One

Linguistic analysis as a study of meaning†

The present article arises from the Nice Colloquium on semantics sponsored by the Société Linguistique de Paris, organized and presided over by Professor Benveniste and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

The study of meaning was examined and exemplified from at least as many angles as there were members of the group, and all the principal theories of semantics considered in one connection or another. The most valuable results of such meetings are intangible and the effects will probably not be recognizable in the subsequent work of the participants even by themselves.

For the present writer this article provides a very welcome opportunity of making explicit some of the more fundamental issues as they now appear to him after the colloquium.

All systematic thought must start from presuppositions and in dealing with meaning some scholars have supposed single words listed in a dictionary and single sentences each bounded by full stops could be safely examined as to their meaning in complete abstraction from specific environment.[1] Similarly a sentence as such has been regarded as a logical proposition expressed in words, which must have a subject, that which is not the subject being the predicate, the whole sentence affirming or denying the predicate. Logicians continue to treat words and sentences as if they somehow could have meanings in and by themselves. Some linguists follow this centuries-old method of linguistic analysis merely because of the weight of philosophical and logico-grammatical tradition. Both these pre-suppositions are misleading in

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linguistics and wholly inadequate for the handling of speech events which is the main object of the discipline.

The meaning of any particular instance[2] of everyday speech is intimately interlocked not only with an environment of particular sights and sounds, but deeply embedded in the living processes of persons maintaining themselves in society. 'Spoken language is immersed in the immediacy of social intercourse',[3] and 'voice-produced sound is a natural symbol for the deep experiences of organic existence.'[4] The sounds of speech are *ex intimis*. They are not merely molecular disturbances of the air. It is not the acoustic disturbances which matter, but the disturbances in the bodies of speakers and listeners. The dominating interest of the immediate situation, the urge to diffuse or communicate human experience, the intimate sounds, these are the origins of speech.

Since science deals with large average effects and these within certain modes of observation,[5] it is necessary to generalize typical 'texts' or pieces of speech in generalized contexts of situation. The basic presuppositions or postulates are from this point of view in three groups:

1. The human being is a field of experience in which the life process is being maintained in the social process. The human being in society is endowed[6] with an urge to 'diffuse' and 'communicate' his experience by voice and gesture.

2. All language text in modern languages has therefore:

   (a) the implication of utterance, and must be referred to
   (b) participants in
   (c) some generalized context of situation.[7]

These categories must also cover 'talking to oneself'.

3. The participants in such contexts are social persons in terms of the speech community of which they are members. The key notion is one of personality, the essentials of which are:

   (a) Continuity and the maintenance of the life process, the social process. In this connection the concepts of context of culture and context of experience[8] are necessary abstractions in stating the continuity as well as the change of meanings.
   (b) The creative effort and effect of speech, including talking to oneself. The preservation of the essentials of life in society from the point of view of the participants in the situation forms a large part of the meaning of language as creative activity.
   (c) Personal responsibility for one's words.

(d) The organization of personality and of social life depends on the built-in potentialities of language in the nature of the human beings and on what is learned in nurture.

In the most general terms, the basic principle is the unity, identity and continuity of the human personality, bearing constantly in mind that 'we are in the world and the world in us'.[9] As far as possible the linguist should remain in one world, resisting all theories which demand the acrobatics of balancing on two worlds, oscillating between two worlds or seeking a machine with an escape velocity by means of cybernetics.

It is of course true that all language presupposes 'other' events linguistic and non-linguistic issuing from each other. But this does not necessarily lead to a dualist theory of the sign, still less to the setting up of a naïve binary opposition based on the two much abused general words *phonetic* and *semantic*.

