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BOOK REVIEW

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Eugeniu Coșeriu & Horst Geckeler, *Orientări în semantica structurală*, Traducere din limba engleză, notă preliminară, comentarii și postfață de Cristinel Munteanu, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iași, 2016, 217 p.

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The translation of scientific texts regarded as milestones in the contemporary scientific world unfortunately does not stand out as a tradition in the Romanian academic area, as it happens, for instance, in Italy or Spain. This is thus the reason why translations of important texts, issued quite a long time ago, are provided at the present time. One such case is *Trends in Structural Semantics*. The text was issued in its first version in 1974, being subsequently published in a volume, without any notable changes, in 1981 (see p. 13). Its importance is given by the fact that it represents a "survey" in a branch of Linguistics that has reached its climax but lacks a direction of research that could be a point of convergence for specialists. The title itself (*Trends...*) actually reflects this state of research in the field of Semantics.

Eugeniu Coșeriu and Horst Geckeler, his disciple, render this research report in the field of structural semantics in a text organized in Coșeriu's well-known style, using numbered sections and subsections without titles. The translator, Cristinel Munteanu, opts for turning the main sections into chapters, also giving each section a title according to the information provided by the author in the first paragraph of each section; this choice basically gives this relatively short text (p. 17–116) the formal status of volume. Undoubtedly, the presentation of structural semantics can be the subject of a vast work. However, the authors' purpose is to provide a short account of the history, research directions and corresponding methodologies of the field. The text was issued in a period when the interest for structuralism based on significance started to decline, mainly because of the post-structuralism directions imposed by the North-American school: the generative approach and pragmatics. This is also the reason for which the authors have chosen to write the text in English, as it represented a guide for structural semantics in the early 80's. Certain sections, the first, introductory one, for instance (p. 17–18), provide only basic information regarding the types of semantics (linguistic, logic and a general one), by quoting definitions provided in representative works for each type of semantics.

The second section (p. 19–29) provides a short history of this discipline (semantics) within the field of linguistics, pointing at the distinction between semasiology and semantics and then presenting different types of structural semantics. The most notable distinction is the one between the European and the North-American structuralism. The former is based on the linguistic content, while the latter focuses on a more complex content that also includes the content resulted from knowledge through experience (in relation to either the ontic or the situational reality), attached to the lexical significance in the acts of communication. In this specific context, the emphasis falls on the evolution of the mechanistic-behaviourism direction opened by Bloomfield, pointing at the way from Bloomfield's circumspection regarding linguistic significance to its rejection in distributionalism. This direction is described in opposition with the semantics view proposed by anthropologists and psychologists (of which F.G. Lounsbury is a notable name). The latter, due to its descriptive tendency, is closer to linguistics and consequently to the European structural semantics.

The next section (p. 37–61) begins with the presentation of the first stages of structural semantics based on the linguistic context, materialized in the theory of semantic fields (later called lexical fields, because they are based on lexical semantics) represented mainly by the works of two great German lexico-

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logists, Jost Trier and Leo Weisgerber. These are followed by a series of other views on the lexical fields expressed in the after-war period by French, German, Saxon and Scandinavian specialists. A significant contribution is brought by L. Hjelmslev, who founded modern structural semantics. Hjelmslev actually proposes a new fundament for the analysis of a linguistic unit: distributional analysis is opposed to the analysis based on the commutation test.

The most important section (p. 63–105) presents the types of structural semantics, approached according to the method either from the perspective of the Northern-American school (distribution), or the perspective of the European school (commutation), with an obvious bias on the latter. After a short presentation of the attempts of determining the content by means of distributional methods, where different types of context have a determining role, there follows a digression that emphasize Coșeriu's theory of "frames" (Sp. "entornos"). There follows a presentation of the well-known directions of structural analysis of the lexis based on the commutation method and the identification of distinctive traits, starting with B. Pottier and continuing with A.-J. Greimas, J. Lyons and E. Coșeriu. The presentation of the latter is made by H. Geckeler, as specified by the footnote attached to the title of the text (p. 15). Undoubtedly, in the presentation of Coșeriu's lexematics theory an important part is played by the well-known preliminary distinctions in binary oppositions, successively subordinated to an entity belonging to the previous distinction (starting with the one between the extra-linguistic and the linguistic reality), which leads to lexematic structures—the object of study of lexematics. The importance of Coșeriu's predecessors in lexematics is emphasized by means of relevant quotations. N.S. Trubetzkoy represents an exception, as he is only mentioned in a footnote (p. 95). Although he did not approach the issue of semantics, his works represents an important reference point for Coșeriu's theory of lexematics, alongside Hjelmslev's.

A short section (p. 107–111) describes the evolution of the attempts to perform a diachronic structural semantic analysis. J. Trier, who elaborated the theory of semantic fields, relied exclusively on diachronic analysis, an approach that was later used by W. von Wartburg. Coșeriu, making use of the semic analysis tools, elaborates a semantic analysis method from a synchronic perspective, proving that the same tools can be employed with the diachronic semantic analysis (of the lexical fields). Structural semantics actually has diachronic roots; Coșeriu's first study on structural semantics (*Pour une sémantique diachronique structural*e, 1964) shows continuity in this respect.

The last section (p. 113–116) signals the research opportunities in the field of structural semantics, as well as a number of questions that subsequent studies should find answers for, one of them targeting the possibility of a complementary version of semantics, where European and Northern-American semantics could be identified.

The translator adds two sections at the end of the volume. The first, entitled *Supliment* [Addendum], is a text written by Coșeriu himself regarding the linguistic status of cognitive semantics (1992), while the second, entitled *Postfață* [Afterword], is a text where the translator approaches two issues: the 'signified' in Coșeriu's works and the specificity of Romanian compound nouns. Although the contributions included in the afterword are directly related to Coseriu's theory of lexematics, an afterword proper would have been more important. A new "statement" four decades after the first publication on the trends in structural semantics would have shown how the directions indicated at the time were followed along with the new contributions in the field, taking into account the fact that semantic analysis has been constantly dealt with by linguistic research. The *Supliment* [Addendum] could be regarded as a step made by Coșeriu in this direction, indicating in fact that the translator is aware of the necessity to present the subsequent evolution of structural semantics and its impact upon the general study of language. The *Supliment* consists of a fragment of one of Coșeriu's speeches, delivered in 1992, *Semantica cognitivă și semantica structurală* [Cognitive Semantics and Structural Semantics], based on yet another disjunctive orientation of the Northern-American school in relation to the European structuralism, based on linguistic meaning. The objective of the new research direction is to know the class of objects designated by a word, rather than the meaning by means of which the word indicates the respective class. After all, the difference between the Northern-American and the European structuralism is given by

the perspective from which language is approached. The objective of the Northern-American school is to perform a structural analysis of language by means of a global method, whereas the objective of the European school is the structural analysis of language wherever language can be analysed from this perspective. The target established by Geckeler and Coșeriu in the end of the main text of this volume envisages the combination of these two objectives, yet the main condition for such an approach is an unitary perspective as far as the method is concerned, namely the role of the linguistic meaning in the structural analysis of the language. The presentation of Geckeler and Coșeriu still represents a text that provides the basic information and indications for this specific purpose.