

MEETINGS HELD IN 1962

March 26. Dr. A.S.G. Butler discussed aspects of Maupassant's language in his correspondence.\*

April 24. Mr. W.O. Droescher presented a paper on meaning in grammatical structures.\*

July 9. Discussion of the problems in the description of Middle High German was continued by Professor J.A. Asher with a paper on the implications of prosody.

August 6. Mr. A. Pawley: Person Markers in Samoan.\* Dr. K.J. Hollyman: Direct borrowings from New Zealand and American English in New Caledonian French.<sup>1</sup>

September 17. At the annual Students' Evening, four phonemic studies were given by University of Auckland students: O. Whaley on Bambatana (Choiseul, BSIP);\* Gail Drake on Tahitian French; D. Walsh on Raga (New Hebrides);\* and Beryl Nicholas on Mauritian French.

November 1. The Annual General Meeting was followed by a discussion and social evening attended by M. André G. Haudricourt, of the CNRS, Paris.

The following Committee was elected for 1963:

Patron: Dr. Gilbert Archey

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The Society has hitherto published in *Te Reo* only papers which have been given at its meetings. In this issue for the first time other papers are included. All manuscripts on linguistic topics will be considered, but preference will be given to those submitted by members. Information on the styling of manuscripts is given inside the back cover. The Society reserves the right to make changes in texts required by its styling: these do not affect the content.

Information concerning subscription rates and publications is also printed inside the front cover.

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<sup>1</sup>Incorporated in "Anglo-French Language Contact in New Caledonia", in *Aumla* 20 (Nov. 1963).

MEANING IN GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

(Revised Text of a Paper read on April 26th, 1962)

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The difference of attitude between some European linguists, such as H. Glinz<sup>1</sup> and American linguists<sup>2,3</sup> is most evident in the treatment of the concept of "meaning".

It is the aim of the American linguists to describe language formally under the headings *Item* and *Arrangement*, without having regard to meaning but only to formal considerations of order and position or distribution of the items. In fact, Martin Joos, the editor of the anthology *Readings in Linguistics*,<sup>3</sup> states very clearly in his "Description of Language Design"<sup>4</sup> that the question of semantics (i.e. meaning other than formal arrangement) lies beyond the scope of linguistics and assigns the task of semantic investigation to the sociologists, although in an aside in the same article (on p.356) he says: "Could we do something further with 'meaning' in linguistics?" The variety of expressions which have slipped into the American linguists' analyses and which appear to be extra-linguistic is quite striking. Wells<sup>5</sup> speaks of something as "semantically harmonious" (my emphasis — W.D.) and later "meaning' in a wider sense ... includes stylistic overtones". Nida<sup>6</sup> introduces aesthetic feeling as a touchstone for determining whether a certain form is an allomorph or not: "such problems are too much a matter of proportion, balance, symmetry, pattern, congruence and the like — features closely allied to one's esthetic feeling". He frequently uses the expression "meaning in terms of a bio-social context". Furthermore, terms of arrangement are said to have "generic meanings" (Wells), to be "structurally meaningful" (Nida), to have "linguistic meaning" (Nida), to be "canonical categories" (Hockett).<sup>7</sup>

I am the last person to minimize the tremendous advances in descriptive formal grammar that have been achieved by these scholars; but I have the same feeling as E. Haugen in an article in the anthology who, comparing the linguistics of the Scandinavian Hjelmslev with American linguistics, points out that the complete disregard of semantics may lead to circular arguments and concludes "that distributional analysis must go hand in hand with phonetic and semantic identification".<sup>8</sup>

I am concerned here, in this paper, with the question of meaning. There are categories of thought and perception which go beyond pure linguistics, which must be recognized as such and acknowledged as such when being used in linguistic discussion. Already Jespersen, in his *Philosophy of Grammar*,<sup>9</sup> speaks of "notional categories". Glinz analyses these in his above-mentioned book. It is irrelevant in linguistic description whether these "notional categories" arise out of language or have an "a priori existence". To discuss that is the problem of philosophy and psychology in language. But categories of meaning must be stated explicitly when used in linguistic description.<sup>10</sup>

Everybody is in agreement that in any given language there are a great number of words, which can be described in terms of reference to the "bio-social context" to use Nida's phraseology, that these words can be listed with their appropriate descrip-

