

## Book Review

MARTÍN MINGORANCE, LEOCADIO (1998) *El modelo lexemático-funcional*. Amalia Marín Rubiales (ed.). [Preface: Gerd Wotjak]. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada.

Review by Ángel Felices Lago (Universidad de Granada)

### **The Functional-Lexematic Model: The Linguistic Legacy of Leocadio Martín Mingorance.**

Martin Mingorance's widow has published recently a book collecting the most influential articles of this eminent Spanish linguist, whose functional-lexematic model is considered now the key element to understand the organization of the lexicon in the functional grammar theory of Simon C. Dik and his followers. Leocadio Martin Mingorance was only 48 when he suddenly died in 1995. His premature death has probably deprived us of one of the most eminent Spanish linguists in the final part of the XX century. Although the consequences of this loss cannot be measured, he had enough time to leave us the foundations of a very important legacy not only for Spanish linguists but also for European linguistics as a whole. In the 60's, Professor Martin Mingorance was awarded the Master's degree in English, Law and History at the University of Granada, continuing his education in Glasgow and Los Angeles. He became a specialist in Generative and Historic Grammar and was familiar with 5 modern languages plus Latin and Greek. His doctoral dissertation on word formation in English and Spanish was the basis for his discrepancies with Lees and Brekle and, finally, with the theory of generative grammar. He also had a solid knowledge of European linguistics and found there answers to many unsolved questions. Basically, he combined the fundamental principles of two prominent schools: the lexematic school of Tübingen led by Eugenio Coseriu and the Functional Grammar school of Amsterdam led by Simon C. Dik. He proved the complementarity between the essential postulates of both schools and this certitude was the basis to develop his own approach to the lexical component: The Functional Lexematic Model. He wrote some seminal articles (collected in the aforementioned book) describing the key principles of the FLM. In the following years this model was gradually

accepted by Coseriu and Simon Dik, to the extent that the latter considered that Martin Mingorance description of the lexicon component should be fully integrated in his Functional Grammar. At the same time, he was followed by many brilliant young students who have developed and extended the applications of the FLM to various fields of linguistics.

### **The foundations of the Functional Lexematic Model (FLM)**

Since the lexicon of natural languages can be viewed as lying at the interface of the linguistic and the extralinguistic worlds as well as at the crossroads of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, stylistics, pragmatics, etc., a complete description of the vocabulary of individual languages necessarily involves drawing on the advances made in other branches of linguistics. Moreover, a certain degree of formalisation is required in lexicographic analysis to integrate all these types of information. Given these premises, a lexicographic model should ideally be capable of providing a satisfactory answer to the following general questions:

- (a) criteria of vocabulary delimitation and selection types of meaning which can be considered necessary for the complete description of lexical units
- (b) organisation of the different types of meaning in a hierarchically - structured manner
- (c) criteria to achieve the maximum degree of information with the maximum degree of economy in definitions

Given the premise that the lexicon constitutes the symbolic part of a communication code, which consists of different sets of symbols of a different nature, and whose meaning and conditions of usage have previously been agreed on by the speakers of the language involved, it follows that the terms of the code should be specified in such a way as to make it not only as adequate as possible for its communicative purposes, but also methodologically coherent with the theoretical postulates of the linguistic model adopted for its description.

If a lexicographic model is called "functional-lexematic", it must be designed as a formalised "grammatical" lexicon, organised on onomasiological principles, for the description of the core vocabulary of a language.

In this model the core vocabulary consists of two parts: (a) primary (i.e. synchronically non-derived) contentive lexemes; and (b) productive affixes. In principle, a dictionary with these characteristics could well serve as a kind of bridge between lexicological and lexicographic description.

As a dictionary of this type is designed to constitute the lexicon (or lexical component) of a grammar, its elaboration should be undertaken in accordance with the postulates of that grammar. At a later stage, adaptations and extensions of such a "core" dictionary can be easily made for different purposes: non-technical general-purpose dictionaries, specialised dictionaries, pedagogical dictionaries, valency dictionaries, contrastive dictionaries, etc., organised on either a semasiological or an onomasiological basis.

### **Two complementary functionalist models: Lexematics and Functional Grammar**

This lexicographic model is intended, from a model-theoretical point of view, as a development of the lexicon component of a specific grammatical model: S.C. Dik's Functional Grammar (FG). This grammar, based on a functional-communicative view of language, belongs to the synthetic type of grammars, i.e. it has been devised from the encoder's point of view. The onomasiological approach seems to be the most appropriate criterion for the organisation of the lexicon in this type of grammar, as the procedure of "stepwise lexical decomposition" clearly shows.

Conversely, the application of an analytic model such as Coseriu's Lexematics seems to be, from a practical point of view, the most appropriate procedure for the structuring of the lexicon in semantic fields; in this way it would be able to provide a "stepwise" description in accordance with the postulates of FG.

