Linguistic Society of America

Review: [untitled]
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Reviewed work(s):
    What is Language? A New Approach to Linguistic Description by Robert M. W. Dixon
Source: *Language*, Vol. 43, No. 3, Part 1 (Sep., 1967), pp. 742-751
Published by: Linguistic Society of America
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/411814
Accessed: 12/05/2009 09:32

REVIEWS

What *is* language? A new approach to linguistic description. By ROBERT M. W. DIXON. (Longmans linguistic library.) Pp. xviii, 216. London, Longmans Green, 1965.

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The title of this book is somewhat of a come-on; fortunately the subtitle provides an accurate indication of the purpose and contents of the book. Dixon's purpose, clearly enough, is to enter the arena of linguistic theory construction with a detailed sketch of a putatively new approach to the study of language and a no less detailed critique of practically all other approaches to the subject, ancient and modern. Accordingly, chapters one and three present Dixon's theory, while two and four are devoted to criticism of other approaches relative to his own.

It should be pointed out at the outset that this book represents only a small beginning of what the linguistic world can ultimately expect from Dixon's pen. At least three other works are mentioned as 'in preparation' or as 'yet to be published'. First we are told that 'the present discussion is founded on a homogeneously formulated set of philosophical principles. A description and explanation of these has yet to be published' (vii). Next Dixon remarks that 'investigations into "logic" and "truth" can be based on consideration of linguistic meaning: I hope in due course to investigate these topics in more detail' (vii). Elsewhere he says explicitly that 'a fuller statement and justification of a theory of truth, along the lines suggested here is in preparation' (161). Finally we are informed that 'an application of the linguistic theory sketched in this book, to a fairly complete description of Dyirbal, an Australian aboriginal language, is in preparation. This will clarify points that have been left undeveloped in the present book ... [and] other applications will be attempted in the near future' (viii).[1]

The reader who is familiar with modern developments in British linguistics may well wonder what is really 'new' in Dixon's approach; his avowed purpose is simply to find out 'how language is used—both in itself and in its relations to other phenomena' (1), a purpose indistinguishable from that of either Malinowski or J. R. Firth. What is new is presumably the thoroughness with which Dixon pursues his study, and the fact that he genuinely confronts a certain amount, at least, of linguistic data. Thus at least one persistent criticism of earlier British linguistics in the Malinowski-Firth traditions (including that found in Dixon 1963), namely that it fails to address itself to actual linguistic data in any serious way, is met in this book.[2]

[1] After completing this review, however, I was informed by Dixon (personal communication) that he has no intention of proceeding with any of the works just mentioned, except for the description of Dyirbal, and that he would now disown a great deal of what he says in this book, an exception being for the material on Z-correlations (see below). He would take back many of his criticisms of linguistics, ancient and modern; in particular, those of generative-transformational linguistics, as he is now convinced of the need for transformations.

[2] For some of the criticisms just alluded to, see Postal 1964:103 and 1966:84, 92–3;

Moreover Dixon expresses his desire to confront the data with a minimum of assumptions. He allows himself to be able to determine a priori only whether a given sample of stuff is or is not a specimen of natural language—nothing else. This position he contrasts with those of every other thinker on language (Malinowski excluded), which he conceives of as being based on a host of assumptions about the nature of language, generally uncritically inherited from the past. The source for most of these assumptions he identifies as Aristotle (197). A quite natural corollary of this position is his view that his task is, or will be, much more difficult than that of a tradition-accepting grammarian such as Chomsky or Halliday, whose task is largely that of 'formalizing past work' (109). Dixon asks us to believe that

to a very large extent they [Chomsky and Halliday] can validly rewrite old grammars in their terms, without really looking too much at the relevant language patterns: a general theory is thus quite easily obtainable. In my case, when I am trying to be as uninfluenced by previous studies as I can and when, in fact, my analysis will not be significantly relatable to any other work, a general theory is much further off. By judiciously working with very different kinds of subclasses [of language patterns] I may be able to *approach* one; but the sheer statistical fact of the size of the sample needed makes it unlikely that I shall be able to put forward a definitive, *descriptive*, and faithful general theory within, say, the next twenty years [109, emphasis Dixon's].

