

## DISCUSSION ON PAPER 12

MISS MASTERMAN asked what was meant by "kernelisable pair" and whether it applied to particular noun pairs or pairs of noun types. Also, was Prof. Zarechnak's antithesis, concrete-abstract, a semantic or syntactic distinction in Russian, and what are his criteria for making the assignment of these properties.

PROF. ZARECHNAK. "Kernelisable pair" is the description applied by Prof. Z.S. Harris (University of Pennsylvania) to a pair of nouns, connected by a noun government structure from which a sentence can be constructed. Examples are:- ОБСУЖДЕНИЕ ТЕЗИСОВ and СОКРАЩЕНИЯ ВРЕМЕНИ. The description is applied to particular combinations, but as members in a class. As to the coding of concrete or abstract nouns, this is a wholly semantic classification in Russian. Though semantic, it is applied through a syntactic channel. In applying the classification to a noun, native informants are asked such questions as:- "does it have length?", "can you see it", "is it discernible by human receptors?" to which there are yes/no answers only allowed. Answers from a group of informants would be averaged, discarding obvious isolated opinions.

MISS BARTON asked if "*elegance*" was "discernible by human receptors?"

PROF. ZARECHNAK sidestepped this question by saying he didn't know what English native informants would answer to that question.

DR. RUBENSTEIN wondered how syntactic procedures are to be defined. Transformation analysis is certainly subsumed under syntactic analysis and Prof. Chatman has shown how fine a classification can be obtained with formal distributional features. Perhaps such features could be found to give the concrete-abstract distinction. He feels himself that syntax goes beyond the bounds of word order and the effect of bound morphology on other words.

PROF. ZARECHNAK agreed generally, but said that Georgetown's syntactic procedures were concerned only with the subject-predicate dichotomy, i.e. those two parts of the sentence structure which do not depend on any other element of the sentence; Rubenstein's definition of syntax obviously took it a lot further. As to transformation analysis, this is used by Georgetown only as a testing procedure, not as used by Prof. Harris.

MISS MASTERMAN pleaded for an automatic system to apply semantic classifiers to the contents of a dictionary, or otherwise we shall continually be caught out when new statements are made.

PROF. ZARECHNAK. Georgetown are not currently striving to successfully translate any Russian sentence that may ever be uttered. For multiple-meaning problems, e.g. ПЕРЕГНАТЬ, which in chemistry means "to distil", but in economics means "to surpass", he expects microglossaries to give a practical solution. He does not believe it is a linguistic problem to produce Prof. Bar-Hillel's FAHQMT, but does believe that Georgetown's restricted quality output will be useful.

MR. SPIEGELTHAL asked how to handle a word like "decision" which can be both concrete and abstract at the same time, as in the sentence:-

"The Chief Justice wrote the lengthy decision that outlawed drinking on Sundays."

"Decision" is firstly the concrete object of "wrote" (a piece of paper) and secondly the abstract antecedent of "that" (the law itself).

PROF. ZARECHNAK. "Decision" would certainly be coded as a deverbal noun, which class would be high in the ranking of classes, which it would be necessary to evolve experimentally. However, the translation actually offered would depend on the distribution of equivalents decided on by one's informants.

DR. GARVIN pointed out the parallels between this paper by Prof. Zarechnak and those by Prof. Chatman and Prof. Klima, in that they all deal with the sub-classification of major word classes and all use transforms as a testing device.

PROF. ZARECHNAK added the name of ХОЛОДОВИЧ to those given by Dr. Garvin.

DR. DOSTERT said that as we discover more and more syntactic tags to add to elusive semantic items, the area of semantic ambiguity will disappear as the area of syntactic clarity increases.

PROF. STREVEENS offered some remarks on behalf of Dr. Halliday, who has invented a term for the increasing degrees of classification noted by Dr. Garvin above. He refers to the "delicacy" of classification of words. The first order of delicacy is the obvious word classes and the limit of delicacy is the lexical item, at which point you are no longer bound by the rules of grammatical analysis but you are into the rules of lexical analysis, which will require a different theory.

PROF. MEILE ended the discussion by making an appeal for better use of the often very valuable material available in existing linguistic works. In French, for instance, there is Ferdinand Bruno's "La pensee et la langue", which is an enormous catalogue of equivalent phrases, almost a transformational dictionary.

*J. McDANIEL.*