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1. Glinz 1952.
  2. Fries 1952.
  3. Joos 1958.
  4. Joos 1958: 356.
  5. Wells in Joos 1958: 186.
  6. Nida in Joos 1958: 255.
  7. Hockett in Joos 1958: 386.
  8. Haugen in Joos 1958: 363.
  9. Jespersen 1924.
  10. Robins 1951.

tion in a lexicon and that the description makes the "lexical meaning" of each word explicit.<sup>11</sup> These words and their corresponding "meanings" are listed conveniently in any dictionary. Looking at the enormous number of such words it is found that the words can also be put into groups where a number of words express basic concepts that refer to the fundamental categories of our existence, both organic and inorganic, and which are expressed by the means inherent in our particular language. They are "beings" (*Wesen*) in space and time undergoing change and in the case of human beings having intellect, emotions, etc.

It has been the task of philosophy and particularly of the philosophy and psychology of language to discuss and codify these categories, and of the lexicographer to arrange words according to the groups of ideas, such as we find in Roget's *Thesaurus* and similar "concept dictionaries." In such works we find rough categories and concepts which delineate spheres of our "bio-social" world. These concepts are part and parcel of speech and existence for a given historical or social group. These concepts appear verbalized in our bio-social world, i.e. in utterances, and thus enter directly (as words standing for concepts) and indirectly (as words explaining concepts) into our language, and thus into the very subject matter of linguistics. In spite of the aim of descriptive linguists to describe language only in terms of item and arrangement (referred to subsequently as I-A), these concepts "steer", "influence" linguistic thinking and analysis and they appear in a disguised form as in some of the expressions enumerated above. To give one example: Fries isolated a group of words, the function words, which have no lexical meaning, which can only be described in relation to other words. Among them is the word *not* which he puts into a group of its own (I must here anticipate the technique of I-A by saying that American linguists work with replacement possibilities of words with a "frame" of a minimum sentence or utterance). If, however, we construct the frame:

He is 

<i>often</i>
<i>sometimes</i>
<i>not</i>

 late

the word *not* fits in quite easily into this I-A structure. As it stands in the same position as *often* and *sometimes* it cannot be in a group of its own, so the decision to give it a class by itself may have been influenced by other considerations, and I have the suspicion that in assigning *not* to a special group Fries was influenced by his having unconsciously in mind the logical category of "to be" and "not to be" — "the category, logically so important, of pure (absolute) negation, *not*", as Glinz puts it.<sup>12</sup>

Now it is one of the great achievements of modern linguists to have described the significance of words with lexical meaning within the utterance and to have isolated the function words which are only significant within the utterance. By testing the position of certain words within the sentence frame they came to realize that there are four word classes with an infinite number of words plus a restricted number of function words which serve only to put class words in relation to each other. Fries gives the number 154 for English.<sup>13</sup>

It is curious to note that the four classes — formally isolated — correspond roughly to the four main classes of the conventional grammar: noun, verb, adjective and adverb; and many who investigate word classes have come to the same classification, from Aristotle to Glinz.<sup>14</sup> Fries goes no further than stating that each word of a particular class has a certain position within the sentence, i.e. such-and-such a word will only occur in such-and-such a position, and thus he isolates his four word classes. It appears to me essential that the nature of each word class should be discussed fully because the nature of each word may give some indication of why it appears

11. I am not yet concerned with words that have no lexical meaning.

12. Glinz 1957: 135.

13. Fries 1952: 104.

14. Otto 1954: 34.

in a certain position and why there are ambiguities in its usage, why it is important to resolve classifications neatly when certain concepts overlap the word classes.

Glinz in his book admits this, and through a description of the nature of each word class certain meanings appear which can only be assigned to one particular word class. The difference between these meanings, morphological meanings and meanings related to whole structures (to be discussed later)<sup>15</sup> becomes evident. Perhaps this way of looking at words is more essential in German, being an inflected language, as inflected forms already give much more information of the relation of one word to another, than in English. Word order in English is fixed and is the main indication of relation between words.

In other words, each word in each class has certain characteristics which allow it to be used only in a certain way. These characteristics correspond to those of the general concepts which do not themselves simply derive from the position of the words. On the contrary the position is only possible because the concept has a certain nature.