Twenty years is indeed a long time; but even so I am fully persuaded that Dixon will not succeed in bringing forth a theory by 1985 that will convince anyone except perhaps his own students, for he has simply not come to grips with the enormity (not to mention tedium) of the task which he has set out for himself, the ability to provide a coherent description of the relationship between linguistic events and the situations in which they are observed to occur. He writes glibly of the creation of a 'contextual thesaurus', in which parts of utterances will be catalogued with other parts which they may replace or with which they may contrast in correlation with extra-linguistic phenomena. The very size of such a monstrosity staggers the imagination. In one passage, Dixon does wrestle briefly with the realization of its potential size: 'the number of features in ... [a contextual thesaurus] is likely to be greater than in a lexical thesaurus, such as Roget's: it may exceed fifty thousand for some subclasses [surely a low estimate!]; and the structure of a contextual description will be far more complex than that of a lexical one' (140). Dixon is aware of the fact that it took Roget fifty years to develop his rather modest thesaurus (72), but of course he did it alone and without the help of computers.

Let me postpone discussion of the theoretical sections of this work in order to take up Dixon's rejection and consequent criticism of traditional thinking about

Langendoen 1964:307. From Dixon's point of view, moreover, the only kinds of linguistic data which are acceptable for analysis are actually observed texts, and not examples thought up by the investigator. This point of view, however, betrays one of the peculiarities of the restrictions under which Dixon chooses to operate. For him there is no concern for searching for an example which may crucially bear on an issue, unless by good fortune one happens to be in the sample under analysis. This position really amounts to saying that every language is a dead language, or that there are no particular languages (Dixon actually does say this, 5).

the nature of language. Dixon's rejection of all traditional thinking about language except that of the Malinowski-Firth-Halliday tradition is well known from his earlier writings.[3] In this book, finally, we are told why, in a revealing auto-biographical comment in the very last section:

> My investigation into language correlations began when I wanted to make use of linguistic ideas in a fairly complex logical inquiry ... Eventually, I discovered that the kind of linguistic foundations I sought had never been properly worked out; the nearest I could find was Malinowski's ethnographic theory of language, but his remarks are far from systematic or complete. Contemporary thinking about language seems to be befuddled with too many 'traditional unforgettables'; the small value of the tradition is demonstrated by the lack of revealing results it has turned up in the two millennia of its existence. The large number of linguistic theories current at present, and the difficulty of satisfactorily applying most of them, underlines this point [197].

For Dixon to make such a charge against the field is no joking matter. Perhaps he is prepared to substantiate his charge with a sensible and insightful account of the history of linguistic thought. Indeed, perhaps this is the point of Chapter 2 of the book under review, which is a capsule treatment of the Western grammatical tradition from Plato to the present scene. But if that is its intent, it will not do, for while Dixon does succeed in presenting many of the ideas of prominent thinkers on language in a straightforward fashion (there are hundreds of direct quotations), outside of the classical period his treatment is largely quite superficial and occasionally distorted. Moreover, there is no claim to exhaustiveness; what has been left out may turn out to have had far more profound significance.

Quite naturally, Dixon begins with Plato and Aristotle. His treatment of the classical period follows closely that of Sandys (1903) and Robins (1951, 1957, 1966), and for Aristotle's logic in particular also the work of Bocheński (1961) and Łukasiewicz (1957). His discussion cannot be faulted for being unfaithful to these generally satisfactory treatments, and there are also a few apparently original remarks interspersed here and there, for example his footnote (37) on Plato's and Aristotle's use of the terms ónoma and rhêma.

His treatment of the Hellenistic and Roman periods is much less satisfactory. After introducing the analogist/anomalist controversy as 'a more sophisticated version of the old "naturalist/conventionalist" controversy' (40), he nowhere precisely tells us the nature of the 'rules' which formed the center of the dispute. It is clear from examining the rules of the analogists that they were designed solely to determine membership in paradigm classes of words found in the classical texts. The anomalist attack on the analogists' rules was more of an attack on a particular and rather ineffective methodology than on the view that language is rule-governed behavior. Nor are we told of Varro's ingenious resolution of the anomalist/analogist controversy, the key to which was his reinterpretation of the Alexandrian notion of 'rule of grammar' as a principle governing some aspect of language design (cf. Langendoen 1966). Most of the rest of Dixon's discussion of this period has to do with the development of notions concerning the parts of speech, again following Sandys and Robins.

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[3] Postal (1964:84–5) is understandably vigorous in his denunciation of Dixon's expressed contempt for the achievements of linguistic scholarship.

