

nological organization (and an ad hoc introduction for each contribution), the reader who is interested in specific topics has to find his own way without even an index. True, it would have been a difficult task to strive for a topic-wise treatment, especially with regard to the older contributions in which overlap in the treatment of specific subject matter occurs quite often, but this problem could have been solved by accounting for this overlap in an introduction and by means of cross references.

The accent in the more recent contributions lies on syntax. This is the favorite topic of the TG-theory-inspired new approach, and understandably so since the new tools are better fitted for the job of proper syntactic analysis. Still, one wonders whether the book does not show a slight overaccentuation of syntactic, TG-inspired studies.

At the end, though, I wholeheartedly come back to my initial praise. *Child language, a book of readings* is a beautiful contribution to the study of primary language acquisition. It will be wonderful if there could be a second updated edition.

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George A. Hough, 3rd, Structures of modification in contemporary American English. *Janua linguarum, Series Practica*, 126. Mouton, The Hague, 1971. 125 pp. f 22.00.

In 1964, when the research for this book was done, the kind of investigation it reports had already undergone harsh criticism as being excessively data oriented. However, the author argues that the original analysis can stand, though he might change some of the details of his procedure. And indeed there is substantial justification for publishing the report at this time, if for no other reason than the practical information presented in its tables, outlines, and list of examples.

The type of grammatical construction under investigation, namely modification, is defined in operational terms in essentially the same way that grammarians ancient and modern have always defined such terms: by substitution. If a constituent of a construction, say the adjective 'small' in a construction like 'small tree', can be replaced by the phrase 'very small' (but not by 'very' alone) then the expanded constituent 'very small' is an instance of modification, with 'very' the modifier and 'small' the head. Similarly the relation between 'very small' and 'tree' is again an instance of modification. In the frame of reference in which this study was carried on, it is understandable that further theoretical depths at this point are left unplumbed, the author's main purpose being to get on with an account of the facts.

The information presented in the main part of the book is typified by the statistical tables (pp. 31, 72, for example) where we find that within noun phrases the commonest kind of modifier is the noun adjunct – including 'city hall' and

various other subtypes – which outnumber the ordinary adjective modifier by a slight margin (464 to 439 according to tables 1 and 2). At least this is true of the contemporary texts of 1964 as opposed to those of seventy years earlier, shown in adjacent columns. The earlier texts yielded a significantly smaller number of noun adjuncts (257 compared to 383 ordinary adjectives). There is a great deal more information of this sort in the book, giving a good idea of how common the various modification structures are and which ones have grown or declined in popularity since 1894.

Theories of syntax are given very little attention. The emphasis is on facts. And the facts are not broad generalizations, but rather specific quantitative statements about phenomena open to direct observation. The items to be counted are classified by surface form with no attempt made 'to examine the meaning of the various modifiers or the manner in which they modify the meaning of their heads'. The investigator conceived his task as only 'to identify the various modifiers and to note their distribution and frequency' (p. 30).

This viewpoint is exemplified in the discussion of appositives (p. 69) where there is no mention of different manners of modification such as restrictive and non-restrictive. An expression like 'another hotel, on West 57th Street' illustrates the contrast between 'first, modifiers set off by commas from the head and the rest of the sentence, and, second, those without any intervening punctuation. The comma represents a distinct pause, a terminal juncture, in the spoken language which stands in distinct contrast to lack of such a pause'. The meanings conveyed by such signals are not open to direct observation and therefore have no place in a scientific account of what the language is like. That is the stance adopted by the author. As authority for his position, he cites some of the most respected names and works of the structural tradition in American linguistics, especially of those who applied these methods to the analysis of English syntax, notably Charles C. Fries, Eugene A. Nida and W. Nelson Francis.

In keeping with the spirit of empirical research, Hough describes his corpus of raw material in some detail. He chose 300 locally written news stories from a sampling of American newspapers of 1894 and an equal number of comparable stories of the year 1964. The sampling was again divided into sentences taken from the body of the story and those which formed the lead or initial sentence of each story. He claims to have 'no hypothesis to prove'; but since 'any sample of language may have its own characteristics as well as the broader characteristics, or grammar, of the language of which it is a part' he seeks to answer 'not what is possible' in the language but 'what actually occurs in a given sample'.

Though this attitude gives a desirable sharpness of focus to the report, it also gets in the way of certain kinds of information that the reader would like to have. Under 'noun markers' for example there is a list of nouns that occurred 'with a zero marker' where we find such diverse items as 'Pennsylvania' and 'pupils' with no hint as to what kind of underlying determiner it is that turns up on the surface as zero. Is it definite, indefinite, particular, generic, or what? We are informed only that 'zero...is not a marker, but the absence of a marker'. It is only a handy way of classifying the noun phrases that appeared with no overt determiner.

There are other examples of semantically important distinctions obliterated by devotion to the simplicity of observable form. One of the most serious cases ap-

appears in the discussion of nouns modified by a following infinitive. The two expressions 'an effort to save itself' and 'devices to catch speeders' are classed together because the infinitive has an object after it. 'Money to burn' is put in the same general category but is noted as different because the infinitive has no object or complement after it. A similar complaint can be made against the treatment of various verb-plus-adjective sequences where the expressions 'keep silent', 'stop dead', 'sweep clean', and 'plead guilty' are all lumped together.

These are the inevitable difficulties faced by one who sets out to count things, especially if those things are syntactic constructions. The more deeply you dig beneath the surface, the more it seems that nothing can be counted in the same category as anything else. This book evades that problem by simply sticking close to the surface. If we sometimes think that the structuralists went to extremes to avoid talking about meaning, it is equally bad to go to the opposite extreme and talk about nothing but meaning. The best tradition is that which continually reminds us that what we are really looking for is an account of the relationship between the observable signals of speech and the meanings conveyed. Though both extremes are dangerous, there are still useful studies from both points of view even if the broader picture is temporarily lost sight of. The work reviewed here is by no means to be rejected just because it temporarily loses sight of the semantic side of the picture.

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Charles S. Hardwick, *Language learning in Wittgenstein's later philosophy*. Janua Linguarum, Series Minor 104. Mouton, The Hague, 1971. 152 pp. f 18.-.

The first part of this book (15–69) is concerned with Wittgenstein's pragmatic conception of language. After a general sketch of the differences between Wittgenstein's treatment of language in the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* and the way he came to view linguistic phenomena in his later period, which culminated in the *Philosophical investigations*, the author offers a clear account of what he calls the most important single passage in the latter book: "For a large class of cases – though not for all – in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (section 43). In order to elucidate this pragmatic conception of language he draws a helpful parallel between Wittgenstein's remarks and the main ideas about meaning and language put forward by such classical pragmatists as John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. In the same way he tries to illustrate what is involved in Wittgenstein's insistence on the importance of context and situation in the determination of meaning by considering similar views held by Bronislaw Malinowski and J.R. Firth.

In the second part (73–110), entitled "Wittgenstein on how we learn words", the author concentrates upon the role played by the question "How did we learn to use this word?" in Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a kind of therapy. In this connection the notion of a language-game is discussed, together with the use