The contextual theory of meaning[10] employs abstractions which enable us to handle language in the interrelated processes of personal and social life in the flux of events. As I emphasized in my little book,[11] published over twenty years ago, 'In common conversation about people and things present to the senses, the most important "modifiers" and "qualifiers" of the speech sounds made and heard, are not words at all, but the perceived context of situation. In other words, "meaning" is a property of the mutually relevant people, things, events in the situation. Some of the events are the noises made by the speakers.'[12]

The abstractions the linguist makes must always presuppose communicativeness or tendency to diffusion of experience as a human predisposition, but he must never forget converse with oneself which starts with babbling in infancy, as one of the origins of all speech.[13] It is on this basis that in further converse two or more articulated memories become, so to speak, one.

There are many difficulties in dealing with written language, which may itself be considered as 'an abstraction from insistent surroundings'. But a great deal can be done with writing which 'is immersed in the immediacy of social intercourse', and any remoter text which can be apprehended in use can be regarded as having such temporary meaning as is given to it by the reader.

At this point two contemporary journalistic discussions of the meaning of 'words' will point what I venture to think is the inevitability of the contextual approach to meaning.

The *Sunday Times* correspondent in Korea reports as follows on 7th October 1951:

> One vital necessity is for the already largely standardised Anglo-American military vocabulary to be extended to cover tactical situations as well as equipment, signal procedures and headquarters nomenclature. A powerful contributory reason for the heavy losses suffered by 29th Brigade in April was the tactical misunderstandings which arose between the staffs of the brigade and the U.S. 3rd Division—misunderstandings equally inspired by British understatement and American over-statement.
>
> It is true that American staff officers are quicker to use such expressions are 'surrounded' and 'cut off', and that those expressions do not always apply to situations as Commonwealth staff officers see them. But the British are no less guilty of misrepresentation in a mixed command when they describe imminent disaster as a 'shaky do'; or assure anxious Americans that 'everything is under control' when, as the Americans themselves would declare, 'all hell is breaking loose'.

As an illustration of the contextual theory of analysis, I would point out that the main categories could be applied to the events referred to in the above report: the nature as well as the nurture of the participants, the *texts* or verbal actions, the non-verbal behaviour of the participants, the relevant objects and the effects of the verbal actions.

Much more interesting is the recent correspondence[14] in the *Observer* on what Mr Philip Toynbee called the 'wanton privacy' of Edith Sitwell whom he accused of cheating in using a phrase he quotes as *Emily-coloured hands*. His complaint of wanton privacy is based on the fact that such writers publish material 'which is *by its nature* inaccessible to all readers except their personal friends. It is almost equally unjust when Joyce demands of his readers a detailed acquaintanceship with the geography of Dublin.' This again reminds him of Mr Ivor Brown's previous article on the *Laziness of readers*, which refers failures of communication to the shortcomings of the reader and the social situations of our times. A writer should certainly be conscious of his readers. But of what readers? 'You cannot broadcast to people who are without receiving sets.' Such discussions show how far such professional writers are from the naïve approach to the meanings of words, characteristic of nineteenth-century semantics, which regarded them as if they were immanent essences or detachable ideas which we could traffic in.

However, it turned out that it was Dr Edith Sitwell who had been wronged. She graciously accepted an apology and pointed out that 'taking a line out of its context helps to obscure the meaning,[15] in many cases', and supplied the three relevant lines:

> For spring is here, the auriculas
> And the Emily-coloured primulas
> Bob in their pinafores on the grass.

She pointed out that the intention was to call to mind 'the pink cheeks of young country girls'. Such 'intention', however, is not the concern of the linguist. The intention of a particular person in a particular *instance* of speech is never the concern of linguistic science. We study the flux of experience and suppress most of the environmental co-ordination of what we examine, regarding the essentials as *instances* of the general categories of the schematic constructs set up. We see structure and system as well as uniqueness in the instance, and its essential relationship to instances other than itself.

But before Dr Sitwell's explanation had appeared another correspondent had written to say that she knew quite well what 'Emily-coloured hands' were like. They had the tang as well as the colour of 'white' pepper. She had not been cheated. And Dr Sitwell charmingly accepts this approach adding '*the phrase gave a sensory impression*, that is all that matters'.

