concerned with historical, only with psychological syntax, but he calls attention to a 'mentalité européenne'
which would account for many resemblances [between Old French
and Germanic]" (p. 195).

The fact that many American linguists had European backgrounds facilitated the transmission of ideas developed by European
linguists to their New World counterparts. As one example, Alfred

Senn (1899–1978), who served on the LSA Executive Committee in 1939, was born in Switzerland and early in his career taught at the University of Lithuania, where he built a reputation as the world's leading Lithuanian dialectologist.[55] Senn moved to the United States in 1930. Given his Swiss roots it is not surprising to find an article written by him in a major American journal that begins with a reference to a member of the Geneva School (Senn 1937, 501).

We now turn to the significant degree of recognition accorded to Swiss linguists in the interwar period by the LSA. The highest recognition that the Society can give to a foreign scholar is that of 'Honorary Member'. Of the six chosen at the first election, two were Swiss. One was the Indo-Europeanist Jakob Wackernagel (1853–1938), who was born, spent most of his career, and died, in Basel. The other, Albert Debrunner (1884–1958), was also an Indo-Europeanist. He too was born in Basel and at the time of his election was a professor at Jena in Germany. However, he returned to his native country in 1935, teaching in Bern until his 1954 retirement. In 1936, the Indogermanische Gesellschaft, headed by Debrunner, was named an 'Associated Society' of the LSA. The only other society at the time to have received such recognition was the Société Linguistique de Paris.

The Second International Congress of Linguists (ICL) was held in Geneva from August 25th to August 29th, 1931. For the LSA and its members it was an important event. The Society was represented by three delegates: George M. Bolling, Carl D. Buck, and Franklin Edgerton (1885–1963; LSA President in 1934). Seven other members made the time-consuming trans-Atlantic journey: Kemp Malone (1889–1971; LSA President in 1944), Earle Brownell Babcock (1881–1935), David Simon Blondheim (1884–1934), William Edward Collinson (1889–1969), Sanki Ichikawa (1886–1970), Ephraim Cross (1893–1978), and a certain August Gunther.

Swiss linguists also played an important role in the 1931 LSA-sponsored Linguistic Institute, where Swiss dialectologists Jakob Jud (1882–1952) and Paul Scheuermeier (1888–1973) offered a course on the preparation of linguistic atlases. Another Swiss linguist on

---

55. In 1930 the University of Lithuania was renamed 'Vytautas Magnus University'.

the faculty at that Institute was Alfred Senn (see above), who gave courses entitled 'Church Slavonic' and 'Comparative Grammar of the Baltic Languages'. At the 1930 Institute he had been 'Docent in Indo-European Linguistics' (*LSAB* 6, 1930, 9) and at the 1931 Institute both he and Jud gave evening public lectures (*LSAB* 8, 1932, 15).

4. The American structuralists' turn away from Europe

By the early 1940s, American structural linguists had, by and large, stopped looking to Europe for intellectual inspiration. Contributing factors were the American structuralists' view of science (§4.1) and the effects of the Second World War (§4.2).

4.1 The American structuralists' view of science and its consequences

By the early 1940s, American structuralists had turned sour on the work of their European counterparts. As Einar Haugen (1906–1994) put it: "During the first quarter century of the LSA, there was a strong drift away from the European moorings" (Haugen 1979, 1). The main reason, at least at first, was the increasingly positivistic outlook of the former, leading to greater and greater divergence between the Americans and the Europeans. Never beholden to empiricist methodological constraints, the linguists of the Prague School, in particular Roman Jakobson, were developing an approach that had no reservations about hypothesizing any number of abstract constructs. They also laid the groundwork for functionalist approaches to language with the concept of 'functional sentence perspective'. To American linguists at the time all of this seemed hopelessly fuzzy. Years later, Joseph Greenberg (1915–2001) wrote:

> To a neophyte like me, American structural linguistics with its claims to rigorous scientific methodology and definitions of basic units of language without recourse to meaning, was naturally enough, enormously impressive. In contrast, Prague linguistics seemed impressionistic and lacking in scientific rigor. (Greenberg 1994, 22)

Not all of Prague linguistics was "lacking in scientific rigor", by any imaginable standards. After all, acoustic phonetic research was high on their agenda. But:

> Even the most patently 'scientific' (because highly technological) aspect of Jakobson's position – the appeal to data from acoustic research, which had progressed greatly by the end of the 1940s – was widely considered illicit [by Americans]. This was because of the use he made of it: in proposing a universal system of phonological description founded on properties that could be defined independent of particular languages, Jakobson threatened the position of presuppositionless, fundamentally agnostic analysis that many believed was essential to objective linguistic description. (Anderson 2021, 138)

But there was more to the American isolationism with respect to Europe than differing views of science (and, of course, the general isolationism that characterized America at the time). American linguists felt that they *didn't need* Europe, because they had worked out the basic principles of structural linguistics on their own:

> We do not know when the close-knit membership of the LSA – inhospitable to European theory – began to realize that Bloomfield had given them a wholly American and wholly explicit linguistic theory. We do, however, know that they could talk about nothing else at the half dozen Linguistic Institutes preceding World War II; and, more importantly, they could talk to Bloomfield who was present at every one of these LIs. (Voegelin & Voegelin 1963, 20)

American structuralists were baffled by what seemed to them as an almost mystical European obsession with the *langue-parole* distinction. To the Americans, *langue* was no more than the result of the set of operations that might be performed on *parole*, and therefore not of special interest:

> The separatism we are discussing [between US and European linguistics] dates from the spread of Saussure's influence in Europe, which was not matched in this country. For this there is a simple reason: we

had our own giants, Boas, Sapir, and Bloomfield (Hockett 1952b, 86). Newer European contributions have been read with little sympathy and less understanding (p. 90) [...] The outstanding example [are debates over] the *langue* and *parole* problem. [...] The average American linguist is either unimpressed or else actively repelled [...] (Hockett 1952b, 90)

Hockett went on: "[t]he terms 'language' and 'speech' can well enough be used: 'speech' is behavior, 'language' is habits. Perhaps, indeed, this is what Saussure meant – but if not, it is what we should mean when *we* use the terms at all" (p. 99; emphasis in original).

It is true that some European linguists attempted to minimize the differences in world view between the Americans and the Europeans at that time. For example, the Geneva School linguist Robert Godel (1902–1984) wrote that there is "no reason to contrast 'Saussurean linguistics' with 'American linguistics'" (Godel 1966, 480). I tend to agree with the following rebuke to Godel: "Intellectual influence and a common ground there certainly is, but there has also been conscious opposition. A contemporary observer, Harold Whitehall (1905–1986), referred to '[...] the depressing and sometimes hysterical conflict between the 'Americanist' and 'Prague' schools [...]' (Whitehall 1944, 675)" (Hymes & Fought 1981, 14).

By the mid-1940s, "It can almost be said that there was no desire to know Europeans. The Americans had been hurt in their pride by the European supremacy in certain domains. The world being split in two by the war, they took advantage of the opportunity to ignore for years the existence of European thinking and to assert their independence from Europe" (Martinet 1974, 222). Along these lines, Martinet offered the opinion:

The Americans obstructed everything; they were very happy that there was a war that prevented the Europeans from coming and pestering them. One must say that the Europeans in America were insufferable; they arrived and they considered the Americans wretched, and the Americans were understandably not happy about that. They were very happy to be free from the Europeans, from European pressure. There were all these émigrés, in general European Jews, Germans, who had

every reason to get out. (quoted from an interview in Chevalier and Encrevé 2006, 57–58)[56]

The anti-European feeling among American structuralists accelerated with Bernard Bloch taking over the editorship of *Language* in 1940. Bloch's editorial practice was to favor American-style (post-Bloomfieldian) structuralism and neogrammarian historical linguistics over alternative approaches, in particular those emanating from Europe. Roman Jakobson submitted two papers to *Language* and both were rejected. In 1940, when he was in exile in Sweden, he sent Bloch an article entitled "Les lois phoniques du langage enfantin et leur place dans la linguistique générale". Bloch's 3 x 5 note card on the submission reads as follows:

> Rec. 17 Dec. 40 (via Sergius Yakobson, c/o Dr. Friedland, Woodbine, N.J.). – Not a member – Read 4 Jan 41: utter drivel! Sent to G.L. Trager same day, with letter q.v. – Trager concurs fully: balderdash; E.H. Sturtevant suggests that I return the MS with a general statement that it is not according to the taste of the American Public. – MS back 14 Jan. – Returned 19 Jan. (LSAA)

This paper was a shorter version of what was to become his celebrated book *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze* (Jakobson 1941), a pioneering work that attempted to relate child language, speech disorders, and principles of phonology. And a few years later, "Bloch had rejected an article about poetry (written by Jakobson) insisting that such poetic study was not within the science of language' (Pike 1994, 39–40).[57] In fact, no article by Ja-

---

56. In the original French: "Les Américains bloquaient tout; ils étaient contents d'avoir une guerre qui empêchait les Européens de venir leur casser les pieds. Il faut dire que les Européens en Amérique étaient insupportables; ils arrivaient, il considéraient les Américains comme de pauvers types; et les Américains n'étaient pas contents, à juste titre. Ils étaient très contents d'être libérés des Européens, de la pression européenne. Il y avait tous ces émigrés, en general des Juifs européens, allemands, qui avaient toutes sortes de raisons de s'en aller de chez eux."

57. However, no submission meeting this description appears on any of Bloch's 3 X 5 cards. Perhaps Bloch discouraged Jakobson from even sending the paper to him.

kobson appeared in *Language* until 1966, the year William O. Bright (1928–2006) took over as editor.

Reviews of European work continued to appear in *Language*, but they were overwhelmingly negative. For example, Zellig Harris in 1941 reviewed Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge der Phonologie* and wrote

> The Prague School terminology […] has two dangers: First it gives the impression that there are two objects of possible investigation, the Sprechakt (speech) and the Sprachgebilde (language structure), whereas the latter is merely the scientific arrangement of the former'. (Harris 1941, 345)

That same year George Trager reviewed Louis Hjelmslev's *La catégorie des cas* and wrote that he couldn't understand what a "general category of case might be", since his operationalist methodology wouldn't allow the idea of any universal categories (Trager 1941, 172).

Even Leonard Bloomfield, who, along with other American linguists of his generation, tended to respect European scholarship, could not help making a thinly-veiled barb at the European practice of forming 'schools' of thought:

> It may not be altogether wrong to say that the existence of the Linguistic Society has saved us from the blight of the odium theologicum and the postulation of 'schools'. When several American linguists find themselves sharing some interest or opinion, they do not make it into a King Charles's head, proclaiming themselves a 'school' and denouncing all persons who disagree or who merely choose to talk about something else. (Bloomfield 1946, 3)

Hockett (1952b) agreed, claiming that no American journal could conceivably be called the "Leonard Bloomfield Bulletin", analogously to the Swiss publication *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*. I can easily imagine the outrage among European structuralists on reading these assertions by Bloomfield and Hockett. In their eyes their American colleagues were far more dogmatic and closed-minded than they were.

Negative attitudes toward European scholarship in general continued to be expressed until well into the 1950s, as the following quotations illustrate:

> [...] socially biased value judgments which European scholarship has inherited from the aristocratic, theological background of mediaeval and Renaissance intellectualism. (Hall 1946, 33–34)[58]
>
> Thus we hear the term *scientific* applied to unprovable speculation; e.g. "[...], to much of European structural studies (with their concepts of neutralization in their analyses of concepts of cases)" (Smith 1950, 5).
>
> [This book] exhibits the usual kind of European philosophizing on the basis of insufficient evidence. (Trager 1950, 100)

As one further sign of the changing times, as mentioned in section 3.1, in 1936 five of the seven LSA Executive Committee had been born in Europe and five had studied there. There were eight members of the Executive Committee in 1946. Not a single one was either born in Europe or had studied there.

4.2 The Second World War and the two-dollar bill conspiracy

Refugee scholars from Europe started arriving in the United States in the 1930s, an influx which continued after the outbreak of the war. Their arrival had short term effects, which were largely negative in terms of the relationships between American and European linguists. At first, American academics saw the Europeans as a threat to their own well-being:

> However, the strong anti-European feeling of many American linguists in the 1930s and 1940s had its main roots in often-times bitter personal experiences. Not a few young Americans saw, and frequently more than once, positions (for which they had been trained and were eminently qualified) snatched from under their noses and given to European refugees. Such a reaction, though by no means generous, was easily un-

---

58. In a reply to Hall, Leo Spitzer (1887–1960) accused Hall of wanting to set up an 'Academic FBI' (Spitzer 1946, 499).

derstandable in the days of the depression when any job at all was hard to come by, especially since American scholars, then as now, were not protected by citizenship requirements of the kind prevailing in virtually all European university systems. A frequent remark heard from [many leading American linguists] was "We'll show those Europeans we have something they never dreamed of". (Hall 1969, 194)

A few years later, Jakobson strongly rebuked Hall:

> Bloomfield particularly despised chauvinistic protectionists, who launched quasi-ideological arguments in order to repress the competition of foreign linguistics and to gain for native Americans academic positions which might otherwise be "snatched from under their noses and given to European refugees" as was so bluntly avowed by Robert A. Hall, Jr. in order to justify "the strong anti-European feeling" of his comrades. (Jakobson 1973, 17–18)

Allan Walker Read (1906–2002) was later to write that "We felt that we were carrying on an American-based linguistics and were not cordial to the intrusion of certain refugee scholars. This was resented by some of them, who felt that they were superior to American scholarship. Especially difficult to deal with was Roman Jakobson, who seemed to us at that time to be overbearing and self-aggrandizing" (Read 1991, 282).

Jakobson's arrival in New York City in 1941 triggered the most despicable incident in the history of American linguistics, namely 'the two-dollar bill conspiracy'. John Kepke (1891–1965), a minor figure in American linguistics, was one of the linguists based at 165 Broadway in New York at the Language Section of the United States War Department. The task of this group was to prepare instructional materials in languages that were deemed vital to the war effort. Kepke passed around some two-dollar bills to his colleagues there, that banknote having long been considered to bring about bad luck to the bearer.

> The two dollars were to be a contribution towards paying the fare of Jakobson and the others back to Europe on the first cattle boat *after the*

war was over. Kepke went around the office with the two-dollar-bill, but without great success. I refused to sign it, and no-one in the 'Reverse English' section was willing to do so, nor (as far as I can gather) were many others outside of Kepke's small clique. When I saw the bill, it had perhaps five or six names on it. This was in reality a minor office prank, in extremely bad taste, and not representing the attitude of the 165 Broadway linguists as a group. […] [H]owever, it contributed to intensified ill feeling on the part of Jakobson and his followers. (Hall 1991, 162; emphasis in original)

One of the signers on the two-dollar-bill was Charles Hockett. He attempted to justify his signing in the following way:

In after-hour bar sessions and evening get-togethers of our group, the resentment [against Jakobson and other émigré scholars] came to be concretized, some time early in 1943, in the form of a two-dollar bill club. Each 'member' had a two-dollar bill, on which all 'members' signed their names; the avowed 'purpose' was to pay for Jakobson's return to Europe on the first available cattle boat. I should not really have to add that all of this was intended purely for internal consumption. It was a metaphor designed as a basis for communion and mutual commiseration. Anyone in the group would have stood aghast at the notion of really delivering anyone into the clutches of the Nazis. That was so obvious to all of us that it never had to be said. I will not name 'members' of the club other than myself (most of the others are dead by now). […] To the best of my belief, neither our 165 Broadway group nor anyone of those in or close to it was at any time in any position either to promote Jakobson's search for a decent academic appointment in this country or to stand in the way of such an appointment. (Hockett to Morris Halle, 22 February 1989; TSA)

Thomas Sebeok was cc'ed on Hockett's letter to Halle. In a reply to Hockett, after dismissing the latter's outrage at various interpretations of forty-five-year-old events in the field, Sebeok concluded his letter by writing: "Where was your moral indignation when you, in the uniform of the U.S. Army, signed John Kepke's notorious 'two-dollar bill'?" (Sebeok to Hockett, 3 March 1989; TSA). Another signatory of the two-dollar bill was Norman McQuown (1914–2005): "Michael Silverstein, of the University of Chicago, in an email mes-

sage (of 28 February 2004) referring to Hall's 'lurid details of the $2.00-note incident,' added that 'Norman McQuown showed the artefact around our Monday lunch table some years back, by the way; it's the genuine article'." (Dixon 2007. 439).

5. European views of American linguistics

An interesting question is what European linguists thought about what was going on in the United States during the heyday of American structuralism. If we are talking about the period up to about 1950, the answer is "probably not much, though there are conflicting views on the question". In the 1930s and 1940s citations in European work to American structuralism were few and far between and were mostly references in passing to Sapir and Bloomfield. Koerner (1984, xxi), for example, is aware of only three European reviews of Sapir's *Language*. Charles Bally, a leading member of the Geneva School, first published his *Linguistique générale et linguistique française* in 1932, though revised editions kept appearing until the late 1940s (see, for example, Bally 1965 [1932]). Even in the later editions, no American linguists are mentioned. Hall (1951–1952) asserted that Bloomfield was not just unknown, but also untranslated in Europe. This assertion is reinforced by the comment that "Jakobson thinks that Trubetzkoy probably never read Bloomfield's *Language*; he did not read it himself before coming to America" (cited as a personal communication in Kilbury 1976, 126).

On the other hand, Eramian (1988) has documented at length the considerable degree to which the Prague School linguists were familiar with the work of Edward Sapir. For example, as early as 1926 Vilém Mathesius wrote approvingly of Sapir's 'Sound patterns in language' paper (Sapir 1925), noting Sapir's "theory about the special grouping of sounds which is individual for each language and which depends not on their phonetic similarity, but on their function in a given language" (Mathesius 1926, 39). Trubetzkoy maintained a lengthy and productive correspondence with Sapir, though most letters have unfortunately not been preserved. However, some appear in Jakobson (1975), where the deep respect that the two linguists had for each other is made evident.

By and large European linguists were dismissive of the post-Bloomfieldian zeal for attempting to construct theories of grammar where meaning was considered peripheral, if it was considered at all. Zellig Harris, in particular, was the subject of scorn. The following passage from a historiography of linguistics conveys a very typical European sentiment:

> Some American linguists on the other hand have gone much further and indulged in speculations that are divorced from reality. The analytic method of Z.S. Harris for example is a logico-mathematical construction lacking firm foundation. He deliberately restricted his research to questions of distribution, [...] thereby eliminating the meaning of words from his analysis, as B. Bloch and G. Trager had done before him. One wonders what happens, with this purely mechanical procedure, when the criterion of distribution is considered to be the only relevant one, to the expressive, stylistic, and other variants that are of prime importance in communication amongst human beings. (Leroy 1967 [1963], 80)

But little by little 'international relations' among linguists began to change. A watershed event in 'European-American relations' was the publication of Roman Jakobson's 'Russian conjugation' paper in 1948 (Jakobson 1971 [1948]). His debt to Bloomfield is explicit throughout the paper. For example:

> In the stimulating chapter 'Morphology' of Bloomfield's *Language*, the way has been indicated: "When forms are partially similar, there may be a question as to which one we had better take as the underlying form, and ... the structure of the language may decide this question for us, since, taking it one way, we get an unduly complicated description, and, taking it the other way, a relatively simple one" (13.9). Following Bloomfield's suggestions, we would say that "the simple and natural description is to take as a starting-point" the non-truncated stem from which we can easily infer the truncated alternant as well as the use of each. If, on the contrary, we took the truncated stem as our basic form, we would be unable to predict the corresponding full-stem and we "would have to show by elaborate lists" what phonemes are added. (Jakobson 1971 [1948], 166–167).

Jakobson's 'Russian conjugation' paper, like Bloomfield's 'Menomini morphophonemics' (Bloomfield 1939b), presents a set of rules mapping a morphophonemic representation onto a phonemic one, although unlike in Bloomfield's, no special morphophonemic elements are posited. Jakobson derives most of the superficial complexity of the Russian conjugation system by positing a single underlying stem for each verb along with a set of rules that allow each surface stem and desinence to be derived. Jakobson's endeavor was a more modest one than Bloomfield's in two crucial respects. While Bloomfield posited rules *for the Menomini language,* Jakobson's were focused on a circumscribed subpart of Russian. As a result, he did not state them with full generality. For example, several rules that he discusses, such as the vowel / zero alternation, substantive softening, and bare softening, occur elsewhere in Russian, yet they are stated in their verbal environments only. Furthermore, 'Russian conjugation' lacks the attention to rule ordering of 'Menomini morphophonemics'. There are instances, for example, of one rule being presented after another, even though the correct derivation demands its prior application.

   The most noteworthy feature of 'Russian conjugation', from the point of view of linguistic historiography, is its 'un-Jakobsonianness'.[59] For one thing, Jakobson seems to have had in general little interest in morphophonemics, and when he did treat such phenomena it was as a subpart of morphology. Only in his work on Gilyak (Jakobson 1971a [1957]) do we find anything resembling the rule-centered analysis presented in 'Russian conjugation'. Jakobson had little interest in rule systems in general – to him, categories and their contrasts were paramount in language. The indirect evidence points to Jakobson not considering the paper very important. While it triggered a dozen imitations from his students – one for each Slavic language – Jakobson himself gave the paper only a couple of brief published references in the remaining 34 years of his career. Jakobson's own student, Michael Shapiro, felt the need to criticize the paper for ignoring the principles that he had learned from his teacher. Shapiro

---

59. An overview of the history of morphophonemic theory states that the Russian conjugation paper 'is not properly Jakobsonian' (Kilbury 1976, 127).

condemned 'Russian conjugation' for valuing "descriptive economy [as] a legitimate surrogate for explanation" (Shapiro 1974, 31).

It is worth asking why Jakobson wrote the 'Russian conjugation' paper. Halle 1988 suggests that it arose from discussions that Jakobson carried on with Bloomfield between 1944 and 1946. Jakobson was impressed with Bloomfield's *Spoken Russian* text, produced for the war effort (Lesnin, Petrova & Bloomfield 1945), and suggested that the two collaborate on a Russian grammar. Bloomfield was constantly in contact with Jakobson for comments, suggestions and examples. He tried hard to get Jakobson to write a descriptive grammar of Russian, perhaps in part to help establish credentials that would get him a job. While the grammar never materialized, the 'Russian conjugation' paper shows the unmistakable imprint of Bloomfield's influence. Bloomfield is the only linguist Jakobson refers to in the paper (other than himself).

Given that the paper grew out of the idea of a pedagogical grammar of Russian, it is not surprising that its goals seem more applied than theoretical. This interpretation seems to be supported by Jakobson's remarks in the conclusion. Rather than summarizing its theoretical import, he focuses entirely on the paper's relevance for pedagogy. The paper concludes: "The rules formulated above allow the student [...] to deduce [the] whole conjugation pattern [...]. And these rules could be presented in a popular form for teaching purposes' (162–163).

By the 1950s, European knowledge of (if not approval of) American work had grown by leaps and bounds. The British phonetician-phonologist Daniel Jones (1881–1967) in his overview of work on the nature of the phoneme (Jones 1950) showed himself to be quite knowledgeable about American contributions, while Jean Cantineau (1952) gave a very extensive survey of American structuralist research. The encyclopedic overview of structuralism by André Martinet asserted that "It is interesting to note that, in spite of profound theoretical divergences. There is a considerable amount of practical agreement among structuralists, [...]" (Martinet 1953, 575), and took the position that the three major structuralist schools were located in Prague, Yale (the home base of Bernard Bloch and many others), and Copenhagen.

The leading British linguist in this period was J.R. Firth (1890–1960). His collected papers from 1934 to 1951 (Firth 1957) contain only scattered references to American work. He was critical of both Sapir's and Bloomfield's approach to meaning and of the latter's behaviorism. He saw American linguistics as developing out of the need to study indigenous languages and mentioned "Boas, Sapir, Hoijer, and others" for their Amerindian work (p. 172). The Swedish structuralist Bertil Malmerg (1913–1994) discussed the internal diversity within American structuralism (Malmberg 1964 [1959]), and the Dutch structuralist E.M. Uhlenbeck (1913–2003) castigated Martin Joos for not giving any space in his edited volume (Joos 1957) to the less positivist approaches within American linguistics (Uhlenbeck 1959). Finally, the Danish linguist Knud Togeby (1918–1974) cited American work extensively in his *Structure immanente de la langue française* (Togeby 1965 [1951]).

Each of the European structuralist schools had its own journal or one that it published in regularly, including *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* (1929–1939; Prague), *Acta Linguistica* (1939-present; Copenhagen – now *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*), *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* (1941-present; Geneva), *Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris* (1869-present; Paris), and *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1854-present; London). It is interesting to review their pages to see how much American work was presented and how it was treated.[60] Let's begin with *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*. No American work was cited before 1945. In that year the journal published an article by Thomas Sebeok on Finnish vowel assimilation (Sebeok 1945). In 1946 Thomas Godel reviewed a book of his (Sebeok 1946), noting that he was inspired by Roman Jakobson. A few years later, an article by the British linguist C.E. Bazell (1909–1984) (Bazell 1949) cited several post-Bloomfieldian publications, including Bloch (1947), Pittmann (1948), and Nida (1948). American work was cited regularly in the *Cahiers* after that year.

---

60. I would very much have liked to present the material in *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*. However, COVID-19 restrictions prevented me from leafing through its pages in my university library and I have been unable to locate online versions of the journal.

1949 turned out to be a critical year for European interest in American theorizing. That year the journal *Lingua* was founded by the Dutch linguists Anton Reichling (1898–1986) and E.M. Uhlenbeck. It was almost as if the mission of *Lingua* was to acquaint Europeans with American research. The first volume had no less than eight articles that cited American linguists. And the second volume contained an article by Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (1911–2010), whose entire basis was glowing praise for Kenneth Pike's analysis of English intonation (Fischer-Jørgensen 1949). In the same issue appeared an article by the Norwegian-American linguist Einar Haugen (Haugen 1949) and one by Uhlenbeck on the structure of the Javanese morpheme that showed profound knowledge of work carried out on the other side of the Atlantic:

> In the United States, finally, morphonology has during the last ten years become the centre of the attention of those linguists who have been strongly influenced by Bloomfield. In a series of articles in the journal *Language* several linguists who for the most part seem to have been in close contact with one another, have tried, starting from Bloomfield's definition of the morpheme, to develop a theory of morpheme-analysis which was more satisfactory than what could be found about this in *Language*. On the whole they confined themselves to working out and systematizing Bloomfield's views, at the same time removing a few inconsistencies. (Uhlenbeck 1949, 246).

Aside from Bloomfield, the article cited Harris, Hockett, Bloch, Voegelin, Wells, and Nida. From the 1950s on, *Lingua* has regularly published work by American scholars, including (after 1957) articles devoted to generative grammar.

6. The American rediscovery of European linguistics

Beginning in the mid-1940s, American linguists began to warm up to work carried out in Europe. The presence of European refugee linguists in the United States led to more familiarity with European theorizing (§6.1) and, eventually, to a greater appreciation of this theorizing (§6.2).

6.1 Roman Jakobson, the École Libre des Hautes Études, and the founding of Word

Not all American linguists were opposed to Roman Jakobson's presence in the United States. Indeed, some went out of their way to welcome him and help him to find work. Foremost of these was Franz Boas, who wrote to Bloomfield: "I am very much disgusted but it seems quite impossible to find any position for Roman Jakobson. [...] What annoys me the most, I heard indirectly that he had been turned down at Yale because it was feared that his method, being different from the Yale method, might be detrimental to the students. [...]" (Boas to Bloomfield, 28 September 1942; quoted in Swiggers 1991, 283). Since Boas was to die three months later, he was not there to give Jakobson further support.[61]

Both Zellig Harris and Leonard Bloomfield supported Jakobson's presence in the United States, despite their disagreements with his theoretical stance. Harris, who was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, did his best to secure a position for Jakobson there, possibly with support from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS):

Dear Dr Jakobson,

It is with great regret that I have to tell you that our plans for you here at the university have apparently come to nothing, though I think other possibilities exist. What happened was this: Drs [name illegible] and Metro both spoke with [Mortimer] Graves [of the ACLS]. Graves assured them that the ACLS would really do the best it could as soon as any university would request it for money for you. Then we tried to get a request from our university. Not only our department, but also another group interested in Slavic put through a strong joint request for you. Knowing that our university, which is one of the poorest, had

---

61. A number of web pages claim that "When the American authorities considered 'repatriating' [Jakobson] to Europe, it was Franz Boas who actually saved his life". No citations are ever given. It seems quite implausible to me that Boas, a German immigrant and a Jew, would have had any influence with the 'American authorities'. And again, Boas died the year after Jakobson's arrival in the United States.

a deficit, we did not request a straight appointment […]. Now I have just learned that the university administration refused the Dean because they said that they could not take on anything for which they could not pay themselves. We will still try to reopen the matter, but there is a very small chance. […] I am afraid the question now is to find anew a school which will request such courses with you. Do you have any suggestion? I am writing Boas, who wrote me recently asking if he can think of any possibility.

Regards etc. [Harris to Jakobson, 2 August 1942; RJA][62]

A follow up letter from Harris a few weeks letter was both more personal and more on the subject of the differences of approach between Jakobson and his American colleagues:

Dear Dr Jakobson,

I am certainly glad to have received your last letter and to have your questions, because I can imagine that the series of unjustifiable disappointments must make you wonder about the attitude or the status of scientists in America.

First, I must say that I did not know about Edgerton's letter.[63] Also that that letter cannot be responsible for some of your disappointments, certainly not the one at Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania case, and perhaps some of the others, are ordinary examples of what faces many scientists, both refugees and Americans (though perhaps Jews more than others). The whole attitude toward scientific work is commercial and often derogatory, and appointments often depend on family connections and having the right kind of friends.

But since there is nothing we can individually do about that, it is more relevant for me to say how I understand the difference between your work and that of American linguists. You know from the Trubetzkoy review that I, and most American linguists, disagree with the philosophical approach of many European linguists (and other scientists), including that of the Prague Circle. […] It seems that the above opinions have made some American linguists feel that much of European linguistics can be disregarded. Sapir, whom I knew well, did not feel

---

62. That same day Harris wrote to Boas imparting the same information and the same sentiment (see Swiggers 1991).
63. There was no letter from William Franklin Edgerton (1893–1970) in the RJA.

that way, nor do I – for perhaps two reasons: First because Prague has contributed so much to modern linguistics [...] that they have demonstrated their productivity. Second, because every piece of work which is formal is of use some place or other, and most Prague work has been [...]. Especially since speaking with you I have the opinion that work like yours, precisely because it has different points of departure from ours but is still formal, and because it is so original, can give us new ideas and important suggestions. Perhaps only after you have published more in America will more Americans realize this. [...] And, of course, I am still looking for other possibilities instead of Pennsylvania. [...]

Cordially,
    Zellig S. Harris [Harris to Jakobson, 28 August 1942; RJA]

Bloomfield went to bat for Jakobson soon after his arrival in the United States, writing to Boas: "Of course I have been in touch with Jakobson, and I know that Edgerton and Sturtevant also have him in mind, but so far we have not found any opening" (Bloomfield to Boas, 20 October 1941; cited in Swiggers 1991, 282). A few years later Bloomfield wrote directly to Jakobson:

Dear Jakobson,

[...] Miss Petrova has spoken of you in a way that disquieted me and in fact has made it painful to write. She said that you were hard up for a job and were placing your hope in Yale. Of course, I imagine that any such report is inaccurate, but even without being told, I can see the basis. I can see it especially as I read yesterday a shocking story of how you had been treated in connection with your coming to this country. This too may have been inaccurate, but even if it is half true, it is bad enough. Therefore it is painful to have to tell you about the situation here; had I written to you even a week ago, I might have not felt it necessary to mention it. There is no possibility here of an appointment in Slavic languages. [...]

As ever,
    Leonard Bloomfield [Bloomfield to Jakobson, 28 March 1944; RJA]

Jakobson was one of many European refugee scholars who entered the United States from the late 1930s to the end of the war. Some

ended up in New York City, teaching at the École Libre des Hautes Études, which was founded in 1941, inaugurated on February 14, 1942 and housed by the New School for Social Research. It was a sort of a university in exile for European refugees, offering its courses in French, and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Belgian and Czech governments in exile, and the Free French government. Jakobson was there from the beginning. According to Testenoire (2019), linguistics courses were offered both at its Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientale and at its Institut de Sociologie. Five linguists gave courses at the École Libre: Giuliano Bonfante (1904–2005), teaching comparative Indo-European linguistics; Jakobson, teaching Russian and general linguistics; Wolf Leslau (1906–2006), teaching Semitic languages; Henri F. Muller (1879–1959), teaching history of the French language; and André Spiré (1868–1966), teaching French versification.

The École Libre was located a bit uptown from 165 Broadway, where so many post-Bloomfieldian linguists were based. At the beginning, the relations between the two groups were tense:

> Between the group at 165 Broadway and that at the École, therefore, one might have hoped that good relations and profitable intellectual exchanges could have prevailed – if times had been normal. Unfortunately, however, by the early and mid 1940s, they were not normal. In many fields, including linguistics, there was hostility between American scholars, especially the younger generation, and refugees who had come to America beginning in 1933. [...] In the resultant clash between '165 Broadway' and the linguists at the École, not all the members of either group were involved. It was, rather, a conflict centered on the dislike of Trager and Jakobson for each other, with theoretical disagreements between European and American structuralists in the background. [...] Some 165-Broadway-ites attended Jakobson's lectures at the École, but reports differ concerning the latter's relations with the '165 Broadway' group. There was a certain amount of tale-bearing and gossip relayed by members of the secretarial staff who frequented the École, in at least

two instances with harmful results in the post-war picture of American linguists that prevailed in Europe. (Hall 1991, 161–162)[64]

With respect to the antagonism between Jakobson and Trager, Stephen R. Anderson has offered the view:

> This in part goes back to the history of the Army Language manuals for Russian [see §5]. That was first assigned to Trager, who claimed expertise in Russian on the basis of what he felt he had learned as a child. He produced a set of materials that were full of inaccuracies, at least with respect to the standard language. Bloomfield sent this to Jakobson for comment, and Jakobson wrote a devastatingly negative critique of what Trager had done. Trager insisted he was right, although all the native speakers they could consult said his materials were full of mistakes. Jakobson's critique was never published, but the task of writing the Russian materials for the army was taken over by Bloomfield (with constant reference to Jakobson). Trager was not pleased. (p. c., 8 April 2021)

Despite all of this, my feeling is that the presence of the two groups of linguists in the same city at the same time was, in the long run, positive. Even though there were personal and professional animosities, linguists from each camp came to better understand the other's orientation and motivating influences. Even Charles Hockett wrote that "before very long I was attending Jakobson's lectures at the École Libre des Hautes Études, benefitting from them greatly, and coming not just to respect but to admire the man even when I disagreed with him" (Hockett to Halle, 22 February 1989; TSA).

In any event, a year after the war ended, Jakobson secured full-time employment in the United States, being named Thomas G.

---

64. Hall remarks in a footnote: 'According to some accounts, efforts to have Jakobson give one of the talks at the after-hours linguistic meetings at 165 Broadway were received coldly and were not acted on. Others report that he often attended these meetings and alienated other scholars' sympathies by his virulent hostility to American linguistics and by behaving like "a boor and a bore." The two accounts are not incompatible. In any case, personal antipathies were certainly involved' (p. 162).

Masaryk Professor of Czechoslovak Studies at Columbia University in New York, a position which, despite its name, allowed him to devote most of his energies to linguistics. He moved to Harvard University in 1949, where he remained until his death in 1982. Thanks to Jakobson and other European scholars who remained in the United States after the war, elements of the Prague School approach to linguistics had become, while perhaps not mainstream, at least a major pole of attraction for American students entering linguistics in the 1940s and 1950s.

American structural linguistics continued its diversification in a European direction with the founding of the journal *Word* in 1945, which was an indirect product of the École Libre. In 1943, several linguists connected with the École Libre, most notably Jakobson, founded the Linguistic Circle of New York (LCNY). Henri F. Muller, a historian of the French language, was its first president. Two years later, the first issue of the LCNY's journal *Word* appeared, under the editorship of Pauline Taylor of New York University. The first editorial board was about half recent arrivals from Europe, but also linguists born and trained in the United States, such as the structural linguist Charles C. Fries (1887–1967), the Indo-Europeanist Robert A. Fowkes (1913–1998), the orientalist Louis H. Gray, and the historian of the English language Albert C. Baugh (1891–1981). Sapir's student Morris Swadesh edited the second volume. From 1947 and for the next two decades the journal was edited by the structuralist André Martinet, who had arrived from France to take a position as full professor and department chair at Columbia University in 1946.[65] In an editorial statement in the first issue, Muller

---

65. Martinet remained at Columbia until 1955, at which point he returned to France. His stay at Columbia (as well as most of the rest of his life) is documented in his fascinating quirky memoir Martinet (1993), which was the subject of a controversy within the LSA in 1994. Some members wanted the Society to condemn Martinet for the following remark, which was deemed to be anti-Semitic: "[Jakobson] s'inclinait devant Troubetzkoy, car en face du prince, il était tout de même le Juif muscovite" ["Jakobson deferred to Trubetzkoy, because in the presence of the prince, he was still the Moscow Jew"]. No action was taken against Martinet, an LSA Life Member, by the way. It is worth pointing out that in the same book, Martinet brags about his efforts on behalf of the Yiddish Studies program at Columbia.

emphasized how ecumenical the new journal would be, taking it as self-evident that the unit 'word' was a construct that all approaches shared:[66]

> Why 'Word'? Because the word, in its various aspects, is a focal point of the science of language. Linguists of diverse schools are in agreement here. Ferdinand de Saussure says: "Le mot, malgré la difficulté qu'on a à le definir, est une unité qui s'impose à l'esprit, quelque chose de central dans le mecanisme de la langue". Edward Sapir stresses "the definitely plastic unity of the word", which is "the existent unit of living speech, an integral whole, a miniature bit of art", and opposes it to the smaller units "abstracted as they are from the realities of speech". Viktor Vinogradov, the outstanding linguist of New Russia, states: "The word, the laws of its life, its historical development, its role in the history of material culture are the basic subjects of modern linguistics". Not only linguistics, but also sociology, anthropology, psychology, and logic deal with the word. With the title WORD we intend to emphasize the multiform natural structure of linguistic reality and the necessity for studying language in all the fullness of its various functions and relations. (Muller 1945, 4)

From the beginning, *Word* presented a more diverse picture of linguistics than did its well-established rival *Language*. Not surprisingly it featured a number of papers by linguists associated with the Prague School. But notably it published papers by American structuralists who were outside of the militantly positivist mainstream. For example, the first issue featured a paper by the missionary linguist Eugene Nida (Nida 1945) and the second volume by linguists who were more followers of Sapir than of Bloomfield (Newman 1946, Sapir & Swadesh 1946, Haas 1946). The third volume was extremely diverse, with articles by Fred Householder (Householder 1947) and Rulon Wells (Wells 1947), two linguists who were close to the American mainstream, as well as an important paper

---

66. But it was not self-evident: "Neo-Bloomfieldians did not deal with 'words' at all. For them, 'word' was not a technical term, nor a focus for analysis. 'Words' were the victims of metaphysical amateur etymology in contrast to 'morphemes,' which were the object of hardboiled professional scientific research" (Murray 1994, 215).

by Kenneth Pike, in which he laid bare his differences with majority opinion over whether grammatical information was legitimate input to phonemic analysis (Pike 1947a). By the mid-1950s even the orthodox post-Bloomfieldians were publishing in *Word*, as is illustrated by the appearance there of a paper by Charles Hockett (Hockett 1954). In other words, *Word* was both a product of, and a contributor to, a growing rapprochement among the diverse schools of structural linguistics.

Even *Language* editor Bernard Bloch came to terms with Jakobson and the new journal with which he was involved. Despite his earlier summary rejection of two of Jakobson's submissions, he wrote to the latter:

> Dear Mr Jakobson,
>
> I have read your article on Russian conjugation [(Jakobson 1971 [1948])] with great interest and pleasure; your exposition is so clear that even my ignorance of the language did not prevent me from following it. I have, however, one regret: that you did not send the article to me for *Language*. Since it includes a detailed criticism of a paper which had appeared in *Language* [(Cornyn 1948)], I believe it would have been appropriate to publish this new treatment of the same subject in the same journal. The fact that it appeared in *Word* may give some readers the false impression that there is some kind of rivalry or bad feeling between the two journals; you will agree with me, I know, that we ought to do everything we can to suppress that misconception. There is plenty of room for two American periodicals devoted to linguistic science; the existence of *Word* side by side with *Language* does not mean – as a few poorly informed persons possibly suppose – that American linguistics is divided into opposite camps. [...]
>
> Sincerely yours,
>   Bernard Bloch (Bloch to Jakobson, 29 March 1949; RJA)

Jakobson sent a gracious reply to Bloch, remarking: "I am glad you liked my paper and I fully agree with the conclusion of your letter. Orally and in letters, I always emphatically fight against the false idea of two would-be linguistic factions. And I am deeply convinced that there are not." (Jakobson to Bloch, 18 April 1949;

RJA). Jakobson went on to note that the starting point of his paper was an approach developed by Bloomfield (Bloomfield 1939b, I imagine) and suggested that they get together for a personal talk.

6.2 Increasing American appreciation of European linguistics

By the late 1940s, the times were changing with respect to the desire of American structural linguists to understand European work. A sign of the changing attitudes is reflected by a letter that Kenneth Pike wrote to Thomas Sebeok in 1949, just before (what I believe was) his first trip to Europe. Pike told Sebeok: "As the semester goes by I still hope as much as ever to get to Europe in the not too distant future and so I am proceeding with a note asking for information of the type you so generously offered to provide me. Which are the descriptive linguists in England, France, Netherlands, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Hungary, Finland, and Russia whom you think I would be interested in meeting?" (Pike to Sebeok, 16 March 1949; TSA). Sebeok's reply, excerpts of which are provided below, is of great historical interest:

> Denmark. The dominant figure in linguistics is Professor Louis Hjelmslev, who is also editor of *Acta Linguistica*, the journal devoted entirely to structural linguistics. There are also some excellent phoneticians, notably, a girl [*sic*], Eli Fischer-Jørgensen.

> England. Professor J.R. Firth you will probably have met last summer at the Linguistic Institute, and you undoubtedly know all about Daniel Jones. You should not miss Ida Ward.

> Netherlands. There are at least two first-rate linguists in Holland, namely Anton Reichling and A.W. de Groot. These two edit *Lingua* and are quite aware of American linguistics.

> Czechoslovakia. You are, of course, acquainted with the publications of the Cercle Linguistique de Prague. The Cercle has broken up pretty completely since the war, but one outstanding, brilliant, young linguist remains: Joseph Vachek. Vachek is not a Communist at all, but must watch his step carefully. Give him an opportunity to speak to you in private, where no one can overhear you.

Hungary. There is only one structural linguist in Hungary: he is professor Gyula Laziczius. He is a bitter lonely old man.

Finland. We have a Visiting Professor from Finland this year at Indiana University, Professor Lauri Posti. He will introduce you to all of the Finns.

Germany. I cannot give you any further information about the present whereabouts of the people I used to know before the war.

France. Here it is best, of course, to contact everybody through the offices of the Société Linguistique de Paris. (Sebeok to Pike, 5 April 1949; TSA)

While neither Pike nor Sebeok were in the dominant positivist wing of American structuralism, their letters manifest a new openness to an exchange of ideas between the two continents (as does the fact that Firth had been invited to teach at the 1948 Linguistic Institute).

The most dramatic testimony to renewed American interest in Europe is provided by Einar Haugen's LSA Presidential Address in 1950 (published as Haugen 1951). Haugen began his address by observing that

> Linguistic science is today in every sense of the word an international science. Few disciplines can lay better claim to this term than ours, in view of its universally and specifically human subject matter, as well as its bearing on the interrelationship and communication of nations. Even within our generation a vast expansion of linguistic study has taken place when compared with the preceding one. It is characteristic that around 1930 contributions to phoneme theory were being made by men as widely scattered as Trubetzkoy in Austria and Yuen Ren Chao in China. This was already a forward step over the much narrower field of Rask and Grimm, but we have seen a still more intense effort in the last two decades. (Haugen 1951, 211)

Haugen went on to deplore that fact that "Rarely does one see a reference in American writings on linguistic theory to the works of de Saussure, Trubetzkoy, or other European writers, although they were the thinkers who gave us the instruments with which we work"

(p. 211). He attributed this fact to the increasing terminological gulf between the Americans and Europeans and went on to explain how, to a significant degree, and terminology aside, the views of the Dane Louis Hjelmslev coincided with those of American structuralists, even those in the more empiricist camp. Hjelmslev, in fact, was on the faculty at the 1952 Institute and his countrywoman Eli Fischer-Jørgensen was there as a visitor for a month (Hill 1991, 71).[67]

The same year that Haugen's address was published, Charles Hockett published a remarkably positive review (Hockett 1951) of André Martinet's book *Phonology as Functional Phonetics* (Martinet 1949). In Hockett's words: "This booklet should be widely read; it ought to be read in this country, with a more open mind than we sometimes grant our European colleagues" (Hockett 1951, 334). In a review of another important structuralist work published in Europe, Daniel Jones's *The Phoneme: Its Nature and Use* (Jones 1950), Fred Householder (1913–1994) made some astute comments about the differences between the various 'national' approaches to structural linguistics:

> Every American linguist is aware that phoneme theory and practice have been more or less independently developed in three places: the United States, England, and continental Europe. [...] The three areas, while agreeing in essentials, differ mostly in philosophical background and primary aims. The philosophical background of the British linguist is largely that empiricism and logic of terms which is most familiar to us in the works of Bertrand Russell; much more given to skepticism (in the philosophical sense) and gentlemanly moderation than either the United States or the continent. The United States background is, in the main, Deweyan pragmatism, with a strong shot of behavioristic metaphysics and a bias toward logical rigor and methodology imparted originally by Leonard Bloomfield, but carried much farther by the younger Amer-

---

67. Fischer-Jørgensen had written to the LSA on 6 December 1949: "In Copenhagen we are very interested in American linguistics and we have often discussed American books in the Cercle Linguistique. I think that there is a certain relationship between the methods of American linguistics [...] and Hjelmslev's theories, so that a discussion of the undoubtedly existing differences would be fruitful [...]" (*LSAB* 26, 1950, 443).

ican linguists. The continental background is more complex: a strong element of idealism and grandiose system building such as we associate with Hegel is present, but also strong are the influences of Comptean positivism and Gestalt psychology. [...] The European asks "Is it true?", the American "Is it consistent?", the Englishman "Will it help?" But in spite of these differences in background and purpose, the agreement on fundamentals among followers of the three schools is considerable, and Jones is in many ways closer to American theory than to continental. (Householder 1952, 99–100)

And a year later, in his overview of the field of linguistics, John B. Carroll (1916–2003) wrote that "In the last year or two, there have been signs of a necessary and well-justified rapprochement, after a temporary lapse beginning in the thirties, between American and European linguistics" (Carroll 1953, 22). Furthermore, the International Congress of Linguists, held in Oslo in 1957, "had more American members than any of the previous ones" (Mohrmann, Sommerfelt & Whatmough 1961, 9)

The most vivid indicator of the cross-Atlantic rapprochement was the election of Roman Jakobson as LSA President in 1956. Hymes & Fought (1981, 175) go so far as to suggest that if a knowledgeable person were queried in the early 1950s as to who was the most prominent linguist in the United States, the answer would likely be 'Roman Jakobson'.

7. The European reaction to early generative grammar

The era of good feeling between American and European structuralists would have continued uninterrupted for many years had it not been for an event that would turn world linguistics upside-down: the publication of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (Chomsky 1957). There is not much obvious European influence in that book, given that Chomsky mainly cites American structuralists and formal philosophers. But it was his joint work with Morris Halle (1923–2018) in phonology where Prague School influence – especially Jakobson's – became evident. Halle had been one of Jakobson's leading students. In fact, his work in generative phonology started out as a restatement of Jakobson's 1948 'Russian conjugation' pa-

per. Chomsky and Halle's *The Sound Pattern of English* was mostly written in 1962, but not published until six years later (Chomsky & Halle 1968). The book was dedicated to Roman Jakobson for a good reason, namely that the influence of the Prague School is evident throughout. Notions like universal phonetic and phonological elements, underlying forms, binary distinctive features, and markedness all go back to Jakobson and Trubetzkoy (for discussion, see McCawley 1977). And by the early 1960s Chomsky was asserting that the problem of the correct theory is intimately tied to the problem of child language acquisition, just as Jakobson had done in 1941.

One would think, then, that early work in generative grammar would have brought American and European linguists even closer together. Unfortunately, just the opposite happened. Many European structuralists (and their co-thinkers in the United States) were appalled that Chomsky appeared to continue the post-Bloomfieldian idea that semantics is not central to grammatical theory. In particular, they found the *Syntactic Structures* advocacy of the autonomy of syntax especially troubling. The critique was led by none other than Roman Jakobson, who, true to his Prague School roots, argued that grammatical form could not be dissociated from meaning. He asserted that "Chomsky's [...] ingenious attempt to construct a 'completely non-semantic theory of grammatical structure'" was a "magnificent argumentum a contrario" (Jakobson 1959, 144), and went on to argue that import of Chomsky's classic sentences "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" and "Golf plays John" was precisely the opposite of that intended by Chomsky. And in a situation that I find somewhat ironic, the European attack on Chomsky was led by two Dutch linguists associated with the journal *Lingua*, Anton Reichling and E.M. Uhlenbeck, who from the start had opened that journal up to American descriptivists. Reichling stressed that hermetically sealing off syntax made the process of sentence understanding intractable:

> Native speakers do not exclusively understand each other by means of their language as a closed system; the linguistic means in a natural language are always used in conjunction with data supplied by the situation [...] (Reichling 1961, 16).

Uhlenbeck's criticisms echoed those of Reichling:

> Language is not a self-contained system. Its structure is founded on the assumption that it will be used not in vacuo. It functions in its setting, but as soon as a speech-utterance is observed by the linguist outside of its situational setting and as soon as the frame of reference of the speaker is taken into account, the utterance becomes for him uninterpretable, that is it becomes ambiguous. (Uhlenbeck 1963, 11–12)

André Martinet summed up the European reaction in commenting on a 1950s submission by Chomsky to the journal *Word*:[68]

> [Chomsky's submission is] a reaction against the self-imposed limitations of the Bloomfieldian approach, but one retaining all of its formalistic prejudices with a few additional ones. [...] Actually, my impression was one of utter drabness unrelieved by any glint indicating some hidden awareness of what a real language is. (André Martinet, quoted in Murray 1980, 77)

Many European linguists did adopt generative grammar in later years. That, in fact, will be the subject of a chapter of Newmeyer (forthcoming).

8. The Prague School influence on American functional linguistics[69]

The Prague Linguistic Circle was officially disbanded by the Stalinist regime after the war. Those in Prague who continued to do linguistic work were mainly involved in developing the idea of 'functional sentence perspective', namely that grammatical (in particular, syntactic) properties of language are a product of the communicative

---

68. Though in the early 1960s, *Word* published what was perhaps the most important journal article of the decade in generative syntax: Charles Fillmore's "The position of embedding transformations in a grammar" (Fillmore 1963).

69. For a more extensive discussion of American functionalism and the Prague School, see Newmeyer (2001).

setting in which language is used. This work was a forerunner to modern functional linguistics, rather than anything that generative grammarians were doing. Not just in Prague (Daneš 1964; Firbas 1965), but also in London (Halliday 1961), Paris (Martinet 1962), Amsterdam (Dik 1968), and elsewhere in Europe, functionalist studies eclipsed generative ones for several decades.

There is strong evidence pointing to the conclusion that the pioneers of American functionalism not only were familiar with the central writings of the Prague School, but found them intellectually inspiring. I will demonstrate this point by reference to the work of Dwight Bolinger (1907–1992), Joseph Greenberg, Wallace Chafe (1927–2019), and Susumu Kuno (1933-).

Bolinger had begun to refer to the work of Prague School linguists as early as 1965. A book published in that year (Bolinger 1965a) reprinted some of his early papers and contained some never published ones as well. In a new preface to one of the former (Bolinger 1965 [1952]), he remarked that when he wrote the article, he "was not aware of the earlier work of V. Mathesius and the recent work of Jan Firbas on what Firbas calls 'functional sentence perspective ...'" (p. 279) and went on to cite a paper of Firbas's and to characterize the (rather minor) differences between their respective positions. In a new paper in that same volume (Bolinger 1965b), he expressed his debt to a 'cautious statement' (p. 167) in Daneš 1957 regarding stress-timed rhythm in English that had helped to shape his thoughts on the matter. And in his popular 1968 introductory text, *Aspects of Language*, Bolinger noted:

> A group of Czech linguists refers to this tendency of many languages to put the known first and the unknown or unexpected last as 'sentence perspective' [a footnote here cites Firbas 1964]. They point out that, in order to communicate the sentence dynamism that has been partially lost by the stiffening of word order, English must resort to other stratagems, and these are among the things that give the language its distinctive syntactic appearance. (Bolinger 1968, 119–120)

Bolinger continued to cite Prague School work until the end of his career. For example, we find in Bolinger (1986) and Bolinger

(1989) some discussion of the approach to accent prominence taken in Daneš 1960.

The influence of the Prague School permeates every page of Joseph Greenberg's seminal paper "Some universals of grammar with special reference to the order of meaningful elements" (Greenberg 1963). Indeed, by Greenberg's own acknowledgement (Greenberg 1963, 104), the paper was written in response to Roman Jakobson's call for an 'implicational typology' of language universals (Jakobson 1971b [1957]). Prague School terminology is also rampant in the Greenberg paper, as is evidenced by the frequent description of one order of elements as being 'more marked' or 'less marked' than another.

In his 1970 book, Chafe notes that "the basic role played by semantic structure in the structure of language [...] has been seriously neglected by the mainstream of linguists" (Chafe 1970, 210). To this remark he adds in a footnote:

> It has not been totally neglected, however. Some members of the 'Prague School' have given it considerable attention, beginning with Vilém Mathesius and continuing now with, especially, the work of Czech linguists such as Jan Firbas (see Firbas 1966 and numerous other publications). (Chafe 1970, 210)

Kuno bestowed upon the Prague School a signal honor – he named one of his papers 'Functional sentence perspective' (Kuno 1972), and began the acknowledgement footnote with the following remark:

> I am most grateful to Jan Firbas for discussing with me the theme-rheme (or predictable information vs. unpredictable information) interpretation of *wa* and *ga* in Japanese. The reader will find that I have been greatly influenced in my analysis by the Prague School notion of functional sentence perspective. (Kuno 1972, 269)

We have the personal testimony of the 'second generation' of functionalists, as well, that their mentors, Chafe and Kuno, valued the work of the Prague School enough to call their attention to it:

Wally Chafe's work in the 1960s was an important influence on my
thinking, and it was Chafe who got me to reading the Prague School
work [...]. I heard Chafe give lectures in the 1960s in which he referred
to FSP, and spoke of it as the basis of his ideas. Pre-war names like
Mathesius were often mentioned, so this wasn't merely the newer Prague
School. (Paul Hopper, personal communication, 20 January 1999)

Incidentally, the person who pushed Prague School ideas on infor-
mation flow the most here at Berkeley during the 70s was Wally Chafe,
who of course was a major force behind the formation of the functional-
ist school first here and later at Santa Barbara. (George Lakoff, *Funknet*
posting, 11 February 1999)

At least by the early 1970s, Kuno was indeed talking about the
Prague School. I remember reading Mathesius and Firbas on his rec-
ommendation at that time. (Ellen Prince, *Funknet* posting, 16 February
1999)

In short, there can be no question that the American functionalist
movement, as it took form in the early 1970s, was shaped to a sig-
nificant degree by the conceptions of the Prague School.

9. Conclusion

This paper has examined how American structural linguists and
their European counterparts saw each other from roughly the 1920s
to the 1960s. American linguistics had deep roots in Europe, though
by the late 1930s, most American structuralists had turned their
back on the old continent. Attitudes towards the Europeans started
to warm in the late 1940s and into the 1950s. Prague School con-
ceptions had a major influence on generative grammar (at least as
far as phonology is concerned) and on the nascent functionalist
movement in the United States. From the European side, there was
some, but not a great deal, of interest in American theorizing until
the late 1940s. A real rapprochement was underway in the 1950s,
which was derailed by the appearance of generative grammar, an
approach that at the time most European structuralists rejected.

Bibliography

ANDERSON, STEPHEN R. (2021), *Phonology in the twentieth century: Second edition, revised and expanded*, Berlin, Language Sciences Press.

BALLY, CHARLES (1965) [1932], *Linguistique générale et linguistique française,* Bern, Francke.

BAZELL, CHARLES E. (1949), "Syntactic relations and linguistic typology", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 8, 5–20.

BLOCH, BERNARD (1947), "English verb inflection", *Language* 23, 399–418, reprinted in Joos (1957), 243–254.

– (1948) "A set of postulates for phonemic analysis", *Language* 24, 3–46.

BLOOMFIELD, LEONARD (1914), *Introduction to the study of language*, New York, Henry Holt & Co. (New ed., with an introduction by Joseph F. Kess, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1983).

– (1924), "Review of Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*", *Modern Language Journal* 8, 317–319.

– (1933), *Language*, New York, Holt.

– (1939a), *Linguistic aspects of science*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

– (1939b), "Menomini morphophonemics", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* 8, 105–115.

– (1946), "Twenty-one years of the Linguistic Society", *Language* 22, 1–3.

BOLINGER, DWIGHT (ed., 1965a), *Forms of English: Accent, morpheme, order,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

– (1965b), "Pitch accent and sentence rhythm", in D. Bolinger (ed.), *Forms of English: Accent, morpheme, order,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 139–180

– (1965) [1952], "Linear modification" in D. Bolinger (ed.), *Forms of English: Accent, morpheme, order*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 279–307.

– (1968), *Aspects of Language*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World.

– (1986), *Intonation and its parts: Melody in spoken English*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

– (1989), *Intonation and its uses: Melody in grammar and discourse*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

CANTINEAU, JEAN (1952), "Les oppositions significatives", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 10, 11–40.

CARROLL, JOHN B. (1953) *The study of language*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

CHAFE, WALLACE L. (1970), *Meaning and the structure of language*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

CHOMSKY, NOAM (1957), *Syntactic structures*, The Hague, Mouton.

CHOMSKY, NOAM & HALLE MORRIS (1968), *The sound pattern of English*, New York, Harper and Row.

CORNYN, WILLIAM S. (1948), "On the classification of Russian verbs", *Language* 24, 64–75.

COWAN, J. MILTON (1987), "The whimsical Bloomfield", *Historiographia Linguistica* 14, 23–37.

DANEŠ, FRANTIŠEK (1957), *Intonace a vêta ve spisovuê cestinê [Sentence intonation in present-day Standard Czech],* Prague, Ceskoslovenské akademie ved.

– (1960), "Sentence intonation from a functional point of view", *Word* 16, pp-34–54.

– (1964), "A three-level approach to syntax", *Travaux linguistiques de Prague* 1, 225–240.

DIK, SIMON (1968), *Coordination: Its implications for the theory of general linguistics*, Amsterdam, North-Holland.

DIXON, ROBERT M.W. (2007), "Roman Jakobson and the two-dollar bills", *Historiographia Linguistica* 34, 435–440.

ERAMIAN, GREGORY M. (1988), "Edward Sapir and the Prague School", *Historiographia Linguistica* 15, 377–399.

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE (ed., 1939), *Mélanges de linguistique offerts à Charles Bally*, Geneva, Georg et Cie.

FALK, JULIA S. (2004), "Saussure and American linguistics". In C. Sanders (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Saussure*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 107–123.

FIELD, H.F. (1927), "Review of E. Lerch, *Historische französische Syntax*", *Modern Philology* 24, 366–372.

FILLMORE, CHARLES J. (1963), "The position of embedding transformations in a grammar", *Word* 19, 208–231.

FIRBAS, JAN (1964), "On defining the theme in functional sentence analysis", *Travaux Linguistique de Prague* 1, 267–280.

– (1965), "A note on transition proper in functional sentence perspective", *Philologia Pragensia* 8,170–176.

– (1966), "Non-thematic subjects in contemporary English", *Travaux Linguistique de Prague* 2, 229–236.

FIRTH, JOHN RUPERT (ed., 1957), *Papers in Linguistics 1934–1951*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

FISCHER-JØRGENSEN, ELI (1949), "Kenneth L. Pike's analysis of American English intonation", *Lingua* 2, 3–13.

FREI, HENRI (1929), *La grammaire des fautes*, Paris, Geuthner.

GODEL, ROBERT (1966), "F. de Saussure's theory of language", In T. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics, volume 3: Theoretical foundations*, The Hague, Mouton, 479–493.

Gray, Louis H. (1931), "Review of L. Hjelmslev, *Principes de grammaire générale*", *American Journal of Philology* 52, 77–81.

– (1939), *Foundations of language*. New York, Macmillan.

Greenberg, Joseph H. (1963), "Some universals of grammar with special reference to the order of meaningful elements", In J. Greenberg (ed.), *Universals of language*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 73–113.

– (1994), "The influence of *Word* and the Linguistic Circle of New York on my intellectual development", *Word* 45, 19–25.

Haas, Mary R. (1946), "Techniques of intensifying in Thai", *Word* 2, 127–130.

Hall, Robert A. (1946), "The state of linguistics: Crisis or reaction?", *Italica* 23, 30–34.

– (1951–1952), "American linguistics, 1925–1950", *Archivum Linguisticum* 3–4, 101–125, 1–16.

– (1969), "Some recent developments in American linguistics", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70, 192–227.

– (1987), "Review of C. Hockett", In R.A. Hall (ed.), *Linguistics and pseudo-linguistics*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 58–79.

– (1991), "165 Broadway", *Historiographia Linguistica* 18, 153–166.

Halle, Morris (1988), "The Bloomfield-Jakobson correspondence, 1944–1946", *Language* 64, 737–754.

Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood (1961), "Categories of the theory of grammar", *Word* 17, 241–292.

Hamp, Eric (1961), "General linguistics – the United States in the fifties", In C. Mohrmann, et al. (1961), 165–195.

Harris, Zellig S. (1941), "Problems of bilingualism", *Lingua* 2, 271–290.

– (1951), "Directions in modern linguistics", *Language* 27, 211–22, reprinted in Joos (1957), 357–363.

– (1979), "Introduction", In H. Hoenigswald (ed.), *The European background of American linguistics: Papers of the Third Golden Anniversary Symposium of the Linguistic Society of America*, Dordrecht, Foris, 1–3.

Hill, Archibald A. (1966), *The promises and limitations of the newest type of grammatical analysis*, Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati Press.

– (1991), "The Linguistic Society of America and North American linguistics, 1950–1968", *Historiographia Linguistica* 18, 49–152.

Hjelmslev, Louis (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale*, Copenhagen, Bianco Luno.

Hockett, Charles F. (1942), "A system of descriptive phonology", *Language* 18, 3–21, reprinted in Joos (1957), 97–108.

– (1951), "Review of A. Martinet, *Phonology as functional phonetics*", *Language* 27, 333–342.

– (1952a), "A formal statement of morpheme analysis", *Studies in Linguistics* 10, 27–39.
– (1952b), "Review of *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague, V: Recherches structurales*", *International Journal of American Linguistics* 18, 86–99.
– (1954), "Two models of grammatical description", *Word* 10, 210–234, reprinted in Joos (1957), 386–399.
– (ed., 1970), *A Leonard Bloomfield anthology*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
HOENIGSWALD, HENRY M. (1964), "Obituary of George M. Bolling", *Language* 40, 329–336.
HOLMES, URBAN T. (1931), "Germanic influences on Old French syntax", *Language* 7, 194–199.
– (1940), "Review of *Mélanges de linguistique offerts à Charles Bally*", *Language* 16, 237–240.
HOUSEHOLDER, FRED W. (1947), "A descriptive analysis of Latin declensions", *Word* 3, 48–58.
– (1952), "Review of Daniel Jones, *The phoneme: Its nature and use*", *International Journal of American Linguistics* 18, 99–105.
HYMES, DELL & FOUGHT JOHN (1981), *American structuralism*, The Hague, Mouton.
JAKOBSON, ROMAN (1941), *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*, Uppsala, Almqvist & Wiksell.
– (1959), "Boas' view of grammatical meaning". *The anthropology of Franz Boas: Essay on the centennial of his birth* (American Anthropological Association, Memoir 89), ed. by W. Goldschmidt, 139–145, reprinted 1971 in R. Jakobson (ed), *Selected writings: vol. 2, Word and language*, The Hague, Mouton, 489–496.
– (1971) [1948], "Russian conjugation". In R. Jakobson (ed.). *Selected writings*, The Hague, Mouton, 119–129.
– (1971a) [1957], "Notes on Gilyak". In R. Jakobson (ed.), *Selected writings, Volume 2: Word and language*, The Hague, Mouton, 72–97.
– (1971b) [1957], "Typological studies and their contribution to historical comparative linguistics", in R. Jakobson (ed.), *Selected writings*, The Hague, Mouton, 523–532.
– (1973), *Main trends in the science of language*, London, Allen & Unwin.
– (ed., 1975), *N.S. Trubetzkoy's letters and notes*, Mouton, The Hague.
– (1979), "The twentieth century in European and American linguistics: Movements and continuity". In H. Hoenigswald (ed.), *The European background of American linguistics: Papers of the Third Golden Anniversary Symposium of the Linguistic Society of America*, Dordrecht, Foris, 161–173.

JONES, DANIEL (1950), *The phoneme: Its nature and use*, Cambridge, W. Heffer & Sons.

JOOS, MARTIN (ed., 1957*), Readings in linguistics: The development of descriptive linguistics in America since 1925*, New York, American Council of Learned Societies.

JOSEPH, JOHN E. (2019), "Linguistics", in M. Bevir (ed.), *Modernism and the social sciences: Anglo-American exchanges, c. 1918–1980*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 182–201.

KILBURY, JAMES (1976), *The development of morphophonemic theory*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

KOERNER, KONRAD E.F. (1984), "Introduction". In E.F.K. Koerner (ed.), *Edward Sapir: Appraisals of his life and work*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, xi-xxvii.

– (2002a), "American structuralist linguistics and the 'problem of meaning'", In E.F.K. Koerner (ed.), Toward a history of American linguistics, London, Routledge, 75–104.

– (2002b), *Toward a history of American linguistics,* London, Routledge.

KUNO, SUSUMU (1972), "Functional sentence perspective: A case study from Japanese and English", *Linguistic Inquiry* 3, 269–320.

LEPSCHY, GIULIO C. (1972), *A survey of structural linguistics*, London, Faber and Faber.

LEROY, MAURICE (1967) [1963], *Main trends in modern linguistics*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

LESNIN, I. M, PETROVA LUBA & BLOOMFIELD, LEONARD (1945), *Spoken Russian, basic course*, Madison, Published for the United States Armed Forces Institute by the Linguistic Society of America.

MALMBERG, BERTIL (1964) [1959], *New trends in linguistics: An orientation,* Stockholm, Institute of Phonetics.

MARTINET, ANDRÉ (1949), *Phonology as functional phonetics*, London, Oxford University Press.

– (1953), "Structural linguistics". In A.L. Kroeber (ed.), *Anthropology today: An encyclopedic inventory*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 574–586.

– (1962), *A functional view of language*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

– (1974), "Interview", In H. Parrett (ed.), *Discussing language,* The Hague, Mouton, 221–247.

– (1993), *Mémoires d'un linguiste: Vivre les langues*, Paris, Quai Voltaire.

MATHESIUS, VILÉM (1926), "Linguistická charaktistika a její místo v moderním jazykopytu [Linguistic characterology and its place in modern linguistics]", *ČMF* [*Journal for Modern Philology*] 13, 35–40.

MCCAWLEY, JAMES D. (1977), "Jakobsonian ideas in generative grammar", In D. Armstrong & C.H. Van Schooneveld (eds.) *Roman Jakobson: Echoes of his scholarship*, Lisse, Peter de Ridder Press, 269–284.

MENCKEN, HENRY LOUIS (1948), *The American language: An inquiry into the development of English in the United States; Supplement II*, New York, Knopf.

MOHRMANN, CHRISTINE, SOMMERFELT, ALF & WHATMOUGH, JOSHUA (eds., 1961), *Trends in European and American linguistics, 1930–1960*, Utrecht, Spectrum.

MULLER, HENRI F. (1945), *Word*, Word 1, 3–4.

MURRAY, STEPHEN O. (1980), "Gatekeepers and the 'Chomskyan revolution'", *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16, 73–88.

‒ (1983), *Group formation in social science*, Edmonton, Linguistic Research, Inc.

‒ (1994), *Theory groups and the study of language in North America: A social history,* Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

NEWMAN, STANLEY S. 1946, "On the stress system of English", *Word* 2, 171–187.

NEWMEYER, FREDERICK J. (2001), "The Prague School and North American functionalist approaches to syntax", *Journal of Linguistics* 37, 101–126.

‒ (2015), "American linguists look at Swiss linguistics: 1925–1940", *Historiographia Linguistica* 42, 107–118.

‒ (forthcoming), *American linguistics in transition: From post-Bloomfieldian structuralism to generative grammar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

NIDA, EUGENE A. (1945), "Linguistics and ethnology in translation problems", *Word* 1, 194–208.

‒ (1948), "The identification of morphemes", *Language* 24, 414–41, reprinted Joos (1957), 255–271.

PIKE, KENNETH L. (1947a), "Grammatical prerequisites to phonemic analysis", *Word* 3, 155–172.

‒ (1947b), *Phonemics: A technique for reducing languages to writing*, Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press.

‒ (1994), "A limited perspective on *Word* seen in a transitional moment between paradigms", *Word* 45, 39–43.

PITTMAN, RICHARD S. (1948), "Nuclear structures in linguistics", *Language* 24, 287–92, reprinted in Joos (1957), 275–278.

READ, ALLEN W. (1991), "My personal journey through lingistics", In E.F.K. Koerner (ed.), *First person singular II*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 273–288.

REICHLING, ANTON (1961), "Principles and methods of syntax: Cryptanalytical formalism", *Lingua* 10, 1–17.

Ryckman, Thomas A. (1986), *Grammar and information: An investigation in linguistic metatheory*, Columbia University PhD dissertation.

Saleski, Reinhold E. (1930), "Review of Henri Frei, *La grammaire des fautes*", *Language* 6, 91–93.

Sapir, Edward (1921), *Language*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, and World.

– (1925), "Sound *patterns in language", Language* 1, 37–51, reprinted in Joos (1957*)* 19–25.

– (1963) [1933], "The psychological realities of phonemes", In D.G. Mandelbaum (ed.), *Selected writings of Edward Sapir*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 46–60.

Sapir, Edward & Swadesh, Morris (1946), "American Indian grammatical categories", *Word* 2, 103–112.

Saussure, Ferdinand de (1916), *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris, Payot.

Sebeok, Thomas (1945), "Progressive vowel assimilation in Finish", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 5, 38–40.

– (1946), *Finnish and Hungarian case systems, their form and function*, Stockholm, Acta Instituti Hungarici Universitatis Holmiensis.

Senn, Alfred (1937), "The art of linguistics", *Modern Language Journal* 21, 501–506.

Shapiro, Michael (1974), "Morphophonemics as semiotic", *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* 15, 29–49.

Smith, W.B.S. (1950), "Review of Robert Hall, *Descriptive Italian grammar*", *Studies in Linguistics* 8, 5–11.

Spitzer, Leo (1946), "The state of linguistics: Crisis or reaction"?, *Modern Language Notes* 71, 497–502.

Swadesh, Morris (1948), "On linguistic mechanisms", *Science and Society* 12, 254–259.

Swadesh, Morris & Voegelin, Charles F. (1939), "A problem in phonological alternation", *Language* 15, 1–10, reprinted in Joos (1957), 88–92.

Swiggers, Pierre (1991), "Roman Jakobson's struggle in wartime America", *Orbis* 36, 281–285.

Testenoire, Pierre-Yves (2019), "Jakobson & Co.: La linguistique à l'École Libre des Hautes Études", *Les Dossiers de HEL* [electronic supplement to *Histoire Epistémologie Langage*], Paris, Société d'Histoire et d'Epistémologie des Sciences du Langage.

Togeby, Knud (1965) [1951], *Structure immanente de la langue française*, Paris, Librairie Larousse.

Trager, George L. (1941), "Review of *La catégorie des cas* by Louis Hjelmslev", *Language* 17, 172–174.

– (1950), "Brief reviews", *Studies in Linguistics* 8, 99–100.

UHLENBECK, CHRISTIANUS CORNELIUS (1927), "Review of W. Schmidt, *Die Sprachfamilien und Sprachkreise der Erde*", *International Journal of American Linguistics* 4, 229–233.

UHLENBECK, EUGENIUS MARIUS (1949), "The structure of the Javanese morpheme", *Lingua* 2, 239–270.

– (1959), "Review of M. Joos (ed.), *Readings in linguistics*", *Lingua* 8, 327–329.

– (1963), "An appraisal of transformation theory", *Lingua* 12, 1–18.

VOEGELIN, CHARLES F. & VOEGELIN, FLORENCE M. (1963), "On the history of structuralizing in 20th century America", *Anthropological Linguistics* 5, 12–35.

WELLS, RULON S. (1947), "De Saussure's system of linguistics", *Word* 3, 1–31, reprinted in Joos (1957), 1–18.

– (1949), "Automatic alternations", *Language* 25, 99–116.

WHITEHALL, HAROLD (1944), "Some languages are better than others, review of F. Bodmer, *The loom of language*", *Kenyon Review* 6, 672–676.

ZIPF, GEORGE K. (1938), "Review of A. Reichling, *Het woord, een studie omtrent de grondslag van taal en taalgerbruik*", *Modern Language Journal* 23, 232–233.

Author: Frederick J. Newmeyer, Professor emeritus of Linguistics, University of Washington and adjunct professor in the University of British Columbia Department of Linguistics and the Simon Fraser University Department of Linguistics. He is also the Secretary-Treasurer of the Linguistic Society of America. E-mail: fjn@uw.ed

What Structuralism Is Not

John E. Joseph
University of Edinburgh

Abstract. *Structuralism remains so ill-defined that there is little agreement on when it began and ended – indeed whether it has ended – or on who embraced it, who resisted it, and who resistently embraced it. Adding to the difficulty is the widespread tendency to fall into 'the mythology of doctrines', whereby diversity get erased within a school of thought and even the whole period dominated by a school. To gain a better understanding of what we mean by structuralism, this paper applies the structuralist approach to meaning as a value generated by difference: it examines what structuralism is not, focussing on six features widely ascribed to it. Structuralism is not (1) a unified movement, (2) a rejection of history, (3) a denial of subject-hood, (4) taxonomy without process, (5) anti-mental (or anti-meaning) or (6) anti-social. Those whom we lump together as structuralists were as aware of what separated them as of what joined them, often more so. They varied in their attitudes toward history, subjecthood, mind, meaning and society, enough that a rejection of any of these cannot be taken as an essential feature of structuralism, even if found in the work of some in the period, some of the time.*

1. Introduction

Structuralism designates the approach to language analysis which brought linguistics into the modern era and turned semiotics from an outline programme into an academic discipline. It made the synchronic study of language into a recognised science and helped to shape the whole of the humanities and social sciences into their present form. It is possibly the most important development in understanding the human experience of the last hundred years.

Yet it remains so ill-defined that there is little agreement on when it began and ended – indeed whether it *has* ended (see e.g. Haspelmath 2020) – or on who embraced it, who resisted it, who resistently embraced it (see Joseph 2019), and whether the form it took in linguistics is continuous with or separate from that in semiotics, cultural anthropology, psychoanalysis, literary and feminist theory or the many other fields in which it has been applied. Many accounts of structuralism are based largely on reductivist characterisations by people aiming to distance themselves from it. The distancing is typically more rhetorical in nature than taking the form of sharp, substantive breaks from structuralist concepts and methods.

The fullest treatment to date, François Dosse's *History of Structuralism* (1991–92), is a work that we are fortunate to have. It is based on first-hand accounts by most of the surviving key figures, which Dosse has sifted so that the self-justifications and occasional accusations they contain are set in proper context, allowing readers to judge them fairly. It has its limits, certainly: centred on Paris and the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009), Roland Barthes (1915–1980), Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) and Louis Althusser (1918–1980), it keeps other figures and fields in the background. Linguistics appears almost as a satellite, despite its being the field in which structuralism originated.[70] Dosse's coverage of linguistics and semiotics is sketchy and at times erroneous, especially when it ventures outside France; it is little concerned with what structuralism has meant on a global scale.

In striving to understand better what 'structuralist' has stood for, one should be mindful of the decades-long struggles of people such as Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) against being boxed in by it (see Joseph 2020a). To be classified as a structuralist brought with it a powerful set of assumptions which structured how their work was read, and

---

70. The 'structuralism' of psychologists in the USA at the start of the twentieth century (on which see Joseph 2001) had little if any residual effect on the structuralist poetics and linguistics which was first signalled in Tynianov & Jakobson (1928) and Jakobson, Trubetzkoy & Karcevskij (1928), and was certainly less significant than the contemporary echoes of Gestalt psychology and phenomenology.

even their direct challenges to supposed structuralist tenets were taken as following those tenets. Bourdieu once told an interviewer:

> I even think that one of the obstacles to the progress of research is this classificatory mode of functioning of academic and political thought, which often hamstrings intellectual inventiveness by making it impossible to surpass false antinomies and false divisions. The logic of the classificatory label is very exactly that of racism, which stigmatizes its victims by imprisoning them in a negative essence. (Bourdieu 1990, 28)

The parallel between the classificatory labels and racism does not of course equate the two morally: we should strive for a world without racism, but do we really want to let go of structuralism as a category? For my part, on the contrary, I want to understand it better, use it better – take better care of it, and with it.

Having tried and failed for a long time now to understand what structuralism is, in this chapter I shall come at the problem from the opposite direction: looking at what it is not. That is after all a quintessentially Saussurean approach, since the semiotic value of a sign is defined differentially and negatively. I shall consider six ways in which structuralism is typically characterised, ways which do not stand up to scrutiny, or at least go wobbly when subjected to it. Here is my list, with no pretence that this is the first time any of these assertions has been made, though I am unaware of them all having been made jointly. Structuralism was not, or is not:

a. A unified movement
b. A rejection of history
c. A denial of subjecthood
d. Taxonomy without process
e. Anti-mental (or anti-meaning)
f. Anti-social

To be precise, I am arguing that when structuralism is characterised in these ways, it is an oversimplification. I am not trying to oversimplify in the opposite direction, by rejecting these reductivist characterisations totally; rather, the aim is to understand what has

led to them. Not just to present evidence against them, but to complexify the picture by adducing counter-evidence and recognising that variation exists within the paradigm: those who get classified as structuralists produced work to which one or more of characteristics 2 to 6 do indeed sometimes apply, in varying degrees.

2. Structuralism is not a unified movement …

… yet the very use of the term 'structuralism' implies that it is. As scholars of the subject and its history, we ritually acknowledge the diversity, then slip back into using the term. It is not hard to find examples of people asserting that it was a movement or a school, rather than a set of schools. But a highly diverse set it was, in which the individual schools were themselves internally fractious.

In 1969 Quentin Skinner cautioned against what he called 'the mythology of doctrines', in reaction to the idea of 'paradigms' that had arisen in the history of art with Gombrich (1960) and in the history of science with Kuhn (1962). When applied to the history of ideas, Skinner said, 'paradigm' fosters a mythology that how people thought at any given period was more unified than has ever historically been the case (see further Joseph 2015). This needs to be borne in mind when we talk about structuralism. As it happens, Kuhn's avowed inspiration for the idea was a linguist of the structuralist period, Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), and his well-known views of how the structure of one's language inclines one toward certain ways of thinking rather than others (see Kuhn 1970 [1962], vi). The Kuhnian paradigm is a kind of shared language-thought nexus; but no area of enquiry, Skinner maintained, is ever monolingual, as it were.

If I call Whorf a linguist of the structuralist period rather than a structuralist linguist, it is to avoid lapsing into Skinner's mythology of doctrines – but really it just trades one mythology, the labelling of a man, for another, the labelling of an age. Bourdieu's comment quoted above about classificatory labels pertains whether we apply 'structuralist' to individuals or to the time and context in which they worked. The mythology of doctrines turns all the characteristics in my list into essential features of structuralism, then treats anyone

whose work does not display one or more of the positions as an outlier. I am arguing however that none of these was a strong, widely held characteristic of work produced by structuralist linguists (I shall not be obsessive about avoiding the term), and that this work was so diffuse that everyone was, in effect, an outlier.

The reception of Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) and glossematics offers material for a whole panoply of case studies where the fundamental diversity of structuralist linguists of the mid-twentieth century was all too apparent. Parisians, Pragueans and Philadelphians each heard what was of particular interest to them, and latched onto or rejected that as though it were the whole of glossematics. In the USA, Paul Garvin (1919–1994) took on the role of a dragoman. His efforts to explain glossematics to his fellow American linguists, although intended to build a bridge, tended to dwell on how wide the chasm was. In his review of Hjelmslev (1953 [1943]) the letter H appears before any term when it is a 'form understood in Hjelmslev's sense' (Garvin 1954; see also Joseph 2021a), underscoring that the two fundamental languages in need of translation were not Danish and English, but Linguistic and Glossematic, which tend to be thought of as two dialects of Structuralism.

Garvin occupied a unique position, yet was typical of mid-century linguists in thinking of their field primarily in terms of national schools, not without a sense of nationalist pride attached to them (cf. e.g. Newmeyer on the USA, this volume). In each case, to qualify as linguistics, it needed to be modernist: that was an imposition of the Global North on any field with pretensions to being a science, and it turned whatever was not modernist enough into its Global Southern equivalent.[71] Linguistics made philology its South. In Paris from the 1920s to the 1960s, the Finno-Ugric specialist Aurélien Sauvageot (on whose work see Joseph 2019, Joseph 2022) was the sort of dragoman that Garvin would become in the USA, mediating

---

71. As is now generally known, the Global North and South are conceptual spheres which align only vaguely with their original geographic senses. Australia and New Zealand are examples of countries which are largely part of the Global North although in the southern hemisphere, and there are similar examples of Global Southern contexts in the northern hemisphere.

between, on the one hand, the philological traditions which were as close to a native linguistics as could be found in Finland and Hungary, and on the other, the structuralism of his generation of linguists, the students of Antoine Meillet (on whom more below). Structuralism is uniformly modernist, but the modernism itself varies from context to context.

3. Structuralism is not a rejection of history

One often reads that, starting with Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), structuralism aimed to replace diachronic with synchronic linguistic enquiry. Two examples:

> Most linguists work under the assumption (following the Saussurean paradigm) that synchronic linguistics is diametrically opposed to diachronic linguistics, and most of us who teach linguistics continue to insist on keeping the two approaches apart. (Kaye 2002, 800)
>
> Saussure makes a number of important distinctions. … Linguistics must study these arbitrary signs not in a historical or comparative way (diachronically) but in a single language at a single moment in time (synchronically). (Miller 2018)

If their target was indeed to replace diachronic with synchronic linguistic enquiry, Saussure and his successors had terrible aim. Every piece of work Saussure published in his lifetime was diachronic. In fact the very concept of diachronic linguistics was his creation: the comparison of whole language systems at different stages in time, rather than tracing individual elements through time, as was the norm in his day. He wanted to reform historical linguistic method, not abolish it. When we look at the output of linguists usually designated as structuralists, none of them disdains diachronic enquiry; it is always part of their work, and often dominates it – vastly so with a Meillet (1866–1936) or Émile Benveniste (1902–1976), largely so with the Prague and Copenhagen schools. Even Edward Sapir (1884–1939) in the 1930s was publishing articles on Hittite loanwords in Greek (1936) and the effect of a Hebrew loanword on Indo-European phonology (1937).

There is however another dimension to this, which would arise after World War II, when History with a capital H, the Marxist engine driving inevitably toward economic, political and social revolution, became intellectually dominant across the globe. As Lévi-Strauss led the structuralist advance from linguistics into ethnography at the end of the 1940s and into the 50s (cf. Hastrup this volume), when it was taken up more widely, structuralism was received as an alternative to Marxism, particularly because it was possible (though not necessary) to talk about structures as though they stood outside time. 'Structuralism argues that actions are determined (in some way) by social structures rather than as affected but different from social structures. The pre-eminence of structures leads to an indifference (or even hostility) towards history …' (Harvey 2012–20).

Linguistics in this period was allotting progressively more attention to synchronic analysis. Linguists who were Marxists were liberated from worries over this by Stalin's intervention of 1950,[72] clarifying that language is not superstructural, having been 'created not by some one class, but by the entire society, by all the classes of the society, by the efforts of hundreds of generations'. Thereafter it was not structural linguistics that got treated as the enemy by Marxist theoreticians, so much as the extensions of structuralism to fields concerned directly with society and labour. Here there was indeed a gap between structuralist analysis and Marxist analysis: capital-H History was left aside by structuralists, until Althusser's synthesis seemed to prove that a rejection of history was only contingent to structuralism, not essential to it. These methodological debates were inseparable from party-political affiliations, confusing the issues into the early 2000s.

---

72. This is not to say that all or even many linguists outside the USSR who were politically Marxist felt inclined to follow the Soviet scientific line, indeed we sometimes find them apologising for it or even, in the case of Sauvageot (1935), attacking it as not truly Marxist (see Joseph 2022).

4. Structuralism is not a denial of subjecthood

Marxists take the structures of structuralism to be in opposition not just to History, but to the Subject. 'Structuralism is not concerned with the role of the active subject, subjects are "determined" by structures' (Harvey 2012–20). Sharing this outlook with Marxists were both more traditional humanists and certain 'post'-structuralists (whose 'post'-ness was itself never clearly definable). Étienne Balibar (1942-) formulates his insightful investigation of this issue as a question: 'Structuralism: A destitution of the subject?' – to which his answer is a yes followed by a pair of buts:

> But this destitution should not in any way be confused with a nega-tion of an apophantic type, in which the annihilation, or inversion, of the predicates of individuation and belonging, or of self-presence and consciousness, constitutes by itself the essentiality of the subject …. But neither should it be confused with a misrecognition of subjectiv-ity or of the subject/object difference, which is precisely the mistake that personalist and transcendental critiques imputed to structuralism, whose slogan in a sense was the substitution of the object (be it a formal, residual, or complex object) for the subject. I believe that, in reality … the typical movement of structuralism resides in a simulta-neous operation of deconstruction and reconstruction of the subject … (Balibar 2003, 10)

Balibar is right about the position of structuralism vis-a-vis the Subject being widely misunderstood, and also in his characteri-sation of it as a simultaneous deconstruction and reconstruction. If he exaggerates in calling the substitution of the object for the subject the 'slogan' of structuralism, he signals his awareness of the exaggeration by adding 'in a sense'.

'Subject' is a classic example of a word by which people think they mean the same thing, yet on probing, it turns out to mean very different, even directly opposed things, whether it is phenom-enologists arguing against more traditional philosophers or against Marxists, or phenomenologists or Marxists arguing amongst them-selves. They think they hold contrary positions regarding the same

concept, when actually it is their concepts which are contrary. But their use of the same signifier masks this.

In saying that, I open myself to an accusation that I am denying the subjecthood of those who talk about the Subject, and asserting that their subjecthood – their command of what they are saying and hence of the position they are taking – is an illusion, because that command is at the very least mitigated by the language, by a trick or a trap built into its structure. The language then becomes the true Subject, with speakers as its Objects. To that charge I plead guilty with extenuating circumstances, in the form of my faith that if the language contains this trap, it also offers the way out of it, and it is up to us, as subjects, to make our way out.[73]

Structuralism is one of several movements that have been characterised as reactions against the so-called 'Cartesian subject', the *I* who says *I think, therefore I am*, and is endowed with an ability, potentially absolute, to turn thought and desire into action. With the denial of subjecthood, as with that of history, we have an accusation that is frequently taken as an original sin of structuralism, attributed to Saussure. But Saussure did not exclude the Subject from linguistic enquiry. His division of *langue*, the socially-shared language system, and *parole*, the utterances produced by an individual speaker, was made precisely in order to distinguish what belongs to each. Although he focussed in his courses on the linguistics of *langue*, he made clear his intention to move on to the linguistics of *parole* – and surely would have done so, had he lived. Despite his statements about the linguistics of *parole*, it is frequently asserted that he meant for linguistics to concern itself with *langue* only, based on the closing sentence of the *Cours de linguistique générale*: "Linguistics has as its unique and veritable object the language system envisaged in itself and for itself" (Saussure 1922 [1916], 317).[74] Out of context, this appears to be a banishment of *parole* from linguis-

---

73. Note that I have just fallen into another trap: saying 'we' and 'us' is potentially another mitigation, implicitly denying subjecthood to individuals and locating it instead in some social nebulosity.

74. "[L]a linguistique a pour unique et véritable objet la langue envisagée en elle-même et pour elle-même".

tics; but this sentence, written by the editors of the *Cours* and not found in Saussure's drafts or his students' notes, closes a chapter on language families and types. It is warning against the tendency to imagine that the "genius of a race" leads its language in certain deterministic directions. Saussure consistently rejected purported links between language and ethnicity. In that regard, linguistics should indeed be concerned with the language alone, and not with that race psychology which linked language type to worldview. The closing sentence was read, not as the noble-minded ending of a chapter taking up arms against racial determinism, but as the narrow-minded conclusion of the book as a whole.

The appeal of structuralism lay for many in its repositioning of the analysis of language, thought and action away from the 'Cartesian subject', which, although it rests on an untenable oversimplification of Descartes (see Joseph 2018a, 27, 110), had assumed the status of secular dogma. It was at the centre of debates amongst phenomenologists, Marxists and existentialists with Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) somehow having one foot in each of the first two camps whilst solidly planted in the third. To the younger generation, including Michel Foucault (1926–1984) and Bourdieu, it felt oppressive and ironic that, in order to succeed within the academic system, one had no choice but to assert the idea of free choice, where moreover the freedom was constrained by the tide of History (Joseph 2020a, 113).

Structuralism offered an intellectually respectable way out of the quandary, by demonstrating the existence of socially shared semiotic structures of knowing. This came as no surprise to linguists, who did not need to have it revealed to them that utterances are not the wholly free invention of those who produce them, but follow patterns which constitute what we call grammar. The surprise was that the patterns do not simply exist *in* the language – they actually *are* the language. What creates meaning are not the elements of the language but the differences between elements.