As he moves into the period of the Renaissance and beyond, Dixon's concern narrows down mainly to an attempted demonstration of how the categories of Greek and Latin grammar have become hypostatized in Western thinking about language. The development of philosophical or universal grammar in France and England following Descartes is entirely ignored, although a discussion of that work surely would have fitted in quite nicely. Instead we are left with the vastly oversimplified view that the categories of Greek and Latin grammar were uncritically accepted as the sole basis for grammatical description of the languages of the period. By discussing briefly the thinking of such philosophers as Locke, Leibnitz, Kant, and Mill on language, we are led to realize that critical thinking concerning language was undertaken during this period, but the discussion is so superficial (except in the case of Locke) as to be of no use whatever for understanding the issues that these men were really concerned with.

After a section devoted to developments in nineteenth- and twentieth-century logic, Dixon takes up the ideas of these linguists in the following order: Roget (72-3), de Saussure (73-8), Bloomfield and his followers (78-84), Chomsky (84-7), Malinowski (87-91), Firth and Halliday (91-7), and Sapir and Whorf (97-101). There is some attempt on Dixon's part to relate the ideas of these thinkers to what he thinks their particular purposes are, and to what he thinks they are reacting against, and his tone in these sections is generally quite sympathetic.

Roget heads the list of linguists under inspection probably because the notion of a thesaurus is crucial for Dixon. Dixon's discussion of de Saussure notes accurately his distinction between langue and parole—this is important because it is a distinction not drawn by Dixon himself; at least he does not fail to make it out of ignorance. Dixon also recognizes de Saussure as a critic of accepted grammatical notions (like himself), and as an important innovator, notably in his argument that the relationship between signifier and signified is correlative rather than determinative, and that an important dimension in meaning is that of value in a system.

The section on Bloomfield and his school is a hash of direct quotations, with rather inconsequential quotes scattered in along with well-known proof texts. Dixon's method of presenting the history of linguistics shows its merits and demerits very clearly in this section. The quotes give you a sense of being in touch with the original (less of a service than if Bloomfield were out of print), but there is precious little critical historicizing to be found.

Dixon's discussion of Sapir correctly focuses on the latter's concern with psychology and for establishing the psychological reality of linguistic constructs, but Dixon dismisses Sapir's beliefs with a parenthetical remark: 'this merely implying that intuitive ideas about language correlate with Sapir's theoretical categories' (98). This remark in itself would not be wrong, and indeed would represent a justification of Sapir's notions, if it were true that what Dixon means by 'intuitive ideas' is what Sapir meant by it or similar terms. But it is clear that they do not. Dixon has in mind the consciously formulable notions of laymen about language; Sapir's convincing cases about the psychological reality of phonemes have to do with unconscious ideas, ideas which require patient elicita-

tion and interpretation by the linguist, just like primary linguistic data itself. Moreover, as Bernard Bloch's wonderful editorial note to Postal's review of Dixon 1963 testifies (Postal 1966:90), intuitive ideas about language for Sapir also extended to unconscious ideas about grammatical structure. These too the linguist may—indeed must—determine and then exploit.[4]

Dixon discusses ever so briefly the grammatical notions of Sapir 1921, but even so manages to muddle a number of issues hopelessly: 'In contrast to the static, Bloomfieldian, IC-type of analysis, Sapir's descriptions dealt with the derivation of a grammatical form from some underlying form by application of various dynamic processes' (98). Two footnotes apply to this passage: fn. 415 reads 'See Hockett's "Two Models of Grammatical Description" for a comparison of the IA (item and arrangement) and IP (item and process) models', while fn. 416 informs us that 'Chomsky's theory of linguistics (§2.25) can thus be looked upon as a synthesis of certain aspects of the IC approach (a static immediate constituent component) and quasi-IP methods (transformations as a dynamic process)'. But of course IA ≠ IC (even the I's are different); and the point of Hockett's article was to show an isomorphism between the two models, IA and IP, as he understood them. Finally the application of the label 'quasi-IP' (whatever that is supposed to mean) to the notion of grammatical transformation, while still identifying IA and IC and applying that notion to the constituent structure component of a generative grammar, is simply nonsense.

Whorf comes in for more extended discussion and quotation. Dixon apparently has taken some of Whorf's assertions as established: thus, 'Whorf showed that any system of logic is relative to a particular language or group of languages' (99). Dixon's section on Chomsky is reasonably well-informed, and his prejudices only occasionally show through; the myth that Chomsky's views 'apply a little better to written than to spoken language' (86) is, for example, trotted out. Most recent innovations in generative-transformational theory are, of course, not discussed.

