

**Presentations Given at an Assembly Commemorating the 25th
Anniversary Since the Founding of the Linguistics Institute
(Summaries)**

BÉLA KÓPECZI:

Opening Address

The author in the capacity of Secretary-General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences opened with the speech published here the scientific session organized during the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the Linguistics Institute. The opening address briefly outlines the history of the Institute and praises its role in furthering linguistic science in Hungary.

PÉTER HAJDÚ:

Achievements — Tasks

The address delivered at the 25th Anniversary of the Linguistics Institute is concerned mainly with the recent past and present as well as with problems of development. In the opinion of the speaker the activity of the Institute is more varied today from a methodological point of view than 15—20 years ago: the role of modern linguistic trends has become strengthened, but modern pursuits worthy of notice can be seen in the so-called area of traditional linguistics as well. In the future there will be a greater need for collaboration and team-work between the different trends.

Against such a background the speaker outlines the situation and anticipated perspectives of the more important topics. The second part of the presentation is concerned with what kind of tasks can be expected for the Institute after the completion of the old projects and within what kind of organizational, individual and methodological frameworks can they be completed.

LORÁND BENKÓ:

Some Questions Regarding Historical Linguistics

The first section of the presentation embraces questions of a historical scientific nature with a special emphasis on the Hungarian situation in historical linguistic studies while still considering the international developments as well. Among the factors which appear significant in determining the historical linguistic situation the author considers those which bind this branch of science to the disciplines of descriptive, general and applied linguistics. His principal argument is that the historical linguistic approach, theories and problems cannot be in contrast to the above mentioned scientific branches and their newer developments. In connection with this circle of questions, he examines those effects which have been felt on historical linguistics in its newer period of development since the appearance of the neo-grammarians school, or rather those effects which were and are in this relation potentially given. These influences appear significant from four aspects: linguistic geography, modern descriptive linguistics, related branches of science (developed earlier or more recently), and from the aspect of Marxism. In becoming inter-related with each other and with the earlier principles of historical or

rather the internal development of historical linguistics, these effects assure the possibilities of further developing the discipline.

The second part of the presentation is concerned with the sphere of questions regarding language changes, or rather he raises a few problems out of this. He emphatically refers to the fact that not only the disclosure and systematization of facts pertaining to language changes belongs to the task of historical linguistics, but also the exposure of the causes of the changes as well as an appraisal of the results of the changes too. With the goals of the changes (communication, economic and aesthetic goals) he examines the causes of the changes all together. The order of these reasons can be broken down into three levels: external reality in language, cognition, and the language system itself, emphasizing, however, their truly tight relationship. He relates to such examples in which the changes are induced by the characteristics of the language structure itself, or rather by the goal of communication directly. In estimating the language changes he considers the main point to be on the one hand the question regarding the change potential (the possibility), and on the other hand the question regarding the change realization (the actualization), bringing both factors into connection with the systematic nature of language and the system relations of the language signals. Among the factors pointing to the changes and which influence their nature, he especially emphasizes the problem of the strong and weak nature of the language elements, the problem which is the function of the position they occupy in language and parole; he illustrates with examples the main rule that in the mutual influence and struggle of language elements on change, the strong defeats the weak.

FERENC KIEFER:

Tendencies and Problems in Contemporary Semantics

The article briefly surveys the development of semantics since the publication of the works of J. J. Katz and J. A. Fodor (1963). After comparing contemporary semantics and the previous so-called structural semantics, the author points out two reasons for the remarkable progress in semantic research. One reason is no doubt the close connexion between linguistic and logical semantics. It was made possible by the fact that generative grammar between 1957 and 1965 had formed the basis of a sufficiently precise syntax. The other reason is more practical: it was realized that one cannot manage in applied research (e. g. machine translation) without semantics. The three tendencies within generative grammar, i. e. (a) interpretative semantics, (b) modified interpretative semantics („surface interpretation”) are only casually hinted at in the article. The chief purpose of the work is the discussion of a set of five problems which has played a crucial role in semantic research in recent years, to be more explicit (a) the theory of presuppositions, (b) semantic features and their role in the semantic representation, (c) topic-comment and its status within the theory of grammar, (d) speech act theory and (e) the relation between sentence and text (the theoretical status of text grammars). In the rough exposition of the general problems of these questions the author points out not only the most important results of present semantic analysis, but is aware of its shortcomings and weak points as well.

GYÖRGY SZÉPE:

Some Problems of Applied Linguistics

After a short introduction concerned with the content of the term 'linguistics'; the following topics are presented: paragraph 1 'The social function of linguistics'; paragraph 2 'Disciplines and activities to be included in Applied Linguistics'; paragraph 3 'The problem of Applied Linguistics in mother tongue education'; and paragraph 4 'The problem of Applied Linguistics in foreign language teaching'. — The paper is based on a lecture given on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Research Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The last paragraph of the lecture ('On the linguistic problems of the Scientific and Technical Revolution') will be published in the volume *A magyar kultúra 2000-ben* ('Hungarian Culture in the Year 2000') ed. by E. Hankiss. Budapest, 1976.