In a recent study of meaning[16] I have avoided any attempt to approach individual 'reified' words as isolates of conceptual meaning. In examining Swinburne's poetic diction, for example, the language 'pieces' are chiefly verses, stanzas and poems, and in the study of prose whole sentences and paragraphs form the quoted material, not just 'words'. They were examined by applying a set of modes excluding historical details such as those given in telling the story of *Emily-coloured*.

In the prosodic mode the compound *Emily-coloured* certainly suits the verses in which it comes. At the level of collocation something might be learned from other contexts of *coloured* and generally of such *-ed* forms in compounds. Similarly studies of collocations in which personal names and such flower names as *primulas* occur might prove interesting. Before briefly exemplifying this approach, all conceptualist and associationist psychology must be laid aside together with the traditional figures of rhetoric.

We have the verbal text, and Edith Sitwell's poems, her personality,

language and diction are possible subjects of study. Linguistic analysis must first state the *structures* it finds both in the text and in the context. Statements in structural terms then contribute to the statements of meaning in various modes.

I have already mentioned the structure of the verses in which *Emily-coloured* has its place in the design. This is a statement of meaning in the prosodic mode. The grammatical mode of meaning will be better understood if in addition to a statement of *syntagmatic structure* (i.e. of the nominal phrases including *Emily-coloured primulas*) we set up *systems of constituents* each one of which is a *term* having *function* or 'meaning' by interior relations with the other terms of the system.

I have not made a study of Dr Sitwell's English, and can only offer open systems of collocations in which *coloured* is commonly preceded by (1) closely related nominals, and (2) closely related adverbs. Most of us are familiar with (1a) *rose*-coloured, *coffee*-coloured, *chocolate*-coloured, *plum*-coloured, perhaps *flame*-coloured, *honey*-coloured and *canary*-coloured; (1b) *dark*- or *light*-coloured, and *darkish*- and *lightish*-coloured, *funny*-coloured; (1c) phoneticians refer to *h*-coloured or *r*-coloured vowels; and (1d) *multi*-coloured, *parti*-coloured. And with adverbs, (2) *brightly*-coloured, *gaily*-coloured and *highly*-coloured.[17] In terms of the above very tentative system, the constituent *Emily* is first of all not a sectional term in (2), nor in (1b, c, d), but has its value as a sectional term in (1a), which itself has the functional value of *not* being (1b, c or d), or (2), which as a section is a function of a group of given sections or sub-sections.

It will now be clear that whatever the 'intention' of the poet, whatever imagined concepts are invented for *Emily-coloured*, such things are not relevant. In all systematic thought there is a putting aside of notions, and of suggestions, with the prim excuse that of course we are not thinking about such things.

We have, however, seen *Emily-coloured* as part of a syntagmatic structure, a structure of categories. We have also very tentatively set up paradigmatic systems of which it is a term. And such functions as are there given by way of example can be stated as meanings at various levels of analysis. Having made a series of abstractions at various levels, it is necessary to establish *renewal of connection*.[18] If the context is about not very aristocratic flowers in English country gardens, the odds against *Emily-coloured* seem to be decidedly less than twenty to one. The odds in favour can perhaps be guessed when the collocational improbabilities of some of the phrases in (1a) with the word *primulas* are borne

in mind. According to my analysis part of the meaning of *Emily-coloured primulas* is collocation with *Bob in their pinafores on the grass*. This level I have termed meaning by collocation, which may be personal and idiosyncratic, or normal.

Proceeding from the three lines of text to fuller contextualization makes it clear that no independent conceptual 'meaning' can be given to *Emily-coloured*. If poetry can be defined as any piece of prose for which another piece of prose cannot be adequately substituted,[19] then '. . . Emily-coloured primulas Bob in their pinafores on the grass'.

And though my employment of these controversial lines has been entirely linguistic, I am happy to say that thanks to the poet I *have* seen them bobbing in their pinafores on the grass, the Emilys *and* the primulas.