His treatment of the linguistic theory of Malinowski (1935) is reasonably thorough, although it is too bad that Dixon did not point out the development of his ideas through time (the parallels with Bloomfield's change in attitude from the 1910's to the 1930's is remarkable). More interesting is Dixon's opinion that in certain respects Firth was more traditional-minded than Malinowski (92), despite the fact that Firth criticized Malinowski sharply for unconsciously carrying over traditional grammatical notions without question in his actual descriptive work (Firth 1957).

We may assume that Dixon's description of Halliday's theoretical position is up-to-date; we are told that 'the present account is largely based on Halliday's lectures and on unpublished work by Halliday, Angus McIntosh, J. McH. Sinclair, and J. O. Ellis' (93). Even so, it is difficult from this section to discover what the theory is all about—no linguistic examples are discussed, although

[4] Chomsky (1965:21–4) makes these points in a particularly forceful way; thus when Dixon quotes Chomsky (1964:924) as being fundamentally concerned with giving 'a correct account of the linguistic intuition of the native speaker', he immediately misconstrues Chomsky's intentions.

Dixon does provide a rather elaborate (and in my judgment totally irrelevant) artificial illustration (96).

We turn now to the linguistic theory set forth in this book by Dixon himself, and ask of it whether it is at least potentially 'revealing' in a way in which other theories are thought by him not to be. The first chapter is entitled 'Towards a linguistic theory', and is largely made up of sections dealing with what Dixon believes to be aspects of the nature of descriptive scientific theories in general. As such, it represents an expansion of a similar discussion in Dixon 1963.

The reader first encounters slow going in §1.3, 'Primitive terms'. I allow myself to quote the entire first paragraph, and confess my inability to make any sense whatever out of it (and similarly the other two paragraphs of this section).

I take four theoretical terms as basic: *observation, action, direction,* and *pattern-correlation*. These are called the four components of a life. A life contains just one observation and just one action. Each observation corresponds to a 'person': a large number of observations correspond to each individual person, although we cannot have two observations corresponding to the same person *simultaneously:* similarly for actions. Despite this superficiality between the relations of observation and actions with people there is no necessary one-one correspondence between observations and actions. 'Observation' and 'action' are looked upon as more primitive than 'person'; when we say that a particular set of observations all correspond to the same person, the 'person' is just a 'pattern' which is correlatable (in a meta-way) out of this set of observations. A 'person' is, for all relevant purposes here, just a set of observations and a set of actions—together with components of direction and pattern-correlation. Direction can only occur together with one of the other three components: Direction co-occurs always in degree, rather than as a clearcut presence [4].

In all seriousness, I must say that I fail to see any connection between what Dixon calls 'person' in this paragraph and the ordinary notion. Dixon's concept appears to me to include, besides ordinary human mortals, also dogs, spermatozoa, and electric eyes.

In the next section we are given Dixon's definitions of what are to him the important notions of internal and external meaning, along with a few rather curious comments about language. Dixon sees no necessity to talk about particular languages such as English. Language patterns will do for the raw material for investigation, and these 'can be of any extent: a five hour speech, or just a letter of an alphabet' (5). Presumably it does not matter if the speech were to be given by a person constantly shifting between two different (for us) particular languages.

Meaning, for Dixon, is nothing more nor less than pattern correlations referable to the language pattern, or part of it, under consideration. These can be correlations within the text itself (internal meaning) or with the 'general situation' (external meaning). Concerning the latter, Dixon tells us that 'the whole of the general situation will tell us the complete meaning of the pattern. But in practice this will be too vast, too impracticable to investigate; and so we take as much as we need off the top of the general situation scale: giving us the most important part of the meaning of the pattern' (6). If only situations were like bottles of unhomogenized milk! Dixon's bland assumption that he can take off the cream of the context of situation and find 'the important part of the meaning of the pattern' of course begs all the significant and, as far as I can see, unsur-

mountable questions standing in the way of making such a theory of meaning coherent. Dixon has not gone beyond Firth's purely hypothetical 'net' for obtaining the significant elements of situational context which can be brought to bear upon the problem of meaning determination (cf. Langendoen 1964:307)—but more on this below, in connection with the discussion of Dixon's third chapter.