Both models are complementary in several ways: in general terms, Lexematics is an analytic method which applies the fundamental principles of European structuralism (functionality, opposition, systematicity and neutralisation) to the description of the structure of lexical units. In this sense, Lexematics is structurally functional, i.e. the system of a language is based on the principle of functional oppositions, which states that only the elements which a language delimits by means of differences on the two levels of its signs exist as constitutive elements (Coseriu 1981: Ch. VII). FG,

on the other hand, is teleologically functional, i.e. it is organised on the assumption that language is an instrument to achieve an end: verbal interaction. In both models the functional approach is all-encompassing: for Coseriu (1981: 5.1, 5.2), the complete grammar of a language should consist of three sections, dealing respectively with the following questions: (1) *what* is it that functions in the grammar, i.e. a constitutional section (morphology); (2) *why* the existence of different grammatical constructions, i.e. a functional section (the study of the 'grammatical meanings of a language', i.e. their functions); and (3) *how* do grammatical constructions function, i.e. a relational section (relations between the constructions of different paradigms: ways of passing from one paradigm to another or of expressing analogous contents -- denotational equivalences -- in different paradigms). The relational and the constitutional sections should be considered in a relation of dependence with respect to the functional section.

For Dik also the description of the formal structures of the code must be embedded in a wider framework, envisaging communication as the ultimate purpose of language. In the Functional Paradigm, syntax cannot be regarded as autonomous with respect to semantics. Rather, the very essence of syntax is that it provides the means of creating meaningful expressions. And the system of language cannot be regarded as autonomous with respect to pragmatics. Rather, the very essence of language is that it must function properly and effectively in verbal interaction. (Dik 1983: 3).

### **Outline of a functional-lexematic grammar**

This grammar consists of a fund and two sets of rules: assignment rules and expression rules. The fund consists of three separate but interrelated components: a grammatical component, a lexicon, and a word formation component. The lexicon, which runs parallel to the other two components and from which they draw information on every level, constitutes the central component. The grammatical component consists of four subcomponents (pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and phonological). At the same time, the word formation component, which constitutes a kind of "grammaticalisation of the lexicon" (Coseriu 1976: 5.2.), runs parallel to and consists of the same subcomponents as the grammatical component, drawing information both from the primary lexicon and from the affix lexicon on every level.

Given the centrality assigned to the lexical component, FG can be considered as a dictionary-based grammar. The central building block for the production of linguistic expressions is the 'predication', which can be nuclear or derived (*cf.* Dik 1978, 1989). A 'nuclear predication' consists in the application of a 'predicate' (an element designating properties of, or relations between entities in some world) to an appropriate number of 'terms' (expressions with referential potential). Basic predicates (simple 'contentive' lexemes: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) are given in the lexicon where they are provided with all the information relevant for their semantic and syntactic behaviour in linguistic expressions. Thus each predicate is represented in the lexicon by means of a 'predicate-frame', a lexical formula containing the following types of information relevant for its correct use in linguistic expressions: (a) lexical form; (b) syntactic category; (c) number of arguments required; (d) selection restrictions on arguments; and (e) semantic functions fulfilled by the arguments. An essential characteristic of predicate-frames is that each predicate is provided with the relevant information about its combinatory possibilities. At the same time, the inherent properties terms are provided with allow us to determine their ability to combine with a given predicate. Besides, selection restrictions, packaged into the predicate frames, are placed in the argument slots, which are precisely the positions where they will be operating.

The second part of the predicate-frame in the lexicon is its definition. The specification of the meaning of a predicate-frame is done by means of 'meaning definitions' added to it. Each lexical entry has the following format:

$$a =_{\text{def}} \pi$$

“a” being a predicate-frame and  $\pi$  some combination of predicate-frames of semantically simpler predicates, in accordance with the following assumptions:

1. The defining predicates in meaning definitions are lexical items of the object language. This excludes the introduction of theoretical predicates drawn from some semantic metalanguage
2. The defining predicates used in meaning definitions may themselves be defined in other meaning definitions, This is the basis of the principle of 'stepwise lexical decomposition', according to which the defining predicates in meaning definitions are always the most complex ones in terms of the

lexical system of the language in question. This principle entails the following corollary:

- 2a. The definiens  $\pi$  of a meaning definition may not contain a proper subconfiguration  $\rho$  such that  $\rho$  in itself constitutes the definiens of some other lexical item in the language.
3. The structure of the definiens of meaning definitions is of the same formal type as the structures underlying linguistic expressions
4. The definiens of meaning definitions is not directly accessible to the operation of syntactic rules
5. In every language there is a set of simple lexical items the meanings of which cannot be defined by means of meaning definitions

Through the operation of principles (2), (2a) and (3) the lexicon is organised in such a way that the information contained in each lexical item presupposes all the information contained in its definiens. Therefore, only the features which differentiate the defined lexeme from its definiens and from its near-synonyms are specified. Conversely, principle (5) allows the concentration of relevant information (linguistic and extralinguistic) in archilexemes, thus permitting the automatic incorporation of the whole semantic content of archilexemes, which constitutes the nucleus of semantic information of the entire field, throughout the whole field. Consequently, a rigorous application of these principles complies with Grice's maxims, making at the same time for great parsimony in lexical description.

