Post-Bloomfieldian Structuralism

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Learning objectives

In this lecture, students will be introduced to

- Post-Bloomfieldian Linguistics

- Its contributions

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. The influence of Bloomfieldian

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**. The phonemic specification of a word or utterance was held to determine uniquely its phonetic realization (except for free variation), and, conversely, the phonetic description of a word or utterance was held to determine uniquely its phonemic analysis.
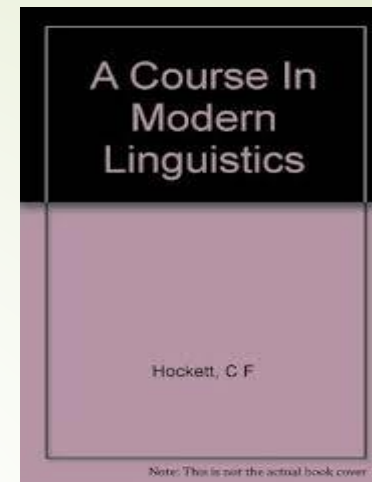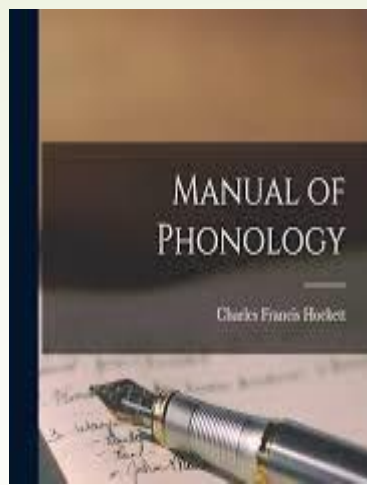
A second important principle of the post-Bloomfieldian approach was its insistence that **phonemic analysis should be carried out prior to and independently of grammatical analysis.**
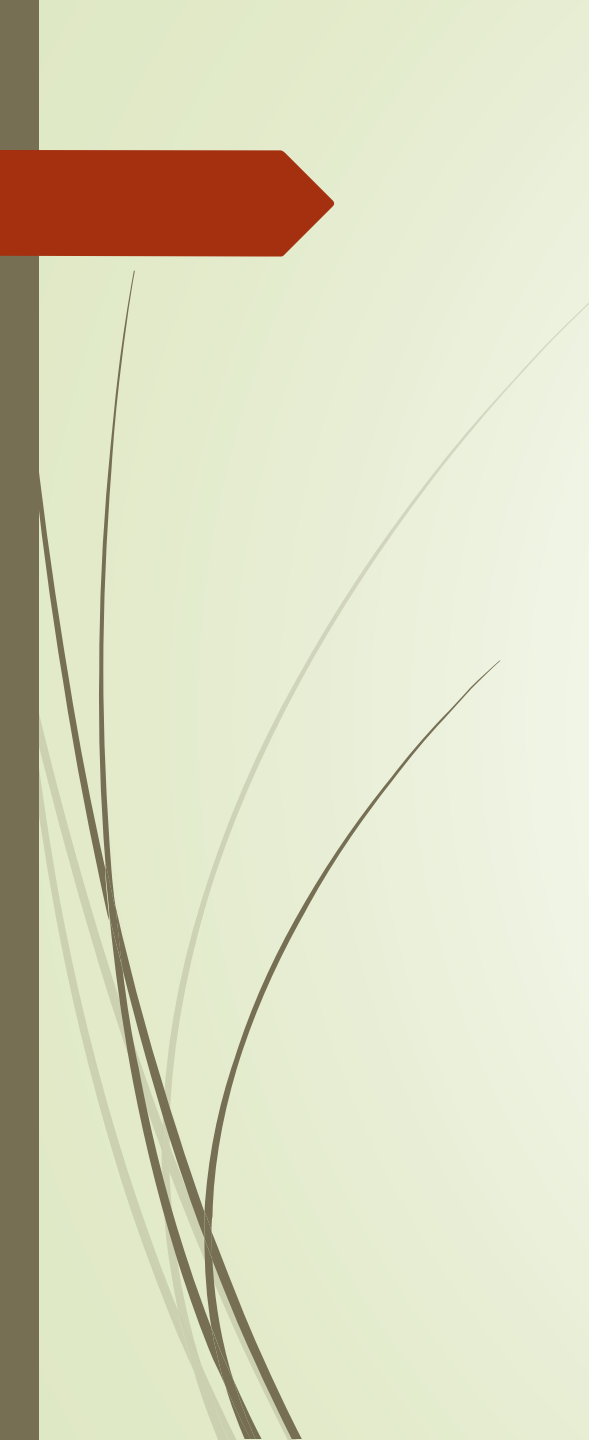
2. Bloomfieldian Major Linguists

