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GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

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and
Evelyn G. Pike**

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Preface to the Second Edition

We have been pleased with the usefulness of our book (a) with senior scholars in theoretical discussions of underlying linguistic postulates, (b) in field workshops for advanced researchers, and (c) in the classroom, in helping beginners to get ready to analyze languages which have not yet been written and which have not yet been studied by linguists. There is more in it, however, than can easily be taught in a single semester. In our own teaching, in the first semester, we place emphasis on the first nine chapters, concentrating on materials from clause to morpheme, with less—but very important—attention to higher levels (see p. 226). In advanced work, we then emphasize higher levels of the hierarchy, including discourse and conversation, and treat the referential hierarchy in more detail. (The referential hierarchy, however, is the point at which the theory is developing most rapidly; revision of the textbook at this point must await publication of articles now in press, by various authors, and still further development of the theory itself.)

In general, the content of the book remains unchanged, except for the index which has been greatly enlarged. We have taken advantage of the need for a second printing, however, to introduce numerous minor changes to make various sections a bit more clear by rewording or by enlargement. (See, for example, the allomorph check chart Illustration 8.2; and the discussion of simple versus complex hyperclass on pp. 122, 133–37.)

In comments reaching me from other scholars, various problems have emerged:

(1) They have sometimes failed to see that our discussion of English structure is *emic*, specific to that language, and not given as a universal. As we said,

It must be emphasized that these clause-root types are for English; clause roots of another language may be quite different. Some of the *etic* meaning differences which we have mentioned may, in another language, be correlated with grammatical formal differences and hence give different contrastive types [p. 45, and cf. pp. 130 and 236].

and

The list is etic—intended to be cross-cultural [but useful as] a first approximation...and as a source of suggestion...just as a phonetic chart helps the beginning student to be alerted to the kinds of sounds which he must be prepared to meet [p. 49, referring to the list in Appendix 3].

(2) A related difficulty has been their feeling that our clause roles—the grammatical meanings of subject, say—are too vague; that current research has made many more detailed distinctions than those which we have given. But here again, a serious failure to grapple successfully with the claims of our theory is involved: they often fail to see that our meanings are here intended to be emic, not etic, and therefore that each tagmeme may occur with an etic range of meaning. We stated: “As the emic structure takes over (in the description) from an etic set of categories, the semantic definitions of the terms may become broader (vaguer), and the formal component may become more prominent and specific” (p. 13, and see also pp. 121, 233). That is, the choice of an emic view predicts that a person searching for purely etic descriptions in the system will find ours “vague.” But this is precisely analogous to what happened in the days when persons began to find the need for structural definitions of sound units (phonemes), and met with resistance from those who wanted absolute, precise writing in a detailed international alphabet of distinctive phonetic minutiae.

History is repeating itself. And just as formerly persons in field work often found such an etic alphabet eventually incomplete since it carried an implicit infinite regress of detail for the infinitely resourceful scholar, so in the study of grammatical role (or “case” at the clause level), we have seen beginners in the field who have at first found themselves excited by the helpfulness of the use of cases, but then have become discouraged as the number continued to increase intolerably. For the first verbs, case was wonderful for them; but often for several hundred verbs it started to become unworkable, with each verb tending to demand its own case. In general, then, we have found that form must be used to put emic restrictions on semantic proliferation in the grammatical hierarchy. Then, to handle a sample of that detail, further semantic distinctions must be moved to the referential hierarchy (in ways which we are struggling with, but have not provided answers to here).

The difference between the emic and etic characteristics of the meaning of tagmemes has been part of tagmemic theory from the beginning (i.e., in K. Pike’s *Language*, first edition Vols. I–III 1954, 1955, 1956; second edition 1967). The subjects manifested by *John* in *John runs home* and in *John has been hit in the eye* are distinct tagmemes [1967, alias grameme 1954] “because of the sharp differences in structural meaning and proportion (... e.g., actor-as-subject, versus recipient-of-action-as-subject), and in their potential expansion [including here, a transformational difference] (...e.g.,

To John was given the map but not To John ran away),” (1954:131b, cf. 1967:246; see also 1954:103a, 104, 116b–17, and 1967:196, 198, 219–20, 231). Further, “the meaning of ‘actor-as-subject’ in the first tagmeme in *Fire burns* is slightly different from the meaning of ‘actor-as-subject’ in *Man sings*, since the relationship of the subject to the remainder of the sentence is slightly different in each instance” (1967:231, 1954:123a; and cf. 1967:218–19, and 1954:116a).

But (3) a still deeper problem lies behind the two mentioned. The current climate of opinion makes it difficult for readers to take seriously enough, for following the textbook, certain of our claims: (a) We insist that there are three structural hierarchies in language, not just two; that a referential hierarchy must be added to the consideration of phonological and grammatical ones. (b) Meaning is related to behavioral impact and understanding, and is found as a component for each of the hierarchies. “Semantics” is not treated, therefore, as a single basket in which to toss all miscellaneous kinds of meanings, but rather these are dispersed over the hierarchies. (c) Each level of each hierarchy, furthermore, has its own kind of meaning—with indeterminacies (allowed for by a wave perspective of language) occasionally involving overlap of meanings. In this connection, it should be noted, the meaning of grammatical case is merely one kind of grammatical role; other grammatical roles occur at levels of phrase, sentence, paragraph, monolog, or whatever levels a particular language utilizes. Referential and phonological roles, also, must be analyzed. Handling all semantics as comprising just one abstract area is too simplistic, in our opinion, for analyzing the data which we have had to struggle with. Rather, meaning must in each case be treated only in reference to simultaneous physical form; the form-meaning composite is that which must serve as our target for discovery in a language strange to us—not a disembodied essence; only thus can infinite regress of minute differences of meaning in context be dodged without damage to the study and use of language in theory and in practice.

A similar problem of etics and emics affects the discussion of hierarchy. In our classes we frequently mention that the lists on pp. 20 and 23 are etic, not emic; one or more of the levels of a hierarchy may perhaps be omitted in some particular language, or two levels may be joined. We had not made this sufficiently clear, previously, in the text; but see now the second comment on p. 23.

And, again, we acknowledge our gratefulness to those who have helped us teach the book to some four hundred students over the past four years. In addition to those listed earlier, there are Linda Blackburn, Linda Criswell, Mary Huttar, Carolyn Orr, Velma Pickett, Joanne Prewitt, Terry Schram, Andrew Sims, Ed Travis, John Watters, and James Watters. In addition, parts of the material have been, during that time, field tested under our supervision in workshops in over a dozen countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, as we have visited researchers of the Summer Institute of

Linguistics in those areas. From them we have gained courage to continue in this direction, which has proved profitable for field linguists, and have received stimulus which will help in the next stages of theory development.

Dallas, Texas
October 22, 1979

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