

ACTIVITIES OF THE LINGUISTICS SECTION, SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES, THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The teaching activities of the Linguistics Section which constitutes the nucleus of a Department of Linguistics which is to be established in the foreseeable future, comprise work in phonemics and phonetics, morphology and syntax. Structural principles are in the foreground of interest. The courses in General Linguistics which at the moment lead to the M.A. Degree, are attended by students of the Faculties of Oriental Studies and of Arts for whom the choice between Linguistics I and a Linguistics Seminar is open. In these courses the students are made acquainted with the principles of linguistics; special emphasis has until now been laid on phonemics, articulatory phonetics and syntax. It seemed to be important to acquaint students with the methods of investigation into unknown languages. Therefore, the linguistic material was partly taken from some New Guinea languages which formed the special sphere of interest of Mr. J. Harris. Until September of this year, Mrs. M. Lascelles was kind enough to take the responsibility of teaching modern theories of syntax. Next year, the Section will be joined by Mr. C. Court from Sydney University and by Mr. N.D. Liem, who is preparing his Ph.D. dissertation on a comparative phonemic and phonetic analysis of Vietnamese and English in the Institute of Advanced Studies.

The Linguistics Section is, in co-operation with the Institute of Advanced Studies, building up a phonetics laboratory; so far the equipment consists of an ultra-violet recording oscillograph, a trans-pitch meter, an intensity meter, a larynx vibrator, an MLR 38 tempo-regulator, and high-quality recording equipment. It is planned to buy an audio frequency generator, a segmentator, an oscillomat and an electro-aerometer. For use in the Tandberg language laboratory (30 booths), a distortion meter, an Ampex copying machine, an AVO multimeter, a Test rig (concorde), a number of tape recorders, as well as a range of smaller accessories, have been purchased. The language laboratory has been successfully employed for the teaching of French, German, English, Russian, Spanish, Latin, Indonesian, Chinese and Japanese. At present this teaching activity extends over 36 hours a week plus an additional ten hours for

students' voluntary exercises. The two technicians employed in the language laboratory are also responsible for the maintenance of the phonetics equipment. At present they are investigating the qualities of different types of tapes and tape recorders for scientific purposes.

The research of the Section to date has been concentrated on a New Guinea language, Kiwai. Mr. J. Harris has spent a considerable amount of time in Papua during the last few years and, with the help of an informant from the Gulf district, residing in Canberra for three months under the auspices of the Australian National University, he has been able to establish the phonemics, morphemics and syntax of that language. Auditive results were completed by measurements on combined pitch and volume curves.

My own work consists mainly of a continuation of a dialect geographic investigation into the distribution of distinctive features of Dutch dialects which had been recorded in March of this year. The material consists of 89 recordings each of about 15 minutes length; for the purpose of comparison Sranan Tongo, Pasar Malay and Frisian have also been included. The recording of an older and a younger speaker from each Dutch village visited should make it possible to study differences in the speech of two different generations and perhaps to predict to a certain degree the development of the dialects. At the moment the tapes are in the process of being transcribed. Subsequently, combined volume and modulated pitch curves will be associated with the corresponding parts of the phonetic text. The investigation of dialect geographical isophones of quantity, stress, voice, degree of opening of vowels, nasality and of the realization of distributional sound classes is emphasized. The relationship of these factors and their dependence on morpheme, word and sentence structures are another aim of the linguistic work in Dutch dialects.

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