There is, however, a possibility that a statement of meaning in the phonaesthetic mode[20] might be made, if the association of personal and social attitudes with certain proper names be considered relevant. There is the trinity of Tom, Dick and Harry, and Mary Ann, Mary Jane, Polly, Martha, Rosie, even Emily. And what would English low comedy do without Wigan?

The important points for the present purpose are (1) the inadequacy of the traditional categories of semantics, (2) the impossibility of the conceptualist word-idea approach in descriptive linguistics, and (3) the indication that the time has come to try other abstractions using the larger contexts in which words are embedded, necessitating new types of ordered series of words and pieces, and new systems of stylistics. The conceptualist or psychological approach to words as units in the linguistic analysis of meaning is already in its grave, but not yet buried. The 'one morpheme one meaning' approach in the United States will probably follow it.

Words must not be treated as if they had isolate meaning and occurred and could be used in free distribution. A multiplicity of *systems*[21] derived from carefully contextualized *structures* would seem to be indicated.

The *structures* attributed to 'texts' are not to be given ontological status. They are schematic. Only within such limited systems can commutation provide the basis of a functional or meaning value, and substitution not amounting to commutation, the absence of such value.

Two or three further examples may be useful. The final assibilation of words in English is homophonous for the plural and the genitive of nouns, and the third person singular of the present indicative of verbs. I

have employed the traditional terms since here at any rate they can be formally established in English. Take three texts, which can be fully contextualized:

(a) He got the orders for cement.
(b) He orders cement once a month.
(c) Have you forgotten the Ancient Order's name?

First the structure of appropriate contexts of situation must be stated. Then the syntactical structure of the texts. The criteria of distribution and collocation should then be applied. Three formal scatters can be established:

(a) order, order-s;
(b) order, order-s, order-ed, order-ing;
(c) order, order-'s, order-s, order-s'.

We may consider the categories of noun substantive and verb established, since grammatical collocation and distribution provide differentiating criteria. The categories of singular and plural both in the noun substantive and the verb present indicative are similarly guaranteed.

The simple form of the noun and the genitive form are also determined by distribution and collocation. There is clearly a functional meaning for the noun substantive and the present indicative verbal forms in a system of formally established grammatical categories. Text, context, distribution in collocation, guarantee the binary opposition of singular and plural, and also of the zero form and genitive forms of the noun substantive. At the levels of the situation, syntax, and distribution in collocation, abstractions can be made from the structures, and systems of word-classes and morpheme-classes set up. Within these systems each term or member functions and has a clearly determined meaning.

The linguist must be clearly aware of the levels at which he is making his abstractions and statements and must finally prove his theory by *renewal of connection* with the processes and patterns of life. Without this constant reapplication to the flux of experience, abstract linguistics has no justification.

The lexicographer has to face the difficult problem of definitions and the forms of entry. One of the most valuable results of the Nice Colloquium was the frank recognition that truly descriptive dictionaries did not exist, that we are still a long way from real historical dictionaries,

that most of the citations we meet were far from satisfactory, and that great opportunities awaited the lexicographers of the future.

During the Nice discussions the suggestion was made that a lexicographical definition of the English verb *get* might be possible, and I made some sort of statement which turned out to be highly complex, but at any rate not just nebulous and vague. I shall not repeat it, but suggest a schematic summary compiled independently of the N.E.D., giving some of the structures in which distribution in collocation may be stated.

My purpose is to suggest what was in my mind during the discussion, namely, that the various formal structures and collocations of which *get* is a constituent or 'word' can be regarded as criteria for setting up a system of distributed variants, in which each variant is a function of the others and of the whole system. Each sectional definition in shifted terms is *not* a statement of a concept or of the 'essential' meaning of the word *get* itself, but a descriptive indication of the relation of the collocations to generalized contexts of situation.