Thus a noun (*Nomen*) represents a content (*Inhalt*) as a "being", a "unit", and has an "extension" and contains the element of number.<sup>16</sup> It can be taken as a certain point of an action, it can be at the end point of it, it can manipulate and be manipulated. From this nature of the noun then stem the "generic meanings" (Wells) or "canonical categories" (Hockett) pertaining to this class of word: plurality and case.

At this point the word morpheme as used by American linguists must be discussed. In descriptive linguistics it is the smallest *meaningful* unit of sound, whether it is a single word or a recurrent grammatical form (the inflexional suffix, for example) which always has the same meaning (e.g. ending *-ed* for past tense with its variants, *-t*, for example, which are called allomorphs). Taking the word *farm* and its related forms: *farmer*, *farms*, *-er* is a morpheme and also *-s*. I would say now that there are three distinct meanings. *Farm* is an archmorpheme (it is a morpheme which has a basic lexical meaning and at the same time belongs to a particular class of words, here Class I). *Farmer* consists of two morphemes, *farm* and *-er* forming the morphological variant *farmer*: a person engaged in the work on a farm, *-er* here having the additional indication that the word *farmer* is used as an agent. In other words *-er* has a double function: it is in its shape a contrasting feature assigning it to Class I plus a categorical meaning that it pertains to the particular word class of *doer*. In *farms* the *-s* indicates a plurality of the archmorpheme *farm*, the ability to form a plural being inherent in the description of a noun. Three layers of meaning become obvious:

1. There is the meaning of *farm* which I would call the morphic meaning as a Class I word;
2. *-er* is a morpheme that indicates that a word belongs to a certain word class: morphological meaning;
3. The morphemic meaning which only applies to this class, i.e. plural case ending *-s* and other case endings as in Latin or German.

I have said: "layers" of meaning. These meanings do not necessarily find overt forms (endings) but each word of the class "noun" has implicitly the three meanings. There may not be a separately identifiable archmorph, there may not be an overt indication of plural (in collective nouns such as *bread*, or single words: *sheep*) but a full description of a Class I word will always have to consider these three meanings to reveal its specific structure (*Gestalt*) and the generic modifications. Re 1: morphic meaning as Class I word signifies that it can be described in general terms as "Grösse" (being) and may have — and by substitution is capable of having — certain

15. i.e. the tactical meaning, see below page 9.

16. Glinz 1952: 456: *Grössenwörter als Wesen, Grösse, Einheit geprägt; ein Moment der Zahl enthaltend.*

determiners (*the, a, of, etc.*)<sup>17</sup>. Re 2: morphological meaning signifies that certain morphemes, suffixed such as *-ion, -ity*, indicate it clearly as a Class I word. Re 3: morphemic meaning signifies that it is capable of expressing certain categorical relations which only apply to this class word. Here: plural, acted on, etc. — number and cases. These are the “generic meanings” or “canonical forms” mentioned above and are extra-grammatical categories which must be recognized as such and cannot be explained by only I-A considerations alone, in so far as they do not apply only to language but to concepts of our human existence.

In the description of this class word by Fries and in the list of morphemes of the English language by Harris<sup>18</sup> these different layers are not distinguished, with the result that shape (morphic and morphological meaning) and categories (morphemic meaning) are given the same importance.

With Word Class II, the verb, we have similar considerations:

1. It expresses a happening, a state or an event;<sup>19</sup>

2. It has the usual morphological variants where number and suffixes indicate special morphological meanings, e.g. transitive or intransitive meaning (the prefixes *be-, ver-, ge-* in German, for example);

3. It has the generic — morphemic — meaning of congruence with “Grösse” (Class I word), thus having singular and plural forms and the categories of

(a) time (expressed in English by the morpheme *-ed* and its variants).

(b) and other extra-linguistic meanings: hypothesized (subjunctive), to be realized (future), commanded (imperative), etc.<sup>20</sup>

In the description of these two word classes the lexical meaning cannot be ignored, the immediate concrete relation to the aspects of “being” and “action” of our bio-social context, nor the general concepts of “number” and “time”.