That was a difficult enough revelation for linguists to accept, but for philosophers and social scientists it turned things upside down to have it suggested that, as in language, the patterns of thought and action which they study are not patterned in the way

that a human creator or author patterns things, but by an internal system of differences that gives meaning-value to the signs which constitute everything knowable, signs which are socially shared. Nothing, then, is solely the result of the agentive choices of an individual Subject. Agency is shared between Subject and social structures – and here we find a gamut of positions taken. For some, the denial of *absolute* subjecthood, of unconstrained individual agency, means the denial of subjecthood *tout court*. For others, though, to recognise how social structures or forces constrain agency is necessary to make subjecthood a coherent and meaningful concept. This is at the centre of the projects pursued by Foucault and Bourdieu, who opposed an academic system which threatened to excommunicate anyone who would not follow the party line against the 'voluntarism' which absolute subjecthood endorsed – thus proving the power of the social forces whose existence the dogma denied.

Beyond linguistics, structuralism developed in the 1950s and after under the misunderstanding, tangible in the quotations given earlier in this section and the preceding one, that it was launched by Saussure as a theory denying the role of either Subject or History, dogmatically asserting a reductivist view of language, thought and action as the product of static structures, reproduced by the individual, who is unaware of their existence and yet under their control, quite as much as – or even more than – the individual in Marxism is pulled along by the tide of economic and political History.[75] If the internal consistency of the structuralist system of ideas runs counter to what Saussure intended in launching it, then this is indeed itself a case where we could expect a structuralist to contend that history needs to be set aside in favour of a focus on the conceptual system within its own synchronic terms.

---

75. In saying this I join in part with the critical views of Henri Meschonnic (1932–2009), who argued powerfully against what he saw as distortions and misappropriations of Saussure by 'the structuralists' (see Meschonnic 1989, Joseph 2018b) – but only in part, given that Meschonnic, who struggled throughout his career against structuralist linguists of various stripes, lumps them together into the sort of Skinnerian 'mythology of doctrines' which I am contesting.

But that does not amount to a dogmatic denial of history, and whilst it may represent an attenuation of subjecthood, it is a denial only if subjecthood is defined in such an absolute way that any attenuation of it is a denial, in which case all study of grammar is a denial of subjecthood. We then face the paradox that subjecthood has been constructed in terms of a rationality which is recognised and defined by normative language use. Those who defy its rules are liable to be classified within the Foucauldian dyad of unreason and madness and have subjecthood legally denied them.[76] The forfeit of some linguistic subjecthood is the price of legal subjecthood; though to put it that way is an oversimplification, since slaves may have the same linguistic subjecthood as their masters, and 'mad poets' may even enjoy an enhanced subjecthood. But here again the varying definitions of subjecthood mean that like is not being measured against like.

5. Structuralism is not taxonomy without process

The charge in question makes an early appearance in Robert Lees' (1922–1996) 1957 review of Noam Chomsky's (1928-) *Syntactic Structures* (1957). Then, in his 1962 address to the International Congress of Linguists (published in several versions, the last being Chomsky 1964), Chomsky takes up this use of 'taxonomic' as a criticism of his predecessors. Lees' student Frederick Newmeyer points out in his recent paper on the canonical *Readings in Linguistics* edited by Martin Joos (1957) how the ground was laid for it:

> Joos counterposed a 'taxonomic' approach to an 'explanatory' one, opting for the former. The empiricist wing of American structuralism was often described as taxonomically-oriented, since their procedures led to a taxonomic classification of grammatical elements. In the words

---

76. A dramatic though not unusual case of this is examined in Joseph (2021b). For Foucault (2006 [1961], 197), unreason (*déraison*) is a moral condition and madness (*folie*) a medical one, 'But as soon as thought, in its scientific speculation, tried to relate madness to its concrete faces, it necessarily met this moral experience of unreason.'

of Charles Hockett: "Linguistics is a classificatory science" (Hockett 1943, 3). (Newmeyer 2019, 318n.)

Chomsky extends the critique back to Saussure, who he says conceives of *langue* simply as an inventory of elements:

> Modern linguistics is much under the influence of Saussure's conception of *langue* as an inventory of elements (Saussure 1916, 154, and elsewhere, frequently) and his preoccupation with systems of elements rather than the systems of rules which were the focus of attention in traditional grammar and in the general linguistics of Humboldt. (Chomsky 1964, 23)
>
> The distinction I am noting here is related to the *langue-parole* distinction of Saussure; but it is necessary to reject his concept of *langue* as merely a systematic inventory of items and to return rather to the Humboldtian conception of underlying competence as a system of generative processes. (Chomsky 1965, 4).

But it is clear from the *Cours* and from its source materials that, whilst Saussure characterises the *langue* as a *trésor* – a hard metaphor to pin down since *trésor* can mean anything from a change purse to a storehouse, and either the container or its contents – he maintains that

> It is a *trésor* deposited by the practice of *parole* in the subjects belonging to one same community, a grammatical system existing virtually in each brain, or more exactly in the brains of an ensemble of individuals .... (Saussure 1922 [1916], 30)[77]
>
> ... the *trésor* of the *langue* where the generating forms are arranged according to their syntagmatic and associative relations. (ibid. 227)[78]

---

77. "C'est un trésor déposé par la pratique de la parole dans les sujets appartenant à une même communauté, un système grammatical existant virtuellement dans chaque cerveau, ou plus exactement dans les cerveaux d'un ensemble d'individus; car la langue n'est complète dans aucun, elle n'existe parfaitement que dans la masse" (the translation is mine). See also Joseph (2016).
78. "Toute création doit être précédée d'une comparaison inconsciente des matériaux déposés dans le trésor de la langue où les formes génératrices sont rangées selon leurs rapports syntagmatiques et associatifs".

That is much more than an inventory (see also Matthews 2001, 5–6). If it is a system of elements, those elements include the grammar, and all the 'rules' whereby the elements relate to one another both virtually (as associative relations) and through their syntagmatic combinations.

Linguists of the next generation take various approaches with regard to taxonomy versus process. Some of Leonard Bloomfield's (1887–1949) students, including Charles Hockett (1916–2000), will extend the behaviourist scruples about psychology to a puristic approach to processes or rules which have to be inferred from comparison of forms, where the forms alone can be directly observed, or indeed instances of the forms. From that perspective, only taxonomy is scientific; the rest is story-telling. But Bloomfield himself, in his "Menomini Morphophonemics" (1939), is very far from such purism, and few signs of it are found amongst linguists in Europe. Here, however, the purported structuralist anti-historicism conspires to create the perception that structuralism is dogmatically focussed on fixed, static elements: what Bourdieu called the *opus operatum*, as opposed to the *modus operandi*.

Although it is now rare to find 'taxonomic' being wielded as a criticism in print, a 2019 blog entry by a young linguist, citing Matthews (2001) as her source, says that "The term [structural linguistics] has recently been used in a third sense, particularly by followers of the transformational generative school. Such linguistics is characterized by transformationalists as 'taxonomic'" (Noori 2019). Once a definition takes root, it can have a long underground life. 'Mere taxonomy' can function, for example, as a convenient explanation for why a history of linguistics course opens its coverage in 1957, as some have done.[79]

---

79. In my years at the University of Maryland (1986–93), my colleague and friend David Lightfoot gave a course on History of Linguistics in which the first session was devoted to "before 1957".

6. Structuralism is not anti-mental or anti-meaning

Throughout the twentieth century, analytic philosophy was wrestling with the 'problem' of meaning. Behaviourists argued that to locate it in anything other than what people can be observed doing is to engage in metaphysics and mysticism. By the 1950s Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) had concluded that meaning is use, essentially concurring with Willard V.O. Quine's (1908–2000) view that it is indeterminate in analytical terms. As late as 1970 Hilary Putnam (1926–2016) published an article entitled "Is Semantics Possible?", his answer being yes, but only as a typically "sloppy and impressionistic" social science (Putnam 1970, 201).

If Bloomfield seems to sit on the extreme end amongst linguists, we should remember that linguists were not considered to be the equal of philosophers when it comes to fundamental matters such as meaning. By espousing the behaviourist stance, Bloomfield was, as they say, following the science. He defers to the scientific and philosophical consensus when the context is one which requires him to make a broad methodological statement. In his actual linguistic practice, however, he relies unabashedly on meaning in a traditional sense in order to identify forms and structures in languages. Some of his students aimed for a purer anti-mentalism, George Trager (1906–1992) most notably. Others just skirted the issue.

When in 1950–51 Benveniste undertook a transatlantic effort to develop a structural semantics, it failed on both sides of the ocean, despite the collaboration of Hjelmslev, J.R. Firth (1890–1960), Stephen Ullmann (1914–1976), Hendrik Pos (1898–1955) and others. The problem was not that they were anti-mental, but that conceiving of meaning as containable and analysable using the same methods as for linguistic form is a category mistake, made worse if linguistic meaning is not treated separately from other sorts of meaning, which are potentially limitless. The transcripts of the symposium organised at Nice (Benveniste 1951) show how far those taking part were from a meeting of minds, just on the European side of the Atlantic, let alone across it. It is one of those cases which Quentin Skinner was concerned with, where historical hindsight imposes a spurious consistency on a group or an individual.

7. Structuralism is not anti-social

Here again we are dealing with a two-pronged attack: a Marxist critique of its detachment of language from class struggle, going back to Valentin N. Voloshinov's (1895–1936) (1929) rejection of Saussure's 'abstract objectivism'; and an internal critique of structural linguistics for its idealisation of languages, pushing variation and multilingualism to the margins, along with sign languages and much else. Here is an example of this second critique:

> Saussure's ideas ... gave rise to ... the acknowledgment of the social dimensions of language. But within Linguistics, his insistence that language could be analyzed as a formal system of differential elements, apart from the messy dialectics of real-time production and comprehension, and in particular, his distinction between *langue*, the abstract rules and conventions of a signifying system independent of individual users on the one hand, and *parole*, the concrete instances of the use of *langue* by individuals in a series of speech acts on the other, led to the divergence of interests in two very different directions. (Garcia & Li 2014, 6)

Garcia & Li are right to spot this paradox in Saussure. Despite his repeated insistence that the language is a 'social fact', he does not go into its ramifications, apart from the section of the *Cours* on the *esprit de clocher* versus the force of 'intercourse' (Saussure 1922 [1916], 281–285). The language is deposited 'in identical form' in each member of the speech community (ibid. 38), and observable variation is a matter of *parole*, individual production.

Saussure's erstwhile student Meillet was the chief linguist on the team of Émile Durkheim's (1858–1917) *L'Année sociologique*, and Meillet did talk about social differences in language, though it was in terms of lexicon: the role of the argot of specialised professions in language change (Meillet 1905/6), or the 'noble' and 'peasant' nature of individual words in Latin (Meillet 1932; see Joseph 2020b, 7). In the 1960s Meillet's student Benveniste put forward the view that 'the language contains the society' (Benveniste 1970a, 95; 2012, 79 [2019, 84]) by encoding all the differences and values through which society is constituted. Some French linguists (including Mes-

chonnic 1995, 51) deny that Benveniste was a structuralist, because of his programmatic statements about *énonciation*, enunciation, where the focus is on the act of speaking rather than the language system (most notably in Benveniste 1970b). This highlights another aspect of the mythology of doctrines: whatever label we apply to a person, we want to be able to read their entire *œuvre* within its frame, apart perhaps from juvenilia. But Benveniste's work of the 1930s, when he was appointed to chairs in the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* and the *Collège de France*, was received as being aligned with that of others of the generation that gets classified as structuralist, and in later years he would be closely allied with Jakobson, Lacan and Lévi-Strauss (see Joseph, Laplantine & Pinault 2020). Even if his paper in the first issue of *Acta linguistica* (Benveniste 1939) starts to mark a distancing on certain points, through his whole career there is never what could be called a break from Saussure or Meillet (see also Strickland 1977, 116).

It will be another of Meillet's students, André Martinet (1908–1999), who sets structuralism on a sociolinguistic course, first with his *Prononciation du français contemporain* (1945), then, after his move to New York, with his programme at Columbia University that would produce the work of Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967) and William Labov (1927-). Weinreich's 1954 paper "Is a Structural Dialectology Possible?" makes clear the tension that was felt, whilst at the same time concluding that the answer to the question posed in the title is yes. Sociolinguists would aim to make their work as structuralist as possible, in order to gain respect for it within the linguistics establishment. In France, Bourdieu, who identified Labov as one of his contemporaries whose work he drew upon most (Bourdieu 2004, 13), never refused the label 'structuralist', although he would sometimes subvert it by calling his approach a "genetic structuralism" or a "constructivist structuralism" (see Joseph 2020a, 114–115). It is all about social processes, in language and beyond.

A tension within structuralism, yes – a paradox even – and for some a naive imagining that all the 'messy dialectics' to which Garcia & Li refer could be ignored. But no such imagining can be rightly attributed to Saussure and his lineage, which embraces all the major figures to whom the label of structuralist gets applied.

The worst they can be accused of is to have thought that the best way to unravel the complexity of language is to deal with its various aspects, including the individual and the social, not simultaneously but in turn.

In conclusion: it is our scholarly duty to carry on the never-ending struggle with reductionism – never-ending because of the steady demand for simplified summaries of scholarly work, which is not a bad thing in principle. It is in practice that the problems arise, when we let ourselves lump together 'structuralists' who were as aware of what separated them as of what joined them, and often more so. They varied in their attitudes toward history, subjecthood, mind, meaning and society, enough that a rejection of any of these cannot be taken as an essential feature of structuralism, even if found in the work of some in the period, some of the time.

Bibliography

Balibar, Étienne (2003), "Structuralism: A Destitution of the Subject?".
　　Trans. by James Swenson. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*
　　14/1.1–21.

Benveniste, Émile (1939), "Nature du signe linguistique". *Acta Linguistica*
　　1/1.23–29. Repr. in Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, t. 1.
　　Paris: Gallimard, 1966, 49–55. English version, 'The Nature of the Lin-
　　guistic Sign', in *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. by Mary Elizabeth
　　Meek, Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971, 43–48.

– (1951), *Actes de la conférence européenne de sémantique (Nice, 26–31 mars
　　1951)*, organisée par M.E. Benveniste (Paris), avec la participation de
　　MM.C.E. Bazell (Istambul), G. Devoto (Florence), J.R. Firth (Londres),
　　H. Frei (Genève), L. Hjelmslev (Charlottenlund), J. Lotz (Columbia U.
　　New-York), A. Sommerfelt (Oslo), S. Ullmann (Glasgow). Paris: Société
　　de Linguistique de Paris (mimeographed).

– (1970a), "Structure de la langue et structure de la société". *Linguaggi
　　nella società e nella tecnica (Congresso Internazionale Olivetti, Milano, 14–17
　　ottobre 1968)*. Milano: Edizioni di Comunità, 459–460. Repr. in Ben-
　　veniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, t. 2, Paris: Gallimard, 1974,
　　91–102.

– (1970b), "L'appareil formel de l'énonciation". *Langages* 5, n° 17, 12–18/
　　Repr. in *Problèmes de linguistique générale 2* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974),
　　79–88.

– (2012), *Dernières leçons: Collège de France, 1968 et 1969*. Ed. by Jean-Claude
　　Coquet & Irène Fenoglio. Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences
　　Sociales, Gallimard, Seuil. English version, *Last Lectures: Collège de
　　France, 1968 and 1969*, trans. by John E. Joseph, Edinburgh: Edinburgh
　　University Press, 2019.

Bloomfield, Leonard (1939), "Menomini Morphophonemics". *Travaux
　　du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* 8, Études phonologiques dédiées à la
　　mémoire de N.S. Trubetzkoy, 105–115.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1990), *In Other Words: Essays toward a Reflexive Sociology*.
　　Trans. by Matthew Adamson. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

– (2004), *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse*. Paris: Raisons d'agir. English
　　version, *Sketch for a Self-analysis*, trans. by Richard Nice, London: Polity,
　　2007.

Chomsky, Noam (1957), *Syntactic Structures*. s'Gravenhage: Mouton & Co.

– (1964), *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*. The Hague: Mouton.

– (1965), *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

DOSSE, FRANÇOIS (1991–92), *Histoire du structuralisme*. 2 vols. Paris: La Découverte. English version, *History of Structuralism*, trans. by Deborah Glassman, 2 vols. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

FOUCAULT, MICHEL (1961), *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Plon. English version, *History of Madness*, trans. by Jean Khalfa & Jonathan Murphy, London & New York: Routledge, 2006.

GARCIA, OFELIA & LI WEI (2014), *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Houndmills & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

GARVIN, PAUL L. (1954), Rev. of Hjelmslev (1953 [1943]). *Language* 30/1.69–96.

GOMBRICH, ERNST H. (1960), *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon.

HARVEY, LEE (2012–20), *Social Research Glossary*, Quality Research International, http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/socialresearch/

HASPELMATH, MARTIN (2020), "We Are All Structuralists". *Hypotheses*, https://dlc.hypotheses.org/2356.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard. English version, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. by Francis J. Whitfield (Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics, Memoir 7 of the *International Journal of American Linguistics*, Supplement to vol. 19, no. 1), Baltimore: Indiana University, under the auspices of the Linguistic Society of America and the American Anthropological Association, 1953.

HOCKETT, CHARLES (1943), "A System of Descriptive Phonology". *Language* 18.3–21.

JAKOBSON, ROMAN, counter-signed by TRUBETZKOY NIKOLAJ S. & KARCEVKSIJ SERGE (1928), 'Proposition au Premier Congrès International de Linguistes: Quelles sont les méthodes les mieux appropriées à un exposé complet et pratique de la phonologie d'une langue quelconque?'. *Actes du premier congrès international des linguistes à La Haye,* 336. Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff. Repr. in Jakobson, *Selected Writings, I: Phonological Studies*, 3–6. The Hague: Mouton. (2nd, expanded ed., 1971.)

JOOS, MARTIN (ed., 1957), *Readings in Linguistics: The Development of Descriptive Linguistics in America since 1925*. New York: American Council of Learned Societies.

JOSEPH, JOHN E. (2001), "The Exportation of Structuralist Ideas from Linguistics to Other Fields: An Overview". *History of the Language Sciences: An International Handbook on the Evolution of the Study of Language from the Beginnings to the Present*, ed. by Sylvain Auroux, E.F.K. Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe, and Kees Versteegh, vol. 2, 1880–1908. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter.

– (2015), "Corpse Puppetry: Anachronisms of Consistency, Continuity and Progress in the History of Linguistics". *History and Philosophy of the Language Sciences*, https://hiphilangsci.net/2015/06/03/salon-anachronism-in-linguistic-historiography/

– (2016), "The Cerebral Closet: Language as *valeur* and *trésor* in Saussure". *SPELL: Swiss Papers in English Language and Literatures* 32.39–61.

– (2018a), *Language, Mind and Body: A Conceptual History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

– (2018b), "'This Eternal Wanderer': A Non-dogmatic Reading of Saussure". *Le* Cours de linguistique générale: *Réception, diffusion, traduction*, ed. by John E. Joseph & Ekaterina Velmezova, 197–208. Lausanne: Cahiers de L'Institut de Linguistique et des Sciences du Langage de l'Université de Lausanne, no. 57.

– (2019), "The Resistant Embrace of Formalism in the Work of Émile Benveniste and Aurélien Sauvageot". *Form and Formalism in Linguistics*, ed. by James McElvenny, 141–174. Berlin: Language Science Press.

– (2020a), "The Agency of Habitus: Bourdieu and Language at the Conjunction of Marxism, Phenomenology and Structuralism". *Language & Communication* 71.108–122.

– (2020b), "Structure, mentalité, société, civilisation: les quatre linguistiques d'Antoine Meillet". 7e Congrès Mondial de Linguistique Française. https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2020/06/shsconf_cmlf2020_15002.pdf

– (2021a), "Why Does Language Complexity Resist Measurement?". *Frontiers in Communication* 6:624855. doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2021.624855

– (2021b), "The Linguistic Psychosis of Karl Tuczek's Patient Frau M.". Paper presented at the 15th International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences, Milan (online), 23–28 August.

– (2022), "Making Grammars Concrete Again: Aurélien Sauvageot's *Esquisses* of Finnish and Hungarian". *The Architecture of Grammar. Studies Linguistic Historiography in Honour of Pierre Sweiggers*, ed. by Tim Denecker, Piet Desmet, Lieve Jooken, Peter Lauwers, Toon Van Hal & Raf Van Rooy, 457–470. Leuven: Peeters.

JOSEPH, JOHN E., LAPLANTINE, CHLOÉ & PINAULT, GEORGES-JEAN (2020), "Lettres d'Émile Benveniste à Claude Lévi-Strauss (1948–1967)". *Histoire Epistémologie Langage* 42/1.155–181.

KAYE, ALAN S. (2002), Review of Erik W. Hansen, *The Synchronic Fallacy* (Odense: Odense University Press, 2001). *Language* 78/4.800.

KUHN, THOMAS S. (1962), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2nd, enlarged ed., 1970.

LEES, ROBERT B. (1957), Review of Chomsky (1957). *Language* 33.375–408.

Martinet, André (1945), *La prononciation du français contemporain*. Paris: Droz.

Matthews, Peter (2001), *A Short History of Structural Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meillet, Antoine (1905/6), "Comment les mots changent de sens". *Année sociologique* 9.1–38. Repr. in Meillet, *Linguistique historique et linguistique générale*, t. 1, Paris, Champion, 1921, 231–271.

– (1932), 2ᵉ avertissement à Alfred Ernout & Antoine Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: Histoire des mots*. Paris: Klincksieck.

Meschonnic, Henri (1989), "Traduire, et la Bible, dans la théorie du langage et de la société". In *La rime et la vie*, Lagrasse: Verdier. Paperback ed. Paris: Gallimard, 2006, 420–441. English version, "Translating, and the Bible, in the Theory of Language and of Society', trans. by John E. Joseph, in *The Henri Meschonnic Reader: A Poetics of Society*, ed. by Marko Pajević, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019, 229–243.

– (1995), "Seul comme Benveniste, ou Comment la critique manque de style". *Langages* nᵒ 118 (juin 1995), 31–55.

Miller, Joan M. (2018), "Structuralism". *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, on *Cengage*, https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/philosophy/philosophy-terms-and-concepts/structuralism

Newmeyer, Frederick J. (2019), "Martin Joos's *Readings in Linguistics*: A Publication History". *Historiographia Linguistica* 46/3.73–130.

Noori, Sarah (2019), "Structural Linguistics", https://www.facebook.com/LINGUISTCS/posts/structural-linguisticsbysarah-noorithere-have-been-structuralists-in-anthropolog/2477868419155325/ (last accessed 5 July 2022)

Putnam, Hilary (1970), "Is Semantics Possible?". *Metaphilosophy* 1/3.187–201.

Sapir, Edward (1936), "Greek ἀτύζομαι, a Hittite Loanword, and Its Relatives". *Language* 12/3.175–180.

– (1937), "Hebrew 'Helmet', a Loanword, and Its Bearing on Indo-European Phonology". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 57/1.73–77.

Saussure, Ferdinand de (1916), *Cours de linguistique générale*. Ed. by Charles Bally & Albert Sechehaye, with the collaboration of Albert Riedlinger. Paris & Lausanne: Payot. 2nd ed. 1922 (later eds substantially unchanged). English version, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin, New York: Philosophical Library, 1959 (preferable to the later retranslation by Roy Harris, London: Duckworth; La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1983).

SAUVAGEOT, AURÉLIEN (1935), "Linguistique et marxisme: la théorie 'japhétique' de l'académicien N. Marr". *À la lumière du marxisme*, 160–168. Paris: Éditions sociales internationales.

SKINNER, QUENTIN (1969), "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas". *History and Theory* 8/1.3–53.

STALIN, JOSEPH (1950), "Марксизм и вопросы языкознания" (Marksizm i voprosy iazykoznaniia). *Правда* (*Pravda*, The Truth), 20 June, 4 July & 2 August. (Anon. English translation, *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*, New York: International, 1951.)

STRICKLAND, GEOFFREY (1977), "Benveniste and Semiology: or Where Structuralism Doesn't Work". *The Cambridge Quarterly* 7.2: 113–128.

TYNJANOV, JURI & JAKOBSON, ROMAN (1928), "Проблемы изучения языка и литературы" (Problemy izucheniya yazyka i literatury). *Новый ЛЕФ* (Novyi LEF, New Left Front of the Arts) 12.36–37. English version, 'Problems in the Study of Language and Literature', trans. by R.T. De George, in *The Structuralists: From Marx to Lévi-Strauss*, ed. by Richard De George & Fernande De George, 80–83, New York: Anchor Books, 1972.

VOLOSHINOV, VALENTIN N. (1929), *Марксизм и философия языка* (*Marksizm i filosofiya yazyka*). Leningrad: Priboj. English version, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. by L. Matejka & I.R. Titunik, New York: Seminar Press, 1973.

WEINREICH, URIEL (1954), "Is a Structural Dialectology Possible?". *Word* 10.388–400.

Author: John E. Joseph, Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. He has written extensively on the history of linguistics; among his books is the authoritative biography of Ferdinand de Saussure. He is currently President of the *Cercle Ferdinand de Saussure.* E-mail: john.joseph@ed.ac.uk

The legacy of structuralism. Structuralist notions in contemporary linguistics

Klaas Willems and Thomas Belligh
University of Ghent

Abstract. *The article explores five notions which erstwhile played an important role in Structural Linguistics but continue, often implicitly or in an altered form, to live on in current linguistics: (1) the view that each language should be described in its own terms, (2) the claim that a distinction must be made between language-specific encoded meaning and non-language-specific meaning, viz. contextually and encyclopaedically enriched utterance meaning, (3) the view that in between the grammar of a language system and individual acts of discourse an intermediary level of 'normal language use' must be taken into account, (4) the claim that paradigmatic contrasts are of paramount importance to arrive at a coherent understanding of language systems, and (5) the conviction that language systems and grammars are of an inherently intersubjective and social nature. As well as examining convergences that reflect the legacy of structuralism in contemporary linguistic research, the article pays attention to epistemologically significant differences in approach, which require careful reconsideration of structuralist notions that are widely taken for granted but not always interpreted in the same way.*

> *"The seductive siren song of structuralism has yet to fade away"*
> *(Givón 2016, 699)*

1. Introduction

There are many possible approaches to the history of linguistics, including launching new editions of historical publications, studying influences, affinities, intellectual crosscurrents, and evaluating former schools of thought and frameworks with a view to establish whether current research may profit from them or not (Gordon 1992, 387). It is the latter approach we are primarily interested in in this article. The introductory quote from Givón shows that such an evaluation can turn out differently depending on what one considers to be the objective of historiographical research, but also on one's understanding of what has actually happened in the history of linguistics. Whereas Givón (2016) openly expresses his irritation about Lazard's (2012) claim that we can still learn from linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, we will take a more favourable view on structuralism in a spirit shared, we believe, by most contemporary historians of the language sciences. From this perspective, we maintain that linguists should not outright reject the work of previous generations but try to understand it and integrate their insights into current research. This is to some extent acknowledged by Givón as well when he points out that all linguists since structuralism in a sense 'must be *structuralists plus*' (Givón 2016, 682, emphasis in the original).

In this article, we discuss the legacy of structuralism with a focus on the presence of theoretical concepts and empirical analyses typical of structuralism in contemporary linguistics. We distinguish two perspectives on structuralism: in addition to taking into account contemporary linguistic schools of thought that have been explicitly founded on key notions of structuralism from their inception onwards, we will also pay attention to recent developments in linguistics that indicate a revival of structuralist concepts and analyses in frameworks that do not explicitly acknowledge any intellectual indebtedness to the structuralist tradition. We do not maintain that there currently is a conscious restoration of structuralist notions in contemporary linguistics, nor do we pretend that current linguistic frameworks fall short compared to the ones developed in the heyday of Structural Linguistics. We agree with most historians of

the language sciences that Structural Linguistics suffered from a number of shortcomings and is now justifiably considered obsolete as a paradigm (cf. Albrecht 2007, Ch. 10 for discussion). Structural Linguistics has moreover been surpassed, roughly since the 1970s, by frameworks which are often (though by no means always) more comprehensive and better attuned to the rich and diverse reality of language and language use. While it is our explicit aim to steer clear of any "kind of reactionary nostalgia for the certainties of an earlier age" (Sinha 2002, 275), what guides our enquiry is the observation that one can easily come across contemporary studies in linguistics in which concepts, distinctions, claims and analyses are put forward that are similar to what can be found in erstwhile structuralist accounts.

Before a comparison between some contemporary approaches in linguistics and the structuralist paradigm can be carried out, it is necessary to briefly recall the main characteristics of structuralism in linguistics (Section 2). We also specify which contemporary linguistic frameworks will be taken into consideration in our analysis, both with regard to accounts that are explicitly based on core tenets of structuralism and accounts that are not. We will then focus on five specific notions that played an important role in Structural Linguistics and continue to live on in current linguistics. The five specific issues we will discuss are the view that each language should be described in its own terms (Section 3), the claim that a distinction must be made between language-specific encoded meaning and non-language-specific meaning, viz. contextually and encyclopaedically enriched utterance meaning (Section 4), the view that in between the grammar of a language system and individual acts of discourse an intermediary level of 'normal language use' must be taken into account (Section 5), the claim that paradigmatic contrasts are of paramount importance to arrive at a coherent understanding of language systems (Section 6), and the conviction that language systems and norms are of an inherently intersubjective and social nature (Section 7). To conclude the article, we briefly address the general question of how modern linguistics can integrate still relevant structuralist insights by drawing on Hegel's notion of *Aufheben* ('sublation').

We add two caveats from the outset. First, we do not intend to contribute to the ongoing debate about the exact relationship between the historical figure of Ferdinand de Saussure and the historical movement called structuralism. Some scholars – in particular Jäger (1976, 1978, 2003, 2010); cf. also Rastier (ed., 2016) – have challenged the view that structuralism, understood as a framework based on a series of theoretical and methodological assumptions that emerged at the beginning **of** the twentieth century, developed the theory of language and linguistics outlined by Saussure in the *Cours de linguistique générale* (Saussure 1916/1922 [1975]); in the remainder of this article we refer to the critical edition by R. Engler, Saussure 1967–1968). This debate has demonstrated that Saussure and structuralism as a paradigm should not be confused with each other, neither historically nor conceptually. We will make sure that claims about structuralism and claims about Saussure are clearly distinguished in this article.

Second, in our exploration of the five aspects mentioned above, we will not address the distinction between an intuitionist approach to linguistics and what is now commonly known as a 'corpus-based approach', basically because the difference between these approaches is orthogonal to the issues we will discuss. Both intuitionist and corpus-based approaches can be found in nineteenth-century Historical and Comparative Linguistics as much as in twentieth-century Structural, Cognitive and Functional Linguistics. The difference between 'arm-chair linguistics' based on intuition and corpus-based linguistics cuts through all frameworks of the previous and current century to some extent and is not suited as a criterion that can be used to distinguish particular notions typical of different frameworks or to reveal the different theoretical and methodological assumptions of the frameworks we will focus on in this article.

2. Structuralism and contemporary linguistics

2.1 *The basic assumptions of Structural Linguistics*

As Van de Walle et al. (2006) point out, it has to be borne in mind that there have been several structuralist theories rather than one single structuralist theory (see Joseph this volume). Like all other modern linguistic frameworks, structuralism had many faces, which is not surprising given the international diversification of the paradigm in the twentieth century (see Newmeyer this volume, Jensen & Gregersen this volume). It is customary to distinguish, e.g., between European, North-American and Russian schools of structuralism, but there were also many scholars in other parts of the world who adhered to structuralist assumptions until well into the 1970s (cf. Albrecht 2007). However, although structuralism was not, as occasionally thought, a unitary paradigm, it is possible to pinpoint a number of basic assumptions which were shared by arguably most scholars who more or less expressly positioned themselves as representatives of structuralism. Following Van de Walle et al. (2006, 2–3), we would like to highlight the following five sets of assumptions.

a) "Structuralists tend to stress the autonomy of the language system *vis-à-vis* other aspects of language, such as sociological, psychological and pragmatic or discourse factors, which are considered 'external'" (Van de Walle et al. 2006, 3). A language system is a specific 'social system' (Joseph 1995, 225). A corollary of this view is that "there are as many particular systems as there are languages", which in turn translates into empirical analyses of linguistic phenomena that favour categorial particularism, as opposed to categorial universalism (cf. Lazard 2006).

b) A language-specific 'functional' system (*langue*) is based on relations which are foundational for the formal and semantic properties of the linguistic units between which these relations exist. This may be called the 'principle of anti-atomism' that was instrumental in forwarding the Saussurean approach to 'a language' after the publication of the *Cours de linguistique générale*

(Saussure 1916/1922 [1975]). The 'systematic' approach entails a relational, differential approach to linguistic signs. The linguistic sign is defined as a bilateral entity consisting of the inseparable juncture of a signified (*signifié*) and a signifier (*signifiant*), which entertains both paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations with other signs.

c) From a structuralist perspective, it is imperative to distinguish synchronic from diachronic analyses of language, which are considered two perspectives on language with far-reaching methodological consequences. Languages should moreover first be studied from a synchronic point of view, which has logical priority over the diachronic point of view. For Saussure in particular, the synchronic point of view corresponds to the knowledge speakers possess of a language understood as a system of linguistic signs (Van de Walle et al. 2006, 6), which does not preclude the possibility that speakers entertain opinions and judgments about historical features of their language.

d) Structuralism subscribes to the famous words in the *Cours de linguistique générale* (Saussure 1916/1922 [1975], 169) that language is not a 'substance' but a 'form'.[80] To the extent that 'form' can be taken to mean that a *langue* is a 'structure' and/or consists of structures (Van de Walle et al. 2006, 3), the structuralist focus on form entails that language should not be studied with the methodology of the natural sciences but by means of new, genuinely linguistic methods that are appropriate to its object of study. Already Saussure himself – who never used the term 'structuralism' – occasionally referred to 'structures', in particular the structure of words (Saussure 1967–1968, 278) and differences in

---

80. The assertion "la langue est une forme et non une substance" is actually an addition by the editors of the *Cours* (1916/1922), Ch. Bally and A. Sechehaye. Saussure himself entertained a more nuanced understanding of 'form' in language. He emphasised that 'form' and 'meaning' constitute an original synthesis in linguistic signs, separable only as a result of posterior analysis (see Saussure 1967–1968, 256–264 and Saussure 2011, 72, 104, 140–141, 148–149; cf. Jäger 1976, 1978 and Willems 2016a for discussions).

structure with regard to 'different types of language' (441) (cf. also Saussure 2011, 127).

e) Finally, in contrast to Bloomfield (1933) and post-Bloomfieldian structural linguists, who emphasised the study of linguistic forms (expressions) with as little regard as possible for substance (Van de Walle et al. 2006, 19, Newmeyer this volume), European structuralists such as Jakobson (1936 [1971]) and Hjelmslev (1935–1937, 1959) stressed the need to analyse meaning as an inherent aspect of language systems (cf. Jensen & Gregersen this volume). Meaning is considered by these structuralist scholars to be "not reducible to external factors or reference" (Van de Walle et al. 2006, 3). Meaning is furthermore amenable to an analysis in terms of functional oppositions that has been successfully applied to the domain of phonology in Prague structuralism (cf. Trubetzkoy 1939 [1958]).[81]

It is not possible to address the status of all these assumptions and points of view in contemporary linguistics in detail in this article. We will instead focus on five specific ideas that have loomed large in the history of Structural Linguistics and that we consider of particular relevance for our purpose to examine the traces of structuralism in contemporary linguistics (Sections 3 through 7). In accordance with the conceptual clarifications put forward under d) in this section, we will continue to use the terminological pair 'form' and 'meaning' to refer in general terms to the two sides of the bilateral linguistic sign. Hjelmslev (1943 [1961], §13) proposed to further differentiate Saussure's notions 'signified' and 'signifier' by combining the distinction between 'content' and 'expression' with

---

81. Hjelmslev does not model the analysis of grammar and the lexicon on the principles of phonology, but instead advocates an account of all aspects of language on the basis of general sets of categories that are not derived from the study of any specific level of language. This is actually one of the major aspects of the continuity between Hjelmslev's so-called preglossematic and glossematic periods, which is easily overlooked or underestimated (see Van de Walle 2009, 230–232; see also Cigana, this volume).

the distinction between 'form' and 'substance' and delimiting the four strata thus defined ('content-form' and 'content-substance', 'expression-form' and 'expression-substance') *vis-à-vis* the general layer of 'purport' (cf. Albrecht 2007, 141–144, Fudge 1995, Graffi this volume and Jensen & Gregersen this volume for brief overviews). In order not to complicate matters, we do not rely on Hjelmslev's further differentiations in this article.

2.2 Two complementary perspectives

As mentioned in the introduction, there are two main areas that are relevant for the study of the legacy of structuralism in current linguistics. First, several contemporary linguistic schools of thought express their allegiance to the structuralist tradition and continue to defend, albeit with important qualifications, structuralist ideas and assumptions.[82] Second, authors of different persuasions who often explicitly reject structuralism as a paradigm occasionally make claims, or rely on concepts, distinctions and methods, that are similar to what can be found in former structuralist accounts. The resulting analyses are reminiscent of notions that were once taken for granted in Structural Linguistics before largely falling into oblivion, but they apparently keep re-entering linguistic accounts by the back door. In this section, we briefly characterise both perspectives.

It is not our aim to provide an exhaustive list of the schools of thought and scholars that have explicitly adopted and further developed structuralist notions, either directly from Saussure or indirectly through early American or European (in particular Danish) Structuralism; compare, for example the work of Henry Gleason (1917–2007), Sydney Lamb (1929-) and Sebastian Shaumyan

82. We deliberately refrain from using the term 'neo-structuralist', which might cause confusion because of the lack of clear criteria for how to define and apply it. The term has been used to refer to a wide range of approaches, e.g. Wierzbicka's 'Natural Semantic Metalanguage', Pustejovsky's 'Generative Lexicon' and Fellbaum's 'WordNet' (cf. Geeraerts 2010, Ch. 4), which do not necessarily share basic assumptions about language. Some of these approaches even explicitly reject basic claims of classical Structuralism, e.g. about linguistic particularism or about the bilateralness of the linguistic sign (see also Section 4).

(1916–2007) in the United States, Alan Gardiner (1879–1963) in the United Kingdom, Emile Benveniste (1902–1976), André Martinet (1908–1999), Gustave Guillaume (1883–1960), Antoine Culioli (1924–2018) in France, Leo Weisgerber (1899–1985) in Germany, among many other scholars in the Soviet Union, Eastern and Southern Europe and South-America.[83] Moreover, while several linguistic frameworks in the second half of the twentieth century have been explicitly built on Structural Linguistics, e.g. the Columbia School of Linguistics (Kirsner 1979, Diver 1995), only a handful of them have been able to continue that effort until the present day. The frameworks that are particularly relevant to mention in the context of this article are Eugen Coseriu's (1921–2002) school of Integral Linguistics, alternatively known as the Tübingen School of linguistics (Coseriu 1958 [1974], 1962 [1975], 1985, 1987, 1992, 2001, 2007, Albrecht et al., eds. 1988, Stehl and Haßler, eds. 2017, Kabatek 2018, 2022, Willems and Munteanu, eds. 2021, among others), M.A.K. Halliday's (1925–2018) school of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1973, 1978, 1995, Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014, Martin 1992, Butler 2003, Taverniers 2011, among others) and the initiatives to revive, integrate and continue the school of Danish structuralism and the work of Louis Hjelmslev in particular (Rasmussen, ed. 1993, Piotrowski 1997, Vykypěl 2005, Zinna and Cigana, eds. 2017, among others).

Both Integral Linguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics can be classified under the common denominator of 'structural-functional approaches.' They explicitly draw inspiration from structuralism, in the case of Integral Linguistics mostly from the work of Saussure, but also from Trubetzkoy, Hjelmslev, Jakobson, Bloomfield and Martinet (cf. Coseriu 1958 [1974]), in the case of Systemic Functional Linguistics mostly from the work of Hjelmslev and the Copenhagen School of linguistics and the work of J.R. Firth (1890–1960) and the London School of linguistics (cf. Halliday 1995, Taverniers 2011). At the same time, both frameworks pay due attention to the diversity and richness of language use, including discourse

---

83. See the various articles in Section X '20th Century Linguistics' of Koerner and Asher (eds. 1995) and Albrecht (2007, Ch. 4) for succinct overviews.

traditions and text linguistics (Kabatek 2018, 2022, Martin 1992). Integral Linguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics not only incorporate many structuralist insights, but also go 'beyond structuralism' (Coseriu 2001, 109–115). The current initiatives to revive the school of Danish structuralism, on the other hand, remain closer to the original structuralist edifice of Hjelmslev and his school, while leaving room for innovation in domains such as linguistic change, connotation, linguistic norms and even mathematical linguistics. In addition to the overall similarities, these schools of thought also differ with regard to many aspects. In the ensuing sections we will make reference to some of these schools of thought and provide examples of the analyses they have put forward so as to bring out the points we consider revelatory of the legacy of structuralism in contemporary linguistics. For the sake of coherence, our focus will mainly be on European structural functionalism.

With regard to the second perspective, we will, for the purposes of this article, focus on frameworks that pertain to the broad paradigm of functionally oriented linguistics, in particular Cognitive Linguistics (Langacker 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1999, 2007, Taylor 1999, 2002, 2003, 2012, Geeraerts and Cuyckens, eds. 2007) and Construction grammar (Fillmore 1988, Fillmore and Kay 1993, Goldberg 1995, 2006, Hoffmann and Trousdale, eds. 2013), Functional Typology (Dryer 1997, Evans and Levinson 2009, Haspelmath 2007, 2010, Matić and Wedgwood 2013), and a number of pragmatic approaches to language, in particular Neo-Gricean pragmatics (Atlas 1989, 2005, Bach 1994, 2010, Grice 1989, Levinson 2000). These various frameworks are undoubtedly highly diverse, both with regard to their historical background and their scope, aims and analyses. What makes it relevant to group them together is that all of them have little, if any, affinity for the structuralist tradition and yet frequently rely on structuralist notions in their investigations of linguistic phenomena.

None of these latter frameworks present themselves as being explicitly built on previous work in the structuralist tradition, but rather consider themselves to have left behind structuralism. Occasionally reference is made to structuralist ideas with a nod to structuralist precursors, for example as when cognitive gram-

marians maintain that the cognitive definition of the linguistic sign is "profoundly Saussurean in spirit" (Taylor 1999, 18–19), which is however based on an interpretation that glosses over considerations that were central to Saussure (cf. Willems 2011, 2016a). It is more common that concepts, distinctions and claims with a distinctly structuralist flavour are introduced without being acknowledged as having already a history in structuralist work. When surveying this type of structuralist aftermath, we will not only point out similarities but also address differences in approach. The legacy of structuralism in these frameworks should not be misconstrued as acts of historiographically informed restoration. It is important to keep in mind that similarity of concepts, distinctions, arguments and methods across periods of time and across different frameworks does not mean that they are identical. The disruption that took place in the decades after the heyday of structuralism should not be underestimated. This is why the issues on which we will focus are treated with equal attention to convergences and differences.

3. Structuralist notion no. 1: Each language should be described in its own terms

With the Chomskyan turn in linguistics, one of the guiding principles of structuralism, viz. that each language should be described in its own terms, came under severe criticism. Contrary to Structural Linguistics, Generative Grammar has been first and foremost interested in the principles of Universal Grammar (UG) and the constraints on parametric variation of linguistic structures across languages. The criticism was intimately associated with Chomsky's major charge that, like most nineteenth-century historical linguists, Saussure had effectively placed syntax outside the scope of linguistics proper (Chomsky 1972 [2006], 18). By contrast, many functionalist researchers who emphasise the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to language have explicitly reverted to the guiding principle that linguistic enquiry should not be driven by *a priori* formal assumptions regarding *Language*, but by the interest in the substantive variation encountered in particular *languages*.

In Integral Linguistics, it has been argued, for instance, that the syntax of Japanese cannot be adequately captured by relying on putative universal categories such as 'subject', 'object', 'active' and 'passive', which are well-established in the tradition of grammatical analysis of Indo-European languages. Japanese syntax should instead be analysed by relying on categories that capture the specificity of the Japanese language system. Japanese verbs are inflected for tense, aspect, mood, honorific relationship, etc., but not for person and number, and Japanese shows no agreement. Coseriu (1987, 96–118) links this finding to an analysis of verbal semantics and valency. He argues that Japanese does not have a 'subject' or 'direct object' in the common understanding of these terms, because Japanese verbs are fundamentally 'impersonal'. Coseriu (1987) goes on to argue that diathesis in Japanese cannot be understood in terms of the contrast between 'active' and 'passive' voice familiar from Indo-European languages. In fact, Japanese distinguishes two types of 'passive diathesis', viz. *judo* and *ukemi*, the latter being the original and historically older passive voice in Japanese. *Ukemi* in particular is characterised by various language-specific properties that cannot be subsumed under an Indo-European informed understanding of what passive diathesis is without distorting the relevant linguistic facts, according to Coseriu. This kind of particularist approach to linguistic categories does not prevent Coseriu from defining any linguistic category encountered in a specific language at the same time as a 'potential universal' in view of Language in general (Coseriu 1974 [1977]; see Willems 2016b for discussion).

The focus on language-particular categories is widely shared in contemporary Functional Typology. Functional Typology does not openly subscribe to a structuralist point of view, yet it adopts several ideas that are structuralist in spirit. For instance, in a widely discussed paper, Evans & Levinson (2009) argue against the generative view that all languages share a common blueprint (UG) or are built to a common plan. Differences between languages, the authors claim, are substantial and the true object of linguistics, viz. these differences are not reducible to the structures proposed by the restrictivist approach advocated by generative linguists. Most functional linguists nowadays share the view that the renewed focus

on language diversity and variation is to be applauded. What is less often recognised is that this focus dovetails with one of the basic claims of structuralism.[84]

Another particularly interesting case in point is the recent typologically informed criticism of the basic information structural category of 'focus' by Matić and Wedgwood (2013). In virtually every theory of information structure, the notion of focus plays a key role. Depending on the specific account, focus has been defined in various ways, for example as "indicator of alternatives" (Féry and Krifka 2008, 125) or as "the semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition" (Lambrecht 1994, 213). While it is generally acknowledged that the formal manifestations of focus can differ from language to language, potentially involving word order, morphology and prosody, the standard view in information structure research is to assume that the functional category of focus is a cross-linguistically stable category that is manifested in virtually every language. On the basis of a typological study of the many particular uses of focus constructions in languages around the world, Matić and Wedgwood (2013) challenge this view. They argue that by relying on a number of focus diagnostics, such as elicitation questions, it is possible to identify various 'focus constructions' in a sundry variety of languages in the world, but as soon as one takes a semasiological perspective and starts examining the so-called 'focus constructions' in more detail, it becomes clear that a universal notion of focus, regardless of how it is defined, does not do justice to the diversity and richness of the uses of the various focus constructions. For example, the Somali morpheme *baa* has been analysed as a focus particle because it is used in answer to standard elicitation tests for focus,

---

84. It also complies with a Humboldtian approach to language and linguistics, which places particular emphasis on language diversity (Trabant 1986, Coseriu 2015, II, Ch. 12). This approach had already been lent support before the publication of Saussure's Cours (1916) by the work of German-born anthropologist and linguist Franz Boas, who greatly influenced categorial particularism through his work on native American languages (Boas 1911). The work of Boas was instrumental in the development of American structuralism (cf. Hymes and Fought 1981, Fought 1995 and Kilarski 2021).

such as WH-questions that can elicit focus on particular constituents in the answer to such questions. Matić and Wedgwood (2013) point out that if *baa* is examined without the *a priori* assumption that it is purely a focus morpheme, then it is evident that *baa* has many other uses that have nothing to do with the category of focus. *Baa* can also be used to indicate a change of topic, to increase textual coherence and as a marker of realis mood. On the basis of similar cases, Matić and Wedgwood (2013) conclude that focus is at most 'a comparative concept' and not a 'language-particular category', in accordance with the conceptual distinction proposed by Haspelmath (2010). Under their view, a universal notion of focus is at most a useful tool for linguists to compare various related interpretational effects across languages, but not a category that captures aspects of the grammar of specific languages. In developing their analysis, Matić and Wedgwood (2013) thus adopt a strikingly structuralist perspective, without mentioning this explicitly.

Although contemporary Functional Typology sides with earlier structuralist research in emphasising language diversity and favouring categorial particularism, there are also substantial differences between both approaches. In the structuralist tradition, subscribing to the view that each language should be described in its own terms did not entail that generalisations across languages were ignored. For example, structural linguists already pointed out that language contact and cultural factors may affect structures across languages; compare, in particular, the seminal contributions to the study of areal linguistics by Trubetzkoy (1931), Jakobson (1931 [1962]), Bloomfield (1933, Ch. 19) and Coseriu (1955 [1975]), among others. However, the focus of structuralism with regard to cross-linguistic generalisations was on general principles of language structuring that were assumed to be universally applicable, in particular the systems of oppositions and paradigmatic contrasts that can be found both in phonology and grammar overall (cf. Section 6). By contrast, current functional typologists stress that universal properties of languages are not to be explained on language-internal grounds but in view of external 'universal-functional pressures' or 'general functional and cognitive principles', including processing constraints (Dryer 1997, Haspelmath 2007, Evans and Levinson 2009).

While the structuralist focus on systematic properties of grammar does not itself contradict the view that grammars are historically shaped by functional and cognitive principles, many functional and cognitive linguists associate the assumption of the vital role external functional pressures and cognitive principles play in language with the profoundly un-structuralist claim that the distinction between grammar (*langue*, the language system) and language use (*parole*) cannot be maintained. This is, as Newmeyer (1998) argues, an essential feature of the holistic 'usage-based approach' that dominates both current functional and cognitive linguistics. This particular point of view does not merely imply that linguistic analyses should be based on accounts of language use, but linguistic analyses can give up the very concept of *langue* or a language-specific grammar altogether, with all the circularity this involves (cf. already Silverstein 1981; see also Newmeyer 2003). For example, Taylor (2012) conceives of a language as a 'mental corpus', which amounts to equating knowledge of a language with a memorised repository of previous experiences with language, resulting in a hierarchically structured, interrelated network of linguistic units that are to various degrees schematic. Under this view, there is no place for *langue*-specific systematic contrasts in phonology, morphology and syntax as conceived by structuralists, just as there is no reason to bring out the specific differences between the grammars and lexicons of different languages other than the language variation in particular instances of language use. We will return to the structuralist distinction between *langue* and *parole* in Section 5.

The distinction between Structural Linguistics and the holistic, usage-based approach can also be linked to the debate concerning the relation between 'crosslinguistic concepts' and 'language-particular categories' already mentioned above (cf. Haspelmath 2007, 2010, Newmeyer 2010). The claim that language-particular generalisations and universal, cross-linguistic generalisations are virtually disconnected can only be upheld if it is assumed that the concepts used for cross-linguistic comparison are arbitrary artefacts of linguists. For example, this is evident in the assertion that focus merely is 'a heuristic tool' (Matic and Wedgwood 2013, 158–160). Under this view, the delimitation and definition of concepts advanced by

linguists for cross-linguistic comparison are not guided by the categories structurally encoded in particular language systems, which are ultimately considered unique, possibly idiosyncratic, but not potentially universal. Linguistic typology can accordingly dispense with 'language-particular categories,' and their formal and semantic description is not considered necessary in order to arrive at cross-linguistic generalisations. 'Semantic maps' are another case in point. Drawing 'semantic maps' allows functional typologists to compare how linguistic items partially overlap and partially differ in their uses, e.g. the prepositions *to* in English and *à* in French and the functionally partly similar dative case in German (Haspelmath 2003). The empirical analyses that lead to semantic maps draw on 'crosslinguistic concepts' with a view to compare languages from an onomasiological point of view. The functions displayed on the maps are general concepts that capture (typical) uses of linguistic items in various languages, they do not aim to capture the language-specific encoded signifieds of the items under study. By charting and comparing their 'multifunctionality' by means of concepts that are considered merely tools for typological enquiry, it is possible to sidestep the question how crosslinguistic concepts relate to the language-particular categories of the different languages – yet it is the knowledge of the various language-particular categories that informs the delimitation and definition of the different crosslinguistic concepts in the first place.

Thus, despite acknowledging that particular languages have their own categories, which is in accordance with the structuralist emphasis on studying languages in its own terms, the aims of Functional Typology and the former structuralist research agenda regarding linguistic generalisations are opposed to one another in this particular respect. Whereas structural linguists resorted to general principles of linguistic structuring to account in a systematic fashion for the irreducible cross-linguistic diversity of the world's languages, functional typologists draw on language-particular categories in order to show that diversity and variation are universally constrained by general functional and cognitive principles and processing constraints.

4. Structuralist notion no. 2: The distinction between language-specific signifieds and non-language-specific senses

Saussure pioneered the difference between language-specific signifieds (Fr. *signifiés*) grounded in a system of differing *valeurs* in the *langue* of a particular language, on the one hand, and the multifunctionality of the language-specific form-meaning pairings in *parole* (Saussure 1967–1968, 251–276).[85] The distinction was taken up by early European structuralists, in particular Trubetzkoy (1939 [1958]), Hjelmslev (1928, 1935–1937, 1943 [1961]), Reichling (1935), Jakobson (1936 [1971]), among others. It is in this context that Jakobson (1936 [1971]) introduced the notion *Gesamtbedeutung* and Hjelmslev (1935–1937) the notion *Grundbedeutung* (which he adopted from Wüllner 1827) with regard to grammatical signifieds. Full-fledged accounts of the language-specific structures of lexical signifieds were not developed until later, in particular by German scholars such as Jost Trier (1894–1970), Gunther Ipsen (1899–1984) and Walter Porzig (1895–1961) (*Wortfeldtheorie* 'semantic field theory') and American anthropological linguists like Ward Goodenough (1919–2013), Harold Conklin (1926–2016) and Floyd Lounsbury (1914–1998). These latter scholars developed componential semantic analyses similar to European accounts, with Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967) as an important figure for the explanation of the rationale underlying the concept of feature analysis. The European structuralist approach was continued, but gradually adapted to a less strict approach of signifieds in the work of Algirdas Greimas (1917–1992), Bernard Pottier (1924-), Luis Prieto (1926–1996) and several other structuralists (cf. Geckeler 1971, Coseriu and Geckeler 1974 and Lyons 1977, Ch. 8–9).

Among contemporary structural-functional approaches to language, Integral Linguistics continues to play the role of ardent defender of the need to observe the distinction between indefeasible language-specific signifieds, which are underspecified, and the con-

---

85. See Wunderli (1981), Joseph (2004), Willems (2016a), among others, for discussions. The difference is already addressed by Saussure at various places in De la double essence du langage (Saussure 2011).

textual and/or encyclopaedic enrichments signifieds undergo when linguistic signs are instantiated in specific instances of language use (cf. Coseriu 1970, 1987, 1992, Dietrich 1997, Willems 1994, 2011, Kabatek 2000, among others). Proponents of Integral Linguistics have defended this position time and again against criticisms from different quarters. As an example to illustrate this effort, recall the discussion about the meaning of the English verb *climb*, a word that has been much discussed in the literature. Fillmore (1982) adopts a cognitive approach to semantics and considers 'clambering' and 'ascending' as the two 'critical conditions' of the semantic prototype of *climb*. This entails that in non-prototypical uses either of the two conditions may be absent, but they may not both be absent. Compare *The snake climbed (up) the tree* but?*The snake climbed (down) the tree*.[86] Coseriu (1990 [2000], 28–29) argues that it is essential to distinguish the unitary language-specific encoded signified of the verb *climb* from its various instantiations depending on the contexts of use. While features such as 'ascending' and 'clambering' are adequate to characterise specific salient uses of the verb, they cannot be used to determine the language-specific encoded signified of *climb*. According to Coseriu, the signified of *climb* only specifies "on a vertical or inclined plane" (not 'up' nor 'down') and "with effortful use of extremitie" (not necessarily 'with limbs') (Coseriu 1990 [2000], 28). The semantic features that Coseriu proposes for the semantic paraphrase of the verb are not derived from its prototypical use(s) in discourse but established with a view to capture the unitary signified that licenses prototypical and non-prototypical senses alike.

In a similar vein, Van der Gucht et al. (2007) show that the language-specific encoded signified of the English preposition *over* is a unitary combinatorial meaning ('instrumental meaning' in the terminology of Coseriu 1987, 149) that can be paraphrased as "positioning of X *vis-à-vis* a reference point Y which is inferior to X", while various more specific uses of the preposition belong to a level

---

86. Alternative analyses along similar lines were proposed by Jackendoff (1990), Wierzbicka (1990) and Taylor (2003, 108–111). See Hanks (2013, 99–101) for a brief overview and yet another analysis in accordance with prototype theory, albeit in terms of preferential and probabilistic features.

of non-language-specific referential functions. De Cuypere (2013) argues that the language-specific encoded signified of the English preposition *to* should historically be paraphrased as "establisher of relationship between X and reference point Y'. More specific uses, such as 'temporal boundary', e.g. in *She worked from dawn to dusk*, and 'addressee', e.g. in *She talked to him*, are analysed as contextually and conceptually enriched senses. A similar account has recently been provided for the preposition *with* in English and its counterparts in German, Swedish and French by Widoff (2021). Recent work in the context of Integral Linguistics has thus made a strong case for observing the difference between language-specific encoded signifieds and the much more specialised non-language-specific referential functions ('senses') to which linguistic signs – i.e. form–meaning pairings of language-specific signifiers with language-specific signifieds – are put to use. According to this line of research, the difference between the meaning that is given in a particular language system and the meaning that is constructed in a speech act, which involves reference to some object of discourse, is key to a coherent approach to natural language semantics, in line with one of Structural Linguistics' basic assumptions.

This distinction was not retained in many frameworks (at least not in the sense intended by Saussure and many of his structuralist followers in Europe), which nevertheless adopted the originally structuralist method of componential analysis. The feature analysis Katz and Fodor (1963) and Katz and Postal (1964) developed as part of their Generative Semantics extended the componential approach to all traits that play a role in the interpretation of lexical items in context, disregarding whether the trait is an encoded language-specific feature or not (cf. Geckeler 1971, 433–444 for discussion). Lehrer (1974), too, proposed an approach to lexical fields in which language-specific signifieds are no longer distinguished from other components of meaning as a matter of principle. The same holds true for more recent accounts, for example Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage and Pustejovsky's Generative Lexicon. In these accounts, language-specific semantic features and encyclopaedic features are conflated with a view to map out a theory of disambiguation and interpretation of words in context. This conflation

goes hand in hand with an explicit universalist claim regarding the features put forward in the componential analyses. It is assumed that language-specific meanings can in large part be reduced to universal features. This claim is very explicit in a framework such as Wierzbicka's (1972, 1996) Natural Semantic Metalanguage, while it remains implicit in Pustejovsky's (1995) Generative Lexicon model (cf. Willems 2011 and 2013 for discussion).

Cognitive linguists, on the other hand, usually reject componential semantic analysis altogether and instead favour semantic analyses in terms of prototypes or prototypicality effects, mental spaces and idealised cognitive models and frames (cf. Kleiber 1990, Blank 1997, Geeraerts 1997, 2010). These notions reflect the holistic approach to meaning cognitive linguists endorse. It focuses on the conceptual nature of meaning, broadly construed, rather than on disentangling language-specific signifieds from the enriched conceptual representations in language use. In Cognitive Linguistics it has moreover been claimed that distinguishing between language-specific and non-language-specific features of meaning is either irrelevant or not feasible (Langacker 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1999, Fillmore 1982, 1985, Taylor 2002, 2003, 2012, Geeraerts 2010, Geeraerts and Cuyckens, eds. 2007). The main argument is that there are no cut-and-dried, broadly applicable procedures to separate the two kinds of features, all the more so because speakers consistently rely on encyclopaedic knowledge for the necessary enrichment of any meaning in discourse. For instance, Langacker writes:

> Certainly an autonomous semantics [...] can be formulated, but the account it offers of the meanings of the linguistic expressions is apt to be so restricted and impoverished relative to the full richness of how we actually understand them that one can question its utility and cognitive reality. (Langacker 1987, 155)

Similarly, Fillmore's model of Frame Semantics, which aims to be a "semantics of understanding" (Fillmore 1985, 222) that promotes the perspective of the hearer/listener (as contrasted to the perspective of the speaker), is based on the assumption that linguists should determine "cognitive structures (or 'frames'), knowledge of which

is presupposed for the concepts encoded by the words" (Fillmore and Atkins 1992, 75). Language is viewed as "a repository of world knowledge" (Geeraerts 1997, 8) and semantics should consequently be "broadly encyclopaedic in scope" (Taylor 2002, 21; 2003, Ch. 5). This also entails that "pragmatics is fully subsumed into a semantic characterization" (Taylor 2002, 104) in order to arrive at a cognitively 'realistic' account of meaning.

Despite reluctance to acknowledge it, the distinction between language-specific signifieds and the broadly encyclopaedic content of language in discourse has never been completely abandoned in the linguistic frameworks that have little or no affinity for the structuralist tradition, even if it was largely consigned to the status of an unresolved issue of semantic theory. This situation may have contributed to a change of heart among some linguists, who in the last two decades have become increasingly aware of the theoretical and empirical problems the holistic approach to meaning pose. An important indication of this change is that the conceptual distinction between 'encoded meaning' and 'pragmatic sense' is being taken seriously in an increasing number of studies. This is particularly conspicuous in current Neo-Gricean pragmatics, but also in recent work conducted by a number of cognitive linguists.

In the work of Neo-Gricean pragmatists, the distinction between underspecified encoded meanings and the enriched pragmatic senses that can be found in actual discourse figures prominently. For example, Atlas (1989, 2005) argues that the encoded meaning of the English numeral *three* is fundamentally underspecified, whereas specific uses of the numeral such as 'exactly 3', 'at least 3' and 'at most 3' are in his account pragmatic senses rather than encoded meanings. While the distinction between encoded meanings and pragmatically enriched senses has been around since the inception of Neo-Gricean Pragmatics and is shared by virtually all its adherents, it must be pointed out that in this framework encoded meaning is not necessarily conceived of as being language-specific. Only in the work of a few authors, e.g. Levinson (2000), meanings are seen as language-specific, but the language-specific nature of encoded meaning is not an issue in the seminal work of Grice (1913–1988) (1989) and other Neo-Gricean pragmatists such as Atlas (1989, 2005)

and Bach (1994, 2010). In the related approach of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986, Carston 2002, Carston and Hall 2012), too, the distinction between encoded meanings and pragmatically enriched senses abstracts away from the language-specificity of the encoded meanings. Thus, whereas for Structural Linguistics and a number of structural-functional approaches the assumptions of encoded meaning and language-specific meaning are intrinsically connected, this is not the case for most contemporary pragmatic approaches to language (cf. Belligh and Willems 2021 for discussion). This shows that the distinction between encoded meaning and pragmatic senses and the distinction between language-specific and encyclopaedic, broadly conceptual aspects of meaning are orthogonal distinctions that can be combined in various ways, depending on the framework.

Some cognitive linguists have recently maintained that semantics and pragmatics ought not be conflated, for example Langacker (2007, 431–432) and Evans (2009, 2015), among others. Whereas Langacker (1987, 155) initially rejected "an autonomous semantics" on the ground that the account it offers of meanings is too "impoverished" and does not reflect any "cognitive reality", in some recent publications he claims that the "encyclopedic view of linguistic semantics" does not forego the semantics/pragmatics distinction even if it is still considered "largely artifactual" (Langacker 2007, 432). He even claims that his position is actually "quite close to the one Levinson espouses", at the same time criticising Levinson for "egregious misunderstandings" of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2007, 451, n. 14). Langacker then reiterates the major cognitivist claims that follow from the "encyclopedic view of linguistic semantics" and the rejection of the semantics/pragmatics distinction (2007, 431–438), to which Levinson's semantic theory is opposed (Levinson 2000, 21), without further discussion or analysis.

Other cognitive linguists have gone so far as to reintroduce the Saussurean distinction between meaning in the *langue* and meaning in *parole*, claiming that both have to be kept apart, e.g. Geeraerts (2015). However, the two Saussurean notions are still interpreted according to the holistic view of meaning. For instance, according to Geeraerts (2015, 242), whenever a polyseme is uttered or interpreted,

"only a subset of features is activated". A similar account of 'making' meaning in terms of feature selection is advocated by Hanks (2013). Accounting for the specific sense a lexical item (or any linguistic sign, for that matter) takes on in language use in this way effectively constitutes a relapse into the pattern of feature analysis found in early Generative Semantics, which also construed interpretation or utterance meaning in terms of feature selection (cf. Katz and Fodor 1963, 188, 199–202). The reification of semantic features as traits among which a selection can be made on particular occasions of language use is alien to a Structural Semantics that takes into account Saussure's distinction between a word's encoded signified and its various instantiations in context (cf. Saussure 1967–1968, 259–264; Saussure 2011, 148–154, 191–192). Hjelmslev (1943 [1961], 46) already called attention to the "purely operative" nature of so-called components in semantic analysis, which Hjelmslev termed 'figurae' (compare also Bloomfield 1933, 145–146). Moreover, Coseriu (2001, 355–369) expressly calls attention to the fact that distinctive features in componential analyses must not be construed as 'building blocks' of language-specific signifieds:

> Primary lexical items correspond to unitary intuitions, they are by no means the product of an assembly of distinctive features that are already given. They present distinctive features only because they entertain oppositions with other lexical items: distinctive features exist by virtue of oppositions, not the other way round. (Coseriu 2001, 364; our translation)

Language-specific encoded meanings can be analysed in terms of features, but these features do not in turn constitute encoded meanings. Feature selection is thus ruled out as an explanatory mechanism in structural-functional approaches because it assumes (explicitly or implicitly) that the features are already present 'before' the signifieds.

Contemporary research in pragmatics and psycholinguistics stresses the importance of 'meaning construction' based on general, unitary but underspecified meanings (cf. Atlas 1989, 2005 and Frisson 2009, 2015). These accounts have for their part not drawn

on componental analysis. It is a matter of future research to determine how these strands of research can be combined to overcome the drawbacks of the feature selection paradigm and to present more realistic accounts of how enriched senses in context relate to language-specific encoded signifieds which underdetermine the referential and inferential processes in language use.

To conclude this section, it is worthwhile to discuss a recent development in current research on alternating constructions in morphosyntax. As is well known, many pairs of constructions alternate in the expression of a specific function. Famous examples include the genitive alternation, e.g. *John's shoes* and *the shoes of John*, the dative alternation, e.g. *She gave him the book* and *She gave the book to him*, and the particle placement alternation, e.g. *They picked up the key* and *They picked the key up*. The standard approach to deal with alternations such as these in the framework of Construction Grammar has been to analyse both structures as constructions in their own right, whereas the alternation is regarded as an epiphenomenon of the fact that the two constructions partially overlap in their uses (cf. Goldberg 1995, 2006 and much related work). More recently, Cappelle (2006) proposed an alternative approach, suggesting that it might be appropriate to analyse pairs of alternating constructions as 'allostructions', similar to treating variants of phonemes and morphemes as allophones and allomorphs in Structural Linguistics. Allostructions, then, are more 'filled-in' instantiations of an underlying, general and schematic constructional pattern, a so-called 'constructeme' (Perek 2015, 154). Cappelle's (2006) proposal is to be situated firmly within the context of Construction Grammar, but it obviously draws on a well-evidenced insight from structuralist phonology and morphology.

Cappelle (2006) elaborated on the formal aspects of the underspecified constructeme while leaving the question of the nature of its meaning unresolved. This question was subsequently taken up by Perek (2015), but Perek's analysis is couched in terms of the cognitive approach to semantics typical of Construction Grammar and does not differentiate between structurally encoded, language-specific meaning and pragmatically enriched senses. A number of studies from the perspective of Integral Linguistics fur-

ther addressed the semantics of the underspecified constructeme in relation to the more fleshed out senses that are associated with the allostructions (De Vaere et al. 2018, 2020, 2021). De Vaere et al. take the constructeme/allostructions distinction as an occasion to present the distinction between language-specific encoded meaning and pragmatic sense in a new light. In their view, the difference between a constructeme and allostructions must acknowledge the pivotal status of semantic invariance in the analysis. Since linguistic structures, viz. phonological and morphological units, but also words and syntactic patterns, are always instantiated as variants in discourse, it is necessary to establish their invariant systematic properties on a level of abstraction that does not prejudge in any way the creative use of the linguistic structures.[87] De Vaere et al. (2018, 2020, 2021) argue that the meanings of the constructeme and the allostructions should be aligned with the distinction between an invariant language-specific encoded signified and the conceptual variation of its instantiations in a corpus. For example, for the German ditransitive alternation, i.e. the alternation between the Indirect Object Construction, e.g. *Kanada will den Vereinigten Staaten Erdgas verkaufen* [Canada wants to sell natural gas to the United States], and the Prepositional Object Construction, e.g. *Motorola will eine Lizenz an Texas Instruments verkaufen* [Motorola wants to sell a licence to Texas Instruments], the authors propose an underlying 'AGENT–THEME–GOAL' constructeme with a schematic argument structure and a schematic 'three-placed transfer' meaning that is paradigmatically anchored in the grammar of German. By contrast, the meanings of the two allostructions, with either a dative NP or a prepositional phrase, include uses such as 'caused motion', 'caused possession', 'concrete transfer', 'abstract transfer' and 'propositional transfer'. These specific uses are pragmatically enriched senses that cannot be reduced to the invariant, unitary signified of the constructeme. However, although the meanings of the allostructions are pragmatically enriched, rather than semantically encoded, they do not constitute nonce-interpretations but are shown to be reg-

---

87. On the relation between the 'concrete' reality of variants and linguistic 'abstraction', see in particular Coseriu (1958 [1974], Ch. 2).

ularly recurring pragmatic meanings (De Vaere et al. 2020). The distinction between regularly recurring uses and one-off uses can be subsumed under another structuralist distinction, viz. between 'normal language use' and 'individual acts of discourse', to which we turn in the next section.

5. Structuralist notion no. 3: The distinction between a language system, normal language use and individual acts of discourse

Any possible revival of the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* is not without difficulties. It encounters the same kind of problems as when it was first launched by Saussure. A major problem is that the distinction between *langue* and *parole* is easily presented as a dichotomy, as if the distinction concerned two different linguistic phenomena that not only have an autonomous existence of their own, but that also are two impenetrable and separate spheres which are only connected to each other by virtue of instantiation: the abstract, social, intersubjectively shared *langue* is taken to be realised in the concrete, individual activity of *parole*. Such an interpretation cannot be upheld without important qualifications. This issue was already addressed by structuralist scholars from the Copenhagen and Prague schools.

The first structuralist scholar who was particularly concerned with the mediation and transitions between *langue* and *parole* was Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965). Hjelmslev dealt with this issue in his preglossematic period (cf. Hjelmslev 1928 and 1935–1937) but also in his later writings.[88] Hjelmslev replaces Saussure's dichotomy by a complex four-tiered model which adds important distinctions to Saussure's binary model of abstract *langue* and instantiating *parole*. *Langue* is differentiated by Hjelmslev into 'schema', or 'pure form', i.e. differential values by virtue of mutual relations within the system regardless of any material realisation, and *norme*, i.e. the abstract,

---

88. There are differences in emphasis in the preglossematic account and the glossematic one, but these do not concern us here. For discussion see Van de Walle (2009, Ch. 5 and 11) and Jensen (2015).

socially defined *formes matérielles* of linguistic units. Conversely, *parole* is differentiated into *usage*, i.e. the conventionalised, habitualised realisation of units adopted by the members of a speech community in their linguistic activity, and *acte*, i.e. the individual speech activity of utterance (Hjelmslev 1943b, 32–38). Differentiations such as these introduce a layered approach to language that allows for a more fine-grained and more realistic account of (the relation between) language and language use.

While the application of Hjelmslev's model to concrete linguistic phenomena may pose difficulties, a comparable three-levelled model introduced by Trubetzkoy (1890–1938) in the introduction to his *Grundzüge der Phonologie* (1939 [1958], 10–12) is considerably easier to apply. When discussing the aims and tasks of a coherent Structural Phonology as opposed to a phonetic description of speech sounds, Trubetzkoy takes issue with Zwirner's phonometry (Zwirner and Zwirner 1936). According to Trubetzkoy, phonometrical analyses are useful to determine mean variations, i.e. 'norms' in the realisation of the phonemes of a language in a population of speakers. There is, however, no path from such quantitative analyses to the establishment of the phonological system of a particular language because phonemes do not differ from each other in terms of quantity but qualitatively in terms of 'functional' oppositions. At the same time, Trubetzkoy concedes that the phonometrical study of variation in the production of speech sounds is important, not only to establish what can be considered the 'normal' realisation of specific speech sounds across speakers of a linguistic community, but also to determine the realisation norms the individual speaker adheres to with regard to different speech situations (*Gesprächssituationen*, 1939 [1958], 12). Trubetzkoy thus establishes, with regard to phonology and phonetics, a plausible tripartite distinction between phonemes in the language system, 'normal' realisations of sounds and the unique sound realisations in actual speech as an alternative to Saussure's dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*. While the phonetic properties of speech sounds in *parole* are related to the phonemes, which must be determined on the basis of oppositions in the functional system of the *langue*, it is important not to construe the sounds found in *parole* as an undifferentiated set of individually realised phonetic

manifestations. On the contrary, *parole* encompasses specific habits, 'norms', which depend on conventionalised realisations of speech sounds according to specific criteria of language use that have to be accounted for, even though such normal realisations are not to be mistaken for phonemes in the *langue*. Trubetzkoy outlines in considerable detail the objectives of a stylistics of speech sounds (*Lautstilistik*, 1939 [1958], 17–29). Even though falling outside the purview of phonology proper, such a stylistics of speech sounds should embark on the vast task of establishing how, for example, emotive and conative speech (i.e. emotions and appeal, cf. Bühlers 'Organon model', Bühler 1934, 1990) are commonly realised by means of speech sounds.

The most elaborate theory of 'normal language use' to date has been developed in the structural-functional framework of Integral Linguistics. Drawing on the work of Copenhagen and Prague structuralists, Coseriu makes a strong case for why linguistics needs to overcome Saussure's dichotomy (Coseriu 1952 [1975], 1958 [1974], 46–51).[89] In Integral Linguistics, 'norm' or 'normal language use' designates an intermediary level of language which allows us to take into account linguistic facts that go beyond purely oppositional features of *langue*. The central claim is that there are, between individual acts of *parole* and systematic *langue*, traditional, non-distinctive realisations of *langue* within speech communities. One of Coseriu's examples to illustrate this is the Spanish vowel system. There are only five oppositional vowel phonemes in Spanish, i.e. /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/, but speakers of Spanish 'normally' realise the first /e/ in a word like *verde* ('green') as an open vowel and the second /e/ as a closed vowel ([vɛrde]). Any other realisation would be possible and understood by hearers (as long as it remains within phoneme boundaries), but it would not be considered 'normal' (Kabatek 2020, 128).

In several of his publications, Coseriu demonstrates the importance of the threefold distinction, not only with respect to matters of

---

89. See Jensen (2015) for a comparison of the concept of 'norm' in the work of Coseriu and Hjelmslev, and Kabatek (2020) for a brief presentation of Coseriu's theory of norms in language.

form, but also with regard to meaning. Regarding lexical semantics, Coseriu explains the role of normal language use by pointing out that the normal meaning of compounds, i.e. the conventionalised interpretation among the members of a speech community, should not be confused with their language-specific encoded signified. It is, for instance, a matter of normal language use that the German compounds *Goldwaage* and *Straßenhändler* are generally used to refer to a 'balance to weigh gold' and a 'street vendor', respectively. In accordance with German word formation rules, these compounds could just as well be used to refer to a 'balance made of gold' or a 'person who deals in streets'. Alternative readings such as these are not ruled out on the basis of the rules of word formation in the German language system, even if they might be exceptional (Coseriu 1970; cf. Willems 1994, 2019). The same argument holds with regard to syntax. For example, Coseriu disagrees with Fillmore's (1968) well-known analysis of the two English sentences (1) and (2) in terms of a difference in semantic roles:

(1) John broke the window.

(2) A hammer broke the window.

According to Fillmore (1968, 25), the subject of the sentence is an AGENT in (1) but an INSTRUMENT in (2). According to Coseriu, the subject in English sentences such as (1) and (2) structurally encodes the same semantic role, which however is underspecified and does not differentiate between the roles of AGENT and IN-STRUMENT. Whether *John* and *a hammer* actually perform the act of breaking or are used as instruments cannot be determined on the basis of the syntactic patterns instantiated in (1) and (2). There is nothing in the grammar of the English language system that prevents us, for example, from interpreting (1) in such a way that *John* is thought of as an INSTRUMENT, which is the default interpretation of *a hammer* in (2), but not of *John* in (1) (Coseriu 1970, 109, Coseriu 1987, 179, see Willems 2020 and Höllein 2021 for detailed accounts). Hence, AGENT is not a structurally encoded semantic role in the grammar of English, but a denotational function of normal language use (and the same holds for INSTRUMENT).

In other languages the situation is different, for example in an ergative language such as Hindi. Compare (1)-(2) with (3)-(4):

(3) LaDakii=ne   khiDakii=ko   toD   di-yaa

    boy-ERG   window-ACC   break give-PERF.SG.MASC

    "The boy broke the window."

(4) KhiDakii   hathauDa=se TuuT ga-yii

    window-NOM   hammer=INS break go-PERF.SG.FEM

    ≈ "The window broke due to the hammer."

With the transitive verb *ToD-naa* 'to break' in (3), the direct object *khiDakii=ko* 'the window' is in the accusative case and the AGENT subject *laDakii=ne* 'the boy' is in the ergative case. By contrast, with the intransitive verb *TuuT-naa* 'to get broken' in (4), *khiDakii* 'the window' is the subject in the nominative case and 'the hammer' is in the instrumental case (*hathauDa=se*) (cf. De Hoop & Narasimhan 2008, 66). Using a construction with the subject 'a hammer' in the ergative case (*hathauDa=ne*), the transitive verb *ToD-naa* and the object 'a window' in the accusative would not be ungrammatical but highly unusual. It would entail that the hammer is coerced into the role of AGENT, which in Hindi turns out to be a structurally encoded semantic role, unlike in English. Not surprisingly, with inanimate subjects an ergative construction is considerably more natural if the subject refers to a natural force, e.g. lightning (*bi-clii=ne*), than to a hammer or a stone (Saartje Verbeke, c.).

    Several authors working within the framework of Integral Linguistics have followed the same lead and applied the distinction between 'system', 'normal language use' and 'individual acts of discourse' to various phenomena in lexical semantics, word formation, syntax, alternating argument structure constructions and contrastive linguistics (Willems 1994, 2001, Dietrich 1997, 2021, Kabatek 2000, Coene and Willems 2006, Willems and Willems 2010, Belligh 2020a, 2020b, Belligh and Crocco 2022, Widoff 2021, Höllein 2021, among others). In Romance linguistics in particular, the introduction of

the concept of 'discourse traditions', which are characteristic of texts, genres and registers, has been instrumental in further developing and refining Coseriu's layered theory of linguistic competence (Koch and Oesterreicher 1985, 2012). Importantly, Coseriu has shown that different types of norms play a role according to the level of language that is the subject of analysis. Whereas i) general laws of thinking, logic, world knowledge etc. are norms of any linguistic activity in general and ii) idiomatically correct language use is guided by the norms that define the speech traditions that hold in a linguistic community, speakers also conform to iii) what is conventionally considered adequate and appropriate in specific communicative situations, discourses and the production of various kinds of texts. These latter issues touch on historical speech practices in linguistic communities that are differentiated beyond the Saussurean dichotomy between *langue* and *parole* (cf. Oesterreicher 2001, Kabatek 2021).

The general acceptance of the role of 'normal language use' in language may have suffered from the fact that the term 'norm' is liable to cause confusion. It is often used to refer to a prescriptive standard of language behaviour, rather than being used in a descriptive sense to denote a traditional way of instantiating the systematic resources ('possibilities') of a particular *langue*.[90] The possible confusion that might arise is unfortunate because the insights that undergird the theory of descriptive norms such as it was developed in the tradition sketched out above may be key to several issues that are currently raised in linguistic pragmatics (including historical pragmatics), text linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, linguistic anthropology, and so forth. In order to successfully pursue this line of enquiry, an important remark already made by Coseriu (1958 [1974], 1962 [1975]) is in order. We have to remind ourselves that the traditional modelling of language use (*parole*) in terms of 'instantiating' the underlying grammar (*langue*) is easily misconstrued as a relationship between a static, seemingly immutable system and an infinitely

---

90. Hjelmslev's notion of 'norm' actually straddles both approaches to norms in language (Van de Walle 2009, 168–172).

variable, heterogeneous series of individual performances. Yet, an underlying grammar is ever-changing as well: the relationship of *langue* underpinning actual speech (*parole*), mediated by normal language use, is a dynamic process which is grounded in the activity of speaking itself. After all, a *langue* is not an object that is being used in speech but the incessantly renewed 'historical manifestation' (Coseriu 1962 [1975], 256–258 and 1983) of a continuous process of creation and re-creation by speakers and hearers who instantiate the units, rules and procedures of linguistic activity according to the traditions laid down in their languages.[91]

The structuralist concept of 'normal language use' has not only been applied by scholars working in the context of Integral Linguistics but was also partly adopted by other scholars in the 1970s and 1980s who otherwise rejected most structuralist principles and methods. Several authors have put forward a number of arguments for revising dichotomous distinctions such as *langue* and *parole*, 'competence' and 'performance' or 'grammar' and 'usage', which also seem to hark back to the preoccupation with norms among structuralists, if only implicitly or tacitly. Whereas Bartsch (1985, 1987) restricts 'norms' to guidelines of communication as part of her overall pragmatic theory of language developed in critical response to Chomsky's theory of language, Newmeyer (2003) provides a thoughtful discussion of why he thinks that the Saussurean position with respect to *langue* and *parole* should be maintained. While acknowledging that grammars have been shaped in the course of time by "processing considerations – that is, by language in use" (2003, 684), Newmeyer shows that mainstream cognitive us-

---

91. Recall that we use langue and 'language-specific' in the sense explained in Section 4, viz. referring to a particular language system. In a more encompassing sense 'a language' can also be characterised by specific normal language usages, e.g. in pronunciation, the use of specific syntactic constructions, the realisation and occurrence of particular word formation procedures, etc. Under such a view, 'a language' is not only 'a language system' but the combination of a language system with particular traditions of 'normal language use' in a specific linguistic community. Cf. Coseriu (1975 [1952]) and (1979, 45–59) for the difference between a narrow and a broad definition of 'language' and the consequences that ensue for the coherence of a three-layered linguistic analysis.

age-based models of grammar and stochastic models of grammar often run into trouble by assuming that the distinction between 'knowledge of language' and 'use of language' is wrongheaded. As much as he emphasises the importance of Saussure's separation of *langue* and *parole*, Newmeyer recognises that language use frequently displays characteristics that are not systematic. For instance, actual discourse is rife with incomplete sentences, in particular sentences that lack the expression of an argument required by the verb's valency. This observation does not contradict the assumption that the corresponding grammatical representation of such sentences is fully specified, according to Newmeyer (2003, 689), but incomplete utterances are an illustration of the fact that "knowledge of grammatical structure is only one of many systems that underlie usage" (692). Coherent discourse obviously hinges on several other systems besides grammar, and it does so in regular ways. Preferences in discourse may be recurrent, even across languages, but neither does this entail that they are part of grammar nor that the distinction between grammar and usage is to be done away with. According to Newmeyer (2003), this also holds for linguistic content: "Grammar is such a poor reflection of usage because we have many more meanings to convey than could ever be supported by our grammatical resources in a reasonable period of time" (693). In other words, speakers are guided by 'norms' that are not encoded in the grammars of their languages but manifest themselves habitually in actual speech. Rather than invalidating the distinction between *langue* and *parole*, the recurrence of such norms in actual speech on the contrary underscores its importance, on the condition that both *langue* and *parole* are defined in such a way that they refer to clearly delimited interrelated parts of language as object of enquiry (Coseriu 1952 [1975], 43–93, 1979, 45–59, 1985, 2007, 70–75; cf. also Schlieben-Lange 1975, 9–20).

It is with regard to recurrent patterns of linguistic content that arguably the most elaborate theory of normal language use not seeking any affiliation with a structuralist school of thought has been developed in recent decades. We are referring here to Stephen Levinson's (1947-) Neo-Gricean theory of Generalised Conversational Implicatures (Levinson 2000). In this theory, two of Grice's

conversational maxims, viz. the maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner, are deployed to account for meanings of utterances which go beyond that which is structurally encoded in the lexicon and grammar of a language. Despite containing not a single reference to the structuralist theories of normal language use, Levinson's theory is centrally concerned with developing a sophisticated account of utterance meanings in a way that is in many respects similar to the layered approach discussed earlier in this section. For an extensive comparison of Levinson's three-levelled account of meaning with the three-layered approach to language in Integral Linguistics, we refer the reader to Belligh and Willems (2021). Here we briefly point out some of the specifics of Levinson's approach and illustrate its main tenets by means of a few examples.

Whereas Coseriu's conceptual pair 'normal language use' / 'individual acts of discourse' primarily differentiates Saussure's *parole* by disentangling the unique properties of individuals' speech and those formal and semantic structures in utterances that are traditional, recurrent and more or less firmly established according to various diasystematic conditions of language use, Levinson's approach is more narrowly focused on the meaning of syntagmatic structures and revolves around Grice's (1989) distinction between 'what is said' and 'what is implicated' (Levinson 2000, 13). If we take the level of the sentence as object of enquiry, then the tripartition amounts to distinguishing i) encoded sentence meaning, ii) 'utterance-type meaning' by virtue of 'default inferences' on the basis of Generalised Conversational Implicatures and iii) 'utterance-token meaning' characterised by the particularities of every single speech act, including once-off inferences (Levinson 2000, 22). The second layer of default inferences corresponds, *mutatis mutandis*, to the level of normal language use. Not surprisingly, Levinson uses the word 'normal' when he specifies this intermediate layer, which

> is a level of systematic pragmatic inference based not on direct computations about speaker-intentions but rather on general expectations about how language is *normally* used. These expectations give rise to presumptions, default inferences, about both content and force [...]. (Levinson 2000, 22, emphasis added)

For instance, compounds such as *bread knife*, *kitchen knife* and *steel knife* are semantically general expressions whose meanings are narrowed down only because their structural simplicity prompts us to interpret them in a stereotypical manner, that is, to refer to a knife 'used for' cutting bread, 'used in' the kitchen and 'made from' steel. It would be erroneous to think of these conventional interpretations as structurally encoded meanings. Likewise, inferences such as 'p and then q', 'p caused q', 'John intended p to cause q' are normal enrichments of the meaning of a sentence such as *John turned the switch and the motor started*, but there is nothing in the grammar of the English language encoded to that effect (Levinson 2000, 37–38). Examples such as these show that in Levinson's account speech fundamentally depends on inferences on the basis of normal language use, an observation that has meanwhile become quite commonly accepted in linguistic pragmatics and some other frameworks – but many linguistic circles have yet to follow suit. The kind of inference involved has been described as a Generalised Conversational Implicature by Levinson (2000), but whether or not such implicatures lie at the basis of utterance-type meaning has been controversial in Neo-Gricean Pragmatics and Relevance Theory. Alternative accounts of utterance-type meaning have been proposed, in the form of a theory of 'explicature' in Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986, Carston and Hall 2012) and a theory of 'impliciture' by Bach (1994, 2010). The theoretical differences between these accounts do not interest us here (see Belligh and Willems 2021).

To conclude this section, we briefly mention the altogether different notion of 'normal language use' that informs Hanks' Norms and Exploitations model (Hanks 2013). The model is rooted in the author's extensive experience as a lexicographer and combines insights and assumptions from corpus linguistics (especially John Sinclair's approach), Systemic Functional Linguistics, Cognitive Linguistics (especially prototype theory) and Grice's theory of conversational maxims. A norm is defined by Hanks (2013, 92) as "a pattern of ordinary usage in everyday language" or alternatively as a "prototype of usage" (2013, 147). Conversely, an 'exploitation' is a 'noncentral' use: "Normal usage can be identified by evidence

of repeated use, while exploitations can be identified because they show some abnormality, aberration, eccentricity or other departure from the norm" (2013, 147), which according to Hanks also includes metaphors and puns (see Teubert 2016 for some discussion). Again, no reference whatsoever is made to the already established tradition of normal language use research initiated by Hjelmslev in Structural Linguistics. Relevant work of Hjelmslev, Coseriu, Bartsch, Koch and Oesterreicher, and many other authors, is not mentioned in Hanks' book and no theoretical basis for determining the status of conventionalised norms *vis-à-vis* systematic language-specific structures and individual instances of language use is offered.

6. Structuralist notion no. 4: The role of paradigmatic contrasts

As already highlighted in Section 2, the notion of paradigmatic contrast is central to the accounts of language proposed by Saussure and structuralist scholars such as Hjelmslev, who introduced the term 'paradigmatic relation' with regard to one of Saussure's 'associative relations' (cf. Saussure 1967–1968, 276–289 and Hjelmslev 1943a [1961], §11). In some of the contemporary structural-functional schools of thought the notion of paradigmatic contrast has remained pivotal. Both Integral Linguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics rely for their theories of meaning on Saussure's theory of the linguistic sign and Hjelmslev's subsequent elaboration of this theory (cf. Saussure 1967–1968, 2011, Hjelmslev 1943a [1961], 1963 [1970]). Structurally encoded meanings are conceived of, in both frameworks, in terms of relations of contrast (*oppositions*) that hold between linguistic signs, giving rise to what in Saussure's theory of meaning is called *valeur*. Meaning contrasts can be defined both from a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic point of view.

The primary focus in Integral Linguistics is on meaning contrasts from a paradigmatic point of view (see Coseriu 1979, 1987, 1992, 2001, 2007 for extensive discussions). Central to Integral Linguistics is the assumption that any structurally encoded meaning has to be defined in relation to the structurally encoded meanings of other elements in the same linguistic system with which it con-

trasts paradigmatically. Taken together, the contrasting elements constitute language-specific paradigms, both in the lexicon and in the grammar. It is a word's or construction's *valeur* that delimits its encoded meaning in the language system, the signified (*signifié*, Saussure 1967–1968, 252–257). A structurally encoded meaning is emphatically not considered a mental 'representation' of an extra-linguistic object or state of affairs, not even of an abstract kind. Given that the *valeur* of a linguistic sign is that which is not the *valeurs* of related signs, paradigmatic relations jointly delimit any one sign's semantic 'intension' in the system. For instance, according to Coseriu (1978, 195), the structurally encoded meaning of the French verb *venir* ('to come') has to be established in contrast with related French verbs such as *marcher* ('to walk'), *aller* ('to go'), *partir* ('to leave'), *sortir* ('to go out'), *entrer* ('to enter') etc., which together form a paradigm of verbs of movement in the standard variety of French. Similarly, when one aims to determine the signified of the noun *stair* in English, the paradigmatic contrast with *ladder* must be taken into account. The language-specific nature of these nouns and their signifieds becomes clear when the English word pair *stair–ladder* is compared with, e.g., Italian. In contrast to English, Italian *scala* does not discriminate between 'stair' and 'ladder' in terms of a paradigmatic contrast (Coseriu 1978, 209).