1. To have and to hold in secure possession. To be given something for certain, perhaps forcibly, or by creative effort.

get, gets, got, getting.
(a) He has got plenty of money.
He's got the blues.
She's got the measles.
I've got him.
(b) He has succeeded in getting a house at last.
(c) This music just gets me.
He got ten years.
I don't get it.
You'll get it.
He won't get the sack.
He's got what was coming to him.

2. Securing or obtaining possession.
get, gets, got, getting.
(a) Get me one too.
(b) It's difficult to get.
(c) He got a pass.
(d) Get yourself a wife.
(e) That won't get you anywhere.

3. In binomial verbs—making the effort to possess, or putting in possession, movement towards possession.

(a) Go and get it yourself.
Come and get it to make sure.
Run and get it before it is too late.
(b) I'll try and get one for you.

4. Growing, becoming, moving towards having something, arriving successfully at some destination, securing progress towards some end.

(a) He gets better every day.
You'll get dirty.
(b) You'll never get there at this rate.
(c) How do you get to work?
(d) You'll get lost.
You'll get caught if you are not careful.
You'll get mixed up in intrigue.
He got married.

5. Obligation, forcing, forced, making effort towards some end.

(a) Get it done (—made, —written, —finished).
(b) When I get going, you'll see.
He's got moving at last.
(c) You've got to go through with it.
(d) Get rid of it.

6. In phrasal verbs or with particles one at a time. Various combinations of the creative effects suggested above in situations involving becoming, conation, successful effort.

(a) He can't get in.
He can't get out.
He can't get through.
(b) He knows just enough to get by.
(c) I got up at six.
(d) When am I going to be able to get down?
(e) You do get about.
(f) Where do we get out?
(g) He must be getting on.

7. With following nominals.

(a) This gets me down.
(b) We got her off.

(c) I can't get it in.
I can't get it out.
I can't get it through. (Cf. I can't get through it.)
(d) They got the fire under. (Cf. They got under the fire.)
(e) We'll get it over. (Cf. We'll get over it.)

8. With more than one particle.

(a) I've at last got down to it.
(b) I can't get on with him.
(c) There's no getting away from it.
(d) They'll never get away with it.

9. With particle and nominal.

(a) What are you getting at?
(b) She gets on my nerves.
(c) I can't get through it.
(d) He's got under your skin.
(e) I got up a play.
(f) She got in a rejoinder.
(g) He got out a prospectus.
(h) You'll get to it in the end.
(i) You'll get to like it in time.

10. With more than one particle.[22]

(a) You can't get out of it now.
(b) I shall perhaps get over to that tomorrow.

It must be remembered that the above rough scheme is in no sense intended as a criticism of any lexicographical method. It is merely a tentative system of collocations for *get, gets, got, getting*, bearing in mind the types of situation in which the collocations as wholes may be used. The classification is admittedly imperfect and the generalized descriptions of situational usages are not mutually exclusive. But there are over *thirty* formal types of collocation in ten sections to provide not only an internal set of determinants for forms of the verb *to get*, with general conditions of use indicated in general terms, but also a basis for the highly complex statement necessary to define the forms of *get* in a dictionary. There is no doubt about its unique position nor about the inadequacy of any so-called synonymous substitutions. However, summary indications may be given in the following list of words.

(a) have, hold, possess, grasp, grip, catch;
(b) secure, obtain, procure, acquire;
(c) earn, profit, gain;
(d) am, is, etc., grow, become;
(e) progress, advance, arrive, reach;
(f) obliged, force, forced;
(g) succeed, surmount, subdue, defeat, overcome, overpower;
(h) contrive, extricate, insert, apply, escape, avoid;
(j) learn, understand, express.

Some of these words may be substituted for *get* in collocations the distribution of which may be marked by formal structure, but by no means all. The possibility of substitutions not amounting to commutation is an indication of similarity of value or function. There are a sufficient number of such non-commutative cases to suggest that parallel distribution of this kind justifies the use of the above nine lists of words to summarize the general situational conditions of the use of *get*.