In the two remaining word classes, adjectives and adverbs — in the conventional terms — the general concepts are more in evidence. One might even be able to say that the lexical meanings of these words are abstract concepts and must be accompanied by a word of the first two classes. In other words the nature of these words demands that they stand in relation to the other two which in turn determine their position, order, i.e. the “arrangement”. The abstract nature of the words of Class III and Class IV has also caused problems of classification which vary from language to language depending on whether these words have morphemic characteristics which link them with one or the other class. I am thinking here of case endings of adjectives, for example. But one can isolate the essential characteristics of these two classes although there may be overlappings of notional categories particularly when one compares their usages in different languages.

A Class III word represents:

1. A significant quality (German *Merkmal*) in abstracto, a fraction or part of something else (*Teilbestand*). This “being part of something else” lies in morphic meaning and this explains why it is sometimes linked with Class I words, sometimes linked with Class II words which put the Class III word in relation to a “being”, such as the verb “to be”, “seem”, and others which are listed by Fries.<sup>21</sup>

17. These very significant characteristics of having *determiners* can only be made clear by describing the “word” within a sentence.

18. Harris in Joos 1958: 142.

19. Glinz 1957: 30: *Hier erscheint der Inhalt im Bilde eines Vorgangs, eines Verlaufs, eines Zustandes, eines Geschehens. Er ist "in Zeitlichkeit eingebettet".*

20. In English only the morphemic possibilities will indicate whether a word belongs to Class I or II. It is irrelevant whether a word was originally a noun or a verb and diachronic analysis would not give an explanation of its present status. A word belongs to Class I if only *-s* can be added (meaning plural); it belongs to Class II if both *-s* and *-ed* (or its alternants) can be added, meaning respectively congruence 3rd person singular and past.

21. Fries 1952: 135.

2. It has typical contrasting features which distinguish it from other words, e.g. certain endings *-ish*, *-al*, *-ous*: thus *thick* would be the archmorph of the quality extension in the shape of a Class III word. *Thickish* would consist of two morphemes *thick* and *-ish*, where *-ish* would be a morphological morpheme of Class word III with the meaning: not as pronounced a quality as in the archmorph.

3. A Class III word has definite morphemic characteristics:

(a) It may have features which correlate with the "meaning" of "amount or degree of quality" which is the referent of the word.<sup>22</sup> The ending *-er* would be the morphemic morpheme denoting this relation (*more* in this case is an allomorph of *-er*).

(b) It has features of congruence when associated with a Class I word; this only occurs in inflected languages: Spanish *son gruesos*, German *die dicken*, where *-s*, *-en* are morphemic morphemes denoting plurality, which in these cases coincide with the plurals of Class I words, although it is imaginable that in other languages adjectives might have completely different sets of morphemes denoting plural.

If, as has been done, word classes are described using general conceptual categories — including to a certain degree "arrangement" — the very troublesome group of words, i.e. adverbs formed from adjectives, not found in German but in English and the Romance languages, may find a place in the word classes. If it is true that words in Class III give a quality and that this quality — particularly in German — must be related to "nouns" or "verbs", the derived adverbs in other European languages seem to belong to Class III too. The ending *-ly*, *-mente*, *-ment* would be a morphemic morpheme meaning quality restricted to an association with only a Class II or III word. Thus *thickishly* would consist of three morphemes: *thick* = archmorph (quality); *-ish* = morphological morpheme denoting Class III word with additional meaning: lesser degree; *-ly* = morphemic morpheme denoting association with Class II or III word. In German this morpheme is absent. In other languages it is a distinct form: *Er spricht laut (-)*; *He speaks loudly*; *Habla fuertemente*.

This leaves a fourth group of words which can be isolated by conceptual analysis: "pure" adverbs, words of Class IV which have an even more abstract "quality" than Class III words: position in relation to concepts of time, negation (*not*), exclusion (*only*), *Gefühlslage* (German *gern*) etc. Their morphic meaning comes nearest to the abstract categories of our conceptual thinking: they are sculptured in the simplest shape; they have few morphological variants (*backwards*, *rückwärts*, *detrás*, *atrás*) but have the possibility of being associated with any of the principle four word classes: *only the book*, *only green*, *only sings*, *only now*. These words have a further characteristic. They are capable (often after slight modifications) of becoming purely relation-words, function words which can only be interpreted in relation to other words.<sup>23</sup>