In Systemic Functional Linguistics the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic point of view are considered equally important. They are referred to as 'system' and 'structure', respectively (Martin 1992). Initially, the focus was on meaning contrasts from a syntagmatic point of view, in line with Firth's famous principle that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth 1957, 11; cf. Halliday 1973, 1995, Hanks 2013), but the paradigmatic point of view became increasingly important in later stages of the theory (cf. Martin 1992, Taverniers 2011). Whereas in Integral Linguistics the focus has been on the paradigmatically determined encoded meanings of both lexical items and grammatical structures (see Coseriu 1987, 133–176 and 1989 for an outline of an Integral Linguistics approach to syntax), Systemic Functional Linguistics has not so much focused on developing a comparable theory of lexical semantics but instead put emphasis on the encoded functions of phrases, clauses and clause

complexes in a system network of interlocking options (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014, Martin 1992).

The notion of paradigmatic contrast also pops up among contemporary linguistic approaches that do not expressly invoke structuralist assumptions. In what follows, we confine ourselves to two cases in point that are particularly worthwhile, viz. the use of contrasts with regard to some of the maxims relied upon in Neo-Gricean Pragmatics (Levinson 2000) and the role contrasts play in one of the most influential theories of information structure in the cognitive-functional tradition, viz. Lambrecht's (1987, 1994, 2000) theory of focus types.

As already pointed out in Section 5, in the context of Neo-Gricean Pragmatics various maxims have been proposed to explain how language users construe conversational implicatures, starting from the grammatically encoded meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Many of these maxims draw on the knowledge of language users not only about what is being said, but also about what is not being said. For Levinson (2000), the notion of 'contrast' is pivotal in explaining how maxims work. Instantiations of Grice's maxims of quantity and manner establish salient contrasts by virtue of which different kinds of implicit meaning are conveyed. The maxim of quantity is defined in terms of the heuristics "What isn't said, isn't" and "What is simply described is stereotypically exemplified (i.e., is as usual)", the maxim of manner in terms of the heuristic "What is said in an abnormal way, isn't normal, or: marked message indicates marked situation" (Levinson 2000, 33–34). For example, an utterance such as *Some of the boys came* conveys on the basis of the scalar contrast set <*all, some*> that "not all of the boys came", if only implicitly. The rationale behind this way of communicating what is actually meant is "that the speaker would have chosen the stronger alternate if he was in a position to do so" (2000, 36). Similarly, *Not all of the boys came* is usually understood to express that "some of the boys did come" by virtue of the negative scales contrast <*none, not all*> (2000, 36).

Thus, for Neo-Gricean pragmatics of this ilk, contrast and what is not said both play a crucial role in the knowledge language users put to use in ordinary discourse, and it is contrasts of the aforementioned kind that license a certain interpretation rather than

another. Interestingly, the contrasts referred to are situated on the level of Generalised Conversational Implicatures and, hence, normal language use, rather than on the level of structurally encoded semantics. The family resemblance with the semantic feature analysis put forward by Katz and Fodor (1963) is obvious (cf. Section 4). In that account, too, traits are established in view of interpretations of utterances regardless of whether they are encoded features of signifieds or encyclopaedic features associated with extralinguistic referents and contexts. This is an important difference with the work on paradigmatic contrasts in a framework such as Integral Linguistics. In this framework, contrasts are instrumental in delimiting and structuring paradigms (lexical fields), which pertain to the structurally encoded semantics of a particular language (see Belligh and Willems 2021 for discussion).

Considerations such as those put forward by Levinson also draw on the originally structuralist theory of markedness. This theory has been developed in great detail by authors such as Trubetzkoy (1939 [1958], 66–75), Jakobson (1939 [1971] and Hjelmslev (1939 [1971]), but the notion of 'markedness' has become so ingrained in modern linguistics that it is taken for granted and no longer recognised as an originally structuralist notion (cf. Battistella 1990, 1996 and De Backer 2009 for discussions).

A second case in point is the theory of information structure developed by Knud Lambrecht (1939–2019) (1987, 1994, 2000). Lambrecht's theory of information structure has been very influential in contemporary functionally oriented linguistics and has become the dominant theory of information structure in both Construction Grammar and Role and Reference Grammar (see Leino 2013 for discussion). Lambrecht is a disciple of Charles Fillmore (1929–2014) and Wallace Chafe (1927–2019), his work is rooted in the American Construction Grammar framework (Fillmore 1988, Fillmore and Atkins 1992, Fillmore and Kay 1993; cf. Goldberg 1995, 2006). This framework can be situated within the broader paradigm of Cognitive Linguistics and positions itself unambiguously in contrast to Generative Grammar and, albeit more obliquely, Structural Linguistics. Lambrecht nevertheless regularly invokes the notion of paradigmatic contrasts to develop his theory of information struc-

ture. In doing so, Lambrecht goes considerably further than, for example, Levinson (2000) in openly subscribing to 'paradigmatic contrasts' in a manner that is reminiscent of a hallmark structuralist assumption:

> This [...] requires a 'structuralist' rather than 'generativist approach', i.e. an approach in which the interpretation of a given structure is viewed as being determined within a system of formal oppositions rather than by a set of rules. (Lambrecht 1994, 322)
>
> In seeking to explain the form-function fit in focus constructions in terms of the structuralist notion of paradigmatic opposition the analysis challenges both functional and formal generative approaches to grammar. (Lambrecht 2000, 611)

Lambrecht relies on the notion of paradigmatic contrast to differentiate between three types of formally distinguishable focus constructions, each with its own typical focus construal, viz. predicate-focus construal, argument-focus construal and sentence-focus construal (Lambrecht 1994, 221–238). Predicate-focus construal entails that the scope of the focus operator is limited to the predicate, with the subject falling within the scope of the presupposition, as in (5). Alternatively, the scope of the focus operator can be limited to an argument constituent only, with the predicate constituent falling within the scope of the presupposition, which is labeled argument-focus construal, e.g. (6). Finally, it is also possible that both the subject and the predicate fall under the scope of the focus operator, which is then said to be an instance of sentence-focus construal, e.g. (7).

(5) (What did John do?) *John went to the LIBRARY.*[92]

(6) (Who went to the library?) *JOHN went to the library.*

(7) (What happened?) *JOHN went to the library.*

---

92. Capital letters indicate prosodic prominence on certain constituents, which is mostly realised by a peak in pitch.

In contrast to previous information-structural approaches to focus structure, which mostly focused on the focal or non-focal status of individual constituents rather than on the sentential pattern as a whole, Lambrecht's innovative contribution was to look at the realisations of focus configurations as sentential constructions that are determined paradigmatically in relation to other focus-related sentential constructions. By adopting such a perspective, it becomes understandable why in sentence-focus constructions such as (7) only the subject is highlighted prosodically, rather than both the subject and the predicate, which would be expected if the focused or non-focused status of every phrasal constituent taken by itself would be reflected in linguistic form. In Lambrecht's (1987, 1994, 2000) view, sentence-focus constructions have the form they do because their form makes it possible to create a paradigmatic contrast with the form of predicate-focus constructions, which according to Lambrecht are unmarked constructions. The difference with regard to form, e.g. accentuation of the subject or the predicate, corresponds on the functional level to the difference between sentence-focus construal and predicate-focus construal.

While Lambrecht countenances the idea that paradigmatic contrasts have an important role to play in contemporary functionalist linguistics, a number of critical remarks can be made pertaining to how true to the structuralist notion of paradigmatic contrast his theory actually is (cf. Belligh 2020a, 2020b, Belligh and Crocco 2022 for a fuller discussion). In structuralist accounts of paradigmatic relations, the 'one-to-one relationship' between a form and a unitary meaning is of paramount importance, yet Lambrecht's application of the notion of paradigmatic contrast differs in a number of respects. While on a functional level the three types of focus construal are all defined in terms of paradigmatic oppositions, it is not possible to establish the same opposition on the level of the forms of the constructions. According to Lambrecht (1994, 2000), argument-focus constructions and sentence-focus constructions are often homonymous, which is already evident from the above examples (6) and (7). With respect to the form of the constructions, the principle of paradigmatic contrast only plays out convincingly with regard to the distinction between predicate-focus constructions, on

the one hand, and argument-focus constructions and sentence-focus constructions, on the other. Lambrecht (1987, 1994, 2000) motivates this by maintaining that both argument-focus and sentence-focus constructions are marked deviations from predicate-focus constructions, which Lambrecht considers unmarked constructions *par excellence*. Furthermore, Lambrecht (1994) concedes that predicate-focus constructions can often be used to convey argument-focus construal and sentence-focus construal as well. This further deviation from the expected one-to-one relationship between form and meaning is explained by Lambrecht as a result of the 'neutral position' of predicate-focus constructions as unmarked constructions.

While Lambrecht's system, as presented by the author himself, already takes into account various deviations from the one-to-one relationship between form and meaning, there are at least some cases where he excludes additional deviations. In particular, Lambrecht (1987, 1994, 2000) claims that full-fledged, i.e. formally marked, sentence-focus constructions cannot be used for the expression of predicate-focus construal. However, some sentence-focus constructions in both Dutch and Italian do allow for predicate-focus construal (see Belligh 2020a, 2020b, Belligh and Crocco 2022). Due to the very limited one-to-one correspondences between functions and grammatical forms, it has been argued that Lambrecht's typology of three focus categories might better be reinterpreted as a typology of categories of normal language use, rather than as categories that characterise the grammar of particular language systems (cf. Section 5). This view entails that in several languages various sentential constructions can be used to convey predicate-focus, argument-focus and sentence-focus construal, but that none of these categories corresponds to a structurally encoded signified of any one construction involved (Belligh 2020a, 2020b, Belligh and Crocco 2022). The paradigmatic contrast proposed by Lambrecht thus ends up being a contrast on the level of normal language use rather than a paradigmatic contrast in the grammar of language systems.

7. Structuralist notion no. 5: Language is an intersubjectively shared system rather than a cognitive module

Among the key insights Saussure and the structuralist scholars directly inspired by him brought to linguistics is the idea that language (*langue*), in addition to being a mental phenomenon, is also fundamentally a social phenomenon.[93] Although there has been much controversy about the extent to which Saussure (1967–1968, 158–174) defined his concept of *langue* along the lines of Durkheim's (1895) notion of 'social fact' (see Bierbach 1978, Koerner 1989, Ch. 3, among others), there are several indications that Saussure conceptualised language first and foremost in sociological terms.[94]

First of all, it is generally acknowledged that Saussure "tended increasingly towards sociological rather than psychological formulations of *langue*" (Joseph 1995, 224). *Langue* as an abstract socially shared system is therefore beyond the direct reach of the individual will (see Thibault 1997, Linda 2001 and Joseph this volume for extensive discussions). Secondly, the structuralist schools that emerged after the publication of the *Cours* shared "a preference for social abstraction over mental ones, including an axiomatic faith in language as a fundamentally social phenomenon" (Joseph 1995, 225). The structuralist notion of language as a social phenomenon is indebted to Saussure's view that language is not only a tool for cognition (cf. Saussure 1967–1968, 251–264) but also a tool for communication, and that communication is inherently social (Saussure 1967–1968, 37–52, 172–174). At the same time, Saussure maintained that a *langue* is deposited in an identical form in the mind of every language user of a particular language (Joseph 1995, 235), thereby

---

93. Saussure and the structuralist scholars inspired by him were not the first to consider language to be a social phenomenon, but historically they brought the social nature of language to centre stage after previous paradigms in linguistics inclined to characterise language primarily in biological or strictly psychological terms (Joseph 1995, 234–235 and Joseph this volume).

94. Saussure's sociological view is also indebted to the work of other French sociologists, e.g. the work of Gabriel de Tarde (cf. Joseph 2012, 508).

stressing that *langue* is a mental phenomenon as well. This double nature attributed to *langue* by Saussure led to considerable debate in the many theories that followed in the second half of the twentieth century (cf. Itkonen 1978, 55–90). Although language is inherently intersubjective and social but at the same time exists in the individual minds of human agents, it seems that most linguistic schools of thought tend to focus on one of these two aspects at the expense of the other.

The understanding that language is at the same time a social and a mental phenomenon is endorsed by two of the contemporary structural-functional approaches we already discussed in previous sections, viz. Integral Linguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics, albeit with differences in emphasis and focus. In Systemic Functional Linguistics, the mental dimension is readily acknowledged, but the main focus is on language as a social phenomenon. In contrast to many other contemporary functionalist theories of language, Systemic Functional Linguistics does not attempt to frame its analyses in terms of a mental or psychological theory of language (Butler 2003), in accordance with the basic assumption that

> linguistics is a branch of sociology. Language is a part of the social system, and there is no need to interpose a psychological level of interpretation. (Halliday 1978, 39).

In Integral Linguistics (cf. Coseriu 1958 [1974], 1962 [1975], 2007), emphasis is placed on the intersubjective nature of language, which arguably resolves a possible conflict between the social and the mental. While Coseriu claims that language is intrinsically tied to human consciousness, the intuitive conscious knowledge every speaker possesses of language is said to be shared by the members of a linguistic community. This knowledge is therefore also of an inherently social nature. However, there is a risk that a social fact such as language is mistakenly defined as a phenomenon that exists above and beyond all individual speakers/hearers 'taken together', whereas it is a phenomenon that only exists above and beyond individual speakers/hearers when they are 'taken separately'. The conception of language as independent from all individual speak-

ers/hearers 'taken together' is based on a fallacious, sorites-like argument (Coseriu 1958 [1974], 28). If language is understood as an intersubjective system that occupies a level 'above' the language users only when they are considered as separate individuals, no conflict arises between the social and the mental. For Integral Linguistics, a language exists in reality only inasmuch as individual language users realise – or better still: continuously create and re-create – language in the activity of speaking (or writing, or in whatever modality). There is mutual interdependence: intersubjectively shared 'systems' and 'norms' of languages are individuated in acts of discourse, but then again these systems and norms exist only insofar as they are manifested in individuals' creative acts of language use.

With the advent of Generative Grammar, language was drastically reconceptualised as a purely mental – or even 'material' – phenomenon, with little or no room for its social or intersubjective nature. The scientific study of language was rebranded by Chomsky as constituting an integral part of cognitive psychology and the study of language was primarily seen as a possible way to probe into the unconscious structures of the mind (cf. Chomsky 1972 [2006]). The 'cognitive turn' in linguistics initiated by Chomsky abruptly broke with some of the basic insights of Saussure and many structuralist linguists. This way of approaching language in mental terms has dominated American linguistics since the 1960s and continues to exert a profound influence in contemporary linguistic research. This is also evident if one considers some of the core tenets of the broad paradigm of Cognitive Linguistics (cf. Langacker 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1999, 2007, Taylor 1999, 2002, 2003, 2012, Geeraerts and Cuyckens, eds. 2007). Cognitive Linguistics is radically opposed to many core assumptions of Generative Grammar, including its restrictivist focus on formal aspects of language, in particular syntax and phonology, and its basic assumptions regarding the modularity of the human mind (Geeraerts and Cuyckens, eds. 2007, Taylor 2007). Most cognitive linguists have nonetheless adopted the view of generative grammarians that the individual mind is the ontological locus of language. Furthermore, both generative grammarians and cognitive linguists approach language and the human mind in

terms of unconscious knowledge structures and subpersonal computational modules, which can ultimately be considered functions of physical brain states (cf. Itkonen 2008, Zlatev 2008, Belligh 2021 for discussion).

The attempt to conceive language in mental-material and non-social terms in Generative Grammar and Cognitive Linguistics has been criticised over the past 50 years by a number of scholars, in particular Esa Itkonen (1944-) (1978, 1983, 1997, 2008). Itkonen has argued that such a conception cannot adequately capture crucial aspects of natural language, including what Itkonen calls its 'normativity'. Itkonen's notion of 'normativity' should not be confused with the use of the term 'norm' to designate the role 'normal language use' plays as an intermediary level between language systems and individual acts of discourse (cf. Section 5). 'Normativity', in Itkonen's understanding, refers to the fact that the conventions typical of language must be conceived in terms of 'what ought to be said' rather than 'what is said' (Itkonen 1997, 53). 'Normativity' in this sense applies to the language system and normal language use alike. The presence of normativity in languages means that language is not only characterised by various types of 'regularities', but also by prescriptive 'rules'. Based on arguments drawn from the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper, Itkonen maintains that prescriptive rules cannot exist in a purely mental or material world but only by virtue of intersubjectively shared normative knowledge. According to Itkonen, neither Generative Grammar nor mainstream Cognitive Linguistics adequately capture this indispensable social dimension in their accounts of language. Because both frameworks at the same time rely on normative judgments regarding correctness and acceptability for their empirical analyses, their "methodological self-understanding suffers from serious defects" (Itkonen 1997, 49).

Itkonen's criticism has so far largely been ignored in Generative Grammar. Within Cognitive Linguistics, it has inspired a number of scholars to reintroduce notions such as 'socially shared conventions', 'normativity' and 'intersubjectivity' in the context of cognitive-linguistic research, in line with previous structuralist thinking. For instance, Zlatev (2007, 2008) explicitly draws on Itkonen (1978,

1983, 1997) to partly adjust the ontological commitments of Cognitive Linguistics. While giving pride of place to consciousness in the study of the human mind, rather than unconscious structures and subpersonal mechanisms, Zlatev (2007, 2008) also connects this shift in perspective with a renewed focus on the intersubjectivity of language so as to avoid the 'serious defects' in the self-understanding of Cognitive Linguistics. This innovation could also align Cognitive Linguistics with some of the basic tenets of Integral Linguistics (cf. Belligh 2021). More generally speaking, the last few years there has been an increased interest in social phenomena in the work of several other cognitive linguists as well (cf. Schmid 2016, Geeraerts 2017, among others). This turn in approach has primarily been informed by sociolinguistic research on linguistic variation.

Recent developments such as these give credence to the conclusion that the basic Saussurean and structuralist characterisation of language as a social and intersubjective phenomenon has found its way back to contemporary linguistics also among theoretical frameworks which do not explicitly acknowledge any intellectual indebtedness to the structuralist tradition. Whether this trend will be sustained in Cognitive Linguistics and perhaps even prove capable of orienting future research in Generative Grammar (cf. Newmeyer 1998), is as yet an open question.

8. Conclusion

In this article, we addressed the legacy of structuralism in contemporary linguistics with a focus on the presence of theoretical concepts and distinctions as well as empirical analyses reminiscent of structuralism both in approaches that expressly continue the structuralist tradition and those that consider themselves to profoundly differ from Structural Linguistics. We started off with an overview of the main assumptions that characterise Structural Linguistics and briefly surveyed a number of structural-functional, functionalist, cognitive and pragmatic schools of thought that are particularly relevant with regard to our research question (Section 2). The main thrust of the article was a discussion of five specific

notions which played an important role in Structural Linguistics and continue to live on in current linguistics. The five specific notions we discussed are the view that each language should be described in its own terms (Section 3), the claim that a distinction must be made between language-specific encoded meaning and non-language-specific meaning, viz. contextually and encyclopaedically enriched utterance meaning (Section 4), the view that in between the grammar of a language system and individual acts of discourse an intermediary level of 'normal language use' must be taken into account (Section 5), the claim that paradigmatic contrasts are of paramount importance to arrive at a coherent understanding of language systems (Section 6), and the conviction that language systems and grammars are of an inherently social and intersubjective nature (Section 7). We adduced evidence to show that these five structuralist notions continue to guide contemporary linguistic research, albeit often with important qualifications.

To conclude the article, we briefly dwell on the question what kind of attitude, or mindset, towards structuralist notions might be beneficial for linguistic scholarship. Linguists' appraisals of previous scholarship frequently reflect a troubled relationship with the history of the discipline in a strangely recurrent way. For instance, while Chomsky criticises Saussure (and Whitney) for having had an "impoverished and thoroughly inadequate conception of language" (Chomsky 1972 [2006], 18; cf. Joseph 2002 for discussion), many authors subsequently criticised Chomsky for largely the same reason and, incidentally, often in one breath with Saussure (e.g. Agha 2007). Thus it would appear that obsolescence is not so much a quality of the past but an assessment of the present – yet the present is nothing but a temporary stop, it continually recedes into the past. To us it seems that this conundrum can be resolved if a historiographically informed perspective on the history of linguistics is combined with a philosophical attitude that Hegel describes as *Aufheben* ('sublation') (cf. Coseriu 1992 [2000]).

A historiographically informed perspective demands that appraisals of previous scholarship are based on a reasonably comprehensive knowledge of scholars' work and not on an overly selective or biased reading. It is, for example, noteworthy that neither

Chomsky (1972 [2006]), nor Agha (2007) discuss Saussure's theory of the bilateral sign and his historically foundational understanding of language-specific signifieds, but at the same time dismiss Saussure's contribution to modern linguistics on grounds that cannot be addressed without taking his theory of the bilateral sign into account. Selective or biased readings of previous scholarship which result in decontextualising those parts of the history of linguistics that are not recoverable due to a specific focus might not be the best strategy to move forward. This is where Hegel's notion of *Aufheben* ('sublation') turns out to be helpful. *Aufheben* means that what is being surpassed in the history of thought should at the same time be integrated and preserved:

> *To sublate* and *being sublated* (the *idealized*) constitute one of the most important concepts of philosophy. It is a fundamental determination that repeatedly occurs everywhere in it, the meaning of which must be grasped with precision and especially distinguished from *nothing*. – What is sublated does not thereby turn into nothing. Nothing is the *immediate*; something sublated is on the contrary something *mediated*; it is something non-existent but as a result that has proceeded from a being; it still *has in itself*, therefore, the *determinateness from which it derives*.
>
> The German *aufheben* ('to sublate' in English) has a twofold meaning in the language: it equally means '*to keep*,' 'to preserve,' and 'to cause to cease,' '*to put an end to*.' Even 'to preserve' already includes a negative note, namely that something, in order to be retained, is removed from its immediacy and hence from an existence which is open to external influences. – That which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost its immediacy but has not come to nothing for that. (Hegel 1832 [2010], 81–82)

If successful, the risk that structuralism is a siren whose song lures unsuspecting linguists into favouring obsolete ideas and assumptions could at least be substantially reduced.

Bibliography

Agha, Asif (2007), "The object called 'language' and the subject of linguistics", *Journal of English Linguistics*, 35 (3), 217–235.

Albrecht, Jörn (2007), *Europäischer Strukturalismus. Ein forschungsgeschichtlicher Überblick* (third edition), Tübingen, Narr.

Albrecht, Jörn, Lüdtke, Jens & Thun, Harald (eds., 1988), *Energeia und Ergon. Sprachliche Variation – Sprachgeschichte – Sprachtypologie. Studia in honorem Eugenio Coseriu*, Tübingen, Narr.

Atlas, David (1989), *Philosophy without ambiguity*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

– (2005), *Logic, meaning, and conversation. Semantical underdeterminancy, implicature, and their interface.* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Bach, Kent (1994), "Conversational impliciture", *Mind and Language*, 9 (2), 124–162.

– (2010), "Impliciture vs. explicature: what's the difference?", in: Soria, Belén & Romero, Esther (eds.), *Explicit communication: Robyn Carston's pragmatics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 126–137.

Bartsch, Renate (1985), *Sprachnormen: Theorie und Praxis*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.

– (1987), *Norms of language. Theoretical and practical aspects*, London & New York: Longman.

Battistella, Edwin (1990), *Markedness. The evaluative superstructure of language*, Albany, NY, State University of New York Press.

– (1996), *The logic of markedness.* New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Belligh, Thomas (2020a), "Dutch thetic and sentence-focus constructions on the semantics-pragmatics interface: a case study", *Studies in Language*, 44 (4), 831–878.

– (2020b), "Are theticity and sentence-focus encoded grammatical categories of Dutch?", in: Abraham, Werner, Leiss, Elisabeth & Fujinawa, Yasuhiro (eds.), *Thetics and categoricals*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 33–68.

– (2021), "Language as activity, linguistic knowledge and cognitive psychology: a Coserian perspective", in: Willems, Klaas & Munteanu, Cristinel (eds.), *Eugenio Coseriu: Past, Present and Future*, Berlin and New York, De Gruyter, 327–344.

Belligh, Thomas & Willems, Klaas (2021), "What's in a code? The code-inference distinction in Neo-Gricean Pragmatics, Relevance Theory, and Integral Linguistics", *Language Sciences*, 83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2020.101310

BELLIGH, THOMAS & CROCCO, CLAUDIA (2022), "Theticity and sentence-focus in Italian: grammatically encoded categories or categories of language use?", *Linguistics*. doi.org/10.1515/ling-2020–0141

BIERBACH, CHRISTINE (1978), *Sprache als 'fait social'. Die linguistische Theorie F. de Saussures und ihr Verhältnis zu den positivistischen Sozialwissenschaften*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.

BLANK, ANDREAS (1997), *Prinzipien des lexikalischen Bedeutungswandels am Beispiel der romanischen Sprachen*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.

BLOOMFIELD, LEONARD (1933), *Language*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

BOAS, FRANZ (1911), "Introduction", in: Boas, Franz (ed.), *Handbook of American Indian languages* (*Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* 40, Part 1), Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 5–83.

BÜHLER, KARL (1934), *Sprachtheorie: Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*, Jena, Gustav Fischer. (Reprints Stuttgart, UTB 1982, 1999.)

–   (1934) [1990], *The theory of language: the representational function of language*. Translated by Donald Fraser Goodwin, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

BUTLER, CHRISTOPHER (2003), *Structure and function. A guide to three major structural-functional theories*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

CAPPELLE, BERT (2006), "Particle placement and the case for 'allostructions'", *Constructions Online*, SV-1 (7), 1–28.

CARSTON, ROBYN (2002), *Thoughts and utterances. The pragmatics of explicit communication,* Malden, Blackwell.

CARSTON, ROBYN & HALL, ALISON (2012), "Implicature and explicature", in: Hans-Jörg Schmid (ed.), *Cognitive Pragmatics*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 47–84.

CHOMSKY, NOAM (1972) [2006]. *Language and mind* (third edition; first edition 1968; second, expanded edition 1972), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

COENE, ANN & WILLEMS, KLAAS (2006), "Konstruktionelle Bedeutungen. Kritische Anmerkungen zu Adele Goldbergs konstruktionsgrammatischer Bedeutungstheorie", *Sprachtheorie und germanistische Linguistik*, 16, 1–35.

COSERIU, EUGENIO (1952) [1975], "System, Norm und Rede", in: Eugenio Coseriu, *Sprachtheorie und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft. 5 Studien*, München, Fink, 11–101.

–   (1955) [1975], *Die Sprachgeographie*, Tübingen, Narr.

–   (1958) [1974], *Synchronie, Diachronie und Geschichte. Das Problem des Sprachwandels,* München, Fink.

–   (1962) [1975], *Sprachtheorie und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft. 5 Studien*, München, Fink.

– (1970), "Bedeutung und Bezeichnung im Lichte der strukturellen Semantik", in: Hartmann, Peter & Vernay, Henry (eds.), *Sprachwissenschaft und Übersetzen*, München, Hueber, 104–121.

– (1974) [1977], "Linguistic (and other) universals", in: Makkai, Adam, Makkai, Valerie Becker & Heilmann, Luigi (eds.), *Linguistics at the crossroads*, Padua & Lake Bluff, Ill., Liviana & Jupiter Press, 317–346.

– (1978), "Einführung in die strukturelle Betrachtung des Wortschatzes", in: Geckeler, Horst (ed.), *Strukturelle Bedeutungslehre*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 193–238.

– (1979), *Sprache: Strukturen und Funktionen* (third edition), Tübingen, Narr.

– (1983), "Linguistic change does not exist", *Linguistica nuova ed antica. Rivista di linguistica classica medioevale e moderna*, 1, 51–63.

– (1985), "Linguistic competence: what is it really? The Presidential Address of the Modern Humanities Research Association", *The Modern Language Review*, 80 (4), xxv–xxxv.

– (1987), *Formen und Funktionen. Studien zur Grammatik*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer.

– (1989), "Principes de syntaxe fonctionnelle", *Travaux de linguistique et de philologie*, 27, 5–46.

– (1990) [2000], "Structural semantics and 'cognitive' semantics", *Logos and Language*, 1 (1), 19–42.

– (1992), *Einführung in die Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft* (second edition), Tübingen, Francke.

– (2000), "The principles of linguistics as a cultural science", *Transylvanian Review*, 9 (1), 108–115.

– (2001), *L'homme et son langage*. Edited by Hiltraud Dupuy-Engelhardt, Jean-Pierre Durafour & François Rastier, Louvain, Peeters.

– (2007), *Sprachkompetenz. Grundzüge der Theorie des Sprechens* (second edition), Tübingen, Narr.

– (2015), *Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie*, Vol. 1: *Von Heraklit bis Rousseau*, Vol. 2: *Von Herder bis Humboldt*. Edited by Jörn Albrecht, Tübingen, Narr & Francke, Attempto.

COSERIU, EUGENIO & GECKELER, HORST (1974), "Linguistics and semantics", in: Sebeok, Thomas A. (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics*, Vol. 12, The Hague & Paris, Mouton, 103–171.

DE BACKER, MAARTEN (2009), "The concept of neutralization outside the field of phonology", *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 114 (1), 1–59.

DE CUYPERE, LUDOVIC (2013), "Debiasing semantic analysis: the English preposition *to*", *Language Sciences*, 37, 122–135.

DE HOOP, HELEN & NARASIMHAN, BHUVANA (2008), "Ergative case marking in Hindi", in: De Hoop, Helen & De Swart, Peter (eds.), *Differential subject marking*, Dordrecht, Springer, 63–78.

DE VAERE, HILDE, DE CUYPERE, LUDOVIC & WILLEMS, KLAAS (2018), "Alternating constructions with ditransitive *geben* in present-day German. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*. https://doi.org/10.1515/cllt-2017–0072

DE VAERE, HILDE, KOLKMANN, JULIA & BELLIGH, THOMAS (2020), "Allostructions revisited", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 170, 96–111.

DE VAERE, HILDE, DE CUYPERE, LUDOVIC & WILLEMS, KLAAS (2021), "Constructional variation with two near-synonymous verbs: the case of *schicken* and *senden* in present-day German", *Language Sciences*, 83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2020.101313

DIETRICH, WOLF (1997), "Polysemie als 'volle Wortbedeutung' – gegen die Mehrdeutigkeit der Zeichen", in: Hoinkes, Ulrich & Dietrich, Wolf (eds.), *Kaleidoskop der lexikalischen Semantik*, Tübingen, Narr, 227–237.

– (2021), "Coseriu's approach to word formation as an illustration of his theory of meaning", in: Willems, Klaas & Munteanu, Cristinel (eds.), *Eugenio Coseriu: Past, Present and Future*, Berlin & New York, De Gruyter, 279–293.

DIVER, WILLIAM (1995), "Theory", in: Contini-Morava, Ellen & Goldberg, Barbara (eds.), *Meaning as Explanation: Advances in Linguistic Sign Theory*, Berlin & New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 43–114.

DRYER, MATTHEW (1997), "Are grammatical relations universal?", in: Bybee, Joan, Haiman, John & Thompson, Sandra (eds.), *Essays on language function and language type*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 115–143.

DURKHEIM, ÉMILE (1895), *Les règles de la méthode sociologique,* Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan.

EVANS, NICHOLAS & LEVINSON, STEPHEN (2009), "The myth of language universals: language diversity and its importance for Cognitive Science", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32 (5), 429–448.

EVANS, VYVAN (2009), *How words mean. Lexical concepts, cognitive models and meaning construction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

– (2015), "A unified account of polysemy within LCCM theory", *Lingua*, 157, 100–123.

FÉRY, CAROLINE & KRIFKA, MANFRED (2008), "Information structure. Notional distinctions, ways of expression", in: van Sterkenburg, Piet (ed.), *Unity and diversity of languages*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 123–136.

FILLMORE, CHARLES (1968), "The case for case", in: Bach, Emmon & Harms, Robert T. (eds.), *Universals in linguistic theory*, New York, Rinehart & Winston, 1–88.

– (1982), "Towards a descriptive framework for spatial deixis", in: Jarvella, Robert J. & Klein, Wolfgang (eds.), *Speech, place, and action. Studies in deixis and related topics*, Chichester, Wiley, 31–59.

– (1985), "Frames and the semantics of understanding", *Quaderni di semantica*, 6, 222–254.

– (1988), "The mechanisms of 'Construction Grammar'", in: Axmaker, Shelley, Jaisser, Annie & Singmaster, Helen (eds.), *Proceedings of the fourteenth annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 35–55.

FILLMORE, CHARLES, KAY, PAUL & O'CONNOR, MARY CATHERINE (1988), "Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of let alone", *Language*, 64 (3), 501–538.

FILLMORE, CHARLES & ATKINS, BERYL (1992), "Toward a frame-based lexicon: the semantics of RISK and its neighbors", in: Lehrer, Adrienne & Kittay, Eva Feder (eds.), *Frames, fields, and contrasts: New essays in semantic and lexical organization*, Hillsdale, Erlbaum, 75–102.

FILLMORE, CHARLES & KAY, PAUL (1993), *Construction Grammar coursebook*, Berkeley, University of California, Berkeley.

FIRTH, JOHN (1957), *Papers in linguistics 1934–1951*, London, Oxford University Press.

FOUGHT, JOHN (1995), "American structuralism", in: Koerner, E.F.K. & Asher, R.E. (eds.), *Concise history of the language sciences: from the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, Oxford, Pergamon, 295–306.

FRISSON, STEVEN (2009), "Semantic underspecification in language processing", *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 3 (1), 111–127.

– (2015), "About bound and scary books: The processing of *book* polysemies", *Lingua*, 157, 17–35.

FUDGE, ERIK (1995), "The glossematic school of linguistics", in: Koerner, E.F.K. & Asher, R.E. (eds.), *Concise history of the language sciences: from the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, Oxford, Pergamon, 262–268.

GECKELER, HORST (1971), *Zur Wortfelddiskussion*, München, Fink.

GEERAERTS, DIRK (1997), *Diachronic prototype semantics. A contribution to historical lexicology*, Oxford, Clarendon.

– (2010), *Theories of lexical semantics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

– (2015), "Sense individuation", in: Riemer, Nick (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of semantics*, London, Routledge, 233–247.

– (2017), *Ten lectures on Cognitive Sociolinguistics*, Beijing, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Geeraerts, Dirk & Cuyckens, Hubert (2007), "Introducing Cognitive Linguistics", in: Geeraerts, Dirk & Cuyckens, Hubert (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 3–21.

Givón, Talmy (2016), "Beyond structuralismnExorcizing Saussure's ghost", *Studies in Language*, 40 (3), 681–704.

Goldberg, Adele (1995), *Constructions. A Construction Grammar approach to argument structure*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

– (2006), *Constructions at work. The nature of generalization in language*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Gordon, W. Terrence (1992), Review of Brigitte Nerlich (1992), *Semantic Theories in Europe, 1830–1930. Historiographia Linguistica*, 19 (2/3), 387–392.

Grice, H. Paul (1989), *Studies in the way of words,* Cambridge, MA & London, Harvard University Press.

Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood (1973), *Explorations in the functions of language*, London, Edward Arnold.

– (1978), *Language as a social semiotic. The social interpretation of language and meaning*, London, Edward Arnold.

– (1995), "Systemic theory", in: Koerner, E.F.K. & Asher, R.E. (eds.), *Concise history of the language sciences: from the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, Oxford, Pergamon, 272–276.

Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood & Matthiessen, Christian (2004), *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

– (2014), *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar,* New York, Routledge.

Hanks, Patrick (2013), *Lexical analysis: norms and exploitations*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

Haspelmath, Martin (2003), "The geometry of grammatical meaning: Semantic maps and cross-linguistic comparison", in: Tomasello, Michael (ed.), *The new psychology of language. Cognitive and functional approaches to language structure*, Vol. II, Mahwah, NJ & London, Lawrence Erlbaum, 211–242.

– (2007), "Pre-established categories don't exist: consequences for language description and typology", *Linguistic Typology*, 11 (1), 119–132.

– (2010), "Comparative concepts and descriptive categories in cross-linguistic studies", *Language*, 86 (3), 663–687.

Hegel, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm (2010) [1832]. *The science of logic*. Translated by George Di Giovanni, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hjelmslev, Louis (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale*, Copenhagen, Bianco Lunos.

– (1935–1937), *La catégorie des cas. Étude de grammaire générale*. Acta Jutlandica 7:1 and 9:2, Aarhus, Universitetsforlaget.
– (1939) [1971], "Note sur les oppositions supprimables", in: Hjelmslev, Louis (1971), *Essais linguistiques*, Vol. I, Paris, Minuit, 90–96.
– (1943a) [1961], *Prolegomena to a theory of language* (second revised English edition), Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press. Translated from the Danish original by Francis Whitfield: *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse*, Copenhagen, Ejnar Munksgaard (1943).
– (1943b), "Langue et parole", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 2, 29–44.
– (1959), "Pour une sémantique structurale", in: Hjelmslev, Louis, *Essais linguistiques*, Vol. I (*Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague* 12), København, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag, 96–112.
– (1963) [1970], *Language. An introduction*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press. Translated from the Danish original by Francis Whitfield: *Sproget. En introduction*, Copenhagen, Berlingske Leksikon Bibliotek (1963).
HOFFMANN, THOMAS & TROUSDALE, GRAEME (2013), *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar,* New York, Oxford University Press.
HÖLLEIN, DAGOBERT (2021), "Coseriu, significative semantics and a new system of semantic roles", in: Willems, Klaas & Munteanu, Cristinel (eds.), *Eugenio Coseriu: Past, Present and Future*, Berlin & New York, De Gruyter, 261–278.
HYMES, DELL & FOUGHT, JOHN (1981), *American structuralism*, The Hague & Paris, Mouton.
ITKONEN, ESA (1978), *Grammatical theory and metascience: a critical investigation into methodological and philosophical foundations of autonomous linguistics*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.
– (1983), *Causality in linguistic theory: a critical investigation into the philosophical and methodological foundations of non-autonomous linguistics,* London, Croom Helm.
– (1997), "The social ontology of meaning", *SKY 1997. Yearbook of the Linguistic Association of Finland*, 49–80.
– (2008), "Concerning the role of consciousness in linguistics", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 15, 15–33.
JACKENDOFF, RAY (1990), *Semantic structures*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
JÄGER, LUDWIG (1976), "F. de Saussures historisch-hermeneutische Idee der Sprache", *Linguistik und Didaktik*, 27, 210–244.
– (1978), "F. de Saussures semiologische Begründung der Sprachtheorie", *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik*, 6, 18–30.
– (2003), "Wissenschaft der Sprache. Einleitender Kommentar zu den Notizen aus dem Gartenhaus", in: Jäger, Ludwig (ed.), *Ferdinand de Sau-*

ssure. Wissenschaft der Sprache. Neue Texte aus dem Nachlaß, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 11–55.

– (2010), *Ferdinand de Saussure. Zur Einführung*, Hamburg, Junius.

Jakobson, Roman (1931) [1962]. "Über die phonologischen Sprachbünde", in: Jakobson, Roman (1962), *Selected writings*, Vol. 1: *Phonological studies*, The Hague & Paris, Mouton, 137–143.

– (1936) [1971], "Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre (Gesamtbedeutungen der russischen Kasus)", in: Jakobson, Roman (1971), *Selected writings*, Vol. 2: *Word and language*, The Hague & Paris, Mouton, 23–71.

– (1939) [1971], "Signe zero", in: Jakobson, Roman (1971), *Selected writings*, Vol. 2: *Word and language*, The Hague & Paris, Mouton, 211–219.

Jensen, Viggo Bank (2015), "Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, Eugenio Coseriu et Louis Hjelmslev: Quelques points d'une correspondance", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 68, 27–45.

Joseph, John E. (1995), "Trends in twentieth-century linguistics: an overview", in: Koerner, E.F.K. & Asher, R.E. (eds.), *Concise history of the language sciences: from the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, Oxford, Pergamon, 233–239.

– (2002), *From Whitney to Chomsky: essays in the history of American linguistics*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

– (2004), "The linguistic sign", in: Sanders, Carol (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Saussure*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 59–75.

– (2012), *Saussure*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Kabatek, Johannes (2000), "Einheitlichkeit der Bedeutung, Designat und Integrale Linguistik", in: Staib, Bruno (ed.), *Linguistica romanica et indiana. Festschrift für Wolf Dietrich zum 60. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, Narr, 187–205.

– (2018), *Lingüística coseriana, lingüística histórica, tradiciones discursivas*. Edited by Cristina Bleorțu & David Paul Gerards, Madrid & Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana & Vervuert.

– (2020), "Linguistic norm in the linguistic theory of Eugenio Coseriu", in: Lebsanft, Franz & Tacke, Felix (eds.), *Manual of standardization in the Romance languages*, Berlin & Boston, De Gruyter, 127–144.

– (2021), "Eugenio Coseriu on *immediacy*, *distance* and *discourse traditions*", in: Willems, Klaas & Munteanu, Cristinel (eds.), *Eugenio Coseriu: Past, Present and Future*, Berlin & New York, De Gruyter, 227–244.

– (2022), *Eugenio Coseriu. Beyond structuralism*, Berlin & New York, De Gruyter.

Katz, Jerrold & Fodor, Jerry (1963), "The structure of a semantic theory", *Language*, 39 (2), 170–210.

Katz, Jerrold, Fodor, Jerry & Postal, Paul (1964), *An integrated theory of linguistic descriptions*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

Kilarski, Marcin (2021), *A history of the study of the indigenous languages of North America*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Kirsner, Robert (1979), *The problem of presentative sentences in Modern Dutch*, Amsterdam, North-Holland.

Kleiber, Georges (1990), *La sémantique du prototype. Catégories et sens lexical*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France.

Koch, Peter & Oesterreicher, Wulf (1985), "Sprache der Nähe – Sprache der Distanz. Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Spannungsfeld von Sprachtheorie und Sprachgeschichte", *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*, 36, 15–43.

– (2012), "Language of immediacy – language of distance: orality and literacy from the perspective of language theory and linguistic history", in: Lange, Claudia, Weber, Beatrix & Wolf, Göran (eds.), *Communicative spaces: variation, contact, change. Papers in honour of Ursula Schaefer*, Frankfurt am Main, Lang, 441–473.

Koerner, Konrad E.F. (1989), *Practicing linguistic historiography*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Koerner, Konrad E.F. & Asher, Richard E. (eds., 1995), *Concise history of the language sciences: from the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, Oxford, Pergamon.

Lambrecht, Knud (1987), "Sentence focus, information structure, and the thetic–categorical distinction", *Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 13, 366–382.

– (1994), *Information structure and sentence form*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

– (2000), "When subjects behave like objects", *Studies in Language*, 24, 611–682.

Langacker, Ronald (1987), *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Vol. 1: *Theoretical prerequisites*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

– (1988a), "An overview of Cognitive Grammar", in: Rudzka-Ostyn, Brygida (ed.), *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 3–48.

– (1988b), "A view of linguistic semantics", in: Rudzka-Ostyn, Brygida (ed.), *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 49–90.

– (1999), "Assessing the cognitive linguistic enterprise", in: Janssen, Theo & Redeker, Gisela (eds.), *Cognitive Linguistics. Foundations, scope, and methodology*, Berlin & New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 13–59.

– (2007), "Cognitive Grammar", in: Geeraerts, Dirk & Cuyckens, Hubert (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 421–462.

Lazard, Gilbert (2006), *La quête des invariants interlangues: La linguistique est-elle une science?* Paris, Champion.

– (2012), "The case for pure linguistics", *Studies in Language*, 36 (2), 241–259.

Lehrer, Adrienne (1974), *Semantic fields and lexical structure*, Amsterdam, North-Holland.

Leino, Jaakko (2013), "Information structure", in: Hoffmann, Thomas & Trousdale, Graeme (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 329–345.

Levinson, Stephen (2000), *Presumptive meanings. The theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

Linda, Markus (2001), *Elemente einer Semiologie des Hörens und Sprechens. Zum kommunikationstheoretischen Ansatz Ferdinand de Saussures*, Tübingen, Narr.

Lyons, John (1977), *Semantics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Martin, James (1992), *English text. System and structure*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Matić, Dejan & Wedgwood, Daniel (2013), "The meanings of focus: the significance of an interpretation-based category in cross-linguistic analysis", *Journal of Linguistics*, 49, 127–163.

Newmeyer, Frederick (1998), *Language form and language function*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

– (2003), "Grammar is grammar and usage is usage", *Language*, 79 (4), 682–707.

– (2010), "On comparative concepts and descriptive categories: a reply to Haspelmath", *Language*, 86 (3), 688–695.

Oesterreicher, Wulf (2001), "Historizität – Sprachvariation, Sprachverschiedenheit, Sprachwandel", in: Haspelmath, Martin, König, Ekkehard, Oesterreicher, Wulf & Raible, Wolfgang (eds.), *Language typology and language universals/Sprachtypologie und sprachliche Universalien/La typologie des langues et les universaux linguistiques*, Vol. 2, Berlin & New York, De Gruyter, 1554–1595.

Perek, Florent (2015), *Argument structure in usage-based Construction Grammar*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins.

Piotrowski, David (1997), *Dynamiques et structures en langue*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS.

Pustejovsky, James (1995), *The Generative Lexicon*, Cambridge, MA & London, MIT Press.

RASMUSSEN, MICHAEL (ed., 1993), *Louis Hjelmslev et la sémiotique contempo-raine*, Copenhagen, C.A. Reitzel.

RASTIER, FRANÇOIS (ed., 2016), *De l'essence double du langage et le renouveau du saussurisme*, Limoges, Éditions Lambert-Lucas.

REICHLING, ANTON (1935), *Het woord. Een studie omtrent de grondslag van taal en taalgebruik*, Nijmegen, J.J. Berkhout. (Second edition Zwolle, Tjeenk Willink, 1967.)

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE (1916/1922) [1975], *Cours de linguistique générale*. Publié par Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye. Avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger. Edited by Tullio De Mauro, Paris, Payot.

– (1967–1968), *Cours de linguistique générale*. Édition critique par Rudolf Engler, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz.

– (2011), *Science du langage. De la double essence du langage*. Édition des *Écrits de linguistique générale* établie par René Amacker, Genève, Droz.

SCHLIEBEN-LANGE, BRIGITTE (1975), *Linguistische Pragmatik*, Stuttgart, Kohl-hammer.

SCHMID, HANS-JÖRG (2016), "Why cognitive linguistic must embrace the pragmatic and social dimensions of language and how it could do so more seriously", *Cognitive Linguistics*, 27 (4), 543–557.

SILVERSTEIN, MICHAEL (1981), "Case marking and the nature of language", *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 1 (2), 227–244.

SINHA, CHRIS (2002), "The cost of renovating the property: A reply to Marina Rakova", *Cognitive Linguistics*, 13 (3), 271–276.

SPERBER, DAN & WILSON, DEIRDRE (1986), *Relevance: communication and cog-nition*, Oxford, Blackwell & Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press (second edition, with postface, 1995).

STEHL, THOMAS & HASSLER, GERDA (eds., 2017), *Kompetenz – Funktion – Variation / Competencia – Función – Variación. Linguistica Coseriana V*, Frankfurt a.M., Peter Lang.

TAVERNIERS, MIRIAM (2011), "The syntax-semantics interface in systemic functional grammar: Halliday's interpretation of the Hjelmslevian model of stratification", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (4), 1100–1126.

TAYLOR, JOHN (1999), "Cognitive semantics and structural semantics", in: Blank, Andreas & Koch, Peter (eds.), *Historical semantics and cognition*, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 17–48.

– (2002), *Cognitive Grammar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

– (2003), *Linguistic categorization* (third edition), Oxford, Oxford Univer-sity Press.

– (2007), "Cognitive Linguistics and autonomous linguistics", in: Geer-aerts, Dirk & Cuyckens, Hubert (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Lin-guistics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 566–588.

– (2012), *The mental corpus. How language is represented in the mind*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

TEUBERT, WOLFGANG (2016), Review of Patrick Hanks (2013), *Lexical Analysis: Norms and Exploitations. International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 21 (2), 272–283.

THIBAULT, PAUL (1997), *Re-reading Saussure. The dynamics of signs in social life*, London & New York, Routledge.

TRABANT, JÜRGEN (1986), *Apeliotes oder Der Sinn der Sprache: Wilhelm von Humboldts Sprach-Bild*, München, Fink.

TRUBETZKOY, NIKOLAJ (1931), "Phonologie und Sprachgeographie", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, 4, 228–234.

– (1939) [1958], *Grundzüge der Phonologie*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

VAN DE WALLE, JÜRGEN (2009), *Method and form. An epistemological and historiographical analysis of Louis Hjelmslev's work.* PhD Ghent University.

VAN DE WALLE, JÜRGEN, WILLEMS KLAAS & WILLEMS DOMINIQUE (2006), "Structuralism", in: Östman, Jan-Ola & Verschueren, Jef (eds.), *Handbook of pragmatics*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 1–36.

VAN DER GUCHT, FIEKE, WILLEMS, KLAAS & DE CUYPERE, LUDOVIC (2007), "The iconicity of embodied meaning. Polysemy of spatial prepositions", *Language Sciences*, 29 (6), 733–754.

VYKYPĚL, BOHUMIL (2005), *Glossematikstudien: Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen zu Louis Hjelmslev Sprachtheorie*, Hamburg, Dr. Kovač.

WIDOFF, ANDREAS (2021), "System, norm and meaning", in: Willems, Klaas & Munteanu, Cristinel (eds.), *Eugenio Coseriu: Past, Present and Future*, Berlin & New York, De Gruyter, 245–260.

WIERZBICKA, ANNA (1972), *Semantic primitives*, Frankfurt, Athenäum.

– (1990), "'Prototypes save': On the uses and abuses of the notion of 'prototype' in linguistics and related fields", in: Tsohatzidis, Savas (ed.), *Meanings and prototypes: Studies in linguistic categorization*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 347–367.

– (1996), *Semantics. Primes and universals*, New York, Oxford University Press.

WILLEMS, KLAAS (1994), "Das Unbestimmtheitsprinzip und die Grundformen der Komposition", *Wirkendes Wort*, 44, 349–364.

– (2001), "Produktivität, syntaktische Struktur und Norm", *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik*, 29, 143–166.

– (2011), "Meaning and interpretation: The semiotic similarities and differences between Cognitive Grammar and European structural linguistics", *Semiotica*, 185, 1–50.

- – (2013), "The linguistic sign at the lexicon–syntax interface: assumptions and implications of the Generative Lexicon Theory", *Semiotica*, 193, 233–287.
- – (2016a), "A Comparison of the figure representing the 'fait linguistique' in the *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916) and its sources", in: Gambarara, Daniele & Reboul, Fabienne (eds.), *Travaux des colloques Le cours de linguistique Générale, 1916–2016. L'émergence, le devenir*, Genève & Paris, Cercle Ferdinand de Saussure, 1–21.
- – (2016b), "The universality of categories and meaning: A Coserian perspective", *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, 48 (1), 110–133.
- – (2019), "Eugenio Coserius Sprachzeichentheorie und der Prager Strukturalismus", in: Hoskovec, Tomáš (ed.), *Expérience et avenir du structuralisme* (= *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague. Nouvelle Série* 8), Kanina, OPS & Praha, PLK, 469–503.
- – (2020), "Remarks on the ditransitive construction in German", *Sprachwissenschaft*, 45 (2), 141–180.
- Willems, Klaas & Willems, Dominique (2010), "Verbales Wortfeld, Norm und Polysemie", *Zeitschrift fur romanische Philologie*, 126 (2), 237–274.
- Willems, Klaas & Munteanu, Cristinel (eds., 2021), *Eugenio Coseriu. Past, present and future*, Berlin & Boston, De Gruyter.
- Wüllner, Franz (1827), *Die Bedeutung der sprachlichen Casus und Modi. Ein Versuch*, Münster, Coppenrathsche Buch- und Kunsthandlung.
- Wunderli, Peter (1981), "Saussure und die 'signification'", in: Geckeler, Horst, Schlieben-Lange, Brigitte, Trabant, Jürgen & Weydt, Harald (eds.), *Logos Semantikos. Studia linguistica in honorem Eugenio Coseriu 1921–1981*, Vol. 1: *Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie und der Sprachwissenschaft*, Berlin & New York: De Gruyter & Madrid, Gredos, 267–284.
- Zinna, Alesssandro & Cigana, Lorenzo (eds., 2017), *Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965). Le forme del linguaggio e del pensiero,* Toulouse, Éditions CAMS/O (http://mediation–semiotiques.com/archives/9812).
- Zlatev, Jordan (2007), "Spatial semantics", in: Geeraerts, Dirk & Cuyckens, Hubert (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 318–350.
- – (2008), "The dependence of language on consciousness", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 15, 34–62.
- Zwirner, Eberhard & Zwirner, Kurt (1936), *Grundfragen der Phonometrie*, Berlin, Metten.

Authors: Klaas Willems, Professor of General Linguistics, Ghent University. Thomas Belligh, Researcher at Ghent University, Department of Linguistics. E-mails: Klaas.Willems@ugent.be / Thomas.belligh@ugent.be

The purpose of this article is to place the functional perspective squarely at the center of the investigation into the structural heritage, by looking at the relationship between structure and function in language.

When approaching the subject we are up against what looks like a deep-seated dichotomy. To most observers, function and structure may come across as opposites within linguistics. Structuralism is associated with the priority of form (in the sense of Saussurean *signifiant*, as well as in the sense of pattern or regularity in the object of description). In contrast, functionalism is associated with the priority of meaning and the relationship between language and the surrounding world.

This association, however, is misleading. There is no reason why functionalists should not take structure seriously – and no reason why an analysis of structural properties should be incompatible with a functional approach. On the contrary, one of the central points below is going to be that the two properties are in a certain sense two sides of the same coin.

In order to understand how this can be, it is necessary to disentangle a number of issues that have become associated with the word 'structure' in the course of the twentieth century. I am going to distinguish between three aspects of the concept of structure, each of which is bound up with a particular opposition.

The three aspects and their associated oppositions can be laid out as follows. First, structure is associated with 'autonomy', i.e. the idea that linguistic structure should be described without reference to anything outside itself (the opposition being to approaches that describe language in relation to external factors). Secondly, structure is understood in opposition to 'substance', i.e. the distinction between pure form on the one hand and the material out of which it is constituted on the other. Thirdly, structure is associated with

Within this wider perspective, the present article has the more specific aim of showing how (one type of) functionalism can accommodate the basic insights of the structural tradition. This aim constrains the selection of topics, so that issues that would otherwise fit naturally into the following discussion have not been discussed. Among these are the places of Cognitive Linguistics and Systemic-Functional Linguistics in the overall picture. The focus is somewhat narrowly on the rivalries and the inherent connections between approaches to language description predicated on the core ideas of 'structure' and 'function' in a mainly European perspective.

Talking about functionalism in a book on structuralism calls for taking a stand on the two competing buzzwords. The position I am going to present as a representative of modern Danish linguistics entails that structural*ism* is untenable, while structural *description* is an essential aspect also of functional linguistics. By structuralism (in the untenable sense) I understand the belief that structure is the foundation on which everything else is based. In other words, it is not the case that structure lies at the bottom of everything, so that on top of structure we can optionally add elements to flesh it out. Instead, I suggest that basically the world contains various substances, and these can be structured in various ways that confer a number of essential additional qualities on these substances.

Two basic issues relate to the question of what exactly is subsumed by the two key terms for my contribution, i.e. *function* and *structure*. These words are 'ordinary language' or 'folk' terms and therefore do not tend to raise any flags. What is more, their ordinary language senses can also go quite far in guiding understanding of the linguistic issues involved: function is something to do with what language does, and structure is something to do with how languages are constructed.

After this level of analytic depth, however, things start to get hairy. Without wanting to get bogged down in a battle of contested concepts and definitions, I think some pervasive faultlines in the understanding of both structure and function need to be laid out before a coherent account of the relation between functionalism and linguistic structure can be established. The argument proceeds in the following main stages:

Section 2 is devoted to the notion(s) of structure, arguing the there are three core aspects which have separate relations with descriptive practices and with functional properties of language. The differences between these three aspects of what structure involves must be kept in mind in order to understand relations between structure and function.

On that basis, section 3 discusses the general ontological role of structural relations. The issue is the way structure contributes to the overall nature of things, rather than specifically to language. The key point is that structure is crucial also for an understanding of the substantive properties of things in the world.

Section 4 discusses 'function', the second key term, in relation to the understanding of structure provided by the first two sections, arguing that one of the three aspects of structure described in section 2 offer a perspective where functional and structural description are inherently related endeavors rather than constituting separate perspectives.

Section 5 is a brief historical overview. The aim is not to do justice to the approaches mentioned, but to illustrate how they stand in relation to the differentiated picture of structure and function given in the previous sections.

Section 6 gives an account of how structure and function collaborate in modern Danish Functional Linguistics. The discussion extends and deepens the outline of the two basic concepts, including the key role of the evolutionary perspective, and gives examples of the areas to which Danish linguists have applied this basic pattern of understanding.

Section 7 sums up the conclusions.

2. Structure: shades of meaning

The concept of structure is subject to variation that must be understood in relation to the contexts in which it occurs. Three oppositions have been significant, and their insidious similarities and differences continue to play a role.

(1) Structural properties are 'autonomous' as opposed to externally based properties: a structural description captures the internal organization of an object viewed as independent of its external relations.

Example: Categorization in terms of linguistic structure is viewed as autonomous of the ontological features of the language-external objects denoted. The fact that *furniture* is a non-count noun in English is a purely structural fact about the English language (cf. the countable noun *møbel* in Danish).

(2) Structural properties are 'skeletal' as opposed to 'substantial'.

Example: a chair with the same structure can be made out of different 'substances' (wood or plastic)

(3) Structural properties are 'supra-individual' as opposed to being inherent in individual parts: structural properties are due not to the smallest units, but to the larger wholes they enter into.

Example: In the sentence *Joe left*, *Joe* is the grammatical subject not by virtue of its properties as an individual term, but by virtue of its place in a larger whole.

Let us take these senses one at a time:

(1) The first sense is central to all structuralisms (cf. Saussure 1916 [1968]: 314): language is a system "qui ne connaît que son ordre propre". Autonomy is what made structuralism attractive to a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. It amounted to a declaration of independence from intrusive neighbouring fields that would like to impose their categories. Its driving force is analogous to nationalism: let's declare our territory independent and have laws of our own!

(2) Potential producers need to make sure that chairs and buildings have certain structural properties before they go into production, and these criteria apply independently of what the chairs or buildings are made of. However, this does not entail that the ontological identity of a chair or building is determined purely by its structural

properties. The ontology of a chair clearly depends on other things than pure structure.

In linguistic structuralism these two subtly different nuances were intertwined. Traditional 'notional grammar' was rejected both because it located the source of explanation outside language itself (the autonomy aspect) and at the same time because the source of explanation was assumed to be a matter of substance properties (the skeleton aspect). For instance, notional grammar assumed that the meaning of the word *mouton* could be described by reference to the animal and its substance properties. The thrust of structuralism was to point out that linguistic items had properties that were not found in the language-external notions, and which at the same time had to do with structural relations rather than substance properties. Saussure famously pointed to the English contrast between *sheep* and *mutton* as absent in the French language, although the animal and its substance properties were the same. The assumption of identity between pre-linguistic notions and linguistic meanings (which was rightly abandoned) goes back to Aristotle (*De Interpretatione*).

A paradigmatic example of this structuralist point was Hjelmslev's interpretation (1937) of a proposal by Saussure that was taken up by the so-called laryngeal theory of Indo-European. Hjelmslev argued that Saussure's argument for assuming this phonological element in Proto-Indo-European was completely independent of phonetic substance. The whole point was that there was an element that had a crucial role in the phonological *structure* – how people might have pronounced it was irrelevant.

(3) The third perspective on structure is central to the argument in this article because it provides a vantage point from which the affinity between 'function' and 'structure' becomes apparent: both functional and structural properties have to do with the place of an item in a larger context. The function of a cog in a machine is not describable except by showing what difference it makes in relation to the workings of the machine as a whole, and a structural description of the machine cannot be given except by relating the cog to other parts. It also has another interesting feature, in that

it raises the issue of the inherent relation between structure and ontology: items acquire new properties due to being included in a larger whole.[95] This has largely gone unnoticed in linguistic structuralism – because it puts a question mark against the possibility of keeping structure 'clean'.

The 'supra-individual' sense of 'structural' is also central to one of the perennial discussions in social science, the issue of 'structure' versus 'agency'. Roughly speaking, the question is the causal importance of complex societal wholes as opposed to causal forces of the individuals that enter into those complex wholes. Structural racism illustrates this, being due to "the laws, rules, or official policies in a society", cf. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/structural-racism.

A major historical development in social sciences was the transition from belief in the importance of complex wholes (= 'structures') as found in the theories of Durkheim (e.g. 1898) to a belief in finding the source of explanations in individuals, so that features of the aggregate whole could be explained as emergent from actions at the individual level (even if aggregate properties were sometimes in contrast to individual-level properties). The general principle was articulated in its most influential form as 'methodological individualism', cf. Weber (1922).

A staple example of the latter is the foundation stone in economic theory. The individual economic agents make decisions based on their personal perspective, aiming at maximum profit, which may motivate them to sell their goods at a price that is as high as possible; this, however motivates a drive towards efficiency that results in a lowering of the market price (at the aggregate level). More generally, the idea of understanding macro-phenomena as emergent from micro-level causes is the basis of formalizations in terms of so-called 'agent-based models' (going back to von Neumann), which also play a role in linguistics.

---

95. A radically structuralist position would be to say that elements only *exist* as nodes in a network of relations. However, that would entail that the cog (referred to above) ceased to exist when detached from the machinery, which would be impractical if the purpose was (e.g.) to take it out for repair.

As we saw above with the first two perspectives on structure, all three may coincide. A description focusing on the properties of individual linguistic items (words, sounds or meanings) in isolation from all other aspects of language would be non-structural in all three senses: in the absence of relations, it would have to be based on substance; it would focus on a unit rather than a complex whole, and skeletal features would be outside its purview.

3. The ontological role of structures

To address the problem that not all supra-individual features are structural features in the skeletal sense, we need to look at the relation between structural complexity and ontology. The first observation that should be made is that complex entities have ontological properties that are not reducible to properties of the individuals of which they consist. A forest is more than the plural of trees – tigers live in forests, not in trees (plural).

At the most abstract level, the issue is involved in Russell's theory of types (cf. Russell 1908), which very roughly speaking entails that classes have different properties from the individuals that constitute them. More generally, when you move from individual items towards the more complex structures in which they enter, you get not only structure, but also new substantive properties. This is related to the concept of emergence and is crucial to the whole basic nature of reality. A simple example is the property of being 'liquid': it arises as we move from the atomic to the molecular level. At the atomic level we have H and O, neither of which is liquid – only when we move to the molecular level do we get H_2O, which is a liquid. There is nothing mysterious in this, and it can be explained by reference to properties of the constituent atoms as they respond to being combined. The point is that being liquid is also a substantive property, not *just* a skeletal property. For instance, it enters into the set of affordances for living organisms: animals and plants can use water for things that they cannot use oxygen or hydrogen as individual elements. A source of confusion in understanding the ontological role of structure is the ambiguity associated with the word *emergence* in linguistics, cf. Dahl (2004: 33f): it has been used

both to argue that structure is epiphenomenal and to argue that it has a key role in understanding complexity.

Crucial to my purposes, the pathway from individuals towards the larger wholes to which they belong also applies to language (but there is a difference, to which we shall return!). Word combinations have properties that single words do not have. One of the examples that go all the way back to Aristotle (*De Interpretatione*) is that a statement requires both a nominal item (*onoma*) and a verbal entity (*rhema*). You cannot make a claim about what is the case with only a nominal or a verbal element on their own. The conclusion is that also for language, when you describe a complex entity, structural properties (in the skeletal sense) are part of the descriptive task – but they are never sufficient on their own. You have, as a matter of principle, to ask: what are the substantive ontological consequences of this skeletal structural complexity?

A striking example of the lack of awareness of this point in linguistics is the traditional view according to which semantics was a discipline dealing with *words* only (cf. synonymy, hyponymy, antonomy as a property of words). When the path of description moved on from words to combinations of words, you went into a different discipline, namely syntax. And syntax was typically seen as purely structural, quite different from semantics – a view which was carried over to generative linguistics, with massive consequences for linguistics during the past half-century. Yet clearly, as we have seen, the semantic properties also acquire a new dimension when words are combined – the purely structural relations between words cannot be the whole story, as you move from individual items to combinations.

4. Structure and function: an overview

Against the background of these tensions in the understanding of structure, let us now look at what happens when structure is viewed in relation to *function*.

Function, like structure, is an everyday commonsensical term. Three elements are discernible in its meaning, cf. Harder (1996, 88): causal powers (a function is a type of effect); a normatively

privileged status (not all effects counts as functions); and a larger context within which this effect is seen as belonging. In a scientific context, the commonsensical understanding of 'function' has been analysed by Aristotle in relation to the organs of animals, cf. Givon (1995, 4).

The first impulse for most linguists would probably be to see 'structure' and 'function' as opposites. This is in harmony with sense (1) for 'structure' (the 'autonomous' sense of what 'structural' means), as well as sense (2), the 'skeletal' sense. Also, it fits into both the causal and the contextual dimensions of 'function', since function is associated with what an object *does,* in the context against which it is viewed, rather than what it *is.* But much depends on what exactly is understood by 'function' in relation to language.

If we take 'function' to refer to the function of a linguistic utterance in a concrete communicative situation, this is entirely unproblematic. To take a classic example from Austin, you can enter into marriage by saying *I do* (...take thee to be my wedded wife/ husband) in the appropriate context, and this function is clearly not captured by structural analysis.

Newmeyer (1998) describes the relation between structure and function in terms of an analogy with anatomy: the liver has a structure which anatomists can describe, and in addition to that, it also has functions. These two sides co-exist, but can be described independently. Further, if you want a science specifically about the liver, you have to begin by describing the organ itself, i.e. its structure, before you go on to the functions – otherwise you would not know what precisely it is whose function you are trying to describe.

This natural separation, however, does not follow if we approach the issue from a different vantage point. As we have seen, in relation to perspective (3) on 'structure' (the supra-individual view) functional and structural properties come very close: both are defined as going beyond the individual element, being due to its place in relation to something outside itself.

This inherent affinity between the two key concepts is crucial to understanding the way the term 'function' has been used in European (as opposed to American) structuralism. In European linguistics, 'function' is typically used about the role of linguistic

units in relation to larger linguistic wholes. Hjelmslev, e.g. (1943, 31) defines 'function' in terms of the dependency relations on which glossematics is based (cf. Stjernfelt this volume). A broadly recognized term such as 'the subject function' also depends on this approach: there is a larger context in terms of which subjecthood is defined, but the presupposed larger context is purely linguistic.

At the same time, however, function is also used about the relation between the content side and the expression side. Since there is an obvious everyday sense in which the function of linguistic signs is to convey meaning, it is almost inevitable that this comes to be part of academic usage. This sense, too, is built into European structuralism, because it is inherent in the sign-based view of language that it is founded on, cf. the basic Saussurean distinction between *signifiant* and *signifié*.

On this point, there is a fundamental difference between European structuralism and the American tradition from Bloomfield to Chomsky. First of all, structural description in American linguistics is conceived as an analysis of what is called linguistic 'form', which is essentially understood in terms of the expression side only. Secondly, generative structure is based on a quasi-mathematical view of structure whose natural home is at the meta-level: structure is defined in terms of a formal model that is subsequently superimposed upon the object of description, in this case language. The inspiration comes from the way mathematical formulae are used to handle objects of description in physics. Just as mathematical formulae are not part of the physical universe, generative structures were not seen as part of the real world of language until Chomsky set up his innateness thesis. In this system, there is no inherent link between structure and function in language, because mathematical formulae are not born in a functional context. On these premises, Newmeyer's analogy with the liver is natural: if there is a quasi-mathematical engine inside the language organ, this must be assumed to work regardless of what language is used for.

Until recently functionalism has had a basic problem in terms of scientific methodology: the lack of a clearcut criterion for assigning a particular function to linguistic items (after the demise of Aristotelian pre-ordained functions). The informal persistence of

an Aristotelian view is at risk of letting function become a matter of the personal taste of the observer – as pointed out, e.g. by Searle (1995). For the same basic reason, an influential position in social science, cf. e.g. Elster (1983), argues that functional analyses have no proper scientific foundation.

It would take us beyond the scope of this article to go into the specifics of the argument here, but the basic rationale for a non-subjective assignment of function is the role of evolutionary dynamics (cf. Harder 1996, 2013). According to this explanatory paradigm, functional properties are those that contribute to the persistence[96] of an object in an evolutionary lineage, cf. Allen, Bekoff & Lauder (1998) on *Nature's purposes.* Wings persist because they allow birds to fly, thus contributing to the survival chances of birds, including wings – and hence this is their function. An argument for this is that in island populations birds may lose powers of flight because there are no predators to fly away from.

Already in Darwin (1871), this argument was applied to language, based on the idea of competition between words. A famous example of functional pressures driving out conventional content was pointed out by the German linguist Rudi Keller (1990), i.e. the extinction of one sense of the German word *englisch:* Until the middle of the 19C, it could mean 'angelic' as well as 'English' – but with the rise to world hegemony of England, the sense 'angelic' lost its selectional fitness and died out (being replaced by *engelhaft*).

This sets a basic functional paradigm for the description of linguistic phenomena: for each type of linguistic unit or pattern, we must ask what its contribution is to the persistence of utterances in which this element is found (and thus to the persistence of the element itself). There may not always be a functional explanation,

---

96. As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, it is debatable to what extent an evolutionary perspective is strictly necessary; one might also define functions (more synchronically) as features that contribute to the *operation* (rather than the persistence) of the system containing such features. The motivation for basing the argument on an underlying evolutionary dynamics is the unquestionable status of evolutionary dynamics as part of the way the world works (independently of observers).

as already pointed out – but the question has to be asked. As in biology, properties may hang around that no longer have any functional contribution, such as residual leg bones in whales or surviving genitive endings in Danish phrases such as *til søs* or *til måls*.

5. Functionalism in linguistics from Martinet to Dik/Hengeveld and Croft

We meet this basic sign-based approach to function also in André Martinet (1908–1999), who is perhaps the first to found a school of linguistics that explicitly put functionalism in its title. This was no doubt reinforced by his explicit rejection of generative grammar. At the same time, he is clearly well entrenched in the European sign-based version of structuralism. He emphasizes that it is 'function' in the sense of 'function in relation to the content side' that constitutes the key criterion for what elements to set up in one's language description; thus a linguist (cf. Martinet 1960, 55) should only be interested in phonetic features to the extent they have a function. This functional role is seen as directly tied to the choice of the speaker. In Martinet's terms, the speaker chooses phonological segments because they contribute to expressing the sign he wants to convey.

This approach simultaneously illustrates the way in which 'function in a structural context' blends seamlessly into 'function in relation to the content side' – phonemes have their function in relation to its fellow phonemes on the expression side (*signifiant*) because together they convey a particular conventional meaning (*signifié*). The same seamless blending is expressed in Hjelmslev's *commutation* function, which has a sophisticated structural definition which at the same time implies its role in distinguishing meanings. Martinet is also the father of one of the key concepts in describing what is structurally unique about human language, the concept of 'double articulation': human languages are divided not only into words but within words also into sound segments.

More generally, the property of 'distinctiveness' offers possibly the most salient illustration of the inherent relationship between

functional and structuralist aims in linguistic description.[97] Sauss-
ure's *sheep/mutton*-example illustrates the foundational role of the
basic distinction between sameness and difference for understanding
linguistic structure. In accordance with this principle, a maximally
'skeletal' description of linguistic sounds dissolves them into bun-
dles of 'distinctive features'. However, this rigorously structural
analysis makes sense only against an implicitly functional under-
standing: a well-defined set of distinctive features can be postulated
only on the assumption that these are the ones that *serve* to keep
linguistic forms distinct from each other. Without such an assump-
tion, the search for differences would be bottomless: no two actual
sounds are *completely* identical.

In relation to Martinet, however, it should also be emphasized
that in spite of the structuralist anchoring of his thinking, he was
a pioneer in not limiting himself to the immanent, structural side
of language, but included social variation in his account of lan-
guage as a matter of course. He takes his point of departure in the
structural anatomy of language, but does not stop when he moves
into the external anchorings of language. When sociolinguistics
started in America with the publication of Uriel Weinreich (1953),
Weinreich pointed out the invaluable inspiration he had received
from Martinet.

Simon Dik (1940–1995) is another father figure in European
functional linguistics, cf. Dik (1989, 1997). Unlike Martinet, his
roots are not in European structuralism. His basic framework is
strongly inspired by formal generative grammar, which had become
hegemonic between Martinet's heyday and the rise of Dik's model.
His descriptive practice takes the form of a generative procedure,
an 'assembly line', where basic concepts are inserted in one end
and a structural description emerges at the other end. So what is
so functionalist about that, one may ask?

Two things may be mentioned. In the beginning, functions re-
ferred to specific aspects of grammar which are clearly functional
in nature, of which Dikian functionalism recognized three types:
semantic, syntactic and pragmatic functions. The sentence grammar,

---

97. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

which was in itself not noticeably different from many other models, was designed so as to insert especially nominal constituents into three different sets of functional roles: semantic functions such as agent and patient, syntactic functions such as subject and object, and pragmatic functions such as topic and focus. This entailed that the grammatical description was attuned to functions that elements were designed to serve.

In later phases of the model, worked out in collaboration with Kees Hengeveld (cf. Dik/Hengeveld 1997), the functional approach began to permeate also the basic grammatical description. This took the form of what became known as the 'layered' model of grammatical description. The basic idea is that elements in sentences are put together in a way that resembles the layers of an onion. At the centre we find the combination of the verb and core arguments – and these are then wrapped in layers that indicate place, time, modality and speech act functions. The two basic layers are the representational core (describing a state of affairs) and the interactional periphery (which inscribes the representational core in an interactive context). The layered model has also been adopted in Danish Functional Linguistics, cf. Engberg-Pedersen, Boye & Harder (2019).

In later years, the model has been revised and extended by Dik's inheritors, and developed into what is now called *Functional Discourse Grammar*, where the aim of integrating the description of grammar into a theory of linguistic interaction has become even more explicit, cf. Hengeveld & Mackenzie (2008).

Various strands of functionalism have also developed in America. They have been shaped by the intensive rivalry with Chomskyan generative grammar, which has been the mainstream approach since the 1960s. Non-generative grammarians in America have had to struggle to get recognition. The polarized atmosphere in American linguistics has produced a climate in which it was difficult to combine interest in function and structure. The so-called 'West Coast functionalist' school, with key figures including Paul Hopper (1942-) (e.g. 1987), Sandra Annear Thompson (1941-) (e.g. 2002), John W. Du Bois (e.g. 1987) took up a position where the aim was to derive as much linguistic structure as possible directly from patterns of usage. This produced a number of very interesting results, because

it turned out that rather than being purely arbitrary, linguistic structures could be related to pervasive facts about discourse patterns that were in themselves quite independent of structural categories. However, most linguists would agree that the basic claim of structuralism still holds: you cannot derive the structure of language directly from non-linguistic structures (cf. Harder 2013) – so there remains a gap to be filled.

One of the most influential American functionalists, William Croft (1956-), made important theoretical proposals for how this gap could be bridged (e.g. Croft 2000; 2001). It is impossible to do justice to his contribution in the context of an article such as this. I will focus on two features that can be profiled in relation to what I am going to say about our local brand of functionalism.

One is that Croft shares the orientation of West Coast functionalists towards a strong anchoring in actual usage – rather than towards conventional patterns understood as underlying actual usage and somehow being more basic than *parole*. The way in which such instances of actual usage translate into patterns and conventions (whose existence he obviously recognizes) is based on what he calls his *Radical Construction Grammar*. Its key feature is that each conventional pattern stands on its own. The description of language is essentially a list. It is like a lexicon, a dictionary, but extended with syntactic patterns – each of which has its own individuality and its own partly idiosyncratic set of syntactic, semantic and phonological properties. Each such pattern is viewed as derived directly from repeated patterns of usage – not as mediated by those grandiose systems that were the centrepiece of structuralist theories of language.

A feature also shared with Croft is the anchoring of human languages in an evolutionary framework. The process whereby constructions emerge and become established in languages is viewed as analogous to the process whereby new genetic features spread in a biological population. In accordance with the strong basis in usage, Croft views a language as a population of *utterances* – not as a population of *signs*. The analogy to genetic transmission in language is seen as transmission of structures as part of usage events – linguistic structural material being analogous to genetic mate-

rial. Communication is like biological reproduction in this respect: structures are passed on as an ongoing aspect of linguistic usage.[98]

Against this basis, I am now going to make a few observations about the place of contemporary Danish Functional Linguistics in the development of functional linguistics, while drawing at the same time on the attempts at conceptual clarification that I started out with.

6. Function and structure in Danish Functional Linguistics

Danish Functional Linguistics is not a 'school' with a set of inviolable doctrines, but rather (with a Croft-inspired biological metaphor) a population with a range of variational features. The population includes the authors represented in Engberg-Pedersen et al. (eds., 1996) and Engberg-Pedersen et al. (2005). Central in this context, the characteristic features include a heritage from European structuralism, relocated from its original position as predicated on immanent structure to being embedded in a functional context. For reasons discussed above, there is no sleight of hand involved in such a reconstruction; rather, it places structural properties in the context where they have always inherently belonged. As a salient example, arbitrariness, a centrepiece of Saussurean structuralism, is fundamentally a functionally motivated property (cf. Harder 2010, 236).

Unlike Croft, we see the set of linguistic conventions that are in force in a speech community as a prime target of description – rather than a population of utterances. Such a set of conventions is a social, institutional formation: the 'language system' has the same mode of existence as the 'education system'. Actual utterances like actual schools have other crucial properties than those of the social conventions – but unless they *also* presupposed social conventions, they would not count as instantiations of a human language. As an example of the difference it makes whether the focus is on conventions or on a population of utterances, one can mention the understanding of variation as opposed to shared understanding. Croft

---

98. I have discussed this theory in detail in Ch. 6 of Harder (2010).

(2009, 418), describes language as "fundamentally heterogeneous [and] indeterminate (...)", which at one level is true enough – but in the Danish tradition the emphasis would be on the equally fundamental *constraints* on variation that are imposed by the language system as described above. Without an element of sharedness in the form of conventions, language could not serve as a medium of communication among members of the speech community. A description targeting *only* variation would not capture this inherent complexity in the ontology of human languages.

In harmony with Croft, however, we build on the observation that, as in all social and evolutionary systems, variation is the inherent background for selection and change also in language.

Like other forms of human behaviour, linguistic communication is function-driven. This basic functionality operates at several different levels, especially two (cf. also Verhagen fc):

- Populations (what selection pressures shape human populations, including their languages?)

- Individual life histories (what pressures shape the linguistic behaviour of an individual?).

As in biology, function does not explain everything – languages also take 'random walks' over historical periods. And as in all evolutionary systems, 'path dependence'[99] plays a role. This is reflected in the properties from earlier stages that have no necessary functional motivation.

Nevertheless, those facts about linguistic conventions that do have functional significance are the most interesting area of investigation – just as the functional features are central in evolutionary biology. Where the Danish brand of functional linguistics differs from some other approaches is in stressing the importance of *structure* in understanding how language *functions*.

---

99. 'Path dependence' refers (across scientific disciplines) to the fact that not all properties of elements can be explained by reference to the system of which they currently form part: earlier stages of a developmental sequence continue to exert influence.

If we look at this position from the point of view of the watersheds of recent linguistic history, it may be viewed as an attempt to correct the exaggerations of two twentieth-century revolutions. The structuralist revolution had an important point in saying that linguistic structure exists and cannot be derived from anything outside language – but it went overboard in claiming that structure is *everything* and all other facts about language are irrelevant from a linguistic point of view.

When the debunking of structuralism began in the 1970s, and the non-immanent world returned in force to linguistics, the opposite exaggeration came to play a significant role. Now language was, by many of the pioneers, understood as totally embedded in context, with the essential properties of language being derivable from general properties of cognition or of social processes. This exaggeration, too, Danish functional linguists were concerned to try to correct.

In an even wider context, this development can also be placed in relation to the 'linguistic turn' and its sequels. The linguistic turn constituted a step away from substance, also in the general theory of science. Instead of getting its hands dirty by messing around with empirical details, science was about imposing a formally consistent model on whatever the substantive facts might be. How easy it is to confuse the perspective from the theory of science with the perspective from linguistic structuralism is apparent from Carnap's book title *Logische Syntax der Sprache* (1934), which is really about the structure of the scientific meta-language (cf. Collin, this volume).[100] It is this pattern of thinking that underlies generative grammar, whose view of structure is therefore quite different from that of European structuralism and also independent of assumptions about meaning. However, the tradition of cutting itself off from 'substance' properties – kicking away the ladder

---

100. Hjelmslev regarded this development as identical to the one he pursued in linguistics, see Harder (1974) – but since his own system was built on dependency relations, i.e. relations defined in terms of co-occurrence, it was based on properties of concrete manifestations in a way that was different from properties associated with formal logic.

leading down to messy non-linguistic realities – is shared between the two traditions.

In understanding the role of structure within a functionalist approach to language, it is important to distinguish between two ontologically different types of structure: *component*-based structure and *function*-based structure. Component-based structure is what we find in the structure of matter. When we put carbon atoms together, they enter as components in a larger complex whole, and they may take on different structural properties, depending on how they are combined – one form being that of a diamond crystal. Above we followed the same pathway in relation to water, composed out of oxygen and hydrogen atoms, which may illustrate a different type of structure that may arise when smaller components are put together.

Component-based structure can be investigated without taking functional relations into consideration. This kind of structure is purely a matter of the internal composition of the object. When Newmeyer (1998) sets up his analogy between the structure of language and the structure of the liver, the assumption is that the same thing applies to language: it has an internal composition that has nothing to do with functional properties.

However, language has a type of structure that takes its point of departure in the way language functions, rather than in what it is made of. What this means can be illustrated with a key difference between pre-human and human 'language'. Animals have 'utterances' in the sense that they can convey whole messages – e.g. alarm calls meaning (e.g. in the case of vervet monkeys', cf. Cheney & Seyfarth 1992), *snake!* or *leopard!* What pre-human languages do not have are syntactically structured utterances, i.e. utterances with internal subcomponents. So in these cases the larger whole – the utterance – came first.

The smaller components, rather than being primitive constituents as in the structure of matter, therefore arose out of sub-differentiation. It was not a question of putting components together to build something bigger – it was a question of factoring out sub-functions as part of an intended overall whole function. If we tried to understand the rise of syntax from a component-based perspective, it would imply that scattered words including nouns and

verbs had been lying around for a while, until some bright hominid suddenly got the idea of combining them into a whole sentence.[101]

An illustrative example of function-based structure is the structure of a knife: handles and blades did not lie around until somebody had the idea of combining them into knives – it was rather a case of the sharp-edged stone (which had the cutting function all on its own without any sub-components) being replaced by a superior artefact that had two differentiated sub-functions: one of grasping, and the other of cutting. More generally, this is also the most important type of structure in complex social objects of description. A one-man start-up business company begins without internal structure, because the entrepreneur at first does everything himself. If he is successful, he then hires other people – and they then have to be assigned sub-functions within the company. The structure cannot be derived from the properties of the individuals – it has to be described top-down, based on what the company as a whole does.

The existence of function-based structure does not entail that functional properties are alone on the stage in languages. On the contrary, functions have to be served by items that also have ontological properties that are not inherently functional, i.e. sounds produced by the articulatory apparatus. As part of this complexity, there will also be component-based structure, in the sense of component-based relational properties between speech sounds. Phonological assimilation processes, for instance, are relations based on substance properties of components.

Similarly, in business companies, two people may form an alliance across departmental barriers because of shared interests and good 'chemistry' (after accidentally meeting in the coffee room, for instance), and relations of that kind may be a functionally important part of the way things work in the organization. The point is that such component-based relations are not the sole or even the most important basis of structural properties in complex social objects, including languages.

---

101. As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, the generative assumption that a random mutation could give rise to syntax is congenial with the idea of a purely component-based approach to syntactic structure.

This view of the role of structure in a function-based approach has a number of implications for linguistics (and potentially also for other social sciences – linguistics may still make a bid for serving as a model science!). In describing complex linguistic structures, the key endeavour must be to get at the functional division of labour between them. At the same time, it is built into the ontology described above that such a functional description can never be exhaustive: Looking for a functional explanation for everything would be a fallacy that may be dubbed 'unconstrained functionalism'.

The fact that there is not always a functional explanation for linguistic phenomena means that a functionalist may sometimes be barking up the wrong tree. It is not always easy to argue for precisely what the contribution to the persistence of the larger whole to which the element belongs can be (if there is one) – but nevertheless asking the question may guide thinking about function in valuable ways. As an example, the question of 'contribution to persistence' may be used to settle the argument of whether thinking is the canonical function of the phenomenon of language itself rather than communication, as claimed by Chomsky. Clearly this cannot be true in an evolutionary perspective – since the use of linguistic utterances could not persist from generation to generation merely by solitary thinking processes. Without communication, linguistic utterances would not be reproduced from one generation to the next.

This paradigm can use all the valid results of structural linguistics and anchor them in a wider functional framework. Unlike the way evolution is conceived by Croft, in the Danish context the focus is on conventional features, including structures, rather than acts of usage. Danish Functional Linguistics, very briefly speaking, can be seen as an approach that aims to carry on all the valid results of structuralism by placing them in the functional context in which they inherently belong – and reject those results that cannot stand the test of being relocated from the isolation chamber of pure immanence to the welter of functional pressures. One issue where the integrated approach to function and structure has been explored in Danish Functional Linguistics is grammaticalization, cf. Nørgaard-Sørensen et al. (2011) and Boye and Harder (2012).

To exemplify the various directions that linguistics on these premises have taken, I can mention some of my colleagues: Lars Heltoft, one of the authors of this generation's major Danish grammar (Hansen & Heltoft 2011), has continued the tradition from the Danish linguist Paul Diderichsen and shown how the sentence schema fits into functional properties of sentence organization (and how these have shifted historically) (Diderichsen 1946). Kasper Boye has studied typological phenomena based on the functional division of labour in the clause, including a function-based approach to the validation of cross-linguistic categories (e.g. Boye 2012), and has shown how this may be integrated with the study of grammaticalization and aphasia (Boye & Bastiaanse 2018). Elisabeth Engberg-Pedersen has applied functional-cognitive principles to the study of sign language (Engberg-Pedersen 1993) and the study of features of autistic language disorders (Engberg-Pedersen & Boeg Thomsen 2016). Ole Nedergaard Thomsen has formulated an integrated functional-pragmatic theory of structure and change (e.g. Thomsen 2006); Peter Juul Nielsen (2016) has studied functional structure in morphology, throwing light especially on the structuralist issue of zero forms.

7. Summary

First of all, the argument in this article has tried to show how functionalism can accommodate the key insights of the structuralist tradition. This is perhaps especially obvious in relation to the sign-based tradition of European structuralism. The essential correction of classic structuralist 'immanent' thinking is to see internal (structural-and-functional) differentiation as presupposing external functional embedding.

The foundation of this reinterpretation is the insight that linguistic structure takes functions as the input on which structure is imposed – instead of function being external to structure. Thus the subject function, a centrepiece of the argument in favour of language-internal structure, presupposes the external, communicative function of selecting a target of predication.

The classic argument against such an approach was the lack of a one-to-one fit between grammatical subjecthood and external function. But this argument presupposes that a functionalist approach would have to be based on the assumption that language-internal features could be directly derived from external functions. In reality, the fact is that languages are like all other complex function-based systems (business companies, education systems, etc.) in requiring internal structure in order to serve their external functional purposes. Such an internal structure must be *compatible* with external purposes – but cannot be directly *derived* from them. This is the structural analogue to Aristotle's insight that an axe, in order to be able to serve its function, must be sharp – but this does not tell us whether it is to be made of bronze or iron. That is a choice which is not dictated by functional considerations alone – and similarly many purposes in language can be served in many different ways. But this does not mean that you can understand them without taking the functional context into consideration.

The same point, expressed differently: the properties of language are partially arbitrary. What is more, arbitrariness is a functionally motivated property. As a Danish linguist in the structural-functional tradition used to say 'Thank God the order of the letters of the alphabet were fixed before linguists got their hand on the issue'. The crucial *functional* purpose of an alphabetic sequence requires that the order is fixed (any order!), regardless of the precise extent of its functional motivation. The integration of functional and structural description is not a tense, hard-won compromise but a reflection of the way these twin aspects are inherently interwoven in the ontology of language.

Bibliography

ALLEN, COLLIN, BEKOFF, MARC & LAUDER, GEORGE (eds., 1998), *Nature's Purposes*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

ARISTOTLE in ACKRILL, JOHN L. (1963), *Aristotle's 'Categories' and 'De Interpretatione'*. Oxford: Clarendon.

BOYE, KASPER (2012), *Epistemic Meaning. A Cross-linguistic and Functional-Cognitive study*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

BOYE, KASPER & BASTIANNSE, ROELIEN (2018), "Grammatical versus lexical words in theory and aphasia: Integrating linguistics and neurolinguistics", *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*, 3(1), 29. DOI: http://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.436.

BOYE, KASPER & HARDER, PETER (2012), "A usage-based theory of grammatical status and grammaticalization", *Language 88*, 1,1–44.

CARNAP, RUDOLPH (1934), *Logische Syntax der Sprache*, Wien: Springer.

CHENEY, DOROTHY L. & SEYFARTH, RICHARD M. (1992), "Précis of "How monkeys see the world"", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 15, 135–182.

CROFT, WILLIAM A. (2000), *Explaining Language Change. An Evolutionary Approach*, London: Longman.

– (2001), *Radical Construction Grammar. Syntactic Theory in Typological Perspective*, Oxford: University Press.

DAHL, ÖSTEN (2004), *The Growth and Maintenance of Linguistic Complexity*. (Studies in Language Companion Series 71), Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins

DARWIN, CHARLES (1871), *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. [2007]. Concise edition. Selections and commentaries by Carl Zimmer; foreword by Frans de Waal. New York: Penguin Random House.

DIDERICHSEN, PAUL (1946), *Elementær Dansk Grammatik*. København: Gyldendal.

