Course: Linguistics   **Level: L2**   **Lecturer: Prof. Saliha CHELLI**

Unit: 2   American structuralism   **Lesson 7**

Post-Bloomfieldianism

Introduction

Bloomfield's approach to linguistics was characterized by its emphasis on the scientific basis of linguistics, adherence to behaviorism especially in his later work, and emphasis on formal procedures for the analysis of linguistic data. In addition to his remarkable contribution to the fields of phonology and morphology. Bloomfield's name is usually attached to a pioneering syntactic theory called immediate constituent analysis (ICA). Basically, ICA is an explicit method of analyzing sentences grammatically by dividing them into their component parts. Post-Bloomfieldian school of linguistic theoreticians dominant in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s include leading members included Zellig Harris, Charles F. Hockett, and George L. Trager and others. The influence of Bloomfieldian structural linguistics declined in the late 1950s and 1960s as the theory of Generative Grammar developed by Noam Chomsky came to predominate.

1. Post-Bloomfieldian School of Linguistics

Bloomfield disseminated his teachings among a group of enthusiastic linguists, who came to be known as Post-Bloomfieldians. He lectured in the Summer Institute of American Society of Linguistics from 1938 to 1941, and inspired these linguists by his empiricist approach to language study.

The post-Bloomfieldians made the assignment of phones to phonemes subject to what is now generally referred to as the principle **of bi-uniqueness**. According to this principle, every phoneme of a language can be manifested by a variety of phones, following regular distributional ('allophonic') rules; every phone in an utterance can be identified as the phonetic manifestation of a specific phoneme of the language; and crucially, *in a given context no phone can manifest more than one phoneme*. Together, these principles meant that there is a 'biunique' or one-to-on correspondence between any string of phones (i.e. any 'phonetic representation', in present-day terminology) and any string of phonemes. For example, given the

predictable allophonic distribution of aspirated and unaspirated manifestations of voiceless stops in English, the phonemic string /kɪt/ necessarily begins with the phonetic segment [kh] and the string /skɪt/ necessarily includes the phonetic segment [k]. In the other direction, the phonetic segment [k] following the phoneme /s/ in /skɪt/ can only correspond to the phoneme /k/.

A second important principle of the post-Bloomfieldian approach was its insistence that **phonemic analysis should be carried out prior to and independently of grammatical analysis**. Neither this principle nor that of bi-uniqueness was at all widely accepted outside the post-Bloomfieldian school, and they have been abandoned by the generative phonologists (*see* below).

2. Bloomfieldian Major Linguists

Among the number of American linguists influenced by Bloomfield, Zellig. S. Harris, Charles Francis Hockett, Kenneth L. Pike and Sydney MacDonald Lamb   further developed structuralism, characterized by a strict empiricism.

Zellig S. Harris, Chomsky's teacher (1909- 1992) was a Russian-born American scholar known for his work in structural Linguistics. He carried the structural linguistic ideas of Leonard Bloomfield to their furthest logical development: to discover the linear distributional relations of phonemes and morphemes. Harris suggested the use of transformations as a means of expanding his method of descriptive analysis to cross sentence boundaries.

Charles Francis Hockett (1916- 2000) was an influential mid-twentieth century linguistic anthropologist, and was a vocal critic of Chomsky's transformational-generative paradigm. His book,' Phonology' (1955), shaped phonological theory for a decade and remains important to this day. His introduction to linguistics from 1955, 'A Course in Modern Linguistics', is regarded as a model of clarity. It was a comprehensive introduction to the gamut of linguistic knowledge that had developed by that time and became the standard introductory text for nearly two decades. It continues to be widely studied to this day. He continues to be widely known for his "design features" proposal, which attempted to differentiate human language and animal communication systems.

He enumerates seven of them: duality, productivity, arbitrariness, interchangeability, specialisation, displacement and cultural transmission (1958: 574). Hockett refrains from qualifying the seven properties as more or less important but seems to treat them as equally fundamental to the characterisation of language**.**

Kenneth L. Pike (1912- 2000) was an American linguist and anthropologist known for his studies of the aboriginal languages of [Mexico](), [Peru](), [Ecuador](), [Bolivia](), [New Guinea](), Java, [Ghana](), [Nigeria](), [Australia](), [Nepal](), and the [Philippines](). The most significant figure in continuing the structuralist tradition may be K. Pike, who

and his followers have a special name for their technique of linguistic analysis – **tagmemics**, a grammar that describes language in terms of relationship between grammatical function and the class of items which can perform that function. In addition to his work in tagmemics, Pike has done research in phonology and is the author of *Intonation of American English* (1945)

Sydney MacDonald Lamb (1929) is an American whose scientific contributions have been wide-ranging, including those to historical linguistics, computational linguistics and the theory of linguistic structure. Starting from the late 1950s, Lamb developed his theory in a model consisting of three levels, or strata: phoneme, morpheme, and morphophoneme. This laid the foundation for his stratificational grammar, a system of grammatical analysis in which language is viewed as a network of relationships and linguistic structure is considered to be made up of several structural layers, or strata. Stratificational grammar derives in part from glossematics and in part from American structuralism. This later developed into neurocognitive.

Morphophonology (also morphophonemics) is the branch of linguistics that studies the interaction between morphological and phonological or phonetic processes.

Morphophonemics involves an investigation of the phonological variations within morphemes, usually marking different grammatical functions; e.g., the vowel changes in "sleep" and "slept," "bind" and "bound," "vain" and "vanity," and the consonant alternations in "knife" and "knives," "loaf" and "loave

References

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