The words of word classes have so far been discussed in isolation and only occasional reference to their position in structures has had to be made. Each word can be described in its relation to our bio-social context with its basic conceptual categories. Each word has a lexical meaning, may exhibit morphological meanings — shape of words whose variants show additional lexical meanings but each variant only pertaining to a particular word group (thus the *-er* in *farmer*, *thicker*, must be described for each word group separately) and a morphemic meaning which describes significant alterations, if any, which pertain to the general class definition of each word, e.g. number, time, case, degree. Besides these class words there are a number of words which accompany class words or put one class word in relation to another or may be substituted for a class word. They have no lexical meaning in isolation but may — in case of relation-words — share the general concepts of Class IV words. These words have been called function words (marker, determiner). They would also require a detailed conceptual analysis, which is not attempted here, to show — as I have shown in the case of the word *not* — whether they can be explained only in relation to a whole structure or have a morphic meaning. Thus *the*, the definite article, would have the morphic meaning: marker of Class I word; Spanish *el*, *la* stand in complementary dis-

tribution and *los, las* contain the morphemic meaning plural — the *-s* morpheme and *lo* the morphic alternant of *el*. So even in this sphere of function words there exist the features of morphic and morphemic meaning.<sup>24</sup>

When the class words with the accompanying function words are found in utterances they have a further meaning which has, in turn, been called: structural, linguistic, or tactical meaning. In English this tactical meaning is predominantly expressed by "arrangement". A word in a certain position has an extra, additional meaning within a structure and therefore the method of I-A is particularly suited to English. The word acquires a further dimension, the tactical meaning which in turn, as we found in the description of each class word, has underlying implicit concepts which are also extra-linguistic.

It is immediately realized that words are found in groups and that the grouping of words, the immediate constituents and constitutes of Wells<sup>25</sup> and nuclei of Pittman,<sup>26</sup> has significance. But an interpretation of the meaning of these is not attempted, the institution of such considerations being considered "primitive."<sup>27</sup> Later on in the same article the introduction of the expression "hierarchical order" does not really contribute to the analysis of the meaning of "tactical". Glinz, on the other hand, prefixes his analysis of tactical meaning with a fundamental investigation into the nature of the Indo-European sentence. His analysis is descriptive and not a re-statement of the logical deduction of syntax from a syllogistic conception of a sentence. In the course of the description certain categories become evident which go beyond arrangement and distribution.

At first he investigates the grouping (*Glieder* = constitutes) very much in the same way as American linguists do by substitution test and mobility test (*Verschiebeprobe*), he isolates the possible constituents which each group contains and by the *Weglassprobe* (test of ommittability) which seems to be "the American linguists' 'principle of expansion', but in reverse",<sup>28</sup> he arrives at a number of tactical meanings which apply in part to German and which account for certain features found in the inflectional forms and, in certain cases, flexible word order.

When Glinz says "the German, and also the Indo-European sentence is sculptured in the image of time or an action, of an event, of a happening"<sup>29</sup> he emphasises the formal importance of the verb and what it stands for in the Indo-European sentence. It sets up a kind of tension, "determining factor", not only notionally from content but also in form, in German in particular. This tension is also reflected in intonation and stress. As soon as any word of Classes I, III and IV is combined with a word of Class II, the words acquire a new dimension, a new meaning which has been called the tactical meaning. A new set of concepts appear when the fusion of words through a Class II word occurs, when sentences are analysed.<sup>30</sup> Glinz is in agreement with American linguists that there are definite formal "ties" between nouns and verbs. But as Glinz says *Zeitlichkeit* is the fundamental category of a sentence; it is from this point of view that he describes the sentence. Incidentally he gives the number I of his word classes to the verb, not to the noun. He arrives at similar basic sentences — he must if his analysis is correct — as, for example, Fries' test-frames. But he goes a step further. Whereas Fries simply states that certain arrangements signal meaning, Glinz also isolates the concepts that lie beyond the basic frames which in turn have a bearing on the "specific reaction"<sup>31</sup> of each sentence type. It must be emphasised again that in my view concepts are not derived from *a priori* logical categories, on the contrary that logical categories are derived from statements which carry an implicit reference to the ultimate categories of our exist-