DIK, SIMON C. (1989), *The Theory of Functional Grammar*. Vol 1: *The Structure of the Clause*. Dordrecht: Foris.

DIK, SIMON C. (ed. by Kees Hengeveld), (1997), *The Theory of Functional Grammar I-II,* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

DU BOIS, JOHN W. (1987), "The Discourse Basis of Ergativity". *Language,* Vol. 63, No. 4, 805–855.

DURKHEIM, ÉMILE (1898), "Représentations individuelles et représentations collectives", In Durkheim, Émile, (1974), *Sociologie et philosophie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 13–50.

ELSTER, JON (1983), *Explaining Technical Change*, Cambridge: University Press.

Engberg-Pedersen Elisabeth (1993), *Space in Danish Sign Language: The Semantics and Morphosyntax of the Use of Space in a Visual Language*. Hamburg: SIGNUM-Press.

Engberg-Pedersen, Elisabeth, Fortescue, Michael, Harder, Peter, Jakobsen, Lisberth & Heltoft, Lars (eds., 1996), *Content, Expression and Structure. Studies in Danish Functional Grammar,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

– (2005), *Dansk Funktionel Lingvistik. En helhedsforståelse af forholdet mellem sprogstruktur, sprogbrug og cognition.* Københavns Universitet, Handelshøjskolen i København & Roskilde Universitetscenter.

Engberg-Pedersen, Elisabeth, Boye, Kasper & Harder, Peter (2019), *Semantik*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

Engbgerg-Pedersen, Elisabeth & Thomsen, Ditte Boeg (2016), "The socio-cognitive foundation of Danish perspective-mixing dialogue particles", in Dancygier, Barbara, Lu, Wei-lun & Verhagen, Arie (eds.), *Viewpoint and the Fabric of Meaning: Form and use of viewpoint tools across languages and modalities*. Boston / Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 125–142

Givón, Talmy (1995), *Functionalism and Grammar*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Hansen, Eirk & Heltoft, Lars (2011), *Grammatik over det danske sprog I-III*. København: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab.

Harder, Peter (1974), "Videnskabelighed og hensigtsmæssighed – en metodisk uklarhed i det glossematiske begrebsapparat", *PAPIR* I,3, 4–17.

– (1996), *Functional Semantics. A Theory of Meaning, Structure and Tense in English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

– (2010), *Meaning in Mind and Society. A Functional Contribution to the Social Turn in Cognitive Linguistic*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

– (2013), "Structure and function: A niche-constructional approach", in Bischoff, Shannon T. & Jany, Carmen, (eds.), *Functional Approaches to Language*. Berlin: DeGruyter Mouton, 71–106.

Hengeveld, Kees & Mackenzie, J. Lachlan (2008), *Functional Discourse Grammar: A Typologically-Based Theory of Language Structure*, Oxford: University Press.

Hjelmslev, Louis (1937), "Quelques reflexions sur le système phonique de l'indo-européen", in *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à M. Holger Pedersen*, Acta Jutlandica IX, 1, 24–44. Also in *Essais Linguistiques II*, Travaux du cercle linguistique de Copenhague XIV, 163–171.

– (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse*. København: Københavns Universitet.

Hopper, Paul (1987), "Emergent Grammar", in Aske, Jon, Beery, Natasha, Michaelis, Laura & Filip, Hana (eds.), *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual*

Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 139–157.

KELLER, RUDI (1990), *Sprachwandel. Von der unsichtbaren Hand in der Sprache*, Tübingen: Francke.

MARTINET, ANDRÉ (1960), *Éléments de linguistique générale.* Paris: Armand Colin.

NEWMEYER, FREDERICK J. (1998), *Language Form and Language Function*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

NØRGÅARD-SØRENSEN, JENS, HELTOFT, LARS & SCHØSLER, LENE (2011), *Connecting Grammaticalization.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

NIELSEN, PETER JUUL (2016), *Functional Structure in Morphology and the Case of Nonfinite Verbs. Theoretical Issues and the Description of the Danish Verb System*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

PUTNAM, HILARY (1960) [1975], "Mind and Machines", in Hook, Sidney (ed.). *Dimensions of Mind.* New York: SUNY Press, 148–79. Reprinted in Hilary Putnam, (1975), *Mind, Language and Reality. Philosophical Papers,* vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 362–385.

RUSSELL, BERTRAND (1908), "Mathematical logic as based on the theory of types", *American Journal of Mathematics* 30, 222–262.

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE (1916) [1968], *Cours de linguistique générale.* Paris: Payot.

SEARLE, JOHN R. (1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

THOMSEN, OLE NEDERGAARD (1992), "Unit Accentuation as an Expression Device for Predicate Formation. The Case of Syntactic Noun Incorporation in Danish", in Fortescue, Michael, Harder, Peter & Kristoffersen, Lars (eds.), *Layered Structure and Reference in a Functional Perspective*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 173–229.

– (2006), "Towards an integrated functional-pragmatic theory of language and language change", in *Competing Models of Linguistic Change. Evolution and beyond*, ed. by Thomsen, Ole Nedergaard, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 307–336.

– (2011), "Syntactic processing and word order in Danish", *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* 30 (1), 129–166.

THOMPSON, SANDRA A. (2002), "'Object complements' and conversation", *Studies in Language* 26.1, 125–164.

VERHAGEN, ARIE (2021), *Ten Lectures on Cognitive Evolutionary Linguistics.* Leiden/ Boston: Brill.

WEBER, MAX (1922) [1968], *Economy and Society*, ed. by Roth, Guenther & Wittich, Claus. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weinreich, Uriel (1953) [1963], *Languages in Contact*. Publications of the Linguistic Circle of New York. New York; The Hague: Mouton.

Author: Peter Harder, Professor emeritus of English language, University of Copenhagen. E-mail: harder@hum.ku.dk

Phonology and Phonetics, a recurrent theme in European Structuralisms: the case of Otto Jespersen and André Martinet

Hans Basbøll
University of Southern Denmark

Abstract. *In this paper I illustrate my topic by selecting two outstanding examples of great European linguists: Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) and André Martinet (1908–1999) both of whom began as very good phonologists/phoneticians, and who became famous in those subjects before they continued their careers within other linguistic disciplines. My focus is upon the initial part of their careers, and the main parts of my paper are section 4, on Otto Jespersen, and section 5, on André Martinet. There are two important general issues that must be dealt with: (i) What is the relation between phonology and phonetics? And (ii) can Jespersen and Martinet both be considered structuralists, and if so, in what sense? The first of these issues is taken up in section 1, and the second particularly in the conclusion (section 6). I also include Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) in the discussion, and I conclude – in a detailed table – that Martinet is a prototypical phonologist who attaches particular importance to phonetics, Hjelmslev is a structuralist without phonetics, whereas Jespersen can hardly, or at most in a very limited sense, be considered a structuralist. But first, I discuss the relation between phonology and phonetics (section 1), and how phonology can be subdivided (section 2).*

1. The relation between phonology and phonetics: a European structuralist view of the main linguistic disciplines, starting from the linguistic sign

The relation between phonology and phonetics is viewed quite differently by different linguistic schools. Figure 1 illustrates what I take to be a common understanding, in particular by European structuralist linguists, of the relation between the central linguistic disciplines; thus 'hyphen'-disciplines like socio-linguistics, psycho-linguistics and neuro-linguistics are not included in the figure, and the focus is on synchrony. The linguistic sign is the basis of Figure 1 that represents

'The World$_1$'

pragmatics

semantics

syntax

morphology

phonology

phonetics

Language-transcendent disciplines

Language-internal disciplines

"grammar" (sign combinatorics)

The two "sides" of the minimal sign
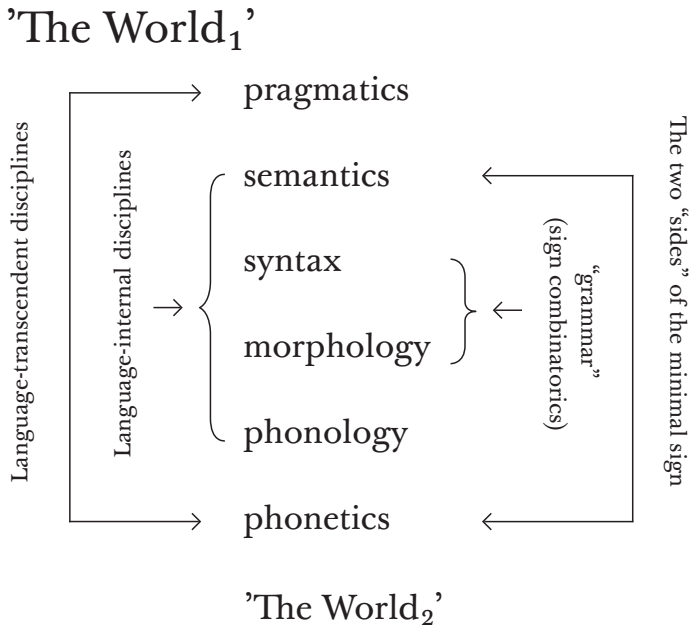
'The World$_2$'

NB: 'The World$_2$' is meant as the totality of possible human speech sounds. It is properly included in 'The World$_1$'.

Figure 1. The six central synchronic linguistic disciplines in a Saussurian(/glossematic) interpretation

a Saussurian understanding (from Saussure 1916), and it agrees in its fundamentals with many Glossematicians' interpretation.[102]

The first distinction is between *language-internal* disciplines, viz. semantics, syntax, morphology and phonology, and *language-transcendent* disciplines, viz. pragmatics and phonetics. *Semantics* concerns Saussure's *signifié* (Hjelmslev's *content*), *phonology* Saussure's *signifiant* (Hjelmslev's *expression*). Each of the linguistic disciplines semantics and phonology thus concerns one of the two 'planes' or 'sides' of the linguistic sign. *Syntax* and *morphology*, on the other hand, both involve an interplay between *signifié* and *signifiant*, and can be characterized as *sign combinatorics*, viz. of *words* and *morphemes* (in the sense of minimal linguistic signs), respectively. For syntax, the domain is the sentence (ie. the combinatorics of words within the sentence), whereas for morphology, the domain is the word (i.e. the combinatorics of morphemes within the word). The term *grammar* is often used for syntax and morphology together.

In this conception of the linguistic sign, thus, the difference between *phonology* and *phonetics* is that the former is a 'pure' linguistic discipline, and the latter a discipline exhibiting both linguistic aspects (having to do with human speech sounds) and non-linguistic aspects (acoustics and physiology, for example). The term 'phonology' is now standard across schools, whereas in the middle of the twentieth century, it had connotations to the Prague school in particular (in contrast to the terms *phonemics* and *phonematics*). One could say that if phonology and phonetics together (i.e. their union in a logical sense) cover (human) speech sounds, then phonology studies their function – e.g. how the change of one speech sound of a word can lead to a change in the semantics of that word, i.e. change it into a different word – and phonetics studies them as sounds (acoustically and physiologically, for example).[103]

---

102. Central in Glossematics' contribution to linguistics more generally is the idea of a parallel structuring of content and expression, as illustrated in J.M. Anderson 1992.
103. In Martinet's formulation (1994, 1327): "linguists distinguish in phonic matters between phonetics dealing with objective reality irrespective of its function, and phonology where matters are handled in reference to communicative relevance."

The key issue when discussing the delimitation of phonology and phonetics is the role of the phonetic substance in phonology. The positions cover a whole scale of opinions, going from a strong glossematic point of view: phonetic substance should play no role in the study of phonology (expression analysis in glossematic terms), to more generally accepted views at the other end of the continuum, viz. that it is impossible to do any reasonable phonological analysis while ignoring the phonetic substance. Both cases discussed in this paper – Otto Jespersen and André Martinet – placed strong emphasis on the phonetic substance in their analyses (further see section 6).

2. Divisions within phonology: a Praguian view

One way to subdivide phonology can be illustrated by Table 1. It is based upon a Praguian practice (see section 5.2), and exhibits two binary distinctions, viz. – in the vertical dimension – whether units are segmental or prosodic (supra-segmental), and – in the horizontal dimension – whether the domain is the word or the utterance (sentence), see Table 1.

	Domain: word	Domain: utterance (or sentence)
Segmental units (vowels, consonants)	Segmental Word Phonology	Segmental Utterance (Sentence) Phonology
Prosodic (supra-segmental) units (e.g. accents)	Prosodic Word Phonology	Prosodic Utterance (Sentence) Phonology

Table 1. Four compartments of phonology, in a Praguian interpretation

The four compartments can be characterized as follows: The *segmental units* of the top row are vowels and consonants, and in certain traditions there may be one or two further such categories (like semivowels or glides). Segmental units are those that have the smallest extent in the sound string. The *prosodic units* – also called supra-segmental – have a larger extent, as e.g. the syllable. The leftmost column considers *word phonology*, viz. phonological

phenomena taking place within the word, not across the boundaries between words. The rightmost column concerns *utterance phonology* (the term generally accepted to-day, rather than *sentence* phonology, the original Praguian term being, in German, *Satzphonologie*); utterance is a more apt term since it is not grammatically determined – being about speech, not written language.

Of the four compartments of phonology according to Table 1, *Segmental word phonology* has traditionally been the central field for both phonetics and phonology. *Segmental utterance phonology*, on the other hand, has in no way been given the same scientific attention, generally speaking, but has been studied intensely in particular cases like French liaison, for example (sometimes under the heading of *sandhi*, see H. Andersen 1986). *Prosodic word phonology* and *prosodic utterance phonology* have not always been clearly distinguished, and eg. stress and tonal phenomena can be part of either: tonal word accents – as found in Swedish and Norwegian, for example – versus intonation, and dynamic word accents (word stress) versus sentence accents, eg. nuclear stress in some Germanic languages, including English, but not Danish.

3. Two European examples of general linguists who began as phoneticians/phonologists: Otto Jespersen and André Martinet

I have selected two influential European linguists, of different generations, who began their careers with important phonetic and phonological works, viz. the great and universally acclaimed Danish linguist Otto Jespersen (1860–1943), and the more controversial but also great French linguist André Martinet (1908–1999). They knew each other personally, and they were both throughout their careers preoccupied with diachronic issues; here I focus on their phonetic and phonological work, particularly in the beginning of their careers. There is no doubt that Martinet can justifiably be characterized as a phonologist and a structuralist (see Joseph, this volume, where he also considers Martinet): Section 5, in particular 5.2, is full of examples where he establishes phonological systems and discusses how they interact, etc.

Whether Otto Jespersen can equally justifiably be called a phonologist or a structuralist – in addition to being an important phonetician and general linguist – is more doubtful, and eg. Fischer-Jørgensen (1975, 6–8) classifies him – as she also classifies Henry Sweet (cf. section 4.4) – as belonging to the "Forerunners within classical phonetics."[104] Is he a structuralist at all, and if so, in what sense? Jespersen has an interesting discussion of his relation to the *phonological* (OJ's emphasis) standpoint in *Linguistica* (1933, 210ff, under the title "Letzte worte" [last words], 205). He quotes (among many other examples) what he said about the system of plosives in (1904b):

> Wir bemerken dabei einen gewissen parallelismus, indem jede sprache in gegensätzlicher verwendung (d.h. um wörter zu unterscheiden) nur zwei klassen hat, und zwar diejenigen, welche sich stark von einander unterscheiden, das dänische die erste und vierte, das norddeutsche und englische die zweite und fünfte, das französische und im allgemeinen die romanischen und slavischen sprachen die dritte und sechste. (Lehrb. 6.77).

> [We note thereby a certain parallelism so that each language in contrasting usage (ie. in order to distinguish between words) only has two classes, viz. those that are strongly distinguished from one another: Danish the first and fourth, Northern German and English the second and fifth, French and in general Romance and Slavonic languages the third and sixth.]

I think this exemplifies a structuralist position (not unlike Daniel Jones' which is normally classified as phonological, also by Fischer-Jørgensen 1975, 50–58). And, perhaps more importantly, there is no doubt that Jespersen's analyses of prosody (section 4.3) can justifiably be considered structuralist.[105] I shall conclude this discussion

---

104. This agrees with Joseph's evaluation (1994a, 4792): "Jespersen would expressly reject some of the key tenets of Saussure's *Cours* and structuralism, making him the last great general linguist in the prestructuralist vein."

105. Jespersen proposes (1933, 214) to use the term *phoneme* as follows: "Das wesentliche scheint mir zu sein, dass ein phonem zwei oder mehrere objektiv unter-

in section 6 where I also include the relation to Louis Hjelmslev and Glossematics (also cf. section 4.5).

4. The case of Otto Jespersen (1860–1943): a great phonetician (and a phonologist without adopting the term?) who became an internationally leading general linguist

Jespersen was incredibly wide ranging in his scientific (and also more applied) work, and his influence is enormous. The standard work on the history of linguistics in the Nordic countries, Hovdhaugen et al. 2000, states that "The most influential, and by far the most productive, general linguist in the Nordic countries in this period [1900–1965] was Otto Jespersen [...] Jespersen was one of the most widely read and most frequently quoted general linguists of the first half of the twentieth century" (p. 344). His works on English are equally influential, and he also contributed significantly to auxiliary/constructed languages for international communication,[106] to practical works on the teaching of pronunciation and grammar in schools, to language acquisition,[107] to history of sound and comparative linguistics,[108] etc. Jespersen has also been acknowledged as an

---

scheidbare lautnuancen umfassen kann, aber innerhalb ein und derselben sprache insofern einheitlich ist, als es für begriffliche unterscheidungen zu verwenden ist. Zwei phoneme können demnach genügen um zwei worte auseinanderzuhalten." [The essential seems to me to be that a phoneme can encompass two or more objectively distinguishable sounds, but within a particular language is unitary as far as differences in meaning are concerned. Two phonemes, on the other hand, can suffice to distinguish between two words]. Jespersen then suggests a common term (glottic) for phonemes and prosodic units that can make semantic differences.

106. Jespersen is the creator of *Novial*, and was involved also in *Ido* and *Interlingua*, see Larsen (1989).

107. Questions of child language occupied Jespersen throughout his career, see Vejleskov (1989).

108. Nielsen (1989, 62) used the term 'Jespersen's Law' about an important sound law: "By this is meant the change in the 15th and 16th centuries of [voiceless obstruents, fortes] to [voiced obstruents, lenes] under conditions similar to those governing Verner's Law (after a weakly stressed syllable)." In Jespersen (1909a, 83) he calls it "Det "vernerske" skifte" [The Vernerian shift], and in (1909b, 199) "Verner's Law in

important predecessor for Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar.[109] The focus of my paper will be his great handbook *Fonetik* [Phonetics] (1897–1899).

4.1 What in Jespersen's Fonetik (1897–99) is relevant still to-day?

Otto Jespersen's main contribution to phonetics is *Fonetik* (1897–99),[110] a book of more than 600 pages. The main parts of it were translated into German, and brought up-to-date, in two books that both appeared in 1904.[111] The parts of *Fonetik* about Danish were not included in the two books in German, but were used for Jespersen's *Modersmålets fonetik* [Phonetics of the mother tongue] (see note 13); it became the standard textbook on Danish phonetics for several generations of students.

The grand old lady of phonetics – in Denmark as well as internationally – Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (1911–2010), gave (1979, 409–410) a concise evaluation of Jespersen's classic *Fonetik*, which agrees well with Rischel's later and more detailed account (1989). She points out that Jespersen did not introduce completely new aspects or methods in phonetics but that, basically, he followed his immediate predecessors, viz. mainly Sweet (see section 4.4). But Jespersen can be said to represent the culmination of what may be called 'classical phonetics', i.e. the description of the articulation of sounds based mainly upon what can be seen – by looking at the mouth – and be felt by a careful speaker, and from our knowledge of the relation between the articulation and what can be heard (p. 410). Jespersen

English." It was introduced already in Jespersen's dissertation (1891, 170–217) where it was called (p. 183, cf. 178) the "vernerske lov paa engelsk" [Vernerian law in English].
109. Joseph (2002, 167) states that "the principal intellectual debts Chomsky has acknowledged apart from Saussure and Jakobson have been European rather than American, including the linguists of 17th-century France (see Chomsky 1966), Humboldt and Jespersen." Also see Akaso (2019).
110. *Fonetik. En systematisk fremstilling af læren om sproglyd* [Phonetics. A systematic presentation of the theory of the sounds of language] (1897–99). It was published in three volumes (1897, 1898, 1899), then combined into one volume (1897–99).
111. *Phonetische Grundfragen* [Basic Issues in Phonetics] (1904a) and *Lehrbuch der Phonetik* [Textbook of Phonetics] (1904b and later).

– being an eminent observer and listener – presents a wealth of good analyses of sounds that he could pronounce to the complete satisfaction of native speakers. Jespersen was always aware of the contrastive function of sound differences, and in my view he must thus be said to have a clear phonological understanding (see sections 3, 4.5 and 6). Thus his notion of 'fonetisk *økonomi*' [phonetic *economy*] of different languages (*Fonetik* 611f) bears resemblance to phonological points of view.

What is outdated to-day in *Fonetik* are, in particular, the sections on acoustics (under "Syntese" [Synthesis], 361 ff.). This comes as no surprise, of course, since there has been, in the 20th century, an enormous progress in the technical possibilities in studying speech acoustics. But Jespersen was, in fact – according to Fischer-Jørgensen – sceptical towards the use of instruments, more so than some other phoneticians of his time. In this respect, he is in direct opposition to Karl Verner, who actually designed instruments for measuring different aspects of speech sounds.[112]

4.2 Jespersen's contribution to phonetic transcription and segmental analysis

"Jespersen has also written about the phonetics of Danish, for the study of which he prepared a special system of notation, and Danish phonetic terminology is largely his invention," says Paul Christophersen (1989, 2), a close collaborator of Jespersen's in the 1930s (Juul 2002, 32). I totally agree, and this is true both of segmental phonetics (vowels and consonants), and of prosody (section 4.3).

Otto Jespersen created a system for the phonetic transcription of Danish: *Dania*, presented in Jespersen (1890). This system has been used ever since in most of the works written within the Danish philological tradition, that is, in the history of language, in dialect

---

112. See Verner 1903, LXXIII-LXXX and 365–372, and two detailed letters on instrumental phonetics and the theory and practice of acoustics from Karl Verner to the important Finnish phonetician Hugo Pipping, published (1912, with a translation into French) by Vilhelm Thomsen and the mathematician J. Gram.

descriptions, in dictionaries, and so forth (see section 4.6).[113] Transcriptions in Dania are relatively easy to read if you know Danish orthography well – therefore particularly easy for Danes. Obviously, this is also a weakness, in relation to an international audience, in terms of comparison between languages, et cetera.

The importance of Otto Jespersen for the study of Danish phonetics in general, and also Danish phonology, is both theoretical and descriptive. Theoretically, his analysis of the syllable in terms of sonority is in my view his most important contribution, see section 4.3. But he also contributed to the theory of the segmental parts of phonetics (vowels and consonants), and his analyses of what lies behind phonetic transcriptions – eg. proposing so-called antalphabetic notations – were a noteworthy theoretical contribution. Descriptively, his detailed analyses of the pronunciations of Standard Danish from the early part of the twentieth century[114] have contributed to defining the norm of what may now be called Conservative Standard Danish, even though it was in no way conservative when it was proposed by Jespersen.[115]

Paul Christophersen (1989, 10) also says: "Another work in the field of English which is seldom mentioned but deserves attention is the indication of pronunciation which Jespersen supplied to Brynildsen's English and Dano-Norwegian Dictionary (1902–7). This is probably the first pronouncing dictionary of the century, and it uses a type of notation which in all essentials is identical with that which Daniel Jones was to use later on. The speech that

---

113. However, *Dania* is not used in studies written within an international linguistic and phonetic tradition, e.g. by Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, Jørgen Rischel, Nina Grønnum and myself. We have been using the *IPA*-system (on which Jespersen also left his mark).

114. This is true for the very influential *Modersmålets fonetik* = Jespersen 1906 (third edition 1934) which is followed in the large dictionary *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog* [Dictionary of the Danish Language] (1919–56, 28 vol.). See further sections 4.5 and 6 on the importance of this book in relation to the fathers of Glossematics, Hjelmslev and Uldall.

115. I refer in general to Brink (2011) who gives a number of detailed examples where Jespersen made observations on Danish pronunciation that had never been noticed before, even though they had been in the language for a long time.

Jespersen recorded was of course that of a generation which has now all but disappeared, the grandparents of present-day Englishmen. This gives the dictionary some historical interest, preceding as it does by quite a few years the first edition of Daniel Jones's dictionary in 1917."

In the preface to his large – and fine – dictionary, J. Brynildsen says that Professor Otto Jespersen's phonetic notation is probably one of the strongest assets of the book. In his introduction, Jespersen[116] states that his transcription is only slightly different from the one used in *Le Maître Phonétique* – which later became the IPA-system – but that he has made it more readable for Danish and Norwegian readers. Interesting conventions introduced by Jespersen are the use of *italics* for sound segments that can be pronounced either 'clear' or more 'reduced', and superscript vowels for the second part of falling diphthongs, e.g. [me^{i}n, bo^{u}n] *mane, bone*. He emphasizes that the pronunciations should be natural, and points out that native speakers often think they have a much more distinct pronunciation than they actually do.

4.3 Jespersen's contribution to the analysis of prosody: sonority, stress, tones and stød

Prosody is, as explained in section 2, a term for properties of the sound chain characterizing longer stretches than the individual segments (vowels and consonants), viz. (dynamic) *accents* (stress) – which are properties of syllables – and *tonal* phenomena, eg. word tones in Swedish or Norwegian, and intonation. Danish *stød* is also a prosody. I consider first Jespersen's analysis of syllabic structure in terms of the inherent sonority of individual segments.

Theoretically, his analysis of the syllable representing it as a mountain, that is a peak surrounded by valleys, of sonority, metaphorically speaking, where different sound types exhibit different degrees of inherent sonority thereby forming a sonority (or

---

116. "Om udtalebetegnelsen" [On the phonetic notation] (1902, XII-XIII) – see also his "Oversigt over udtalebetegnelsen" [Survey of the phonetic notation] (p. XIV).

strength) hierarchy,[117] is a truly important achievement. Jespersen says (1897–99: 524) that the most sonorous sound (ie. the sound with highest sonority) is the one that – everything else being equal – can be heard over the longest distance.[118]

Jespersen was a true pioneer in his analysis of stress: he developed a whole system of types of stress and described it in detail: both syntactic principles of stress reduction (unitary stress, or unit accentuation), of compound stress, of value stress (different types of emphatic stress), and on the interaction with rhythmical principles. His chapter on "Tryk" [stress] in *Fonetik* (pp. 555–581) is a comprehensive and very original account of stress principles in general, and how they function in Danish, German, English and French.

According to Louis Hjelmslev (see section 4.5), every language has a particularly difficult descriptive problem around which the whole linguistic analysis must centre. For French, it is the interpretation of schwa, h, and the latent and optional consonants; for English, diphthongs and quantity. For Danish, the central structural problem is the stød (1951). Danish stød is a particular kind of laryngealisation (creaky voice) characterizing some Danish syllables. Only syllables with a long vowel or with a short vowel followed by a sonorant consonant, e.g. [n, l], and with stress can have stød.[119]

Jespersen's contribution to the study of stød is important in two respects in particular: (1) Jespersen described stød synchronically in great detail, both phonetically and phonologically, and he also provided lots of minimally contrastive pairs of words, with and without stød, respectively, and he specified the morphological

---

117. Lesser sonority of a segment corresponds to higher (consonantal) strength, and vice versa.

118. He refers to an experiment by O. Wolf (1871, 58ff, 71) who measured, at night, how many steps away a specific sound could be heard, when it was shouted at maximal voice effort; there are many problems with such experiments, as Jespersen notices.

119. The absence or presence of stød – linguistically speaking: a laryngeal syllable rhyme prosody – can be the only difference distinguishing words having otherwise identical pronunciations, e.g. *ven, vend!* 'friend,' 'turn!' [vɛn vɛnˀ]; *musen, musen* 'the muse,' 'the mouse' [ˈmuːsən ˈmuːˀsən]; *vandet, vandet* 'watery,' 'the water' [ˈvanəð ˈvanˀəð].

functions of stød; in these respects, he is a very important successor to Jens Høysgaard, the great Danish linguist of the Enlightenment who discovered and analyzed the stød (1743), (1747), see Basbøll (2018a). (2) Jespersen discussed in depth the relation between the Norwegian and Swedish tonal ('musical') accents and the Danish stød, and he contributed significantly to the understanding of the early development of tonal and laryngeal distinctions in Scandinavia; in these respects (not covered by Høysgaard), Jespersen is a truly grand name, together with Karl Verner, and building on Sweet (see section 4.4).[120]

Jespersen represents the culmination of Danish prosodic terminology: Since Høysgaard's pioneering analysis of Danish prosody (1769), which he saw as an interplay between 'tones,' vowel length, stød and stress, the terminology had been unstable and unclear throughout the 19th century. This development ended with Jespersen's *Fonetik* which established the terminology that would be maintained in all essential respects throughout the 20th century and until this very day, viz. that vowel length, stød and tonal phenomena are consistently distinguished. It is not just a question of terminology – even though the terminology is extremely shifting and often vague – but it is also clear that the concept itself becomes sharper throughout the century until Jespersen ends the game, so to speak; for details see Basbøll 2018a, 38–40.

4.4 Jespersen and two other great phoneticians: Sweet and Storm

Otto Jespersen (1897–99, 50) calls Sweet "måske overhodet den störste nulevende fonetiker" [perhaps after all the greatest phonetician alive]. Jespersen had a close relationship with Sweet, he visited him in Oxford and London, and after Sweet's death, when Jespersen visited his widow in London, she called him "min mands kæreste og dygtigste elev" [my husband's dearest and most able/clever pupil] (Jespersen 1938, 156 [1995, 180f]). He had known and admired Sweet's work from his early days as a student of linguistics (1881).

120. Brink (2018) gives detailed analyses of Danish stød and other aspects of prosody in a historical context, emphasizing the importance of Jespersen's contributions.

Henry Sweet (1845–1912) in his very first work analyzed Danish phonetics. His treatment of the Danish 'Tonelag' – a term here covering both Danish stød and Scandinavian tonal word accents – is generally very insightful for its time.[121] Sweet's *Handbook of Phonetics* (1877) was probably the most important single work on phonetics of its time (see Jespersen 1897–99, 50–53 and 146–148, Juul 2002).

One of the greatest influences on the young Otto Jespersen, even though they never met, was the German Felix Franke (1860–1886), and the influence was reciprocal as documented by their correspondence from 1884 until Franke's premature death, see Kabell 2000; Jespersen translated and edited several of Franke's works, and they both saw Sweet as their great idol.

Jespersen first became aware (1938, 28 [1995, 33f]) of Sweet's works in 1881 by reading the Norwegian Johan Storm (1879). Storm (1836–1920), who was professor of Romance and English philology (1873–1912) at Oslo University, was a personal friend of Vilhelm Thomsen's throughout his life, from the time they had travelled together in Italy in 1870, see Juul 2002, 24. Arne Juul has given a fascinating and well-documented account of Storm in *Den levende fonograf: nordmændenes professor Higgins* [The living phonograph: Professor Higgins of the Norwegians] (2002), including comprehensive correspondence between Storm on the one hand, and Jespersen, Thomsen and Sweet (among others) on the other hand. Juul (2002) demonstrates that Jespersen and Storm were both easy to offend,[122] and several times Thomsen had to function as a mediator between them. In particular, Storm was hurt by Jespersen's frequent claims that Storm was basically unsystematic, see eg. *Fonetik* § 46, 53–55, and Juul 2002, 111–114.

---

121. Sweet is sometimes unfair to earlier phoneticians, e.g. he says that "[the stød] was discovered by the Danish grammarian Höysgaard, who, however, contented himself with merely giving a number of examples" (1873 [1913, 348]); this is not at all a fair evaluation of the great Høysgaard, see Basbøll 2018a.
122. This applies to Sweet as well, as far as his relation to Storm is concerned.

4.5 Jespersen and 'structuralism'

After the death of Otto Jespersen in 1943, Louis Hjelmslev was the most important general linguist in Denmark, and he wrote an interesting obituary of Jespersen in *Acta Linguistica* III (1945); see Jørgensen (this volume) on the relation between Hjelmslev and Jespersen. Hjelmslev characterized Jespersen as a truly revolutionary spirit, and he called him the Jacobin[123] among the linguists (1945 [1973, 52]). He ends the obituary (1973, 53f) by expressing some surprise that Jespersen almost never adopted the points of view of others even when they seemed to be very close to his own,[124] perhaps for psychological reasons, Hjelmslev suggests.[125] Hjelmslev may have in mind his own theory of *Glossematics*, constructed together with Hans Jørgen Uldall in the 1930s.

Jørgen Rischel (1989, 56) has called attention to a hitherto scarcely noticed connection between Jespersen and Uldall: "it was planned that Uldall […] should revise the *Lehrbuch* [1904b] with English-speaking readers in mind. […] In 1935 they discussed various points (modifications of the an(t)alphabetic system, degrees of stress, and other topics). In the late thirties Jespersen (with reference to his own advanced age) expressed some jealousy over Uldall's collaboration with Louis Hjelmslev: 'Hjelmslev is young and he can wait better than I can'. In 1938 or 1939 the plan was changed; now it was to be a joint venture: 'Essentials of Phonetics and Phonology [altered from: with remarks on phonology] by Otto Jespersen and Hans Jørgen Uldall'. […] Anyway, the war broke out and the work was never completed."[126]

---

123. The Jacobins were members of an extremely radical movement during the French revolution in the most bloody period (i.e. the early 1790s).

124. Hjelmslev mentions Prague phonology, Ferdinand de Saussure, Maurice Grammont and Edward Sapir. Paul Christophersen (1995, xviii-xix) tells us that "Henry Sweet, himself very much of a loner, once said of Jespersen that it was 'as if he were determined to be original at all costs' (*The Sounds of English*, 1908, Bibliography)."

125. Paul Christophersen (1995) gives an interesting analysis of Hjelmslev (1945) and of Hjelmslev's relation to Jespersen.

126. Uldall writes in a letter to Hjelmslev (26.1.36) "Jeg har den sorteste samvittighed mht ham [Jespersen], jeg kan næsten ikke overvinde mig til at arbejde med

The leading Prague phonologist, the Russian prince N.S. Trubetzkoy (1890–1939), said (2001, 44) that "The distinction between languages with externally determined quantity and those with internally determined quantity was introduced into the study of sounds by our esteemed president, Otto Jespersen, and is now common knowledge"; and he adds (2001, 50) that "Phonology is interested only in languages with internally determined (or, as we would say to-day, phonologically relevant) quantity [...] [serving] the differentiation of meaning." This is a clear recognition of Jespersen's relevance for phonology, and in 1930 he (OJ) received a telegram stating that "La réunion phonologique internationale"[127] "recognizes you as one of the pioneers of the new methods in linguistics" (*Linguistica* 1933, 212). Another Prague phonologist, André Martinet (section 5 here), said (1993, 337), à propos *speech acts* and *shifters*, that much of this scarcely surpassed what Jespersen had said sixty years ago. I think this is typical for the respect paid by later linguists to Jespersen's pioneering works.

The directness and pertinence, but sometimes also sharpness, in Jespersen's formulations towards other researchers can be seen in the postcards Jespersen sent to a leading member of the Prague School, Bohumil Trnka (1895–1984), who was professor of English and author of the comprehensive *A Phonological Analysis of Present-Day English* (1935). The first postcard (19.6.1928) was written in Jespersen's invention: the auxiliary language *Novial*, the others in English. 11.2.1930 Jespersen thanks Trnka for his paper on The phonological structure of English, and points out a couple of points

---

hans gamle, støvede bog, hvorfor den skrider overmaade langsomt. ... Naar jeg saa endda vidste, hvad han vil have mig til at gøre med den; han bebrejdede mig, at jeg ikke havde lavet mere om paa det, der er færdigt. Et mærkeligt menneske!" [I have the most black conscience concerning Jespersen, I can hardly overcome myself to work with his old dusty book, that is why it is progressing extremely slowly...I wish I knew what he would have me do with it; he blamed me for not having changed more in the finished parts. A strange man!]. Thanks to Viggo Bank Jensen for calling my attention to this letter.

127. It was a conference "Réunion Phonologique Internationale Tenue à Prague [The International Phonological Meeting Held in Prague] 18–21/XII 1930," the proceedings of which are published as *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* IV (1931).

where he disagrees with it; and he refers, as in other postcards, to many places in his own publications that Trnka should have paid attention to. Of general importance is the following: "I have […] e.g. in my *Fonetik* […] paid much attention to what you now call phonology, what I generally termed 'economy of speech'" (cf. section 4.1). 17.5.1931 Jespersen thanks Trnka for his Syntax of English Verbs, mentions a number of disagreements, but ends "But on the whole I consider your book a valuable contribution to Engl. Syntax." 2.2.1936 Jespersen thanks Trnka for having sent him Trubetzkoy's book,[128] but adds that it is not easy reading, that he does not like his phonetic transcription, and Jespersen asks "What does he mean by capital letters?[129] Perhaps he explains it somewhere: I have not found it yet." Here and in the following postcards there are numerous concise points of criticism of Trnka's claims. And the last one in the correspondance (1.3.1938) simply was "Dear professor Trnka, Thank you very much. But you will forgive me for saying that I do not think you have cleared up the matter. Yours sincerely (sign.) Otto Jespersen."[130]

4.6 Jespersen's heritage in Danish phonetics/phonology: The New Jespersen School (of phonetics)

What I have termed the *New Jespersen School*[131] is a group consisting of the main editors of the *SDU*,[132] namely, Lars Brink, Jørn Lund and Steffen Heger, and their collaborators and pupils. Jørn Lund says, in his status report on the study of the Danish language (1993, 31), that the term *Ny-Jespersenianerne* make the authors, i.e. Brink and Lund, proud, and that they consider Jespersen as a much greater in-

128. This book must be *Anleitung zu phonologischen Beschreibungen* [Manual of phonological descriptions] (1935).

129. This must be Archiphonemes, a crucial notion in Prague phonology.

130. Postcards from Jespersen to Trnka, Inventář Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy, nr. 2132; thanks to A. Andronov. (I have not seen Trnka's reactions.)

131. In Danish *Ny-Jespersenianerne*, Basbøll (1989, 93–97).

132. *SDU* stands for *Den Store Danske Udtaleordbog* [The comprehensive pronuncing dictionary of Danish] (1991), by Lars Brink, Jørn Lund, Steffen Heger and J. Normann Jørgensen.

spiration than Hjelmslev. Lars Brink (1981, 17) even called Jespersen "fonetikkens store ledestjerne" [the Great Lodestar of Phonetics].

The main work of the *New Jespersen School*, apart from the *SDU*, is Brink & Lund (1975), a comprehensive history of the pronunciation of the Danish Standard language as spoken by people born between 1840 and 1955, based upon sound recordings from radio archives, their own tape recordings, and so on. This work is an important basis of the *SDU*, in methodology and not least with respect to factual knowledge. The *SDU* is one of the largest pronouncing dictionaries published for any language, with respect to information provided – in the dictionary part and the systematic part combined – with respect to pronunciation variants (regional, stylistic, etc.), information on pronunciation in inflections, and pronunciations varying with respect to stylistic reduction phenomena and ongoing sound change. It is not documented with respect to informants and social stratification, however, and the extremely detailed information in the *SDU* cannot always be verified systematically by others.

The New Jespersen School introduced an important definition of Dansk *rigsmål*,[133] i.e. Danish standard (spoken) language, and it has been adopted by other scholars as well. Essentially, *rigsmål* is not defined here as a "whole language (variant)," spoken by particular people, in particular institutions, or the like. Brink & Lund define a *rigsmål-form* as a pronunciation of *a specific word form* that can be heard with some people – not necessarily a majority – raised in all major regions of Denmark. This is more operational than definitions like "spoken at the Royal Theater," "spoken by well educated people," etc., and is methodologically sound. However, this definition presupposes that the pronunciation is rendered in a discrete – in the mathematical-logical sense – notation system since two different concrete pronunciations are never one hundred percent identical, if measured in the finest details. This means, in practice, that e.g. differences of intonation that cannot be reduced to simple answers to yes-no-questions, are not incorporated in this definition (Basbøll (1989), (2016)). Thus two pronunciations of a given word form can both be *rigsmål-forms* in this definition, even though they can be

---

133. Literally *rigsmål* means 'the speech of the kingdom (or realm).'

clearly different with respect to intonation and thereby easily iden-
tifiable as, for example, Jutlandish vs. Copenhagen speech.

4.7 Otto Jespersen's heritage in Danish grammar: a brief look

I have just (in section 4.6) used the term The *New Jespersen School*
about a specific group of Danish phoneticians. But Otto Jespersen,
as would be expected, has had many other followers (also) in Den-
mark, within the study of English, of applied linguistics, of gram-
mar, etc. I shall not discuss this vast field here, but only single
out a study of Danish grammar strongly inspired by Jespersen,
that includes also phonetic and phonological aspects, viz. Wiwel
(1901).[134] Wiwel emphasizes in the preface the extraordinary impor-
tance Jespersen has had for this book. He mentions four "positive
grammatical marks," i.e. (i) inflectional forms, (ii) word order, (iii)
prosody (tone, stress, stød) and (iv) pauses/interruptions. As an
example, this approach leads to his enumeration of 30 different
plural formations of nouns, including also phonetic/phonological
criteria, both segmental and prosodic (pp. 98–100).

  Jespersen himself mentions Wiwel's book briefly[135] where he
says that Wiwel (1901) does not pretend to be a complete grammar,
but that he criticizes traditional grammar with sagacity, and often
presents new observations that are both fine and just; however, Jes-
persen adds, Wiwel can be blamed for overemphasizing the formal
view and neglecting the logic of language. Louis Hjelmslev praised
Wiwel (1901) highly, characterizing it (1928, 109f) as a work of the
utmost importance for the principles of grammar. The truth is –
according to Hjelmslev – that in all of Europe, Wiwel is the first to
have argued, in a consistent, clear and rigorous way, for a pure lin-
guistic synchronic standpoint (similar to, but antedating Saussure).

---

134. H.G. Wiwel (1851–1910), the author of *Synspunkter for dansk sproglære* [View-
points for Danish grammar] (1901), was a teacher at the Latin school (college) in
the Northern Jutlandish city of Aalborg.
135. This is in Jespersen (1928 [1933, 27]); Wiwel is not mentioned in Jespersen's
memoirs (1938).

Wiwel (1901) led to a strong controversy with 'traditionalists.' The leading expert of Danish grammar at the time, and a primary object of Wiwel's harsh criticism, was Kr. Mikkelsen.[136] In the generation following Wiwel and Mikkelsen, the two most important grammarians of Danish were Aage Hansen[137] and Paul Diderichsen.[138] When the latter gave his final, very detailed, evaluation of Danish grammar in the 20th century (1965), he found that Wiwel's criticism of Mikkelsen was basically unfair, and that Mikkelsen had contributed much more to our knowledge of Danish grammar than did Wiwel. Diderichsen also said (1965, 191) that the most decisive difference between Aage Hansen and himself was their relation to Otto Jespersen: Aage Hansen was deeply influenced by Jespersen's scientific optimism that grammatical problems could be solved by using common sense and forgetting about the artificial traditional systems; Diderichsen, on the other hand, was more sceptical of Jespersen and found more inspiration in the structuralism of Hjelmslev and in earlier traditions. It is interesting to see how the new large scientific grammar of Danish, by Hansen & Heltoft (2011), treats the tradition: Høysgaard, Mikkelsen, Wiwel and Diderichsen (and to a lesser extent Aage Hansen) all play a significant role, and thus Jespersen indirectly – via Wiwel – still owns a heavy share of today's tradition of Danish grammar.

---

136. Kr. Mikkelsen (1845–1924) was a teacher at the college ("Latin school") of Roskilde. He was raised in the Latinate tradition, but his most important works, scientifically, were his grammars of Danish, viz. (1894), and the much expanded syntax (1911) with very detailed new observations.

137. Aage Hansen (1893–1983) edited more columns than anyone else of the largest Danish dictionary ever, viz. *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog* [Dictionary of the Danish Language] (1919–56, 28 vol.). He is also the author of several large philological works on Danish, culminating with (1967).

138. Paul Diderichsen (1905–1964) was the most important professor of Scandinavian Studies at Copenhagen University, and he dominated the study of Danish grammar, not least with his textbook (1946).

5. The case of André Martinet (1908–1999): a Prague phonologist who became a general 'functionalist', founding his own school

5.1 Young Martinet (before the dissertations 1937)

Martinet has given a detailed narrative of his life in *Mémoires d'un linguiste. Vivre les langues* [Memoirs of a linguist. Long live the languages] (1993, reviewed by Joseph 1994b) with the subtitle "Entretiens avec Georges Kassai et avec la collaboration de Jeanne Martinet" [Interviews with Georges Kassai and in collaboration with Jeanne Martinet].[139] He had been acquainted with Jespersen since 1928 and had worked on translating his *Language* (1922) into French (Martinet 1993, 249),[140] and he obtained a degree (agrégation) in English (1930). 1925–1930 he studied linguistics at la Sorbonne, and he got interested in Scandinavian languages (including Old Norse), in particular Danish. In 1928 he received a stipend to study in Copenhagen, and he became a specialist in Danish. In 1934 he married a Dane in Copenhagen at a non-religious ceremony with two official witnesses one of whom was Otto Jespersen (Martinet 1993, 42f).

In the thirties, Martinet closely followed the Prague phonologists, and from 1932 he had contacts in writing with Trubetzkoy. His first published paper is on French phonology (1933), his second is on the Danish stød (1934). His two doctoral dissertations were both published in 1937; the primary one is *La gémination consonantique d'origine expressive dans les langues germaniques* [Consonantal gemination of expressive origin in the Germanic languages] (1937a), and the secondary one is *La phonologie du mot en danois* [Word phonology in Danish] (1937b), on which see section 5.2. Trubetzkoy (2001, 257) writes the following favourable words in a letter to Roman

---

139. Martinet's role in French linguistics, where he was a strong but controversial figure, is treated in *Combats pour la linguistique, de Martinet à Kristeva* [Fights for linguistics, from Martinet to Kristeva] by Chevalier and Encrevé (2006), including an interview with him (pp. 55–63).

140. This translation seems never to have been published.

Jakobson (20 September 1937): "Both works by Martinet [1937a, 1937b] are quite professional and rather interesting. His study of Germanic gemination is still partly dependent on the 'phonetic outlook,' which is natural. But it is good that he dares criticize even such authorities as Meillet. His criticism of Meillet's theory of the aristocratic and democratic strata in the Indo-European protolanguage is most apt."

5.2 Second dissertation: La phonologie du mot en danois (1937)

Martinet (1937b) is the first comprehensive declared 'phonological' or structural analysis of the Danish sound system (Uldall 1936 is too short and sketchy in this respect); but as argued in sections 3 and 4.5, Otto Jespersen may in some respects be considered a structuralist (see also section 6). In Hjelmslev's introduction to his analysis of the Danish expression system (1951 [1973, 247]), he refers to Martinet (1937b) for a phonological analysis of Danish.[141] Poul Andersen's *Dansk fonetik* [Danish phonetics] (1954) was the most important textbook of Danish phonetics for university students in the generations following the readers of Jespersen's *Modersmålets fonetik* (section 4.2); Poul Andersen's book introduced its phoneme analysis as follows (p. 326): "*André Martinet* establishes the following psychophonetic units that I shall term *phonemes* in the following."[142] But note that Martinet's term is *phonèmes*! Poul Andersen uses Martinet's inventory as a basis for a detailed phonetic description of each phoneme (pp. 328–350). Andersen's prosodic analysis (pp. 309–326) – in contradistinction to Martinet's – precedes, and is presupposed by, the segmental analysis; it is very different from Martinet's, and utterly original.

---

141. It appears from Hjelmslev's notes in his own copy of Martinet (1937b) – with the dedication "Hommage cordial de l'Auteur" [cordial homage of the author] – that he has read Martinet closely.

142. Andersen's original: *André Martinet* opstiller følgende psykofonetiske enheder, som jeg i det følgende betegner *fonemer* (emphasis in the original).

The title of Martinet (1937b) can be illustrated by the follow-
ing quotation from § 7–1:[143] "En danois, les variations de hauteur
mélodique n'ont de valeur phonologique que dans la phrase, et
non dans le mot. En conséquence, un examen de ces variations
sortirait du cadre de la présente étude." [In Danish, tonal variations
only matter phonologically in the utterance and not in the word.
Therefore, an investigation of such variations would fall outside
the scope of the present study]. According to Table 1 (section 2),
the work thus covers the lefthand column (with two boxes), and
it is divided into three main parts: inventory of phonemes, com-
binations of phonemes (both part of segmental word phonology),
and prosodic characteristics (obviously belonging to prosodic word
phonology). I shall briefly present and discuss here Martinet's main
analytic phonological principles and his main results. The focus in
the present context, however, is not the detailed analysis of Danish
phonology, but rather the types of arguments that Martinet is us-
ing for his structural analysis, in particular to distinguish between
purely structural arguments; arguments of a psychological or pseu-
do-psychological nature (quoting "la conscience linguistique"[144])
that would never be accepted by strict structuralists (adherents to
glossematics, for example); and, finally, arguments building upon
phonetics.

5.2.1 Martinet's establishment of the system of phonemes

Martinet's analysis (1937b § 5–1) establishes 10 qualitatively different
full vowel phonemes. He presents them in the following triangular
system (§ 2–1), see Figure 2:

---

143. I am referring to paragraphs in Martinet (1937b) since the two versions of
the dissertation have different page numbers. The version I have been using is the
independent book (Hjelmslev's copy, see note 40).

144. Martinet says about his Danish wife (§ 1–8): "Elle a été pour [l'auteur] un in-
fatigable sujet d'expériences et lui a permis de rester toujours en contact avec une
conscience linguistique qui, sans elle, aurait été absente." [She has been an infatigable
source of experience for the author and has permitted him to stay always in contact
with a linguistic awareness [of Danish] that, without her, would have been absent]
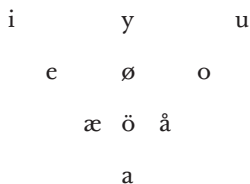
i   y   u

   e   ø   o

    æ ö å

     a

Figure 2. Martinet's triangular system representing the 10 full vowel pho-
nemes of Danish (1937b, § 5–1).

This triangular system consists, he continues, of three series: pal-
atal, rounded palatal, and velar, whereas the lowest vowel /a/ "en
théorie, tout au moins, […] n'est ni palatal, ni vélaire, ni arrondi"
[in theory, at least … is neither palatal, nor velar, nor rounded].
According to Martinet, all of them occur both with long and with
short quantity,[145] except that he considers long [ö:] and [ø:] to be
bound (combinatorial) variants with the argument that they can-
not be demonstrated by (what Hjelmslev calls) the commutation
test (minimal pair test); but Martinet admits (§ 2–4) that this is
somewhat arbitrary since the distinction between *køre* 'drive' (with
[ø:]) and *gøre* 'do' (with [ö:]) cannot be explained – phonetically
or phonologically – by the difference between [k] and [g]. This
seems to indicate that Martinet places great emphasis on the com-
mutation test (in an overly mechanistic way, according to many
phonologists).[146]

    However, his use of the commutation test raises further ques-
tions: In § 2–2,[147] he presents 15 minimal pairs as evidence of the
phonemic status of all 10 short full vowels. But the number of
all possible minimal pairs for 10 potential units (phonemes) is 45
(9+8+7+…+2+1), not 15! The *implicit* logic which Martinet seems
to have followed, is (1) every rounded palatal V is paired with the

---

145. Martinet (§ 5–1) adds archiphonemes where the quantity distinction is neutral-
ized for all these full vowels.
146. Bjerrum (1938, 4) accepts Martinet's conclusion, but with a different argument,
viz. that the difference can never distinguish between two words in the same position
of an utterance.
147. § 2–3 is lacking.

other vowels of the same height (= aperture); (2) for each of the three series, each vowel is paired with their neighbouring vowel (i.e. with minimal height difference); (3) a is paired with all neighbouring vowels.

Martinet does not explain what lies behind this procedure. A possible reason for it could be: (1) if a rounded palatal V is commutable (still Hjelmslev's term) with the two vowels of the same height (in the other series), then these two are also commutable; (2) if it is true for all three series that vowels with (only) 1 difference in height are commutable, then it is true for the whole system (except *a*) that two arbitrary vowels with at least 1 difference in height are commutable; (3) if *a* is commutable with all vowels of next-lowest height, then rule (2) applies to the whole system (*a* included).[148] The phonetic substance is crucial for Martinet's arguments, and his method does not allow overlapping manifestation as follows: there are only minimal pairs of short [y] and [ø] before non-nasals, and only minimal pairs of short [ø] and [ö] before nasals, as shown in the following diagram, see Figure 3:[149]

	/y/				/ø/	
[y]		[ø]		[ø]		[ö]
_non-nasal		_nasal		_non-nasal		_nasal

Figure 3. Diagram illustrating the complementary distribution of the Danish short rounded front vowels before non-nasals and nasals: the vowels before nasals are lowered by one degree.

Thus, Martinet does not allow overlapping (as eg. Jakobson did), ie. identifying the same phonetic segment with two different phonemes, even though the distribution is systematic and can be accounted for by a simple principle.

Martinet establishes (1937b, §5–2) the following 18 consonant phonemes (in normalized notation here): /p t k (h) b d ɡ f v s ð j ɣ

---

148. There are logical alternatives to the formulations above.
149. This is somewhat simplified when the whole vocabulary is taken into account, see Spang-Hanssen 1949, 66f.

r l m n ŋ/. The first group are the plosives ('occlusives'), and they
are classified as non-aspirated (/b d ɡ/) and aspirated (/p t k/). He
says (§5–5) that the plosives are the only consonants that enter a
correlation (in the Praguian sense). As for (h), Martinet considers it
not as a normal phoneme, but as the marked member of a correla-
tion between zero and aspiration before a full vowel.[150] The oppo-
sition between aspirated and unaspirated plosives is neutralized
in certain positions, eg. after /s/, resulting in archiphonemes, eg.
in /sB, sD, sG/ pronounced as unaspirated plosives, the *unmarked*
members. Martinet discusses the alternative interpretation offered
by Uldall (1936) – taking the dentals as examples[151] – that there
are two phonemes: /t/ and /d/, manifested as [t] vs. [d] initially
and as [d] vs. [ð] finally. Martinet gives the following arguments for
not identifying phonologically [d] and [ð] (thus resulting in three
phonemes /t d ð/): the same sound [d] would be associated with
two different phonemes, and this is problematic in itself (§3–19);
if one would then – to avoid the force of the preceding argument
– identify [t-] and [-ð], this would be against the "ordre de fermeté
d'articulation décroissante" [order of decreasing articulatory clo-
sure] (also §3–19), and this is for Martinet even worse than the first
point; a quite different type of argument is that Danes would never
pronounce English *ladder* with [ð] (§3–21).[152]

---

150. Hjelmslev has added in the margin (in §5–2) in his copy (see note 40) about
this interpretation: "Brud paa det fonologiske princip!" [Violation of the phono-
logical principle!].

151. The three series (labial, dental, velar) are not exactly parallel, but I shall not
discuss this problem here.

152. In his *Économie des changements phonétiques* [Economy of phonetic changes] (1955,
376) Martinet presents a radical revision of these views, well hidden in the chapter
"Les occlusives du basque" [The plosives of basque]. There he distinguishes three
phonetic variants: "(1) la forte en position 'forte,' aspirée [strong in 'strong' position:
aspirated]; (2) la forte en position 'faible' et la douce en position 'forte,' l'une et
l'autre occlusives sourdes [strong in 'weak' position and soft in 'strong' position:
both voiceless plosives]; (3) la douce en position 'faible,' spirante sonore" [soft in
'weak' position: sonorant spirant]. Except for the terminology, this analysis agrees
with what many others, including Roman Jakobson, have proposed.

5.2.2 Martinet's account of the combinatorics of phonemes

In § 6 Martinet treats phoneme combinatorics, divided into the sections "initiale" [initial], "finale" [final], "combinaisons internes" [internal combinations], "caractéristiques des mots étrangers" [characteristics of foreign words], and "signes démarcatifs" [boundary signals]. Martinet does not give a formal definition of 'word,' but he defines the domain of his combinatorial descriptions to be monomorphemic native words in (what Martinet calls in § 6–7) the unmarked grammatical form, viz. undeclined nouns; adjectives in the positive, singular, common gender; and verbs in the infinitive.[153] This gives a phonologically homogeneous frame for the description, consisting mainly of monosyllables and disyllables whose last vowel is non-full, viz. either /ə/ or "i de très faible intensité" [i of very week intensity].[154] When in this way the frame is monomorphemic words only, the final consonant combinations do not include complex clusters where suffixes like -s, -t, -st, -sk are added to the morpheme, nor internal consonant combinations resulting from compounding where the first part ends in a consonant and the second begins with one. In the tables of consonant combinations (initially § 6–13, finally § 6–16, internally § 6–25) the combinations are restricted as explained above, but in the text Martinet discusses far more types and many difficulties in making non-arbitrary decisions. In the section on foreign words, he often just appeals to "la conscience linguistique" [see note 43], and sometimes he suggests that the real object of study should be speech where any influence from writing was abstracted away (§ 6–29 on the word *chef*): "c'est évidemment vers les illettrés qu'on devrait diriger ses recherches" [obviously, one ought to direct one's research towards the illiterate], but – unfortunately for the phonologist – "[les] adultes illettrés

---

153. It is important that verbs are not in the imperative (the stem), due to imperatives like *cykl!* 'go by bike!,' etc., that are not well-formed syllables, cf. Uldall's proposal (1936) that the Danish imperative is formed by subtraction (see Basbøll 2018b).
154. This category is a characteristic of Martinet's approach. His argument for introducing it is the neutralization of the correlation of aspiration in examples like *hyppig* 'frequent.' This "i de très faible intensité" is most often found in derivatives with the suffix *-ig*, thus it is not very relevant when the frame is monomorphemic words.

[...] sont à peu près inexistants au Danemark." [illiterate adults are practically non-existent in Denmark]

5.2.3 Martinet's word prosodic analysis

In §7, finally, Martinet treats "Les caractéristiques prosodiques" [prosodic characteristics], divided into "L'accent" [accent/stress] (§7–1–7–7) and "Le Stød" [the stød] (§7–8–7–23). Martinet shows (§7–2) that the accent has a "valeur phonologique" [phonological value] by examples like *forslag* which pronounced with main stress on *for-* means 'proposal' but with main stress on *-slag* means 'enough' (in idioms). In §7–5 and 7–6, he discusses whether there are more than two degrees of stress, by examples like *sygeforfald* (with primary stress on *sy(ge-)* 'due to illness'): (i) if the constituent *forfald* in isolation would be pronounced with primary stress on *for-*,[155] then *(have) sygeforfald* – pronounced with secondary stress on *for* – means 'being prevented from attending due to illness'; (ii) but with secondary stress on *fald*, *sygeforfald* instead means 'decay due to illness.'[156] Martinet concludes from such examples (§7–6) that one should distinguish three degress of stress, viz. primary accent, secondary accent and non-accented syllable.[157] Martinet (ibid.) mentions rhythmical tendencies: change from primary-secondary-unstressed to primary-unstressed-secondary. One could reasonably argue, with important Danish structuralists (Hjelmslev, Fischer-Jørgensen and Rischel), that an analysis that posits only binary oppositions of stress, but at different levels, is preferable.[158]

Martinet gives a phonological analysis of the Danish stød in his second publication (1934), and the arguments he presents there in favour of considering the stød as prosodic are employed again

---

155. *(have) forfald* with primary stress on *for* means 'being prevented from', ie. case (i); in contrast, *forfald* with primary stress on *fald* means 'decay,' ie. case (ii).

156. A rhythmical principle will lead to secondary stress, with stød, on the final syllable *fald* in both cases, so the main difference will be whether (i) *for* has secondary stress or (ii) is unstressed (*for* never has stød).

157. One could argue that there would then be a fourth degree as well, since Martinet operates with the phonological category of syllables with non-full vowel (/ə/ and "i de très faible intensité").

158. Martinet later (1960, 86f, 1965, 145f) sharpened his view on accents.

in (1937b): Danes do not normally notice the stød; when the stød gets their attention, they call it 'stødtone';[159] then they say that it appears in a syllable or in a sound (not after);[160] stød is lost in singing which is probably a tradition going back to the time before stød had replaced tonal accents (§ 7–12). But Martinet emphasizes the structural arguments for a prosodic analysis of stød: that the position in the syllable is fixed (phonologically) so that it is on the vowel if this is long, otherwise on the following sonorant consonant (§ 7–13); and that the stød vowel has the quality of the long vowel in cases where the short vowel has a different quality (e.g. with /a/) (§ 7–15).

Martinet 1937b is a very important work in the history of Danish phonology, and it has been highly influential for later structuralist phonologies of Danish. It illustrates many aspects of Prague phonology, before its codification – its culmination many would say – in Trubetzkoy's posthumous *Grundzüge der Phonologie* (1939), in particular the kind of psychological, historical and other arguments that are different from purely structural ones, but also the kind of structural arguments that were used. But this was only the beginning of Martinet's scientific voyage.

5.3 Martinet and Glossematics

André Martinet was a key figure in the reception of Glossematics in France – partly in a positive sense, but in fact also negatively. He read and spoke Danish well, and, as we have just seen, he was a specialist in Danish phonology (section 5.2). He knew Hjelmslev personally and was received in his home, and he had close contacts with other participants in the *Cercle linguistique de Copenhague* as well, not least Eli Fischer-Jørgensen. He had long discussions of Glossematics with them.

---

159. Incidentally, 'stødtone' was the term used by Sweet, and Verner used the related term 'tonestød,' but both these terms were abolished by Jespersen in favour of simply 'stød,' with no tonal connotations (see section 4.3).

160. The timing and duration of the stød is highly variable (see e.g. Grønnum & Basbøll 2007).

Hjelmslev had read Saussure (1879, 1916) before 1928 (he was in Paris 1927–1928), but after that, he probably studied him again, intensely; and in Martinet's words (1985, 17), Hjelmslev had "pratiqué le *Cours* de Saussure beaucoup plus sérieusement qu'on ne le faisait alors en France" [practiced Saussure's *Cours* much more seriously than was done in France at that time]. But concerning the Prague school, Martinet and Hjelmslev came to have opposite opinions. A key point of contention was whether the phonetic substance should be significant in the structural analysis of what Hjelmslev called *phonematics* in his and Uldall's contributions to the London Congress of Phonetic Sciences (in 1935), the term later being changed to *cenematics*. Martinet said the following on this difference (1993, 256):

> c'est dans la ligne d'une remarque de ma part, où je relevais cette inconsistence, puisque *phon-* indicait une substance, qu'ils ont, au cour de l'année suivante, repensé le problème et rebaptisé la "phonématique" comme la "cénématique," du grec *kenos* "vide" oppose à la "plérématique" du grec *plērēs* "plein," étude du signifiant s'opposant à celle des signifiés. Mais ces choix lexicaux suggèrent plutôt la double articulation: plein de quoi, sinon de substance sémantique? C'est l'écho de nos conversations de l'été 1935 à Londres qu'on retrouve dans les premiers paragraphes de ma *Phonologie du mot en danois*. [It was following a remark from me, where I emphasized this inconsistency, since *phon-* indicated the substance, that they [Hjelmslev and Uldall], during the following year, thought again about the problem and rebaptized "phonematics" as "cenematics," from Greek *kenos* "empty" as opposed to "plerematics" from Greek *plērēs* "full," the study of the *signifiant* as opposed to the study of the *signifié(s)*. But these lexical choices would rather suggest (point to) the double articulation: full of what, if not semantic substance? It is the echo of our conversations in the summer of 1935 in London that one can find in the first paragraphs of my *Phonologie du mot en danois*.]

Martinet (1993, 238) explains:

> [...] mes contacts avec lui [Hjelmslev] étaient longs, réitérés et amicaux. Mais ce qui reste à dire, et sur quoi il faut insister, c'est que la pensée

hjelmslévienne a exercé sur la mienne le même genre d'influence que la pensée de Prague sur celle de Hjelmslev, c'est-à-dire une influence profonde, à certains égards décisive, mais négative. [...] Il faut dire et répéter que la pensée de Prague a été décisive pour guider celle de Hjelmslev. Sur moi, la pensée hjelmslévienne a exercé une influence du même ordre [...] Dès que j'ai connu les développements post-praguois de la pensée de Hjelmslev, ma réaction immédiate a été de méfiance et de rejet. [my contacts with him [Hjelmslev] were long, reiterated and friendly. But what remains to be said, and on which one must insist, is that the Hjelmslevian thought has exerted the same kind of influence on mine as did the Praguian thought on Hjelmslev, i.e. a profound influence, in certain respects decisive, but negative ... It must be said and repeated that the Praguian thought has been decisive in guiding that of Hjelmslev. On me, the Hjelmslevian thought has exerted an influence of the same order/magnitude ... From the moment I came to know about the post-Praguian developments of Hjelmslev's thought, my immediate reaction was one of distrust and rejection.]

Thus Hjelmslev had strong reservations with respect to the Prague school principles – in particular their adherence to the phonetic substance – but Martinet also points to personal animosities: "Le refus de reconnaître toute dette envers Prague était, chez Hjelmslev, au moins partiellement déterminé par une hostilité personnelle – le mot n'est pas trop fort – envers Troubetzkoy" [The refusal to recognize any debt towards Prague was, for Hjelmslev, at least partially determined by a personal hostility – this word is not too strong – towards Trubetzkoy] (1985, 17).

Martinet wrote a detailed, and generally positive, review (1946) of Hjelmslev's *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* (1943), before this important book was translated: "À tous les linguistes qui savent lire le danois nous recommandons vivement cet ouvrage d'une prodigieuse richesse, bien ordonné et bien écrit, clairement et rigoureusement pensé [...]" [To all linguists able to read Danish we strongly recommend this prodigiously rich work, well organized and well written, clearly and rigorously thought ...] (Martinet 1946, 42). An interesting correspondence between Martinet and Hjelmslev followed (see Arrivé 1985, Arrivé & Ablali 2001, Jensen & Cigana 2017).

Hjelmslev, naturally, wished for a French translation of *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* (see Skytte 2016, 79–85), and Knud Togeby (1918–1974)[161] provided one. André and his (second) wife Jeanne Martinet were asked in 1953 by Hjelmslev to review it, and they criticized it so harshly that it was abandoned (the ms exists): "[…] cette 'relecture' nous a réclamé quarante huit heures de travail et j'exagère à peine en disant que nous n'y avons pas laissé deux lignes consécutives sans corrections. Hjelmslev, on le comprend, était atterré." [… this 'rereading' demanded forty eight hours of work for us and I hardly exaggerate when I say that we did not leave two consecutive lines without corrections. One can understand that Hjelmslev was appalled.] (Martinet 1985, 19).[162]

André Martinet had, just before his harsh criticism of Togeby's translation of Hjelmslev (1943), given an extremely negative review (1952) of Knud Togeby's (1951) doctoral dissertation (Habilitationsschrift) *Structure immanente de la langue française* [Immanent structure of the French language] (in *Word* 9); there he critizes both Togeby's knowledge of French and Hjelmslev's reduction of languages to 'structures'.

Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, who was a good friend of both Martinet and Togeby, wrote in a letter: "Mon cher André […] Quant à Togeby, je ne crois pas que votre ton "vous a réussi." S'il vous a envoyé son livre c'est plutôt malgré ce ton. C'est un garçon sympathique qui s'intéresse beaucoup à la linguistique et très peu aux petites inimitiées des linguistes" [My dear André, … Concerning Togeby, I do not think that your tone "was a proper one." If he did send you his book, it is rather despite this tone. He is a nice guy who

---

161. Knud Togeby, a prominent member of the *Cercle linguistique de Copenhague*, professor at Copenhagen University since 1955 and surely the most influential Danish Romanist of his generation.

162. Later French translations of Hjelmslev (1943) are independent of Togeby's attempt: 1) *Les prolégomènes à une théorie du langage*. Traduit du danois par une équipe de linguistes. Traduction revue par [Translated from the Danish by a team of linguists. Translation revised by] Anne-Marie Léonard. Paris, Éditions de Minuit (1968); and the much more satisfying 2) *Les prolégomènes à une théorie du langage*, traduction par Una Canger avec la collaboration de [translation by Una Canger with the collaboration by] Annick Wewer, Paris, Éditions de Minuit (1971). 2e éd. (1993).

has great interest in linguistics and very little interest in the small enmities of linguists] (28.11.1964, quoted in Skytte (2016): 85). Togeby wrote in a letter (29.2.1956) to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, after his positive contribution to Martinet's Festschrift (Togeby 1958): "It has amused me a lot to thank him in this way for his somewhat unpleasant attitude towards me."[163]

Martinet later (1985, 19), i.e. long after Togeby's premature death (in a car accident, 1974), says that.

> Je puis témoigner, pour m'être souvent entretenu avec lui, que Togeby parlait excellemment le français et sur tous les registres possibles, du plus raffiné au plus argotique. Que l'on consulte sa *Grammaire française* – malheureusement posthume – […] et l'on pourra se convaincre qu'il connaissait la langue dans tous les détails. Mais il y a un monde entre pratiquer une langue pour s'exprimer et traduire dans cette langue un texte rédigé dans sa langue première. [I can testify, since I have often spoken with him, that Togeby spoke excellent French in all possible registers, from the most distinguished to the most slanglike. It suffices to consult his *Grammaire française* [French grammar] – regrettably posthumous – … But there is a whole world between knowing a language in practice and translating into that language a text in one's mother tongue.]

5.4 Martinet: phonology, structure (with double articulation), dynamics

For linguists whose formative years were during the Chomskyan Revolution, it is tempting to underestimate Martinet's influence on linguistics at large.[164] He was an effective school builder during most of his career, in close collaboration with his second wife, Jeanne

---

163. Togeby's original: "Det har moret mig meget at takke ham for hans noget ubehagelige holdning over for mig på denne måde" (Skytte 2016, 85).

164. A personal memory: My first professor of linguistics (in Copenhagen 1965) was Martinet, and when as a doctoral student in 1973 I came to the University of Vincennes in Paris (a very leftwing and Chomskyan university at the time), I was told that Martinet was the worst possible person even to mention.

Martinet, and with his co-author Henriette Walter who was also a close colleague for many years. In 1946–1955 Martinet was in New York; he became professor of general and comparative linguistics at Columbia University and he was the editor of the journal *Word* from 1947 to 1960; see Newmeyer (this volume) for Martinet's important relations to American linguistics at that time. In 1955–1977 he was professor of general linguistics at the Sorbonne (Paris). Martinet founded the journal *La Linguistique* in 1965, and he edited many book series and other publications, all with a focus on his conception of *functionalism*. He has had direct pupils and others who follow his tenets all over the world. His introduction (1960) to linguistics *Éléments de linguistique générale* [Elements of general linguistics] (whose title is a deliberate parallel to Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*) has been translated into about twenty languages.[165]

Martinet has contributed within a very broad spectrum of topics, including comparative indo-european linguistics, language typology and auxiliary languages. Central in his view of structure is 'double articulation. In his late presentation of his model of 'Functional' (meaning "adapted to achieve some end") grammar, he identifies the main (1994, 1323f) traits of his "Empirico-deductive Approach" by defining natural languages as exhibiting: (i) communicative function; (ii) use of vocal[166] utterances; (iii) double articulation. (ii) is in sharp contrast to approaches – such as Glossematics – viewing spoken and written language in parallel, whereas Martinet sees written languages as a secondary phenomenon, also for e.g. ideographic writing systems. Essential in (iii) is the difference between significant units, viz. *monemes* in Martinet's term – that are seen as being units of meaning[167] – and distinctive units (of phonology).

---

165. When Peter Harder (this volume) considers the 'functionalism' of Martinet, he quotes (1960) which represents a much later stage than Martinet's publications in focus here.

166. Martinet says (1994, 1324) that 'vocal' implies 'voice' which implies 'melodic curve' which takes care of 'intonation.'

167. Martinet argues (1994, 1324) that the term *morpheme* "suggests form rather than meaning," and therefore *moneme* is preferable to him.

André Martinet's most important heritage may well be his contribution to diachronic phonology, exemplified by his great *Économie des changements phonétiques – traité de phonologie diachronique* [Economy of phonetic changes – study of diachronic phonology] (1955). This work eminently combines two key concepts in Martinet's view on language: *dynamics* and *structure*, as we shall see in the last section.

6. Conclusion: Jespersen, Martinet, and Hjelmslev

There are many parallels in the careers of Otto Jespersen and André Martinet: both began as phoneticians/phonologists, and they became famous as such before they had a career as general linguists. Both were important in the field of auxiliary languages: Jespersen as the creator of Ido and Novial, and Martinet started his work in New York as the Director of the International Auxiliary Language Association. Both worked internationally with phonetic transcriptions. Both contributed essentially to diachronic linguistics before they became truly general linguists. But a crucial question in this paper is their relation to "structuralism" and "phonology." Jespersen used the word "phonology" in the third edition of *Modersmålets fonetik* (1934), with the section "fonologisk oversigt" [phonological survey] about consonant combinatorics.[168] In the introduction (p. 2) he says that "hvert sprog har sit fonologiske system" [every language has its phonological system], and he adds that the title of the book might as well have been "Dansk fonologi" [Danish phonology]. But this is not enough to make Jespersen a true phonologist in a structuralist sense.

I shall end by contrasting the approach to phonology – in a broad sense – of Jespersen, Martinet, and Hjelmslev (Hjelmslev and Uldall as phonologists are treated in Basbøll 2022, forthcoming).[169] Martinet (1994, 1323) makes a comparison between his own

---

168. In the preface Jespersen thanks both Hjelmslev and Uldall for their help with the book.

169. Hjelmslev begins his lecture on viewpoints on Danish phonetics (1935, 6) by distinguishing – within *fonik* – between the physical part which he calls *fonetik*, the

'functionalist' approach and Glossematics in that the latter is characterized by "(a) the constant parallelism between the two faces of the sign presented as expression and content; (b) the rejection of phonic and semantic substances in favour of pure relations, this leading to (c) the disregard of changes affecting substance, resulting in a tendency to equate the successive stages of a language and thereby leading to a purely static approach" (whereas Martinet's own approach is dynamic).

Even though Hjelmslev is not a main topic of this paper, a few words on his relation to phonetics as a discipline – and to phonetic practice – is required, before we conclude. He considered it part of his professional duties to direct projects in phonetics, to get instruments for experimental phonetics, partly in collaboration with other institutions (e.g. for audiologopedics) (see Fischer-Jørgensen 1981, Skytte 2016, 81f). He also wrote (1954) an introduction to general phonetics published as a textbook by Copenhagen University together with Poul Andersen's chapter on Danish phonetics (1954). The most interesting publication on phonetics by Hjelmslev is (1938), a long paper (in German) where he states his well-known formalist (Saussurean) position, but in fact uses most of the space to argue for adopting Eberhard Zwirner's so-called phonometry (see Zwirner 1939, Fischer-Jørgensen 1985, Skytte 2016, 40–42), and sees that as an apt way to connect his "phonematics" to physical reality (cf. Hjelmslev 1943, 92). Hjelmslev accepts Zwirner's two basic demands for such an approach, viz. that it shall use (i) acoustic data, not physiological (articulatory), and (ii) natural connected speech and not isolated words (see Fischer-Jørgensen 1981, 66f). Hjelmslev (1938) contains some hard dilemmas, see Gregersen (1991, vol. 1, 273–282).

In Table 2 I have tried to summarize the position on phonology – still to be taken in a broad sense here – of these three important linguists, as to whether ("yes") or not ("no") they can be said to

---

psychological part which he calls *fonologi*, and finally a purely linguistic (intra-linguistic or "immanent") part which he calls *fonematik*, the term he adopts here and sees as the central part – in agreement with his own and Uldall's papers on *phonematics* at the London Phonetics Congress 1935, viz. Hjelmslev (1936) and Uldall (1936).

operate with – or be characterized by – the content of the five boxes in the lefthand column.

	Jespersen	Martinet	Hjelmslev
Phonetic substance	yes	yes	no
Contrastive function (commutation)	yes	yes	yes
System with relations: segments	no	yes	yes
System with relations: prosody	yes	yes	yes
'Immanent' (no psychology nor sociology)	no	no	yes

Table 2. The position on phonology by Otto Jespersen, André Martinet and Louis Hjelmslev with respect to the five criteria in the left column

Table 2 (which is of course extremely simplified) indicates that Martinet – in the middle of the table – is the prototypical phonologist who emphasizes both the structural aspects and the phonetic aspects of phonology. Jespersen is, as I have argued throughout this paper, in some respects a structuralist, but in others not. Hjelmslev is surely a structuralist, but he is extreme – and thus not prototypically a phonologist – in his rejection of the phonetic substance (the first row), and also in his insistence on an "immanence" (the last row, implying prohibition of psychological or sociological factors to enter the analysis). Thus the table illustrates the broad spectrum in the positions on phonology by Otto Jespersen, André Martinet, and Louis Hjelmslev.

Bibliography

AKASO, NAOYUKI (2019), "On Chomsky's interpretation of Jespersen", Paper read at the Henry Sweet Society Colloquium, Edinburgh, September 7, 2019, https://euro3.safelinks.protection.outlook. com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.ngu.ac.jp%2Fgakujou%2Fron-bun%2FChomsky%27s_interpretation_of_Jespersen.pdf&-data=04%7C01%7Cba%40osdu.dk%7Cb8709ab9b6cc42b0c91508d9e-ae601e5%7C9a97c27db83e4694b35354bdbf18ab5b%7C0%7C0%7C637799096308181357%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWI-joiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJX-VCI6Mno%3D%7C3000&sdata=Fod4f35zz72zxXBUj4sbeCg%2BT-2N31hKVRpeNU4IAc4s%3D&reserved=0

ANDERSEN, HENNING (1986, ed.), *Sandhi Phenomena in the Languages of Europe*. Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Monographs 33, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.

ANDERSEN, POUL (1954), "Dansk Fonetik" [Danish phonetics], in N.R. Ble-gvad et al. (eds.): *Nordisk Lærebog for Talepædagoger*, København, Rosen-kilde og Bagger, 308–353. [Published with Hjelmslev (1954) as Andersen & Hjelmslev (1954)].

ANDERSEN, POUL & HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1954), *Fonetik* [Phonetics], Køben-havns Universitets Fond til Tilvejebringelse af Læremidler, København, Rosenkilde og Bagger.

ANDERSON, JOHN M. (1992), *Linguistic Representation. Structural Analogy and Stratification*. Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs 67, Berlin, New York, Mouton de Gruyter.

ARRIVÉ, MICHEL (1982) [1985], "Hjelmslev lecteur de Martinet lecteur de Hjelmslev", [*Linx, Paris X – Nanterre*, 6: 77–93], in Hjelmslev (1985), 195–207.

ARRIVÉ, MICHEL & ABLALI, DRISS (2001), "Hjelmslev and Martinet: Cor-respondence, Translation, Theoretical Problems", *La linguistique* 37, 1, 33–58.

ASHER, R.E. & SIMPSON, J. (1994, eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguis-tics*, Amsterdam, Elsevier (10 vol., continuous pagination).

BASBØLL, HANS (1989), "Dansk talesprog, systembeskrivelser" [Danish spoken language, structural descriptions], in Holmberg, Bente & Frederiksen, Britta Olrik & Ruus, Hanne (eds.), *Forskningsprofiler udgivet af Selskab for Nordisk Filologi* [Research profiles, published by the Society for Nordic Philology], København, Gyldendal, 91–134.

– (2005), *The Phonology of Danish* [Series The Phonology of the World's Languages], Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press.

– (2016), "Fonetikker (sprogbeskrivelser) [Descriptions of phonetics (and phonology)], in Hjorth, Ebba & Jacobsen, Henrik Galberg & Jørgensen, Bent & Jacobsen, Birgitte & Fahl, Laurids Kristian (eds.), *Dansk Sproghistorie* [Danish language history] vol. 1, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, Aarhus, Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 279–297 (extra material on dansksproghistorie.dk).

– (2018a), "Chapter Two. The discovery of Danish phonology and prosodic morphology: from the third university caretaker Jens Høysgaard (1743) to the 19th century", in Götzsche, Hans (ed.), *The Meaning of Language*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 17–45.

– (2018b), "Danish imperative formation: a problem for the phonology/ morphology interface", *Scandinavian Philology* vol. 16, 2, 219–244. https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2018.203

– (2021), "Otto Jespersen: a great phonetician and linguist in his Danish context", in Qu, Changliang (曲长亮, ed. and translator): *Otto Jespersen on Phonetics* (叶斯柏森), Beijing, The Commercial Press (北京 商务印书), 40–64 (in Chinese) and 531–565 (in English).

– (2022), "Chapter 16. Phonology in Glossematics in Northern and Western Europe" [in the middle of the 20th century], in Dresher, B. Elan & van der Hulst, Harry (eds.), *The Oxford History of Phonology*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 331–355.

– (forthcoming), "Can phonology benefit from Glossematics? Reconsidering phonotactics and prosody", in Hamans, Camiel (ed.): *The History of Linguistics & Its Significance*, Wilmerton, Vernon Press.

BERTELSEN, HENRIK (1915–1929, ed.), *Danske Grammatikere fra Midten af det syttende til Midten af det attende Aarhundrede* [Danish Grammarians from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century], København, Gyldendal. [Reprinted by Det danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab [The Danish Society for Language and Literature], København, C.A. Reitzel, 1979].

BJERRUM, ANDERS (1938), "Et Par nyere fonologiske Arbejder" [A couple of recent phonological works], *Selskab for Nordisk Filologi. Årsberetning for 1938* [The Society for Nordic Philology. Annual report for 1938], København, 3–5.

BRINK, LARS (1981), "Sammenligningstryk" [stress for comparison], *Selskab for Nordisk Filologi. Årsberetning for 1979–80* [The Society for Nordic Philology. Annual report for 1979–80], København, 17–30.

– (2011), "Otto Jespersen som fonetiker" [Otto Jespersen as phonetician]. *RASK Internationalt tidsskrift for sprog og kommunikation* [International journal of language and communication], 33, 77–87.

– (2018), "Stød, tryk og tonegang" [Stød, stress and intonation], in Hjorth, Ebba & Jacobsen, Henrik Galberg & Jørgensen, Bent & Jacobsen, Birgitte & Jørgensen, Merete Korvenius & Fahl, Laurids Kristian (eds.), *Dansk Sproghistorie* [Danish language history], vol. 2. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, Aarhus, Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 229–254.

BRINK, LARS & LUND, JØRN (1975), *Dansk Rigsmål. Lydudviklingen siden 1840 med særligt henblik på sociolekterne i København* [Spoken standard Danish. The phonetic evolution since 1840 with particular reference to the sociolects in Copenhagen], vol. 1–2, København, Gyldendal.

BRINK, LARS, LUND, JØRN, HEGER, STEFFEN & JØRGENSEN, JENS NORMANN (1991), *Den Store Danske Udtaleordbog* [The comprehensive dictionary of Danish pronunciation], København, Munksgaard.

BRYNILDSEN, JOHN (1902–07), *Engelsk-Dansk-Norsk Ordbog = A Dictionary of the English and Dano-Norwegian Languages*. English pronunciation by Otto Jespersen, København, Gyldendal.

CHEVALIER, JEAN-CLAUDE & ENCREVÉ, PIERRE (2006, eds.), *Combats pour la linguistique, de Martinet à Kristeva* [Fights for linguistics, from Martinet to Kristeva], Paris, ENS [École Normale Supérieure] Éditions.

CHOMSKY, NOAM (1966), *Cartesian Linguistics: A chapter in the history of rationalist thought*, New York, Harper & Row.

CHRISTOPHERSEN, PAUL (1989), "Otto Jespersen", in: Juul & Nielsen (1989), 1–12.

– (1995), "Foreword", in: Juul & Nielsen & Nielsen (1995), xiii-xx.

DIDERICHSEN, PAUL (1946), *Elementær dansk Grammatik* [Elementary Danish grammar], København, Gyldendal.

– (1965), "Synspunkter for dansk sproglære i det 20. århundrede" [Viewpoints for Danish grammar in the 20th century], *Det danske sprogs udforskning i det 20. århundrede* [Research on the Danish language in the 20th century], in Larsen, Jørgen & Lisse, Christian & Nielsen, Karl Martin (eds.), Udgivet af Selskab for nordisk Filologi, København [Published by the Society for Nordic Philology, Copenhagen], København, Gyldendal, 142–211.

FISCHER-JØRGENSEN, ELI (1975), *Trends in Phonological Theory. A Historical Introduction*, Copenhagen, Akademisk Forlag. [Republished 1995 as Trends in Phonological Theory Until 1975. A Historical Introduction. *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague XXVII*, Copenhagen, C.A. Reitzel]

– (1979), "Fonetik" [Phonetics], *Københavns Universitet 1479–1979* [(History of the) University of Copenhagen 1479–1979], vol. IX, Det Filosofiske Fakultet [The faculty of philosophy], vol. 2, 401–420.

–   (1981), "Fifty years with phonetics and phoneticians: A causerie given at the Institute of Phonetics 28/2 1981", *Annual Report of the Institute of Phonetics, University of Copenhagen* 15, 61–75.

–   (1985), "Review article [of] Zwirner und Zwirner: Grundlagen der phonometrischen Linguistik, 3. Auflage", *Phonetica* 42, 198–213.

GREGERSEN, FRANS (1991), *Sociolingvistikkens (u)mulighed. Videnskabshistoriske studier i Fredinand de Saussures og Louis Hjelmslevs strukturalistiske sprogteorier* [The (im)possibility of sociolinguistics. Studies in the structuralist theories of language by Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev], vol. 1–2, København, Tiderne skifter.

GRØNNUM, NINA & BASBØLL, HANS (2007), "Danish Stød: Phonological and Cognitive Issues", in: Solé, Maria-Josep & Beddor, Patrice & Ohala, Manjari (eds.), *Experimental Approaches to Phonology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 192–206

HANSEN, ERIK & HELTOFT, LARS (2011), *Grammatik over det Danske Sprog* [Grammar of the Danish language], Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab [The Danish Society for Language and Literature], Odense, Syddansk Universitetsforlag, vol. 1–3.

HANSEN, AAGE (1967), *Moderne Dansk* [Modern Danish], Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab [The Danish Society for Language and Literature], København, Grafisk, vol. 1–3.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale* [Principles of General Grammar], Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab [The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters], Hist.-Fil. Medd. XVI, 1, Copenhague, Munksgaard.

–   (1935), "Synspunkter for dansk fonetik" [Viewpoints for Danish phonetics], *Selskab for Nordisk Filologi. Årsberetning for 1935* [The Society for Nordic Philology. Annual report for 1935], København, 6–8.

–   (1936), "Principles of Phonematics", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* (London 1935), 49–54. Also in Hjelmslev 1973, 157–162.

–   (1938), "Neue Wege der Experimentalphonetik" [New ways for Experimental phonetics], *Nordisk tidsskrift for tale og stemme* 2, 153–194. [Reprinted in Zwirner & Ezawa 1968, 159–177.]

–   (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* [in English (1953), *Prolegomena to a theory of language*, Baltimore, Waverly Press; second revised edn. (1961), Madison, University of Wisconsin Press; in French (1971), *Prolégomènes à une théorie du langage*; new edn. Translated by Una Canger from the Danish in collaboration with Annick Wewer, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit.]

– (1945), "Otto Jespersen. Nécrologie [Otto Jespersen. Obituary]. *Acta linguistica* III, 119–130. Reprinted in Hjelmslev 1973, 41–54.

– (1951), "Grundtræk af det danske udtrykssystem med særligt henblik på stødet [Outline of the Danish expression system with particular reference to the stød]. *Selskab for nordisk filologi, årsberetning for 1948–49–50* [The Society for Nordic Philology. Annual report for 1948–49–50] [summary of two lectures given November 23 and 30, 1948], 12–24 [in English (with notes by the translator and the editors) in Hjelmslev 1973, 247–66].

– (1954), "Almindelig Fonetik" [General phonetics], in N.R. Blegvad et al. (eds.): *Nordisk Lærebog for Talepædagoger*, København, Rosenkilde og Bagger, 233–307. Published together with Andersen 1954 as Andersen & Hjelmslev 1954.

– (1973, *Essais linguistiques* [Linguistic essays] II, Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague [Works of the Copenhagen Linguistic Cercle] XIV, Copenhague, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.

– (1985), *Nouveaux essais* [New essays], Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

HOVDHAUGEN, EVEN, KARLSSON, FRED, HENRIKSEN, CAROL & SIGURD, BENGT (2000 eds.), *The History of Linguistics in the Nordic Countries*, Jyväskylä, Societas Scientiarum Fennica.

[HØYSGAARD, JENS] (1743), *Concordia res parvæ crescunt, eller Anden Prøve af Dansk Orthographie, Som viser skrevne Accenters Nytte, og Vocalernes rætte Brug* [Unity makes strength, or Second Attempt/Specimen of Danish orthography, showing the use of written Accents and the rightful use of the Vowels], Kiøbenhavn. In Bertelsen (1915–1929), vol. IV (1920), 217–248.

– (1747), *Accentuered og Raisonnered Grammatica* [Accentuated and Reasoned Grammar], Kiøbenhavn. In Bertelsen (1915–1929), vol. IV (1920), 249–488.

– (1769), *Første Anhang til den Accentuerede Grammatika* [First Appendix to the Accentuated Grammar], Kiøbenhavn. In Bertelsen (1915–1929), vol. V (1923), 507–550.

JENSEN, VIGGO BANK & CIGANA, LORENZO (2017) "Glossématique « par correspondance »: Hjelmslev et ses interlocuteurs (Martinet et Bazell)", in Chepiga, Valentina & Sofia, Estanislao (eds.), *La corréspondance entre linguistes. Un espace de travail*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 85–129.

JESPERSEN, OTTO (1890), "Danias lydskrift" [The phonetic transcription Dania]. *Dania* I, 33–79.

– (1891), *Studier over engelske kasus. Förste række. Med en indledning om fremskridt i sproget* [Studies on English cases. First part. With an introduction on progress in language], København, Kleins Forlag.

– (1897–99), *Fonetik. En systematisk fremstilling af læren om sproglyd* [Phonetics. A systematic presentation of the theory of language sounds], København, Schubotheske (= *Fonetik*).

– (1902(-07)), "Om udtalebetegnelsen" [On the phonetic notation], in Brynildsen (1902–1907), XII-XIII.

– (1904a), *Phonetische Grundfragen* [Basic Issues of Phonetics], Leipzig, Teubner.

– (1904b), *Lehrbuch der Phonetik* [Textbook of Phonetics], Leipzig, Teubner.