Although no explicit reference is made in FG to lexical field theory, the principles underlying both the structure of meaning definitions and the procedure of stepwise lexical decomposition are essentially the same as those underlying structural semantics.

Yet it is somewhat paradoxical that within FG no coherent methodology has been devised for the onomasiological structuring of the lexicon which would make possible its organization in lexical fields and, consequently, the stepwise decomposition of the groups of lexemes of each field. Nor has a methodological apparatus been devised for the description of word formation elements and processes.

### **Further developments of the FLM**

Two followers of Martin Mingorance, Ricardo Mairal and Pamela Faber, have expanded the scope of the central part of the FLM theory.

Some of these improvements to the basic principles can be explained as follows (*cf.* Faber and Mairal, 1998):

The construction of a formalised grammatical lexicon, organised onomasiologically in semantic hierarchies based on shared meaning parameters, entails the distinction between primary and derived lexicon, the elaboration of the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axis and also, the elaboration of the cognitive axis. The latter is a major theoretical move within the FLM of lexical description/construction of Lexical Field-Bound Grammars and it also presupposes a reorganisation of the lexicon component in FG. In a lexicon structured according to FLM principles, lexical entries with shared meaning components are located in the same lexical subdomain in the following way:

Subdomain-1	Subdomain-2	Subdomain-3	Subdomain-n
lexeme	lexeme	lexeme	lexeme
lexeme	lexeme	lexeme	lexeme
lexeme	lexeme	lexeme	lexeme

A lexical subdomain is a subdivision of semantic space derived from the factorisation of the meaning definitions of its members. This type of lexical organisation codifies the range of choices available to each speaker in the lexicalisation of a given area of meaning. In this way, the lexicon becomes a dynamic component where the choice of one lexeme over another is goal-directed. The following is an example of one of the subdomains of *cognition*. The verbs in brackets are an example of the type of verb belonging to each particular area of meaning:

- Domain-1. To become aware through your mind (*know*)
  - Subdomain-1. To become aware of sth., (having it) in one's mind [*know*]
    - subdomain-1.1. To come to know sth. [*learn*]
      - causative subdomain-1.1a. To cause s.o. to learn [*teach*]
      - causative subdomain-1.1b. To cause sth. to be known
    - [*show*]
      - subdomain-1.2. To know the nature/meaning of sth. [*understand*]
        - causative subdomain-1.2a. To cause s.o. to understand sth. [*enlighten, illuminate*]
        - causative subdomain-1.2b. To cause sth. to be understood better [*clarify*]

subdomain-1.2.1. To understand sth. with difficulty [*grasp*]  
subdomain-1.2.2. To not understand sth. [*mistake*]  
causative subdomain-1.2.2.a. To cause s.o. not to  
understand/understand with difficulty.

A lexical domain is thus hierarchically structured in subdomains organised in terms of their degree of prototypicality. In each domain, it was found that the degree of lexicalisation of a given domain is proportional to its conceptual salience. Consequently, a domain is conceived as a dynamic structure which is closely interrelated with schemata in other domains.

Apart from the leading developments in the core of the FLM, other contributions of Martin Mingorance followers have explored relevant features linked to this theory as well as useful applications to other fields of applied linguistics. The following list is by no means exhaustive, but it gives a clear idea of the impact of the FLM on Spanish linguists and the relevance of this theory in various topics of modern linguistics:

*Word formation*: The causativity in the derived lexicon (Martin Morillas, 1984); development of an onomasiological lexicon of nominalization affixes (Cortés Rodríguez, 1994).

*Syntax*: Complementation models of perception and speech acts verbs from a functional-cognitive perspective (Mairal Usón, 1992).

*Classematics*: Valuation or axiology (Felices Lago, 1991); intensification (Portero Muñoz, 1997).

*Lexicolgy and lexicography*: Functional-lexematic analysis of approximately 8,000 verbs in English and Spanish (Faber, Mairal Usón and others [unpublished]).

*Pragmatics*: The pragmatic component in the verbal lexicon of several languages (Jiménez Hurtado, 1994).

*Terminology*: Metaphorization in scientific terminology (Marín Rubiales, [unpublished]); axiologization in financial and commercial terms (Felices Lago 1996, 1998).

*Vocabulary teaching*: Direct applications to the lexical fields analysed in the FLM (Marín Rubiales, 1994)

*Translation*: Descriptive traductology with a combined functional focus on translation deviations (Sánchez García, 1994).



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