

## Book Reviews

### Linguistic Method Essays in Honor of Herbert Penzl

Irmengard Rauch and Gerald F. Carr, Editors.

Mouton Publishers, The Hague, 1979,

628 pp., DM 130, ISBN 90-279-7767-4.

(Dist: Walter de Gruyter & Co., New York)

A collection of essays on historical method, the last written in Latin with Ciceronian cadences, may not seem appropriate for review in a journal devoted to computational linguistics. Yet several of the essays deal with methods pertinent for synchronic analysis, as those noted here may indicate.

The editors have arranged the essays under four topics: I. Linguistic Concepts (pp. 27-160), II. Linguistic Stratums (161-284), III. Linguistic Systems (285-493) and IV. Linguistic Attitudes (495-615). Essays have separate bibliographies. A selected bibliography of Penzl's publications (11-18), an essay on linguistic method by Rauch (19-23) and an index (619-630) complete the work. Well-prepared and presented, the book as a whole, as well as Rauch's essay, testify to the affection for Penzl and to the respect for his achievements.

The first part includes a highly interesting essay by James W. Marchand entitled *Sagena piscatoris*, with the sub-title "an essay in medieval lexicography" (123-137). The essay begins with a reinterpretation of the Latin phrase used as title, proposing in contrast with a different interpretation that it meant 'net of the fisherman' but also that it was a "patristic commonplace for 'Church'". Thereupon Marchand discusses relationships between the SIGNANS and SIGNATUM applying during the medieval period, at the same time chiding medieval lexicographers for neglecting such meanings on the grounds that they are merely figurative. He vigorously presents the position that "throughout the Middle Ages, particularly in the language of the Church, but penetrating all walks of life and every kind of discourse words were thought to have two kinds of meaning, literal and spiritual" (125). His discussion and examples will interest anyone concerned with meaning, such as the use of *Gideon's fleece* for 'virgin Mary' — also 'an unplowed field', whether in Latin, medieval Spanish *un prado bien sinçido* or medieval German *anger ungebrachot*. Marchand asks that medieval dictionaries include such meanings, as well as more remote derivations based on medieval etymologies which we consider utterly fanciful, such as *caro datur vermibus*, literally 'flesh is given to worms' for *cadaver* 'corpse' and also used when an author simply means 'corpse'. Besides such citations he provides examples of faulty interpretations by read-

ers ignorant of medieval conceptions of meaning. Apart from the exhortation to medieval lexicographers to repair previous inadequacies, Marchand makes the point that "in dealing with a passage, we must observe not only the immediate linguistic context, but also the type of discourse in which it is found" (125). Computational linguists have of course propounded such views from the earliest days of machine translation, when microglossaries were widely advocated, as by Reifler, with little impact on general linguistics. It is a pleasure to read an article on a somewhat remote area of language concern with such illuminating examples supporting a more realistic view of language and its interpretation. Current texts, especially in technical and scientific fields, may not introduce a spiritual alongside literal meanings, but terms like *bit*, *hardware*, *program* cannot always be interpreted "literally" any more than a medieval term like *sagena*.

The essay by the dean of Germanic linguists, Hugo Moser, also relates to interests of computational linguists, in pointing to occupational and special languages: "Zur Problematik der Fach- und Sondersprachen" (139-151). Moser discusses their twofold treatment, on the one hand in sociolinguistic study, on the other in pragmalinguistics, in this country known as pragmatics. In his discussion, he points out that while some occupational languages have been capably studied, such as the language of chemistry, many "special languages" have not, and he indicates problems that must be noted in dealing with these. Like Marchand's, his essay also directs attention to complexities that must be faced in dealing with lexicon of natural languages. Several articles illustrate points he is making, e.g., Michael G. Clyne's "Linguistic analysis and the 1972 Bundestag election campaign" (163-173) and Irmengard Rauch's "Semantic naturalness and word-building: East German *Nur*-" (253-263). These illustrate the importance of sociolinguistic and pragmatic attention to all linguistic materials, or as Clyne puts it, "The main thing is that we do not lose sight of the portion of reality we are investigating" (172).