– (1906) *Modersmålets fonetik* [Phonetics of the mother tongue], København, Schubotheske (3d edn. 1934).

– (1909a) *Større Engelsk Grammatik på Historisk Grundlag, I. Lyd og Skrift*, København og Kristiania, Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag [abridged Danish edition of Jespersen (1909b)].

– (1909b) A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles. Part I. Sounds and Spellings, London, Allen & Unwin.

– (1922), Language. Its Nature, Development and Origin, London, Allen & Unwin.

– (1928), "L'étude de la langue maternelle en Danemark" [Study of the mother tongue in Denmark], *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* III, 63–76; reprinted in Jerspersen (1933), 24–39.

– (1933), Linguistica. Selected papers in English, French and German, Copenhagen, Levin & Munksgaard.

– (1938) *En sprogmands levned* [A linguist's Life], København, Gyldendal [English translation *A Linguist's Life* (eds. Juul, Arne & Nielsen, Hans Frede & Nielsen, Jørgen Erik), translated by David Stoner and annotated by Jørgen Erik Nielsen, with a detailed bibliography. Foreword by Paul Christophersen. Odense University Press 1995.]

JOSEPH, JOHN E. (1994a) "Twentieth-century linguistics: Overview of Trends", in Asher & Simpson (1994), 4789–4799.

– (1994b) "Review" [of Martinet 1993]. *Historiographia Linguistica* 21, 2, 212–221.

– (2002) *From Whitney to Chomsky. Essays in the history of American linguistics*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

JUUL, ARNE (2002), *Den levende fonograf: Nordmændenes Professor Higgins* [The living phonograph: Professor Higgins of the Norwegians], RASK [International journal of language and communication] Supplement vol. 13, Odense, Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Juul, Arne & Nielsen, Hans Frede (1989, eds.), *Otto Jespersen: Facets of his Life and Work*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

Juul, Arne, Nielsen, Hans Frede & Nielsen, Jørgen Erik (1995, eds.), *Otto Jespersen: A Linguist's Life*, translated [from Jespersen 1938] by David Stoner and annotated by Jørgen Erik Nielsen, with a detailed bibliography, Odense University Press.

Kabell, Inge (2000), "Jespersen and Franke – an academic friendship by correspondence", *Language & History. Journal of the Henry Sweet Society for the History of Linguistic Ideas*. Bulletin vol. 35, issue 1, 27–37 (online 2016).

Larsen, Fritz (1989), "Jespersen's New International Auxiliary Language", in: Juul & Nielsen (1989), 101–122.

Lund, Jørn (1993), "Hovedstrømninger i dansk sprogforskning" [1968–1992] [Main currents in the research on the Danish language (1968–1992)], *Dansk Sprog- og Litteraturforskning* [Research on Danish language and literature], Statens humanistiske forskningsråd [The Danish research council for the humanities], København.

Martinet, André (1933), "Remarques sur le système phonologique du français" [Remarks on the phonological system of French], *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 34, 191–202.

– (1934), "Nature phonologique du stød danois" [Phonological nature of the Danish stød], *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 35, 52–57.

– (1937a), *La gémination consonantique d'origine expressive dans les langues germaniques*. Thèse principale de doctorat d'état, Copenhague, Munksgaard.

– (1937b), *La phonologie du mot en danois* [Phonology of the word in Danish]. Thèse complémentaire de doctorat d'état, Paris, Klincksieck. Also in *Bulletin de la Société linguistique de Paris* 38, 169–266.

– (1946) [1985], "Au sujet des Fondements de la théorie linguistique de Louis Hjelmslev" [About the fundamentals of Louis Hjelmslev's linguistic theory], (*Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 42,I, 19–42), in: Hjelmslev (1985), 175–194.

– (1952), "Review" [of Togeby 1951], *Word* 9, 78–82.

– (1955), *Économie des changements phonétiques: Traité de phonologie diachronique* [Economy of phonetic changes. Treatise of diachronic phonology], Bern, A. Francke.

– (1960), *Éléments de linguistique générale* [Elements of general linguistics], Paris, Armand Colin.

– (1965), *La linguistique synchronique: Études et recherches* [Synchronic Linguistics: studies and research], Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

– (1985), "Contribution à l'histoire des "Prolégomènes" de Louis Hjelmslev" [Contribution to the history of Louis Hjelmslev's "Prolegom-

ena"], in: Caputo, Cosimo & Galassi, Romeo (eds.), *Louis Hjelmslev – Linguistica, Semiotica, Epistemologia. Il Protagora – Saggi e Ricerche* 4, 15–19.

– (1993), *Mémoires d'un linguiste – vivre les langues* [A Linguist's Memoirs. Long live the languages], Paris, Quai Voltaire.

– (1994), "Functional Grammar: Martinet's Model", in: Asher & Simpson (eds.), 1323–1327.

MIKKELSEN, KR. (1894), *Dansk Sproglære med sproghistoriske Tillæg. Haandbog for Lærere og Viderekomne* [Danish grammar with diachronic appendices. Handbook for teachers and advanced learners], København, Lehmann & Stage.

– (1911), *Dansk Ordföjningslære med sproghistoriske Tillæg. Haandbog for Viderekomne og Lærere* [Danish syntax with diachronic appendices. Handbook for advanced learners and teachers], København, Lehmann & Stage. [Republished 1975 with an index. København, Reitzel.]

NIELSEN, HANS FREDE (1989), "On Otto Jespersen's view of language evolution", in: Juul & Nielsen (1989), 61–78.

ORDBOG OVER DET DANSKE SPROG [Dictionary of the Danish Language]. Udgivet af Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab [Published by the Danish Society for Language and Literature] (1919–1956), 28 vol. København, Gyldendal.

RISCHEL, JØRGEN (1989), "Otto Jespersen's contribution to Danish and General Phonetics", in: Juul & Nielsen (1989), 43–60.

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE (1879) Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes. Paris.

– (1916) *Cours de linguistique générale.* Publié par Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger. Paris, Payot.

SKYTTE, GUNVER (2016), *ELI – 99 års opdagelsesrejse gennem livet* [ELI – 99 years of voyage of dicovery through life], KDVS [Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters] Sci.Dan.H.8. vol. 12.

SPANG-HANSSEN, HENNING (1949), "On the Simplicity of Descriptions", *Recherches Structurales* = Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague V, 61–70.

STORM, JOHAN (1879) *Engelsk Filologi, I. Det levende Sprog. Anvisning til et videnskabeligt Studium af det engelske Sprog for Studerende, Lærere og Viderekomne* [English Philology, I. The living Language. Instructions to a scientific study of the English language for students, teachers and advanced learners], Kristiania [= Oslo]. [Translated into German by the author, revised and expanded, under the title Englische Philologie [English Philology], 1881 and 1892–1896].

Sweet, Henry (1873) [1913], "On Danish Pronunciation", *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1873–4), 94–112 [here after Wyld, H.C. (ed., 1913), *Collected Papers of Henry Sweet*, Oxford, Clarendon, 344–361].

– (1877), *A Handbook of Phonetics*, Oxford, Clarendon.

Thomsen, Vilhelm & Gram, J. (1912) "To Breve fra Karl Verner" [Two letters from Karl Verner] [with a translation into French], *Oversigt over Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs Forhandlinger* [Transactions of The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters] (1913), No. 3, 161–211. Also *Danske Folkeminder* no. 55, 1–51.

Togeby, Knud (1951), *Structure immanente de la langue française*, Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague VI, Copenhague, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag. Éd. revue (1965), Paris, Larousse.

– (1958), "Désorganisation et réorganisation dans l'histoire des langues romanes", *Festschrift. André Martinet = Word* 23, 277–287.

Trnka, Bohumil (1935), *A Phonological Analysis of Present-Day English*, Praha, Universita Karlova.

Trubetzkoy, Nikolaj S. (1935) *Anleitung zu phonologischen Beschreibungen* [*Introduction to the Principles of Phonological Descriptions* (translated by L.A. Murray), The Hague: Nijhoff (1968)], Brno, Édition du Cercle linguistique de Prague [Edition of the Prague Linguistic Cercle].

– (1939), *Grundzüge der Phonologie*. Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague 7. [Translated by Christiane A.M. Baltaxe as *Principles of Phonology*, Berkeley, University of California Press (1969)]

– (2001), *Studies in General Linguistics and Language Structure*. Edited, and with an introduction by Anatoly Liberman; translated by Marvin Taylor and Anatoly Liberman, Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Uldall, Hans Jørgen (1936), "The Phonematics of Danish", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* (London 1935), 54–57.

Vejleskov, Hans (1989) "Otto Jespersen's thinking about child language", in: Juul & Nielsen (1989), 123–146.

Verner, Karl (1903), *Afhandlinger og Breve udgivne af Selskab for germansk Filologi med en Biografi af Marius Vibæk* [Papers and letters published by the Society for Germanic Philology with a biography by Marius Vibæk], København, Frimodt.

Wiwel, Hylling Georg (1901), *Synspunkter for dansk sproglære* [Viewpoints for Danish grammar], København, Det Nordiske Forlag.

Wolf, Oskar (1871), *Sprache und Ohr. Akustisch-Physiologische und Pathologische Studien* [Language and ear. Acoustic-physiological and pathological studies], Braunschweig, Friedrich Vieweg.

Zwirner, Eberhard (1939), "Phonologie und Phonetik. Eine erkenntnistheoretische Erörterung" [Phonology and phonetics. An epistemological

discussion], *Acta Linguistica* 1, 1, 29–47. [Reprinted in Zwirner & Ezawa 1968, 240–259]

Zwirner, Eberhard & Ezawa, Kennosuke (1968, eds.), *Phonometrie 2. Allgemeine Theorie*. Bibliotheca Phonetica, No. 5, Basel and New York, S. Karger.

Author: Hans Basbøll is Professor Emeritus of Scandinavian Linguistics at Odense (Southern Denmark) University. He has published on phonology (e.g. *The Phonology of Danish*, OUP 2005), morphology, the history of linguistics, and language acquisition. He is a Member of the Danish, Austrian and European Academies of Science. E-mail: hba@sdu.dk

Louis Hjelmslev and the Danish linguistic traditions

Henrik Jørgensen
University of Aarhus

Abstract. *This paper discusses the position of Louis Hjelmslev in relation to the linguistic millieu in Denmark as it was when he began his career. Hjelmslev gives few clues to his relation to older Danish linguists, but important details may be collected from his papers, first and foremost from his obituaries. The focus of the paper are the two obituaries of Otto Jespersen and Holger Pedersen. While it is evident that Jespersen's brand of pre-structuralism in many ways paved the way for Hjelmslev's own work, his discussion of Jespersen is extremely critical and does not acknowledge much of the heritage. On the contrary. Holger Pedersen, whose methods and approaches only in a few superficial points converged with Hjelmslev's, is treated with respect and full understanding. The key to this enigma seems to lie in the different channels where the obituaries were published.*

1. Aim of the paper

The aim of this paper is to give an overview of the Danish linguistic traditions surrounding young Louis Hjelmslev when he embarked upon his career as a linguist, and to discuss some of the significant influences he received from his education at the University of Copenhagen. Hjelmslev is normally relatively tacit about his predecessors and influences; only occasionally will he lift the curtain and allow us insight into his reflections upon the merits and problems of earlier Danish linguists except his idol Rasmus Rask. Still, when

he does lift the curtain, e.g. in his obituaries of the important fig-ures from his past Otto Jespersen and Holger Pedersen,[170] there are clear indications that certain aspects of his attitudes were kept out of the picture, while other aspects were focused in a somewhat biased way, to use a deliberately vague phrasing. The special focus in this paper will be to document these indications and to gauge their importance for an estimation of what Hjelmslev inherited from his immediate past.

2. Hjelmslev's acknowledgement of his heritage

In *Essais linguistiques II* (Hjelmslev 1971), we find reprints of Hjelmslev's obituaries of two of his most important teachers, Otto Jespersen and Holger Pedersen, right next to each other (see fn. 1). The texts seem to paint a picture of Hjelmslev as on the one hand a brave follower of Holger Pedersen's and on the other a sworn enemy of everything connected to Jespersen's brand. The commemoration of Holger Pedersen is sympathetic and friendly, whereas the picture of Jespersen sharply underlines the differences between Jespersen and real ("real") structuralism, writing off Jespersen's work as a *linguistique de parole*, rather than *real* linguistics, i.e. investigation into form capacities.

My point in this article is that this quite natural impression of the two texts is not a correct linguistic pedigree. Jespersen was much closer to Hjelmslev than Pedersen was, and he probably also played a much more important role in the formation of Hjelmslev's ideas than the obituary reveals. While Hjelmslev in many ways continued Pedersen's line of historical linguistics, he was also criti-cal of many ideas and methods of his teacher and mentor, but this dissatisfaction is hardly ever spelled out directly. We may trace it by comparing actual claims by Pedersen with critical remarks on others in Hjelmslev's papers. In order to achieve a proper frame of understanding, I will first give a brief overview over the linguistic milieu in Denmark when Hjelmslev was young, and then go on to

---

170. First printed as Hjelmslev 1945 and 1954b; now in Hjelmslev 1971, 41–54 and 29–39.

a tentative description of what the pedigree of Danish structuralism could be.

3. Linguistics in General in Denmark around 1920

Louis Hjelmslev was a student at the University of Copenhagen from 1917 to 1923, when he finished his Master's degree in Linguistics. A glance at the linguistic research carried out at the University of Copenhagen in his formative years[171] will show that two trends prevail. The main body of research was historical linguistics, more or less within the Neogrammarian paradigm, i.e. the treatment of the history of languages according to strict sound laws, within a framework established locally by Vilhelm Thomsen (1842–1927), Karl Verner (1846–1896), and Kristoffer Nyrop (1858–1931) and carried on by important figures like Holger Pedersen (1867–1953), Kristian Sandfeld (1873–1942), and Johs. Brøndum-Nielsen (1881–1976). Another trend was the early brand of studies of synchronic relations in modern languages, established by Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) and carried on by Louis L. Hammerich (1892–1975) and Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942). While this group was much smaller than the group of historically oriented linguists, it was very up front in terms of prominence and modernity. At the same time, the historical paradigm was about to stifle into a pure agglomeration of facts, as documented by e.g. the Grammar of Medieval Danish ("Gammeldansk Grammatik") by the Professor of Nordic Philology Johs. Brøndum-Nielsen (vol. I-VIII, 1929–1974).

In Hjelmslev's brief *curriculum vitae* at the occasion of his promotion as *doctor philosophiae* (Hjelmslev 1932), we see that he acknowledged Holger Pedersen and Kr. Sandfeld from the list above as his teachers at the university. To this list, he adds the orientalist Dines

---

171. The meticulous lists in Slottved 1978 gives the names and main data of all teachers employed at the University of Copenhagen up to 1977. For a deeply interesting analysis of the scientific and political positions at the university, the power constellations between the university and the state, and the many facets of career planning for young scientists in the period 1870–1920 when Hjelmslev's teachers acquired their positions, see Larsen 2016.

Andersen (1861–1940) and the Latinists A.B. Drachmann (1860–1935) and J.L. Heiberg (1854–1928). For some reason, Hjelmslev does not mention Ferdinand Ohrt (1873–1938), the teacher of Finnish at the university, with whom he had important contact also later on.[172] It is crucial to note that Jespersen is not mentioned in this list of influential teachers, only as the author of *Sprogets logik*. The traditionalists prevail on the brief list, and it is remarkable that the three teachers of the classical base of Indo-European reconstruction, Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, viz. Andersen, Drachmann, Heiberg, figure so prominently. The list has a suspiciously traditional if not downright conservative ring; it is difficult to tell that this young person in fact was a rather revolutionary type.

The following figure gives an overview of the most important teachers:

Professor	Area and period of function Years in (parenthesis) mark the start of a junior professorship ("docent")
Vilhelm Thomsen (1842–1927)	General Linguistics (1875) 1887–1912
Karl Verner (1846–1896)	Slavic philology 1883–1896
Kristoffer Nyrop (1858–1931)	Romance philology 1895–1928
Holger Pedersen (1867–1953)	Slavic philology (1900–1914); General linguistics 1914–1937[173]
Kristian Sandfeld (1873–1942)	Romance linguistics (1905-) 1914–1942
Johs. Brøndum-Nielsen (1881–1976)	Nordic philology (1919-) 1926–1952
Verner Dahlerup (1859–1938)	Nordic philology 1911–1925
Otto Jespersen (1860–1943)	Anglistics 1893–1925
Louis L. Hammerich (1892–1975)	German philology 1922–1958
Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942)	Romance philology 1928–1942

172. Jensen (2021) gives an interesting insight in Hjelmslev's relation to Ohrt. Ohrt's relation to the university was troubled by the fact that he taught only in a very low teaching category, and that he had retired from a high school position due to poor health, cf. Hammerich 1939.

173. On Pedersen's early career, see Larsen 2016, 71–74.

Dines Andersen (1861–1940)	Indian and Oriental Philology 1903–1928
A.B. Drachmann (1860–1935)	Classical philology (1892-) 1918–1926
J.L. Heiberg (1854–1928)	Classical philology 1896–1925

To enumerate the important teachers at the university does not cover the floor of linguistic discussions in Denmark in those days, however. There were other important milieux, one of them being *the teachers at the high schools*, where an important confrontation between on the one hand a conventional conception of grammar built on Latin patterns, and on the other a modern positivist approach took place. The propagator of the traditional approach was the productive grammarian and language teacher Kristian Mikkelsen (1845–1924), author of a much-used series of traditional school grammars with a historical perspective built in (Mikkelsen 1894, 1911).[174] The propagator of the modern approach was H.G. Wiwel (1851–1910), author of an energetic attack on this tradition (Wiwel 1901). The discussion between the two approaches filled the pages of the important journal *Dania* between 1894 and 1902.

The traditional approach defended the idea that semantic concepts might justify certain ways of describing linguistic facts, whereas the positivists insisted on the form level, albeit without much theory to support how a formal analysis should be carried out. Teachers from the university, like Otto Jespersen and Verner Dahlerup, joined side with Wiwel in his attack on the classical grammars based on Latin patterns. They called for a new approach based on the analysis of the specific structures of the local language, not on (what was thought to be) a more or less illegitimate transference of categories from the classical languages into languages hitherto not described (Jespersen's keyword for this practice has become a household label: *squinting grammar*).

In Hjelmslev's work, we can see that he regularly agrees with the positivist Wiwel, quoting him with great adherence. He must have recognized the analytic shortcomings of Wiwel's approach,

---

174. I have given a more thorough description of Mikkelsen as a grammarian in Jørgensen 2011 & 2014.

but Hjelmslev's lifelong preference for approaches that broke away from traditions led him to promote Wiwel's ideas.

Another important arena outside the university was *the dialecto-logical milieu*, which was only about to find its way into institution-alization as part of the university. The most important figure here was the co-creator of the important cartographical description of the Danish dialects, Marius Kristensen (1869–1941), cf. Bennike & Kristensen 1898–1912. Until 1927, he taught at Askov Folkehøjskole, a free teaching institution at high school or bachelor's level, directed towards the interests of the larger farm-owners. In this year, he was given a life-long stipend by the Carlsberg Foundation in honor of his achievements in collection and description of dialectological and historical facts about the Danish language. He taught a few courses at the university, but he never received a formal professor-ship. His main area of study, the connection between historical linguistics and dialectology, was maintained by a private institute, only much later to be incorporated by the University of Copenha-gen (in 1960, cf. Gudiksen et al. 2009, 7). After the incorporation, the Department of Danish Dialectology developed into a stronghold of glossematic methods (cp. Gregersen 2016), but this was still to come in the 1920s.

4. An approach to the concept of structuralism

As we have seen, Hjelmslev was very unwilling to reveal where he got his ideas from and preferred to appear as a rather traditionalistic kind of erudite person, at least at the beginning of his university career in 1932. In order to understand how many of his structural ideas he had from his background, we need a yardstick to measure to which degree structural concepts were current among his prede-cessors, Pedersen and Jespersen.

Asking for a yardstick in this way takes for granted that the con-cept of structuralism is clear and evident, but this is hardly the case. Evidently, such a definition is only the accumulation of experience. There is no such thing as an ahistorical definition of structuralism. The definitions used here are derived from Frans Gregersen's me-ticulous exposé of the historical development lines of the different

schools of structuralism (2006). That Gregersen's historical work here is converted into a catechism, is incidentally an illustration of his main argument, viz. that structuralism as some kind of *gesunkenes Kulturgut* in a broad sense is an important drive in the way concepts are organized within contemporary linguistics.

Structuralism may be defined primarily through confession to the dogma of *the arbitrariness of the (sign) relation between sound and meaning.* Coined by Saussure, but in many ways intuitively clear to thinkers long before him,[175] this idea is of primary importance, excluding the direct influence of external factors on core meaning. This does not mean that elements of iconic or indexical meaning in the Peircean sense qualify as a refutation; after all, Saussure used quite a lot of pages of the *Cours* to argue in favor of a conception of grammar as partly iconic (Saussure (1916) 1974, 180–4 *et passim*). Likewise, it would be impossible to conceive the field of enunciation unless you assume that indexical aspects of many content elements in a language, primarily pronouns and grammatical endings (but not only these), are central.

The second important factor in structuralism is the relation between binary (or ternary) thinking and whole entities.[176] All concepts must divide a totality in two parts: one with a recognizable characterizing item, and the other without it. The salient point is here that the field to be analyzed is conceived as totalities and that the concepts for the analysis cover the field in its entirety. The latter effects will have to be achieved through a dichotomous structure of concepts. All elements within the field must be either positive or negative in their relations to the distinguishing feature (+/-A).

---

175. One obvious early case being the dismissal of the claim that parts of words (e.g. *ice* in *mice*, or *ouse* in *mouse* in other translations) build up accumulating meanings for the whole word, found in Aristotle's *De interpretatione* Ch. 4 (Ackrill 1974, 45f).
176. There is an interesting problem here, namely the conception of a totality (*Ganzheit, Einheit* or similar). In a furious critique of Hjelmslev, Erik W. Hansen (2009) launches the argument that the empirical facts will never appear to the researchers as parts of whole entities. This is plausible when you consider the matter from an empiricist's point of view, but conceptualisation in science is a different matter, and a purely inductive empiricism will never be able to establish any conceptions of anything, hence, a fortiori, no science.

A simple contrast (the two concepts A and B covering the field are defined positively), will not do, since in such a case, the third possibility – neither A nor B – cannot be excluded (cf. further Stjernfelt, this volume).

The third important assumption in structural thinking is the situation of meaning as an independent zone, outside the realm of psychology or, for that matter, sociology. This criterion is mainly relevant in order to understand early structuralism: it is an important claim for Saussure and his immediate followers. On the other hand, at least since Chomsky's attack on Skinner (Chomsky 1959), language has again been situated in 'the wet ware' (to quote Searle), i.e. as part of a general cognitive science. However, being in the wet ware also means that language has to be seen as integrated in human behavior in general, cf. Harder 2006. The implications of this are difficult to sort out; but at least in this sense, the strong tendency among early structuralists to place language *between* the speakers, not *in* the speakers[177] is an interesting outcome of the ambition to define linguistics as a science on its own. It is an obvious case of a dogma that proves itself to be of little value. Languages do have systematic, autonomous aspects, but it makes little sense to separate language *a priori* from all other aspects of human life.

The fourth assumption behind structural thought patterns is that this approach also has to include the use of structural argumentation. By this, I mean that the results of the analysis will have to be reached through tests building on the commutation test. The classical methods of substitution, elimination, permutation, and connection were in use long before classical structuralism, and they are still used by many linguists, including persons that would never claim to be structuralists. Nevertheless, this methodology has to be seen as a highly characteristic theme.

One more point than the ones we have derived from Gregersen's exposition should be mentioned: the insistence on forms rather than meaning. In a fully-fledged structural analysis, this point would be a simple consequence of the use of e.g. the commutation test: the actual forms to be analyzed would be singled out and identified

---

177. Cp. Brøndal's (1943, 54) expansion upon the ideas of Saussure.

through the application of structural tests. Although the commutation test was not applied consistently in the early phases of structuralism, the focus on form aspects was there nevertheless, and that is important in its own right.

Let us resume the five important tenets of structuralism:

a) The analysis must acknowledge that the arbitrariness of meaning is fundamental to linguistic analysis
b) The analysis must be structured on simple systems, mostly binary, and these systems must be used to interpret the whole linguistic field
c) Language is an entity in itself, independent of sociological or psychological structures
d) The analysis of language has to employ structural methods such as the commutation test
e) The analysis of language has to insist on matters of linguistic form, not semantic or pragmatic content taken directly as such

Armed with these tenets, we will now investigate how much structuralism we may find with Hjelmslev's predecessors.

5. Hjelmslev's approach to Holger Pedersen

Firmly rooted in the historical linguistic school, Holger Pedersen produced his results through a meticulous application of his methods to the materials at hand. Pedersen saw himself as taking part in a great chain of accumulating science, viz. comparative historical linguistics; he even left an impressive account of this school in his brilliant introduction to the achievements of his doctrine (Pedersen 1924). This book, wide-ranging as it is, also has its curious aspects. The modern reader will search in vain in the text for many important names from the 19th century, e.g. Hermann Paul or Georg von der Gabelentz. They did not participate in the development of historical linguistics according to Pedersen; hence they did not deserve to be mentioned.

It is pointless to show that Pedersen's *oeuvre* contains few traces of the structuralist's catechism above. Many of the questions raised

by the catechism were simply irrelevant, and a researcher like Holger Pedersen did not waste much ink on questions like the arbitrariness of meaning (Tenet 1) or language as an entity (Tenet 3). Tenet 2 – even in a very wide interpretation like 'economy of linguistic material' – also seems irrelevant. Alf Sommerfelt (Sommerfelt (1954) 1967, 286) sums up Pedersen's methodology nicely:

> Du point de vue de la théorie, Pedersen est resté sur les positions qu'il s'était acquises vers 1900: l'histoire des changements des langues s'explique par les changements phonétiques qui doivent être formulés d'une façon rigoureuse, et par les actions de l'analogie. Au fond, ses méthodes ne différaient pas de celles des néogrammairiens, mais elles étaient bien plus souples. [From the viewpoint of theory, Pedersen remained at the positions he had acquired around 1900: The history of the changes in the languages is explained through phonetic changes that may be formulated in a rigorous manner, and through the effects of analogy. Fundamentally, his methods were not different from the neo-grammarians, but they were more refined.]

An important aspect of Pedersen's work is that it is tied up with philological methods and rules of good philological behavior. In a remarkable passage in (Pedersen 1916), his early and much smaller book on the development of linguistics, he makes a harsh comment on Friedrich (Bedrich) Hrozný's discovery of the Indo-European nature of Hittite. According to Pedersen, Hrozný makes a completely unacceptable move in a scientific context by publishing the grammatical and historical interpretation of the materials from Bogazköy without publishing the actual texts themselves (Pedersen 1916: 30). The rather aggressive tone in the passage[178] may have something to

---

178. In this early text, Pedersen commits the brutal *faux pas* of implying that the Czech-born Hrozný, who at that time worked in Vienna, should be 'German'. As an Austrian citizen, Hrozný was in no way German, and as a native Czech, he was furthermore not 'fully Austrian', at least not in Germano-Austrian eyes (Fuchs 1984, 179-181). After 1919, he moved to Prague to teach at the Charles University; his attachment to his Czech origin was clear. Furthermore, Austrian universities were not immediately a part of the German university world. In Pedersen (1924, 151) he is mentioned as a Czech, and the harsh comments have disappeared. Much

do with Pedersen's well-attested national (i.e. anti-German) feelings (Hjelmslev 1954a), but it also shows what expectations a disciplined linguist had to observe in Pedersen's opinion: Before you publish an analysis of a material, the readers need access to the material on which the conclusions are based.

Hjelmslev seems to have been a polite pupil, taking over and continuing many of Pedersen's methods and results, but also raising doubts on the relevance of other practices of Indo-European linguistics. A look at the historical chapters in *Sproget* (Hjelmslev 1963) will prove that the continuity in relation to Pedersen's own introduction to historical linguistics *Sprogvidenskaben i det 19. aarhundrede. Metoder og resultater* [Linguistics in the 19th Century. Methods and Results], (Pedersen 1924) is very strong, apart from the necessary updates, like the inclusion of Anatolian and Tocharian in the Indo-European language family.[179] Hjelmslev made very few contributions to historical linguistics in his research and seems to have taught

---

later, in 1941, the value of Hrozný's efforts is fully acknowledged (Pedersen 1941, 3), alongside with the point that philological editions are still necessary for the advance of historical linguistics, but now Hrozný is one of the good guys, taking care of the philological editions, whereas the discoverers of Tocharian A & B have done very little to assist those who wanted to delve into the mysteries of these languages (Pedersen 1941, 7-9).

179. Pedersen's exposé in the impressive 1924 book on the advances of linguistics in the 19th century includes only the classical ten families: Indian, Iranian, Germanic, Slavic, Celtic, Baltic, Albanian, Armenian, Italic, and Greek. Tocharian and Hittite are only mentioned in passing, and the question whether Hittite is Indo-European is not even considered to be finally settled (Pedersen 1924, 291). The rest of the Anatolian languages still had to be discovered. Only on the very last pages are these two families included in the discussion (Pedersen 1924, 291). Since the book is part of a series of works on the achievements of science in the 19th century, this disposition is logical; the discoveries of Tocharian and Hittite were strictly speaking achievements of the 20th century. In his later works, Pedersen provided strong contributions to the inclusion of these two long-extinct branches of Indo-European in the language family (Pedersen 1938, 1941,1944, 1945, cp. Hjelmslev 1954a).

the subject from the same notes throughout his career with very few emendations and changes.[180] He kept himself updated on the recent results of the discipline, though, and he seems to have been capable of reading some of the complex early languages, like Hittite. In this sense, he is the self-appointed custodian of the heritage left from Pedersen, but at the same time, he both expands and restricts this heritage considerably.

We may get an idea of the extent of both expansions and restrictions through a closer look at Hjelmslev's concise introduction to linguistics, *Sproget* (Hjelmslev 1963; Engl. version 1970). In the first long chapter on genetic relations between languages, Hjelmslev introduces a rather complex structural notation of sound laws as correspondences, which is then 'simplified' into the conventional notation mode of Indo-European linguistics (Hjelmslev 1963, 19). One important point is the discussion of the degree of accuracy in sound reconstruction (Pedersen 1924, 248; Hjelmslev 1963, 79–87). Hjelmslev has strong reservations as to how precisely an undocumented state of a language may be phonologically reconstructed. He has a good point against the precision of the reconstruction in his demonstration of the relation between a well-known parent language like Latin and its successors, the modern Romance languages. Using the reconstruction method from Italian, Spanish, French and Romanian, we would arrive at Common Romance forms like **facte, *lacte, *nocte*, where the actual Latin forms were *factus, lac, nox*, or, since the actual base of the development was the oblique forms, *factum, lactem, noctem*. The reconstruction may reconstruct the word stems with precision but has no clue (literally) as to types of inflection that got washed away completely in the successor languages (Hjelmslev 1963, 25). In this way, the Indo-European reconstruction gains in precision, but the greater outlook into discussions of society, religion and homeland is dismissed as pure speculation (Hjelmslev 1963, 82).

---

180. The notes are preserved in the Hjelmslev Archive at the Royal Library in Copenhagen (Acc. 1992/5 capsula 98). In the papers are many dates, mainly from the 1940s and the early 1960s, most likely indicating how far he had proceeded through the notes during his weekly lectures.

In other connections, Hjelmslev may also appear a bit like the custodian in the linguistic-historical museum. One of Hjelmslev's favorite arguments for the supremacy of form over substance is the claim that language structures may exist without use (1941, 159; 1963, 119). In *Sproget*, he even ventures to assume that the reconstructed Indo-European language was only a structure; as soon as it had come into existence, it began falling apart into the later language families (Hjelmslev 1963, 81, 118). The structure remains. When the argument is given in Danish, the word for 'structure' is frequently *bygning*, which has the double sense of 'structure' and 'building, house'. While this rather oblique argument cannot be blamed on Pedersen, it shows how deeply rooted Hjelmslev was in the study of the classical dead languages. In its quasi-paradoxical form, the idea of languages existing without use or users also reveals to which extent this phase of structuralism considered language form to be independent of its actual users.

Pedersen's strong affiliation with historical linguistics means that as Hjelmslev's teacher he only marginally offered methodological incentives to Hjelmslev's original synchronically oriented project. In at least one place, though, Pedersen seems to anticipate an idea mentioned by Hjelmslev, namely in the discussion of analogies as repair work, cf. Pedersen 1924, 275:

> Lydlovene betegner bevarelsen av det gamle med samt alle sporene av slid; analogidannelserne søger derimod at udjævne slid-sporene ... Men når sådant reparasjonsarbejde kommer i rette tid, er det i virkeligheden mere konservativt end den fortsatte sliden videre. [The sound laws imply the preservation of the old forms including all traces of wear; the analogy constructions on their part seek to even out the traces of wear and tear ... But when this repair work arrives early enough, it is in reality more conservative than the steady wearing down.]

The same idea is mentioned in *Sprogsystem og sprogforandring* (Hjelmslev 1972, 39):

> Der er ting nok, der viser, at naar det strukturelle udtryk for en form kommer i forfald, sker der udbedringer i strukturen, dersom formen har

livskraft nok til at holde ud. [There is evidence enough to prove that when the expression of a form starts to decay, there will be repair work in the structure if the form has strength enough to hold on.]

Hjelmslev never worked out any detailed thoughts on diachrony, apart from the Danish lecture series "Sprogsystem og sprogforandring" from 1934 (Hjelmslev 1972); how the detail on repair would fit into a structural theory, is not fully clear.

Neither Pedersen nor Hjelmslev held much of philosophy in linguistics. We know Hjelmslev's teasing remarks on anonymous philosophers (1941, 146; 1943, 8), and Pedersen is able to deliver similar attacks (Pedersen 1916, 47):

> ... (filosofien har aldrig udrettet andet end fortræd, når den har stukket sit hoved op på sprogvidenskabens område) ... [philosophy has never been able to do anything but harm when it has popped up its head in the field of linguistics]

The remark is found in a passage discussing the idea of Franz Bopp that forms of the auxiliary verb 'to be' have agglutinated to the verb stem to form some of the complex Indo-European verb forms. In spite of Pedersen's critique, the idea is still discussed, both for the classical Latin future forms (*cantabimus* – 'we will sing') and for the Latin imperfect (*cantabamus* – 'we were singing'), (cf. Hopper & Traugott 2003, 9, 158f).

The most important methodological discrepancy between Hjelmslev and his teacher is the status of the empirical material. Hjelmslev wrote some critical lines on the ontological status of reconstructions already in *Principes...* (Hjelmslev 1928, 68), but without mentioning Pedersen. Indeed the criticisms is relevant to the majority of Indo-European research; hence, there is no reason to assume that this remark has a specific Danish address. Nevertheless, Pedersen maintained the view that the reconstructed states of language were actual realities. We have already seen how much importance Pedersen ascribes to the access to the relevant philological material, but his preference for empirical approaches may take him even further. He quotes the following passage from August

Pott (Pott, quoted from Pedersen 1916, 60):

> Bei der Vergleichung verwandter Sprachen ist für uns die Kunde der *etymologischen* Übereinstimmung der Laute in verwandten Wörtern und Formen Hauptsache, nach deren Erlangung wir eifrig streben müssen, die der *phonetischen* dagegen mehr ein Sumendum, das wir, wenn es sich uns darbietet, dankbar annehmen, ohne darauf ein so grosses Gewicht zu legen, als auf das zuerst genannte, dem Sprachforscher durchaus unentbehrliche Gut.

> [In the comparison of related languages, the knowledge of the etymological identity of the sounds in related words and forms is of primary importance to us, a thing that we must strive to reach, whereas the phonetic [identity] on the other hand rather is a surplus that we will be happy to accept if it offers itself to us, while we on the other hand do not want to find great importance in this matter, compared to the first-mentioned, which is indispensable to linguistic research.]

This passage does not please Pedersen; on the contrary, in the discussion that follows the quotation, he demands that the exact nature of the sounds involved should also be investigated.

The interesting part of the passage is that Pott formulates a point of view which is easily identified as pre-structuralistic. What matters to him, is the relation between the sounds, not the actual pronunciation. Pedersen dislikes this very much, but read through the imaginary eyes of Louis Hjelmslev, this comment from Pedersen must be a clear case of too much *linguistique de parole*. We have seen how Hjelmslev reduced the status of the reconstructed languages from being fragments of real languages to mere calculations on the basis of sound laws and reconstructive principles. How words were actually pronounced, would have played no role at all to him.

An even more debatable passage (debatable from Hjelmslev's point of view) is found towards the end of the book (Pedersen 1916, 75–76):

> ... hvor man næsten synes at mene, at det er sætningen om lydlovenes undtagelsesløshed, der har skabt den nyere sprogvidenskab ... Dette er en meget betænkelig forveksling av årsag og virkning. Det er ikke den

teoretiske klarhed. der har skabt de store konkrete fremskridt, men det er de konkrete fremskridt, som har skabt den teoretiske klarhed. Det var erfaring der fremkaldte forestilling om lydudviklingens regelmæssighed, og den teoretiske drøftelse var for en stor del blot et forsøg på at begribe, hvorledes denne regelmæssighed kunne forklares. [… where people almost seem to think that the thesis of absence of exceptions to the sound laws has created recent linguistics … This is a very dubious mistake, mixing cause and effect. It is not the theoretical clarity that has created the big scientific progresses, but the concrete progresses that have created the theoretical clarity. Experience called upon the idea of the regularity of sound development, and the theoretical debate was to a large extent just an attempt to grasp how this regularity could be explained.9

The striking detail in this passage is the claim that the 'concrete progresses' have driven the development of the new methodology. These 'concrete progresses' were in this context reconstructions of prehistoric language situations, and the implied claim that they were based solely on experience clashes evidently with the fact that such reconstruction would be impossible without a theory. Once more, Hjelmslev probably shook his head when reading such passages, his reduction of historical linguistics to mere calculations of sound relations taken into consideration.

6. The importance of Jespersen

In Hjelmslev's work, Jespersen plays an enormous but somewhat shady role. Jespersen is definitely the main source for *Principes*, in which almost every important turn in the theoretical development is won in a long discussion of concepts and ideas collected from Jespersen's work. Yet, in the mature work of Hjelmslev, Jespersen is hardly present as a direct reference any longer. One feature remains, though: whenever there is a sneer at 'philosophers of language' in the later work, the target seems to be Jespersen, rather than the otherwise obvious Viggo Brøndal. However, many of the concepts developed in *Principes* are maintained, and since they definitely owe their conceptualization to a discussion with Jespersen, the predecessor is in a sense still present *incognito* in the later work (Cigana

2020, 247 *et passim*).

In the literature on General Linguistics, Jespersen is often seen as an early structuralist (see also Basbøll, this volume). Such claims are found quite often (cf. Fischer-Jørgensen 1975, 7). Similarly, Jespersen's pupil L.L. Hammerich, professor of German Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen in his memoirs plainly refers to Jespersen's and his own way of doing linguistics as 'structuralism' (Hammerich 1973, 409 *et passim*). In the obituary, Hjelmslev admits this, although somewhat wryly (1954b, 43):

> … c'est ainsi que – malgré l'abîme indéniable qui sépare ses travaux phonétiques du structuralisme moderne – il a pu réclamer avec une certaine raison sur plusieurs points les droits d'un précurseur du point de vue phonémique [It is in this way [through his notorious advances in the direction of a synchronic, systematic approach to language, my addition] that – in spite of the abyss that distinguishes his phonetic work from modern structuralism – he has been able to maintain, with some reason in several points, the claim to be a precursor of the phonemic point of view]

One of Jespersen's present-day followers, Lars Brink,[181] has pointed out how many features Jespersens shares with later structuralism, at the same time as he has made it clear that Jespersen dismissed a number of ideas that in Brink's view distorted later structural approaches (Brink 2011, 85–86). Brink's description points to Jespersen as the initiator of many structuralist practices, like the commutation test, and the distinction between a phonetic and a phonological level in the languages expressed methodologically, although without much theoretization. Brink, who is strongly opposed to the idea of structural analysis, saves Jespersen from turning into a structuralist with the claim that for Jespersen the phoneme is precisely a psychological entity, and not defined through a formal analysis (Brink 2011, 87). Brink's description fits fully with the emphasis given by Basbøll (this volume, sect. 4) to Jespersen's interests in characteristic oppositions within languages. This case is typical of

---

181. Cf. Rischel 1989, 59; Basbøll (this volume), sect. 5.6.

Jespersen's methodological liminality: he uses structural oppositions and form elements as two means among others to characterize a language. Jespersen did discuss the concept of the phoneme in his later work, but mainly as an effect of linguistic economy, cf. Basbøll (this volume) sect. 5.1 and 5.5. Rischel (1989, 57 ff.) discusses the problem in detail, including a list detailing the influence of Jespersen on phonetics. His conclusion is that on the balance, Jespersen's main contribution was to 'practical phonetics' (ibid. 57) and that Jespersen was no structuralist in any sense, dogmatic or undogmatic. However, as Rischel points out (1989, 49), certain aspects of his work are clear forerunners, like his 'antalphabetic' system of sound description, which is strongly reminiscent of Jacobsen's feature analysis of sounds.[182]

The grammarian Jespersen has also attracted interest from later structuralists. It is a remarkable fact that both formal and functional linguists (Noam Chomsky, James McCawley) have been able to see their own ideas reflected in Jespersen's work. However, the main question, when discussing Jespersen in this context, is of course whether Jespersen was a structuralist or not when we try to view his analytic praxis in its totality.

Now, if we consider the first four points, Jespersen obviously falls short of most of it. For instance, Jespersen opposed the idea of the arbitrariness of meaning; defending an otherwise difficult position that sound symbolism played an important role in languages, cf. Jespersen 1922: 396–411. However, his defence for sound symbolism is somewhat cloudy; it is difficult to discern whether he actually considered sound symbolism to be of ubiquitous importance, or whether he just wanted to reserve a place for this iconic function in a world where arbitrariness otherwise reigned supreme. The reason for this cloudiness lies in the method of his defence; it consists mostly in reductions *ad absurdum* of rejections of the sound symbolism thesis. However, the sound symbolism is often quoted in comments of Jespersen's work as important. In his review of *Language, its nature, development and origin* (Bloomfield 1922), Bloomfield

---

182. Jespersen's antalphabetic system is mentioned with great interest by Bloomfield (1934, 86).

launches a heavy attack on the sound symbolism, while otherwise demonstrating his reverence for Jespersen. In a more positive vein, Haislund ((1943) 1967, 151) points out that Jespersen used sound/meaning-relations to counter the dogma of the Junggrammatiker that sound-laws had no exceptions. Qu Chang-liang (2018) makes a strong attempt at a defence, while at the same time pointing out that sound symbolism does not have to explain everything. It comes as a bit of a surprise that Hjelmslev discusses the idea of sound symbolism in his small introduction *Sproget* (Hjelmslev 1963, 46). Jespersen is not mentioned, and Hjelmslev discards the idea of sound symbolism as pure subjectivism; but still, Jespersen's idea sparked continuous discussion.

Concerning binarism and similar restrictions on form capacities, Jespersen seems to be rather obscure, too. Sometimes he uses binary approaches, sometimes not. In *Sprogets Logik* (Jespersen 1913), we find this fascinating passage right at the beginning in a discussion of the division of the ancient category of *nomen* between nouns and adjectives (Jespersen 1913, 8):

> Sandheden er vel i begge tilfælde den, at een oprindelig klasse er blevet spaltet til to: såsnart een af disse nye underklasser har erhvervet et bestemt særpræg, ligger dæri allerede, at den anden klasse nødvendigvis samtidig må være opstået, om end den fra først af kun har været karakteriseret ved manglen på de træk, der gir den modsatte klasse dens særpræg. [The truth is in both cases probably that one original category has been split into two: as soon as one of these new subcategories has acquired a certain characteristic feature, this entails that the other category necessarily has emerged, even though, from the beginning, it has only been characterised by the absence of those features that yield the special character of the first category.]

This passage is interesting insofar as it *in nuce* contains several features that look extremely like structural thinking. We see a clear-cut case of binarism in the contrast of the two emerging categories, hand in hand with their connectedness; but also a kind of markedness thinking, since only one category is expected to have a positive feature, the other one only characterised through the absence.

This quotation is definitely situated close to Jakobson's brand of structuralism. The passage becomes even more striking when we consider the fact that *Sprogets Logik* was the first book on linguistics that Hjelmslev read[183] – and this passage is found on the very first page of the book, directly after the introduction.

Binarism is also a facet of Jespersen's approach in many other passages of his work, e.g. the characterisation of the main sound distinctions in several European languages (Jespersen 1897–9, 609–616). What is important here, however, is that Jespersen only saw binarism as one possible tool in the linguist's toolbox. What really matters to Jespersen are the empirical facts. If the facts do not offer a binary solution to the observer, no binarism is applied and other solutions are sought. In other words, the passage looks like one of the fundamental dogmas of structural thinking, but the important structuralist's tenet that *all* reconstruction of structures must be filled out by only one type of structure, is not present.

As for Jespersen's syntax the original doctrines of ranks, the definition of junction vs. nexus, and many types of construction seem best to be interpreted as binary structures, cf. Cigana 2020, 236f. Furthermore, the binarism encountered here seems to exhaust the possible structures within the field, so that this aspect of Jespersen's theory may be said to be completely in line with a strong line of development within structuralist thinking (Cigana 2020, 237).

We should keep in mind, though that binarism is not a necessary feature of true structuralism. Considering the position of binarism within important structuralist approaches like Jakobson's line of thinking (Jakobson 1995, 65) or the generative paradigm, which adopted binarism quite late and only after a phase during which flat ternary or even quaternary structures were said to be possible (Kayne 1984, 133–136; Haegemann 2006, 102–105; Rizzi 2013,

---

183. According to Hjelmslev 1932, 149, *Sprogets Logik* (Jespersen 1913) was published in the university programme from November 1913, which Hjelmslev's father, the mathematician Johannes Hjelmslev, received as a member of the faculty of sciences. Since professors in those days had their office at home, the book probably lay around for young Hjelmslev to pick up and read in.

4–5),[184] the impression that binarism is a *sine qua non* for structural thinking is tempting. However, Hjelmslev opens the possibility of ternary structures in his theory of markedness, and a different line of structuralism like Viggo Brøndal's used no binarism dogmas, instead relying on a narrow set of mathematico-logic concepts carefully picked from current philosophical theory (Brøndal 1928, 1932, 1940).[185] The unifying aspect of these approaches is that the chosen tool of structuring will have to exhaust the entire space of a linguistic entity to be analysed. In generative metatheory, this point is often connected to Occam's Razor (Haegemann 2006, 17, 104): there is no need to posit more structuring mechanisms if only one set of structuring mechanisms – the binary mechanism – will cover the field. This point was of no concern whatsoever to Jespersen, although he was able to formulate binaristic thinking lucidly, as we have seen.

Concerning the independence of language from psychology and sociology, Jespersen does not seem to have clear-cut opinions either. Language seems inseparable from its users in his descriptions, cf. this passage from Jespersen (1924, 29):

> Grammar thus becomes a part of linguistic psychology or psychological linguistics; this, however, is not the only way in which the study of grammar stands in need of reshaping and supplementing if it is to avoid the besetting sins of so many grammarians, pedantry and dogmatism – but that will form the subject-matter of the following chapters.

---

184. I am indebted to Sten Vikner for his assistance with the technicalities of generative grammar.

185. It is quite unclear whether Brøndal ever used commutation tests and similar classical structural devices in his work. Insofar, Brøndal also seems to be on the margin of the artificial structuralist's catechism propagated here. Nevertheless, the intention to cover the empirical matter with a narrow set of structuring devices is so poignant in his approach that he has no problems in defending his positon within structuralism. Although his main idea to collect philosophical ideas and reorganize them as a structuring fabric is a continuation of practices from Jespersen, the decisive difference is the intention to work with a narrow set of structuring elements, an intention which Jespersen did not share.

We almost reach a clear-cut definition in the first sentence, but then we are told that more is to come if we want to avoid being professionally tedious. Jespersens makes it clear that language and psychology are intertwined, but more ingredients are to come. In those days when scientific methods of one branch insisted on the necessity of being different from other branches of science, Jespersen in some sense proved bravery through not being concerned with scientific demarcation.

There is, however, one aspect of Jespersen's grammatical thinking that clearly prefigures structuralism: his insistence on obvious forms as the basis of the analysis and his strong rejection of semantic approaches as the basis of grammatical analysis. This line of thinking is obvious all the way through the little booklet "The System of Grammar"[186] (Jespersen 1933), originally a methodological appendix to *Essentials of English Grammar*. His concept of form is a relatively simple one: are there positive signals that make distinctions in the meaning, or are there not? He does not point to any discovery procedures or analytical concepts when referring to the forms; forms seem to Jespersen to be a simple matter of actual observable morphological or syntactical facts, not disturbed by any methodological, semantic, or pragmatic considerations. This is obvious in the discussion of the concept of case in English (Jespersen 1933, 23–29), one of the longest and most detailed sections of the booklet. The only forms that may pass for case according to Jespersen are the genitive forms; all other phenomena, suggested to belong to the category of case by Jespersen's two main antagonists George O. Curme (1860–1948) or Edward A. Sonnenschein (1851–1929), have to find their place somewhere else.

An interesting aspect of Jespersen's approach is the redefinition of the third person as 'neither speaker nor spoken to' (Jespersen 1933, 29). In this case, he prefers a dichotomous approach in order to avoid obscurities in positive definitions, and at the same time he

---

186. The title is identical with Viggo Brøndal's contribution to Jespersen's *Festskrift* from 1930 (Bøgholm et al. (eds.) 1930), cf. Brøndal 1943. In the beginning of Jespersen 1933, the booklet is declared to be an answer to different international linguists, but later in the text, Brøndal's criticisms of Jespersen are also dealt with.

reveals that he conceives the semantic area of person as an entity which must be covered fully by the definition, hence the preference for this approach. In this aspect, the book clearly prefigures a genuine structural approach. At the same time, the booklet reveals that not everything in a language is systematized. Just to take one example, Jespersen refrains from a clear-cut structural approach to word-classes and hypothesizes that the necessary distinctions may be learned through prototypical patterns (Jespersen 1933, 13).

The conclusion is that Jespersen only in certain selected matters prefigures a fully-fledged type of structuralism. To quote the succinct formulation of Lorenzo Cigana: "Otto Jespersen can be regarded as a liminal figure, ushering Danish linguistics to a proper structuralistic approach, yet keeping himself somewhat peripheral to it." (Cigana 2020, 216) However, it is beyond doubt that he prefigured many aspects of structural thinking in the most extensive sense of these words, and it is also beyond doubt that many of his findings tempted a later generation of structuralists to try to reconstruct his achievements within the new framework. Hjelmslev was definitely one of these followers of Jespersen.

In detail, we find Jespersen's spirit quite frequently throughout Hjelmslev 1928, and as mentioned, many of the theoretical achievements from this work were explicitly held all through Hjelmslev's *œuvre*. Jespersen and Hjelmslev agreed on the need to liberate linguistics from the Graeco-Roman tradition (Hjelmslev 1928, 13f). On the other hand, Hjelmslev did not accept Jespersen's definitions of subject and predicate with concepts taken from logic (Hjelmslev 1928, 34); later these concepts never enter Hjelmslev's discussions again. Hjelmslev also criticizes Jespersen's dichotomy of empirical matter (synchronic) and explanation (diachronic) (1928, 56–61); this dichotomy is later split up into two: SYNCHRONY vs. DIACHRONY, cf. Saussure, and FORM vs. SUBSTANCE (Hjelmslev 1943).

The most important theoretical heritage from Jespersen is the conversion of the doctrine of *ranks* into a doctrine of *rection* (Hjelmslev 1928, 128–162). The technical details of this transformation are treated in depth in Cigana 2020; hence this discussion will only touch upon certain supplementary aspects. The doctrine of rection is a generalisation of Jespersen's way of treating matters

of dependency. Hjelmslev asks the relevant and interesting question what the force behind Jespersen's observations might be and concludes with the revival of the time-honoured notion of *rection*. Once more, the difference between Jespersen and Hjelmslev is striking. To Jespersen, the observation of the dependency and the semantic interpretation along rather conventional philosophical lines[187] is enough. Hjelmslev, on the other hand, asks what forces could lie behind this (see Stjernfelt, this volume). The fact that Hjelmslev tries to identify a systemic cause shows very precisely where the difference between Jespersen's and Hjelmslev's brands of structuralism is situated.

An interesting aspect of Jespersen's work is the fact that he seems to be steering in two radically different directions at once, when it comes to scientific metatheory. One side of him is the strong empiricist, insisting on observed facts and the meticulous description of them. He made observations, collected quotations, and developed methods to make observations palatable, like the phonetic alphabets; indeed he contributed strongly both to the development of the IPA and its Danish parallel, Dania's phonetic alphabet. The other side of him is the philosophical side, using models from logic and psychology to explain his observations. Hans Frede Nielsen (1989) has pointed to some challenging contradictions in Jespersen's way of thinking: on the one hand, he thinks that redundancy in a language is superfluous from a communicative point of view (why say the same thing twice). On the other hand, he does not seem to take into account that redundancy is precisely there to avoid misunderstandings in actual communication (Nielsen 1989, 73). Jespersen thought highly of the simplification of inflections in English, pointing to those verbs that like *cut* and *put*, seeing in this a

---

187. Jespersen seems to find it difficult to disentangle himself from the Aristotelian concept of predicate, comprising both verbs and adjectives, cp. Aristotle's *Categories* Ch. 8 (Ackrill 1974, 24-31), cp. *De interpretatione* 21a38: "… for there is no difference between saying that a man walks and saying that a man is walking" (Ackrill 1974, 60). In the continuous claim that nouns are always first rank, Jespersen seems to continue the Aristotelian dictum that substances are primary: "So if the primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist." (Ackrill 1974, 6).

case of "economy in the living tongue" (Nielsen 1989, 74). However, Nielsen points to the fact that out of the 21 verbs in this group, at least 3 have developed new weak past tenses. According to Nielsen, this indicates that the identical forms are not as useful as Jespersen thought (Nielsen 1989: 75). Another "case of inconsistency" is the fact that Jespersen assumed that languages in their earliest stages were most irregular while progressing towards an ideal stage of regularity (Nielsen 1989, 73).

In brief, Jespersen's work presents a wide array of linguistic challenges, but when it comes to theoretical consistency, his solutions are not always as effective or even clear as they might appear to be. When Hjelmslev later thought that Jespersen's main achievement was *la linguistique de parole*, it had to do with the fact that Hjelmslev felt obliged by the empirical aspects of Jespersen's work but found no satisfaction with his attempts at a systematic approach.

7. Why are the two obituaries so different?

Let us return to the two Hjelmslev obituaries, those of Jespersen and Pedersen (Hjelmslev 1945, 1954b). Why this striking difference between them?

The most likely explanation is that they were published under very different circumstances. The obituary of Otto Jespersen appeared in *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, whereas the obituary of Holger Pedersen appeared in the official yearbook from the Univ. of Copenhagen. *Acta* was very much the main publishing channel for Hjelmslev's ideas, and in spite of the fact that Hjelmslev in many ways was much closer to Jespersen's projects and intentions, a certain narcissism of minor differences probably took over here. Hjelmslev felt a need to explain at Jespersen's tomb where the differences were, and furthermore, he felt no need to try to reconcile their ideas. After all, Jespersen, even as a dead man, was very much alive. He had educated and encouraged the whole generation around Hjelmslev, including his lost twin H.J. Uldall. Hjelmslev assumed that the readers of *Acta* were best served with a thorough explanation of anything that could possibly separate adherents of Jespersen from the adherents of Glossematics. It seems, too, that

Hjelmslev's personal attitude to Jespersen was always rather dismissive. Gregersen (1991, 177–181) resumes a review of Jespersen's *Language* (1922), which is very critical in many ways. Before writing it, Hjelmslev so to speak asked permission from Holger Pedersen to be critical to Jespersen (Gregersen 1991b, 177). For these reasons, Jespersen is commemorated as a discoverer of substance (Hjelmslev 1954b, 52) – a title that in one sense shows great respect for the deceased. At the same time, no careful reader of Hjelmslev's work will miss the (perhaps unintended) reference to the famous place in Hjelmslev 1943, 46, where the substance is deprived of its independent character and completely subsumed under linguistic form.

The readers of the Copenhagen University yearbook was a quite different group, since the book was distributed among all levels of employees and officials not only at the university. In such a channel, it would be tactless to start arguing about professional differences, no matter what size they might have had. Hjelmslev knew what he owed to his predecessor in the chair of Linguistics and acted accordingly. Probably, it is also important that Hjelmslev owed a lot to Pedersen's personal interests in him and to his willingness to support Hjelmslev in his projects, including those that Pedersen himself could not attach to, cf. Pedersen's recommendation of Hjelmslev's structuralistic approach to a founding council quoted in Gregersen 1991a, 292. Hjelmslev's personal attachment becomes even clearer in the other obituary of Pedersen (1954a). This was originally given as a commemorative speech in the Royal Academy of Sciences and was printed in the publications from this society. The Royal Academy version is much longer and much more personal than the University one. Clearly, a close friendship across generations connected the two men. Hjelmslev had no reason to try to explain what separated his conception of Linguistics as a university subject from Pedersen's in any of these texts – and thus, he did not.

If we look at the core matters, there is little doubt that Hjelmslev was much closer to Jespersen, seen from a larger perspective. After all, Jespersen had touched upon many of the themes and problems that Hjelmslev himself tried to address and to solve. The preference for synchronic description secured closeness, too. Within the field of Historical Linguistics, Hjelmslev really was a plot spoiler, pinpointing

weak aspects of the field and downsizing the ambitions, also well beyond the ambitions of Pedersen, who definitely was no friend of lofty speculation either, as we have seen. However, other forces were at work, too; hence the striking difference between the two obituaries.

Bibliography

ACKRILL, JOHN LLOYD [1963] (1974), *Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

BASBØLL, HANS (2022), this volume.

BENNIKE VALDEMAR & KRISTENSEN MARIUS (1898–1912), *Kort over de danske folkemål med forklaringer*. København: Gyldendal.

BLOOMFIELD, LEONARD (1922), Review of: *Language, Its Nature, Development, and Origin* by Otto Jespersen. *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (1922), 370–373.

– (1934), *Language*. London: George Unwin and Allen.

BRINK, LARS (2011), "Otto Jespersen som fonetiker". *Rask 33*, 77–88.

BRØNDAL, VIGGO (1928), *Ordklasserne*. Kjøbenhavn: G.E.C. Gads Forlag.

– (1932), *Morfologi og Syntax. = Festskrift udgivet af Københavns Universitet i Anledning af Universitetets Aarsfest November 1932*. København: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

– (1940), *Præpositionernes Theori. = Festskrift udgivet af Københavns Universitet i Anledning af Universitetets Aarsfest November 1940*. København: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

– (1943), *Essais de linguistique générale*. Copenhague: Ejnar Munksgaard.

BRØNDUM-NIELSEN, JOHANNES (1929–1974), *Gammeldansk Grammatik i sproghistorisk Fremstilling* I-VIII. København: Universitetsforlaget i København: i kommission hos Akademisk Forlag.

BØGHOLM, NIELS, BRUSENDORF AAGE & BODELSEN, C.A. (1930), *A Grammatical Miscellany Offered to Otto Jespersen on his Seventieth Birthday*. København: Levin & Munksgaard.

CHANG-LIANG, QU (2018), "Sources of Otto Jespersen's Sound Symbolism From Various Disciplines: A Case of Linguistic Historiography". *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, April 2018, Vol. 8, No. 4, 628–634. doi: 10.17265/2159–5836/2018.04.011

CHOMSKY, NOAM (1959), "A Review of B.F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior" in *Language*, 35, No. 1 (1959), 26–58. https://chomsky.info/1967/ (21.02.2021)

CIGANA, LORENZO (2020), "Some Aspects of Dependency in Otto Jespersen's Structural Syntax." András Imrényi and Nicolas Mazziotta (eds.): *Chapters of Dependency Grammar. A historical survey from Antiquity to Tesnière*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin. https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.212.08cig

FISCHER-JØRGENSEN, ELI (1975), *Trends in phonological theory*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

FUCHS, ALBERT [1949] (1984). *Geistige Strömungen in Österreich 1867–1918*. 2nd Ed., Wien: Löcker Verlag.

GREGERSEN, FRANS (1991), *Sociolingvistikkens (u)mulighed* 1–2. København: Tiderne skifter.

– (2006), "Strukturalismen i vore hjerter" *Nydanske sprogstudier* 34–35, 11–52.

– (2016), "Inger Ejskjær". *Det kongelige danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Oversigt over selskabets virksomhed 2015–2016*, 194–203.

GUDIKSEN, ASGERD & ALII (2009), "Indledning". Gudiksen, Asgerd et el. (eds.): *Dialektforskning i 100 år*. Københavns Universitet: Afdeling for Dialektforskning, Nordisk Forskningsinstitut, 7–9.

HAEGEMANN, LILIANE (2006), *Thinking syntactically: a guide to argumentation and analysis*. Oxford, Malden & Victoria: Blackwell.

HAISLUND, NIELS [1943] (1967), "Otto Jespersen". Originally in *Englische Studien*, 75 (1943). 273–283, here quoted from the reprint in Ths. B. Sebeok (ed.): *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. II, Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1967, 148–157 (retrievabe from: https://publish.iupress. indiana.edu/projects/portraits-of-linguists-vol-2.).

HAMMERICH, LOUIS L. (1939), "Mindeord over afdød Medlem: Ferdinand Christian Peter Ohrt." *Oversigt over det Kongelige danske Videnskabernes selskabs Virksomhed Juni 1938 – Maj 1939*. København: Ejnar Munksgaard, 51–68 (retrieved from http://publ.royalacademy.dk/ books/311/1824?lang=da, August 20th, 2021).

– (1973), *Duo*. København: Wøldike.

HANSEN, ERIK W. (2009), "En vurdering af glossematikken og dens reception. Louis Hjelmslevs forudsætninger og fejlgreb." *Danske Studier*, 64–105.

HARDER, PETER (2006), "Dansk funktionel lingvistik." *Nydanske Sprogstudier*, 92–130.

HOPPER, PAUL & CLOSS TRAUGOTT, ELISABETH [1993] (2003), *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale*. København: Einer Munksgaard.

– (1932), [Autobiography] *Festskrift udgivet af Københavns Universitet i Anledning af Universitetets Aarsfest November 1932*. København: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 149–150.

– (1941), "Et sprogteoretisk causeri". Frans Gregersen & Simo Køppe (eds.): *Idéhistorie*. Bd. 2: Tekster. København: Amanda, 144–161.

– (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse = Festskrift udgivet af Københavns Universitet i Anledning af Universitetets Aarsfest November 1943*. København: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

- (1945), "Otto Jespersen". In Hjelmslev, Louis 1971, 41–54.
- (1954a), "Holger Pedersen". *Oversigt over Selskabets virksomhed juni 1953 – maj 1954*. København: Einar Munksgaard, 97–115.
- (1954b), "Holger Pedersen". In Hjelmslev, Louis 1971, 29–39.
- (1963), *Sproget*. København: Berlingske Forlag.
- (1971), *Essais linguistiques II*. Copenhague: Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.
- (1972), *Sprogsystem og Sprogforandring*. Copenhague: Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.

JAKOBSON, ROMAN (1995), *On language*, eds. Linda R. Waugh & Monique Monville-Burston.

KAYNE, RICHARD (1984), *Connectedness and Binary Branching*. Dordrecht: Foris.

JENSEN, VIGGO BANK *2021. "*Finsk kasus i dansk sprogforskning. Fra Rask til Hjelmslev og Ohrt" Ny forskning i grammatik, vol 28, 66–83. DOI 10.7146 / nfg. v0i27.122128.

JESPERSEN, OTTO (1913), *Sprogets Logik*. København: Universitetsbogtrykkeriet.
- (1922), *Language*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ldt.
- (1924), *Philosophy of Grammar*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ldt.
- (1933), *The System of Grammar*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ldt & Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard.

JØRGENSEN, HENRIK (2011), [Jubilæumsanmeldelse af] Kristian Mikkelsen: Dansk Ordföjningslære. *Danske Studier*, Bind 106, 165–172.
- (2014), "Kristian Mikkelsen 1845–1924". Ole Togeby, Henrik Jørgensen & Sten Vikner (eds.): *Problemer og perspektiver i dansk syntaks*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 5–13.

MIKKELSEN KRISTIAN (1894), *Dansk Sproglære: med sproghistoriske Tillæg: Haandbog for Lærere og Viderekomne*. København: Lehmann & Stage.
- (1911), *Dansk ordföjningslære*. København: Lehmann & Stage.

LARSEN, PELLE OLIVIER (2016), *Professoratet*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag

PEDERSEN, HOLGER (1916), *Et Blik paa Sprogvidenskabens Historie = Festskrift udgivet af Københavns Universitet i Anledning af Universitetets Aarsfest November 1916*. København: Universitetsbogtrykkeriet.
- (1924), *Sprogvidenskaben i det nittende Aarhundrede. Metoder og resultater*. København: Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag.
- (1938), *Hittitisch und die anderen indoeuropäischen Sprachen"*. = Det kgl. *Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser* XXV, 2.

–   (1941), *Tocharisch vom Gesichtspunkt der indoeuropäischen Sprachvergleichung. = Det kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser* XXVIII, 1.

–   (1944), *Zur Tocharischen Sprachgeschichte = Det kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser* XXX, 2

–   (1945), *Lykisch und Hittitisch. = Det kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser* XXX, 4

RISCHEL, JØRGEN (1989), "Otto Jespersen's Contribution to Danish and General Phonetics". Juul, Arne & Hans F. Nielsen (eds.): *Otto Jespersen – Facets of his Life and Works*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 43–60.

RIZZI, LUIGI (2013), "Introduction: Core computational principles in natural language syntax". *Lingua* 130, 1–13.

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE [1916] (1974), *Cours de linguistique générale.* Paris: Payot

SLOTTVED, EYVIND (1978), *Lærestole og Lærere ved Københavns Universitet 1537–1977.* København: Samfundet for dansk Genealogi og Personalhistorie

SOMMERFELT, ALF (1954), "In Memoriam Holger Pedersen: 1867–1953." Originally in *Orbis*, 3 (1954) 343–346, here quoted from the reprint in Ths. B. Sebeok (ed.): *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. II, Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1967, 283–287.

WIWEL, HYLLING, GEORG (1901), *Synspunkter for dansk Sproglære.* København: Det nordiske Forlag.

Author: Henrik Jørgensen (b. 1953). 1997–2022 Senior lecturer at University of Aarhus. His publications concern Scandinavian Linguistics and Semiotics. PI of the INFRASTRUCTURALISM project. E-mail: norhj@cc.au.dk

Hjelmslev and his semiotic legacy

Sémir Badir
FNRS, University of Liège

Abstract. *The paper is about the reception of Louis Hjelmslev's work by semioticians, from the 1960s to today. I emphasize the 'French connection', through which semioticians have inscribed Hjelmslev's thought within the broader tradition of 'saussurism', a tradition which structuralism extends to other fields than Linguistics. This reception turned Hjelmslev's work into a legacy, to be maintained (by publications), to be enhanced (by critical works) and to be developed through new theoretical perspectives and applications to objects other than languages. Hjelmslevian concepts promote a semantic analysis that differs from traditional lexicological study. Furthermore, they raise the level of abstraction of semiotic discourse and give it an 'epistemological style', as exemplified by Hjelmslev's* Prolegomena to a Theory of Language.

Keywords: Hjelmslev, semiotics, semantic analysis, style of thinking, legacy

1. Legacy vs. transmission

This paper focuses on the reception of Louis Hjelmslev's (1899–1965) work by semioticians from the early 1960s to today. Indeed, Hjelmslev has been cited over the past decades by semioticians more frequently than any other author, and the influence of Hjelmslev's thought on Semiotics is still potent compared to its impact on other fields.

I have chosen to refer to the relationship between Hjelmslev and his reception in semiotics in terms of 'heritage' and 'legacy', rather than 'transmission' and 'descendants' (i.e. 'disciples'). Transmission, in the narrow sense, would have implied a straightforward relationship, either through teaching or by means of correspondence, in any case while Hjelmslev was still alive. This could have happened. Hjelmslev died in 1965, and semioticians had already

been active at that time. Furthermore, Hjelmslev had been in close contact with French linguists, such as André Martinet (1908–1999) and Émile Benveniste (1902–1976), who were also close, intellectually speaking, to French semioticians. However, these conditions proved insufficient. Adverse circumstances prevailed, so that the relationship between Hjelmslev and the semioticians followed a winding road, almost like a spiral. There are four main reasons for this shift in direction:

1) Hjelmslev suffered from cerebral palsy from the early 1950s; he had been lacking intellectual strength and was unable to maintain his contacts with foreign scholars as much as he might have liked.

2) In the Circle of Copenhagen, there were no semioticians; or, if there were any, which is beyond my knowledge,[188] they certainly did not contribute to the international semiotic movement to any significant extent. Semioticians were to be found outside of Denmark and speaking another language than Danish. As it has become clearer over the course of time, it was from France that the relationship between Hjelmslev's work and semioticians was established, although it was after Hjelmslev's death that most of his work was translated into French.

These are contingent reasons and, if they had been different, transmission might still have happened. The following two factors, in contrast, reveal epistemic shifts:

3) Change of purpose. Hjelmslev was interested in natural languages as *systems*. Semioticians, or at least French semioticians, deal with *discourse* (the *manifestation* of a system, according to Hjelmslev); first, with literary discourse; then, with other types of social discourses, such as the written press and advertising;

188. In the issue of *Langages* devoted to Hjelmslev's legacy in Denmark and edited by Knud Togeby (1967), the contributions deal with topics in general linguistics, synchronic linguistics, diachronic linguistics and philosophy, but none of them evoke semiotic applications.

finally, with types of social discourses that are non-verbal, such as images and music. Hjelmslev had only made allusive (although very fruitful) remarks on those objects.

4) Change of writing practice and, consequently, change of scholarly milieu. Throughout his life, Hjelmslev was able to have many scholarly connections in addition to linguists, but those connections did not exert a decisive influence on the way he conceived his work and wrote it. Linguistics had always been his intellectual concern. Quite differently, semioticians are used to discussing their research subjects at length with scholars from other academic fields, namely with those who work on documents (i.e. pieces of cultural interest), including historians, anthropologists and literary scholars. Linguistic issues are only part of their concerns.

Legacy, considered in the context of science, entails (1) a *close reading* of Hjelmslev's work, which is the proper inheritance step of the process: a thought to be interpreted; (2) a *reworking* of concepts, using them in a way that is different from the way Hjelmslev used them; (3) the addition of *symbolic values* correlated to the renewed uses of Hjelmslevian concepts – these symbolic values such as the guarantee of quality (concepts have, so to say, a 'pedigree'), claims of authority (conceptual reworking is assumed to be legitimate, and perhaps even the only appropriate way of use) and self-justification (conceptual reworking is fruitful).

2. A history of Semiotics as a legacy

Tracing the whole process of this legacy is likely to form a history of Semiotics. I will present it in eight stages. Yet there is more to be expected. A legacy also has an impact on the way we might consider the targeted readership of Hjelmslev's work itself. Indeed, it could be considered that the French scholarly tradition was part

of it since the beginning.[189] As early as *Principles of General Grammar*, Hjelmslev referred to Saussure, with the enthusiasm of great intellectual discoveries.[190] In his *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, he explicitly established his theory on a Saussurean basis: "One linguistic theoretician should be singled out as an obvious pioneer: the Swiss, Ferdinand de Saussure" (Hjelmslev [1943] 1961, 7). At the same time or a little later, Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (from now on, *CGL*) was the trigger for structuralism, hence for an interdisciplinary relationship among French scholars, especially in the Humanities. That is why the semiotician A.J. Greimas (1956) was able to speak of structuralism as 'Saussurism'. The Saussurean legacy enabled the heritage of Hjelmslev's work to become part of the French tradition, in which it is related to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009, cf. Hastrup, this volume), who were also readers of the *CGL*.

This being said, one could consider that French semiotics has a history distinct from structuralism precisely because of the book that it places at the core of its project: not the *CGL*, but the *Prolegomena*. The reading of this book has inspired a certain register of discourse and supplied the foundations of semiotic concepts. Here are the various stages through which this legacy has developed.

(1) As is well known, the two main figures at the origin of French semiotics were Roland Barthes (1915–1980) and Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917–1992). The two men met in 1949, when their academic careers were still uncertain, in Alexandria, where they had just taken teaching posts, Barthes in the university and Greimas at a girls' boarding school. It is interesting to collect their accounts of that period. Greimas, asked about his career during a conference devoted to his work in the summer of 1983 in Cerisy-la-Salle, confessed this:[191]

189. This was also the opinion of Firth, who wrote as early as 1957: "Glossematics is clearly French in inspiration – if French in this connection can be taken to include the Geneva School" (Firth [1957] 1968, 127; quoted by Léon 2019, 287).
190. As Tullio De Mauro (1998, 4) notes: "Hjelmslev already started with the *Course in General Linguistic* this profound and enlightening dialogue that was to accompany him (and us) throughout his scientific and intellectual life".
191. Louis-Jean Calvet's report offers a somewhat romanticized version of the exchange, quoted in François Dosse's *History of structuralism* (1991, 94): "Greimas sug-

> I will address Michel Arrivé's third question: "the date and modalities of the first reading of Hjelmslev, Martinet's paper, Danish text or English translation". … I can't remember my encounter with Hjelmslev. I don't know whether it was Barthes who told me it was important or whether it was me who told Barthes. At that time we worked together and we shared everything that seemed to be important to us, everything that could help us to get a grip on analysis and start to analyse (Greimas 1987, 303).

What Greimas and Barthes had read of Hjelmslev at that time is not clear. It could hardly be *Prolegomena*, since neither of them knew Danish; and the English translation had not been published yet (the first edition is from 1953).

(2) About the French translation of *Prolegomena*: the publication followed a sinuous path. We owe an early manuscript to Togeby's pen, although Togeby belatedly denied this by attributing the work to a "Frenchwoman from Copenhagen, Ms France Gleizal" (the following shows why).[192] In 1953, the proofs having been so copiously corrected by André Martinet,[193] both on language points and more strictly on terminological issues, Hjelmslev abandoned the project for this French publication since the English version was on the verge of being published. About ten years later, on 31 August 1964, Hjelmslev signed a contract with Larousse for an imminent publication. Revisions of the existing translation were made in 1965 and 1966 by Greimas, himself using annotations made by Y. Gentilhomme (then preparing a thesis on Hjelmslev), and again by Togeby. Finally, when the text was already composed, Larousse ceded the translation rights of *Prolegomena* to Éditions de Minuit (where *Language [Le Langage]* had already been published in 1966).

---

gested that Barthes, who had come to Egypt at the same time, read Saussure and Hjelmslev. For his part, Barthes had Greimas read the beginning of the manuscript that was to become his *Michelet by Himself*. "'It's very good,' commented Greimas, 'but you could use Saussure.' 'Who is Saussure?' asked Barthes. 'But one cannot not know Saussure,' answered Greimas, peremptorily" (Eng. tr. in Dosse 1997, 68).

192. Letter from Togeby to Greimas, 2.9.1971 (Hjelmslev's Archive at the Royal Danish Library: file 111; from now on, abbreviated "HA, 111").

193. This version of *Prolegomena* on proofs can be found in HA, 118.

Greimas brought the typescript to the publisher Jérôme Lindon, who, considering that the translation was "cumbersome and even incorrect", introduced corrections penned by Anne-Marie Léonard (a linguist close to O. Ducrot). The first French edition was finally published at the end of 1968, translated by "a team of linguists and revised by A-M. Léonard".[194] This translation was severely criticized (see for example Mounin 1970, 95–102), in particular by Vibeke Hjelmslev, Louis's widow, who then proposed that a new translation prepared by a "Danish pupil of Louis Hjelmslev" (*Foreword* in Hjelmslev 1971, 7), Una Canger, with the collaboration of a Frenchwoman, Annick Wewer, should be published as soon as possible, as the first edition was quickly sold out. This new translation was published in the first half of 1971.

I have reported the editorial history of this translation in detail for those interested. For the present argument, there is only one thing to remember: Greimas was directly involved in the dissemination of Hjelmslev's work in France.

(3) Barthes wrote his *Elements of Semiology* in 1964. First published in the journal *Communications*, the text was reprinted in book form the following year. These *Elements* seem to follow the *CGL* closely: Chapter 1 is entitled "Language and Speech" (*"Langue et parole"*); Chapter 2, "Signified and Signifier"; Chapter 3, "Syntagm and System". It is only in the fourth and final chapter that some Hjelmslevian concepts clearly emerge: "Denotation and Connotation". But appearances are deceptive here. In fact, it is essentially the doctrine of *Prolegomena* that Barthes followed throughout the book. He admitted it before his students: Barthes read Saussure *after* Hjelmslev.[195]

---

194. Ablali found in Hjelmslev's Archives the names of the Danes who are supposed to have been the members of this "team": Gunnar Bech, Eli Fischer-Jorgensen, Jens Holt, Michel Holger, Stern Sørensen and Jane Rønke (Ablali & Arrivé 2001, 44 n. 11) [should be: Gunnar Bech, Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, Michel Olsen, Holger Sten Sørensen and Jane Rønke, Eds.'s comment].

195. As evidenced by a note from the 1962–63 seminar at École Pratique des Hautes Études (Roland Barthes' Manuscripts at the French National Library). There is no need for this note to be interpreted in a purely factual sense.

(4) 1979: Greimas (with J. Courtés) published *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*. The work has been recognised as a fundamental one, well beyond the circle of French semioticians.[196] 'Analytical' (French: *raisonné*) means that the work puts forward a coherent theory. This entire semiotic theory is infused with Hjelmslev's work, but Greimas and Courtés develop the concepts with a view to identifying new objects to analyze.

In this respect, the 'Text' entry is very indicative (Greimas & Courtés 1979: 389–390).[197] It consists of six sections, each of which is devoted to a conceptual use of the word. Section 1 reports on linguistic usage, already contrasting the Jakobsonian with the Hjelmslevian conception. Section 2 sets out the reformulation and contextualisation of this first use in Semiotics. Clearly, the Hjelmslevian conception prevails: "a ritual, a ballet may be considered as text or as discourse". Next, section 3 further develops the theoretical conception of the text according to Hjelmslev. While section 4, shorter than any other, admits that 'text' can sometimes be an equivalent of 'corpus', section 5 devotes the application of Hjelmslev's conception to semiotic analysis: "a text is made up only of those semiotic elements fitting the theoretical goal of the description". Section 6, finally, anticipates and announces the concept of 'Textualization' which derives from the semiotic application described in the previous section. As a whole, the argument is edifying because it neglects all the philological questions related to text and instead focuses on what a strictly linguistic and formal definition can imply for the analysis of objects as disparate (and as foreign to Linguistics) as a ritual or a ballet.

---

196. Here are some excerpts from American reviews: "The most ambitious attempt to date to provide a comprehensive lexicon as well as a coherent theoretical framework for the study of semiotics" (Brown 1985, 377); "An extremely useful overview of semiotics as a discipline" (Duvall 1984, 195); more nuanced: "If the *Analytical Dictionary* will not create the kind of coherent and homogeneous metalanguage both its authors and its translators hope for, it will create at least the locus of common denomination – the 'common ground' the authors speak of – which will aid understanding in important ways" (Schleifer 1983, 267).

197. The two short quotations below are taken from the English translation (Greimas & Courtés 1982, 340).

(5) Meanwhile, in the entourage of Greimas, the next generation of semioticians published Hjelmslev's other publications in France, sometimes in their own translations:

– *Essais linguistiques*, in 1971, edited and prefaced by F. Rastier;[198]
– *Nouveaux essais*, in 1985, edited and introduced by F. Rastier, including seven papers from *Essais linguistiques II*,[199] and a partial translation of the *Résumé* by C. & E. Zilberberg, as well as two commentary essays, the first by A. Martinet, the second, commenting on the first, by M. Arrivé.

(6) François Rastier and Claude Zilberberg (1938–2018) were, moreover, the designers of new semiotic theories, and each of these theories bears the hallmark of Hjelmslev's thought. In Rastier's interpretative semantics (1987), conceptual developments in narrative semiotics find closer links with Hjelmslev's theory of language. In Zilberberg's tensive semiotics (2002; 2006), the Hjelmslevian concepts of 'intensive' *vs.* 'extensive' govern the entire theoretical framework.

(7) A series of critical writings by these second-generation French semioticians on Hjelmslev's work and its semiotic reception were then published. In addition to Rastier's prefaces to the French editions of Hjelmslev's work, the following should be noted in particular:

– "Knowledge of Hjelmslev (Prague or Copenhagen?)", "Saussure's 'Memoirs' read by L. Hjelmslev", "Description of description", and "An uncertain continuity: Saussure, Hjelmslev, Greimas", by Claude Zilberberg (1985; 1986; 1993; 1997);

---

198. The French edition is identical to the original edition published in Denmark except for the texts written in English, which are presented in translation.
199. Either as is (originally written and published in French) or translated into French.

- – "Peirce and Hjelmslev: the Two Semiotics", "Prehistory, structure and topicality of Hjelmslev's theory of cases", by Herman Parret (1984; 1995);
- – and, the chapter entitled "L. Hjelmslev, or How to concretise through abstraction" in *History of Semiotics* by Anne Hénault (1992, 55–77).

(8) Subsequent generations of semioticians also contributed to deepening the critical reception of Hjelmslev's thought and its semiotic application. Some researchers are now considered specialists in his work. This is the case of Alessandro Zinna, who edited three collections of critical essays on Hjelmslev (1986; 1997; 2017 with L. Cigana), Driss Ablali (several papers, including: 2001; 2002; 2003; 2021) and myself (two books: Badir 2000; 2014; and a journal issue: Badir & Cigana eds. 2013).

The reason why I distinguish between generations[200] is to show that Hjelmslev's legacy among semioticians is not localised in time (as is the case, for example, with René Thom's (1923–2002) thought), but that it is, on the contrary, a linking factor between researchers of different ages.

Since its emergence, buoyed by the wave of structuralism, French semiotics has had a certain influence outside its borders (mostly in Belgium, Italy, and Latin America), so that it has become, to a certain extent, semiotics written in French[201], or even French-style semiotics. For all semioticians influenced or inspired by French semiotics, the reading of Hjelmslev has become unavoidable, if only through secondary literature.

Furthermore, Hjelmslev's specialist semioticians in Italy encountered a distinct, albeit close, tradition of critical reception, mainly

---

200. Barthes and Greimas were born in the 1910s; Hénault, Rastier, and Zilberberg, between 1935 and 1945; younger researchers, after 1955.

201. It is worth noting that Greimas himself is of Lithuanian origin, just as Kristeva and Todorov are of Bulgarian origin.

gathered around the linguist Romeo Galassi.[202] Particularly note-worthy in this respect is the work of Cosimo Caputo, *Hjelmslev and Semiotics* (2010).

3. Conceptual heritage

I would now like to turn to the substantive issues. What is Hjelmslev's legacy for Semiotics in conceptual terms? It is both quite limited and a lot.

Limited, because, apart from the semioticians specializing in his work, it is nearly always the same few pairs of opposing concepts that are used:

– expression plane *vs.* content plane;
– form *vs.* substance;
– syntagmatic *vs.* paradigmatic;
– denotation *vs.* connotation;
– language *vs.* metalanguage.

None of these concepts is completely original, even if Hjelmslev gave them a formal definition that is specific to his theory of language. Semioticians use these technical terms in reference to Hjelmslev's theoretical conception, but not without being influenced by the logicist and philosophical traditions that preceded it. For example, the concept of substance is often equated with the *hyle* of phenom-enologists; and I have shown (Badir 2000, 161–188) how Roland Barthes or Umberto Eco depended on Frege's conception as it was conveyed by Ogden & Richards (1923) for their use of denotation, despite their claims that they adopted Hjelmslev's concept.

---

202. One could object, for instance, that Alessandro Zinna is rather a part of this Italian movement, since all the works he edited were published in Italy (with a large number of papers in Italian). I decided to count him among the 'French' semioticians because he has been teaching Semiotics in France for more than twenty years and runs a centre called "Semiotic Mediations" at the University of Toulouse.

Yet, in many ways, this heritage is considerable. Until the 1960s, in France as in the rest of the world, linguistics still followed the grammatical tradition. The study of form predominated over meaning, both in synchronic and diachronic linguistics. In the words of Anscombre (1998: 38), "the grammatical tradition has always made semantics the poor relation of Linguistics".[203] Hjelmslev's thought, however, paved the way for a semantic analysis that went far beyond existing descriptions, which were mainly concerned with lexicology (semasiological as well as onomasiological).

Greimas' intellectual career is exemplary in this respect. He defended a thesis in 1948 which was in the field of historical lexicology (the thesis was a description of fashion vocabulary in the French magazines of 1830).[204] But later he repudiated this work. And he did so, one might argue, for reasons that have more to do with Semiotics than with Linguistics. In the interview in which he looked back on his research career, already quoted above, Greimas (1987, 302–303) said:

> Indeed, I started research that I now dare not call 'research' but which was within the conception of linguists, let's say around 1940–1950. I believe that the function of my foray into lexicology is the stimulating function of failure. It is because I saw, after five or six years of work, that lexicology led nowhere – that the units, lexemes or signs, did not lead to any analysis, did not allow for the structuring, the global understanding of phenomena – that I understood that it is 'under' the signs that things happen.

Semiotics as Greimas saw it was born out of this refusal of lexicology, which considers only signs.[205]

---

203. An assertion that has become commonly held in France. Anscombre's statement is almost word for word a phrase by Greimas: "It must be recognised that semantics has always been the poor relation of Linguistics" (1966, 6). By quoting Anscombre, I only want to show that this judgment is shared by linguists of all persuasions.
204. This thesis was edited, posthumously, by T.F. Broden & F. Ravaux-Kirkpatrick (see Greimas 2000).
205. Naturally, the split is partly rhetorical, and one can see, as Broden (2017) tried to make clear, that Greimasian semiotics is not as detached from the lexicological

Let us put it this way, at the risk of sounding cavalier: the Hjelmslevian concepts mentioned above seemed almost banal among structuralist linguists when applied to the phonological, morphological and morphosyntactical study of languages. They take on their full significance when they are applied to the content plane, according to the dual hypothesis of the isomorphism of the planes and the non-conformity of their analysis.

(1) Analysis of meaning registers units that solely belong to the content plane; these units are formal invariants, in the same way as units of the expression plane ('phonemes', one might say).

The isomorphism between the planes is explicitly established by Greimas (1966, 22). The analysis in minimal units ('semes') in the content plane is the condition for the constitution of the concept of 'isotopy' (*id.* 53), as it allows a renewed description of the interpretation of texts.

(2) The description of meaning depends not only on denotation analysis but also on connotation analysis. It is not even true that the semantic 'system' of a language supports the varieties of that language. On the contrary, it must be considered that it is the deduction of connotative variants that makes it possible to analyse denotative invariants (cf. Cigana, this volume).

The concept of connotation was used by Barthes (1957) to account for 'mythical' meanings conveyed in the media discourse in contemporary France (that of the 1950s), far beyond what these discourses claim to say. But it is Christian Metz (1931–1993) who has best perceived, through its application to the analysis of film language, the scope of the Hjelmslevian concept of connotation: "In conclusion, we will define *film language* as a set of all the particular and general film codes, as long as we temporarily neglect the differences that separate them, and treat their common core, by fiction, as a unitary real system" (Metz [1971] 1977, 51).

(3) There is an (original) correlation to be made between connotative analysis and metalinguistic analysis. Both operate with variants that need to be deduced.

This correlation takes on its full meaning in the description of

research as it claims.

elaborate texts such as literary texts and scientific or philosophical writings, for which 'reflexivity' is frequently a specific feature of their linguistic variety. In his paper, "The Relevance of Saussurism", Greimas made the connection between the Hjelmslevian concepts and Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero* (1953): "Thus, according to Hjelmslev's fertile suggestion, starting from a clearly structured set of signifiers: literature, popular language, mythology, one is allowed to construct a semiological system whose structures, revealed by analysis, would have an autonomous global meaning. The application of this postulate to the description of literary metalanguage, which we owe to Barthes, will make it possible to better show its significance" (Greimas 1956: 198).

(4) Text is not only the object given to analysis. It is also its result as a syntagmatic.

With regard to the expression plane, it may seem obvious (or necessary) that the analysis is capable of 'restoring' the given object in all its components. On the content plane, the consequences of this equivalence or ambivalence between the two statuses of the text are more delicate to grasp. As Rastier (1987, 94) showed, Greimas 'paradigmatized' isotopy by making it the simple recurrence of a minimal unit in a text. In order to give the text its full syntagmatic functionality, it is necessary to define isotopy as a building path (an '*itération*') in the text, and consequently to view analysis as interpretation. This is why for Rastier semantics is by essence interpretative.

(5) Finally, it must be contemplated that Hjelmslevian concepts, although presented in pairs of opposites, are not in a symmetrical ratio. For each pair, one is governed (a constant) and the other is governing (a variable). Content governs expression, substance governs form, syntagmatic governs paradigmatic, denotation governs connotation, and metalanguage governs language. In other words, the governed concept is a necessary condition for the syntagmatic presence of the governing concept.

I could not say that the latter proposition is common knowledge among semioticians, or even among Hjelmslev's readers. But Claude Zilberberg found in it the starting point for his tensive semiotics. In spite of a symmetrical presentation due to the conventions of description, every unit of meaning is analysed according to its ten-

sivity and thus becomes governed ('concentrated') or governing ('extended').[206]

Hjelmslev's theoretical propositions are of great significance for semioticians because they concern not only the analysis of natural languages but also of other socio-cultural productions. Formal languages, music, diagrams, images, films or perhaps even social practices in their broadest sense are subject to analysis in terms of expression / content, form / substance, syntagmatic / paradigmatic, denotation / connotation, and language / metalanguage. Moreover, Hjelmslev, wary of the ambivalence of the English word *language* (applicable to both natural and formal languages), decided to use the term *semiotic* in the English translation of the *Prolegomena*, so that a "denotative language" became a "denotative semiotic". It is the latter formulation that is also found in the 1971 revised French translation. As a result, the theory of language gave semioticians a solid pretext for federation: whatever the objects under study, a terminological and conceptual basis was available for their analysis.

4. Inheritance of a style of thinking

From Hjelmslev, semioticians did not only inherit concepts. They also found inspiration for a certain style of thinking and writing. This style can be perceived above all in the *Prolegomena*.