The last three sections of Chapter 1 present Dixon's notions about what a theory is, a plea for freedom from bias, and an account of 'popular ideas' held by a group of about twenty British non-linguists which Dixon surveyed. Concerning theory making, Dixon distinguishes two evaluative criteria: internal and external power. Internal power is comparable to the usual notions of simplicity and elegance, which all scientists delight in. By external power, Dixon means the criteria of 'exhaustiveness and faithfulness' (14). These terms sound familiar, but I find Dixon's description of them puzzling; he says that 'a theory is exhaustive if it describes all the original set of lowest level pattern-correlations (and no others); it is faithful if the descriptions obtained from the theory agree detail for detail with the lowest level pattern-correlations (and no others); it is faithful if the descriptions obtained from the theory agree detail for detail with the lowest level descriptions' (14). I am not at all sure if I know what Dixon means by 'lowest level pattern-correlations', but I suspect that they must include detailed text-to-situation correlations. If so, however, then Dixon's criteria of exhaustiveness and faithfulness make no sense, because (if I have argued correctly) we have no way of telling what these correlations are IN FACT. Dixon can, of course, assert what they are in particular cases, but that would be part of the theory. It would appear that Dixon's linguistic theory has nothing at all to be exhaustive or faithful about, unlike those theories which purport to say something about the linguistic competence of ideal speaker-hearers.[5]

Dixon considers freedom from bias a good thing, but note his definition of bias: 'I call a very strong and simple intuition concerning what must be recognized a bias' (16). Consequently, Dixon is very concerned to bring to light any hidden biases he might have, so as to correct for them. However, he maintains his simplistic view, found in earlier writings, that intuitions or biases are taught in schools, so that untutored souls are bound to be intuition-free. The incredibility of this view should by now be generally apparent.

Let us now consider Dixon's third chapter, 'Towards a linguistic description'. We have noted Dixon's view that each language pattern is to be studied on its own merits, presumably without reference to other language patterns. He assumes, however, that similarities will be found among the various descriptions that arise, and that one can expect the class of language patterns to be divided into numerous subclasses, 'each of which is in itself fairly homogeneous' (107). Dixon's notion of language subclass I take to be essentially the same thing as

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[5] For such theories, it is merely DIFFICULT to determine the facts by which the theories may be evaluated along the dimensions of faithfulness and exhaustiveness. It is worthwhile noting Chomsky's frank statement that generative-transformational theory in its present state fails miserably in both regards, but that at least proponents of that theory can legitimately point toward progress in measuring up to those goals as time goes on.

Halliday's 'register'—in any event it is with recognizable subclasses that Dixon proposes to begin his study. In this book, he analyzes in this way a few texts from such a subclass, that of informal conversation among university students and nurses in Edinburgh. A fully definitive description of a language would cover the minimum number of subclasses which could be deemed a representative sample of an entire language. Dixon, as we have seen, predicts that it will take him twenty years to arrive at such a state.

The bulk of the discussion in Chapter 3 is devoted to illustrating the nature of certain general types of external correlations using the texts at hand, which we are told were selected at random from a shelf-full of tape recordings (147). The different types are called X-, Y-, and Z-correlations; the latter is divided into contrastive and replacement Z-correlations. Following Firthian terminology, the textual and situational realizations are called exponents of the correlation. Contrastive Z-correlations may be, for example, proper names or pronouns with the respective individuals themselves, activities and the textual expressions for them, etc. Replacement Z-correlations involve different ways of saying the same thing (Dixon, I am sure, would not put the matter quite this way). In one of Dixon's texts, a young engineering student, in addressing a suggestion to a group of young nurses, refers to them successively in the manner known only to bashful men in the company of ladies: *you, all of you, whoevers here at christmas*. This illustrates the concept of replacement Z-correlation.

X-correlations have as textual realizations items which connect different exponents of Z-correlations; functional rather than content elements, in the more standard linguistic idiom. Y-correlations are much harder to get hold of; they appear to be made up mostly of expletive elements: *like hell*, or introductory expressions: *I just decided, I know*. Perhaps they are content expressions which Dixon takes to be unrelatable directly to the situation at hand.