24. The analysis of the meaning of pitch and stress are not attempted here.

25. Wells in Joos 1958: 186.

26. Pittman in Joos 1958: 275.

27. Hockett in Joos 1958: 393.

28. Moulton 1953.

29. Glinz 1957: 96.

30. Discussion of definition or description of "sentence" is not attempted here.

31. Otto 1954: 131.

ence, as Robins said so clearly: "many of the basic principles of scholastic logic, the formalised syllogism and the categories of substance, quality and so on were thus based, without this being realised, on the lexical and grammatical structure of some favourite sentence forms" of the classical languages, particularly those involving the verb "to be".<sup>32</sup> Glinz arrives at a certain number of categorical sentence types. Basically a sentence expresses "existing" or "happening" in which a being "participates".<sup>33</sup> Then certain types are described:

(a) *Vorgangssatz* (being — happening plus situation):

*He works (there).*

(Frame C of Fries)<sup>34</sup>

(b) Judgement sentence, the syllogistic sentence *par excellence*:

*This is that.*

(Frame A of Fries).

(c) Action sentence (actor — action — acted on):

*The boy sees the farmer.*

(Frame B of Fries).

These sentence types are further elaborated to show special German forms.

The tactical meaning of each Class I word can be described by reference to the basic sentence types in English by its position — in Latin or German by inflectional endings, both on the morphemic and tactical level. If a class word is part of a constitute (*Glied*) there is another level of tactical meaning which can be described. In linguistic description all levels of both morphological (in the broader sense) and tactical meaning must be considered.

(a) *The farmer works.*

- farmer*:
- (a) morphic meaning: it has bio-social content
  - (b) *farmer*: morphological meaning: a doer
  - (c) morphemic meaning: singular (zero allomorph), accompanied by marker *the*
  - (d) tactical meaning: the actor within a happening within a sentence of type No.1 (Fries C).

(b) *The farmer's son sees the farmer*

- farmer's*:
- (a) and (b) as above
  - (b) *farmer's*: morphemic meaning: singular, marker plus origin expressed by morpheme *'s*
  - (d) tactical meaning: by test of omission part of a constitute

- the farmer*:
- (a) to (c) as Sentence a
  - (d) tactical meaning: "being acted upon": sentence of type No.3 (Fries B)

If the same sentence is analysed in Latin "*filius agricolae videt agricolam*," "*agricolam*" would necessitate a description of *-m* on the morphemic level plus the tactical meaning "being acted upon".

It has been stated so far that morphic (lexical) meaning is excluded by American

32. Robins 1951: 87.

33. Glinz 1957: 96.

34. Bloomfield 1958: 172.

linguists in their analysis of language. In the description of purely formal arrangement of words the term "complementary distribution"<sup>35</sup> is used. Two morphemes which have the same meaning but differ in phonemic shape stand in an either-or distribution. It can quickly be said that certain words with a specific lexical meaning are incompatible in certain frames. One cannot say: *the farmer's plough sees the farmer*. It is always assumed that an utterance has a total — commonsense — meaning and the same applies to class words insofar as the substitution within a frame has to make sense. Perhaps that is the meaning of the expression "semantically harmonious"<sup>36</sup> quoted above, and interpreting the expression one could say that words with specific lexical meanings are either in complementary or identical distribution within a certain frame depending on their respective morphic meanings. The expression "morphic meaning" was used to refer to the lexical meaning within a structure. Semantics properly speaking investigates "how the words are semantically organized and interlinked".<sup>37</sup> When it comes to breaking down the words or rather grouping of words for machine translation the consideration of lexical meaning becomes important. This — not only I-A — is a preoccupation of linguistics: the whole question of lexical meaning must be included in the investigation. Of course formal arrangement comes first.

It has been shown that meaning enters into description of language far more and in a far more varied form than is admitted by American linguists. At each level of the investigation, meaning is linked with extra-linguistic concepts which are not brought to the language from logic or philosophy but which emerge as part and parcel of the language. Again one must restrict: of a particular language, because concepts may vary from language to language — they vary according to the social structure of the people who speak a given language.<sup>38</sup> These concepts — I would prefer the word "categories" — are related to the whole of our existence, to the content and form of our thinking and acting. To exclude these meanings with their corresponding categories has led to vagueness in American linguistics when more complex linguistic forms are described. These categories are the co-ordinates of our language system, in which our thinking, imagining, describing, occur.

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35. Nida in Joos 1958: 259.

36. Wells in Joos 1958: 200.

37. Smit 1961.

38. Sommerfelt 1938.