I found, in the handwritten notes of the series of lectures Hjelmslev gave at the University of Texas at Austin in January-February 1961,[207] a quite surprising presentation of the *Prolegomena,* about twenty years after its publication: "Intended as a general orientation for readers of a high academic standard, not for specialists of linguistics. As matters stand, <provisionally,> and until *Outline* II and/or *Treatise* will appear, it is the most systematic statement so far, and can be taken as a textbook, though not without reservations". The *Prolegomena* as a 'textbook'? This is a delightful perspective,

---

206. See Zilberberg (2006, 55). With the additional problem that Zilberberg, in his reading of Hjelmslev, assimilated (wrongly in my opinion) the governed term to a variable and the governing term to a constant.

207. AH, 115.

but one that is very unlikely. I have never met anyone who has not been impressed by the difficulty of the book. However, even if the book might well only be addressed to the happy few, placing its horizon at the level of 'a general orientation' is a good fit. What can be a general orientation for a theory of language? I assume that it is something like a philosophy of language; more precisely, a philosophy of language from a linguistic point of view.

That a linguist should be able to conceive a philosophy of language from his or her own point of view is what several commentators have been arguing for some twenty-five years now. This was first put forward in favour of Saussure, especially since the publication of *Writings in General Linguistics* (2002), by philosophers such as Arild Utaker (2002) and Patrice Maniglier (2006). The argument was then extended to the work of Hjelmslev, by myself (Badir 2014) and Waldir Beividas (2017).

In a forerunner paper, Ivan Almeida (1997) exposed some penetrating views about the style of thinking of *Prolegomena*. He qualified it as an "epistemological style", taking advantage of the use Gilles-Gaston Granger (1920–2016) made of this formula to designate personal standpoints about the general conditions of science. Two of Hjelmslev's standpoints are highlighted: a gambling on form, excluding any reference that would give meaning to formal deduction; and a gambling on immanence, which forbids theory to be anything other than a part of its very object. Almeida saw in this a strong originality of thought that he did not find among semioticians, whose "neo-Hjelmslevism" therefore must be distinguished from Hjelmslev's thought. I am quite convinced by this diagnosis. However, I cannot help but see that the radicalism and dynamism at work in the theory of language which, according to Almeida, results from these standpoints can also be found in semiotic theory, in comparison with competing theories in Linguistics and, more broadly, with most theories in the social sciences and Humanities. Critical bias, reflexivity and, at the same time, neutrality and radical relativism make an intellectual alloy that can only be found in the style of thinking of semioticians. See, for example, the opening chapter of *Semiotics of Passions*, devoted to an "Epistemology of Passions" (Greimas & Fontanille 1991), which is much more radical

and dynamic than Spinoza! The semiotic way of thinking, or its "epistemological style", often clashes with scholars from other disciplines. Is this also a kind of legacy from Hjelmslev? I believe so.

*

This legacy thus consisted of a patrimony to be maintained (through publications), developed (as a theory), illustrated (far beyond the fields of application foreseen by Hjelmslev) and defended (from an epistemological point of view). Objectively speaking, semiotics is quite far removed from Hjelmslev's linguistic preoccupations. However, from a symbolic point of view, Hjelmslev left a very significant mark on Semiotics: firstly, a terminology around which semioticians can congregate; secondly, a project to be pursued; thirdly, a theoretical and critical style. In truth, without Hjelmslev, French semiotics would no longer exist, or indeed might never have coalesced: it would probably have dispersed.

Bibliography

ABLALI, DRISS (2001), "Hjelmslev et Greimas: deux sémiotiques universelles différentes", *Linx,* 44, 39–54.

– (2002), "Hjelmslev, Greimas, Rastier: une continuité impossible autour de la notion de texte", in: Fontanille, Jacques (éd.), *Actes du congrès de l'AFS « Sémio 2001 a Sémio 2001 »* [CD-rom], Limoges, Pulim, 13–21.

– (2003), "Les fondements linguistiques de la sémiotique. Autour de la sémiotique du texte", in: Hassler, Gerda & Volkmann, Gesina (eds.), *History of Linguistics in Texts and Concepts*, II, Münster, Nodus, 761–770.

– (2021), "Retour sur l'histoire tumultueuse de la traduction des *Prolégomènes* de Louis Hjelmslev. Le cas de la traduction inédite de Knud Togeby", in: Chepiga, Valentina & D'Ottavi, Giuseppe (eds.), *Traduire la linguistique, traduire les linguistes*, Louvain-la Neuve, Academia.

ABLALI, DRISS & ARRIVÉ, MICHEL (2001), "Hjelmslev et Martinet: correspondance, traduction, problèmes théoriques", *La Linguistique,* 37(1), 33–57.

Almeida, Ivan (1997), "Le style épistémologique de Louis Hjelmslev". *Texto!* [online: http://www.revue-texto.net/Inedits/Almeida_Style.html].

ANSCOMBRE, JEAN-CLAUDE (1998), "Regards sur la sémantique française contemporaine", *Langages,* 129, 37–51.

BADIR, SÉMIR (2000), *Hjelmslev*, Paris, Belles Lettres.

– (2014), *Épistémologie sémiotique. La théorie du langage de Louis Hjelmslev*, Paris, Honoré Champion.

BADIR, SÉMIR & CIGANA, LORENZO (eds., 2013), *Actes du colloque "Reading the Résumé of a Theory of Language / Lire le Résumé d'une théorie du langage".* *Janus*, 11–12, Treviso, ZeL.

BARTHES, ROLAND (1953), *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, Paris, Seuil.

– (1957), *Mythologies*, Paris, Seuil.

– (1964), "Éléments de sémiologie", *Communications,* 4, 91–135.

BEIVIDAS, WALDIR (2017), *La sémiologie de Saussure et la sémiotique de Greimas comme épistémologie discursive: une troisième voie pour la connaissance*, Limoges, Lambert-Lucas.

BRODEN, THOMAS F. (2017), "A.J. Greimas' historical lexicology (1945–1958) and the place of the lexeme in his work", *Sign Systems Studies* 45(1/2), 104–119.

BROWN, JAMES W. (1985), "[Reviewed Work: *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, A.J. Greimas and J. Courtés. Translated by Larry Christ, Daniel Patte, James Lee, Edward McMahonII, Gary Phillips, & Michael Rengstorf. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983. 432]", *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 7(3), 377–378.

Dosse, François (1991), *Histoire du structuralisme, I: Le champ du signe, 1945–1966*, Paris, La Découverte [English edition translated by Glassman, Deborah: *History of Structuralism, Volume 1: The Rising Sign, 1945–1966*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997].

Duvall, John N. (1984), "[Reviewed Work: *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary* by A.J. Greimas, J. Courtés, Larry Crist, Daniel Patte]", *College Literature* 11(2), 195–197.

Caputo, Cosimo (2010), *Hjelmslev e la semiotica*, Roma, Carocci.

De Mauro, Tullio (1998), "Presentazione", in: Hjelmslev, Louis, *Principi di grammatica generale* [edited by Galassi, Romeo & Picciarelli, Massimiliano], Bari, Levante Editori.

Firth, John R. (1957), 'Applications of general linguistics", in: Palmer, F.R. (ed.), *Selected papers of J.R. Firth (1952–59)*, London, Longmans, 1968, 126–136.

Greimas, Algirdas Julien (1956), "L'actualité du saussurisme", *Le Français moderne,* 24, 191–203.

– (1966), *Sémantique structurale*, Paris, Larousse.

– (1987), "Mis à la question", in: Arrivé, Michel & Coquet, Jean-Claude (eds), *Sémiotique en jeu. À partir et autour de l'œuvre d'A.J. Greimas*, Amsterdam, Hadès-Benjamins, 301–329.

– (2000), *La mode en 1830. Langage et société: écrits de jeunesse*, Paris, Puf.

Greimas, Algirdas Julien & Courtés, Joseph (1979), *Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné d'une théorie du langage.* Paris: Hachette [English edition translated by Crist, Larry and Patt, Daniel, and Lee, James, McMahon II, Edward, Phillips, Gary, & Rengstrof, Michael, *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary,* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982].

Greimas, Algirdas Julien & Fontanille, Jacques (1991), *Sémiotique des passions. Des états de choses aux états d'âme*, Paris, Seuil.

Hénault, Anne (1992), *Histoire de la sémiotique*, Paris, Puf, = Que sais-je?

Hjelmslev, Louis (1961), *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* [trans. by Whitfield, Francis J.], Madison, WI, The University of Wisconsin Press [First edition: 1953].

– (1966), *Le Langage*, Paris, Minuit.

– (1968), *Prolégomènes à une théorie du langage* suivi de *La Structure fondamentale du langage*, Paris, Minuit [2nd revised ed.: 1971].

– (1971), *Essais linguistiques*, Paris, Minuit.

– (1985), *Nouveaux Essais*, Paris, Puf.

Léon, Jacqueline (2019), "J.R. Firth et la critique des structuralismes linguistiques", in: Bisconti Valentina, Curea, Anamaria, & De Angelis, Ros-

sana (eds), *Héritages, réceptions, écoles en sciences du langage : avant et après Saussure*, Paris, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle.

MANIGLIER, PATRICE (2006), *La vie énigmatique des signes*, Paris, Léo Scheer.

METZ, CHRISTIAN (1971), *Langage et cinema*, Paris, Larousse [2nd ed.: Paris, Albatros, 1977].

MOUNIN, GEORGES (1970), *Introduction à la sémiologie*, Paris, Minuit, = Le sens commun.

PARRET, HERMAN (1984), "Peirce and Hjelmslev: the Two Semiotics", *Language Sciences*, 6(2), 217–227.

–   (1995), "Préhistoire, structure et actualité de la théorie hjelmslevienne des cas", *Nouveaux actes sémiotiques* 38 (27).

RASTIER, FRANÇOIS (1987), *Sémantique interprétative*, Paris, Puf.

RICHARDS, ARMSTRONG & OGDEN, CHARLES KAY (1923), *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE (2002), *Écrits de linguistique générale*, Paris, Gallimard.

SCHLEIFER, RONALD (1983), "Language, Semiotics, and Criticism: A Review Essay", *Criticism: a Quarterly for Literature and the Arts,* 25(3), 267–276.

TOGEBY, KNUD (ed., 1967), *La glossématique. L'héritage de Hjelmslev au Danemark. Langages*, 6.

UTAKER, ARILD (2002), *La philosophie du langage. Une archéologie saussurienne*, Paris, Puf.

ZILBERBERG, CLAUDE (1985), "Connaissance de Hjelmslev", *Il Protagora,* XXV (7/8), 127–169.

–   (1986), "Le 'Mémoire' de Saussure lu par L. Hjelmslev", *Versus,* 43, 59–90.

–   (1993), "Description de la description", in: Rasmussen, Michael (ed.), *Louis Hjelmslev et la sémiotique. Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague,* 24, 151–172.

–   (1997), "Une continuité incertaine : Saussure, Hjelmslev, Greimas", in: Zinna, Alessandro (ed.), *Hjelmslev aujourd'hui*, Turnhout, Brepols, 165–192.

–   (2002), "Précis de grammaire tensive", *Tangence,* 70, 111–143.

–   (2006), *Éléments de grammaire tensive*. Limoges: Pulim.

ZINNA, ALESSANDRO (ed., 1986), *Louis Hjelmslev. Linguistica e semiotica strutturale*. *Versus,* 43.

–   (ed.) [1997] (1999), *Hjelmslev aujourd'hui*, Turnhout, Brepols.

ZINNA, ALESSANDRO & CIGANA, LORENZO (eds., 2017), *Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965). Le forme del linguaggio e del pensiero* [online: http://mediationsemiotiques.com/archives/9812].

Author: Sémir Badir is a Senior Research Associate of the Belgian Fund for Scientific Research-FNRS at the University of Liège. His essays have focused on epistemological aspects of linguistic and semiotic theories. His project is that of an epistemology which sees knowledge as a discursive practice. He authored five books: *Hjelmslev* (Belles-Lettres, 2000), *Saussure. La langue et sa représentation* (L'Harmattan, 2001), *Épistémologie sémiotique. La théorie du langage de Louis Hjelmslev* (Honoré Champion, 2014), *Magritte et les philosophes* (*Les impressions nouvelles*, 2021), *Les pratiques discursives du savoir. Le cas sémiotique* (Lambert-Lucas, 2022). E-mail: semir.badir@uliege.be

Hjelmslev and structural linguistics in Italy

Giorgio Graffi
University of Verona

Abstract. *The essay investigates the changing attitudes of Italian linguists towards Hjelmslev's thoughts. Three phases can be distinguished: an initial one (approximately, up to the late 1950s), when they were mainly rejected; then a phase of enthusiasm about them (until the early 1970s); finally, an era of growing disinterest (roughly, from the mid-1970s onwards). The early, unfavorable, attitude (typical of Italian linguists born between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) is accounted for by their distrust of any abstract model in linguistics, which was mainly due to the influence of Benedetto Croce's philosophy of language. Such attitude was reversed during the second phase, when Croce's philosophy was gradually abandoned and some scholars (especially T. De Mauro, G.C. Lepschy and L. Rosiello) began to focus on the foundations of structural linguistics, finding Hjelmslev's theories especially stimulating. Shortly after this new phase, generative grammar began to spread in Italy. Initially, some young (at the time) linguists were interested in both theoretical frameworks. Generative grammar, however, quickly became their favorite research paradigm, because it appeared much more promising than glossematics from the empirical-descriptive point of view. Hence, the interest in Hjelmslev's ideas and analyses considerably diminished: however, their importance in the development of Italian theoretical linguistics remains indisputable.*

1. Introduction

Among structuralist linguists, Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) is possibly the one in whom Italian researchers are most interested, with the obvious exception of Saussure (1857–1913) (who, on the other

hand, cannot be labeled as structuralist without some qualification; see below). This is witnessed, among other things, by the activity of the "Circolo glossematico" of Padua, established and headed by Romeo Galassi, as well as by the several publications devoted to the work of the Danish scholar which appeared regularly over the last few decades (see, a. o., Bondì 2012; Caputo 1993, 2010; Caputo & Galassi 1985; Cigana [2014] 2022; Galassi & De Michiel 2001; Zinna 1986; Zinna & Cigana 2017). The following passage can be found in the introduction to the last one, which was published a few years ago:

> Together with Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson, the linguist Louis Hjelmslev is recognized as one of the noble fathers of European structuralism [omitted footnote]. His works have long remained a resource for the studies of language and theories of meaning. If semioticians and linguists generously drew on the vast conceptual and terminological repertoire of the Danish researcher, at the beginning of the 1970s the resonance of his work took a back seat due to the attention paid to the linguistic theories of Noam Chomsky (Zinna 2017, i).[208]

This quotation can serve as a good starting point for our paper: since at least the 1960s, semioticians have shown an unbroken interest in Hjelmslev's work, which, on the contrary, has been rather neglected by linguists, with the obvious exception of specialists in this field (like those quoted above) and, more generally, of historians of linguistics. We therefore intend to outline the ways in which

---

208. "Insieme a Ferdinand de Saussure e Roman Jakobson, il linguista Louis Hjelmslev è riconosciuto come uno dei padri nobili dello strutturalismo europeo. I suoi lavori sono rimasti a lungo una risorsa per gli studi del linguaggio e le teorie del senso. Se semiologi e linguisti hanno attinto generosamente al vasto repertorio concettuale e terminologico del ricercatore danese, all'inizio degli anni '60 la risonanza della sua opera è passata in secondo piano per l'attenzione rivolta alle teorie linguistiche di Noam Chomsky". As can be seen, I have corrected the original "1960s" with "1970s", since the former seems to be a misprint, as the content of the present essay shows. – When a published translation of the works quoted in the present paper exists, I only report that one; when a translation has not been published in English, I report my own translation, with the original text in the footnotes.

Hjelmslev's thoughts were interpreted and assessed by the Italian linguists during the period spanning from the end of the Second World War to the early 1970s. This outline will show us that, after an initial stage when the views of the Danish linguist were substantially rejected, there ensued a new phase of enthusiasm about them, followed in turn by the abandonment referred to above. We will also attempt a historical explanation of this process, which concerns not only Hjelmslev's linguistic theory, but structural linguistics in general. Hjelmslev's views on language and linguistic theory were rather deeply discussed by Italian linguists from the early 1960s to the early 1970s, and they had not been ignored even in previous times, as we will see in section 2. In section 3, we will deal with the early Italian studies devoted to or worked out in the framework of structural linguistics, especially those that explicitly referred to Hjelmslevian ideas. In section 4, we will present the first Italian studies wholly devoted to Hjelmslev and sketch a comparison between glossematics and generative linguistics, with the aim of explaining why the focus of attention switched from the former linguistic theory to the latter after the early 1970s.

2. Italian linguistics and structuralism up to the end of the 1950s

In order to make our story more clearly understandable to readers who are not especially versed in the history of Italian linguistic studies, we will firstly sketch the main features of Italian linguistics and philosophy of language during the first half of the 20th century. In that epoch, the philosophical system hegemonic in Italian culture was the so-called "neo-idealism", whose leaders were Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) and Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944). Croce's and Gentile's positions were rather different both from a political point of view (the former was an anti-fascist while the latter strongly supported Fascism) and a philosophical point of view, but they converged on one point: scientific knowledge is by its own nature inferior to philosophical knowledge, and this automatically implies that a description of language according to the methods of exact

sciences is untenable.[209] Given these premises, it may sound rather strange that the book which first gave great fame to Croce was entitled "Aesthetic as science of expression and general linguistics" (Croce 1902 [1909]): actually, for Croce both the terms 'aesthetic' and 'general linguistics' have a rather different meaning from the standard one. For him, the former is not just the doctrine of artwork and of the value judgment about it, but "the first moment of the spirit", namely that of "intuitive knowledge" or "knowledge of the individual"; it is followed by the moment of "logical knowledge", or "knowledge of the universal", whose science is logic in Croce's sense. "The cognitive spirit has no form other than these two. Expression and concept exhaust it completely. The whole speculative life of man is spent in passing from one to the other and back again" (Croce 1902, English translation: 43–44).[210] In Croce's view, aesthetic and logic, to which history must be added, are the only sciences in the proper sense of the term, while the other disciplines commonly called "sciences", such as mathematics or natural sciences, are not "perfect sciences":

> These explications have firmly established that the pure or fundamental forms of knowledge are two: the intuition and the concept – Art, and Science or Philosophy. With these are to be included History, which is, as it were, the product of intuition placed in contact with the concept, that is, of art receiving in itself philosophic distinctions, while remaining concrete and individual. All the other forms (natural sciences and mathematics) are impure, being mingled with extraneous elements of practical origin (Croce 1902, English translation, 51–52).

This last quotation also explains why Croce's doctrine is often labeled as 'historicism'.

Now, we will see why Croce qualifies aesthetic as "science of expression and general linguistics". First of all, we have to remark

209. The present paragraph and the following two ones are mainly drawn from Graffi (2010, 167–174).

210. I replaced 'intellect' in the English translation with 'spirit' (It. spirito), which seems to fit Croce's philosophical system better.

that 'intuition' in Croce's sense does not mean anything obscure or confused, but, on the contrary, it refers to something well determined, which is identified with expression: "That which does not objectify itself in expression is not intuition or representation, but sensation and naturality. The spirit does not obtain intuitions, otherwise than by making, forming, expressing. He who separates intuition from expression never succeeds in reuniting them" (Croce 1902, English translation, 12). Expression is not only of the verbal kind, but "there exist also non-verbal expressions, such as those of line, colour, and sound" (id. 13), and even intuition of geometrical entities cannot be given if one cannot express it by means of a drawing. However, Croce ends up dealing mainly with linguistic expression. This brings him to the conclusion already stated in the title of the book, namely that general linguistics coincides with aesthetic. "*Philosophy of language and philosophy of art are the same thing*" (id. 234; original emphasis): both are one and the same science, "science of expression". By so doing, the Italian philosopher could also dismiss all controversies about the nature of linguistics, namely whether it belongs to natural or to historical-social sciences, which had characterized a good deal of 19th century linguistics (think of the dispute between Max Müller and Whitney, or between the Neogrammarians and Schuchardt): the only really scientific linguistics was identical to aesthetic, hence it was the first 'science of the spirit', while all the other alleged kinds of 'linguistics' were not true sciences. Furthermore, Croce maintained, in perfect coherence with his idea of the absolute individuality and unrepeatability of every single expression, that the concept itself of language is an abstraction and that "languages have no reality beyond the propositions and complexes of propositions really written and pronounced by given peoples for definite periods" (id. 241). If we tried to translate these statements into Saussure's terminology, we could say that, according to Croce, no *langue* exists, but only *actes de parole*.

What was the attitude of Italian 'professional' (i.e., academic) linguists towards these philosophical assumptions, which, as we have said, were dominant throughout Italian culture throughout the first half of the 20th century? First of all, we have to keep in mind that Croce (who was politically a liberal and was not an aca-

demic: he did not even have an academic degree) had no intention of chasing away professors of linguistics from their chairs, nor any other professor who was not a philosopher or a historian: he saved all other sciences by simply qualifying them as 'practical', namely useful, if not indispensable, for ordinary life, but essentially devoid of any theoretical content: "it never crossed my mind to deny the legitimacy of linguists' work, but I investigated its nature and thus its theoretical justification";[211] "extra-aesthetic study is no longer the study of language but of things, i.e., of practical facts"[212] (Croce 1941, 175).

This assessment and qualification of 'practical' did not apply only to linguistics, but also to mathematics and natural sciences. In this situation, Italian linguists were not especially unhappy: they had no problem in doing their research, be it 'practical' or of any other kind. In fact, they were mainly involved in developing the research paths opened by the founder of the Italian school of linguistics, Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829–1907), whose prestige was very high also outside of Italy, as is witnessed by the fact that some of his publications were translated into German (e.g., Ascoli 1878, 1887). Ascoli was the author of many important publications in the field of comparative linguistics, both in the Indo-European and in the Romance domains (especially, in the research on Italian dialects). Such domains remained, in practice, the only ones that interested most Italian linguists after him, until the middle of the 20th century and even later. We have to add that, according to their statements of principle, Italian linguists were apparently split into different fields: the 'Neogrammarians' and the 'Neolinguists', as the two groups labeled themselves. The first group referred to the homonymous German school; the second one presented itself as a radical alternative to the former. The oddness lies in the fact that both professed

---

211. "Non mi passò neppure un attimo per la mente di negare il diritto all'opera dei linguisti, ma ne ricercai la natura e con ciò la giustificazione teorica".
212. "lo studio extraestetico non è più studio di linguaggio ma di cose, cioè di fatti pratici".

to be Ascoli's legitimate heirs (cf. Benincà 1994, 581–585).[213] This was possible because their domains of research were the same as Ascoli's, on which their different theoretical principles had little or no impact (actually, some Neolinguists attempted to reconcile their investigations, especially in the Romance field, with Croce's principles, but the effect of such attempts was rather ridiculous). The general outcome of this situation was that most Italian linguists, during the first half of the 20th century issued much serious work in the several fields of historical-comparative linguistics (mainly Indo-European and Romance, but also Indo-Aryan, Germanic, Celtic, Anatolian, among others), while only a few of them faced the theoretical issues raised by linguistic structuralism; and when they did, it was rather automatic for them to adopt assumptions echoing Croce's ideas (with one significant exception, as will be seen in a moment).[214]

In fact, Saussure's *Cours de linguistique Générale* (Saussure 1916 [1972]) did not fail to attract the attention of some outstanding Italian linguists from its first edition: Benvenuto A. Terracini (1886–1968) reviewed it (Terracini 1919; cf. Venier 2016), and some of Saussure's ideas were also discussed by other Italian linguists, such as Giacomo Devoto (1897–1974), cf. Devoto (1928), and, later, Giovanni Nencioni (1911–2008), cf. Nencioni (1946). In general, all these scholars (with different nuances) were skeptical about Saussure's concept of *langue*, which "was read, elaborated, but, for the

---

213. Timpanaro (2011, 396–399; the original version of this essay dates back to 1961–62) convincingly argues for an interpretation of Ascoli's ideas as rather close to the Neogrammarians' ideas (although explicitly opposing them on various points) and as essentially different from Neolinguistic tenets.

214. One word of caution has to be said about the label 'structuralism', which it should be more appropriate to decline in the plural (see De Palo 2016), since there are big differences across 'structuralist' schools (Geneva, Prague, Copenhagen, not to mention American structural linguistics), both from the point of view of general assumptions and of analytical procedures. Furthermore, we should always keep in mind that the term 'structure' itself very rarely occurs in Saussure's writings. It is a fact, anyway, that structural linguistics was seen, during the 20th century, as a trend that shared some basic assumptions, both by its followers (see Lepschy 1966) and by its opponents (like Timpanaro 1970, ch. 4).

most part, misrepresented, as if it were an unreal abstractness or, worse still, a revival of the Schleicherian ghost of language as an organism foreign to speakers" (Mancini 2014: 24).[215] An important exception was represented by Antonino Pagliaro (1898–1973), who attempted to frame Saussure's views in a historicist framework, which was however different from Croce's.[216] The Prague school also gained some attention in Italy: for example, an article by Jakobson (1933) appeared in the journal *La Cultura*.

The first Italian linguist to deal with Hjelmslev was probably Piero Meriggi (1899–1982), in a review of the first part of Hjelmslev (1935–37), see Meriggi (1937). Meriggi (1937: 65) declares his approval of Hjelmslev's "general attitude" (*allgemeine Einstellung*), which "is based on Saussure".[217] Furthermore, Meriggi stresses that he and his Danish colleague agree "on the most important point", namely the need to adopt an "immanent" and "inductive" method. On the other hand, Meriggi neatly disagrees with Hjelmslev on two points: 1) the statement that cases are not a "conglomerate", but they form a well-structured system. Actually, they are a conglomerate, which can be accounted for only by means of historical-comparative grammar, which is far from being "no grammar", as Hjelmslev (following Saussure's paths, according to Meriggi) would suggest (cf. Meriggi 1937, 66). 2) The 'localistic' approach to the explanation of grammatical cases taken by Hjelmslev is untenable, since several cases are not explainable in localistic terms (cf. id. 67).[218]

---

215. "fu [...] letta, elaborata, ma, per lo più, travisata, quasi si trattasse di un'astrattezza irreale, o, peggio ancora, di una riproposizione del fantasma schleicheriano della lingua in quanto organismo estraneo ai parlanti".

216. I refer to Mancini's (2014) well documented essay for many other aspects of the reception of Saussure by the Italian linguistic milieu, especially concerning the unique position held by Pagliaro.

217. "bei der die Grundlage die von De Saussure ist".

218. Meriggi again referred to these topics in a paper about thirty years later, where he wrote that he and Hjelmslev began to work out a general theory of cases "in the same spirit". "Our paths parted" ("Später trennten sich aber unsere Wege"), says Meriggi, since Hjelmslev eventually opted for an aprioristic approach, while he was convinced that general grammar should be "free from any philosophical influence" ("frei von jedem philosophischen Einfluss") and "inductively based on the

At the time, Meriggi was Italian only by virtue of his passport, since he held a position at Hamburg University from 1922 until 1939, when he lost his job for political reasons (since he had failed to join the Italian Fascist party, the Italian Fascist government asked the German Nazi government to dismiss him). At any rate, the Italian linguistic milieu was not totally isolated: several Italian linguists attended the International Congresses of Linguists, where they had the opportunity to get in touch with the most important representatives of the different European structuralist schools (cf. also Mancini 2014, 20–21; Sornicola 2018, 60–71). In effect, a common ground between the former and the latter group of scholars was not lacking. Like their Italian colleagues, the first structuralists were well versed in historical linguistics: consider, for example, Slavic studies by Trubetzkoy or by Jakobson, or the fact that Hjelmslev's doctoral dissertation (Hjelmslev 1932) was on the history of Baltic languages.

The first one of the international congresses of linguists, as is well known, was held in 1928 in The Hague; the following ones took place in Geneva (1931), Rome (1933), Copenhagen (1936) and Brussels (1939). The first congress after the war was held in Paris (1948). In an overview of linguistic research between the middle of the 1930s and the early 1950s, published in 1953, the Italian linguist Vittore Pisani (1899–1990) showed a considerable acquaintance with structuralism and in particular with Hjelmslev's work (see Pisani

---

investigation of the different language types" ["rein induktiv von der Untersuchung der einzelnen Sprachtypen auszugehen hatte") (Meriggi 1966, 13). This position is restated in the notes taken from Meriggi's class lectures (presumably dating back to the years between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, where he also hinted at an exchange of letters between Hjelmslev and himself at the time of his review): "we both wanted to start from the concrete study of languages to inductively discover the general laws that govern them. ... I think that we then both went through the same crisis. ... Discouraged, we left this task for the future and I focused on Anatolian, while Hjelmslev concentrated on logical-philosophical linguistics, under the influence previously mentioned [that of Brøndal, G.G.]" ("volevamo tutt'e due partire dallo studio concreto delle lingue per risalire induttivamente alle leggi generali che le governano. [...] Penso che poi abbiamo attraversato tutt'e due la stessa crisi. [...] Sconfortati, abbiamo lasciato questo compito al futuro e io mi sono dedicato all'anatolico, mentre lo Hjelmslev si è dato, sotto l'influsso accennato, a una linguistica logico-filosofica").

1953): he quotes, besides *La catégorie des cas* (Hjelmslev 1935–37) and *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse* (Hjelmslev 1943a), no fewer than eleven papers by the Danish linguist,[219] some of which were scarcely known even to the circle of Hjelmslev specialists, such as Hjelmslev (1938a) or Hjelmslev (1949), which is not listed in the bibliography of Hjelmslev's writings at the end of Hjelmslev (1959).

The first few pages of Pisani's overview (Pisani 1953, 9–17) are devoted to structuralism, and the opening paragraphs just deal with "Brøndal's[220] and Hjelmslev's structuralism", which is qualified as "a universalistic emanation of phonology" (*eine universalistische Ausstrahlung der Phonologie*), where 'phonology' plainly refers to the Prague school (id. 9). A couple of pages later (id. 11), structuralism (of which Brøndal is called "the main representative") is said "to have preceded glossematics".[221] Pisani, therefore, seems to consider glossematics as a trend of structuralism at times, and as a development of it at others. These terminological inconsistencies are, however, of little or no importance; Pisani's assessment of structuralism is more significant: "Schleicher's conception of language as an organism affects Saussure's system and the doctrines developed from it; furthermore, Schleicher's influence in the theory and practice of today's linguistics is far greater than one might think" (Pisani 1953, 17).[222] Hence Pisani criticizes structuralism for being essentially "naturalistic", as Schleicher's view of language was. In his view, linguistics is a historical science, and glossematics, under this respect, is especially wanting. This lack of "historical sense" is especially reproached to glossematics: "one must strongly emphasize

---

219. In this order: Hjelmslev 1938c; 1937a; 1939a; 1939b; 1943b; 1948; 1949; Hjelmslev & Uldall 1936; Hjelmslev 1938a; 1938b; 1939c.

220. Pisani always spells this name "Bröndal", possibly because of typographical problems with the Danish ø.

221. "Der Glossematik Hjelmslevs war der Strukturalismus voraufgegangen, dessen Hauptvertreter der Däne Brøndal angesehen werden kann".

222. "[...] Schleichers Auffassung der Sprache als Organismus sich in De Saussures System und in den daraus entwickelten Lehren auswirkt; weiter ist Schleichers Einfluss in Theorie und Praxis der heutigen Sprachwissenschaft weit grösser als man denken möchte". On this interpretation of Saussure as a "disguised Schleicherian" cf. the remarks by Mancini quoted above.

that glossematics does not exhaust linguistics: it can give us a means of understanding the phenomenon 'language', but it does not tell us how this activity of people takes place, why languages change, what their relationships to other human activities are, etc." (Pisani 1953, 11).[223] Pisani's views, therefore, seem rather close to Croce's historicism. This is even clearer when one considers that he insists on the wholly individual character of linguistic phenomena, which means that for him, as for Croce, only *actes de parole* really exist: "the system contained in one speech act cannot be completely identical with that contained in another, even in the same individual" (ibid.).[224] This implicitly denies the legitimacy of a concept like Saussure's *langue*.

Pisani's attitude towards structuralism in general and Hjelmslev in particular is therefore one of total dissent, although always expressed in a polite way. We can find a rather different approach in a linguist slightly younger than Pisani, namely Luigi Heilmann (1911–1988), who published, two years after Pisani's overview, a paper devoted to "Structural tendencies in linguistic inquiry" (Heilmann 1955a).[225] This paper considers American structuralism, which was scarcely examined (if not completely ignored) in Pisani's. Heilmann (1955a, 141) distinguishes three directions within structural linguistics: American behaviorism, glossematics

---

223. "Man muss jedenfalls kräftig unterstreichen, dass die Glossematik die Sprachwissenschaft nicht ausschöpft: sie kann uns ein Mittel zur Auffassung der Erscheinung 'Sprache' geben, sagt sie uns aber nicht, wie diese Tätigkeit der Menschen stattfindet, warum Sprachen sich verändern, welches ihre Beziehungen zu den anderen menschlichen Tätigkeiten sind usw.".

224. "das in einem Sprechakt enthaltene System mit demjenigen in einem anderen, sogar desselben Individuum enthaltenen, keineswegs völlig identisch sein kann". – The assumption that language is primarily an individual and only derivatively a social phenomenon was held not only by Croce, but by other scholars as well, among whom Hermann Paul (1846–1921; on these topics cf. Graffi 1995). It is difficult to establish to what extent Paul's work was known by Italian linguists, with the exception of Meriggi, who always referred to Paul (1920) as a masterwork.

225. As is standard for the proceedings of many scientific Academies, papers indicate, besides the name of their author, also the name of the member of the Academy that "presents" them: in the case of Heilmann (1955a), this member was Pagliaro (see above, 327).

and phonematics – the last direction "going back to the Prague school" (as can be seen, Prague contribution to structural linguistics is found in phonology only; this assessment would last for several years, as we will see later, fn. 29). Despite their differences, American behaviourism and glossematics are said to share, "in the practice of linguistic analysis" and at different degrees, an attitude which is "antisubstantialistic" and "immanent" (id. 142). On the contrary, Prague phonology "developing Saussurean principles perhaps with less consequentialism than glossematics, but certainly with a livelier sense of the sociality of the language, places linguistically organized substance at the center of its study".[226] Heilmann (id. 144) goes on by stating that "by defining *function* and *structure* in terms of substance, it seems easier to establish a relationship between the statics of the system and the dynamics of individual realizations".[227] The Praguian approach, according to Heilmann, therefore allows the linguist to solve "the problem of the relationship between the traditional historical method and the structuralist method", by "overcoming the Saussurean antinomies between diachrony and synchrony, and between *langue* and *parole*" (id. 138).[228] Like Pisani, Heilmann mainly wants to preserve the approach to linguistic phenomena typical of the historical method, but, while the former scholar thought it was completely incompatible with the structuralist method, the latter (and younger) scholar sees a potential agreement in the structuralist approach typical of the Prague school, which he applied to his own research on the Moena dialect (Heilmann 1955b). On the other hand, the refusal of the 'formalistic' method of the other structuralist trends, and especially of glossematics, is a feature common to both Pisani

226. "svolgendo i principi saussuriani forse con minore consequenzialismo dei glossematici, ma certo con più vivo senso della socialità della lingua, pone al centro del proprio studio la sostanza organizzata linguisticamente".
227. "Definendo in termini di sostanza la funzione e la struttura, appare più facile stabilire un rapporto tra la statica del sistema e la dinamica delle realizzazioni individuali".
228. "Il problema del rapporto tra metodo storico tradizionale e quello strutturalistico […] si risolve nel superamento delle antinomie saussuriane tra diacronia e sincronia, tra lingua e parola".

and Heilmann, and, probably, to all Italian linguists of their generation.[229]

3. The 1960s: the 'golden age' of structural linguistics in Italy

Despite all its limits and reservations, Heilmann's work surely contributed to the introduction of structuralism into Italian linguistics. More generally, Italian human sciences began to experience a profound change in the same years, namely between the 1950s and the 1960s: Croce's doctrines and historicism in general were in a crisis and the spreading of the structuralist approach to several fields of the humanities besides linguistics, such as sociology, cultural anthropology and literary criticism, offered a radical alternative to them. It is therefore not surprising that the first person to refer to Hjelmslev's work in order to develop his own ideas was a philosopher, Galvano Della Volpe (1895–1968), in a book about aesthetics (Della Volpe 1960). Even in his preface, Della Volpe wrote:

> My predominant use in this study of the essential features of the theory of glossematics is not a matter of chance, nor is it due to any personal inclination of my own for the laborious subtleties of Hjelmslev's 'algebra' of language. The reason is simply that glossematics, the structural linguistics of the Copenhagen school, represents the most coherent and complete development of modern scientific (Saussurian) linguistics, and hence the most general language-theory. My use of it is intended to firmly establish the semantic bases of poetry and literature, before

229. Besides those presented in the present section, other Italian linguists discussed Hjelmslev's theory, more or less occasionally. A reference to them can be found in the short chronicle by Devoto (1951). Bolelli (1953, 8) labels the doctrines of the Copenhagen school as an "abstraction orgy"; this assessment is restated in the introductory note to the Italian translation of Brøndal (1939): see Bolelli (1965, 518–520). Bolelli's attitude is similar to Tagliavini's (1963, 314–315), who qualifies Hjelmslev (1943) as "a masterpiece of a hermeticism that is reduced to jargon for initiates and is far from linguistic reality" ("capolavoro di un ermetismo che si esaurisce in vocabolario per iniziati e che si distacca dalla realtà linguistica"). Actually, on the subsequent pages Tagliavini (1963, 315–321) gives a rather detailed presentation of glossematics, basing himself, however, not directly on Hjelmslev (1943), but on Alarcos Llorach (1951).

going on to sketch a general aesthetic semiotics (Della Volpe 1960, English translation, 12).

As remarked by Lepschy (1968, xx-xxi), Della Volpe's use of Hjelmslev's 'algebra' (a term put into quotation marks by him, not by Hjelmslev) was not free of inaccuracies and misunderstandings: it had however the merit of putting Italian philosophical culture in contact with a line of thought previously wholly extraneous to it.

More or less in the same years, a new generation of linguists emerged who became deeply interested in structural linguistics. Among them, I will quote the three scholars who first held a University chair of General Linguistics, from the end of the 1960s (earlier, no chairs with this label existed, but only chairs of 'Glottologia', a term coined by Ascoli to render the German *Sprachwissenschaft*): Tullio De Mauro (1932–2017), Giulio C. Lepschy (b. 1935)[230] and Luigi Rosiello (1930–1993). As can be seen, all three were born between the very late 1920s and the middle of the 1930s, hence they were about a generation younger than Pisani or Heilmann. Rosiello was one of Heilmann's pupils at the University of Bologna and De Mauro was one of Pagliaro's at the University of Rome. However, De Mauro very often mentions Mario Lucidi (1913–1961), who was an assistant at Pagliaro's chair, as his most influential teacher in the domain of contemporary linguistics: "I owe him [i.e., Lucidi] my first readings of the School of Prague, of Harris and Bloomfield, of Hjelmslev: an uncommon set of readings both in Europe and in the United States" (De Mauro 1998: 34). Lepschy's teacher was Tristano Bolelli (1913–2001), an Indo-Europeanist with some interest in linguistic theory and especially in the history of linguistics.[231] It is almost needless to quote De Mauro's and Lepschy's works from the 1960s that made them world-famous: for the first, the monumental commentary to his Italian translation of Saussure's *Cours de*

---

230. Actually, Lepschy obtained the professorship, but he never occupied the chair, preferring to remain in England, where he had already lived for several years; he became a professor at the University of Reading.

231. He was the editor of two anthologies collecting papers of linguists of the 19th and the 20th century: Bolelli (1965) and Bolelli (1971). See also fn. 22.

linguistique Générale (De Mauro 1967), which, since 1972, has also accompanied the original French version; for Lepschy, his survey of structural linguistics (Lepschy 1966), which first appeared in Italian and was subsequently translated into English and several other languages. Rosiello's most lasting contributions of the period were to the history of linguistics, especially of the 17th and the 18th century (Rosiello 1967), but he was also the author of the first Italian book that expressly assumed structural linguistics as its conceptual framework (Rosiello 1965).

These three scholars were structuralists, each of them in his own perspective. I will now try to briefly outline their profile. Lepschy, besides his theoretical interventions, such as his 1966 volume and several essays to which we will return below, investigated phonology and morphology of standard Italian and of some Italian dialects in a structuralist framework (essentially, the Prague one); see, e.g., Lepschy (1962a; 1963; 1964; 1965a). De Mauro (1965; 1967) proposed, among other things, an interpretation of Saussure's structuralism that made it compatible with historicism, developing some insights of Pagliaro's (see § 2, above). Rosiello was equally worried about pursuing a structuralist view that was not detached from historical and sociological considerations: this is shown by his focusing on the language functions (in a Praguian, not glossematic sense) and on the notion of 'language use'. Despite such partially different orientations and interests, all three held Hjelmslev's views in high esteem and resorted to some of his insights to deal with some problems in their own research. I will give some examples, to which several others could be added.

Hjelmslev's (1943a) theory holds an important space in Lepschy's study dealing with the debate about the nature of the linguistic sign after Saussure (Lepschy 1962b). For example, Lepschy (id. 77) writes: "starting from the notion of sign as formulated in the *Cours*, it is difficult to see how one can avoid reaching the glossematic notion of sign: this in fact derives directly from the three Saussurean formulations of *a*) sign as a relationship, *b*) *langue* as a system of

signs, *c*) *langue* as a form and not as a substance".[232] Hjelmslev is also quoted in a paper by Lepschy of the same year (Lepschy 1962c), a very long and detailed review article of a reader devoted to the meanings and the usage of the word 'structure', where the history from Antiquity of the concerned term is investigated. This time, Hjelmslev is m entioned just once, but in a key passage, which states the unavoidability of assuming a structural point of view in linguistics (id. 195): "in reality, any linguistic study is necessarily based on the fact that language is conceived of as a structural system, and on the fact that speech has its own structure, and presupposes the linguistic system (on the fact that the process determines the system, in Hjelmslev's words)".[233]

Rosiello's (1965) is an interesting attempt at defining the specificity of poetic language (exemplified by an analysis of the lexicon of the Italian poet Eugenio Montale), which expressly abstracts away from any hint of 'literary criticism', i.e., from any assessment value of the concerned work. Rosiello explicitly follows the path traced by Jakobson (1960), but he puts his own research in a larger framework that takes into account, besides Jakobson's and other Praguian scholars' suggestions, also some features of Hjelmslev's linguistic thought, especially the distinction between 'schema', 'norm' and 'usage' presented in Hjelmslev (1943b). Rosiello (1965, 55), while expressing his admiration for "the rigor, the consistency and the clarity"[234] of Hjelmslev's approach, pleads for its revision, both on the terminological and conceptual aspect. From the former point of view, he suggests to replace 'schema' with 'structure'. This term denotes "the plane of paradigmatic relationships, which ... represents the formal organization of the hypothetical potential

---

232. "Ma a partire dalla nozione di segno quale è formulata nel Cours riesce difficile vedere come si possa evitare di giungere alla nozione glossematica di segno: questa discende infatti direttamente dalle tre formulazioni saussuriane di a) segno come rapporto, b) langue come sistema di segni, c) langue come forma e non come sostanza".
233. "In realtà qualsiasi studio linguistico si fonda necessariamente sul fatto che la lingua viene concepita come un sistema strutturale, e sul fatto che il discorso ha una sua struttura, e presuppone il sistema linguistico (sul fatto che il processo determina il sistema, per dirla con Hjelmslev)".
234. "il rigore, la coerenza e la lucidità".

of the language",[235] while the plane of syntagmatic relationships is dubbed by him as 'system' (cf. id. 58).[236] By 'usage', Rosiello means a "manifestation of the system" and by 'norm' he means "the institutionalization of usage" (cf. ibid.). Poetic language has to be investigated according to the extent it conforms to norm or deviates from it, in the different authors (cf. id. 108–109). We will not deal with Rosiello's distinctions and definitions any further here, not even with respect to Hjelmslev's ones; it is enough to stress that the former would have not been possible without the latter.

Hjelmslev's doctrine of the linguistic sign also plays a key role in De Mauro's commentary to Saussure (1972), especially in fn. 225 (one of the most important and longest), which refers to Saussure's statement (1972, English translation, 112) that "there are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language". To explain it, De Mauro bases himself on the analysis of the linguistic sign contained in Hjelmslev (1943a, 46–51), which he qualifies (loc. cit.) as "the best commentary" to Saussure's passage. It shows how a "common factor", called 'purport' is differently formed in different languages: Hjelmslev's famous example is that of the same purport that is expressed by *jeg véd det ikke* in Danish, *I do not know* in English, *je ne sais pas* in French, *en tiedä* in Finnish and *naluvara* in Eskimo, to which De Mauro adds *non so* (Italian) and *nescio* (Latin). De Mauro extensively quotes Hjelmslev's (1943a, 48) words:

> We thus see that the unformed purport extractable from all these linguistic chains is formed differently in each language. [...] Just as the same sand can be put into different molds, and the same cloud take on ever new shapes, so also the same purport is formed or structured differently in different languages. What determines its form is solely the functions of the language, the sign function and the functions deducible therefrom. Purport remains, each time, substance for a new form, and has no possible existence except through being substance for one form

235. "il piano delle relazioni paradigmatiche, che [...] rappresenta l'organizzazione formale delle potenzialità ipotetiche della lingua".
236. In this discussion, Rosiello also takes into account the terminology and the concepts introduced by Coseriu (1962).

or another. We thus recognize in the linguistic *content*, in its process, a specific *form*, the *content-form*, which is independent of, and stands in arbitrary relation to, the *purport*, and forms it into a *content-substance*.

Today, the above passage is well-known, to any even hasty reader of Hjelmslev, but the situation was very different more than fifty years ago in Italy, and, above all, nobody (to my knowledge at least) had previously considered employing it as "the best commentary" to another of Saussure's statements, occurring a couple of pages later: the combination of thought and sound "*produces a form, not a substance*", (Saussure 1972, English translation, 113, original emphasis).

4. The focus on Hjelmslev's theory

Shortly after Hjelmslev's death in 1965, Aldo Prosdocimi (1941–2016), a former pupil of Devoto, issued a paper which, despite its title ("Ricordo di L. Hjelmslev"; Prosdocimi 1966), is not a simple obituary of the Danish linguist, but also a thoughtful revisiting of his research paths. At the beginning of his essay, Prosdocimi (id. 108) states that "we could entitle our commemoration: L. Hjelmslev or about linguistics".[237] Prosdocimi sketches a scientific profile of Hjelmslev's work that goes from his first book (Hjelmslev 1928) to one of his last published essays (Hjelmslev 1958)[238] and contains several interesting remarks: e.g., he draws attention to the influence on Hjelmslev's thought by Neo-positivism and especially by Carnap (cf. Prosdocimi 1966, 115) (on Carnap's structuralism, see Collin, this volume). Prosdocimi was mainly a historical-comparative linguist, but he did not hesitate to see "a sufficient reason for a resumption of glossematics even in those domains of Italian linguistics that are

237. "Potremmo intitolare la nostra commemorazione: L. Hjelmslev o della linguistica".

238. The other works by Hjelmslev quoted in Prosdocimi (1966) are, in this order: Hjelmslev 1937b; 1932; 1935–37; 1938c; 1939a; 1936; 1937a; 1937b; 1939c; 1943; 1954; 1956a; 1958; 1956b; 1957; 1948.

most distant from it" (Prosdocimi 1966, 114).[239] He also recalled the attempts by Heilmann, Lepschy, De Mauro and Rosiello to make Italian linguists better acquainted with Hjelmslev's linguistic theory (cf. ibid.). His conclusion was that "one cannot deny – whether or not one accepts its orthodoxy – the centrality of Hjelmslev's doctrine and the function of his effort for consistency and autonomy in a science that has often sinned due to myopia and inability to identify its position among the other sciences" (id. 116).[240]

Although Prosdocimi's wish for glossematics to receive more attention even from Italian linguists who were further away from it largely did not come true, it cannot be doubted that his paper showed that Hjelmslev's ideas were gaining a wider interest. This interest was further strengthened by Lepschy's presentation of glossematics in ch. 4 of his survey of structural linguistics (Lepschy 1966), and, especially, by his translation of Hjelmslev (1943a), preceded by a long, insightful introduction, from which I quote this passage which I consider to be especially important:

> Glossematics established itself [...] as one of the three main trends in structural linguistics, alongside the Prague school and the American Bloomfield school [*omitted footnote*]. Structural linguistics had gradually been established, within the context of historical and comparative linguistics, due to the need to clarify certain ambiguities implicit in the traditional method. Common to the various trends in structural linguistics are 1) the distinction (which does not necessarily mean absolute separation) of synchrony and diachrony [...]; 2) the identification of linguistic elements as they perform their functions within a structured ... system of reciprocal relationships, both syntagmatic ... and paradigmatic .... Glossematics can be considered the most structural of the various trends of structuralism; it [...] rigorously develops both notions indicated by the term *structure*: systems of elements that depend on each

---

239. "una ragione sufficiente per un recupero della glossematica anche in quelle posizioni della linguistica italiana che ne sono più lontane".

240. "non si può disconoscere – se ne accetti o no l'ortodossia – la centralità della dottrina di Hjelmslev e la funzione dello sforzo di coerenza e autonomia in una scienza che ha spesso peccato di miopia e di incapacità di individuare la propria posizione tra le altre scienze".

other (structure as organization), and that of formal system underlying concrete manifestations (structure as abstraction) (Lepschy 1968, ix-x; original emphasis).[241]

A few pages later, Lepschy (id. xviii) writes that "one of the most striking aspects that distinguish glossematics from other structuralist trends is the rigor with which it advocates a quadripartition resulting from two dichotomies, that of form and substance and that of expression and content".[242] In his view, "two notions … present […] a most stimulating interest in Hjelmslev's theory: that of substance, and that of form of content"[243] (id. xxiii). On the latter topic, Lepschy (id. xxvii) writes: "It is necessary to identify those 'atoms' of meaning (which generative grammar is also looking for) [*omitted footnote*] which should be limited in number, but should be able to constitute a very large number of sign meanings, when combined with each other".[244] As can be seen, Lepschy also refers to generative grammar here, which he was one of the first scholars

---

241. "La glossematica si è affermata […] come una delle tre tendenze principali della linguistica strutturale, accanto alla scuola di Praga e alla scuola americana di Bloomfield. La linguistica strutturale si era gradualmente costituita, nel seno della linguistica storica e comparativa, per l'esigenza di chiarire certe ambiguità implicite nel metodo tradizionale. Comuni alle diverse tendenze della linguistica strutturale sono 1) la distinzione (che non significa necessariamente separazione assoluta) di sincronia e diacronia […]; 2) l'identificazione degli elementi linguistici in quanto esercitano le loro funzioni all'interno di un sistema […] strutturato di rapporti reciproci, sia sintagmatici […] che paradigmatici […]. La glossematica si può considerare, fra le varie correnti dello strutturalismo, quella più strutturale; essa […] sviluppa con rigore entrambe le nozioni indicate dal termine struttura: quella di sistemi di elementi che dipendono gli uni dagli altri (struttura come organizzazione), e quella di sistema formale soggiacente alle concrete manifestazioni (struttura come astrazione)".
242. "Uno degli aspetti più vistosi che distinguono la glossematica da altre correnti strutturalistiche è il rigore con cui essa propugna una quadripartizione risultante da due dicotomie, quella di forma e sostanza e quella di espressione e contenuto".
243. "due nozioni […] presentano, secondo chi scrive, un interesse più stimolante nella teoria di Hjelmslev: quella di sostanza, e quella di forma del contenuto".
244. "Bisogna identificare quegli 'atomi' del significato (alla cui ricerca si è messa anche la grammatica generativa) che dovrebbero essere in numero limitato, ma che dovrebbero poter costituire, combinandosi tra loro, un numero altissimo di significati di segni".

to introduce to Italian linguistic culture (see, e.g., Lepschy 1965b; 1966, chap. 8).

The appearance of Lepschy's translation and introduction undoubtedly brought the key notions of Hjelmslev's work to the attention of some (at the time) young scholars. Simone (1969) takes as his starting point a comparison between Saussure's *langue* vs. *parole* and Hjelmslev's 'system' vs. 'process' pairs: while the former could be labeled (in Hjelmslev's terms) as an 'interdependence' relation, the latter is explicitly defined as a 'determination': "*the process determines the system*" (Hjelmslev 1943a: 36; original emphasis). This implies that "systems without processes" may exist (hence the title of Simone's article). This is the basis upon which Simone attempts to define the conditions under which an abstract system can or cannot be implemented by a process.

Muraro (1971–72) investigates the way in which Hjelmslev interprets and develops Saussure's well-known statement that the combination of thought and sound "produit une forme, non une substance" (Saussure 1972, 157; cf. Hjelmslev 1943a: 46 ff.; Hjelmslev 1943b). She maintains that, despite verbal coincidences, the opposition 'form' vs. 'substance' has a rather different meaning for the two scholars.

In those years, some other linguists devoted themselves to Hjelmslev's linguistic theory as a whole, namely not only to some of its specific points, as was essentially the case with the scholars quoted so far. Thus, the general methodological tenets of glossematics became the focus of discussion (Antinucci 1969; Graffi 1971), as well as the quadripartition between form and content of the expression and form and substance of the content (Galassi 1972; Graffi 1974).

In particular, one of the first Italian generativists, Francesco Antinucci, one year after the appearance of the translation of Hjelmslev (1943a), issued an article entitled "Methodological remarks on Hjelmslevian theory" (Antinucci 1969). It mainly dealt with the "two factors" of 'arbitrariness' and 'adequacy', that, according to Hjelmslev (1943a, 14), "it seems necessary [...] to consider in the preparation of a theory". Antinucci attempts to clarify them by referring to a book by Carnap (1958), which introduced a fundamental

distinction between 'deductive calculus' and 'interpreted system'. According to Antinucci (1969, 237), "arbitrariness immediately arises from the deductive nature of the theory",[245] namely from its aspect of calculus, while "the concept of adequacy … makes sense only from the point of view of any applications of the theory: it therefore presupposes the moment of interpretation."[246] Antinucci's short, but very insightful, essay opened the way to a "reading of Hjelmslev through Carnap", which seemed (and still seems to me) fully legitimate: as stated above, Prosdocimi (1966) and Lepschy (1968, xiii) had already suggested that Hjelmslev's theoretical attitude was influenced by Carnap, and Neopositivism in general. This is also the line I followed in my first published paper (Graffi 1971), with some conclusions that partly differed from Antinucci's, but in an essentially analogous perspective. In a footnote to my paper (id. 468), I also reported Eli Fischer-Jørgensen's opinion:[247] "Hjelmslev was not especially influenced by the philosophers of science contemporary to him, neither through personal contacts nor by means of readings; rather, he independently reached his conclusions and only subsequently remarked how they were close to their ideas, on many points". Today, I am inclined to think that Fischer-Jørgensen was right: Hjelmslev was essentially autonomous in his theoretical reflections. Nevertheless, his conception of linguistic theory has many parallels with Carnap's ideas about the nature of empirical theories; hence it is not illegitimate to resort to the latter scholar to achieve a better understanding of the former.

Antinucci also tried to interpret some aspects of the Hjelmslevian theory by means of some notions introduced by Chomsky. The MIT linguist quoted the Copenhagen scholar in the methodological chapter of his first published book (Chomsky 1957, 49–60): after stating that "every grammar will have to meet certain *external conditions of adequacy*" and that "in addition, we pose a *condition of generality* on grammar", he writes in a footnote that, presumably, "these

---

245. "l'arbitrarietà scaturisce immediatamente dal carattere deduttivo della teoria".
246. "il concetto di adeguatezza […] ha senso solo dal punto di vista delle eventuali applicazioni della teoria: esso presuppone, dunque, il momento dell'interpretazione".
247. Personal communication, Copenhagen, August 1971.

two conditions are similar to what Hjelmslev has in mind when he speaks of *appropriateness* and *arbitrariness* of linguistic theory" (id. 49–50; all emphases in the original). Antinucci does not dwell on this passage by Chomsky, but rather attempts to frame Hjelmslev's theory in the classification of linguistic theories developed in the immediately following pages of Chomsky (1957), namely according to their aim of bringing about a 'discovery procedure', a 'decision procedure' or an 'evaluation procedure'. According to Antinucci, Hjelmslev's theory belongs to the last kind of theories, which is, by the way, the only "reasonable" one, as Chomsky (1957, 52) states.[248]

Glossematics and structuralism in general then began to be compared with generative grammar. The outcome of this comparison was sketched by Zinna (2017) in the quotation reported at the beginning of the present paper, namely that many Italian linguists abandoned the former approach to embrace the latter; we can now attempt to give an explanation for this. To this end, it may be useful to present in some more detail the atmosphere of Italian linguistics in the decade between about 1965 and 1975, dubbed by Rosiello (1977) "the age of translations". During this decade, about 130 books of general or applied linguistics were translated into Italian from English, French, German and other languages, hence an average of 8 to 12 books each month. This hectic activity, due to the poor knowledge of foreign languages that characterized Italian culture at the time, had the very beneficial effect of spreading knowledge of structural linguistics also outside the restricted circles of specialists. This was possible even despite the chronological disorder of the appearance of such translations and the considerable differences in editorial accuracy between them (cf. Rosiello 1977, 35–36). For example, the translation of Bally (1944) appeared in 1963, four years before the translation of Saussure (1916); the translation of Jakobson (1963; a collection of essays ranging from 1949 to 1961) in 1966, five years before the translation of Trubetzkoy (1939).

Returning to our topic, the translations of both Chomsky (1957) and Chomsky (1965) appeared only two years later than the translation of Hjelmslev (1943a): hence, one could say that glossematics

---

248. Antinucci's interpretation is shared by Galassi (1972, 541).

(as well as structural linguistics in general) and generative (or 'transformational', as was said more commonly at that epoch) grammar came into Italian linguistics[249] almost at the same time.

What was the impact of this almost simultaneous arrival of theories that had been developed over half a century? Lepschy (1965c, 221–222) had already taken a well-balanced position at the beginning of this rather tumultuous period:

> From what follows ... it should emerge that the present writer sees a continuity between structural linguistics and transformational grammar, and between traditional linguistics and structural linguistics, without diminishing the originality of the innovations (in the methods and in the general vision of linguistic phenomena) introduced by structural linguistics with respect to traditional linguistics, and by transformational grammar with respect to structural linguistics.[250]

Unfortunately, this thoughtful position held by Lepschy was not shared by many of his Italian colleagues. As many 'traditional' linguists had firmly rejected structuralism, so many linguists who had been fascinated by structural linguistics became strong adversaries of generative grammar. (It would be interesting to discuss the reasons for such an attitude, which, by the way, was not limited to Italy, but this would lead us too far afield). On the other hand, neophytes in generative linguistics often had a dismissive attitude toward any previous theory, including structural linguistics.

We will now come back to the question we asked above, namely which reasons diverted several linguists from glossematics to gen-

---

249. It would be better to say: a large part of Italian linguistics. We have seen in section 2, above, that scholars such as Pagliaro, Pisani, Heilmann and others were quite well acquainted with European structural linguistics, although they were in total or partial disagreement with it.

250. "Da quanto segue dovrebbe [...] emergere come chi scrive veda una continuità fra linguistica strutturale e grammatica trasformazionale, e fra linguistica tradizionale e linguistica strutturale, senza diminuire con questo l'originalità delle innovazioni (nei metodi e nella visione generale dei fenomeni linguistici) introdotte dalla linguistica strutturale rispetto alla linguistica tradizionale, e dalla grammatica trasformazionale rispetto alla linguistica strutturale".

erative grammar. We may ask, first of all, how the historical and theoretical relationships between structural linguistics and generative grammar are to be conceived. Lepschy, in his "assessment of structuralism", holds a position which echoes his own from almost twenty years earlier:

> [...] I don't think there are many linguists today who consider or declare themselves to be structuralists. ... A first preliminary observation concerns the scope of the term. We have at least two very different positions: a) according to a restrictive definition, advocated by generativists ..., structural linguistics is typically represented by the Bloomfieldian tendencies that dominated the scene in the United States in the 40s and 50s. ... b) According to a more comprehensive definition (and in my opinion more appropriate, more theoretically coherent and more historically exact), structuralism characterizes many trends of twentieth-century linguistics that can be traced back to Saussure and take place in the groups of Geneva, Prague, Copenhagen, and in America draw inspiration from Bloomfield and Sapir. From this point of view, generative theories are part of structuralism in the broad sense, and indeed constitute one of its most stimulating developments (Lepschy 1983, 47–48).[251]

Shortly after, Lepschy (id. 49) writes:

> A characterization of linguistic structuralism should highlight at least the following aspects: a) an interest in theory [...]; this is a philosoph-

---

251. "non credo che siano molti, oggi, i linguisti che si considerano o si dichiarano strutturalisti. [...] Una prima osservazione preliminare riguarda l'ambito di riferimento del termine. Abbiamo almeno due posizioni molto diverse: a) secondo una definizione restrittiva, caldeggiata dai generativisti [...], la linguistica strutturale è rappresentata tipicamente dalle tendenze bloomfieldiane che dominarono la scena negli Stati Uniti negli '40 e '50. [...] b) Secondo una definizione più comprensiva (e a mio parere più appropriata, più coerente teoricamente e più esatta storicamente) lo strutturalismo caratterizza molte correnti della linguistica del Novecento che si possono far risalire a Saussure e si svolgono nei gruppi di Ginevra, di Praga, di Copenaghen, e che in America si richiamano a Bloomfield e a Sapir. Da questo punto di vista le teorie generative sono parte dello strutturalismo in senso lato, e ne costituiscono anzi uno degli sviluppi più stimolanti".

ical, or logical, propensity characteristic of a large part of modern linguistics; b) the hypothesis that more general and abstract elements can and should be sought behind the variety and singularity of individual linguistic phenomena …; it is a question of what we could call the Galilean attitude that pervades modern science; c) the tendency to emphasize the relational aspect of phenomena …; this perspective corresponds to the systematic interest, characteristic of many disciplines in our century.[252]

As can be seen, the content of this last quotation by Lepschy largely coincides with his picture of structuralism drawn in his introduction to the translation of Hjelmslev (1943a), reported above: point b) refers to what Lepschy calls 'structure as abstraction' (a "formal system underlying concrete manifestations") and point c) to 'structure as organization' (a "system of elements that depend on each other"). A further feature is ascribed to structuralism (point a): the concern for the theory and for its logical and philosophical foundations. Both points a) and b) also characterize generative grammar. Chomsky's propensity to discuss the foundations of linguistic theory has been well known, since his early publications: chap. 2 of Chomsky (1955 [1975]), entitled "The nature of linguistic theory", is devoted to methodological problems; his quotation of Hjelmslev in chap. 6 of *Syntactic Structures* (Chomsky 1957), referred to above, is also significant in this sense.

Concerning point b), the need for abstraction equally characterizes the generative approach from its very beginnings. Consider, for example, how Chomsky (1975, 31) describes the first steps of his research work: "investigation led to more abstract underlying struc-

---

252. "Una caratterizzazione dello strutturalismo linguistico dovrebbe mettere in luce almeno gli aspetti seguenti: a) un interesse per la teoria […]; questa è una propensione filosofica, o logica, caratteristica di molta linguistica moderna; b) l'ipotesi che dietro la varietà e la singolarità dei singoli fenomeni linguistici si possano e si debbano ricercare degli elementi più generali e astratti […]; si tratta di quello che potremmo chiamare l'atteggiamento galileiano che pervade la scienza moderna; c) la tendenza a sottolineare l'aspetto relazionale dei fenomeni […]; questa prospettiva corrisponde all'interesse di tipo sistematico, caratteristico di molte discipline nel nostro secolo".

tures that were far removed from anything that might be obtained by systematic application of procedures of analysis of the sort that I was investigating". Needless to say, notions such as 'deep structure', or 'level of representation' in general, which are so crucial in Chomsky's theory, are justified only if one considers abstraction "la rançon de toute analyse scientifique", as Hjelmslev (1959 [1954], 48) wrote during the years in which Chomsky was working out his first model of generative grammar (Chomsky 1955 [1975]). Furthermore, the distinction between competence and performance is conceivable only if one is willing to pay "the price of abstraction". De Mauro, in one of his most important footnotes to Saussure (1972, fn. 70), argued in a decisive way that Saussure, while not using the term "abstract", which at his time still had a negative connotation, actually considered *langue* as an "abstract" entity (that Saussure's *langue* only partially coincides with Chomsky's 'competence' is another matter, of course). One could also add that there are numerous references to the "Galilean style" of research throughout Chomsky's publications. Hence, I find that, under both points a) and b) of Lepschy's characterization, an essential continuity cannot be denied between structuralism (and especially glossematics), on the one hand, and generative grammar, on the other. On the contrary, there is an essential gap between the two linguistic schools regarding "structure as organization". This idea is, in fact, quite extraneous to generative grammar, whose goal is not to describe the language system as a network of relations, on the basis of which the minimal elements ("the irreducible variants"; cf. Hjelmslev 1943a, 72) are individuated and defined. In generative grammar, this idea would be labeled as "proceduralism" and therefore rejected.[253] Furthermore, while structural linguistics, and especially glossematics, views language as an autonomous entity and hence pleads for an "immanent understanding of language as a self-subsistent, specific structure" (id. 19), the basic assumption of generative linguistics is that language is a cognitive capacity. Antinucci (1972, 60) very clearly summa-

---

253. The most rigorous and detailed analysis of a specific language according to the principles of glossematics (Togeby 1965) is clearly procedural; for some remarks on this topic, see Graffi (2001, 293–295).

rized the criticism, on both points, of generative linguistics towards structuralism:[254]

> The proceduralism of structuralism finds its origin not so much in a distorted vision of scientific methodology, as – I would say – it is the fruit of general theoretical ideas on the nature of language. ... the fundamental concept is that of *langue* understood, on the one hand, as an autonomous entity, that is, detached from its location within the cognitive system, in the mind ...; and, on the other hand, understood as a closed system, as a system in which *tout se tient*, in which ... the established theoretical entities have no other reality than *opposing*, *negative*, *differential*, to all levels (original emphasis).

Another factor that lessened the appeal of glossematics, while at the same time increasing that of generative grammar, lay in the field of their respective applications to concrete linguistic descriptions. To quote Lepschy (1983, 57) once more:

> Despite the great effort of systematicity and explicitness, and the great clarity and subtlety that have been invested in the elaboration of the methods of glossematics, it cannot be said that the results have been particularly enlightening in the description of single languages, beyond the examples, often brilliantly analyzed, during general theoretical expositions.[255]

---

254. "il proceduralismo dello strutturalismo trova la sua origine non tanto in una visione distorta della metodologia scientifica, quanto – direi – è il frutto delle idee teoriche generali sulla natura del linguaggio. [...] il concetto fondamentale è quello di langue intesa, da una parte, come entità autonoma, cioè avulsa dalla sua collocazione nell'ambito del sistema cognitivo, nella mente [...]; e, dall'altra parte, intesa come un sistema chiuso, come un sistema in cui tout se tient, in cui [...] le entità teoriche stabilite non hanno alcuna altra realtà che oppositiva, negativa, differenziale, a tutti i livelli".

255. "Nonostante il grande sforzo di sistematicità e di esplicitezza, e la grande lucidità e sottigliezza che sono state investite nell'elaborazione dei metodi della glossematica, non si può dire che i risultati siano stati particolarmente illuminanti nella descrizione di singole lingue, al di là degli esempi, spesso analizzati in maniera brillante, nel corso di esposizioni teoriche generali".

As a matter of fact, there were very few glossematic analyses of natural languages, especially in the domain of syntax (the only noticeable exception being Togeby 1965). Besides, the tumultuous arrival of many different linguistic theories in Italy at the same time had the effect "of highlighting the self-styled 'theoretical' aspect rather than the empirical-descriptive one" (Cinque 1977, 174).[256] On the contrary, the techniques of generative grammar (especially in the 'standard' version of Chomsky 1965) appeared to be easily applicable to several languages, among which Italian itself, as is witnessed by the colloquium of the Italian Linguistic Society held in 1969 explicitly devoted to the "transformational grammar of Italian" (Medici & Simone 1971; of course, the empirical adequacy of many such studies can be put into doubt, but this is not the question that concerns us here).

These were further reasons why some young scholars (as I was at the time, for example) diverted their research interest from glossematics to the generative framework. On the other hand, Hjelmslev's theory began to attract more and more interest by semioticians, more or less in the same years (the first important works in this direction were possibly Garroni 1972 and Eco 1973), and this interest is still alive, as is witnessed by the numerous papers that have been published. It is however undeniable that, as far as linguistics is concerned, and especially the Italian linguistic milieu, the knowledge of structural linguistics, and of Hjelmslev in particular, were essential steps towards a much more mature awareness of what is required for linguistics to become a science.

---

256. "mettere in luce il sedicente aspetto 'teorico' più che quello empirico-descrittivo". – It was often maintained that European structural linguistics in general paid scarce attention to syntax, only focusing on phonology and, to a less extent, morphology. This was the standard opinion in the epoch we are discussing here, but it is not quite correct: think, first of all, of the important research studies carried out by Mathesius and other Prague linguists on the structure of the sentence, and on other topics as well. Syntax was also practiced by several other European scholars, especially by Tesnière, but his work was largely neglected until the end of the 1960s, when it was rediscovered by Fillmore. For more information about syntactic research in the age of structural linguistics, see e.g. Graffi (2001, part II).

Bibliography

Alarcos Llorach, Emilio (1951), *Gramática estructural: según la escuela de Copenhague y con especial atención a la lengua española*, Madrid, Editorial Gredos.

Antinucci, Francesco (1969), "Note metodologiche in merito alla teoria hjelmsleviana", *Lingua e Stile*, 4, 235–242.

–   (1972), "Alcuni problemi teorici della linguistica e il modello componenziale del linguaggio", in Ludovico, Anna & Vignuzzi, Ugo (eds.), *Linguistica, epistemologia, semiologia*, Roma, Bulzoni, 57–80.

Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia (1878), *Kritische Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, Weimar, Böhlau.

–   (1887), *Sprachwissenschaftliche Briefe*, Leipzig, Hirzel.

Bally, Charles [1932] (1944), *Linguistique générale et linguistique française*, Bern, Francke.

Benincà, Paola (1994), "Linguistica e dialettologia italiana", in Lepschy, Giulio C. (ed.), *Storia della linguistica*, vol. 3, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1994, 525–644.

Bolelli, Tristano (1953), *Considerazioni su alcune correnti linguistiche attuali*, Pisa, Libreria Goliardica.

–   (1965), *Per una storia della ricerca linguistica. Testi e note introduttive*, Napoli, Morano.

–   (1971), *Linguistica generale, strutturalismo, linguistica storica*, Pisa, Nistri-Lischi.

Bondì, Antonino (2012), *Louis Hjelmslev. Fra lingua e linguaggio*, Roma, Carocci.

Brøndal, Viggo (1939), "Linguistique structurale", *Acta linguistica*, 1, 2–10.

Caputo, Cosimo (1993), *Su Hjelmslev. La nuvola di Amleto: segno, senso e filosofia del linguaggio*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane

–   (2010), *Hjelmslev e la semiotica*, Roma, Carocci.

Caputo, Cosimo & Galassi, Romeo (eds., 1985), *Louis Hjelmslev. Linguistica, Semiotica, Epistemologia* (= *Il Protagora*, 25).

Carnap, Rudolf (1958), *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and its Applications*, Dover Publications, New York.

Chomsky, Noam (1957), *Syntactic Structures*, The Hague, Mouton.

–   (1965), *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Cambridge (MA), The MIT Press.

–   [1975] (1955), *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory*, Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press.

Cigana, Lorenzo [2014] (2022), *La nozione di "partecipazione" nella Glossematica di Louis Hjelmslev/La notion de "participation" dans la glossématique de Louis Hjelmslev*, Ph.D. Diss., Università della Calabria/Université de

Liège; forthcoming, 2022 as *Hjelmslev e la teoria delle correlazioni linguistiche*, Roma, Carocci.

CINQUE, GUGLIELMO (1977), "Sintassi", in Gambarara & Ramat (eds.), 173–188.

COSERIU, EUGENIO (1952) [1962], "Sistema, norma y habla", in Id. *Teoría del lenguaje y lingüística general*, Madrid, Editorial Gredos, 1962, 11–113.

CROCE, BENEDETTO (1902), *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale,* Milano-Palermo-Napoli, Sandron (English translation *Aesthetic as science of expression and general linguistics*, London, MacMillan, 1909).

– (1941), "La filosofia del linguaggio e le sue condizioni presenti in Italia", *La critica*, 39, 169–179.

DELLA VOLPE, GALVANO (1960), *Critica del gusto*, Milano, Feltrinelli (English translation *Critique of Taste*, London, New Left Books, 1978).

DE MAURO, TULLIO (1965), *Introduzione alla semantica*, Bari, Laterza.

– (1967), *F. De Saussure. Corso di linguistica generale. Introduzione, traduzione e commento di Tullio De Mauro*, Bari, Laterza.

– (1998), "The world looked wonderful", in Id. *Prima persona singolare passato prossimo indicativo*, Roma, Bulzoni, 29–35.

DE PALO, MARINA (2016), *Saussure e gli strutturalismi*, Roma, Carocci.

DEVOTO, GIACOMO (1928), "Una scuola di linguistica generale", *La Cultura*, 7, 241–249.

– (1951), "Cronaca. Notizie, appunti e spunti", *Archivio Glottologico italiano*, 36, 82–84.

ECO, UMBERTO (1973), *Segno*, Milano, ISEDI.

GALASSI, ROMEO (1972), "Noterelle hjelmsleviane", in *Studi italiani di linguistica teorica ed applicata*, 1, 539–562.

GALASSI, ROMEO & DE MICHIEL, MARGHERITA (eds., 2001), *Louis Hjelmslev a cent'anni dalla nascita. Janus. Quaderni del Circolo Glossematico*, 2, Padova, Imprimitur.

GAMBARARA, DANIELE & RAMAT, PAOLO (eds., 1977), *Dieci anni di linguistica italiana (1965–1975)*, Roma, Bulzoni.

GARRONI, EMILIO (1972), *Progetto di semiotica*, Bari, Laterza.

GRAFFI, GIORGIO (1971), "Linguistica ed epistemologia in Hjelmslev", in *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa – Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, serie III, 1, 455–79.

– (1974), *Struttura, forma e sostanza in Hjelmslev*, Bologna, Il Mulino.

– (1995), "Old Debates and Current Problems: Völkerpsychologie and the question of the individual and the social in language", in Formigari, Lia & Gambarara, Daniele (eds.), *Historical Roots of Linguistic Theories*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, Benjamins:71–184.

– (2001), *200 Years of Syntax. A Critical Survey*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, Benjamins.
– (2010), *Due secoli di pensiero linguistico*, Roma, Carocci.

HEILMANN, LUIGI (1955a), "Orientamenti strutturali nell'indagine linguistica", *Rendiconti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei – Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche,* serie VIII, 10, 136–156.
– (1955b), *La parlata di Moena nei suoi rapporti con Fiemme e con Fassa: saggio fonetico e fonematico*, Bologna, Zanichelli.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale*, København, Det Kgl. Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser, XVI, 1.
– (1932), *Etudes baltiques*, Copenhague, Levin & Munksgaard.
– (1935–37), *La catégorie des cas*, vols. 1 and 2, Acta Jutlandica, 7/1 and 9/2.
– (1936), "On the principles of phonematics", in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 49–54.
– (1937a), "La nature du pronom", in *Mélanges de linguistique et de philologie offerts à J. van Ginneken*, Paris, Klincksieck, 51–58 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 192–198).
– (1937b), *Indledning til sprogvidenskaben*. Forelaesning ved tiltraedelsen af professoratet i sammenlignende sprogvidenskab ved Københavns Universitet den 14 Sept. 1937 (English translation in Hjelmslev 1959, 9–20).
– (1937c), "Accent, intonation, quantité", *Studi Baltici*, 6, 1–57 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1973, 181–222).
– (1937d), "La syllabation en slave", in *Mélanges linguistiques et philologiques offerts à M. Aleksandar Belič*, Beograd: Mlada Srbija, 315–324 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1973, 173–180).
– (1938a), "Etude sur la notion de parenté linguistique. Première étude : Relations de parentèle des langues créoles", *Revue des études indo-européennes*, 2, 271–286.
– (1938b), "Über die Beziehungen der Phonetik zur Sprachwissenschaft", *Archiv für vergleichende Phonetik*, 2, 129–34 and 211–22 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1973, 223–246).
– (1938c), "Essai d'une théorie des morphemes", in *Actes du IVe Congrès International des Linguistes*, Munskgaard, Copenhague, 140–151 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 152–164).
– (1939a), "Forme et substance linguistiques", *Bulletin du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague,* 4, 3–4 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1973, 99–100).
– (1939b), "La notion de rection", *Acta Linguistica*, 1, 10–23 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 139–151).

– (1939c), "The syllable as a structural unity", in *Proceedings of the Third International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, Ghent, Laboratory of Phonetics of the University, 266–272 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1973, 239–245).
– (1939d), "La structure morphologique", in *Actes du V Congrès de Linguistes*, Imprimerie Sainte Catherine, Bruges, 66–93 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 113–138).
– (1943a), *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse*, København, Munskgaard (English translation *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961²; Italian translation *I fondamenti della teoria del linguaggio*, Torino, Einaudi, 1968).
– (1943b), "Langue et parole", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 2, 29–44 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 69–81).
– (1948), "Structural analysis of language", *Studia Linguistica*, 1, 69–78 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 27–35).
– (1949), "Existe-t-il des catégories qui soient communes à l'universalité des langues humaines?", in *Actes du sixième congrès international des linguistes*, Paris, Klincksieck, 419–431.
– (1954), "La stratification du langage", *Word*, 10, 163–88 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 36–68).
– (1956a), "Animé et inanimé, personnel et non-personnel", *Travaux de l'institut de linguistique*, 1, 155–199 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 211–249).
– (1956b), "Etudes de phonétique dialectale dans le domaine letto-lithuanien", *Scando-Slavica*, 2, 62–86.
– (1957), "Etudes ougriennes. I. Théme et suffixation. II. Le système de l'expression" [Resumé in Danish of a Work presented in the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences on 15th February 1957], Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 51.
– (1958), "Dans quelle mesure les significations des mots peuvent-elles être considérées comme formant une structure?", in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Linguists*, Oslo, Oslo U.P., 636–654 (reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959, 96–112, titled "Pour une sémantique structurale").
– (1959), *Essais linguistiques*, København, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.
– (1973), *Essais linguistiques II*, København, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.
HJELMSLEV, LOUIS & ULDALL, HANS JØRGEN (1936), *Synopsis of an Outline of Glossematics*, Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard – Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget.
JAKOBSON, ROMAN (1933), "La scuola linguistica di Praga", *La cultura*, 12, 633–641 (reprinted in R. Jakobson, *Selected Writings*, vol. II, Mouton, The Hague, 1971, 539–546).

– (1960), "Linguistics and poetics", in Sebeok, Th. A. (ed.), *Style in Language*, New York, Technology Press, 350–377.
– (1963), *Essais de linguistique générale*, Paris, Les éditions de minuit.
Lepschy, Giulio C. (1962a), "Fonematica veneziana", *L'Italia dialettale*, 25, 1–22 (reprinted in Lepschy 1978, 145–162)
– (1962b), "Ancora su 'l'arbitraire du signe'", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa – Lettere, Storia e Filosofia*, Serie II, 31, 65–102.
– (1962c), "Osservazioni sul termine Struttura (A proposito di *Sens et usages du terme Structure dans les sciences humaines et sociales*, edité par R. Bastide)", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa – Lettere, Storia e Filosofia*, Serie II, 31, 173–197.
– (1963), "Morfologia veneziana", *L'Italia dialettale*, 26, 129–143 (reprinted in Lepschy 1978, 163–176).
– (1964), "Note sulla fonematica italiana", *L'Italia dialettale*, 27, 53–67 (reprinted in Lepschy 1978, 63–75).
– (1965a), "[k] e [c]", *L'Italia dialettale*, 28, 181–196 (reprinted in Lepschy 1978, 217–229).
– (1965b), "Trasformazioni e semantica", *Lingua e Stile*, 1, 23–35.
– (1965c), "Aspetti teorici di alcune correnti della glottologia contemporanea (seconda parte)", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Lettere, Storia e Filosofia, serie II*, 34, 221–295.
– (1966), *La linguistica strutturale*, Torino, Einaudi (English translation: *A Survey of Structural Linguistics*, London, Faber & Faber, 1970).
– (1968), "Hjelmslev e la glossematica", introduction to the Italian translation of Hjelmslev 1943a, Torino, Einaudi, ix-xxxiv.
– (1978), *Saggi di linguistica italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
– (1983), "Bilancio dello strutturalismo", in Segre, Cesare (ed.), *Intorno alla linguistica*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 47–65.
Mancini, Marco (2014), "Appunti sulla protostoria dello strutturalismo in Italia", in Mirto, Ignazio M. (ed.), *Le relazioni irresistibili. Scritti in onore di Nunzio La Fauci per il suo sessantesimo compleanno*, Pisa, ETS, 11–54.
Medici, Mario & Simone, Raffaele (eds., 1971), *Grammatica trasformazionale italiana*, Roma, Bulzoni.
Meriggi, Piero (1937), Review of Hjelmslev (1935–37), *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 55, 63–7.
– (1966), "Die Junggrammatiker und die heutige Sprachwissenschaft", *Die Sprache*, 12, 1–15.
Muraro, Luisa (1971–72), "Hjelmslev lettore del Corso di linguistica generale", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 27, 43–53.
Nencioni, Giovanni (1946), *Idealismo e realismo nella scienza del linguaggio*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.

PAUL, HERMANN (1920), *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (5th ed.), Halle, Niemeyer.

PISANI, VITTORE (1953), "Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft", in Id. *Allgemeine und vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft. Indogermanistik*, Bern, Francke, 9–42.

PROSDOCIMI, ALDO (1966), "Ricordo di L. Hjelmslev (3 ottobre 1899- 30 maggio 1965)", *Lingua e Stile*, 1, 107–116.

ROSIELLO, LUIGI (1965), *Struttura, uso e funzioni della lingua*, Firenze, Vallecchi.

– (1967), *Linguistica illuminista*, Bologna, Il Mulino.

– (1977), "Il periodo delle traduzioni", in Gambarara & Ramat (eds.), 31–48.

SAUSSURE, FERDINAND DE [1916] (1972), *Cours de linguistique générale*, publié par Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye, édition critique préparée par Tullio De Mauro, Payot, Paris.

SIMONE, RAFFAELE (1969), "Sistemi senza processo", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 26, 137–149.

SORNICOLA, ROSANNA (2018), "Storicismo e strutturalismo nella linguistica italiana del Novecento", in Da Milano, F. et al. (eds.), *La cultura linguistica italiana in confronto con le culture linguistiche di altri paesi europei dall'Ottocento in poi,* Roma, Bulzoni, 49–112.

TAGLIAVINI, CARLO (1963), *Introduzione alla glottologia*, vol. 1, Bologna, Pàtron.

TERRACINI, BENVENUTO A. (1919), Review of F. de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, *Bollettino di filologia classica*, 1, 73–79.

TIMPANARO, SEBASTIANO (1970), Sul materialismo, Pisa, Nistri-Lischi (English ed. *On Materialism*, London, NLB, 1975).

– (2011), "Carlo Cattaneo e Graziadio Ascoli", in Id. *Classicismo e illuminismo nell'Ottocento italiano*, Testo critico con aggiunta di saggi e annotazioni autografe a cura di Corrado Pestelli, saggio introduttivo di Gino Tellini, Firenze, Le Lettere, 328–427.

TOGEBY, KNUD (1965), *Structure immanente de la langue française*, II ed., Paris, Larousse.

TRUBETZKOY, NIKOLAJ S. (1939), *Grundzüge der Phonologie* (= Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague, 7), Prague, Jednota československý matematiků a fysiků (reprint Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).

VENIER, FEDERICA (2016), "'Quale storia laggiù attende la fine?' La prima ricezione del Cours (Meillet, Schuchardt, Terracini)", in Ruffino,G. & Castiglione, M. (eds.), *La lingua variabile nei testi letterari, artistici e funzionali contemporanei. Analisi, interpretazione, traduzione*, Firenze-Palermo, Cesati Editore-Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, 709–742

Zinna, Alessandro (ed., 1986), *Louis Hjelmslev. Linguistica e semiotica strutturale* (= *Versus. Quaderni di studi semiotici*, 43).

Zinna, Alessandro (2017), "Introduzione. Louis Hjelmslev: l'opera e il corpus", in Zinna & Cigana (eds.), i-vii.

Zinna, Alessandro & Cigana, Lorenzo (eds., 2017), *Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965). Le forme del linguaggio e del pensiero*, Toulouse, Éditions cams/o.

Author: Giorgio Graffi, Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at the University of Verona. Among his many books *200 years of Syntax* (2001) may be singled out. E-mail: giorgio.graffi@univr.it

Beyond linguistic languages.
Glossematics and connotation

Lorenzo Cigana
University of Copenhagen

Abstract. *The paper investigates the notion of "connotation" situating it in both the theoretical framework of glossematics and the historical context of its development, namely the correspondence between the two glossematicians Louis Hjelmlsev and Hans Jørgen Uldall. It is maintained that connotation was Hjelmslev's answer to Uldall's broader-minded approach to language that eventually led them to elaborate two different glossematics within an overarching general framework. The role of Urban's "Language and Reality" (1939) is also analyzed as a source for both glossematicians in respect to the role connotation was supposed to play within the theory: to root linguistic structures in reality.*

"Pokkers, at det stadig er så svært at bruge det, man selv har lavet"[257] (Hjelmslev 1940b, 3)

"Alt hvad jeg her siger og skriver i Løbet af mit Liv vil, naar mit Liv engang ikke mere er, staa som solidariske med mig som sprogligt Fysiognomi"[258] (Hjelmslev [1942–43], 23.3.1942)

---

257. "For heck's sake, how is it still so difficult to use what you have made yourself".
258. "One day my life will be over, and everything I say and write here in my lifetime will stand in solidarity with me as a linguistic physiognomy".

1. Introduction

Few theories represent the formalistic soul of structuralism better than glossematics, and few glossematic concepts represent the effort toward a unified theory of language better than the notion of 'connotation'.

At the time of its introduction to glossematics, the notion was not particularly new, as it had been circulating in the philosophy of language for at least a century, serving as the basis of John Stuart Mill's distinction between 'names' designating their respective *realia* through direct reference *vs.* names designating them indirectly, by referring to their attributes or predicates (Mills 1843). And despite common belief, it was not Louis Hjelmslev who introduced the term to linguistics: such a notion is already codified in Marouzeau's *Lexique de la terminologie linguistique* (1933), where it denotes the secondary meanings (emotional or stylistic nuances) attached to the primary notion of a word or lexeme. The term also occurs in Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1933) in a technical sense, within a variational framework and in open reaction to normative approaches:

> The second important way in which meanings show instability, is the presence of supplementary values which we call *connotations* (Bloomfield 1933, 151).
>
> The normal speaker faces a linguistic problem whenever he knows variant forms which differ only in connotation [...]. In most cases he has no difficulty, because the social connotations are obvious, and the speaker knows that some of the variants [...] have an undesirable connotation and lead people to deal unkindly with the use. We express this traditionally by saying that the undesirable variant is 'incorrect' or 'bad English', or even 'not English' at all. These statements, of course, are untrue: the undesirable variants are not foreigner's errors, but perfectly good English; only, they are not used in the speech of socially more privileged groups, and accordingly have failed to get into the repertory of standard speech-forms (Bloomfield 1933, 496; passim).

For Bloomfield, however

> The varieties of connotation are countless and indefinable and, as a whole, cannot be clearly distinguished from denotative meanings (Bloomfield 1933, 155).

Even if Hjelmslev wasn't the one to introduce the notion of connotation into linguistics, he certainly was responsible for its dissemination – not just in linguistics but also in semiotics, endorsing a completely symmetrical claim: connotation *can* be distinguished from denotation, although sharing with it a common functional structure. However, besides the idiosyncratic treatment of the term received in glossematics, the three aforementioned features also recur in his own approach: *technicality* (as connotation is introduced as a technical term), *variational framework* (as connotation is introduced to give account of dialectal and idiolectal forms) and *descriptivism* (since thanks to connotation the whole spectrum of linguistic forms is included, not just those that are considered 'correct' by the speakers' epilinguistic feeling).

It is certainly due to the recurrence of these features that the literature was prone to focus almost entirely on these general features rather than investigating the specificities of the glossematic framework. The following reception was then characterised by a back and forth of positions, from receptive readings to recalibrating interpretations,[259] yet the issue was rarely tackled in its entirety. And, to some extent, it never could have been: Hjelmslev himself did not offer much of a solid foothold for the implementation or further elaboration of his own model, and the connotative analysis outlined in the *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse* (1943; 1961b) was more a programmatic manifesto than a proper part of the procedure.

Our aim is to approach the issue at stake from the perspective disclosed by the scrutiny of the correspondence between Hjelmslev and Uldall. Such scrutiny, carried out within the project *Infrastructuralism* (Aarhus-Copenhagen), allows one to take a peek at the

---

259. For a critical examination of various misinterpretations in receiving literature, cf. Di Girolamo (1976), Sonesson (1988), Trabant (1970), Badir (2014).

process through which the notion of connotation, among many others, was elaborated on and incorporated into the theory. This perspective will perhaps shed some light on the conditions of usage of such an important concept for a general theory of language.

In what follows we will describe the context in which connotation made its first appearance in glossematics, by presenting the dialogue between the two linguists (§ 2), in connection to the link between language and reality, discussed in the wake of Wilbur Marshall Urban's work (*Language and Reality*, 1939), which turned out to be a possible source for their takes on the topic (§ 3). Such discussion resulted in both linguists envisaging an opening up of the theory beyond linguistic hierarchies (§ 4). We will outline 'connotation' as Hjelmslev's answer to such an issue (§ 5) and discuss the way in which this notion was incorporated into early glossematics and later works (§§ 6–7), before drawing our conclusions (§ 8).

2. The collaboration between Uldall and Hjelmslev

'Connotation' entered the framework of glossematics in the forties, thus at a fairly late stage in the development of the theory, when this was still aiming towards the description of natural languages. The idea was developed during the dense correspondence between Hjelmslev and Uldall, which characterised almost the entirety of their collaboration during the thirties.

