Language and linguistics

LINGUISTIC THEORY

80–308 **Cattell, Ray.** Grammar and the facts of life. *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* (Posnan, Poland), **10** (1978), 3–16.

Extra-linguistic knowledge plays a much more important role in the everyday use of language than current linguistic models suggest. From an extensive analysis of the range of readings associated with the verb *fly* (in both transitive and intransitive uses) it is argued that real-world knowledge augments the central core of meaning that we attach to words. But, more interestingly, without appeal to any kind of 'underlying' structure, it can be shown that there are chains of implication leading from encyclopaedic facts to detailed descriptions of the structure and relationships involved in particular sentences. For example, given our knowledge about what objects can move through the air, and their corresponding noun phrases, we can predict that the relevant referring noun phrases can be subjects of the intransitive verb *fly*. How far such implicational chains can go in linking real-world knowledge and language is a question that linguists should explore.

80–309 **Kuroda, S.-Y.** Some thoughts on the foundations of the theory of language use. *Linguistics and Philosophy* (Dordrecht), **3**, 1 (1979), 1–17.

The paper is an attempt to analyse the functions of language in a special sense – not in the sense of what role language plays in human practices and institutions, but rather in the logical sense of what it is about language that makes it the instrument it is. In these terms, a function of language is said to be more 'essential' than another if the latter presupposes the former, that is, if the former is a necessary component of the latter. Three functions in this sense are isolated; firstly, the 'communicative' function (standardly held to be basic) is distinguished from the 'objectifying' function, which gives objective expression to a belief of the speaker. But the objectifying function is itself logically dependent on, and presupposes, the 'objective' function, which is the most essential function of language (in the specified sense of 'essential'); it is independent of the other functions, and may simply be used for its own sake.

80–310 **Radford, Andrew.** The functional basis of transformations. *Transactions of the Philological Society* (Oxford), 1979, 1–42.

For a variety of transformations in several different languages, it is shown that the operation in question can be given independent, functional motivation. In each case the motivation consists in the

avoidance of surface structure forms independently prohibited in the language, and can be descriptively formulated as a global constraint holding upon the transformation. The global constraint thus links a syntactic operation to a constraint holding upon surface structure. Tentative evidence for the universality of several of these functionally motivated rules is presented.

SEMANTICS   *See also abstract* 80-308

80–311   Cushing, Steven. Semantic considerations in natural language: crosslinguistic evidence and morphological motivation. *Studies in Language* (Amsterdam), **3**, 2 (1979), 181–201.

The relevance of morphology to the question of semantic universals is considered. Where a language contains a particular morphological grouping, it is proposed that this fact constitutes corroborative evidence for any semantic analysis which assigns a parallel semantic similarity. Zulu morphology groups the terms for *only*, *all*, and *all n* together, while independent semantic analyses of the English terms can equally be related in a minimal system. Analyses which foster such semantic resemblance are thus supported by the morphological evidence of Zulu. A theoretical semantics investigating the universal systems of semantic elements and interrelating rules might investigate the principles determining natural morphological groupings. Preliminary accounts of the non-existence of certain quantificational terms in English are offered, and such principles could conceivably also belong within the universals-orientated approach.

80–312   Nunberg, Geoffrey. The non-uniqueness of semantic solutions. *Linguistics and Philosophy* (Dordrecht), **3**, 2 (1979), 143–84.

It is assumed that the boundary between semantics and pragmatics is ill-defined, and for a good reason; it is not in principle possible to say which regularities are conventional, and which not. The content of any purely linguistic conventions of use is necessarily indeterminate. Polysemy in word-use is a case in point; it is argued that there is no need for separate conventions governing all the word-uses that speakers judge normal or acceptable. Rather, a pragmatic account will allow the derivation of non-conventional uses, as well as metaphor and extended reference generally. The postulation of word meanings has seemed necessary to explain how novel utterances are understood. But this hypothesis is too strong; we do not have to know what a word names to be able to say what it refers to. All that semantics should be asked to provide is an account of how languages come to be used and understood, and we can do that without having to say that speakers know what words mean.

LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS *See also* *abstract* 80–327

80–313   Hartmann, Peter. Grammatik im Rahmen einer realistischen Sprachwissenschaft. [Grammar in the context of a realistic linguistics.] *Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung* (Berlin), **32**, 4 (1979), 487–507.

A new perspective is needed on the directions in which linguistics can develop. Despite increasingly scientific methods some aspects of language remain outside the scope of present linguistic description. Numerous quotations from Brecht's writings on literary realism are discussed, with particular emphasis on his critique of formalistic approaches to literary criticism, and his concept of realism is used as the basis for a discussion of scientific method. Scientific forms of knowledge should not be regarded as absolutes or as deductive systems but as the product of methods and attitudes which are far more widespread in their effects. The differences between a 'realistic' linguistics and existing approaches are set out, and the aim of this new approach is defined as being to understand and explain all the conditions affecting and affected by language (*Bedingungsanalyse*) as well as purely linguistic phenomena.

Within this framework, a grammatical description will not be a normative grammar. It must recognise the existence of norms but not accord them the status of reasons or causes in linguistic analyses. It must use strictly quantitative methods. Such a grammar would not be a monolithic construct but be capable of taking a variety of forms depending on the function of the grammatical analysis.

80–314   Pulman, Steve. Grammatical description and sentence processing. *UEA Papers in Linguistics* (Norwich), **10** (1979), 19–49.

The sentence-processing approach to grammar is applied to the task of specifying the semantically relevant relations in both basic and complex sentence forms. To a given sentence of unspecified form, an Augmented Transition Network (ATN) will first assign a constituent structure description. Semantically relevant relations (Subject, Direct Object, Prepositional Object, Agent) are determined from the constituent structure by means of a further set of rules, a subset of which apply to the basic, canonical forms of English. The remainder of these rules operate on non-basic structures equivalent to the product of structure-preserving transformations such as Raising or Passive. Forms which in the derivational paradigm can be viewed as products of root or Wh-Movement transformations can be parsed by the ATN in procedures which are essentially the reverse of these transformations. Subcategorisation-restrictions in this model are more inclusive than in, for instance, Chomsky's *Aspects*.

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Chomsky's conditions on transformations are re-examined in processing terms. The Tensed S Constraint and the Sentential Subject Constraint are replaceable by conditions on coreference, framed in terms of the defined concept 'grammatically related'. This latter concept is compared with Postal's 'Clause Mate' condition.

The simplicity of the required apparatus and its effectiveness as a decision procedure for grammaticality argue for its superiority over the derivational model as relevant to actual performance processes, both with respect to parsing and to language learning.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS *See abstracts* 80–316, –350, –368

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS *See abstracts* 80–328, –336, –356, –358/9

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN *See also abstract* 80–353

80–315 de Villiers, Peter A. and Jill G. Form and function in the development of sentence negation. *Papers and Reports on Child Language Development* (Stanford, Calif), **17** (1979), 57–64.

The aim of this investigation of the speech of three young children was to study the development of the form and function of negative sentences, and how it relates to the input children receive from their parents.

The results provide little support for the idea that the use of NEG + S negatives represents a general stage in the acquisition of negation. Instead, there appear to be individual differences in the parents' use of negative sentences, both in the functions that they serve and the forms used to express them. The individual styles are mirrored rather closely by the children, preserving individual differences in the proportion of the various functions of negation. The primitive forms that express these functions are plausibly derived from the parental forms; in particular, parents' polite negative rejections that are reinforced with an emphatic initial *no* may be a source of the *NEG + sentence* construction adopted by some children for rejection.

These findings provide clear evidence of the influence of parental input on a domain of grammatical constructions. They also suggest that the child at first preserves certain forms to express particular functions, and does not at first learn syntactic constructions independently of the functions they serve. Thus the pattern of mastery of the syntactic form of negation will reflect both the predominant functions to which the child puts the negative and the frequency of different forms and functions in the parental speech.

80–316   Esposito, Anita. Sex differences in children's conversation. *Language and Speech* (Hampton Hill, Mddx), **22**, 3 (1979), 213–20.

