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On the Tagmemic Theory: Introduction to Tagmemic Analysis

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Book Reviews

ON THE TAGMEMIC THEORY

INTRODUCTION TO TAGMEMIC ANALYSIS. By Walter A. Cook, S.J. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969.

This book was designed to teach the student the principles of morphological and syntactic analysis, according to the tagmemic approach. It assumes that the student who uses it is already conversant with phonetics and phonemics, and has already taken a course in "Introduction to Linguistics." Perhaps, a few remarks on the pedagogical and theoretical aspects of the book can be made, by way of evaluation.

Pedagogical Aspects

The organization of material and its presentation with graphs, charts, and figures are outstanding. The language of the book is technical and exact, yet easy to follow. The (homework) exercises and supplementary readings at the end of each chapter also make the book a handy text for a class in (tagmemic) morphology and syntax. The book covers the essential notions of tagmemics, and provides ample training in the basic principles of tagmemic analysis. It avoids controversial issues and alternate positions on the various points of theory. Since the exercises are (almost) elementary in nature, neat solutions are possible. The author may have purposely left out problematic items, in order not to confuse the student. However, this may give the student a false impression, since neat solutions to actual morphological and syntactic analysis of language structure are the exceptions and not the rule. In short, the book is an ideal text for an undergraduate or masteral class in morphology and syntax.

Theoretical Aspects

The author is in the mainstream of tagmemic theory in most aspects. However, he follows Robert Longacre's model, when he tries

to combine tagmemic with transformational approach. Kenneth L. Pike does not think this is possible, since tagmemics is essentially an I-A (Item-and-Arrangement) approach, while transformational grammar is essentially an I-P (Item-and-Process) approach. However, there seems to be no difficulty with using the I-A approach on the formational level of analysis, and I-P on the transformational level. The ideal, of course, is to use the I-P on both levels of analysis.

Cook does not equate function with the position of the various constituents of a construction. He feels that in addition to position, function is also the "structural meaning" of the various constituents, i.e., "the meaning which is added to the lexical items filling the slot, over and above the lexical meaning as it appears in the dictionary" (p. 16). This means that Cook's approach to structural analysis is not formal, but formal-semantic. The difficulty with this so-called "structural meaning" is that one can assign several such meanings to a lexical item which fills a functional slot. Take, for example, the sentence "the dog bit the man": one can think of several structural meanings, which one can assign to the lexical item "dog"; as for example, "subject," "actor," "agent." Yet, "subject" and "agent" are not identical functions in English sentences, although "subject" and "actor" on the one hand, and "agent" and "actor" on the other hand are identical: as, for example, in the sentence "the man was bitten by the dog," where "the dog" is "agent" and "actor", and in the sentence "the dog bit the man," where "the dog" is both "subject" and "actor."

TEODORO A. LLAMZON

THE MULTIHANDICAPPED

FORGOTTEN CHILDREN, A Program for the Multihandicapped. By Merle E. Frampton, Ellen Kerney and Regina Schattner. Boston, Massachusetts: Porer Sargent Publisher, 1969. 287 pp.

"A Declaration of the Rights of a Child" as unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly was an impetus for acknowledging the right of the multihandicapped child to the education and care required by his particular condition.

The present volume is an outgrowth of a special project, proposed in 1956, and undertaken by the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind under a grant from the Avalon Foundation. The focus of the project was on the multi-handicapped cerebral-palsied and blind or partially-sighted children, many with concomitant debilities, including emotional disturbance, epilepsy, hearing loss, speech defect,