By focusing so sharply on particular language patterns in particular situations, Dixon has effectively cut himself off from the possibility of making any kind of significant linguistic generalizations. Despite this, he hopes to arrive at general statements which are appropriate to a recognizable subclass of language patterns, perhaps even to the class of all language patterns. Generalizations having to do with the correlations holding between language and non-language patterns (to him the most significant linguistic generalizations possible) comprise a hypothetical entity which Dixon calls, as noted above, a contextual thesaurus. Let me say quite categorically: Dixon cannot escape from this box. He has provided us with no criteria for determining generalizability from sets of pattern correlations of the type he considers. Therefore he is reduced to saying that anything is generalizable if he says it is generalizable. This state of affairs Dixon actually admits: 'in fact, my sort of analysis is likely to be even more personal than a purely grammatical study' (1); 'it might seem that my sort of analysis is liable to be more subjective, and thus less likely to be generally useful, than a more usual investigation' (199). This, despite Dixon's defense that all theoretical analyses are necessarily subjective to some extent, is the most devastating argument against Dixon of all; not that Dixon's theory is heavily subjective, but that it has no objective components whatever!

We can perhaps illustrate this state of affairs by examining Dixon's arguments for including some correlations and excluding others in the contextual thesaurus covering the subclass of language patterns exemplified by the Edinburgh students and nurses. Dixon maintains that the replacement Z-correlations *you* and *all of you* (together with their situational exponents) are generalizable, but that *whoevers here at christmas* is not; i.e. that it is highly particular to the given conversation, and is not likely ever to be found again as a Z-replacement for the others in a randomly selected pattern of this subclass (131). Remembering that Dixon arrives at this decision without appealing to introspection at any point, we may challenge his judgment and demand to be told the evidence that he has used to arrive at it. The evidence that Dixon actually does present is anecdotal. He cites the proximity of the conversation in time to Christmas and the likelihood of a number of the girls going away for Christmas. For an analysis that is putatively linguistic in nature, this will certainly not do. Such anecdotal explanations can easily be conjured up for any of Dixon's correlations, to be used as a basis for including or excluding practically any particular Z-correlation from the contextual thesaurus.

Dixon is either unaware of the kinds of objections raised here to his approach, or else he is not too worried by them, since he appears to be completely convinced of the significance of his notions of X-, Y-, and Z-correlations and that of the contextual thesaurus:

All previous studies can be shown to be partial, with respect to my analysis, being generally oriented toward rather short-term aims: the construction of a contextual thesaurus and an account of the X- and Y-categories provides the most general description of any set of language patterns, and it seems likely that the results obtained from other analyses will be derivable from it, as particular cases of the general description. Thus, although my scheme of analysis is the most difficult, it is also the most general, and the most worthwhile from a long-term point-of-view. Conclusions may be relatively slow in coming, but once the description is finished it will be more complete and revealing than any other [140].

I fail to see any justification whatever for these claims. This quotation however does bring us directly back to the two fundamental questions raised in this review: is Dixon warranted in rejecting the entirety of linguistic scholarship as 'unrevealing'? and does his apparatus really provide the basis for future more 'revealing' descriptions? My feeling, based on the arguments raised in this review, is that the answer to both these questions is negative.

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Językoznawstwo. By TADEUSZ MILEWSKI. Pp. 276 + 2 maps. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965.

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The author of this book was one of the most prominent Polish linguists, equally known for his work in Slavic, Indo-European, and general linguistics. Among his writings in general linguistics, his work on linguistic typology has attracted particular attention; in this context, Milewski's study of American Indian languages may be of considerable interest to the American linguist. The current book, designed as an introductory course for university use, is by no means his first endeavor of that sort; his outline of general linguistics has appeared in a fourth edition (1962a). Milewski's ideas on linguistic typology were recently summarized in another recent publication (1962b).

While many of the concepts and considerations expressed by the author in his previous works are carried over into the present textbook, this is basically a new presentation of problems and approaches in general linguistics. The book falls into four major sections: (I) Foundations of linguistics (5–47), (II) Descriptive linguistics (49–126), (III) Historical linguistics (127–202), and (IV) Typological linguistics (203–53). Appended are a selected bibliography (254–6), an index of terms (257–66), a language index (267–72), and a list of quoted authors (273). The two maps show the distribution of the languages of the world in 1500 and 1900, respectively.

Section one consists of three chapters, the first giving Milewski's definition of language, the second treating the relationship between language and other sign systems, and the third briefly surveying the history of linguistics. In a first approximation, the author defines language as 'that which is both social, permanent, and abstract in speech'. Speech is thus one of the postulates of such a definition and is in turn said to consist of four phases: (1) enunciation (*mówienie*), (2) comprehension or perception (*zrozumienie*), (3) text (*tekst*), and (4) language (*język*). Speech, being defined as communcation by sound between two people, is said to be, first, an individual process of enunciation, and second, a social process of per-