Sex differences in children's conversation were explored to determine if they exist and, if so, when they emerge. Forty preschool children were randomly assigned to groups (female–female, female–male, male–male) and were audio-taped in conversation while playing. Transcripts of their conversations were analysed for interruptions, overlaps, lapses, gaps and number of initiated unit-types. Significant differences between heterogeneous and homogeneous groups were found for interruptions. Boys interrupted girls two to one. Conversational sex differences seem to be acquired early in life, developing in conjunction with general conversational skills.

80–317   Furrow, David and others. Mothers' speech to children and syntactic development: some simple relationships. *Journal of Child Language* (London), **6**, 3 (1979), 423–42.

This study investigated the relationships between children's linguistic environments and their language acquisition. Speech samples taken from seven firstborn children and their mothers when the children were 1 ; 6 and 2 ; 3 were analysed within a number of semantic and syntactic categories to determine correlations between mothers' speech and subsequent language development. Several characteristics of mothers' speech (e.g. utterance length, use of pronouns) significantly predicted later child speech. The significant correlations suggested that mothers' choice of simple constructions facilitated language growth. Further, they showed that the motherese code differed from adult–adult speech in ways which aided language development. Differences between this study and previous investigations of environmental effects on language development probably resulted from the failure of earlier investigations to take into account children's level of language competence at the time when environmental effects were assessed.

80–318   Johnston, Judith R. and Slobin, Dan I. The development of locative expressions in English, Italian, Serbo-Croatian and Turkish. *Journal of Child Language* (London), **6**, 3 (1979), 529–45.

The ability of children between the ages of 2 ; 0 and 4 ; 8 to produce locative pre- or postpositions was investigated in English, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, and Turkish. Across languages, there was a general order of development: (1) *in, on, under*, and *beside*, (2) *between, back* and *front* with featured objects, (3) *back* and *front* with non-featured objects. This order of development is discussed in terms of nonlinguistic growth in conceptual ability. Language-specific differences in the general pattern of development are discussed in terms of a number of linguistic

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factors which may facilitate or retard the child's discovery of the linguistic means for encoding concepts.

BILINGUALISM *See abstract* 80–319

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY *See abstracts* 80–322/3, –377

TRANSLATION

80–319 Ihenacho, Amechi. The role of translation and interpretation in West Africa. *Babel* (Budapest), **25**, 2 (1979), 59–71.

A brief outline is given of the linguistic situation in West Africa, which is now made up of three zones, in which either English, French or Portuguese is the main official language. Because of the multiplicity of languages in the region, bilingualism and language contact, and thence interpretation and translation, are particularly important.

Interpretation is categorised into (1) intralingual and (2) interlingual levels. Under (1), interpretation of the specialised language of chiefs, priests, medical specialists, and proverbial usuage; under (2), diplomatic usage such as peace settlements, marriages between people of different linguistic origin, litigation. Even in the pre-colonial era, consecutive interpretation was practised quite effectively. From the beginnings of 'Euro-African bilingualism' in the fourteenth century until the nineteenth century, translation and interpretation played an important role in (1) trade, (2) Christian mission work, and (3) colonisation.

In the last twenty years, the need for them has increased considerably with the coming of independence to most countries in the region, especially in the areas of administration, in regional and international groupings and in specialised institutes [examples]. As yet, most of the needs can only be met by importing professional translators. The present trend is to use the mother tongue in the initial stage of education; foreign languages should only be used as the medium of instruction much later on. There is an acute need to train West Africans with French and English as working languages. Later, the emphasis will shift to West African languages.

80–320 Ukoyen, Joseph. The African translator. *Babel* (Budapest), **25**, 2 (1979), 72–4.

The African, literate or not, is obliged to speak two languages: the 'official' language of his country (English, French, Portuguese or Spanish) and one African language, usually his mother tongue. He is generally more familiar with interpretation than with translation, since

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his environment is predominantly oral. The African translator, on the other hand, is in the strange position of having to work exclusively in foreign, non-African languages, because African languages have not yet attained international status. The official language, through extensive use, becomes his 'near mother tongue'.

The African translator's material problems relate to (1) basic training – specialised translation schools are rare, and (2) employment – there is little information about career opportunities. Translation is provided by either academic or staff (professional) translators.

SPEECH ACT THEORY *See abstract* 80–351

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS *See abstract* 80–359

NEEDS ANALYSIS *See abstracts* 80–329, –332