Get is formally involved and widely distributed in a large number of collocations functioning in creative, possessive and highly conative situations. It is easy to understand why taboos grew up about this word of power, especially among puritans and schoolmasters.

The study of the collocations in which a word is normally used is to be completed by a statement of the interrelations of the syntactical categories within the collocation. The distribution of the collocations in larger texts, and the distribution of the word under examination in collocations will probably provide a basis for functional values or meanings for words of all types. The homophones *by* (two values), *bye* (two values), *buy* in English can be dealt with by applying these categories, and definitions are possible for all of them if other words or phrases are used to describe the generalized situations, as with *get*.

Again the notion of substitution in collocation and context of situation not amounting to commutation may prove adequate. Such substitutions are not to be regarded as synonyms, nor need all the *bai* homophones be regarded as homonyms. *by*, *bye* and *buy* are easily distinguished formally. We can even have *by byes* (cricket), *by buying*, *byes by chance*, *buying by the State*. The distinction between prepositional and adverbial *by* is clearly established by distribution in collocation, by substitutions not amounting to commutation, supported by syntactical relations.

For example: (a) They go by night.
(b) They go by night after night.

The substitution of *past* in (b) does not amount to commutation with reference to the situation, but is impossible in (a). Intonational and other differences in utterance can perhaps be shown by oscillograms.

Finally, I submit the barest summary of some of the terms I have used with technical intention, the distribution of which in collocation and context should be adequate definitions for the present study.

Processes and *patterns* of life in the environment can be generalized in *contexts of situation*, in which the *text* is the main concern of the linguist. *Order* and *structures* are seen in these, and after examining *distribution* in *collocations*, '*pieces*', *words* and *morphemes* may be arranged in ordered series, resulting in *systems* and *sets of systems*, the *terms* of which are functions of one another and of the systems. On a previous study I have outlined linguistic analysis as a study of meaning in the following terms:

> I propose to split up meaning or function into a series of component functions. Each function will be defined as the use of some language form or element in relation to some context. Meaning, that is to say, is to be regarded as a complex of contextual relations, and phonetics, grammar, lexicography and semantics each handles its own components of the complex in its appropriate context.[23]

The *abstractions* or *schematic constructs* set up are made at a series of distinct mutually complementary *levels*. *Renewal of connection* with the *processes and patterns of life* in the *instances* of experience is the final justification of abstract linguistics. Linguistic analysis must be polysystemic. For any given language there is no coherent system (*où tout se tient*) which can handle and state all the facts.

I venture to think, even to hope, that this approach to linguistic analysis as a study of meaning may be found to offer opportunities of a synthesis of contemporary theories. Science is not proved wrong, it develops. It is more probable that we are all in that sense right, than that we are all wrong, and only dogmatic interpretations of de Saussure are right. 'The span of life for modern scientific schemes is about thirty years.'[24]

Notes

1. cf. A. N. Whitehead, *Modes of thought*, Cambridge, 1938, 90; and Gordon Holmes, M.D., F.R.S., *Introduction to clinical neurology*, Edinburgh, 1947, 138: 'Single words are meaningless unless related to other words.'
2. 'Instance' is brought forward as a technical term.