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', i**s regarded as a model of clarity. It was a comprehensive introduction to the linguistic knowledge that had developed by that time and became the standard introductory text for nearly two decades.
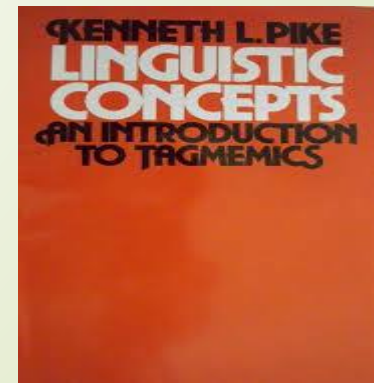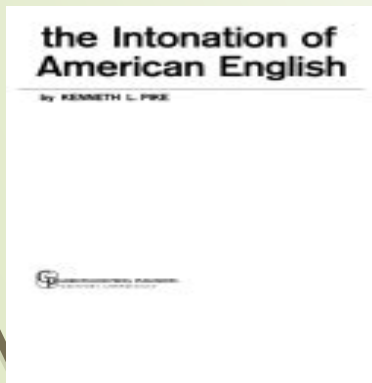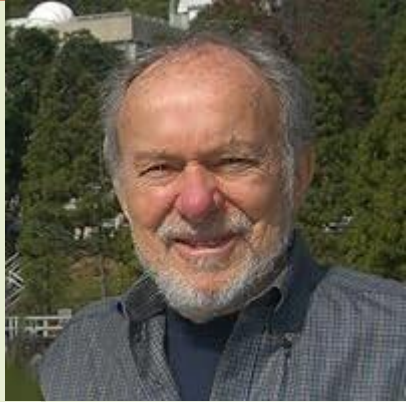
He continues to be widely known for his "design features" proposal, which attempted to differentiate human language and animal communication systems.

He enumerates seven of them: duality, productivity, arbitrariness, interchangeability, specialisation, displacement and cultural transmission (1958,p. 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.
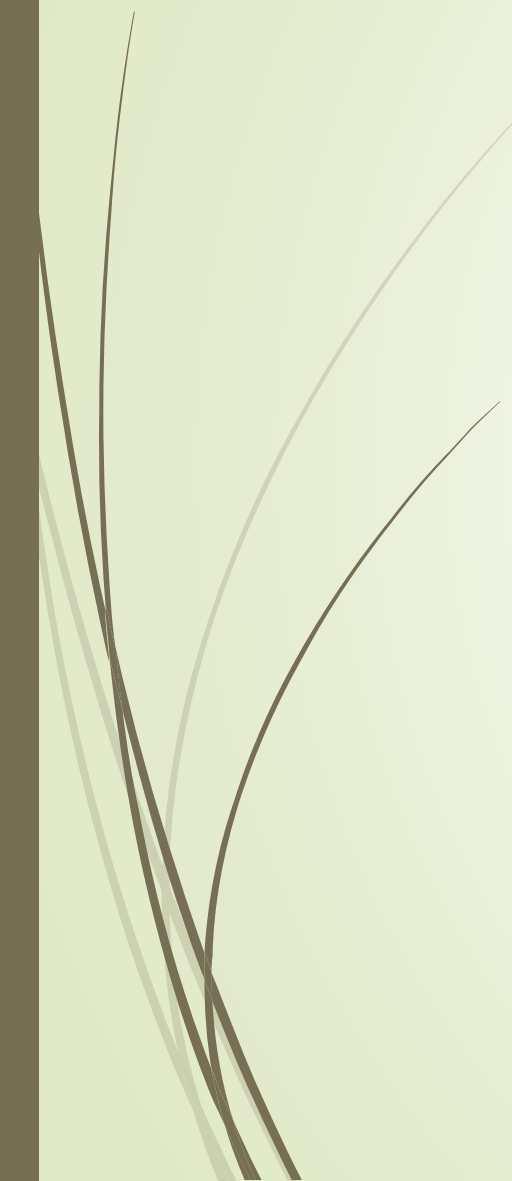
Kenneth L. Pike (1912- 2000) was an American linguist and anthropologist known for his **studies of the aboriginal languages** of Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, New Guinea, Java, Ghana, Nigeria, Australia, Nepal, and the Philippines. The most significant figure in continuing the structuralist tradition 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)

the Intonation of American English
by KENNETH L. PIKE

KENNETH L. PIKE
LINGUISTIC
CONCEPTS
AN INTRODUCTION
TO TAGMEMICS

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.

For example, the word form "understood" realizes a combination of three morphemes UNDER, STAND, and PAST. UNDER and STAND jointly realize the single lexeme UNDERSTAND (whose meaning cannot be described as a function of the meanings of UNDER and STAND), whereas the single PAST morpheme directly realizes the single lexeme PAST TENSE.

Stratificational grammar derives in part from glossematics and in part from American structuralism. This later developed into neurocognitive.

Definition of concepts

Morphophonology (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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