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Olga Mišeska Tomić: GENERATIVE SYNTAX IN THEORY AND PRACTICE
/"Kiril i Metodij" University, Skopje 1978/

The book Generative Syntax in Theory and Practice has been conceived primarily as a text book for undergraduate and graduate students, whose aim is to introduce them to one of the most influential and controversial theories of grammar developed in recent time, the generative transformational theory.

The main body of the book is divided into two parts: Part One, "The Generative Revolution", and Part Two, "The Major Syntactic Transformations". Part One focuses upon generative syntax "in theory", tracing its development from its first appearance in 1957 up to the mid-seventies, special attention being paid to the main turning-points of the generative revolution. Accordingly, Part One is divided into five units covering, in turn, the basic concepts of the new approach to syntax /"Underlying and Surface Structure"/, the major features of Chomsky's first generative

model /"Syntactic Structures"/, those of the revised model advanced by Chomsky in his Aspects of the Theory of Syntax /"The Standard Model"/, McCawley's and Fillmore's proposals as a reaction and alternative to Chomsky's Standard Model /"The Doom of the Deep Structure"/, and, finally, the development of a new trend in generative theory, generative semantics /"The Split among the Transformationalists"/.

Part Two presents generative syntax "in practice", offering an integrated description of the basic syntactic structures and processes generating them. The general framework, outlined in Unit One, is based largely on Fillmore's Case Grammar, introducing, however, the author's own conception of underlying structure. The rest of Part Two is organized in the standard way, each of the seven units dealing with one of the major syntactic phenomena: Deictics, Operator-triggered Transformations, Relativization, Nominalization, Conjoining, Pronominalization, and Ordering of Transformations.

All the units of both parts are accompanied by assignments /the key to the assignments being provided in Appendix 2/, a reading list and a list of suggestions for further reading.

Since the generative model is only one, albeit the most influential, of the several syntactic models advanced over the last twenty years, and since the relativity of syntactic description has become a universally-recognized language phenomenon, the author has found it necessary to mention the most well-known alternatives to the generative model.¹ These alternative models are briefly outlined in Appendix I.

1 The author's outline includes the following models: The Applicative Model, The Sense-Text Model, The Configurational Model, The Categorical Model, The Tagmemic Model, The Stratificational Model, The Functional Generative Model, The Scale and Category Model.

The book also includes a comprehensive bibliography on generative and other syntactic models, as well as an index of proper names and an index of subjects.

The Introduction provides a concise outline of the history of Syntax and its role in traditional, structural and generative grammar. At the same time the basic characteristics of the three approaches to language in general are mentioned, these characteristics reflecting the development of the study of language from its early stage based on the grammar of the Classical Languages, strictly prescriptive in nature, through the establishment of linguistics, in the period of early structuralism, as an independent, though still largely descriptive, scientific discipline, to the emergence of the generative theory, which conferred upon linguistics the status of a science in the modern sense of the word - a science which strives not only for descriptive but also for explanatory/predictive power.

The first three units in Part One deal with the basic features of the generative approach, notably the distinction between underlying and surface structure, phrase structure rules and transformational rules, and the essentials of the two Chomskyan models. The latter models are presented in a clear, concise and comprehensible way. Special attention has been paid to the advantages and shortcomings of each model with respect to its predecessor. This is important, especially for a beginner in this field, since it enables him to grasp the pivotal points of discordance among generative grammarians and to understand the reasons which ultimately led to the construction of several new generative models. Two of the latter, McCawley's and Fillmore's, which are discussed in Unit Four, have been selected for good reasons. They both reflect the general tendency to give semantics, whose function was much restricted in the Chomskyan models, a position of equal status in language analysis, allowing both syntactic and semantic facts to be considered in the search for a linguistic theory of greater explanatory adequacy. In addition to this, McCawley's

proposal represents a direct link with the new trend in the generative theory - generative semantics, which is discussed in Unit Five. The author sketches out only the main features of McCawley's proposal, without going into details whose comprehension would require considerable knowledge of symbolic logic, and, similarly, in the case of Fillmore's proposal, she presents only the essentials common to all his proposals, which otherwise differ in many details. Such treatment is entirely in accordance with the nature and aims of the present book. It is, however, important that a presentation of generative models other than Chomsky's has been included, not only in order to provide a complete picture of the development of generative theory from its beginnings to the present state of the art but also to demonstrate the viability of the generative approach.