When the two linguists first met, in early 1934, Hjelmslev was about to deliver his lectures in Aarhus about linguistic system and linguistic change (*Sprogsystem og sprogforandring* [1934] (1972), thus having a personal picture of a theory of languages already in his mind, while Uldall had just returned from a research stay in America doing phonetic and anthropologic field work mostly carried out under Franz Boas, puzzled by the fact that Maidu, the Californian language he was supposed to describe, kept defying any existing linguistic model (Uldall [1942], 6).

As they started working together, Hjelmslev's interest was set on grammar and morphology, while Uldall mostly focused on the expression side of language, where his specialism lay. The discovery that the two sides of languages (the signifier or 'expression', and the

signified or 'content') were amenable to parallel analysis, achieved around 1936, also led to the realisation that the basic principle behind traditionally conceived functional phenomena, such as morphosyntactic government or accord, could not only be applied to the phonetic domain, but could also be extrapolated and defined *in abstracto*, providing a non-biased foundation for cross-linguistic comparative description. The basic feature behind government, i.e. dependence, was generalised as unilateral determination (or 'selection') and combined with other logical possibilities, namely bilateral determination (later called 'solidarity') and non-determination ('constellation'):

> Her har vi siddet og sagt, at noget til styrelse svarende findes ikke i kenematikken. De husker sikkert dette omkvæd. Men det er aldeles forbavsende, at vi ikke har indset, at kombination og styrelse er ét og det samme. Naar vi ikke forlængst har indset det, er det, fordi vi hele tiden har overset, at udtrykket er irrelevant i plerematikken […] (Hjelmslev 1936, 1).[260]
>
> Styrelse (ensidig kombination, dominans) foreligger i kenematikken lige så vel som i plerematikken ved implikationer, f. ex. *s* impliceret i *z* foran stemt lyd dvs. den stemte lyd *styrer* kommutationsserien *s*; *z* og bevirker derved synkretismen. Er vi ikke søde, at vi ikke har indset det før (Hjelmslev 1936, 3).[261]

The functional apparatus was first established in 1937 (cf. Fischer-Jørgensen 1967, v), much to the excitement of both Hjelmslev and Uldall:

---

260. "Here we sat and said that nothing similar to government existed in cenematics. You surely remember this refrain. But it is absolutely astonishing that we didn't realize that combination and government are one and the same. That we have realized it not long ago, it is because we have constantly overlooked the fact that expression is immaterial in plerematics".

261. "Government (unilateral combination, dominance) exists in cenematics as well as in plerematics, in implications: e.g. s implicated in z before a stressed sound, so that the voiced sound governs the commutation series s; z and thereby causes syncretism. Are we not sweet that we have not realized it before".

> Kære Uldall, min hjerne har kogt siden sidst, og jeg mener nu at have nogle resultater, som hermed forelægges til overvejelse [...] (Hjelmlev 1937, 1).[262]

Despite appearing later on, 'connotation', too, stemmed from the same functional mind-set. If functions were how linguistic phenomena were to be conceived, it was only reasonable to expect more complicated cases of functional entanglement, and since language was conceived as a structure, the interaction of units belonging to different parts of that structure had to be analysed in terms of recursive functions, i.e. 'functions on functions' (*funktionsfunktioner*, cf. Hjelmslev 1940b, 1). This was a mere consequence of the way in which linguistic structure was formalised: since a function (A) is said to bind two elements X and Y into a totality (B), then any other functions contracted by the totality as such would actually tether to the function A, as its *constituting* factor. Trivial as it may seem, such a perspective was first clarified in *La structure morphologique* (Hjelmslev [1939] (1970), 113–115) with the introduction of the distinction between 'dependent dependences' and 'independent dependences'.

The idea of nesting-functions is indeed a primary requirement for connotation, whose structure was defined in terms of a sign-function of second degree, as shown in a series of letters sent between January and April 1940. It was in those years that glossematics first gained semiotic reach.

3. The influence of Urban's Language and Reality

In the early forties, the collaboration between the two linguists had become progressively more difficult due to the onset of the Second World War. From 1939 Uldall was forced to stay abroad, mostly in Athens, working for the British Council. Their separation led them to develop autonomous perspectives on glossematics and, eventually, two quite different models. When he wasn't teaching glossematics and English, Uldall devoted himself to the reading of

---

262. "Dear Uldall, my brain has been boiling since last time and I believe I have reached some results, which are hereby submitted to your consideration".

classics in philosophy such as Cassirer's *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (1923–1929), Russell's *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919, deemed as "naïve") and Wilbur Marshall Urban's *Language and Reality* (1939), while challenging some tenets of glossematics, such as Hjelmslev's system of correlative categories or his assumption on the centrality of language for thought. Why – asks Uldall – should a pure thought-system (a system of content without the corresponding system of expression) not be conceivable? Why shouldn't it be possible to think of a system in which sensorial impressions are immediately combined with purely content categories, for instance things themselves? In such a case, it should be possible to conceive of, and thus to deal with, a referential system of communication, bypassing the symbolic medium of language.[263]

In Copenhagen, Hjelmslev was more concerned with consolidating glossematics into a definitive, stable form ("vigtigst for os begge er det jo, som du siger, at få teorien fastlagt" [most important

---

263. "Saavidt jeg nu kan se, maa det være saadan at sproget ikke er en nødvendig forudsætning for tænkning: med andre ord, det maa være muligt at have en plerematik uden en kenematik, saaledes at man blot henfører sine sanseindtryk til et sæt kategorier der ikke har noget udtryk. Man kan forestille sig en prælingvistisk tilstand hvor det kun var muligt at meddele sig til andre ved at fremvise tingene selv (som hos bierne, der melder om blomster ved at lade deres kolleger lugte til lidt blomsterstøv) – altsaa meddelelse uden symbol. Symbolet – udtrykket – er nu, tænker jeg mig, medlem af kategorien paa linie med dens andre medlemmer: fx kategorien 'træ' har som medlemmer samtlige træer i verden og tillige ordet 'træ', hvilket naturligvis ikke betyder andet end at et hvilketsomhelst træ og ordet 'træ' har funktion til samme reaktion [typography corrected from an original without any Danish letters, HJU was writing from Athens]" (Uldall 1940a, 2). "As far as I can see, now, it must be the case that language is not a necessary precondition for thought: in other words, it must be possible to have a plerematics without a cenematics, so that one merely attributes one's sensory impressions to such categories which have no expression. One can imagine a pre-linguistic state where it was only possible to communicate to others by presenting things themselves (as in the case of bees reporting information about the flowers by letting their colleagues smell a little floral dust) – that is, a message without symbol. The symbol – the expression – is now, I think, a member of the category on the same line with its other members: for instance, 'tree' contains all the trees in the world as members, and also the word 'tree' itself, which of course means nothing else that any tree, as well as the word 'tree', contracts function with the same reaction".

for both of us it is, as you say, to stabilize the theory], Hjelmslev 1940d), as his dream of publishing the *Outline of Glossematics*, promised for 1936, was progressively fading. His reaction to Uldall's theoretical solicitations was somewhat aloof, rarely reacting to them as he used to do before. At that time he was indeed fighting his own way across the early corpus of glossematic definitions, trying to avoid Uldall's intricate systems of categories that ultimately relied on a different take on the role played by language in respect to thought (cf. Hjelmslev [1938] (1970), 164; [1941] (1973), 106–107). He did however receive some suggestions, mostly concerning the possibility of finding non-linguistic hierarchies beside the linguistic one, and the possibility for signs to include concrete instantiations. Such ideas constitute an important background for connotation and were put forward by Uldall in connection to his reading of Urban's *Language and Reality*.

One of Wilbur Marshall Urban's (1873–1952) main works, *Language and Reality*, is a long and densely argued compendium of his theses about the role played by language in science and philosophy, and particularly about the relationship between language, logic and knowledge or cognition. One of Urban's main tenets is that if "all knowledge, including what we know as science, is, in the last analysis, discourse" (Urban 1939, 14–15), then the only tenable metaphysics for science is the inbuilt "natural metaphysics of human mind", plotted by language in the subject-predicate/substance-attribute structure. In Urban's mind, a general theory of symbolism (in terms of a conscious connection between sign or symbol and the thing signified and symbolised) thus becomes an indispensable requisite for both epistemology and gnoseology. Overall, Urban tries to discuss, from a single comprehensive perspective, different issues and problems, some of which, such as those concerning 'linguistic validity' or the theory of truth, were quite remote from both Uldall's and Hjelmslev's focus, or were too traditionally outlined, such as the notion of 'symbol'. Yet others, such as the claims concerning the analytical nature of thought, the linguistic nature of knowledge and science, the denial of 'pure experience' as uncommunicable, the identity with intuition and expression, connotation itself – discussed extensively by Urban (1939) in connection to non-linguistic

languages – must certainly have resonated with the *Problemstellung* of early glossematics.

4. Towards a semiotic turn

Uldall refers to Urban's work in a letter dated 12th February 1940 in connection with the possibility of a pre-linguistic (in Urban's terms, pre-symbolic) form of knowledge: a symbol or expression – Uldall suggests – could be understood as a member of a category along with many others: the category of 'tree', for instance, includes all the real trees in the world and the word 'tree' itself, since those elements equally trigger, and thus are functionally connected to, the same reaction in the speaker (cf. here, n. 8). The choice of which member to actualise – the concrete or the symbolic one – would depend on the context: if the speaker needs some heat from the stove, he will realise the concrete instantiation, by selecting a tree from which to take a lump of wood ("*a fitting beech*"); in a discursive context, he will realise the symbolic instantiation (Uldall 1940a, 2–3). In the same way, adds Uldall, a cow and a check for its sale may have the same function with regard to a farmer's credit (Uldall 1940a, 3). Such a view was supported by Whitehead, whose perspective is quoted (and criticised) in Urban's work:

> both the word itself and trees themselves enter into experience on equal terms; and it would be just as sensible, viewing the question abstractly, for trees to symbolize the word tree as for the word to symbolize the trees (Whitehead 1927, § I, 7; quoted in Urban 1939, 113–114).

Uldall is here exploring the possibility of conceiving biplanar structures that do not require any 'abstract' content such as 'meaning'. To foresee the existence of structures endowed with a purely concrete content would necessarily mean to extend the domain of structural analysis beyond natural languages. Moreover, from a formal point of view there could be no intrinsic difference between structures displaying abstract content and those displaying concrete content, so that the only way to differentiate them would be through context:

> Man tvinges til at tænke over dette videre forhold mellem 'ting' og sprog
> ved problemet om afgrænsning af den specifikt sproglige kontext […].
> Og hvordan skelner man mellem sproglig og ikke-sproglig kontext?
> (Uldall 1940a, 3).[264]

Uldall proposes to assume situational context[265] as a starting total-
ity for the analysis. Such totality would then pack together speech,
furniture, attire, gesture, weather, time, etc.[266] as parts, or sub-to-
talities, to be analysed on their own account from a functional
perspective. In other terms, linguistic-language and non-linguistic
language could be singled out – or deduced – from an 'absolute
totality' (later called 'the world', cf below, section 6), just as single
idioms could be deduced from linguistic-language itself.[267] Such a
theory would fit well with glossematics – said Uldall – since it does
not entail any significant change: "den er blot et supplement [it is
only a supplement]" (Uldall 1940a, 3). He did not realise that this
'supplement' was semiotics in its entirety.

Actually, he was pushing to the extreme a view sketched by
Hjelmslev in his *Principes de grammaire générale* (1928), where there
was said to be no need for the content of a linguistic sign to be
purely conceptual or 'intellectual'; on the contrary, the content of
consciousness in general[268] could equally constitute the counterpart
of expression in a linguistic sign. The same insight was further

---

264. "One is forced to think about this wider relationship between 'thing' and
language in connection to the problem of delimiting the specific linguistic context
[…]. And how to distinguish between linguistic and non-linguistic context?".
265. Cf. "simple behaviour situation" (Hjelmslev 1961a, 63).
266. "Saa vidt jeg kan se, maa man begynde med hele situationer (fx talefilm) hvor
alt, tale, møbler, dragt, gestus, vejr, tid osv. tages i betragtning og analyseres under
eet fra et funktionelt synspunkt" (Uldall 1940a, 3).
267. "Teoretisk må glossematikken, som alle andre videnskaber, tage hele verden
som sit materiale, beynde [begynde, eds.] et beliebigt sted, og blive ved indtil der
i længere tid ikke er forekommet noget nyt: Sproget må deduceres fra verden, og
de enkelte sprog fra Sproget, ikke alene paradigmatisk, men også syntagmatisk"
(Uldall 1940a).
268. "[le] contenu de la conscience en général, non seulement de la conscience
intellectuelle, mais aussi bien de la conscience affective, l'émotion et la volition"
(Hjelmslev 1928, 23–24, n. 6).

maintained in *La catégorie des cas* (1935, 1937) through the localistic thesis,[269] according to which the content of morphemes (*in casu*: case-morphemes) is intuitive or schematic, *i.e.* not exclusively related to conceptual or abstract meanings but also directed towards non-conceptual spatial representations, which could then find their legitimate place within language. With this, a barrier between different kinds of content (meanings) had crumbled. Uldall intended to undermine the foundations of the next barrier, between meanings and *realia*, without giving up the bilateral structure of signs.

However, Uldall's ideas diverge significantly from the perspective adopted by Urban. In his letter, he endorses a behaviouristic approach which Urban deemed completely untenable within the framework of the philosophy of language:

> human nature simply does not work that way. The tree is not the sign or symbol for the word for the poet in the same way that the word is the sign or symbol for the tree (Urban 1939, 114).

In Urban's view, linguistic signs ('symbols')[270] display two specific and interdependent features things do not have: *mobility* and *asymmetry*. *Mobility* implies the susceptibility of signs to have multiple functions: in functional terms, the relation between expression and content is free enough so that they may be wired to different referents or reactions without being bound to any specific one, not even to a particular class. Asymmetry describes the fact that signs can stand for things in a way in which things cannot: while "the actual tree is at most a stimulus for association and imaginative description", being incommunicable in itself (Urban 1939, 114), a tree (as a perceptual element) can become a referent or an object

---

269. The hypothesis of the so-called 'relation à double face', according to which the category of case encodes at the same time topic (spatial, concrete) and logic (conceptual, abstract) relations (cf. Hjelmslev 1935, 36 ff; 62 ff.). The originality of Hjelmslev's principle, formulated in the wake of Wilhelm Wundt, consists in denying any priority to a single pole of this relation, logic or topic – a detail often overlooked by receiving literature.

270. Urban speaks of 'signs' in terms of indices and of 'symbols' in terms of proper linguistic signs.

of knowledge only within language (cf. Urban 1939, 91, 338).[271] Urban's conclusion is that allegedly pre-symbolic content is a mere cue for action, bound to *hic & nunc*, and cannot account for objects and things: for these to be constituted as such, the intervention of linguistic meaning is required (cf. Urban 1939, 109).

While Uldall's behaviouristic take might pose some problems in relation to mobility (maybe it is not by chance that the defining feature of Hjelmslev's notion of 'symbolic system' is *fixity*), asymmetry is not completely disregarded. As we have seen, the removal of the difference between *abstracta* and *concreta* is not posed as absolute, but rather deferred to the level of context, which, in Uldall's eyes, is not something completely external. Moreover, as it transpires from the continuation of his letter, context is conceived in scalar terms, i.e. in relation to the different 'size' of the entities (periods, clauses, words, etc.) at each rank of analysis:

> saalænge der er tale om større enheder, kan det ikke lade sig gøre at skelne mellem sprog og ikke-sprog (en nexi og fx en borddækning kan meget vel forekomme saaledes at de er ombyttelige – med eller uden forskel i betydning); først naar man kommer til mindre enheder kan helheden spaltes op i flere inkommensurable udtrykssystemer (en gaffel og en konsonant vil vise sig ikke at være mutable paa samme plads) (Uldall 1940a, 3).[272]

---

271. Of course, asymmetry is not complete: one cannot burn the word 'tree' in order to produce warmth as he would have done with a concrete instantiation. Yet it is also true that precisely this idea lies at the root of the symbolic system of magical thinking. Such asymmetry is then also best suited to explain this kind of system.

272. "As long as it is a matter of large units, it is impossible to distinguish between language and non-language (a nexia and, for instance, a table setting may well occur in such a way that they are interchangeable – with or without difference in meaning); only when one comes to smaller units the totality can be divided into incommensurable systems of expression (a fork and a consonant will turn out not to be mutable in the same place".

stil, stilart, værdistil, stilgenre, stemning, argot, nationalsprog, lokalsprog og fysognomi er indbyrdes solidariske kategorier, saa ethvert sprogligt punktiv maa bestemmes paa een gang i forhold til dem alle 9.

Af krydsninger mærkes særlig:

stilart

	:β	:B	:γ	:Γ
:β	skjønlitt. stil			
:B				
:γ	slang			
:Γ	jargon, kode	familiærstil		

værdistil

foredragsstil vil være højere, tale, offentligt sprog.
prædikenstil   —   —   —, —, klikesprog.
kancellistil   —   —   —, skrift, arkaisk, klikesprog.

En genrestil bliver altid en argot.

Se vedlagte 2 blade (i forhold til disse er her benævnelsesom stil og stilart ombyttede).

Figure 3. The dimensional mapping of connotators (Hjelmslev 1940e, 127)

5. Hjelmslev's stance: manifestation and connotation

A first reaction from Hjelmslev came a month later, in a letter dated 3rd March 1940 (Hjelmslev 1940c). The occasion was a report concerning the annual business meeting of the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen in which Brøndal proposed to review some important works discussing the relationship between logics and linguistics. Given the influence Urban's book had had on Uldall's speculations, it is remarkable to find his name popping up again here, mentioned by Hjelmslev as the most important ("den allervigtigste") among the works he intended to review (Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936); Britten, *Communication*;[273] Morris, *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (1938), and Bloomfield, *Linguistic Aspects of Science* (1939)) – a clear sign that he had indeed become acquainted with Urban's work and that something was stirring in his mind. And despite still not directly challenging Uldall's ideas, he feeds him a quotation by William James[274] to back him up while wondering whether such view is correct: "Jeg skal vende tilbage til sagen [I will return to this matter]" – he promised. And he did, in his own way.

After a gap of another month, on 2nd April 1940, Hjelmslev sent two long letters to Uldall, announcing that he had been through the whole theory, not to turn it upside down but to introduce some important details. 'Manifestation' and 'connotation' both make their first appearance here. The main concern of the first letter is to define the function that links the linguistic 'system' to 'norm' and 'usage'. While 'system' was already conceived as the core-layer, and the other two as the peripheral domains, their functional interpretation in terms of *constant* (necessary, determined condition) and *variable* (non-necessary, determining condition) occurs here for the first

---

273. Probably Karl Britton's *Communication: A philosophical study of language*. London, 1939.

274. "Just so, I maintain, does a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of 'consciousness'; while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective 'content'. In a word, in one group it figures as a thought, in another group as a thing" (cf. James 1904, 480).

time. In the same sense, a semiological hierarchy, as form, must be said to be determined by a non-semiological hierarchy, as substance (Hjelmslev 1940a, 2).

This was, in itself, quite a change, since, until then, 'form' and 'substance' had still been seen respectively as an "entity that has derivates" and an "entity that has no derivates" (Hjelmslev 1940a, 2). In fact, linguistic theory was early on conceived as a single, long analysis leading from linguistic elements to their concrete instantiations, such as sounds and semes,[275] defined as "derivates of highest order" (*derivater af højeste grad*), which couldn't, in themselves, be divided further. Yet both Uldall and Hjelmslev must have been slowly realising that this was only true from a linguistic perspective, as sounds and semes *are in fact* susceptible to further analysis, once observed from other points of view. Other hierarchies must then exist alongside the linguistic one and entities that turn out to be 'substances' within linguistic deduction are taken over and conceived as 'forms' within other deductions: sounds and semes could, for instance, be structurally studied by acoustics, articulatory phonetics and physiology (for the sounds), or by sociology, psychology and physics (for the semes). In other words, Hjelmslev realises here that form and substance can only be relative terms (Hjelmslev 1940a, 4), as he only goes on to explain fourteen years later, in *La stratification du langage* (1954).

And what is even more interesting is that such an approach shows to just what an extent Hjelmslev and Uldall were struggling to conquer new territory, beyond purely linguistic phenomena, which could be interpreted from their functional perspective:

> vi tænkte os vel, at substans kun kunde bruges, hvor der var mening i at tale om 'ting', 'konkrete genstande', som har en vis funktion. Men 'ting' og 'konkrete genstande' existerer jo overhovedet ikke; der existerer

---

275. In Danish, lyd and tyd (the latter a cleverly used form that stands for betydning and denotes the semantic, substantial aspect of meaning).

foruden funktionerne kun funktiver, definerede blot som funktionernes tankenødvendige endepunkter (Hjelmslev 1940a, 3).[276]

On this point, Hjelmslev does join Uldall: the distinction between what is abstract (formal) and what is concrete (substantial) is not intrinsic, but only pertains to the chosen hierarchy, i.e. within a specific analysis; yet many more could exist and be required, as linguistic forms may receive different manifestations. Moreover, the boundary between internal linguistics and external linguistics in itself seems not always to be so clear: must norm and usage be counted solely among the external factors, or is a more nuanced view possible?

Hjelmslev addresses this problem in his second letter, sent on the evening of the very same day of first one (Hjelmslev 1940b). The issue at stake is how to account for factors that 'interfere' with the standard relations of manifestation – such as prescriptive influences, variational contexts or even the death of a language following the extinction of a whole community of speakers. We can interpret all those cases, explains Hjelmslev, in terms of a progressive nesting of functions, that is through *funktionsfunktioner*: for instance, a manifestation of second degree, such as a prescriptive orthographical reform, may intervene in the manifestation of first degree existing between linguistic forms and the systems of writing and/or of pronunciation:
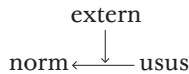
extern

norm ←——↓—— usus

Figure 1 (Hjelmslev 1940b, 1)

276. "We thought that substance could only be used where it made sense to speak about 'things', 'concrete objects' which have a certain function. But 'things and 'concrete objects' do not exist at all; aside from functions, only functives exist, simply defined as necessary endpoints of functions".

In the case of the death of a language, the second-degree manifes-
tation, connecting a first-degree manifestation to a given speak-
ing community, may dissolve, causing the language in question to
become latent (since the first relation still subsists, cf. Hjelmslev
1940b, 1).[277]

By projecting the same view on to the solidarity between ex-
pression and content (denotation of first degree or denotation *tout
court*), multiple levels of nesting denotations might be obtained: a
denotation of second degree may contract a further one, namely a
denotation of third degree. In this way, a given linguistic structure
can be said to refer (to express or to *connote*) a specific set of norms
or constraints, such as styles, or specific pronunciations (second
denotation), through a label which symbolises such reference in
the analysis. Those norms refer in turn to a specific set of material
circumstances (third denotation: a given community of speakers, a
given chronological or geographical context, or even a particular in-
dividual). Now, those degrees of nesting denotations are called 'con-
notation', and the specific elements which trigger them are known
as 'connotators'. Accordingly, a second-degree denotation is called
'internal connotation' and the third-degree denotation 'external
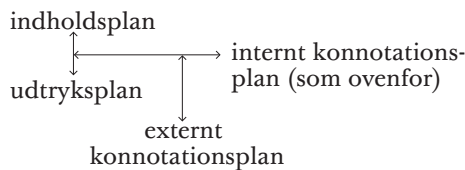connotation', suggesting a progressively centrifugal perspective:

Figure 2 (Hjelmslev 1940b, 2)

Overall, the extreme heterogeneity of connotators is acknowledged
as a fact to be accounted for, especially since, from Hjelmslev's
perspective, there is no need for connotators (as content) to always
be synchronous or even chronologically aligned with their expres-

---

277. Oh to die a glossematic death!

sion (the class of signs they correspond to), as they have their own diachrony ('har deres diakroni'). The evolution of connotators of Latin is sampled by Hjelmslev as follows:

> 'bønderstammes sprog' > 'statssprog' > 'imperiumssprog' > 'verdens-sprog' > 'lærd sprog' > 'klassiske filologers sprog' og til dels 'lægers sprog' (Hjelmslev 1940b, 2).[278]

In the same way,

> Medens den interne behandling (den, vi hidtil har nøjedes med) er udtømt med at en klasse (et sprog) erkendes som havende konnotativet 'litauisk', saa skal den externe glossematik erkende dette konnotativs funktion til de externe konnotationsplaner. Hvis det var i det 19. aar-hundrede, vilde 'litauisk's externe konnotativ være 'bondeproletariat'; nu dærimod vil det være 'stat(ssprog)' (Hjelmslev 1940b, 2).[279]

One thing is clear, however, even if not yet clearly stated: *precisely* because connotators are uncountable, heterogeneous and unavoid-able, the only means by which the analysis might reach a uniform terrain from which to compare and treat different languages is to *subtract* those connotators, keeping record of them, in order to anal-yse them at a later stage, so that they can be reconnected with their connoted elements as described entities. In fact, once subtracted – and here lays Hjelmslev's most original contribution – two ele-ments connoted in different ways become homogeneous, and thus comparable.

---

278. "'peasants' language' > 'state language' > 'empire language' > 'world language' > 'erudite language' > 'philologists' language' and partially 'medical language'".
279. "While the internal treatment (what we have been content with so far) is ex-hausted by recognizing a class (a language) as having the connotator 'Lithuanian', the external glossematics must recognize the function of this connotator as connected with the external connotation plans. If it were in the 19th century, the external connotator of 'Lithuanian' would be 'peasant proletariat'; now, on the other hand, it will be 'state (language)'.

6. Plotting connotation into the theory

Let us return to the correspondence. It is, in fact, curious to note that, despite asking for Uldall's approval, Hjelmslev is not really 'discussing' his ideas, he is presenting them. Manifestation and connotation are quoted as if they were already a common topic of discussion. The paper in which they were meant to make their first appearance – a short paper in honour of Otto Jespersen (cf. Hjelmslev 1941) – was already prepared, and the theory already retouched. From that point onwards, these ideas were plotted into Hjelmslev's version of glossematics, while not a single reference is made in Uldall's *Outline of Glossematics*, published twenty years later, and possibly with a full grasp of their centrality. It seems plausible that these two interconnected ideas, manifestation and connotation, lay at the root of the theoretical divergence between Uldall and Hjelmslev – a gap which, starting in the forties, was bound to become progressively more unbridgeable (cf. Hjelmslev [1958] (1970), 76; Uldall [1942], 8).

As we have seen, Uldall endorsed a far-reaching deduction that started from an overarching totality ('the whole world' or 'the universe', cf. resp. Uldall 1940c, 3; Uldall 1941, 1), from which semiological- and non-semiological hierarchies could be progressively singled out as parts and analysed accordingly:

> Det vilde være interessant engang at tage et primitivt samfund og behandle det hele, sprog, økonomisk struktur, ceremonier, dragt osv i een procedure, saaledes at alle funktioner mellem de semiologiske systemer og mellem disse og saadanne ikke-semiologiske som maatte forefindes (fx det biologiske) kunde blive behandlet paa deres plads i helheden" (Uldall 1940b, 3).[280]

---

280. "It would be interesting someday to take a primitive society and treat it completely – language, economic structure, rituals, attire, etc. – in a single procedure, so that all functions between the semiological systems and between these and the non-semiological systems that may be found (e.g. the biological) could be treated on the basis of their place in the totality".

Only later on, in 1941, would Uldall acknowledge Hjelmslev's position on functions[281] and on form and substance,[282] still remaining sceptical about his definition of manifestation as determination between semiological and non-semiological hierarchies. In Uldall's eyes, to assume such determination would be a ventured move, "fordi vi endnu kun ved saa lidt om hvilke semiologiske og andre hierarkier der findes og følgelig endnu mindre om deres indbyrdes relationer" (Uldall 1941, 3).[283]

Hjelmslev's take on the topic was different, as his route to deduction was via the general definition of language or 'semiotic'. The multifariousness of linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena is thus attained by projection (*ved projektion*, cf. Hjelmslev 1940a, 2), through recursion of the basic structure of denotation. It is on this basis that Hjelmslev sees the possibility of comprehending all human and cultural problems in terms of language (cf. Coseriu [1954] (1973), 175), knowledge included. After all, endorsing Urban's claim, science is a language and knowledge is intrinsically linguistic (cf. Hjelmslev [1941]).

Nothing more is said in the correspondence, yet, as early as 1940, connotation already displays four main features serving as cornerstones for further development.

6.1 Extralinguistic reality as language

Connotation involves a progressive opening-up of the perspective on the external reality connected to language in the strict sense on a double level: as first-degree connotations ('internal connotations',

---

281. "It now seems to me that there are only three possible functions mentioned in the definitions, and that all the complications come from the possibility of each functive having a number of different functions of different degrees [...]. The fifteen functions and the beautiful four-dimensional diagram of last spring are hereby solemnly declared null and void, though it hurts me grievously to have to give them up" (Uldall 1941, 1; letter in English).

282. "Din artikel om form og substans forekommer mig fortrinlig, og jeg er ganske enig med dig [...]" (Uldall 1940b, 1).

283. "because we still know so little about which semiological and other hierarchies can be found, and consequently even less about their mutual relations".

most strictly connected to a given system of signs) and second-degree connotations (also called 'external', representing the extralinguistic reality properly speaking). On this point, glossematics seems to reinterpret the theory of 'reference' – a traditional province of analytical *Problemstellung* – with one major difference: in a referential perspective, the world of *realia* is pointed to by linguistic signs, whereas in a structural perspective such as the one endorsed by Hjelmslev *realia* are situated *within* language in the broadest sense, as functives of a nested structure (called 'projection'). This means that glossematic 'connotation' does not force us to leave language (cf. Badir 2014, 42; *pace* Traini 2001, Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1977), simultaneously preventing us to reduce connotations to secondary or metaphorical meanings (*Nebenbedeutungen*).

6.2 *The various and heteroclite*

Connotation is not limited to any specific domain, such as dialectal or stylistic variations, metaphoric meanings, literary *genres* and so forth; moreover, connotators cannot be established *a priori*, neither in terms of number nor of nature. Classes of signs of any size connote different extralinguistic 'contents', and possibly many 'contents' at the same time: whole classes of signs (languages) are connected to the historical, geographical and cultural circumstances of their manifestation; specific sets of conventions – such as orality or writing – represent different connotations of a given language, each having its own structure, and others may be added (cf. the so-called 'whistled languages'); specific sets of lexemes may refer to specific styles and registers, and specific pronunciations may even be connected to particular individuals (or 'physiognomies' – a notion apparently borrowed from Gabelentz).

6.3 *Connotative content*

All these specimens or 'connotators' are conceived as *content* belonging to a sign-function of the 2nd+ degree. Precisely because connotators represent concrete, material contextes (albeit on different extensions), the very idea of 'connotative content' requires

such content not to be *a priori* restricted to conceptual substance: physical instantiations and single individuals must be accounted for in the theory (cf. Trabant 1987, 95). And they are, through the articulation of variants and the levels of substance (cf. Hjelmslev 1954), a chair is 'high-degree derivate' of the content-side of the very sign *chair*, manifesting it (cf. here §7.5). In fact, the ontological barrier between *abstracta* and *concreta* had already been lifted by Uldall: if a sign is also a thing, things can be signs too.

6.4 Connotation and temporality

There is no need for the different parts that constitute a language to be mutually synchronous nor to connote extra-linguistic contexts, which evolve at the same pace, as connotative contents are said to have their own temporal regimen ('diachrony' in the letter): for instance, there is no necessity for a language to globally connote a synchronous mentality, since possible subsystems may reflect different 'thinking styles' of a culture or a civilisation. This is a decisive aspect in the conceptualisation of a language as a dynamic organism instead of as a static conglomerate.

7. From 1940 onwards

All the aspects discussed so far were so to speak early achievements, carried out by Hjelmslev in a constant dialogue with Uldall, while all subsequent elaboration was exclusively Hjelmslev's, as no further discussion with Uldall on this topic can be found in their later correspondence. However, their early exchange was bound to bear fruit in the long run: Hjelmslev's takes on Uldall's ideas are indeed taken up at various points in his later work (cf. here §7.5). In what follows, we will reconsider the main tenets of connotation found in both published and unpublished material, illustrating such dissemination and showing to what extent Uldall's idea of the hierarchy of substances and Hjelmslev's notion of 'connotation' are intertwined.

7.1 Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse

Held together by the definitions already collected in the early version (1941) of the *Résumé of a Theory of Language* (1975), the *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse* (1943; 1961b) mostly discusses connotation by contrasting it to metalanguage (Hjelmslev 1943, § 22), both types of structure which need to be foreseen in the calculus. A provisional list of stylistic connotators (properly a group of categories) is put forward, with the sole pedagogical intent of showing the multifariousness of the phenomenon: a concrete text – i.e. a limited segment of an unlimited, productive semiotic chain – is never uniform in the first place, but assumed to be heteroclite:

> In preparing the analysis we have proceeded on the tacit assumption that the datum is a text composed in one definite semiotic, not in a mixture of two or more semiotics.
>
> In other words, in order to establish a simple model situation we have worked with the premiss that the given text displays structural homogeneity, that we are justified in encatalyzing one and only one semiotic system to the text. This premiss, however, does not hold good in practice. On the contrary, any text that is not of so small extension that it fails to yield a sufficient basis for deducing a system generalizable to other texts usually contains derivates that rest on different systems (Hjelmslev 1961b, 115; cf. Jensen 2012, 159).

Thus, the uniformity postulated for linguistic 'objects' must be understood as a constructive factor, a condition for their description that has to be recreated experimentally, as it were, and does not belong to concrete material. Such uniformity can be attained by subtracting the connotators (cf. Hjelmslev 1961b, § 22; Hjelmslev (1942) (1970), 98, point n. 7). The initial heterogeneity of texts also means that their components (periods, clauses, words, word-parts, etc.) can be characterised by many connotators at the same time, depending on which 'context' is considered: a single sentence may be connoted simultaneously as 'modern Danish', reflecting the corresponding diachronic variation of such language; as 'vulgar', if some of its parts are expressed in a low register; as 'oral', consid-

ering the diamesic dimension; as 'youth slang', if the pace of its delivery or some lexemes reflect a specific diastratic variation; or it may even connote a single individual, if some elements of that text mark a specific idiosyncratic physiognomy. All these connotators are not necessarily separate entities, as they may combine in all manner of ways. A specific 'style', to stay within the frame of the pedagogical example, is often a combination of parameters or 'dimensions' (register, medium, tone, specific vocabulary, and so on) on to which linguistic elements can be simultaneously mapped. It is up to the theory, then, to provide the means to describe such an entanglement.

7.2 Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques

In the paper *Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques* [1933] (1973), connotation is again addressed as an unavoidable condition for analysis:

> Les états de langue sont de diverses espèces (anciens et modernes, communs et régionaux, neutres ou non au point de vue stylistique, etc.) ; toutes sortes d'états intéressent indifféremment notre recherche. Signalons une fois pour toutes que, sauf indication contraire ni spécification ultérieure, le nom d'une langue (telle que français, allemand, etc.) sert á indiquer la *langue commune* à l'*état moderne*. D'une façon générale *chacune de nos analyses n'est valide que pour les matériaux linguistiques décrits ou compris dans les sources indiquées* ; pour les états de langues qui sont cités sans indication de sources notre analyse est prétendue valide pour les matériaux exposés dans les traités courants et communément connus. Ces remarques ne sont pas d'ordre pratique seulement ; elles visent à énoncer un principe : c'est une illusion trop répandue qu'on peut décrire un état de langue dans son ensemble et sous une forme absolue ; on ne décrit que *ce qui a été observé*, et les généralisations hâtives [...] sont non seulement dangereuses mais nettement injustifiables. Une proposition énoncée en parlant tout court d'une 'langue' ou d'un 'état de langue' ne vaut que pour la fraction de la langue ou de l'état de langue qui est comprise dans l'objectif de l'observateur. Un savant est responsable de ses engagements, et la bonne méthode veut qu'on circonscrive d'une

façon exacte l'objet qui a été étudié. Cet objet n'est jamais une langue dans sa totalité (Hjelmslev [1933] (1973), 63, § 85).[284]

As trivial a lecture on research ethics as it may appear, this section serves Hjelmslev in the making of a theoretical point: while glossematics postulates that a language is never defined by its external functions, these nevertheless circumscribe it from the outside. As a consequence, a description of a linguistic state is bound to refer the set of cultural, historical, geographical … conditions it refers to – all the rest has to be supplied by what Hjelmslev calls 'catalysis' (cf. Hjelmslev [1942] (1970), 97).

7.3 Forelæsninger over Sprogteori [Lectures on the Theory of Language]

Along with the example of the diachronic evolution of the 'Latin' connotator mentioned in the correspondence, the same consideration also recurs in the *Forelæsninger over Sprogteori*, the cycle of lectures held in Copenhagen in 1942–1943. In the text, connotation is discussed in greater detail and the provisional taxonomy of stylistic connotators proposed in *OSG* (which include *stylistic forms*, *styles*, *value-styles*, *media*, *tones*, *vernaculars*, *national languages, regional languages* and *physiognomies*, cf. *Prolegomena*, § 22) is taken up with a more optimistic stance: the list is said to reasonably exhaust "all possibilities that are traditionally and vaguely called *style*",[285] and since connotators often overlap and intertwine, a "dimensional analysis"[286]

---

284. The section was possibly added to the original manuscript in 1942, when Brøndal's grip on Bulletin du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague faded away and Hjelmslev glimpsed a possibility to finally publish the paper, taken up in correspondence of a speech given at the Circle on the category of comparison.

285. "Selvom vor oversigt over konnotatorerne er foreløbig og uden formaldefinitioner, kunde jeg tænke mig, at den kunde udtømme alle de muligheder, som man med traditionel vag betegnelse kalder stil" (Hjelmslev [1942–1943], lecture of 25th October 1943).

286. Dimensional analysis was originally conceived by Hjelmslev (1933, 1935) for the description of grammatical categories. In the Forelæsninger, the treatment of

(Hjelmslev [1933] (1973), 81, §48) is proposed to describe their entanglement, in which the different connotators figure as participative correlates (cf. also Hjelmslev 1975, 221 ff.; Badir 2014, 215, n. 143):

> Disse ni kategorier er indbyrdes solidariske, således at ethvert funktiv i et denotationssprog på én gang må bestemmes i forhold til dem alle. Her foreligger altså et 9-dimensionalt system, og ved at kombinere et led i en af disse kategorier med led i andre, opstår der krydsninger, som er de konkrete konnotatorgrupper, som foreligger i praxis. Disse forskellige krydsninger kan man give særbetegnelser, og det gør man meget ofte i praxis. Skønlitterær stil er en højere værdistil, som samtidig er en kreativ stilart. Slang mener jeg at kunne definere som en værdistil, der på én gang anses for at være højere og lavere, og som samtidig er en kreativ stilart. Hvis vi har en værdistil, som er neutral, og samtidig kreativ stilart, har vi jargon og kode [...]. Alle de ubegrænset mange stilartsbestemmelser, man lejlighedsvis har opstillet i den hidtidige stilistik, og som man aldrig har systematiseret, lader sig betragte som komplexer af disse faktorer (Hjelmslev [1942–1943], lecture of 20th October 1943, orthography modernized).[287]

The basic insight behind such treatment is that any stylistic variation is to be classified simultaneously according to all the parameters considered (cf. Figure 3, below; cf. Figure 4 in Appendix) – as for the morphemes of case in *La catégorie des cas* – so that even newly dis-

---

connotators is presented as an extension in the applicability of such a method, supported by a series of definitions that were already provided in the first draft of the Résumé (1941).

287. "These 9 categories are mutually solidary, so that every function in a denotative language is determined at once in relation to all of them. In other words, we have a 9-dimensional system here, and by combining a member in one of these categories with members in others, there arise crosses: the concrete connotator-groups that we find in practice. These operational crosses can be given special designations, as it is quite often done in practice. 'Belletristic style' is a higher value-style, which is also a creative style. I believe 'slang' could be defined as a value-style considered to be at the same time higher and lower, and which is also a creative style. If we have a value-style that is neutral and at the same time a creative style, we have jargon and code [...]. All the infinite style designations, which might have been set up by traditional stylistics and which have never been systematised, can be regarded as combinations of these factors".

covered or freshly invented connotators can find their place within such a framework, even those that seem external to the respective category, like 'non-coloured' or 'neutral' style.[288]

Despite the high degree of cohesion of the method, however, a number of questions are left unanswered. Some of them, like the relation between connotation and the syntagmatic vs. paradigmatic nature of analysis, have been tackled in Badir (2014, § V, notably, 225 ff.). Others, like the issue concerning how intrinsically open classes (like national and regional varieties) are supposed to be reduced to closed systems – and thus whether they should be conceived as systems in the first place – still need to be discussed.

7.4 The Résumé of a Theory of Language

One of the tasks, outlined in the *Résumé of a Theory of Language*,[289] is to establish the nature and the place of a language (semiotics) within a whole typology of structures, including a 'connotative semiotic'. The originality of the *Résumé* consists in stating that, as opposed to metasemiotics and denotative semiotics, connotative semiotics cannot build up an operation, and thus cannot be considered scientific semiotics (Df 44); in other terms, a connotative semiotics is conceived as a merely described, non-describing structure (Almeida 1997). And, while the extraction of connotators is prescribed to be carried out syntagmatically throughout the denotative analysis, the *Résumé* also prescribes a dimensional treatment of connotators, an operation which is conceived as both syntagmatic

288. In the same way, "un son, dans une langue donnée, n'est pas a priori nécessairement ou sourd ou sonore ; il peut être sourd et sonore (que ce soit alternativement ou à force d'un glissement au cours de son émission), et il peut (du moins théoriquement) recevoir la définition 'ni sourd ni sonore', laquelle représente la case neutre de la catégorie ; même dans le dernier cas, la catégorie est donc représentée" (Hjelmslev [1954] (1970), 59–60, n. 3).

289. The original text, dated 1943–45 (Whitfield 1975, xvi) knew a very limited circulation as a typescript, and was collated and published thirty years later (1975). It is only insofar as it was conceived in the Forties that we include the Résumé in my inquiry.

and paradigmatic, and this, "although the basis of analysis is rela-tion and although the given object is viewed in the first instance as a syntagmatic" (Df 138 ff.; *contra* Badir 2014, 217, 225–226). In fact, once extracted, the connotators need to be mapped on to dimensions (i.e. relational entities) and investigated through their mutual correlations[290]. In order to do so, the *Résumé* in fact *extends* the applicability of the dimensional treatment, as it can now deal with 'open classes' to be mapped through an unlimited number of dimensions (Df 124). On the other hand, however, such dimensional treatment is still only concerned with connotators viewed as purely relational forms, while their usage is deferred to the stage called 'external linguistics' (technically: 'external semiology', Df 49), as Hjelmslev suggested in 1942:

> Ici encore, les facteurs enregistrés restent sans dénomination: 'danois' ou 'archaïque' sont des formes dont l'usage (ou la substance) n'est pas décrit(e) par la théorie des connotations, mais seulement par la méta-linguistique analysant les facteurs sociaux, psychologiques et autres qui manifestent les connotatifs ; cette analyse est appelée ordinairement 'linguistique externe' (Hjelmslev [1942] (1970), 98).

7.5 *Sproget. En Introduktion [Language. An introduction]*

Connotation is also dealt with in two particularly abstract sections of *Sproget. En introduktion* (1963, cf. Hjelmslev 1970), written in the same period as the *Omkring Sprogteoriens Grundlæggelse* (1943): the chapter concerning the different 'layers' of a language ('*sproggrader*'), originally conceived as the conclusive chapter but later removed in the first Danish editions because of its complexity; and the two parts on linguistic typology (typology of schema and of usage) are discussed. The chapter on *sproggrader* enucleates the main features of connotation, namely:

1. the heterogeneity of connotators, which characterise any section of a text;

---

290. This is especially true as they do not constitute a text (cf. Badir 2014, 225).

2. the mutual translatability ('substitution') of those sections, once connotators are subtracted. For instance, a section in verbal language can 'mean the same thing' as a section in written language, once those two connotators have been subtracted; two segments in resp. direct and indirect speech styles 'mean the same thing' once their connotators have been subtracted. These are two different configurations of linguistic constraints (such as tense-, person- and voice-features etc.) connoting a narrative as opposed to a descriptive rendering, a prose text as opposed to a poem, a specific work of a specific period by a specific writer, and so forth;

3. the fact that the operations of identification and subtraction of connotators do not exclusively pertain to stylistics but are carried out on a common ground in grammar as in any stage of linguistic analysis;

4. the treatment of connotators, as content, requires a different degree of analysis, as elements belonging to a given level of abstraction (for instance: denotation) can only be defined in opposition to other elements belonging to the same level (cf. Hjelmslev [1942] (1970), 98, point n. 9).

This last consideration is further addressed in the section concerning the possibilities of a semantic typology. Here the idea is taken up of a hierarchy of content-substances that ranges from abstract meanings to concrete instantiations: the hierarchy is conceived as a continuous articulation of varieties (variants bound to a specific context) and variations (individual variants):

> In the study of meaning (*semantics*) we should expect to be able to arrive at a typology of linguistic usage for the content plane of language. This is for many reasons a more difficult task than phonetic typology, partly because semantics has been much less cultivated and partly because it embraces a far greater domain. The content of language is nothing less than the world surrounding us, and the minimal particular meanings of a word, the particular meanings that are individuals (cf. 114) are the *things* of the world: the *lamp* that stands here on my desk is a particular

meaning of the word *lamp*; I myself am a particular meaning of the word *man* (Hjelmslev 1963, 120).

This kind of articulation is said to be universal, as it can be carried out on any material, not just linguistic phenomena: the focus is on the principles according to which substances that manifest linguistic forms (thus also connotators) can be orderly described. The idea of an inclusive hierarchy of content-substances is tackled here once again, in agreement with Uldall's early considerations: the requirement for a structural analysis of connotators is not the closedness of their category, but a hierarchical distribution, so that a certain number of connotators can be put in relation with denotative elements according to their 'size' (or 'rank' i.e. their place within the analysis).

7.6 La Stratification du langage

Only a few hints to connotation can be found in *La Stratification du langage* (1954), but they are significant ones nonetheless. Firstly, its pervasiveness. Connotation can occur on each of the four strata, and in linguistic scheme, norm and usage alike. Secondly, the asymmetrical correlation (unilateral participation α:A) between substances, which links to Uldall's idea of content-symbols modulated in line with Urban's position. In the standard rapport between content-substance and expression-substance, the first includes the second; contrariwise, as far as connotation is concerned, the connotative expression-substance (the denotative plane of language) must be recognised as unmarked (:A) in respect to the connotative content (the referent), which is the marked pole (:α) (cf. Hjelmslev [1954] (1959), 61). Within glossematic axiomatic, this means that things may very well be linguistic signs, but only signs can properly substitute things, disentangling the speaker from the bounds of the *hic & nunc*.

7.7 Some reflexions on practice and theory in structural semantics

One of Hjelmslev's final contributions, the paper *Some reflexions on practice and theory in structural semantics* (1961a) was his contribution to a festschrift to the founder and director of the so-called Nature method of foreign language acquisition, Arthur Jensen. It is remarkable from many points of view, especially since one would hardly have expected an affinity to exist between glossematics and an inductive approach based on implicit grammar, such as the one endorsed by the Nature Method. In this paper Hjelmslev not only explains the theoretical reasons behind such juxtaposition, but he also feels the need to unearth the whole topic of connotation once again, addressing for the first time the ambiguity of the terms 'connotation' and 'connotators'. The distinction is then made between *connotatum*, as a substitute for *connotator*, denoting the content-element of a connotative semiotic, and *connotans*, i.e. the sign belonging to the expression plane of the connotative semiotics (cf. Hjelmslev 1961a, 59–60, n. 7).

Moreover, the epistemological implications of the 'subtraction of connotators' are clarified: to subtract is to produce a uniformity, allowing one to grasp the identity of the substance behind two different formal patterns. And as the connotators are subtracted, the denotative elements become variants, a mutual 'transposability' between these (or 'traduction', in the case of linguistic denotata) becomes possible. For instance, once the connotative varieties belonging to a text as pronounced by a specific speaker have been extracted, it becomes possible to compare the text with others pronounced by other speakers etc., recognising them as the 'same' type of performance (a pronunciation) of a 'same text', i.e. the same substance behind different formal patterns. Thus 'extraction' does not mean removal, rather temporary *Ausschaltung* (*epoché*), deferral to a later stage of analysis:

> Since the subtractive operation underlying the translation is in principle of a negative nature, it may perhaps be difficult to see that a translation implies a consideration of external elements such as denotata. Suffice it to say that subtracting is far from being the same as ignoring, and

that any translation has to take the subtracted elements (e.g. different languages) into account and to keep them apart [...] (Hjelmslev 1961a, 60–61, n. 4).

Despite the importance of these details, the whole picture of connotation remains substantially unaltered. This is again a fascinating aspect of Hjelmslev's reflection: the cohesion of his rumination, from his early discussions with Uldall and later on, beyond the elective domain of linguistics, in the constant effort of incorporating further fields within the framework of glossematics – a rumination that lasted a lifetime.

8. From linguistic theory to a general theory of language

Let us round up. We have tackled the evolution of the concept of connotation from its very beginning, describing its genesis both conceptually, through the correspondence with Uldall, and chronologically, in the early 1940s. We have followed the elaboration of connotation along two complementary paths: the idea of manifestation and its corollary (the hierarchy of substances as a continuous and non-symmetrical articulation), and the variational aspect, close to what Coseriu would have called the 'architecture of language' (in opposition to the uniform 'functional language', Coseriu 1988, 285–286, cf. Jensen 2012, 159), but not restricted to traditional stylistic values.

The understanding of connotation as a central concept for a variational framework was not specifically due to Hjelmslev, whose original contribution lay in having asserted the need for, and given the means to, a systematic treatment of connotations, including stylistic ones. In fact, Hjelmslev's starting point was neither a stylistic nor a variational consideration, but rather the epistemological issue concerning the multifarious manifestations of linguistic forms. This was interpreted in terms of 'functions of functions', and was fostered by Uldall's insight on linguistic and non-linguistic hierarchies, which manifested a quite different take on the matter.

In fact, it's a striking feature of Uldallian glossematics that it

completely lacks the semiotic apparatus which, instead, became a hallmark of the Hjelmslevian approach: no typology of semiotic structures is put forward in the *Outline of glossematics*, which is only concerned with a functional description of human phenomena. Consequently, there is no trace of connotation, of the distinction between denotative, connotative and metalinguistic layers. The examination of the correspondence between the two linguists has shown us why: Uldall and Hjelmslev conceived the 'deduction' in quite different ways.

From Uldall's perspective, we simply don't know enough about how human phenomena are constructed to postulate the need to understand them by projecting (i.e. recursively multiplying) a basic semiotic structure (denotation) outwards, as Hjelmslev did. Drawing much from Cassirer's perspective,[291] Uldall conceived a culture as a collection of different institutions, each having its specificity described in functional terms, without assuming any privileged linguistic perspective. Now, it is quite curious to note that Hjelmslev's stance was rooted in the same argument: precisely because we cannot have any a priori knowledge[292] of how the external world is articulated, we need a foothold solid enough to start with. Such a foothold is represented by *language*, the only point in which expression and knowledge conflate. Consequently, Hjelmslev's step into the deductive hierarchy was a purely epistemological definition of *semiotics*, the structure of which could be used to illuminate the world around him, like a flashlight of sorts. Uldall had to choose another route. Since starting with the assumption of a basic semiotic structure was out of the question for him, since semiotics was just one structure-type among many others, he had to resort to a different totality to begin his deduction: the 'world' or 'universe' (*verden*, see above, section 4) – the only totality broad enough to ensure

---

291. The correspondence shows that Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms was indeed perused by Uldall during the Forties (cf. for instance Uldall 1940a, 3–4). One of the last contributions by Uldall, the unpublished manuscript "Ciencias culturales" (Cultural sciences, composed in 1948; cf. Fischer-Jørgensen 1967, vii) represents an evident reference to Cassirer's mind-set.

292. Or at least a non-linguistic knowledge – one of the main arguments endorsed by Urban (1939, passim).

that no human factor could be overlooked, the only totality broad enough to incorporate the very dividing line between quantitative (nature) and qualitative (humanities).

The 'semiotic turn' of glossematics was then accomplished by Hjelmslev alone, in the wake of Urban's *Language and Reality* (1939). Within this framework, the role of connotation is to situate abstract forms in their context, so that the notion of 'context' itself becomes dispensable.[293] And if connotation is said to characterise any segment of any linguistic text,[294] it is because a concrete sample of a language co-occurs with the conditions of its manifestation. Despite their multiplicity and multifariousness, such conditions can be put in relation to the 'size' of the element considered (read: to the level of the analysis in which it appears), so that a mapping of such conditions becomes possible, turning a conglomeration into a layered system of systems. It is through connotation that the theory can account for both the variational heterogeneity of concrete texts, conceived as a *factum*, and their cohesive nature, i.e. their constituting organic totalities. Concrete texts have to be recreated as 'objects' in order to disclose their uniformity.[295] Uniformity is then both a presupposition and a goal of analysis (a 'bet', cf. Almeida 1997, Badir 2014, 197), but not a requirement for empirical data. Actually, such a bet may be even more substantial (!) than this, as 'connotative analysis' seems less bound to the operations carried out by a glossematician, than to those carried out by specialists and laymen alike, when dealing with texts. In other words, there seems

293. As Paolo Fabbri (1939–2020) used to say, the notion of "context" is only required if you have a poor definition of "text".

294. Belonging to the linguistic schema or to usage. There are, however, a few exceptions: formal languages or hypothetical reconstructed languages, such as Proto-Indo-European, are not "spoken" by any actual linguistic community and thus have only in that respect a 0 "zero" connotative content.

295. This is held against the vue according to which pragmatic nuances described by glossematics in terms of connotation are "regarded as an extra dimension on the sign that disturbs the functional homogeneity of the object" (Trabant 1987, 102). On the contrary, connotation and connotators are introduced in order to account for the concrete aspects of semiotic structures in terms of layered homogeneity, without being forced to assume such homogeneity a priori.

to be an argument for suggesting that identification, subtraction and substitution of connotators is carried out implicitly whenever one text is compared with another, in order to be interpreted, understood and described.

The view outlined here may sort out some problems, including the spurious distinctions between formal *vs.* substantial connotations, or between literary *vs.* scientific domains, or too realistic interpretations of denotative and connotative languages, or even unjustified preconceptions of connotators as affective nuances or stylistic *Nebenbedeutungen*. However, this view is still far from answering all remaining questions on the matter. Let us name a couple of these.

The identification of connotators seems to depend on the experience or the 'encyclopaedic knowledge' of the specialist – i.e. on his take on the 'sense' behind the patterns of form. This might not be a problem, but only insofar as the identification of connotators is just one of the first steps of the analysis, as different insights might produce quite different analyses.

Moreover, if two sentences can be identified and described by subtracting their connotators such as 'Danish' and 'English', as Hjelmslev suggests, what about the case of texts belonging to different semiotic orders? It would be tempting to treat two texts belonging respectively to 'natural language' and 'sculpture' by subtracting their respective connotators. In this way, the content of e.g. a *Vita Mariae* (a narration of the life of the Virgin, which was quite common in the Middle Ages) and the content of the choir wall in Chartres Cathedral, which portrays it, could be identified and treated accordingly, by acknowledging the fact that, behind their different formal structures, they 'say the same thing' or 'narrate the same story'.[296]

These might seem far-reaching speculations. Yet it must be made clear that it was precisely this sort of solicitation which fostered the initial exchange between Uldall and Hjelmslev, propelling

---

296. Provided that the two are effectively semiotics – something that cannot be taken for granted in the first place. In glossematics, because of their very nature, symbolic systems cannot have connotators.

glossematics from being a linguistic theory to a general theory of language.
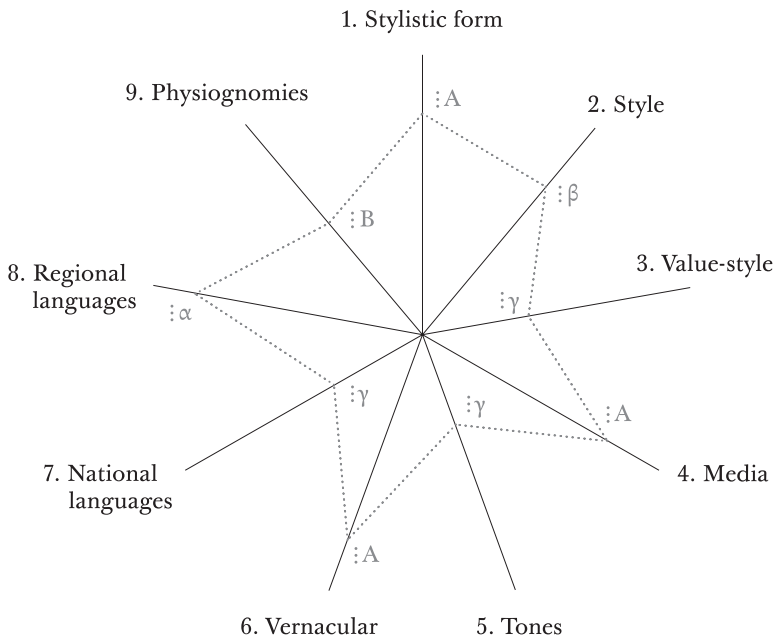
Appendix

Table 1 Speculative representation of the 9 categories of connotators as dimensions (the division of dimensions into correlates is given for purely illustrative purposes)

Each of the nine categories listed by Hjelmslev (cf. Figure 4) represents a dimension that can be further divided into participative members[297] (cf. Hjelmslev 1975, 31, Rg 16; 225 ff.), as follows:

1. *stylistic form* can be articulated into:
   :α'   bound (poetry)
   :A'   unbound (prose)

---

297. Properly: cotensive (Hjelmslev 1975, Df 118), as they are only defined in respect to one another, while their correlations don't establish a category. This also mean that their combinations do not need to follow the "laws of solidarity" (Hjelmslev 1975, 31, Rg 16).

2. *style* into
   - :β'   creative
   - :B'   normal (also called 'reproductive)
   - :γ'   archaising

3. value-style into
   - :β'   higher
   - :B'   vulgar
   - :γ'   lower
   - :Γ'   neutral

4. the *medium* (speech, writing, gesture, attire, music, flag-signals, means of payment, game-equipment, etc., cf. Hjelmslev 1975, 228) represents an open class, so connotators enter here either as tags or as sub-systems, whose oppositional criterion has still to be found;
5. *tones* (joyful, sad, polite/impolite, angry, surprise, contempt, etc.) is an open class, see n. 4;
6. *vernaculars* (formal language, informal language, insider-jargon, specialistic language, etc.) is an open class, see n. 4;
7–9. (national languages, regional languages and physiognomies) these are all open classes, see n. 4.

Accordingly, the interjection by Hjelmslev quoted in exergue of this paper, "*Pokkers*", could be analysed as unbound (1), mostly colloquial (4) informal language (6), belonging to normal or reproductive style (2), having low or non-vulgar value (3), usually expressing contempt or surprise (5), generally indicating subjective involvement in the situation in terms of distancing or reject of it, potentially belonging to any regional variety (8) of Danish (7). In the precise case of the quotation mentioned above, the corresponding physiognomy (9) is /Louis Hjelmslev/. By subtracting the connotators /Danish/, the expression becomes comparable to others, such as /Eng./ 'heck' or /Ita./ 'diamine'; by further subtracting the connotator /low/, other expressions may be added (Eng. 'fuck'), etc.

Bibliography

ALMEIDA IVAN (1997), "Le style épistémologique de Louis Hjelmslev", *Texto!* (mai 1997) [online] http://www.revue-texto.net/Inedits/Almeida_Style.html (consulted 4.3.2021)

BADIR, SÉMIR (2016), Épistémologie sémiotique. La théorie du langage de Louis Hjelmslev, Paris, Honoré Champion.

BLOOMFIELD LEONARD (1933), *Language*, Allen & Unwin, London.

COSERIU, EUGENIO [1954] (1973) "Forma y sustancia en los sonidos del lenguaje", in Coseriu, E. (1973), *Teoría del lenguaje y lingüística general. Cinco estudios*, Madrid, Gredos, 115–234.

– (1988), Einführung in die allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Tübingen, Franke.

DI GIROLAMO, COSTANZO (1978), *Critica della letterarietà*, Milano, Il Saggiatore.

FISCHER-JØRGENSEN, ELI (1967), *Introduction*, to Uldall (1967), i-xxii.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale*, København, Bianco Lunos.

– [1933] (1973), "Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques", *Essais linguistiques*, II (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 14), Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag, 57–98.

– [1934] (1972), *Sprogsystem og sprogforandring* (Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague, 15), Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.

– [1938] (1970), "Essai d'une théorie des morphèmes", *Essais linguistiques* (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 12), Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag, 152–164.

– [1939] (1970), "La structure morphologique (types de systems)", *Essais linguistiques* (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 12), Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag, 113–138.

– (1941), homage to Otto Jespersen in *Hilsen til Otto Jespersen paa firs-Aarsdagen 16 juli 1940*, Copenhague, Munksgaard, 59.

– [1941] (1973), "A Causerie on Linguistic Theory", *Essais linguistiques*, II (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 14), Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag, 101–117.

– [1942–1943], *Forelæsninger over Sprogteori*, unpublished typescript of a course held between February 1942 and December 1943, transcribed by Harry Wett Frederiksen. The transcript will be published in Danish and English during 2022 by Cigana and Canger.

– [1942] (1970), "22.04.42. Observations de L. Hjelmslev", Bulletins du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague 1941–1964 (VIII-XXXI). Choix de

communications et d'interventions au débat lors des séances tenues entre septembre 1941 et mai 1965, Copenhagen, Akademisk Forlag, 96–99.

– (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse*, København, Munksgaard.

– [1954] (1959), "La stratification du langage", *Essais linguistiques* (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 12), Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag, 36–68.

– [1958] (1970), *"An Outline of Glossematics, vol. 1*, L. Hjelmslev présente la première partie de l'ouvrage qu'il avait projeté avec H.J. Uldall, "General Theory", écrit par ce dernier", *Bulletins du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague 1941–1964 (VIII-XXXI). Choix de communications et d'interventions au débat lors des séances tenues entre septembre 1941 et mai 1965*, Copenhagen, Akademisk Forlag, 76–77.

– (1961a), "Some Reflexions on Practice and Theory in Structural Semantics", *Language and Society, Essays presented to Arthur M. Jensen on his Seventieth Birthday*, København, Det Berlingske Bogtrykkeri, 55–63.

– (1961b), *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.

– (1963, 1973²), *Sproget. En Introduktion*, København, Berlingske Leksikon Bibliotek.

– (1970), *Language. An Introduction*, Madison, Universoty of Wisconsin, Press.

– (1975), *Résumé of a Theory of Language* (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 16), København, Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.

JAMES, WILLIAM (1904), "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?", *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, 1, 477–491.

JENSEN, VIGGO BANK (2012), "Eugenio Coseriu, Scandinavian Linguists and variational linguistics", *Dacoromania*, XVII (2), 154–162.

KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, CATHERINE (1977), *La Connotation*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon.

MAROUZEAU, JULES (1933), *Lexique de la terminologie linguistique*, Paris, Geuthner.

MILLS, JOHN STUART (1843), *A System of logic, Ratiocinative and inductive*. London, John W. Parker.

SONESSON, GÖRAN (1988), Pictorial concepts. Inquiries into the semiotic heritage and its relevance to the interpretation of the visual world, Lund, Lund University Press.

TRABANT, JÜRGEN (1970), Zur Semiologie des literarischen Kunstwerks. Glossematik und Literaturtheorie, München, Fink.

–   (1987), *Louis Hjelmslev: Glossematics as General Semiotics*, in Krampen, M., Oehler, K., Posner, R., Sebeok, T.A., von Uexküll, T. (eds.) *Classics of Semiotics. Topics in Contemporary Semiotics*, Springer, Boston, 89–108.

TRAINI, STEFANO (2001), *La Connotazione*, Milano, Bompiani.

ULDALL, HANS JØRGEN [1942], Autobiographical notes, published in English in Uldall, H.J. and Shipley, W. (1966), *Nisenan texts and dictionary*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 4–9.

–   [1957] (1967)², *Outline of glossematics. A Study in the methodology of the Humanities with Special Reference to Linguistics* (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 10), Copenhagen, Nordisk sprog- og kulturforlag.

URBAN, WILBUR MARSHALL (1939), Language and Reality. The Philosophy of Language and the Principle of Symbolism, Allen & Unwin, London.

WHITEHEAD, ALFRED NORTH (1927), *Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect*, New York, Macmillan.

WHITFIELD, JAMES FRANCIS (1975), *Editor's introduction*, in Hjelmslev, Louis (1975), xiii-xxxi.

Unpublished correspondence[298]

Hjelmslev, Louis (1936), letter to Uldall (8.5.1936)		Uldall_32_390
–	(1937), letter to Uldall (2.6.1937)	Uldall_32_820
–	(1940a), letter to Uldall (2.4.1940)	Uldall_33_420
–	(1940b), letter to Uldall (2.4.1940, evening)	Uldall_33_390
–	(1940c), letter to Uldall (3.3.1940)	Uldall_33_350
–	(1940d), letter to Uldall (22.4.1940)	Uldall_33_540
–	(1940e), notebook 17/40, capsula 124	124_7–36–2_0020
Uldall, Hans Jørgen (1940a), letter to Hjelmslev (12.2.1940)		
		Uldall_33_310/320
–	(1940b), letter to Hjelmslev (14.4.1940)	Uldall_33_520
–	(1941), letter to Hjelmslev (16.1.1941)	Uldall_33_590

---

298. The string on the right refers to the permanent identifier assigned to the digitalised document within the framework of the INFRASTRUCTURALISM project at glossematics.dk. It will enable the document to be retrievable once the material is published in the infrastructure.

Author: Lorenzo Cigana is researcher in language sciences at the Institut for Nordiske Studier og Sprogvidenskab (University of Copenhagen). He is affiliated with project INFRASTRUCTURALISM. E-mail: lorenzo.cigana@hum.ku.dk

Worlds apart? Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev: a tale of a competitive friendship

Viggo Bank Jensen and Frans Gregersen
University of Copenhagen

Abstract. *The paper contrasts the careers, theories and organizational contributions made by Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev respectively. Though both are prominent structuralists, they diverged on several important points as to their views of theories and language. Their histories are intertwined because they fought for supremacy in the field of linguistics and collaborated on the journal Acta Linguistica. Their different views were, however, not fully expressed in the 1930s since an important paper by Hjelmslev was suppressed and remained unpublished until 1973. During Jakobson's escape from Czechoslovakia Hjelmslev was instrumental in bringing Jakobson and his wife to Denmark where he worked for half a year before going on to Norway. We document the various meeting points and divergences as well as the close friendship which despite their theoretical differences united them.*

Keywords: Roman Jakobson, Louis Hjelmslev, history of linguistics, history of structuralism

1. Introduction: Structuralisms

The aim of this volume as a whole is to give the reader an overview of structuralism, particularly from a European vantage point. We focus on the discipline where it all started: Linguistics. This implies a definition of what we mean by linguistic structuralism. By linguistic structuralism we mean all traditions of research

a) which take as their starting point the distinction between internal linguistic structure and external forces,

b) which readily acknowledge a distinction between static and dynamic linguistics

c) and which take the autonomy of linguistics as a discipline to be a worthy goal.

Several distinct currents within the history of linguistics fulfill these criteria making it necessary to distinguish both a number of traditions and at least three phases in the development of structural linguistics.

The first phase would be from the appearance of Saussure's *Cours* 1916 and until the end of World War 2. In this phase, the centres of the movement are in the periphery of the linguistic landscape: The Netherlands, Switzerland: Geneva, Scandinavia (Norway: Oslo and Denmark: Copenhagen) and Prague.

The second phase would be from the end of World War 2 and until the appearance of Noam Chomsky's Syntactic Structures (1957). In this phase, structuralism establishes itself as hegemonic linguistics in the cultural centres of Europe, notably Paris.

The third phase would be identical to the period of dominance of Chomskyan linguistics and may still be in effect, though we would be inclined to think that it ended around the turn of the century. The characteristic feature of this period is that global linguistics falls under the hegemony of American Chomskyan linguistics, albeit with some notable exceptions such as Denmark (but not the rest of Scandinavia).

We shall not be concerned with the third phase in this paper. Rather, we detail one of the first phase European general linguistic traditions, the so-called glossematic tradition (Spang-Hanssen 1961, Rasmussen 1992, Gregersen 1991), and contrast it with those traditions which were represented by the name and efforts of Roman Jakobson (Flack 2016, Sériot 1999), i.e. Praguian phonology and Jakobsonian grammar. The idea is to get a better grip of what glossematics was and was not by using the inspiration and competition offered by Roman Jakobson as a backdrop. The paper is structured by the various Congresses of Linguists featuring both of our protagonists starting with the first one in The Hague (1928) and ending with the Oslo Congress of 1957.

2. The beginning: First International Congress of Linguists (1928) and the two protagonists, Jakobson and Hjelmslev

In 1928 the linguists of Europe and the United States of America met for the very first time as 'general' linguists. Until then, there had been congresses for the Oriental philologists and for the Americanists. In addition, there were a number of local societies, among them the *Société de linguistique de Paris*, but this call was unspecified as to which branch of linguistics you perceived yourself to belong to or which branch of languages you specialized in.

The initiative to the Hague Conference came from the Netherlands (Kiefer and van Sterkenburg 2012). C.C. Uhlenbeck (1866–1951) became the first president and Jos. Schrijnen (1869–1937) the first Secretary General of the organization, which was established during the Congress under the name of *Comité International Permanent des Linguistes*, the CIPL. Please note that this is an organization of and for linguists, not defined as being for the discipline, viz. linguistics. The creation of a venue for linguists proved to be decisive for the history of structuralism in that it created an arena of scientific combat for hegemony within the discipline. This is why we have chosen to structure this paper according to the landmarks of the very first Congress and the last Congress attended by our protagonist, Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) and his friend-and-competitor-to-be Roman Jakobson (1896–1984).

Hjelmslev, however was not the only Danish linguist present. At this first international congress of linguists also two other Danish linguists, viz. Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942) and Louis L. Hammerich (1892–1975) met Roman Jakobson, Nikolaj Sergejevic Trubetzkoy (1890–1938) and Serge Karcevskij (1884–1955) for the first time. The latter three took centre stage at the meeting by promoting a phonological programme sponsored by the Linguistic Circle of Prague. Judging by the documentation of the Congress, the three Danish linguists did not take part in the formal discussions. However, the acquaintance with the ideas of the Prague phonologists had a decisive influence on the development of Danish linguistics. Brøndal was very positive to the new ideas of the Prague phonol-

ogists, and he became friends with Trubetzkoy (in particular) and with Jakobson. Hjelmslev was more interested in grammar and thus closer to Karcevskij. However, what made the strongest impression on Hjelmslev when he met the Prague phonologists and noticed their impact, was the effective organization of the Prague Circle. This is probably the main reason why he got in closer contact with Jakobson at the next international congress of linguists in 1931 (see below).

2.1 Introducing the protagonists

2.1.1 Roman Jakobson

Roman Jakobson was born 11th of October 1896 into a rather wealthy Russian Jewish family. His father was an engineer, originally an Austrian citizen, Josef Jakobson, and his mother Anna was born Volpert (Jakobson to the Swedish police, Jangfeldt 1977). As a very young man he wrote poetry (Toman 1995, 18). He was schooled in dialectology and ethnology and practiced what his teachers had told him in performing studies of the living language as used by the peasants around Moscow. Jakobson took a broad interest in their daily life studying not only the peasants' language, but also their narratives and their traditions (Toman 1995, 47 ff.). The early interest in art and folklore was to remain an enduring trait of Jakobson's research profile.

Roman Jakobson was a founding member of the Moscow linguistic Circle in 1915 and functioned as its president 1915–1920 (Toman 1995, Thomas 2014, Table 1). We shall come back to the concept of a circle below (section III). Jakobson's linguistic training took place before the 1917 revolution and was rather traditional: he was educated as a historical linguist and a dialectologist. Actually, the Moscow Circle, Jakobson's first Circle, formed part of the efforts at the Moscow Commission for Dialectology (Toman 1995, 47).

Jakobson took an active part in cultural life already before the Russian Revolution of 1917 and continued during the first revolutionary years in the aftermath of the revolution, joining the Russian version of the Futurist movement and he reminisces about this period as his Futurist years (Jakobson, Jangfeldt & Rudy 1998).

In 1920, Jakobson moved to Prague as a member of a Red Cross delegation whose mission it was to find and arrange for the homecoming of Russian prisoners of war. Once in Prague, Jakobson was among the founding members of the Prague Linguistic Circle (*Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, CLP) in October 1926 (Toman 1995; Thomas 2014) which was in some ways modelled on the Moscow Linguistic Circle but was also aimed at invigorating the cultural life and linguistic research of the then newly founded Czechoslovak republic.[299] This, at least was the stated goal of the Circle's first president Mathesius (1882–1945) (Toman 1995, 71 ff.). Soon, primarily thanks to the efforts of Roman Jakobson and Vienna based Trubetzkoy, the CLP hammered out a common programme which was to initiate a new epoch in international linguistics: Phonology became the watchword.

Jakobson in his 1962b Retrospect underlines that the modernistic attempts of revolutionary Russia were part of a broader European picture presaging or directly leading to some of the fundamental tenets of structuralism, viz. human cultural efforts seen as internally structured and being parts of a larger general structure seen as a whole. Jakobson mentions the relative nature of relationships thereby also drawing on modern physics. Structure may be found not only in linguistics but (first) in the Cubism of Braque and Picasso (1908 and onwards) and possibly also within the field of music (Stravinsky) and certainly poetry (the Futurists). Jakobson collaborated with the poet Khlebnikov (1885–1922) and was a close friend of the revolutionary Russian poet Majakovski's (1893–1930). In other places he also mentions the philosopher and literary theoretician of formalism Shklovskij (1893–1984).

2.1.2 Louis Hjelmslev

This broad cultural background differs significantly from the background that Louis Hjelmslev reveals in his programmatic debut in 1928 with *Principes de grammaire générale*. Here, Hjelmslev draws upon the rich central European, primarily German, tradition of

---

299. For the cultural and philosophical background for the Prague school, see Raynaud (1990).

general grammar, a tradition which incidentally is remarkably absent from the authoritative history of linguistics in the 19th century written by Holger Pedersen (1867–1953) (1924). Pedersen was Hjelmslev's venerable teacher and predecessor as the University of Copenhagen professor of Comparative Linguistics (cf. Jørgensen, this volume).[300] In the book you find some of the fundamental ideas of what would later be baptized glossematics, above all the principal aim: the foundation of a general linguistics, the establishment of an abstract system within which the categories are found as possibilities; moreover the claim that synchronic description must precede diachronic description and that linguistics must be immanent and empirical. Hjelmslev was trained by some of the leading authorities in Indo-European comparative linguistics, and viewed from that point of view the *Principes* is a testament of Hjelmslev's radical approach as a scholar. The wish for a revolutionizing of linguistics so that a general theory would become the central aim was fully shared by Jakobson. Hjelmslev and Jakobson further shared a common goal of a systemic, structural approach, and also the focus on which differences made a difference in the analysis such as the introduction of e.g. 'minimal pairs'. They did not, however, share all tenets but for their disagreements see below, sections 5.1 on phonology and section 5.2 on grammar.

Louis Hjelmslev was born 3rd of October 1899 as the oldest son of a Professor of Mathematics, Johannes Hjelmslev. Hjelmslev senior became a trusted member of the Danish research organization: To our knowledge he is the only person to hold high posts at the University of Copenhagen, as a member of the Carlsberg Foundation and as a central member of the Rask Ørsted Foundation for Research simultaneously. Thus, Hjelmslev junior grew up knowing a lot about Danish academic life, how it was organized and how it was financed. During his time of studies with Holger Pedersen

---

300. In the memorial speech Hjelmslev gave about Pedersen after his death in 1953 (Hjelmslev 1954), Hjelmslev explicitly remarks that one will search in vain for the ideas of v. Humboldt, Steinthal and other German philosophical or general linguists in Pedersen's famous book on the history of Linguistics in the 19th Century (Pedersen 1924).

Hjelmslev wrote a prize essay on Oscan and Umbrian (1920) which inaugurates his structuralist views. He then worked on his exams which were passed in 1923. Immediately after that, he was sent to Prague to study with Josef Zubatý (1855–1931). He was engaged to be married at the time to Vibeke Mackeprang, his future wife, and was pining for her and thus he apparently did not take part in much linguistic life in Prague. He did learn Czech though.

Hjelmslev wrote a huge manuscript for what was later to become the book *Principes de grammaire génerale*. This was intended for a doctorate but his mentor Holger Pedersen wisely counselled him also to write something historical. Thus the *Principes* was instead published in an abbreviated version by the Royal Danish Academy (Gregersen 1991a, 181 ff.). The Academy generously provided Hjelmslev with a large number of copies and in 1929 he distributed them to his old and new friends, among them Karcevskij. Taking Pedersen's prudent advice Hjelmslev in addition wrote a doctoral dissertation in the guise of a technical treatise on a central theme of Baltic linguistics, inaugurated by Ferdinand de Saussure: the Lithuanian and Latvian changes of intonation (Hjelmslev 1931).[301] He was given notice by the Dean of the Faculty at the University of Copenhagen that he would get his degree in June 1931. This paved the way for his bold initiative: To create a Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen.

3. The entrepreneur Hjelmslev establishes the Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague (1931) on the model of the Cercle Linguistique de Prague (1926)

3.1 Prehistory and first decade of the Linguistic circle of Copenhagen

The second international Congress of linguists took place 1931, in Geneva. Though it was not planned as such, it turned out to become also a commemoration of the late Ferdinand de Saussure who was

---

301. Those who have missed examples illustrating real language in Hjelmslev's later works should acquaint themselves with his 1931 doctoral dissertation. Long stretches are taken up with examples and counterexamples making it more of a collection of materials than any other work by him.

used as a patron saint in interventions both by the Genevans and the Praguians. All the main structuralists, including, Brøndal, Hammerich, Hjelmslev, Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy, were present and this was the congress which would mark the breakthrough of phonology. Importantly, Hjelmslev took the initiative to establish the Cercle linguistique de Copenhague by calling a preparatory meeting before the congress but the founding meeting took place after the event of the Congress.

The degree of dr. phil. secured made it possible for Hjelmslev to invite a group of young linguists (the oldest one was 39 years old) to a meeting at his home "where he would present a plan [...] of organizing regular reunions for discussions of common interests, optionally creating an association" (quoted after Gregersen 1991b, 67 (our translation).

This preparatory meeting was held June 24, 1931, i.e. before the Second Linguistic Congress in Geneva. Having returned from the Congress, where he had had discussions with the leading Praguians, Karcevskij, Jakobson and Trubetzkoy, Hjelmslev issued a formal invitation to a regular founding meeting to be held September 24, 1931, The Young Turks had agreed to invite two older professors but only Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942) who was a Professor of Romance at the University of Copenhagen (and his wife) responded.

It has some implications for our argument below to note here that was it not for Louis Hjelmslev, the Linguistic Circle would not have come into existence. He was the moving spirit, the entrepreneur – who learned his lesson from Prague.[302] He also was a dominant figure in the life of the Circle for its first three years until he had to move from Copenhagen in the autumn of 1934.

Hjelmslev mentions in the circular he sent out before the first meeting of the founding members September 1931 that he had had exchanges with members of the Prague Linguistic Circle at the second Congress of Linguists, the Geneva congress of 1931 (repeated in [Hjelmslev] 1951:8). No specific names are given. But at the meeting itself, 24th of September 1931, Hjelmslev informed the others

---

302. In the case of Prague, this is not quite equivalent. Mathesius had organized a circle but it was Roman Jakobson who radicalized it (Toman 1995).

present that he had promised Roman Jakobson that he would organize a description of the Danish standard language according to Praguian principles and as part of the *Internationale Phonologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.[303] This, then would be one of the first aims for the newly founded Circle enrolling it in the phonological army on the move as one of several foot soldiers.

In 1934, taking advantage of his degree in Indo-European comparative linguistics, Hjelmslev became the first teacher of Indo-European and general linguistics as a 'docent' (equivalent to 'Reader') at the newly[304] founded University at Aarhus. Since that is in Jutland, many hours away from Copenhagen, he was not very active in the Linguistic Circle from the fall of 1934 and until 1937 when he succeeded Holger Pedersen in the chair of Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen. During this period Brøndal and his associates dominated in the life of the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen (Gregersen 1991b, 98–101).

After 1937, when Louis Hjelmslev was back, he and Viggo Brøndal had spirited academic discussions in the Circle meetings, often spurned by the other members who loved to listen to the two giants crossing swords (Fischer-Jørgensen 1981). But these two main figures of Danish structuralism had gradually developed to become each other's favourite enemies. The early friendship turned into the opposite already in 1933 when Brøndal prevented the publication of Hjelmslev's second major statement of principles, the so-called *Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques* manuscript (which would only be published posthumously as Hjelmslev 1973a). In 1937 Brøndal had tried (in vain) to persuade the Faculty at Copenhagen to appoint himself – and not Hjelmslev – as Holger Pedersen's successor. Finally, in 1942 when Brøndal was terminally

---

303. This is also mentioned in the first circular of the Association under the headline: Synchronic phonology of various languages: "*L. Hjelmslev* (Copenhague) se propose de publier une description phonologique du danois moderne." Jakobson (1932b, 325). In the same Bulletin, it is mentioned that Viggo Brøndal prepares a treatise on the system of vowels (ibid. 324). Cf. Brøndal (1936) in *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague* 6.

304. Aarhus University started in 1928.

ill, he confronted Hjelmslev in an attempt to deprive him of the future leadership of the Linguistic Circle. Hjelmslev emerged victorious (Brøndal died shortly afterwards) but he did not escape scars (Gregersen 1991b). From then on, the only Danish structuralist programme on the table in Copenhagen was that of glossematics, a programme which took pride in combating any transcendental (including any Brøndalian) perspective on linguistics.

3.2 The Structure of Linguistic Circles

There is no doubt that the idea of creating a circle was inspired by Prague. But which specific features of the Prague circle could be imported at all? In this section we focus on the organization and document how closely the Copenhagen Circle was modelled on the original Prague Circle.

3.2.1 Discussion meetings, not a lecture society

At the planning meeting before the actual foundation mentioned above, Hjelmslev had given an introduction where he made no secret of the fact that there was both a positive reason: the possibility for Danish linguists to join in the discussions started at the first Congress of Linguists in 1928 and continued at the second one, and a negative reason to create a new organization. The negative reason accords very well with what Toman writes about the Prague Circle. Toman quotes Mathesius:

> Neither learned societies nor scholarly groups were able to create an atmosphere in which discussion could flourish. ... The Prague Linguistic Circle is an exception to this. In its meetings which take place twice a month, and are alternately located at the English Department of Charles University and at members' homes, more than half of the time is reserved for discussion; and it is usually quite difficult to make the participants part, notwithstanding the late hour. In my opinion, there are two reasons for this: first, the intimacy of the atmosphere, which is a result of the fact that the Circle is a closed society whose members have grown together through frequent contact; secondly, there is identity of

intellectual interests which exercises mutual attraction. (Mathesius 1929, 1130, cit. in Toman 1995, 155)

Learned societies were not the answer to the crisis in research. A collaborative effort was. And regular meetings outside of the formal institutions would create for the young linguists an intimate arena for discussion.

3.2.2 Common reference points: critical reception of the current international literature, hosting international like-minded researchers

The very idea of creating a working association for young like-minded linguists presupposed that at the outset they shared some ideas about what they wanted to do with linguistics but also and more importantly a will to share presuppositions. A critical reception of current ideas in order to find a common way forward was stimulated by having young researchers review new literature and having them present their own ideas for discussion (cf. Fischer-Jørgensen 1998). Little by little a library was formed and when the *Acta Linguistica* came into existence as the leading journal for structuralist linguistics (1939), cf. below section 4.3, Copenhagen would benefit from receiving a host of books for review while also benefitting from the numerous exchange arrangements which were put into place with other societies and associations.

This library of international literature was to be an asset for the members, in particular the younger members, who could not afford to buy so many books themselves. Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (1911–2010) reports in her memorial speech on Roman Jakobson and Denmark that her teacher L.L. Hammerich got the Prague publications straight from the press – and regularly passed them on to her for her to read (and to keep). Thus the *Travaux* made lasting impressions on her (Fischer-Jørgensen 1997, 18). To sum up: The international literature was made available for members and critically discussed at the meeting creating 'the magic of a common language' as Toman puts it. Add to this that the circles were the obvious meeting point when foreign researchers visited the country. Thus there was constant traffic between Copenhagen and Prague

(cf. below on the visits to Czechoslovakia by Hjelmslev and Brøndal and the visits by Jakobson to Denmark).

3.2.3 A plan of publications distributed according to genre: Bulletins du Cercle, Travaux du Cercle and finally a journal, i.e. the Acta Linguistica

The organization of the linguistic circles which Jakobson participated in shared the characteristic that they were well organized and no less well published. Jakobson himself made numerous contributions to the Czech press, there were minutes for every meeting and all jubilees were duly celebrated. Contributions from Prague and abroad found a venue in the *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*. The famous fourth volume in this series included a number of central contributions by Jakobson.

Hjelmslev closely emulated the CLP but added the publication of a *Bulletin* probably modelled on the *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*. For the first *Bulletin* in 1933 he offered a manuscript based on his presentations of a theory of grammatical correlations. The committee did not, however, accept this offer (cf. the 'avis au lecteur' in Hjelmslev 1973). As mentioned above, this was the first confrontation between Brøndal and Hjelmslev. It was certainly not the last one but it had the unfortunate consequence that this significant paper was not published at the point in time when it would arguably have made a difference. The paper e.g. contains a detailed critique of Roman Jakobson's approach to the theory of linguistic categories, in particular his binarism.

The first *Bulletin* covering the year of 1934 appeared in 1935. Some additional volumes did appear but then the series stopped with no. VII (covering the years 1940–41 but only appearing 1946), only to be restarted after Hjelmslev's death with the collected *Bulletins* VIII-XXXI appearing 1970 and covering the period 1941–1965. Finally, the bulletins were incorporated into the *Acta Linguistica* as they are still.

The first volume in the series of *Travaux du Cercle Linguistiques de Copenhague* appeared in 1945. The CLC never succeeded in presenting any truly collective publication like the famous *Thèses* of the CLP, the closest equivalent being *Travaux* V, a festschrift dedicated

to Hjelmslev on his 50th birthday (1949). Jakobson contributed to this book and this is indeed the starting point of the correspondence between Jakobson and the somewhat younger Eli Fischer-Jørgensen which would last until Jakobson's death (Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020).

We treat the history of the *Acta Linguistica*, the journal which originally was to have been a joint Prague-Copenhagen effort, briefly below, section 5.3.

3.2.4 The committees

The CLP seems to have had a system of committees (Toman 1995 calls them commissions and mentions four of them, 119). In the history of the CLC they were equally pivotal. The CLC established three committees already at their first meeting, a phonological one (with Brøndal and Hjelmslev among its members), a grammatical committee (same story) and finally a committee for caucasiology with only two members, Hjelmslev and Kai Barr (1896–1970). Soon a bibliographical committee would also be established.

The background for having a phonological committee was, as mentioned above, partly that Hjelmslev had promised Roman Jakobson to initiate a phonological description of modern Danish, but in the preparations for the founding meeting, Hjelmslev also mentioned Baudouin de Courtenay, Saussure, Gauthiot, Sapir as well the Praguians (Gregersen 1991, 74).

Hjelmslev made no secret of the fact that he hoped that the grammatical committee would have the same impact for grammar as Praguian phonology had had for the study of phonology. It is even mentioned in the minutes: closely modelled upon the phonological offensive the grammatical committee was to sketch a programme, show its applicability in a few case studies and then present to the International Congress a proposal for international cooperation (Gregersen 1991b, 75). Hjelmslev had talked to Karcevskij about this possibility and at the meeting he urged haste since the Praguians, according to Karcevskij would expand into grammar soon, based upon the Karcevskij approach (probably his *Système du verbe russe*, Karcevskij 1927).

Brilliantly planned, but unfortunately it did not work out that way. Most likely because there were two theories of grammar present

in the committee and two theoreticians, Viggo Brøndal and Louis Hjelmslev. This is the subject of section 5.2, below.

4. Circles: a structuralist alternative to societies

4.1 Circles and societies

Toman 1995 (passim) and Radunovic 2017 both discuss the concept of a circle against the backdrop of the learned societies which were characteristic of how academic life was organized before the advent of structuralism. The society is above all a place and occasion for lectures. The circle, however, is an arena for discussion and, we might add, for forging theoretical weapons to be used in the international battle for hegemony within a field. This presupposes a certain balance between the creative individual and his or her group. The creative individual must reap the benefits of a critical assessment of his or her contributions while the less creative individuals get the benefits of belonging to a group.[305]

There were developments within the CLP documented by Toman which gradually made the circle look more like a political battle

---

305. That this also might be a matter of life stages such that the young benefit incomparably more than the established researchers is an important theme for Margaret Thomas's analysis of Jakobson's circles (Thomas 2011) where she poses the question of why he did not establish a Circle in Cambridge, Mass. In this connection it might be illuminating to quote from a letter Jakobson wrote to Fischer-Jørgensen in 1949: "As for your mention of the theories of the Prague School and the Americans, I still less believe in the existence of such schools. America presents a great variety of approaches, and some Yale linguists are erroneously considered in Europe to represent the American linguistic doctrine. It is rather an interesting but not at all typical minority. And in the linguistic life in such American important centers as Harvard, New York, or San Francisco, you will find almost no traces of the influence of this group. I feel still more that the notion /2/ [of] "Prague School" is an artificial abstraction. I feel almost nothing in common with Mukařovský, no common denominator between Vachek and Havránek, etc." (Roman Jakobson to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen 14.03 1949 (letter 2), cit. in Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 121 ff.). The historical context of this statement might make it less general: Havránek and Mukařovsky were both behind the Iron Curtain whereas Jakobson was being investigated by the FBI for his possible Communist leanings.

organization than an academic union of liberal individuals (Toman 1995, 153 ff.). At the outset, the CLP was a house with many different inhabitants, guided by the idea that if they acted in unison they could make a difference. They were dead set against positivism which they saw as monographic treatments of endless disparate facts; they were for radical theory, for modernism as anti-historicism and more or less vaguely for joint ventures. They did, however, gradually develop a common purpose and that found its perfect outlet at the International Congresses of Linguists. Thus they participated with gusto at the first Congress where a joint paper by Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy was a sensation, e.g. making Antoine Meillet feel that Indo-European linguistics was 'démodé' (quoted by Jakobson in his report on the congress in *Prager Presse* (Jakobson 1928e, 197)). At the second Congress in Geneva 1931 they made history by presenting their acclaimed *Thèses*.