In the area of grammar Albert L. Lloyd's article is of broad interest. Entitled "Prolegomena to a theory of Gothic verbal aspect" (327-346), it proposes to deal with aspect generally, at any rate, aspect in the Indo-European languages. The article succeeds as well as any in this difficult and often debated area. Lloyd's definition of aspect agrees with that of other analysts, "Aspect refers to the position chosen by the reporter as the point of observation on which his report of a non-present phenomenon is based" (343). Using "normal aspectual pairs in Russian" as a guide, he

identifies types of verbs which remain outside the area: statals, e.g. 'know', and punctuals, e.g. 'find'. The basic problem then concerns what he calls "processives." These he analyzes more precisely, chiefly with examples from Gothic but also with reference to Greek and English, in a treatment too detailed for presentation in the space allotted here. Since, however, the analysis of verbs in a grammar is of fundamental importance, especially in computational linguistics and artificial intelligence with their heavy reliance on case theory, Lloyd's article will repay careful study by readers of this journal. His proposed longer work following the "prolegomena" may also be kept in mind.

Many other articles not mentioned here are of interest, also, for specialists in computational linguistics. Anyone teaching a course in grammar testing might, for example, ask students to program the rules in Joseph B. Voyles's "The phonology of the Old High German *Tatian*" (441-493). Besides testing the completeness and accuracy of his formalizations, a programmed phonology would be of no little interest in presenting forms in the scantily attested early period

of German. The availability in English of an article "On some linguistic methods" (521-546) on views of Soviet scholarship by a highly regarded scholar, G.S. Sčur, illustrates a further reason for readers of this journal not to disregard this volume. One may disagree with some of Sčur's statements, for example, his "dissatisfaction with typology, whose chief aim is classification" (530); actually, typological study of syntax has provided some of the best means for insights into the development of language and for explanations, especially when one moves beyond characteristics like adjective:noun and genitive:noun, or preposition:postposition structures. Yet this and many other articles raise important questions, in a handsome tribute. In lauding a historical linguist, a highly appropriate conclusion is an article on views of a major linguist concerning the enduring problem of deep and surface structure: "Quomodo superficiei grammaticae nexus sensusque profundior in Jespersenii Syntaxi analytica dicta tractentur" (601-615) by Ladislav Zgusta.

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## The FINITE STRING Newsletter

### Announcements

#### The Third Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society

The Third Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society will be held August 19-21, 1981, on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley, in Berkeley, California. In addition to submitted papers, there will be four major addresses by speakers who are representative of important directions in Cognitive Science. There will also be four state-of-the-art symposia. These will function as tutorial sessions for particular subject areas, as well as provide a way of learning about the methodologies and concerns that the various component fields of Cognitive Science bring to bear on common problems.

#### Major Addresses

Robert P. Abelson, *Department of Psychology  
Yale University*  
Manfred Bierwisch, *Central Inst. for Linguistics  
Academy of Sciences (GDR)*  
Thomas Kuhn, *Department of Philosophy  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology*  
William Labov, *Department of Linguistics  
University of Pennsylvania*

### State-of-the-Art Symposia

#### Affect

George Mandler, *Chair, UC-San Diego*  
Wendy Lehnert, *Yale University*  
Katherine Lutz, *Harvard University*  
Andrew Ortony, *University of Illinois*  
Amos Tversky, *Stanford University*

#### Cognition and Perception

Stephen Palmer, *Chair, UC-Berkeley*  
Geoffrey Hinton, *Cambridge*  
Paul Kay, *UC-Berkeley*  
Shimon Ullman, *MIT*

#### Mental Models of Physical Phenomena

Dedre Gentner, *Chair, BBN*  
John Seely Brown, *Xerox PARC*  
Patrick Hayes, *University of Rochester*  
Philip Johnson-Laird, *University of Sussex*  
Jill Larkin, *Carnegie-Mellon University*

#### Goals

Robert Wilensky, *Chair, UC-Berkeley*  
Richard Fikes, *Xerox PARC*  
Barbara Hayes-Roth, *RAND Corporation*  
James Levin, *UC-San Diego*  
Naomi Quinn, *Duke University*