The author does not deal with the psychological and philosophical implications of generative grammar, such as the nature of human language in general, the question of linguistic universals, and the relation between language and mind. It was, in fact, these very considerations which, on the one hand, made Chomsky well-known outside linguistic circles and popularized his theory to such an extent, and which, on the other hand, gave rise to a number of controversies. Such psychological and philosophical reflections on language often make it difficult for the beginner to read the original works on the subject of generative theory. For this reason it is an advantage rather than a shortcoming of a book of this nature to exclude them from direct treatment. The works cited in "Suggestions for Further Reading" and "Bibliography" provide ample opportunity for readers to get familiar with the above-mentioned aspects of generative theory if they so desire.

As has already been noted, the general framework adopted by the author for the treatment of major syntactic phenomena is largely of the Fillmorian type. However, the crucial notion of underlying

structure has been conceived somewhat differently from Fillmore's and it represents an original contribution by the author. She points out, however, that the proposed underlying structure has not been chosen as yet another theoretical alternative, but rather as a basis which seems suitable to the author for the treatment of those syntactic phenomena which she has set out to examine. It is, then, in view of the extent to which the author has been successful in pursuing this practical goal that her choice must be evaluated, although a comparison with Fillmore's underlying structure on a more theoretical level might be interesting. From the author's treatment of these phenomena presented in the following units, it can be seen that she has been successful in achieving this goal.

During the discussion of the major syntactic structures and processes, frequent reference is made to Jacobs and Rosenbaum's work English Transformational Grammar,² which is one of the first and most well-known text books on generative grammar. Although it can still be considered to be one of the major works of its kind in this field it must be borne in mind that it was written during the early stage of development of the generative theory and therefore its account of some phenomena is incomplete in the light of more recent developments. For this reason the author has tried, throughout the book, to incorporate into her framework the more recent approaches to particular syntactic problems /if they seem to provide greater insight, of course/, as well as to offer some improvements of her own. Among the former, mention can be made of the distinction between factive and non-factive predicates, which makes possible a more adequate account of Nominalization. The author's improvements include a unified treatment of prepositions and particles, and the avoidance of most of the segmentation transformations. Both steps contribute to greater simplicity of description. In the majority of cases, however,

2 Jacobs, R.A. and P.S. Rosenbaum: English Transformational Grammar, Blaisdell Company, Boston 1968.

the author follows the familiar and widely accepted analyses of particular syntactic phenomena, set, of course, within the general framework she has adopted.

All the main points under discussion are illustrated with simple, typical examples, which make it easy for the reader to follow the argument. Another important feature of this book is that all the crucial notions used are consistently explained and often provided with illustrative examples. This is of great significance if it is recalled that many a misunderstanding among generative grammarians themselves has turned out to be merely the result of terminological inconsistencies. It is no wonder that a beginner in this field is often puzzled by the different uses by various authors of the same term.³ Such a reader expects to find terminological clarity and an explanation of ambiguous terms at least in a text book on the subject. In this connection it must be mentioned that the author's decision to write her book in English is most appropriate, not only because it makes the book accessible to a wider circle of readers, but also because the reader has to get familiar with the original terminological apparatus of the generative theory if he is to be able to follow the major original works in this field, which have been written in English.

The book can be used both for individual study and in a teaching course. In addition to the above-mentioned praiseworthy features, the individual reader will particularly welcome the key to the assignments, which enables him to check his progress, and the graded list of relevant works - those cited under the "Reading List" representing the works which are less complex and which he should definitely consult, and those cited under "Suggestions

3 This is particularly true of the earlier works on the generative theory, which, like any novel scientific approach, had to face the difficulties of building up an adequate terminological apparatus.

for Further Reading", which he can turn to if he so wishes at a more advanced stage. Although the book is primarily intended as an introduction to generative syntax, it will be also useful to those who are already familiar with that subject, since the "Suggestions for Further Reading" and a carefully compiled, up-to-date bibliography provide a good source of reference for particular syntactic phenomena.

The book can be used within a course on theoretical linguistics, both at an introductory and at an advanced level, since its organization enables the teacher to deal with only the fundamentals of the generative theory or else to enlarge upon the material according to the nature of the course.

The book is also suitable for the teaching of English syntax to foreign students of the English language. The choice of the generative approach to syntax instead of the structural or traditional one appears to be entirely justified, for it is in the area of syntax that the generative theory has achieved the most. The syntactic phenomena have never before been explored with such explicitness and scientific rigour as by the generative theory. Moreover, the latter has revealed a great number of hitherto unknown features of human language, and the fact that it has not been able to explain adequately all those features does not in the least diminish its importance, for, in the author's words, "the validity of a theory is assessed not only through the answers it gives but also through the questions it poses."⁴ Whatever future developments may bring, the generative theory has already won a permanent place for itself in linguistics and no student of languages can afford to neglect it.

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