Jakobson sent a letter to Trubetzkoy describing the spirit which had changed the Prague Circle:

> The initiative core of the circle has now concluded that the circle in its function as a parliament of opinions, as a platform for a free discussion, is a relic, and that it has to be transformed into a group, a party, which is tightly interlocked as far as scientific ideology is concerned. This process is taking place at present with much success. An initiative committee of sorts has established itself in the circle, including Mathesius, a very able linguist, Havránek, Mukařovský, Trnka and myself. This transformation of the circle literally inspirited its members; in fact, I have never seen such a degree of enthusiasm in the Czechs at all. (Roman Jakobson to N.S. Trubetzkoy 16.04.1929, after Toman 1995, 154).[306]

The development gradually took the CLP from a parliament to a party, it seems. The CLP even had a paragraph of exclusion. Members who were found to counteract the purpose of the Circle would be excluded. At the end, only one person was in fact excluded (Toman 1995) but members had to sign a declaration saying that they

---

306. Toman notices that in the reprint of the Jakobson Trubetzkoy correspondence, the word 'party' was omitted (Toman 1995, 6).

would work for the purposes stated. Actually, Hjelmslev signed it 20th of February 1939 (Toman 1995, note 7, 288).

4.2 The two circles in their national context

Conditions in Copenhagen were in some respects the same as in Prague but also in important respects different. This analysis of the differences aims to establish as a given that the Copenhagen Circle was focused on matters linguistic in the strictest sense whereas the Praguians responded to societal needs of another kind by addressing wider issues.[307]

Copenhagen was a city characterized by an established, very secure and very well-respected historical linguistics; it was monocultural through and through and regarded itself as the leading academic city in Scandinavia. Prague, in contrast, was multilingual and replete with academic refugees from Ukraine and the Soviet Union. Besides the famous Charles University there was a German university and newly established universities at Brno and Bratislava. Thus there were also new jobs to be had. Add to this, that the Czechoslovak Republic itself was new and in search of a Central European identity *vis à vis* Russia and Germany. The Circle had a mission to accomplish here and an interested audience, in particular when they addressed issues related to purism and normativity (Toman 1995, 162). Thus the interest in the language of poetry and language contact could also be seen as a response to the Circle's national context.

5. Forging structuralism but which one? (1931–39)

In this section we detail the continuous dialogue between Jakobsonian and Hjelmslevian approaches to the analysis of both expression and content.

---

307. We shall not go into the matter of (pan)Slavic identity and Eurasianism though we are fully aware that these themes are essential at least to an understanding of what the ideological aims of Trubetzkoy's efforts were (cf. Sériot 1999; Toman 1995, ch. 10).

5.1 Phonology and/or Phonematics, equivalents or alternatives?

The Prague effort was focused on phonological analysis. In November 1934 Roman Jakobson wrote to Louis Hjelmslev in continuation of his promise of 1931 to deliver a phonological description of modern Danish inviting him to give a paper at the phonological section of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in London 1935. This is the first (surviving) letter in the correspondence between Jakobson and Hjelmslev (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 95).

Some background: The phonologists were aware that Copenhagen was a potential ally for the movement. They originally opted for Viggo Brøndal and elected him as a member of the Board of the International Association of Phonology when meeting in 1933 at the Rome Congress (Jakobson 1935, 83). Brøndal was from 1934 the chairman of the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle which was duly thanked for its backing (ibid. 84). Brøndal lectured in Prague 1936 and 1937 (Baecklund-Ehler 1977, 23) and seemed the right choice for a Danish connection although he was not really a phonologist.

Though the Linguistic Circle at Copenhagen had turned out to be a disappointment in so far as it had turned down Hjelmslev's effort at forging a new structuralist grammar, Hjelmslev was not alone. He had met and joined efforts with the trained phonetician and field linguist Hans Jørgen Uldall (1907–1957). The glossematic twins Hjelmslev and Uldall decided to accept Roman Jakobson's invitation but asked for two slots: One for a general introduction which would also be a theoretical contribution, and one for the actual analysis of Danish from a phonological (or, as it turned out, a 'cenological') point of view.

The paper given by Hjelmslev in London 1935 was a blatant attack on some aspects of phonology. It constituted the opening of an internal front inside the structuralist movement between the transcendentalists and the internalists which was to dominate the developments at Copenhagen. Apparently, the paper also was perceived as an attack. It made Trubetzkoy think that to a certain degree Hjelmslev was to be considered an "enemy" of the phono-

logical cause (Jakobson 1975, 345).[308] It is thus relevant to describe what had happened in the field of phonology, from the invitation (or Hjelmslev's own offer) to give a phonological description of Danish in 1931 and until Jakobson's invitation to Hjelmslev in 1934. Already in October 1931 Hjelmslev had presented a review of a text of Trubetzkoy in the CLC, criticizing that Trubetzkoy let 'phonematics' be based on articulatory-acoustic phonetics, and on the psychological basis of 'Sprachgefühl' (Gregersen 1991b, 81). October 19, 1931, Hjelmslev wrote to Holger Pedersen commenting on his own use of the term 'phonologique' in *Etudes Baltiques*, Hjelmslev (1931):

> Det er med velberaad hu, at jeg har bibeholdt 'phonologi(qu)e' i den betydning, det altid har haft og stadig har i fransk, og at jeg (for øvrigt i overensstemmelse med Jakovlev), der samarbejder med Pragerskolen) benytter <u>fonematik</u> for læren om fonemer. Jeg böjer mig nødig for den terminologiske terror, den – i øvrigt saa fortræffelige – Pragerskole har søgt at udøve; næsten alle de i Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague IV foreslaaede betegnelser er jo uhyrligheder, som för eller senere maa ændres, f.eks. gennem den i Genève nedsatte terminologiske kommission. (KB NKS 2718 folio)

> [I have consciously kept 'phonologi(qu)e' in the sense it has always had and still has in French, and similarly I use <u>phonematics</u> (by the way in accordance with Jakovlev who is a collaborator of the Prague school) when referring to the doctrine of phonemes. I would hate to succumb to the terminological terror which the school of Prague, in other respects so brilliant, has sought to impose; almost all the suggested terms in the Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague IV are atrocities which sooner or later will have to be changed, e.g. through the commission on terminology established in Geneva.][309]

---

308. Whereas Uldall would probably soon be converted to the faith, Brøndal assured him (ibid.).

309. Hjelmslev is referring to the TCLP 4, 1931, 309–322: *Projet de terminologie phonologique standardisée.*

The official version of this harsh statement is a short terminological introduction in the dissertation, but formulated rather more vaguely, and with no reference to the Praguians at all.

Apart from the terminological introduction, however, Hjelmslev had not published anything in the field of phonology/phonematics until the presentation at the Congress in London. So it might not have been so obvious to the phonological leadership what was to be expected from the Danes except a description according to best Praguian practice of Modern Danish. Hjelmslev had agreed to deliver a phonological description, hence he was invited to give a paper on just that in the section of the Congress organized as a showcase for the International Association for phonological studies.[310] Hjelmslev and Uldall for their part were very much aware that the London Congress would be some sort of a battle field between the Prague phonology and the quickly developing new structural theory of what they would call glossematics.[311] In a letter (December 7, 1934) to Uldall, Hjelmslev proposed that they give coordinated papers. He reasons:

> Saa meget har jeg I hvert fald lært af phonologerne, at det er af politisk betydning at demonstrere, at vi er et helt regiment. Wir marschieren! Hvis man ikke laver massepsykose, kan man ikke gennemføre noget særstandpunkt på nogen kongres. Dette har staaet mig klart siden 1931, og jeg lavede oprindelig Lingvistkredsen i det haab, at vi kunne optræde som en flok med en grammatisk teori, et haab, som Brøndal lagde øde.[312] Jeg har nu nyt haab for fonematikken. (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 31)
>
> [I have learned that much from the phonologists that it is politically important to demonstrate that we are a full regiment. Wir maschieren! If you do not create mass psychosis you are not able to follow through on any particular point of view at any congress. This has been clear to me

---

310. But it might have been the case that Brøndal in his dealings with both Trubetzkoy and Jakobson at the Rome congress had warned them that Hjelmslev had developed a number of heretical views.

311. At this point in time it was still called phonematics.

312. Cf. here 5.2.

since 1931 and I originally established the Linguistic Circle in the hope
that we could be a collective with a grammatical theory, a hope which
was laid waste by Brøndal. I now have new hope for phonematics.]

The central idea of the theory, now called 'phonematics', presented
by the two Danes is the "demand that the individual phonemes
should be defined on the basis of possibilities of combination,
implications (i.e. phonemically determined alternations), and al-
ternations (in the restricted sense of grammatically determined
alternations)" (Fischer-Jørgensen 1975, 116). However, *vis à vis* the
Praguians, Hjelmslev's introduction seems more important as a
general statement:

> By *phonematics* I understand a science which treats phonemes exclusively
> as elements of language [...] As phonemes are linguistic elements, it
> follows that no phoneme can be correctly defined except by linguistic
> criteria, i.e. by means of its function in the language. No extra-lin-
> gual criteria can be relevant, i.e. neither physical nor physiological
> nor psychological criteria. [...] The phonological phoneme is defined
> as a *sound-idea* or a *phonetic intention*, and phonology establishes the
> systems of phonemes exclusively on sound-ideas and language feeling
> (Hjelmslev [1936] 1973, 157).

After Hjelmslev's presentation, Uldall presented the description of
the Danish phonematic system, and here among other interesting
innovations introduced a new description of the dentals /t/, /d/,
and /ð/ (cf. below, later in this section).

Let us pause here briefly. Both Jakobson and Trubetzkoy were
inclined to describe the arena of linguistics as a battleground. Just
one example out of many. Having discussed the structural view
coming to the fore at the Copenhagen Congress in 1936, Roman
Jakobson goes on using the political discourse of a party:

> Die vereinzelten Versuche, gegen diese Grundsätze anzukämpfen,
> wurden als verfehlt zurückgewiesen (Jakobson 1936b).

Hjelmslev's distancing himself from the psychological bases of the phoneme definition might not have been seen as that heretical by Jakobson, however. As Jakobson later wrote (quoted above): "Trubetzkoy's 'psychologism' often considered in internation[al] literature as a mark of the Prague School was emphatically refuted from the beginning, by almost all Prague ~~lingui~~ phonemicists." (Roman Jakobson to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen 14.03 1949 (letter 2), cit. in Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 121 ff.).

In 1937, Hjelmslev published a paper *Accent, intonation, quantité* which does include some critique of Jakobsonian views, (viz. Jakobson 1931), but the next important step in their mutual discussion undoubtedly occurred on October 25, 1937. On that day Hjelmslev, invited by Jakobson, presented his paper on *Forme et substance linguistique* to the CLP.[313] In this paper, Hjelmslev (1938, 1939a) stated that linguistic form is independent of the substance in which is manifested, that form can only be recognized and defined by making abstraction from substance. Hjelmslev again explicitly distanced himself from the phonologists' definition of the phoneme on the basis of substance (Hjelmslev 1973, 99). According to Baecklund-Ehler (1977, 23) this presentation seems to have troubled Jakobson very much.

Jakobson at that time seemed to become more independent of Trubetzkoy, insisting on both *distinctive features* instead of phonemes as the basic units and on *binarism* instead of a flexible approach to oppositions as fundamental concepts in phonology (but still advised detailed attention on the part of linguists to the relation between form and substance).

It is interesting in this connection to read the first part of the dialogue summarizing Jakobson's experiences in Denmark 1939 at a distance. Jakobson reminisces:

> My months in Denmark, where I was in close collaboration with the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle with Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942) and Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), major figures in the history of the great

---

313. Hjelmslev would also give a paper on his work with the Rasmus Rask heritage at the Scandinavian Seminar (in Czech, cf. Jakobson 1937).

Danish linguistic tradition, forced me to concentrate deeply on the theoretical bases of phonology. On my own part, I questioned the attempts of the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle to remove phonic substance as an object of our science, and I insisted on the opposite necessity of detailed attention on the part of linguists to the relation between form and substance. At the same time, these discussions led me to carry to its logical conclusion the principle of relativism in phonological analysis. This principle had been enunciated already in the first two volumes of the *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, where the very idea was considered as a secondary notion, derived from the idea of phonological relations. But despite the premise, one can find here and there in the phonological works of the Prague orientation during the late 1920s and 1930s instances where phonological units are defined in absolute psychological or physical terms, rather than relational ones. I must admit that these debates on methodology in Copenhagen taught me to maintain a greater rigor in my definitions so as not to substitute illicitly absolute material terms for the strictly relative terms demanded by exact science (Jakobson and Pomorska 1983, 35–36).

The story as told with hindsight thus became that Jakobson learned from the Copenhagen discussions. It is evident that he has learned from Hjelmslev (and not Brøndal with whom he largely agreed already before arriving) but that he has not been convinced by Hjelmslev to change sides: The linguist still has to pay detailed attention to the relation between form and substance. Relativism as it was used e.g. in *Preliminaries* to contrast formant structures, is the approved result.

In 1949, Hjelmslev would turn 50 and his colleagues in the CLC decided to publish a joint work celebrating his theoretical efforts. Jakobson was invited to contribute a paper for *Recherches structurales* as the Festschrift was called, and chose to write "On the Identification of Phonemic Entities". Here Jakobson actually quotes Hjelmslev from the London Congress 1935, that "no phoneme can be correctly defined except by linguistic criteria". In order to give an example of the above-mentioned relativism/relational terms, Jakobson uses the example from Danish presented by the Uldall Hjelmslev team in London:

In different positions the relation strong/weak can be rendered by different variants [...] In Danish this opposition strong/weak is rendered, for example by *t* vs. *d* in strong position, and by *d* vs. *ð* (Jakobson 1949, 211; this example is reused in *Preliminaries* (Jakobson, Fant & Halle 1952, 5–6).[314]

After their direct confrontation in 1937 and Jakobson's period in Denmark (1939–1940), the next time Jakobson and Hjelmslev discussed phonematics/phonology was at a meeting in the CLC on May 26 1950.[315] The discussion was introduced by Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (see Fischer-Jørgensen 1966). In a letter to Fischer-Jørgensen, Jakobson expresses his thanks to her for a "lucid exposition of our view on the ultimate phonemic entities" (Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 149). To Hjelmslev he writes: "The discussions with the friends from our Linguistkredsen was for me the most dramatic and instructive course I passed through." (30.07.1950, (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25). According to the resumé of the meeting in Fischer-Jørgensen (1966, 24f.), Hjelmslev's principal critique of Jakobson's theory was again that the "distinctive-feature analysis is purely substantial." In Jakobson 1979, 52, he still refers to Hjelmslev's "attack" at the CLC-meeting in May 1950.

---

314. See also a critical letter from Fischer-Jørgensen to Jakobson addressing precisely this analysis in Jensen & D'Ottavi (2020), 174 ff.; Jensen (2021).

315. As with all meetings in the CLC, this meeting is listed in the relevant Bulletin, in this case Bulletin VIII-XXXI. The reference there directs the patient researcher to the paper by Fischer-Jørgensen on "Form and Substance in Glossematics", published in the *Acta Linguistica* X,1. In section 4.1 Fischer-Jørgensen lists three reasons given by Hjelmslev for rejecting the distinctive feature analysis "In a discussion with Roman Jakobson in the linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, 26.5.1950, and in private discussions" (note 77). Among the three reasons we find the third one of theoretical interest: "There is a jump in the analysis when we pass from phonemes (taxemes) to distinctive features, because this point means per definitionem that the analysis on the basis of selection is exhausted. On the feature level, there will be solidarity between the categories. The categories voicing, labiality etc. cannot occur separately (as is the case with vowels and consonants, where a syllable can consist of cv or v alone) but are all present in all taxemes" (Fischer-Jørgensen 1966, 24).

The dialogue between Hjelmslev and Jakobson continued in the form of references: In 1956 Jakobson (with Halle) criticized Hjelmslev's "algebraic" approach, while in 1971, six years after the death of Hjelmslev, Hjelmslev's focus on form "out of touch with substance" is called "futile".

However, Jakobson in this period sometimes still goes to Hjelmslev to find the better term. In the Jakobson Papers at MIT you find a note: "Hjelmslev VIII Congress, 107: 'complementary distribution' much better term of 'mutual exclusion' (Daniel Jones)" In Jakobson's Retrospect 1962 (SW 1, 641), you find: "'mutual exclusion' (in other terms 'complementary distribution')", though without mentioning either Jones or Hjelmslev.

Hjelmslev in general refers to Trubetzkoy and not to Jakobson, when writing on the Prague School in phonology. In the proposal to elect Jakobson as a member of the Royal Danish Academy, Appendix A below, he positioned Jakobson as a member of "the circle of linguists mainly of a Slavic origin who assembled around N.S. Trubetzkoy" and his organizational skills are highlighted just as much as his linguistic oeuvre. This is probably both because Hjelmslev positioned himself as Trubetzkoy's major adversary within the group of structuralists and because he saw Jakobson as a prolific and innovative researcher but not as a great theoretician. Though Jakobson was early overtly critical of Ferdinand de Saussure (which was the impetus to the intervention by Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy at the first Congress of Linguists), in particular of his distinction between synchrony and diachrony, it is probably fair to say that Jakobson never attempted to formulate a full-fledged theory of language which could be compared with what is in *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* (the OSG), Hjelmslev 1943). In the proposal to elect Jakobson to the Royal Academy, Hjelmslev refers to Jakobson's lectures at the University of Chicago and announces that this synthesis, "an integrated theory of language structure" will appear as the title "Sound and Meaning". But the book never appeared.

There are important similarities between the stances towards phonological analysis taken by our two protagonists Jakobson and

Hjelmslev. They both use the function of commutation between the expression level and the content level in order to find the primary units of the phonological analysis. They also both of them dissolve the phonemes into features but here the similarity stops: Jakobson always gives the sound substance an important place in the establishing of phonemic patterns (e.g. the French one, in Jakobson & Lotz 1949). And in *Preliminaries* he further proposed a limited set of universal distinctive features to be defined on a basis which is articulatory as well as acoustical and auditive. Jakobson deliberately insisted on the close relationship between form and substance in his analysis. He also – admittedly partly as a result of his discussions with the Copenhageners – included a relational approach in the establishing of phonological units.

Hjelmslev, on the other hand, rejected the reference to substance in the definition of the 'phoneme', in glossematics called 'expression taxeme'. The taxeme "is defined purely formally as a point of intersection in a net of functions, and independently of its manifestation in substance" (Fischer-Jørgensen 1975, 128). The equivalent to the feature level in the glossematic theory is the analysis into glossemes which again is devoid of substance and carried out separately for each category, i.e. the consonants and the vowels since their definition is based on their different role in the establishment of the next higher unit, the syllable. In glossematics great importance is attached to the establishment of categories according to syntagmatic relations, and thus to distributional phenomena. But the main difference lies in the insistence of Hjelmslev to integrate the analysis of expression (*signifiant*) and content (*signifié*) in one grand all-encompassing theory based on dependencies.

5.2 Grammar: CLP vs. CLC

It seems that Serge Karcevskij (the structuralist grammarian who had been a pupil of Charles Bally (1865–1947) and had taken a course with Saussure) was *the* member of the Prague Circle with whom Hjelmslev at the outset had most in common. Hjelmslev had a profile as a (general) structuralist grammarian already before the

first Congress of Linguists and he sought friends and inspiration based on that. Karcevskij was an obvious choice.[316]

The letters start before the Second International Congress of Linguists in Geneva, August 1931. Karcevskij, though still a member of the CLP, moved from Prague to Geneva in 1927 and thus mainly inspired the CLP from a distance. Hjelmslev had sent out complimentary copies of Hjelmslev (1928) after the Hague Congress. One of them was sent to Karcevskij. In January 1931, Karcevskij thanked Hjelmslev for the book and mentioned two works of his own, on the Russian verb, and, in an introductory form, the system of Russian in general. They continued their correspondence up to and after the Geneva Congress. In a later letter (Hjelmslev to Karcevskij, November 19, 1931), Hjelmslev referred to the Prague linguists' wish to have a phonematic description of Danish and mentioned the phonological committee established under the auspices of the CLC.[317] In the same letter he presented his ideas concerning grammar: the newly established grammatical committee of the CLC was set to discuss a description of Latin, prepared by himself based on Hjelmslev (1928), as an example later to be followed in grammatical descriptions of different languages, as a parallel to the Praguian initiation of collaborative international work within the field of phonology (cf. Gregersen 1991b, 75). Hjelmslev wrote to Karcevskij that he wanted to present the results at the Rome congress in 1933. It is thus again obvious that Hjelmslev wanted to assume the position in the study of structural grammar that the CLP had achieved in phonology and that he wanted the Praguians (or at least Karcevskij) to know that.

It is worth noting the date of the letter to Karcevskij, because only two weeks later, on December 4, 1931, Brøndal, as an elected member of the CLC grammatical committee, in a letter to Hjelmslev proposed a programme for a joint effort in structural grammar.

---

316. Their correspondence has been kept as part of the Hjelmslev archives at the Royal Library in Copenhagen (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25) and has now been digitalized as part of the Project INFRASTRUCTURALISM.

317. "Le comité phonématique s'occupera de la description phonématique du danois dont nous avons parlé á Genève".

Brøndal proposed to start with the category of gender in Latin, and suggested a method with 6 values, 3 simple and 3 complex ones. (Viggo Brøndal's ideas would, in fact, be presented in a paper at the third International Congress of Linguists, Rome 1933). In his significant answer (cf. Gregersen 1991a, 222), Hjelmslev changed the level of the proposed work from being about the level of categories to being about the possibility of different types of categories in general foreshadowing what he would flesh out in the paper that Brøndal rejected in 1933 (cf. section 3.1 above). The collaboration between the two leading Danish structuralists soon turned out to be impossible.

While Brøndal and Hjelmslev tried to bridge their differences in an effort to create a new structural grammar in Copenhagen, Jakobson was in fact taking the first steps towards a 'structural grammar', partly referring to Karcevskij's works on Russian. In an obituary for Karcevskij, Jakobson (1956) wrote that "Karcevskij was the first linguist of the Saussurian trend to attempt a systematic description of such a typically 'grammatical' language as Russian; the earlier research of this school was concentrated on the more 'lexicological', occidental languages."

The work of Karcevskij is an important step in the Prague Circle's attempt to enter grammatical studies. In 1932–33, Jakobson (1933) wrote that the Prague Circle tried to transfer the methodology from phonology, not only to the field of grammar, but also to cultural sciences.[318] Already in October 1931 Jakobson in a letter to Trubetzkoy (Jakobson 1975, 222) presented his ideas concerning the study of the Russian verb. They were published for all to read

---

318. This is a leitmotif in Roman Jakobson's career. He constantly wants to embrace the entire field of the *Geisteswissenschaften* and repeatedly parallels the linguistic endeavor with the ethnological and social sciences. In this, he is more in line with Uldall, see in particular Uldall 1957, 29 and the analysis of marriage types on page 40. It is a matter of some interest that Francis J. Whitfield in his translation of Hjelmslev 1943 adds the field of social anthropology instead of psychology as the science of non-linguistic content substance based on Hjelmslev's own copy and discussions with him (on page 70) cf. Whitfield 1993, 129.

in a Festschrift for Mathesius, August 3 1932.[319] The book includes
several other contributions on grammar, among others Karcevskij
on Russian substantives. In the paper, Jakobson transposed Trubetz-
koy's concept of *merkmalhaltig/merkmallos* ('marked'/'unmarked', i.e.
markedness) from phonology to grammar. While Trubetzkoy did
not always insist that oppositions be binary, in this article Jakobson
analyzed several morphological correlations in Russian from an ex-
plicitly binary point of view,[320] the main references being Peškovskij
and Karcevskij.

On April 27, 1933, Hjelmslev gave a paper at the Linguistic Cir-
cle of Copenhagen with the title "Structure générale des systèmes
grammaticaux" (Gregersen 1991a, 220ff; Gregersen 1991b, 86ff.). In
the printed version of this paper (Hjelmslev (1933a, [1973]), he crit-
icized the universality of Jakobson's binarism. He further discusses
Trubetzkoy/Jakobson's idea of 'merkmalhaftig' ('markedness') and
proposed as an alternative his own concepts *extensive* and *intensive*.
Hjelmslev wanted to publish a paper based on this and another
lecture (on case) in the first instalment of the programmed *Bulletin
du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague.* However, as mentioned above,
the majority of the committee on publications, including Brøndal
decided to decline the offer. Hjelmslev had wanted to use this article
as a notable preparation for his grammatical offensive at the third
International Congress of Linguists, Rome 1933, thus preparing the
ground for a major Copenhagen impact aimed to create a distinctive
structural grammar. This was his way to escape the failure of the
original 1931 Brøndal-Hjelmslev collaboration in the grammatical
committee. If Brøndal wanted to participate he could do so on his
own (and he did, cf. Brøndal 1933), provided Hjelmslev could do

319. When Hjelmslev authored the proposal to elect Roman Jakobson as a foreign
member of the Danish Royal Academy, this was one of the papers he referred to (cf.
below Appendix A, note 20).

320. Writing on grammar, Jakobson could write an article based on his dogma of
binarism without being too much in conflict with Trubetzkoy who was doing his
main research in phonology. Trubetzkoy actually seemed not to be so happy with
Jakobson's exposition, see Trubetzkoy's letters in Jakobson (1975, 222f; 242). For
a more detailed presentation of the discussions between Trubetzkoy and Jakobson
on markedness theory, see Andersen 1989.

the same. The discussion about and the final refusal of the offer to publish the paper as the leading article of the CLC's first Bulletin was to be the first skirmish in a long-lasting battle behind closed doors between Hjelmslev and Brøndal, a battle which lasted until the death of the latter in 1942. Hjelmslev (1933a, [1973]) was not published until 1973, after the death of both Brøndal (1942) and of Hjelmslev himself (1965). And while Brøndal participated in the Rome Congress, Hjelmslev did not.[321]

Thus, Hjelmslev's critique of Jakobson's grammatical efforts was not published in the 1930s, and it is not clear whether it ever came to Jakobson's attention.

There is an important asymmetry here concerning the two Danish leaders. As told above, Jakobson was in close contact with Brøndal, but no letter before 1935 has survived. Brøndal wrote his letters by hand and did not keep copies. And as for the originals: In the correspondence with Fischer-Jørgensen, Jakobson explains that "when I worked in Brno I had an intensive correspondence with Viggo [Brøndal], but when the Nazis entered Czechoslovakia, my entire archive was burnt and eighteen pails of ashes remained." (Roman Jakobson to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, 13.12 1977, Letter 95, Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 323). Brøndal was also a great admirer of Trubetzkoy's and dedicated his (posthumously published) collection of *Essais de linguistique générale* (Brøndal 1943) to his memory. Trubetzkoy refers to discussions with Brøndal at the third Congress, that in Rome, and since Brøndal was elected to the Association for phonology and participated in its meeting at the Rome Congress, we can safely assume that from then on Brøndal was perceived as being friendly to the phonological movement in general and to its key figure Trubetzkoy and his junior brother in arms Jakobson in particular.

The first direct discussion in writing between Hjelmslev and Jakobson on grammar would be on case systems. As mentioned above, Hjelmslev had given a paper on case systems in CLC, May

---

321. Hjelmslev repeats some of his criticism of Jakobson (1932) in his notes for his lessons at Aarhus University in the autumn of 1934; these were, alas, also printed only after Hjelmslev's death (as Hjelmslev 1972).

1933, but published the result, his book *La catégorie des cas*, only in 1935. In the book, there are no references to Jakobson, but some to Brøndal and one to Karcevskij. For the first time Hjelmslev published his theory concerning the role of participation (which was the theme of his lectures from 1933 leading to the refused paper). In the book Hjelmslev defined 'grammar' as the "theory of 'fundamental meanings' [Ger. *Grundbedeutungen*, Fr. *significations fondamentales*] or values and of the systems constituted by them"[322] (Hjelmslev 1935, 84). The 'fundamental meaning' of an individual member of a category is obtained by abstraction from the meaning of its variants and by taking into account the opposition of the other members of the category. The category of case is defined as expressing a relation between two objects, whereas the individual cases are defined by means of the three dimensions: direction, cohesion, an d subjectivity/objectivity. Each dimension may contain from 2 to 6 members. The number and type of members are derived from a logical system of oppositions in which participation plays a great role. A member may be either *intensive* or *extensive* (Hjelmslev 1935, Fischer-Jørgensen 1966). In his analysis of case, Hjelmslev not only included inflectional morphology, but also took word order into consideration, though this feature was traditionally seen as belonging to syntax.

In 1936, Jakobson presented an in depth discussion of Hjelmslev's ideas on case (Jakobson 1936a). While Hjelmslev had treated the *category* case in general and briefly presented several case systems, Jakobson's focus is on the Russian case system. This case system usually is presented with 6 cases/forms (which might have been difficult to deal with in a symmetrical, binary description). Roman Jakobson, however, partitions two of the cases in two, so that he gets 8 cases, and presents them in this way (Jakobson 1936a, 281). For each opposition, the marked case is either to the right of or beneath the unmarked one:

---

322. "La grammaire est la théorie des significations fondamentales ou des valeurs et des systèmes constitués par elles ...".

$$(N \quad \sim \quad A) \quad \sim \quad (G\,I \quad \sim \quad G\,II)$$
$$\wr \qquad \wr \qquad \wr \qquad \wr$$
$$(I \quad \sim \quad D) \quad \sim \quad (L\,I \quad \sim \quad L\,II)$$

Jakobson thus succeeded in making only binary distinctions. In his treatment of Hjelmslev (1935), Jakobson did not mention Hjelmslev's 'sublogical' system with the participation laws,[323] and thus did not mention the use of *extensive* and *intensive*. Jakobson, however, gave a brief specific critique of Hjelmslev's analysis of Gothic cases. Jakobson further substituted the term *Gesamtbedeutung* for Hjelmslev's *Grundbedeutung*, and criticized Hjelmslev for including word order in his case analysis. In this connection, Jakobson quoted Brøndal with approval for sharply separating case theory and morphology in general from syntax, i.e. separating the levels of case morphemes and word order (Jakobson 1936a, 245, 287). Both statements are in explicit contrast to Hjelmslev's approach. Jakobson thus directly plays Brøndal out against Hjelmslev. Jakobson had corresponded with Brøndal on Brøndal 1935, and Brøndal visited Jakobson in Prague in 1936. Hjelmslev for his part reacted in a note in Hjelmslev (1937a), where he defended his use of *Grundbedeutung*.

5.3 Jakobson and Hjelmslev (and Brøndal) create the structuralist flagship Acta Linguistica (1937–39)

Already in the first Bulletin of the *Association internationale pour les études phonologiques*, Roman Jakobson had written:

> La rapidité du développement ainsi que les dimensions de l'échelle sur laquelle se déroule le travail phonologique international, exigent

---

323. However, interesting enough, he quotes his own 1932 article with alfa and beta instead of A and B. It thus is more similar to Hjelmslev's paper. For a more detailed account of Jakobson's and Hjelmslev's ideas of markedness/participation, see Andersen 1989.

impérieusement la publication d'un périodique special pour la phonol-
ogie. (Jakobson 1932b, 322)

When Hjelmslev visited Prague and Brno 1937, he and Jakobson
started negotiations to found an international journal for struc-
tural linguistics. As Jakobson had also discussed this with Brøn-
dal the relationship between Brøndal and Hjelmslev became an
issue (Gregersen 1991b, 103 ff.). When the *Acta Linguistica* finally
was to be launched in 1939, the idea was that the two main editors,
Brøndal and Hjelmslev would write a common editorial. Jakobson
was in Copenhagen precisely at that point in time and according
to Baecklund-Ehler 1977, he and Brøndal discussed what would
later be Brøndal's solely authored editorial, appropriately entitled
'Linguistique structurale'. Apparently, Jakobson had endorsed it.
Hjelmslev, however, would not sign it and wrote his 'La notion de
rection' (Hjelmslev 1939b) instead. At least from that point and on-
wards it must have been clear to Jakobson that in his dealings with
Copenhagen he would soon be forced to choose between Brøndal
and Hjelmslev.

Having left Scandinavia with the last ship to reach the United
States from Sweden in 1941, Jakobson lost all contact with Europe
until 1945. Brøndal died in 1942 so when Jakobson and Hjelmslev
reopened their correspondence in 1945, the choice of a collaborator
(and main editor of *Acta Linguistica*) had been forced by external
circumstances. However, Jakobson would still refer to Brøndal's
editorial as a great introduction to the structural point of view
(Jakobson 1971b, 714).

Contrasting the two editorials gives us a clue to two different
approaches to what structuralism was, and should be. Brøndal's
account is expansive and appeals to world views and other sciences
in an attempt to advertise a general new approach to the human
and social sciences. Structuralism is a general programme for a
radical break with the past. Hjelmslev's paper, on the other hand, is
technical, focused on language internal dynamics and probably also
more parochial in that it is clearly a programme for a glossematic
approach. The Brøndal approach leads on to what we have in the
introduction called phase 2 structuralism and as such is more in

line with the way Roman Jakobson thought of structuralism (cf. Hastrup on Lévi-Strauss this volume). The Hjelmslev line, on the other hand, would dominate the actual journal, the *Acta Linguistica*, for the years to come.

What then were the implications for a general coherent structuralist movement of the fact that two of the possible leaders, Jakobson and Hjelmslev diverged in important ways? For us this implies that structuralism should be analyzed at several levels: The structuralists in general agreed to take Saussure as their starting point. This was, however, more natural for Hjelmslev than for Jakobson. Hjelmslev had the same background and had studied some of same phenomena as Saussure and he had read Saussure very closely. Jakobson, on the other hand, from the outset was critical of the blindness ascribed to linguistic change in Saussure's *Cours* (he stresses the teleology of change) and never accepted the dichotomy between diachrony and synchrony as a fundamental tenet. In the above, we have documented that a split inside the structuralist movement was created between: On the one hand those who sided with Jakobson and wanted to integrate linguistics with other sciences, be they natural sciences (e.g. phonetics) or cultural (e.g. ethnology). On the other hand, those who sided with Hjelmslev and took autonomy much more seriously and sought to build a structural linguistics without any reference to anything outside the realm of language. This great divide led the former to what the latter would critically label 'transcendentalism'. Similarly, the former criticized the latter for the futility of a formal or even 'algebraic' approach. It is still an open discussion whether the two strands would necessarily be construed as structural-functional versus formal or whether this is a contingent fact about the actual practice and theory of Jakobson and Hjelmslev.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. We want to get back to before WW2. How did Jakobson get to Copenhagen?

6. 1939: Hjelmslev (and Brøndal) active in the success of rescuing Jakobson

According to Toman's translation of Jakobson's Activity Report for the Years 1939–1945, Jakobson left Prague after several weeks of hiding on the 23rd of April 1939. Apparently, he and his wife Svatava arrived in Copenhagen on the same day (Jakobson in the police report to the Swedish police, Jangfeldt 1997, 147). They were greeted at the Main Central Station by Hjelmslev. Jakobson thinks back to this occasion in his letter to Vibeke Hjelmslev bringing his condolences on the occasion of Hjelmslev's death 1965:

> A few days ago Svatja' and I spoke about Louis, and to both of us one scene was the most vivid: when we miraculously succeeded in passing through Germany and saw through [the] window of our coach the tall and jovial figure of Louis, who then for a moment suddenly disappeared, and we were frightened because we associated with him the vision of salvation (Tatsukawa 1995, 17; cf. KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25).

Having arrived from Prague, Jakobson ([1939] 1962a) lectured at the University of Copenhagen on "the structure of phonemes" and also gave a lecture in the Linguistic Circle. According to the Rapport sur l'activité du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague 1931–51, this was on "Le signe zero" (25th of May 1939, annual meeting of the Circle). (Rapport, 29). In the Bulletin, there is a reference to the contribution by Jakobson to *Mélanges Bally* with the same title. At the meeting, Jakobson gave examples of the contrast between a marked and an unmarked element manifesting no overt distinction taken from phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and stylistics. His treatment comes close to Hjelmslev's in that e.g. the present tense is seen as both a present and a no-tense. Both Brøndal and Hjelmslev had comments at the meeting. Brøndal's comments seem to be quite critical of Jakobson's 'otherwise very enlightening' presentation. Hjelmslev directly questions whether Jakobson does not confound syntagmatics and paradigmatics in generalizing from the contrast between an expressed ending and a zero to the neutralizations and participative relationships (Bulletin V, 14).

The next pressing problem was to find an income for the Jakob-sons. However, soon the Rask-Ørsted foundation gave a grant to L.L. Hammerich and Holger Pedersen so that Jakobson and his collaborator, a young Danish linguist by the name of Helge Poulsen (who incidentally was married to a Czech who was very kind to both Roman Jakobson and his wife Svatava, cp. Fischer-Jørgensen 1997, 22), could prepare a manuscript by one Tönnies Fenne for publication.[324] This grant was for 2.000 Danish kr. equaling ap-proximately 70.000 DKK in today's money (equal to approximately 9.000 Euro). Of this grant, the 1500 kr. were paid out during Jakob-son's stay while 500 remained at the Foundation for later expenses (according to the Annual report of the Rask Ørsted Foundation, 11). The remaining 500 kr. were paid out during 1940–41 (ibid. 24), most likely to Helge Poulsen.

Jakobson proceeded first to Norway where he had Alf Sommer-felt (1892–1965) as his close friend. When Norway was invaded by the Nazis, he fled to Sweden. The escape has been well documented by Jahr 2017 and by Jangfeldt 1997.[325]

324. This project turned out to last for many years and Jakobson did not live to see its final publications (vol.s III and IV in 1986). He did however finish the first and the second volumes (Jakobson 1961, 1970). The history of the project is given in outline in note 295 in Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020. The edition is mentioned several times in the letters between Fischer-Jørgensen and Jakobson (see Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, index) and also in the letters between Hjelmslev and Jakobson, e.g. in the first letter after the end of WW2 1945.

325. One correction is needed though. Jangfeldt apparently identifies Karlgren as the Swedish professor of Slavistics at the University of Copenhagen. This is highly unlikely. It must be the Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren who was a member of CIPL and had recently moved from Göteborg to Uppsala. Legend has it that the only words Jakobson kept saying to the Swedish authorities was 'Karlgren'. Legend also has it that this was enough.

7. After the war: Consolidating the different structuralisms

The 1948 Paris Congress was where the Copenhageners hoped their structural theories would have the same impact as had the Praguians' phonology at the 1928 Congress in The Hague. Hjelmslev had become the Danish member of CIPL, the organizing committee, and he had accepted the invitation to give a report which was in line with the one he had given to the Brussels congress which was cancelled because of WW2. Unfortunately, he did not deliver on time and his presentation had to be given at the Congress itself. Jakobson was prevented from attending this congress. Whether this had any connection to the fact that he was being investigated by the FBI (Heller & McElhinny 2017, 171) is a matter for further archival research, but it seems likely. He was, however, very eager to have information of the Danes' participation. In a letter, July 28 1948, to John Lotz (who presented Jakobson's report at the Congress), Jakobson asks news about the Czechs, the Poles, Benveniste, the Balkan Slavs and so on. However, first of all he asks: "How was Hjelmslev and his partisans?"[326]

Since Jakobson could not participate in person, Hjelmslev had written to him and asked him to accept being the president of the international council for the *Acta Linguistica* (Louis Hjelmslev to Roman Jakobson July 10 1948, KB 2008/17, box 7). Jakobson wrote in his answer that he would be delighted to accept (telegram from Jakobson to Hjelmslev July 18 1948, KB 2008/17, box 7) – and then did not hear any news at all from Hjelmslev until he wrote to him:

> Dear Louis,
>
> From Vibeke's friendly letter to Svat'a I learned that you are writing to me. But since then nothing has come. I have had no news from you about the Congress, about the meeting of the *Acta Linguistica*, about all

---

326. Jakobson's copy of the letter (MIT MC.0072 Box 43 Folder 38). In Jakobson's correspondence with Fischer-Jørgensen (1949–82) (Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020) you find many examples of his great interest in all kinds of matters linguistic in Denmark.

the things you had promised to discuss with me. I hope you received my telegraphic answer to Paris. Write me, dear friend, and let me know, by the way, in what way you sent me Dahl's dictionary, because it still hasn't reached us. Did you receive our volume about the ancient Russian epopee that I sent you in the Spring. My Summer was literarily very active and I hope to continue this activity during the coming semester which is my leave. But I will write you more about our present and future when I finally hear from you (Roman Jakobson to Louis Hjelmslev September 20 1948. Jakobson's copy of the letter: MIT MC.0072 Box 42 Folder 23).

Apparently the books (Dahl's dictionary) arrived on the 8th of October and Jakobson wrote that in a brief notice. The next letter is from the 22nd of November:

Dear Louis,

I just received the third issue of *Acta Linguistica* and I learned from the title page that I was elected President of the International Council. I am very grateful, and I am still more surprised that in spite of all my letters I haven't heard from you. I hope nothing bad has happened, and I am eager to have some lines from you (Jakobson's copy of the letter: MIT MC.0072 Box 42 Folder 23).

Still no letter the other way. Actually, it was only when Jakobson planned to go to Denmark in 1950 that he heard from Hjelmslev. By then he had been elected to the Royal Danish Academy (at Hjelmslev's suggestion, cf. below and Appendix A) and even more significant as a testament of friendship: Jakobson had contributed to Travaux V, *Recherches structurales*, a festschrift to Louis Hjelmslev (cf. above Section 4.1). The letter reached Hjelmslev when he was teaching at Lund (Albanian!) and Hjelmslev states that he is sure that he has written to Jakobson. Jakobson visited Denmark, was present at the meeting in May at the CLC when the two giants discussed their views on phonology face to face (cf. section 4.1 above), and the next passage is about this trip and rather businesslike. But the next section is different:

2. Next – and not less emphatically – I should like to thank you for your interesting contribution to the volume which was presented to me on my anniversary, as well as for the personal greeting sent to me by your wife and yourself. There can be no mistake that I sent you my thanks in October 1949; it is a pity to think of this letter having been lost: you must have considered me very ungrateful indeed. I wrote to all the authors who had contributed to the volume, and to everybody who had sent me their greetings; I have certainly not left you aside! (Louis Hjelmslev to Roman Jakobson March 23, 1950; cf. KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25)

It is a matter of some interest that Jakobson answers like this:

Dear Louis:

I was happy to have finally a letter from you. I am sorry to learn that there were some letters from you which were lost. By the way, not only I but neither Lotz nor Martinet received any letter from you concerning their papers for your Symposium (Roman Jakobson to Louis Hjelmslev April 1, 1950; cf. KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25).

There is no doubt in either of our minds that Jakobson had a great talent for liking people and making them like him but also that Hjelmslev had as great a talent for friendship. But it must be admitted when you read the letters exchanged between them that there is an asymmetry. Hjelmslev would write letters profusely thanking Jakobson (and his wife) for the times they spent together and he would write when he wanted to ask Jakobson to do something specific or to furnish him with details about visits, but there is no small talk in the letters. Moreover, Hjelmslev apparently had no idea how strange it seemed to Jakobson as one of the most prominent contributors to the TCLC V, a volume dedicated to Hjelmslev on his fiftieth birthday, that Jakobson (nor for that matter Lotz or Martinet) did not receive at least a note of thanks. We are here entering dangerous territory for it was often the case that Hjelmslev thought he had done something which in fact he had not. If you read the letter above, you will see that he was convinced that he had in fact written a note of thanks to everyone ('there can be no mistake

that'), even though the facts contradict him. There are no copies in the archives to substantiate this. His lack of self-consciousness proved to be fatal when it was discovered that he had some sort of neurological disease and that that was at least partly responsible for his slow tempo in the 50s and 60s.

Jakobson in his first letter asks news about Rosally Brøndal, Viggo Brøndal's widow. This indicates either that he was determined to treat the Danes as a close-knit group of friends (irrespective of the facts he knew about the bitter strife between Brøndal and Hjelmslev), or that he could not care about such things. Nevertheless, for Hjelmslev this must have been a reminder that Jakobson had preferred Brøndal and thus one more indication that the friendship between Jakobson and him was a kind of *faute de mieux*.

We have mentioned that in 1949 Hjelmslev, three years after his own admission into the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, proposed that Jakobson be elected a foreign member of the Academy. The proposal was backed by Ad. Stender-Petersen, Kåre Grønbech, Kaj Barr, L.L. Hammerich and last, but certainly not least, by Holger Pedersen. Jakobson was duly elected 1949. In appendix A, you will find the Danish original and a translation of the proposal in order to elucidate which features of Jakobson's career were profiled for the Royal Academy members in 1949. One obvious observation: Jakobson is given a pedigree of Slavic linguists, and not necessarily those he would himself have pointed to. Moreover, Trubetzkoy is singled out as the real genius of the phonological movement. With the *Grundzüge*, (Trubetzkoy 1939) we have a finished work which for Hjelmslev was the real bible of the phonological movement, a movement which had inspired him to create both an organization, the CLC, and a different type of structural theory, i.e. glossematics. Jakobson never produced anything like the *Grundzüge*.

The years from 1941 till 1952 mark the unique chance of glossematics as both a theory of language and as a method of analysis to break through to the young linguists of Denmark and further on to the international scene. The beginning was that Hjelmslev during the war wrote a number of interlocking works, the brief introduc-

535

tion to the study of language (Hjelmslev 1963, *Sproget*, translated by Whitfield in 1970), the *OSG* (Hjelmslev 1943), actually the only work to be printed immediately, and finally attempted to complete his manuscript on the theory of language that he had worked on with Uldall (this remained unprinted until Whitfield edited and translated it as Hjelmslev 1975). In addition, Hjelmslev gave a long series of lectures on the theory of language. Since the lecture series was transcribed in short hand and transferred into long hand and finally typewritten by one of the students, we are today able to document what Hjelmslev said (in the same sense as the *Cours* is a testament to what Saussure meant). The glossematic offensive culminated in a series of meetings in what was called the glossematic subcommittee of the CLC 1950–1951 and in a visit by Uldall to Copenhagen. The idea was that Hjelmslev and Uldall would jointly finish the publication of the theory of language promised in their leaflet to the 1936 Congress in Copenhagen.

To make a very long story very short: None of this worked out quite as it had been planned and none of the works appeared. So neither the often promised theory of language nor its carefully thought out practice were available for other researchers than the happy few who were in personal contact with Hjelmslev. The chance for the international break-through had come and gone and the window of opportunity never opened again.

At the last international congress that Hjelmslev participated in, the 1957 Oslo Congress, he was scheduled to report on: "Dans quelle mesure les significations des mots peuvent-elles être considérées comme formant une structure?" The report (Hjelmslev 1957a) is printed in the Actes (Sivertsen 1958) and was reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959 under a different title (viz. 'Pour une sémantique structurale'). The paper is a good representative of the later period of Hjelmslev's writings. References to the author's various other works are plentiful and most of it reads like a précis of Prolegomena (Hjelmslev 1943) with particular reference to semantics. Semantics seems to have preoccupied Hjelmslev in his later years. There are some minor comments on the idea of creating universals based on substance but mainly the report is notable because it stipulates very well what structural semantics must do: Create subsets of closed

classes out of the larger open classes. Thus the idea of semantic fields is circumscribed.

At the same congress, Jakobson reported on typology. And the Copenhagen linguists, in particular Fischer-Jørgensen, made their presence known by giving reports and papers which were noted. To end this story about the congresses of linguists: Jakobson reported even at the Congress in Bucharest (1967) on Linguistics and other sciences, a report (Jakobson 1969) which is reprinted in the Kiefer and van Sterkenburg collection of papers to celebrate the CIPL. By that time, he was the celebrated grand master, the only one of the giants to survive.

8. Conclusion: Louis Hjelmslev and Roman Jakobson in the history of linguistics

Both Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev sought intensively to influence the development of a structuralist approach. Jakobson was the initiator and/or founder of three important linguistic circles over a period of thirty years: Moscow 1915, Prague 1926, New York 1943, (Thomas 2014). The Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, founded and inspired by Hjelmslev, was in fact the only strong force in this period which was not directed by Jakobson. That is in itself an important reason why it is interesting to study the relationship between Jakobson and Hjelmslev in the history of linguistics.

It is difficult to assess the current status of Jakobson and Hjelmslev in the historiography of Structuralism. There is no doubt that most histories of structuralism are focused on the influence of the early period, and in particular on the influence of the first phase on the second phase, that of – primarily Parisian – 50s and 60s structuralism. For that reason, Jakobson features as the inspiration for Claude Lévi-Strauss (Merquior 1986, chapter 2; Hastrup, this volume) while Hjelmslev is credited with inspiring Roland Barthes and Algirdas Julien Greimas (Dosse 1991, 90–93; Badir, this volume).

But we are concerned with the historiography of linguistic structuralism, and here there are several difficulties. The first one is a difference in public relations. Jakobson published an enormous amount of work during his lifetime and was eager to document it

in endless series of *Selected Writings*, as indeed it happened while he lived and has continued after his death. Almost everything is available in some form or other. This is not the case with Hjelmslev, a situation we are only redressing as we write this paper. There are significant lacunae in the publication line of Hjelmslev, lacunae which were very evident during his lifetime: First of all, he never himself published his theory of language. It was published post-humously by Whitfield (Hjelmslev 1975). But of even more significance for our period, his important paper 'Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques' was refused when he offered it for the very first Bulletin of the then newly started CLC (1933), cf above section 3 and 5. It was later planned for the first *TCLC* (1945) but again was not published. Finally, it was published posthumously in *Essais Linguistiques* II in 1973. Thus, we as historians of linguistics simply know more about Hjelmslev's thoughts and interventions in the then current debate than his contemporaries could possibly know. Apart, of course, from the happy few who were present when he presented his ideas at the CLC (the meetings took place April 27 and May 18, 1933, Hjelmslev 1951, 25).

When looked at from the distance of today, Hjelmslev's contributions seem to be much more coherent and deeply thought than they could possibly seem to Jakobson or any of his other contemporaries. On the other hand, it is just as significant that Jakobson never finished what he thought would be his magnum opus, the book 'Sound and Meaning'. Maybe we never did see the full potential of a Jakobsonian sign theory?

When we look at these two deeply enigmatic figures side by side, we can in the few letters they exchanged, see a friendship with largesse and cordiality from both sides; maybe it is most movingly expressed in the letter that Louis Hjelmslev never read, the letter Roman Jakobson sent to Vibeke Hjelmslev in commemoration of her late husband's life. Jakobson and Hjelmslev had spent some moments together in perfect relaxation and they had shared some exquisite moments of joy. But their paths diverged so that we as historians see their differences much more clearly now: Jakobson held on to binarism even despite heavy critique from Fischer-Jørgensen

and others, and he probably never got a chance to read Hjelmslev's incisive critique in his (1933a, [1973]) paper. Hjelmslev, in contrast, followed his early inclination, already documented in his (1928), to create a perfectly immanent theory of language and wanted to divorce linguistics from all other sciences (only in order to give it back its rightful place among the sciences).

Roman Jakobson is usually seen as a key figure, possibly after Trubetzkoy's death, the key figure, of the phonological movement, but maybe the phonological movement was not that coherent.[327] Maybe there are two schools of phonology, Trubetzkoy's and Jakobson's? Trubetzkoy in his 'Grundzüge' neatly severs phonetics as a natural science from the linguistic point of view, i.e. phonology. Jakobson wanted to integrate the two and did so with gusto and elegance in his theory of distinctive features.

But the 'Copenhagen school' was even less of a coherent whole: Hjelmslev abandoned the traditional view of linguistics encompassing a morphology and a syntax, for him morphology would take care of everything. But Brøndal, and later on his pupil Paul Diderichsen (1905–1964), though the latter was counted among the most important followers of Hjelmslev's, insisted on the division. And both Hjelmslev's closest collaborators Fischer-Jørgensen and Uldall expressed views which were closer to Jakobson's.

So, both the Praguians and the Copenhageners were in fact split and could not create a uniform approach, merging theory and method into a consistent Praguian or Copenhagen structuralist paradigm. In this, the first phase of structuralism is characteristically (and wonderfully) different from the third phase, Chomskyan linguistics. But in the history of linguistics, it may just be the case that the third phase was or is the exception. Never before and never since then had/has one approach to linguistics been so victorious so as to completely dominate the field.

In the present post-Chomskyan situation, the study of language would do well to revert to the many structuralisms of the first phase

---

327. Maybe Jakobson was right about 'schools' being a chimera, cf. the quote from his letter to Fischer-Jørgensen (1949, note 8 above).

to dig out what is still of value. In this endeavour a new pedigree for modern linguistics will be created where both Jakobson and Hjelmslev will have their rightful places once again.

Appendix A

Louis Hjelmslev et al.'s proposal for the election of Roman Jakobson as a foreign member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters dated 31st of January, 1949. Danish original:[328]

Til Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs historisk-filosofiske klasse.

Undertegnede foreslaar herved, at professor dr. phil. <u>Roman Jakobson</u>, Columbia University, New York, optages i Videnskabernes Selskab som udenlandsk medlem.

Roman Osipovič Jakobson, der er født 28/9 1896 i Moskva og fik sin uddannelse i Rusland, men fulgte sin familie da denne som følge af de storpolitiske begivenheder ved slutningen af første verdenskrig begav sig til Vesteuropa, bosatte sig i tyverne i Tjekoslovakiet, først i en aarrække i Praha, hvor han bl.a. var medredaktør af "Slavische Rundschau", og derefter i Brno, hvor han siden 1932 virkede som professor i russisk filologi ved Masaryk-universitetet. Paa grund af de storpolitiske begivenheder forlod han i 1939 Tjekoslovakiet og tog ophold først i København og derefter i Oslo, hvor han en tid virkede som russisk lektor; 9. april 1940 flygtede han til Sverige og tog derfra til de Forenede Stater, hvor han udnævntes i sit nuværende embede, som professor i slaviske sprog ved Columbia University.

I sine ungdomsaar beskæftigede Jakobson sig med russisk dialektologi (han var i mange aar medlem af det russiske akademis dialektkommission)[329] og med versets teori,[330] emner, som ogsaa senere til stadighed har beskæftiget ham. Men han /2/ fandt hurtig tilknytning til den kreds af sprogforskere af slavisk nationalitet, som samlede sig omkring N.S. Trubetzkoy, og som udbyggede en strukturel sprogteori paa grundlag af den tradition der udgik fra F.F. Fortunatov, W. Porzeziński og J. Baudouin de Courtenay, som disse slaviske sprogforskere senere forsøgte at sammenarbejde med de analoge (men ingenlunde identiske) synspunkter der i Vesteuropa var fremsat af F. de Saussure og hans elever. Da ogsaa Trubetzkoy (født 1890, død 1938) i begyndelsen af

---

328. A number of typos have been silently corrected.

329. His forst major work on this is *Fonetika odnogo severno –velikorusskogo govora s namečajuščejsja perexodnost'ju*, Praha 1927.

330. See especially: *O češskom stixe preimuščestvenno v sopostavlenii s ruskia*, Berlin-Moskva 1923; *Základy českého verše*, Praha 1926.

tyverne slog sig ned i Centraleuropa (siden 1922 som professor ved universitetet i Wien), og ligeledes den med Jakobson omtrent jævnaldrende russiske lingvist Serge Karcevskij begav sig til Vesteuropa (hvor han noget senere blev professor ved universitetet i Genève), paavirkede disse russiske sprogforskere, vistnok især ved Jakobsons virksomhed, i ganske særlig grad en række yngre sprogforskere i Tjekoslovakiet, der sammen med dem under Vilém Mathesius' førerskab i 1929 stiftede Cercle linguistique de Prague [ukorrekt: skal være 1926, VBJ & FG], der satte den strukturelle sprogforskning paa sit program. Allerede aaret i forvejen, paa den 1. internationale lingvistkongres i Haag 1928, hvor spørgsmaalet om den synkroniske grammatiks metode var sat paa dagsordenen som et af hovedproblemerne, gjorde Jakobson, Karcevskij og Trubetzkoy sig bemærkede ved at indgive et svar paa dette spørgsmaal, hvor de saakaldte 'fonologiske' synspunkter (dvs. fonemsynspunktet) blev gjort gældende (Karcevskij indgav desuden et svar paa samme spørgsmaal af noget større rækkevidde, og ogsaa Mathesius indgav et udførligt svar efter lignende retningslinier), og disse synspunkter kunne paa kongressen paa frugtbar maade mødes med Genèveskolens, af Ch. Bally og Alb. Sechehaye i tilknytning til Saussures lære fremsatte teser. Dette var i høj grad medvirkende til, at de fonemteoretiske og overhovedet strukturelle synspunkter vakte opmærksomhed i den lingvistiske verden og i de følgende aar blev genstand for en livlig debat, som kan siges endnu i vor tid at fortsættes, ligesom det gav stødet til at der i mange lejre rundt om i verden begyndtes et aktivt forskningsarbejde fra disse synspunkter. Jakobson var frem for nogen sjælen i alle disse be- /3/ stræbelser, og var i besiddelse af ypperlige egenskaber til at gennemføre dem; han er i besiddelse af en overordentlig sproglig lærdom og indsigt, en utrættelig arbejdsevne, en omfattende international orientering, et udstrakt personalkendskab i den lingvistiske verden og et fremragende organisationstalent. Som næstformand i Cercle linguistique de Prague, en stilling han beklædte fra kredsens stiftelse indtil den anden verdenskrig, var han (i ganske særlig grad i de senere aar, da Mathesius ved sygdom var forhindret i aktiv medvirken) den egentlige administrative leder af denne kreds, der udvidede sig med et antal udenlandske medlemmer, indledte et udstrakt internationalt samarbejde, og for en stor del blev toneangivende i det lingvistiske arbejde paa det europæiske kontinent, og blev forbillede for tilsvarende organisationer i andre lande (først for Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, der i 1931 stiftedes efter lignende retningslinier). Nævnes kan bl.a., at Cercle linguistique de Prague gennem afholdelse af Réunion phonologique internationale i

Praha 1930 og gennem udsendelse af en serie "Travaux", der efter ind-bydelse har staaet aaben for udenlandske medarbejdere, har spillet en stor rolle i det internationale lingvistiske liv. Jakobson tog endvidere inititativet til dannelsen af Association phonologique internationale, hvis leder han var, og hans personlige initiativ ligger bag adskillige fremtrædende foretagender inden for vor tids strukturelle lingvistik, bl.a. ogsaa bag det internationale tidsskrift *Acta Linguistica*, der siden 1939 udkommer i København, og i hvis internationale raad Jakobson har sæde, siden 1948 som præsident. Siden sin ankomst til de Forenede Stater har Jakobson ogsaa spillet en fremtrædende rolle i samarbejdet mellem amerikanske fonemteoretikere og strukturalister i det hele og i deres internationale forbindelser; han var medvirkende ved stiftelsen af Cercle linguistique de New York og er medlem af redaktionen af dennes tidsskrift "Word". – Medens det paa 2. internationale lingvistkongres i Genève 1931, hvor 'fonologiens' metoder var sat paa dagsordenen som et af hovedproblemerne, var overdra- /4/ get Trubetzkoy at afgive rapport herom, var det paa 4. internationale lingvistkongres i København 1936 Jakobson, der afgav rapport over den fonologiske teori om sprogfor-bund; til 6. internationale lingvistkongres i Paris 1948 havde Jakobson efter opfordring afgivet en skriftlig rapport om forholdet mellem syn-kroni og diakroni inden for lydlære og grammatik (rapporten maatte fremlægges af J. Lotz, da Jakobson var personlig forhindret i at være til stede). Det vil tilstrækkelig fremgaa heraf, hvilken fremtrædende position Roman Jakobson indtager inden for organisationen af vor tids internationale lingvistik. Roman Jakobson er imidlertid ikke blot organisator, men tillige – som den selvfølgelige forudsætning herfor – en overordentlig aktiv, flittig og produktiv forsker. Han kombinerer vidtstrakt lærdom med stor videnskabelig fantasi, og han maa anses for en af de mest originale repræsentanter for de fra Praha-kredsen ud gaaende synspunkter. Selv om han ifølge sin uddannelse og ifølge sin embedsvirksomhed saa vel tidligere i Brno som nu i New York er slavisk filolog, er hans interesseomraade den almene lingvistik; han arbejder med adskillige andre sprogomraader end netop det slaviske, og har i sine arbejder fremlagt store, bredt anlagte sammenlignende synteser og hypoteser vedrørende sprogstruktur i almindelighed, saaledes at ogsaa de arbejder af ham, der ifølge deres titel omhandler specielle sproggrupper, ofte har langt videre perspektiv.

Af stor betydning for fonemteoriens udvikling og for dens anvendelse paa slavisk omraade er den sammenfattende fremstilling af den slaviske genetiske fonemlære, han har givet i Travaux du Cercle linguistique de

Prague bind II, 1929, under den beskedne titel Remarques sur l'évolution phonologique du russe comparée à celle des autres langues slaves, et arbejde der, selv om det ifølge sagens natur, paa grund af anlæggelsen af nye synspunkter og metoder, kun kan have foreløbighedens karakter, rykkede den slaviske sproghistorie over paa et nyt grundlag, og desuden meddelte vigtige strukturelle hypoteser af almen art. De mere almene synspunkter findes nærmere præciseret i afhandlingen Prinzipien der historischen Phonologie /5/ (i Travaux IV); en ny bearbejdelse heraf er for tiden i trykken under titlen Principes de phonologie historique og vil udkomme i Paris i forbindelse med den franske udgave af Trubetzkoys Grundzüge der Phonologie. I fortsættelse af sin ungdoms interesse har Jakobson rykket versets teori ind under sine 'fonologiske' synspunkter (nævnes kan bl.a. hans meddelelse paa 1. internationale fonetikerkongres i Amsterdam 1932: Über den Versbau der serbokroatischen Volksepen), ligesom Cercle linguistique de Prague i hele sit arbejde, utvivlsomt for en ikke uvæsentlig del under Jakobsons indflydelse, har lagt vægt paa at anlægge strukturelle synspunkter paa det poetiske og litterære sprog. Dette er antagelig ogsaa aarsagen til at Jakobson inden for fonemlæren er kommet til at interessere sig i særlig grad for de prosodiske fænome-ner, for hvilke han har fremsat højst tankevækkende hypoteser.[331] I sin meddelelse paa 3. internationale fonetikerkongres i Gand 1939, med titlen Observations sur le classement phonologique des consonnes, har Jakob-son fremsat et omfattende og højst interessant forsøg paa en strukturel klassifikation af konsonanterne (kontoiderne). I 1939 lykkedes det ham gennem en omfattende syntese at naa til en helhedsopfattelse af lydsyste-mets ontogenetiske og fylogenetiske udvikling, idet han paa grund- /6/ lag af en meget omfangsrig dokumentation kunne sandsynliggøre, at barnets sprog opbygges efter en hierarkisk orden som genfindes inden for sprogtypologien, og at afatikerens sprog afbygges i nøjagtig modsat orden; denne teori, der for første gang bringer læren om børnesprog og sprogforstyrrelser ind under et systematisk helhedssynspunkt, blev offentliggjort 1941 i Språkvetenskapliga sällskapets i Uppsala förhandl-ingar for 1940–42 under titlen Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze; en ny fremstilling med titlen Les lois phonique du langage enfantin er for tiden i trykken i forbindelse med den franske udgave

---

331. E.g. "Die Betonung und ihre Rolle in der Wort- und Syntagmaphonologie," *Travaux du Cercle ling. de Prague* IV, 1931; "Über die Beschaffenheit der prosodischen Gegensätze", *Mélanges van Ginneken*, 1937; "Z zagadnień prozodji starogreckej", *Prace ofiarowane K. Wóycickiemu*, 1937.

af Trubetzkoys Grundzüge der Phonologie. – Jakobson har desuden fremsat meget dristige, men banebrydende hypoteser i sin højst originale lære om sprogforbund, oprindelig fremsat paa russisk i bogen K xarakteristike evrazijskogo jazykogo sojuza, 1931, senere videreført i afhandlingen Über die phonologischen Sprachbünde (i Travaux du Cercle ling. De Prague IV) og i den ovenomtalte rapport paa Københavnskongressen 1936.

Jakobson har endvidere givet meget betydningsfulde bidrag til den almene grammatik, baade til konjugationens og deklinationens teori,[332] og til tegnets teori, specielt til undersøgelserne af nultegnets karakter.[333] En samlet teori for sprogstruktu- /7/ ren har han fremsat for nylig i en længere forelæsningsrække ved universitetet i Chicago, som han for tiden forbereder til offentliggørelse i udvidet form under titlen Sound and Meaning. – Til den planlagte nye udgave af Les langues du monde har Jakobson udarbejdet afsnittet langues paléosibériennes, og i forbindelse dermed har han i de senere aar foretaget nogle for størstedelen endnu ikke offentliggjorte undersøgelser over giljakisk.

Roman Jakobson er en af de førende sprogforskere i vor tid, og baade paa grund af hans videnskabelige originalitet og vidsyn og paa grund af hans store arbejdskraft og organisatoriske internationale position ville det, ikke mindst paa et tidspunkt hvor der med rette lægges saa megen vægt, ogsaa fra dansk side, paa at genknytte de internationale videnskabelige forbindelser, være af betydning at indvælge professor Jakobson i det danske Videnskaberne Selskab. Det kan desuden sluttelig være rimeligt at henvise til, at professor Jakobson har en vis særlig tilknytning til Danmark: han har, som ovenfor nævnt, opholdt sig i København; han har paa mange maader haft, og har stadig, samarbejde med danske lingvister; han har holdt gæsteforelæsninger ved Aarhus og Københavns Universitet, er medlem af Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague og er (som ovenfor anført) præsident for det internationale raad der er knyttet til det i København udgivne internationale tidsskrift for strukturel lingvistik *Acta Linguistica*.

København, den 31. januar 1949.

332. "Zur Struktur des russischen Verbums", *Charisteria Mathesio*, 1932; "Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre", *Travaux du Cercle ling. de Prague* VI.
333. "Signe zéro", *Mélanges Bally*, 1939; "Null-Zeichen", *Bulletin du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague* IV.

K. Barr, K. Grønbech, L. L. Hammerich, Louis Hjelmslev, Holger Pedersen, Ad. Stender-Petersen – affatter.

Source: The Royal Academy archives, Prot. Nr 245/ 1949. Thanks to Rikke Reinholdt Petersen who retrieved the documents for us. There is also an addition written by Ad. Stender-Petersen concerning Jakobson's qualifications as a Slavic philologist.

Translation (by the authors):

We, the undersigned, hereby propose that Professsor dr. phil. Roman Jakobson, Columbia University, New York be elected to the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters as a foreign member.

Roman Osipovič Jakobson, who was born 28th of September 1896 in Moscow and was educated in Russia but followed his family when they as a consequence of the political events at the end of the first world war emigrated to Western Europe, in the 20s settled in Czechoslovakia, at first for some years in Prague where he was a co-editor of Slavische Rundschau, then in Brno where he from 1932 was active as a Professor of Russian philology at the Masaryk University. Because of the political events, he left Czechoslovakia in 1939 and settled first in Copenhagen then in Oslo where he for a time was active as a lecturer in Russian; 9$^{\text{th}}$ of April 1940 he fled to Sweden and from there he went to the United States where he got his present chair as a Professor of Slavic languages at Columbia University.

In his youth Jakobson worked on Russian dialectology (he was for many years a member of the commission for dialectology of the Russian Academy) and on the theory of verse, themes which he has reverted to time and again. But he soon found a place in the group of linguists with a Slavic nationality who gathered round N.S. Trubetzkoy and who based their structural theory of language on the tradition emanating from F.F. Fortunatov, W. Porzežiński and J. Baudouin de Courtenay, which these Slavic linguistic researchers later sought to merge with the analogous (but in no way identical) points of view which in Western Europe had been developed by F. de Saussure and his pupils. When Trubetzkoy too (born 1890, died 1938) in the early 20s settled in Central Europe (from 1922 as a Professor at the university of Vienna) and likewise the Russian linguist Serge Karcevskij, a contemporary of Jakobson's, moved to Western Europe (where he somewhat later became a Professor at the

university of Geneva), these Russian researchers, probably primarily through the efforts of Jakobson, influenced in particular a number of younger linguists in Czekoslovakia, who joined them in establishing the Cercle linguistique de Prague (1929 [incorrect for 1926, VBJ & FG]) under the leadership of Vilém Mathesius, a circle which announced structural linguistics as its programme. Already a year before, at the first international Congress of linguists in the Hague 1928, where the issue of synchronic linguistics was on the agenda as a main problem, Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy made themselves known by sending in an answer where the so-called 'phonological' viewpoints (i.e. the phonemic point of view) were maintained (Karcevskij sent in a separate answer to the same question with a broader scope and also Mathesius authored an extended answer following the same line of reasoning) and these views were at the congress able to fruitfully integrate with those of the school of Geneva, i.e. the theses advanced by Ch. Bally and Alb. Sechehaye in accordance with the teachings of Saussure. This was to a large degree instrumental in making the views of phoneme theory and those in general of structural points of view known to the linguistic world, and in the next years this led to a lively debate which may be said to continue to the present day and to an active programme of research along the same lines in many corners around the world. Jakobson was the leading spirit in all these endeavours and was extremely well equipped for that role; he is in possession of deep knowledge of language, an indefatigable capacity for work, a wide-ranging international orientation and a huge personal knowledge of the linguistic world as well as an eminent talent for organization.

In his capacity as the vice chairman of the Cercle Linguistique de Prague, a position he held from the inception and until the second world war, he was, in particular during the later years, when Mathesius because of illness was prohibited from active duty, the real organizer of the activities of the Circle, which expanded by including a number of foreign members, initiated extensive international collaborations and for a large part became the leading force on the European linguistic scene, thus functioning as the ideal for similar organizations in other countries (first for the Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague which was founded in 1931 along similar lines). It should be mentioned that the Cercle Linguistique de Prague through its organization of the Réunion phonologique internationale in Prague 1930 and by its publication of a series of Travaux, which by invitation was open for contributors from other countries, has played a major role in international linguistics.

Jakobson, furthermore, took the initiative to the formation of the Association phonologique international, whose leader he was and he personally has been the instigator of a number of important initiatives within contemporary structural linguistics, among others also the international journal *Acta Linguistica* which since 1939 has been published in Copenhagen and in whose International Council Jakobson was a member and since 1948 has been the President. Since his arrival in the United States, Jakobson has also had a prominent role in the collaboration between American theoreticians of phonemics and structuralists in general and their international relationships; he was active in the foundation of the Cercle Linguistique de New York and is among the editors of its journal "Word". While at the 2nd International Congress of Linguists in Geneva 1931 where the methods of 'phonology' were on the agenda, Trubetzkoy was charged with the report on this subject, on the 4th International Congress of Linguists in Copenhagen 1936 it was Jakobson who reported on the phonological theory of Sprachbünde; for the 6th International Congress of Linguists in Paris 1948, Jakobson had delivered a written report on the relationship between synchrony and diachrony within the domains of sound and grammar having been asked to do so. (The report had to be presented by J. Lotz since Jakobson was unable to be present in person.)

It will be sufficiently clear from the above which eminent position Roman Jakobson has in the organization of modern international linguistics. However, Roman Jakobson is not merely an organizer but in addition – and as the obvious precondition – an extremely active, diligent and productive researcher. He combines deep and wide-ranging knowledge with a great scientific imagination and he must be regarded as one of the most original representatives for those views which originate with the Prague circle. Even though he by training and in accordance with the chair he occupies as well earlier in his time at Brno as now in New York, is a Slavic philologist, his area of interest is in fact general linguistics; he works within several other linguistic fields than just the Slavic one and he has in his scientific works proposed grand comparative syntheses and hypotheses regarding linguistic structure in general so that the works from his hand which according to their title are concerned with particular language groups often have far wider perspectives.

Of great importance for the development of the theory of phonemes and for its application within Slavistics is the comprehensive review of the Slavic genetic theory of phonemes which he has given in Travaux

du Cercle Linguistique de Prague vol. II, 1929, modestly entitled Remarques sur l'évolution phonologique du russe comparée à celle des autres langues slaves, a paper which though in the nature of the matter because of its new perspectives and methods can only be preliminary in character, shifted the history of the Slavic languages to a new foundation and furthermore brought important structural hypotheses of a more general nature. The more general views are made more precise in the paper Prinzipien der historischen Phonologie /5/ (in Travaux IV); a new edition of this is currently in press under the title Principes de phonologie historique and will appear in Paris in connection with the French edition of Trubetzkoys Grundzüge der Phonologie. In continuance of his early interests, Jakobson has brought the theory of verse into his 'phonological' views (mentionable is among other works his paper given at the 1st International Congress of Phonetics in Amsterdam 1932: Über den Versbau der serbokroatischen Volksepen), just as the Cercle Linguistique de Prague, undoubtedly to a considerable degree due to the influence of Jakobson, in all its work has made a point of including structural perspectives on poetic and literary language. This is presumably also the reason why Jakobson within the study of phonemes has come to be particularly interested in prosodic phenomena, on which he has proposed some very thought-provoking hypotheses. In his contribution to the 3rd International Congress of Phonetics in Gand 1939, entitled Observations sur le classement phonologique des consonnes Jakobson has given a comprehensive and highly interesting attempt at a classification of the consonants (contoids). In 1939 he succeded through a comprehensive synthesis in reaching a holistic view of the ontogenetic and phylogenetic development of the sound system in that he on the basis of a very extensive documentation could make it likely that the child's language is structured according to a hierarchy which may be discovered in the typology of languages as well and that the language of aphasics lose distinctions in precisely the opposite order; this theory which for the first time brings together the theory of language acquisition and language disturbances under a common systematic holistic view was published 1941 in Språkvetenskapliga sällskapets i Uppsala förhandlingar 1940–42 under the title Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze; a new version, entitled Les lois phonique du langage enfantin, is in press at the moment in connection with the French edition of Trubetzkoy's Grundzüge der Phonologie. – Jakobson has furthermore stated very daring but trail blazing hypotheses in his highly original idea of Sprachbund, originally given in Russian

in the book K xarakteristike evrazijskogo jazykogo sojuza, 1931, later carried forward in the paper Über die phonologischen Sprachbünde (in Travaux du Cercle ling. de Prague IV) and in the abovementioned report to the Copenhagen Congress 1936.

Jakobson has also contributed significantly to general grammar, both to the theories of conjugation and declination and to the theory of the sign, especially the character of the zero sign. He has proposed a general theory for the structure of language in a comprehensive series of lectures at the University of Chicago which he at present is preparing for publication in an enlarged version under the title Sound and Meaning. – For the planned new edition of Les langues du monde, Jakobson has prepared the section on langues paléosibériennes and in this connection he has in recent years carried out some, for the majority as yet unpublished, investigations of Gilyak.

Roman Jakobson is one of the leading linguists of our time and both because of his scientific originality and his vision and because of his great capacity for work and his organizational position in international linguistics, it would, not least at a point in time when – and rightly so – weight is laid upon the reinvigoration of international scientific collaboration, also from Denmark, be of significance to elect Roman Jakobson to the Royal Danish Academy. It might be reasonable finally to refer to the fact that Professor Jakobson has a certain particular connection to Denmark: he did, as mentioned above, stay in Denmark; he has in many ways had, and still has, collaborations with Danish linguists; he has given visiting lectures at the universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus, he is a member of the Cercle linguistique de Copenhague and he is (as stated above) the president of the international council for the international journal for structural linguistics, the *Acta Linguistica*, which is based in Copenhagen.

Copenhagen, 31. January 1949.

K. Barr, K. Grønbech, L. L. Hammerich, Louis Hjelmslev, Holger Pedersen, Ad. Stender-Petersen – author.[334]

---

334. This is undoubtedly incorrect; Hjelmslev is the author of the main text, i.e. the text presented here. As stated above, there is an addition by Ad. Stender-Petersen specifically about RJ's contributions to Slavic philology but it is not more than half a page long.

Bibliography

ANDERSEN, HENNING (1989), "Markedness theory – the first 150 years", *Markedness in Synchrony and Diachrony* (ed. Olga. M. Tomić). Mouton De Gruyter, Paris/New York, 11–46.

BAECKLUND-EHLER, ASTRID (1977), "Roman Jakobson's cooperation with Scandinavian linguists", *Roman Jakobson: Echoes of his Scholarship*. Peter de Ridder: Lisse, 21–27.

BRØNDAL, VIGGO (1933), "Structure et variabilité des systèmes morphologiques", Migliorini and Pisani (eds.): *Atti del III Congresso Internazionale dei Linguisti*, 146f, Felice de Monier: Firenze 1935.

– (1936), "La structure des systèmes vocaliques", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistiques de Prague* 6, 62–74, reprinted in Brøndal 1943.

– (1939), *Linguistique structurale. Acta Linguistica* I,1, 2–10, reprinted in Brøndal 1943.

– (1943), *Essais de linguistique générale*. Munksgaard: København.

DOSSE, FRANÇOIS (1991), *Histoire du structuralisme*. Tome I : Le champ du signe 1945–1966. Paris: La découverte poche.

FISCHER-JØRGENSEN, ELI (1966), "Form and substance in glossematics", *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* X/1, 1–33.

– (1975), *Trends in phonological theory until 1975. A historical introduction.* (Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague vol. XXVII). C.A. Reitzel: Copenhagen 1995.

– (1981), "Fifty years with phonetics and phoneticians. A causerie at the Institute of Phonetics, February 28th 1981", *Annual Report of the Institute of Phonetics, University of Copenhagen (ARIPUC)* 15, 61–75.

– (1997), "Roman Jakobson and Denmark", *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* 29, 13–28.

– (1998), "Hjelmslev et le Cercle linguistique de Copenhague", Zinna (ed.): *Hjelmslev aujourd'hui*. Brepols: Turnhout, 25–36.

FLACK, PATRICK (2016), "Roman Jakobson and the Transition of German thought to the structuralist paradigm", *Acta Structuralica* 1/1, 1–15.

GREGERSEN, FRANS (1991a), *Sociolingvistikkens (u)mulighed* 1. Tiderne skifter: København.

– (1991b), *Sociolingvistikkens (u)mulighed* 2. Tiderne skifter: København.

HELLER, MONICA & MCELHINNY, BONNIE (2017), *Language, Capitalism, Colonialism. Toward a critical history*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS (1928), *Principes de grammaire générale.* Det kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser, Bind XVI, nr 1. Munksgaard: København publ.royalacademy.dk/

backend/web/uploads/2019–07–08/AFL 1/H_16_00_00_1928–
1929_6264/H_16_01_00_1928_539.pdf
– (1932), *Études baltiques*. Levin & Munksgaard: København.
– [1933] (1973), "Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques". Printed
   in: Hjelmslev: *Essais linguistiques II* (Travaux du Cercle Linguistiques de
   Copenhague Vol. XIV. Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag: Copenhague,
   57–100. English translation forthcoming in McElvenny, Jamens (ed.),
   The Limits of Structuralism: Forgotten texts in the history of modern linguistics.
   Oxford University Press.
– [1934] (1972), *Sprogsystem og sprogforandring*. (Travaux du Cercle Linguis-
   tique de Copenhague vol. XV). Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag: Copen-
   hague.
– (1935), *La catégorie des cas. Étude de grammaire générale* 1. *Acta Jutlandica*
   7(1). Universitetsforlaget: Aarhus.
– (1936), "On the principles of Phonematics", *Proceedings of the Second
   InternationalCongress of Phonetic Sciences* [London, 22–26 July 1935]. Cam-
   bridge: U.P., 49–54. Also in *Essais linguistiques II* (see 1933a).
– (1937a), *La catégorie des cas. Étude de grammaire générale* 2. *Acta Jutlandica*
   9(2). Universitetsforlaget: Aarhus.
– (1937b), "Accent, intonation, quantité", *Studi baltici* 6 , 1–57. Also in *Essais
   linguistiques II* (see 1933a).
– (1938), "Jazyková forma a substance", *Slovo a slovesnost*, 4, 128.
– (1939a), "Forme et substance linguistiques", *Bulletin du Cercle Linguistique
   de Copenhague* 1937–38, 4, 3–4, also in *Essais linguistiques II*.
– (1939b), "La notion de rection", *Acta Linguistica* I,1, 10–23, reprinted in
   Essais linguistiques I.
– (1943), *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse*. Festskrift udgivet af Køben-
   havns Universitet, 1–113, (translated into English by Francis J. Whitfield
   1953a and 1961 as "Prolegomena to a Theory of Language").
– (1951), *Rapport sur l'activité du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague 1931–1951*.
   Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag: Copenhague.
– (1953), "Mindeord over Holger Pedersen", *Oversigt over Selskabets forhan-
   dlinger* publ.royalacademy.dk/backend/web/uploads/2019–09–04/AFL
   3/O_1953_00_00_1954_5011/O_1953_05_00_1954_5009.pdf
– (1963), *Sproget. En introduktion*. Berlingske Leksikon Bibliotek: København,
   translated into English by Francis J Whitfield (1970) as "Lan-
   guage. An Introduction". University of Wisconsin Press.
– (1975), *Résumé of a Theory of Language* (edited and translated with an
   introduction by Francis J. Whitfield). (Travaux du Cercle Linguistique
   de Copenhague vol. XVI). Nordisk Sprog- og Kulurforlag: København.

HJELMSLEV, LOUIS & ULDALL, HANS JØRGEN (1936), "An Outline of Glossematics", *Humanistisk Samfunds Skrifter*, [a six page specimen of a work which never appeared] 1. Levin & Munksgaard: København.

JAKOBSON, ROMAN O. (1928e), "Wandlungen in der Sprachwissenschaft vom 1. Internationalen Linguistenkongress im Haag", *Selected Writings* IX, 1, Completion vol.2: Mouton: Haag, 196–198.

– (1931), *K xarakteristike evrazijskogo jazykovogo sojuza*. Izdanie Evrazijcev: Paris, reprinted in *Selected Writings* I, 144–201.

– (1932a), "Zur Struktur des russischen Verbum", *Charisteria Gvilelmo Mathesio quinquagenario a discipulis et Circuli Linguistici Pragensis sodalibus oblata*. Cercle Linguistique de Prague: Prague, 74–84, reprinted in Selected Writings II, 3–15.

– (1932b), "Association Internationale pour les Études Phonologiques/ Internationale phonologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft, Bulletin d'information Nº 1", *Selected Writings* IX, 1, Completion vol.2: Mouton: Haag, 322–328.

– (1933), "La scuola linguistica di Praga", *La Cultura* 12, 633–641, reprinted in *Selected Writings* II, 539–546.

– (1935), "Association Internationale pour les Études Phonologiques/Internationale phonologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft, Bulletin d'information Nº 2", *Selected Writings* IX, 2, Completion vol.2: Mouton: Haag, 83–95.

– (1936a), "Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre (Gesamtbedeutungen der russischen Kasus)", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistiques de Prague* 6, 240–288, reprinted in *Selected Writings* II, 23–71.

– (1936b), "Der IV internationalen Linguistenkongress, originally in Prager Presse, Sept. 12, 1936", reprinted in *Selected Writings* IX, 2, Completion vol.2: Mouton: Haag, 194–196.

– (1937), "Prof. Hjelmslev in Prag". Originally Prager Presse 22 Oct 1937, signed R.J. Reprinted in: *Selected Writings* IX, 2, Completion vol.2: Mouton: Haag, 285.

– [1939] (1962a), "Zur Struktur des Phonems", *Selected Writings* I, 280–310 (Written May 1939).

– (1941), *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*. Almqvist & Wiksells: Uppsala, reprinted in *Selected Writings* I, 328–401.

– (1945), "Activity Report for the Years 1939–1945", translated from the Czech by Jindrich Toman and reprinted together with the original: Toman (ed.) *Letters and Other Materials from the Moscow and Prague Linguistic Circles, 1912–1945*. Michigan Slavic Publications: Ann Arbor (Cahiers Roman Jakobson, 1), 231–35. 1994.

– (1949), "On the Identification of Phonemic Entities", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistiques de Copenhague* Vol. V, presented to Hjelmslev, 205–213, reprinted in *Selected Writings* I, 418–425.

– (1956), "Serge Karcevskij", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 14, 9–16, reprinted in *Selected Writings* II.

– (1961), *Tönnies Fennes Low German Manual of Spoken Russian – Pskov 1607* 1, ed. by L.L. Hammerich, R. Jakobson, E. van Schooneveld, T. Starck and Ad. Stender-Petersen. Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters: Copenhagen.

– (1962a), *Selected Writings* I. 'S-Gravenhage: Mouton Co.

– (1962b), "Retrospect", *Selected Writings* I. 'S-Gravenhage: Mouton Co., 629–658.

– (1969), "Linguistics in its relation to other sciences". First published in *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Linguists*, Bucharest: Editions de l'Academie de la république socialiste de Roumanie, 75ff; reprinted in Kiefer and van Sterkenburg (eds.): *Eight Decades of General Linguistics: The History of CIPL and Its Role in the History of Linguistics*, Brill: Leiden 2012, 265–304.

– (1970), *Tönnies Fennes Low German Manual of Spoken Russian – Pskov 1607* 2, ed. by L.L. Hammerich & R. Jakobson. Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters: Copenhagen.

– (1971a), *Selected Writings* II. Mouton De Gruyter: Berlin/New York/Amsterdam.

– (1971b) "Retrospect", *Selected Writings* II. Mouton De Gruyter: Berlin/New York/Amsterdam, 711–724.

– (1975), *N.S. Trubetzkoy's Letter and Notes*. Ed. by Roman Jakobson, with the assistance of H. Baran, O. Ronen and M. Taylor. Mouton: The Hague/Paris.

– (1988), *Selected Writings* VIII, Completion Volume One. Mouton De Gruyter: Berlin/New York/Amsterdam.

Jakobson, Roman O., Fant, Gunnar & Halle, Morris (1952), *Preliminaries to Speech Analysis*. Acoustics Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: *Technical Report* 13, January, reprinted in *Selected Writings* VIII, Completion Volume One.

Jakobson, Roman O. & Halle, Morris (1956), *Phonology and Phonetics. Fundamentals of Language*. Janua Linguarum 1. Mouton: The Hague, reprinted in *Selected Writings* I.

Jakobson, Roman O. & Waugh, Linda (1979), *The Sound Shape of Language*. Indiana Univ. Press: Bloomington, Indiana.

Jakobson, Roman O. & Pomorska, Krystyna (1983), *Dialogues*. The MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

JANGFELDT, BENGT (1997), "Roman Jakobson in Sweden 1940–41", *Cahiers de l'ILSL* 9, 141–149.

JANGFELDT, BENGT, JAKOBSON, ROMAN O. & RUDY, STEPHEN (1997), *My futurist years.* Marsilio Publishers: New York.

JENSEN, VIGGO BANK & D'OTTAVI, GIUSEPPE (2020), *From the Early Years of Phonology. The Roman Jakobson – Eli Fischer-Jørgensen Correspondence (1949–1982).* Scientia Danica. Series H. Humanistica 8, Vol. 20. The Royal Danish Academy: Copenhagen.

JENSEN, VIGGO BANK (2021), "En analyse af Eli Fischer-Jørgensens indflydelse på Roman Jakobsons teoretiske arbejde ud fra deres diskussioner om dansk fonologi". *18. Møde om Udforskningen af Dansk Sprog, Arhus Universitet 8.-9. oktober 2020* (eds. Yonatan Goldshtein, Inger Schoonderbeek Hansen & Tina Thode Hougaard). Århus, 293–313.

KARCEVSKIJ, SERGE (1927), *Système du verbe russe.* Imprimerie Legiografie: Prague.

KIEFER, FERENC & VAN STERKENBURG, PIET G.J.V. (2012), "Introduction", *Eight decades of general linguistics: The History of CIPL and Its Role in the History of Linguistics.* Brill: Leiden, 1–10.

MERQUIOR, JOSÉ GUILLERME (1986), *From Prague to Paris. A Critique of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist thought.* Verso Press: London.

PEDERSEN, HOLGER (1924), *Sprogvidenskaben i det nittende Aarhundrede.* Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag: København (translated into English by John Webster Spargo: *The Discovery of Language. Linguistic science in the nineteenth century*, 1931).

PERCIVAL, W. KEITH (2011), "Roman Jakobson and the birth of linguistic structuralism", *Semeiotike – Sign Systems Studies* 1, 236–262.

RADUNOVIĆ, DUŠAN (2017), "The Emergence of Modern Scientific Communities in late-1910s and Early Soviet Russia: the case of the Moscow Linguistic Circle", *Revue des études slaves* LXXXVIII 1–2, 137–150.

RASMUSSEN, MICHAEL (1992), *Hjelmslevs sprogteori. Glossematikken i videnskabshistorisk, videnskabsteoretisk og erkendelsesteoretisk perspektiv.* Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag.

RAYNAUD, SAVINA (1990), *Il Circolo Linguistico di Praga (1926–1939). Radici storiche e apporti teorici.* Vita e Pensiero: Milano.

SÉRIOT, PATRICK (1999), *Structure et totalité. Les origines intellectuelles du structuralisme en Europe centrale et orientale.* Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

SPANG-HANSSEN HENNING (1961), "Glossematics", Mohrmann et al. (eds.): *Trends in European and American Linguistics.* Utrecht: Spectrum publishers, 128–164.

Tatsukawa, Kenji (1995), "Une lettre de Roman Jakobson, jamais lue par Louis Hjelmslev", *Philologie* 6: Langues étrangères, 14–18.

Thomas, Margaret (2014), "Jakobson's Circles", *History of Linguistics 2011. Selected Papers from the 12th International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences (ICHoLS XII, Saint Petersburg, 28 August 2 September 2011* (eds. Kasevich, Kleiner and Sériot). John Benjamin's, 145–155.

Toman, Jindrich (1995), *The Magic of a Common Language. Jakobson, Mathesius, Trubetzkoy, and the Prague Linguistic Circle*. The MIT Press: Cambridge Mass.

Uldall, Hans Jørgen (1936), "The Phonematics of Danish", *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* [London, 22–26 July 1935]. Cambridge: U.P., 54–57.

–   (1957), *Outline of Glossematics I*: General Theory, (Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague vol. X).

Consulted archives

KB (*Kongelige Bibliotek*). The Royal Danish Library:
Louis Hjelmslev: Acc 1992/5.
Linguistic Circle: Acc 2008/17.
Holger Pedersen: NKS 2718 folio.
MIT
Roman Jakobson Papers, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, MC.0072.
The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.

Authors: Viggo Bank Jensen, emeritus teacher and scholar, University of Copenhagen and Frans Gregersen, emeritus Professor of Danish, University of Copenhagen. Both authors are affiliated with project INFRASTRUCTURAL-ISM. E-mail: vbj@hum.ku.dk / fg@hum.ku.dk