3. Whitehead, op. cit., 55.
4. Whitehead, op. cit., 45.
5. Whitehead, op. cit., 123.
6. cf. Norbert Wiener, *The human use of human beings*, London, 1950, 84, 85, 93, 94, 103, 104, 108. Though this work will interest linguists, it does not show much understanding of their work or recent developments. Three principal notions, however, are in harmony with the presuppositions put forward in this article: (1) Man's 'preoccupation with language . . . is built into him'; (2) Personality and therefore language has to do with 'continuity of pattern' and 'continuity of process'; (3) 'Individual and social process centers around the process of learning.' To apply these three valuable concepts to human beings and the products of engineering alike seems to me nothing more than metaphor. And I am inclined to think the whole cybernetic theory of communication applicable only to engineering, and can only refer to human beings in the manner of telephone exchange metaphors and analogies. Or possibly to a physiologist's decerebrate preparation. The essential elements of living personality in society cannot be 'built' into machines even with all the resources of cybernetics. The development of such machines, however, will undoubtedly affect the categories linguists employ at certain levels of analysis.
7. See *'Personality and language in society'.
8. See *'The use and distribution of certain English sounds'.
9. Whitehead, op. cit., 227.
10. See *'The use and distribution of certain English sounds', *'Technique of semantics'; *'Personality and language in society'; *'Modes of meaning'; *Speech; Tongues of men* especially Chapter 10; Malinowski in C. W. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The meaning of meaning*, London; B. Malinowski, *Coral gardens and their magic*, London, 1935; A. L. Gardiner, *Theory of speech and language*, Oxford, 1932.
11. *Speech*, Chapter 5.
12. cf. Gordon Holmes, op. cit., 65. 'It is on the multiple nature of the impressions we receive that knowledge of what is happening in our bodies and of our relations to the external world depends. Though one or other sensation excited by a stimulus be dominant, it is the total sum of the impressions received that determines our reactions, not exclusively those of one nature or from one source only.'
13. The phrase 'converse with oneself' is not intended as an equivalent of *innere Sprachform* or 'internal speech' as used by neurologists. But the basic importance of babbling in infancy and of converse with oneself is heavily underlined by the experience of clinical neurologists. 'External speech depends on internal speech.' 'Gesture and pantomime or dumb show suffer when internal speech is disturbed.' 'Internal speech may remain intact in motor aphasia.' See Gordon Holmes, op. cit., 136, 193, 141.
14. 30th September, 7th October and 14th October, 1951.
15. i.e. The 'piece' under examination is really *Emily-coloured.*
16. See *'Modes of meaning'.
17. cf. N.E.D. Vol. II. A comparison of these entries with even the tentative and incomplete notes offered above may be taken as a first indication of how far short the best dictionaries often are of being either truly historical or adequately descriptive.
18. Whitehead, op. cit., 2.
19. Attributed to Paul Valéry.
20. See *'Modes of meaning', 195; and *Speech*, 183–8.

21. See *'Sounds and prosodies', 121–2.
22. [This section heading is identical with that of 8; this may have been an oversight, but it seems to me more likely that Firth thought that this was, in collocational and situational terms, a different section. F.R.P.]
23. See *'Technique of semantics', 19.
24. Whitehead.

Two

The Languages of Linguistics†

In the social sciences and in modern linguistics some of the epistemological conditions of scholarship are the vehicles in which it is carried, the general national language. The Scandinavian languages, French, Russian and English for example all determine certain aspects of linguistics. Even in what is called English, scholarship takes very different forms in America in English from those we are developing on this side of the Atlantic in European including British English. *Phonemics*, *phonemicize*, *phonemicization*, *phonemicist* are American words and are rarely used in England. *Phonetics* and *phonetician* are not nearly so frequently used in America as in England, and the modern use of the word *phonology* and its derivatives also is not widely current in America. There are many other discrepancies in the technical language which stand in the way of mutual interchange and quite obviously reduce mutual quotations and references to negligible proportions.

Some of this discrepancy is due to the different technical employment of such ordinary words as *environment*, *frame*, *juncture*, *context*, *contextual*, *situation*, *sound*, *segment*, by Americans, partly on account of basic differences of usage and styles in American English.

In British English there are similar developments, for some of which I am in part responsible—the student reading both languages tends to equate American supra-segmental phonemes for example with the

† As stated on p. 3 this paper was in a completely unfinished state. It was typed but with considerable handwritten emendations and additions. I have omitted some of the typewritten and the handwritten material, but in general have followed the text as emended with such additions as were clearly intended to be part of the text. Internal evidence (see note 4) suggests it was written in 1953.