

New Books

Kybernetika, Vol. 23 (1987), No. 1, 82--83

Persistent URL: <http://dml.cz/dmlcz/124768>

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THOMAS T. BALLMER, ROLAND
POSNER, Eds.

Nach-Chomskysche Linguistik

Neuere Arbeiten von Berliner
Linguisten

Walter de Gruyter, Berlin—New York 1985.
x + 500 pages (in German and English);
DM 220,—.

“Nach-Chomskysche Linguistik” — there are probably many things the title could refer to and the book under review seems to provide *raison d'être* to all we have come up with. On the one hand the title shows us to linguistic studies which comply with Chomsky's theories, i.e., which further than or are compatible with them (“The Prophet has finally come!”). On the other hand when developing Chomsky's ideas, one can get beyond their realm and oppose them (“Finally we have succeeded to get rid of him/it!”). Many of the contributions find their place somewhere on that polarity. Some are closer to the former pole (R. Hausser: *Zur Struktur des Lexikons in der generativen Grammatik*, W. Kummer: *Embedding Structures in Quechua*), but most of them tend to the latter — they are carried in a rather disagreeing spirit and the Chomskian linguistics is being shown as too restrictive to handle language phenomena adequately (P. Bosch: *Propositionen*, W. Brennenstuhl: *Wortbedeutung in den ersten Stadien des Spracherwerbs*, etc.).

But not everything of the reviewed book fits the polarity. Sometimes there seems to be only a distant resonance in certain respect between the stance taken in a particular paper and Chomsky's theories. Thus Bar-Hillel's and Margalit's study of paradoxes (Maya Bar-Hillel, Avishai Margalit: *Expecting the Unexpected*) is of that type — both the study as well as Chomsky's work are affiliated with formal linguistics, but unlike the generative grammar paradoxes were not dealt with, let alone their study would have been initiated by Chomsky. Sometimes again contributions

bear upon other trends of modern linguistics and that linguistics related disciplines than generative grammar (Textlinguistics, Montage grammar, Speech Act Theory, Semiotics, A. I., etc.) including those which Chomsky's work was originally pointed against, i.e., structural linguistics (H. Bergenholtz, J. Mugdan: *Wortstrukturen*).

What has been then meant with the “Nach-Chomskyschen” in the title? The answer is to be looked for in some local particularities of linguistics in Germany. It was Chomsky's work which pushed the German linguistic thinking out of the philological tradition (comp. p. 3 and 39 of the reviewed book) and thus fully opened the way not only to Chomskian linguistics but also to other modern trends including those which Chomsky himself opposed (We can not help it: What was actual influence of Karl Bühler in Germany in his days?).

“Nach-Chomskysche Linguistik” is thus a metonymy. Only then the title spans the thematic variety of the reviewed book. Then also the link between the title and its subtitle — *Neuere Arbeiten von Berliner Linguisten* — becomes clear: it is the subtitle that specifies, not the title, which only “metonymizes”. Finally, then one can fully appreciate why the whole collection was conceived as a *Festschrift* to Helmut Schnelle — it has been him who during his Berlin years (1967—1975) contributed substantially to a fruitful climate in which the *Berliner Schule* could have been constituted and the work of most of the contributors “*entstehen und Frucht bringen*” (*Einleitung*, p. VI).

The book is organized in six chapters and three framing texts, namely two introductory articles (*Einleitung*), each by one of the two editors, and a Conclusion (*Nachwort*) by H. Schnelle. Both the Introduction as well as the Conclusion draw an overall picture of linguistics of sixtieth, seventieth, and beginning eightieth in Berlin. Whereas R. Posner reviews thoroughly the themes dealt with throughout the book, T. T. Ballmer describes the genealogy of the *Berliner Schule*. The Conclusion provides

an interesting autoreflexion of H. Schnelle's intellectual development during his Berlin years (1967–1975).

To contents of the chapters. Each paper of Chapter I — *Aufgaben der Linguistik* — object in its own way the principles of Chomskian linguistics. Chapter II — *Historische Rückblicke* — tries to find some historical roots or support for some alternative approaches. In Chapter III — *Philosophische Voraussetzungen* — linguistic problems are being generalized onto already non-linguistic levels and then dealt with. Chapter IV — *Grammatiktheorie* — focuses on some linguistic notions or problems on general linguistic level without stepping out beyond the realm of linguistics on one side and without “descending” to a systematic description of a particular language on the other side. Contributions into Chapters V — *Deskriptive Grammatik* — concentrate then on particular parts of particular languages for a systematic description. The final, VIth Chapter — *Anwendungen der Linguistik* — touches a whole scale of topics: child language, poetry language, Carthago stone inscriptions, phonetic transcription, language processing, *Fachsprache*, color words and color perception. Simply a “garbage can” chapter. But one thing is significant here, pushing some linguistic topics into the “application zone” of linguistics indicates where the editors (only the editors?) place the centre, and consequently also the horizon, of linguistics. It seems to us that it is nearly on the same spot as the “usual” contemporary linguistic trends, including the Chomskian one, do.

We can thus conclude. There has been gradually worked towards a (for some of us already unbearable) feeling in linguistics that something has to happen. The reviewed work further builds up to that feeling, and therefore it is interesting and attention deserving book. But the “something”, the breakthrough has not taken place.

Zdeněk Starý

RICHARD RUBINSTEIN, HARRY
HERSCH

The Human Factor

Designing Computer Systems for People

Digital Press, Burlington, Mass. 1984.
Stran 250.

Recenzovaná kniha autorů Rubinsteina a Hersche je určena hlavně tvůrcům interaktivních počítačových systémů, sloužících nejprůběžnějším okruhům uživatelů.

Téma je rozděleno do 12 kapitol, posuzujících jednotlivé zřetelové návrhu, vyhodnocování i testování systému, kdy se berou v úvahu funkční i psychologické aspekty a detailně se na příkladech probírá jejich vliv. Značná pozornost je věnována způsobům komunikace se strojem a je posouzena i vhodnost hlasové komunikace se snahou o vymezení jejího významu a oblastí využití. Čtenář je metodicky veden ke komplexnosti celého návrhu, k posuzování a navrhování s ohledem na snadnost používání, které musí být v souladu se zkušenostmi a vžitými způsoby jednání potenciálního uživatele.

Kniha může být využita jako učebnice i jako příručka. Důležité zásady jsou formulovány jako doporučení, která jsou graficky zvýrazněna a slouží zároveň jako stručná shrnutí probrané látky. Některá doporučení mohou při prvním pohledu vypadat triviálně, ale zkušenosti s existujícími systémy ukazují, že řada jejich tvůrců si základních problémů v komunikaci s uživateli nebyla vědoma nebo tyto zásady nerespektovala.

Kniha je napsána čtivě, s řadou ilustrujících příkladů. V doplňcích na konci je uvedeno několik jednoduchých i složitějších úkolů, které mohou sloužit k aktivnějšímu pochopení a procvíčení látky. Dále je uvedena bibliografie téměř 80 odkazů většinou na články v časopisech, které se vztahují k tématu. Kniha je také vybavena indexem a slovníčkem méně běžných výrazů.

Knihu je možno doporučit všem tvůrcům interaktivních systémů, které se brzy stanou převládajícím způsobem využívání počítačů, ale i vedoucím pracovníkům ve všech oblastech, kde se nasazení výpočetní techniky připravuje.

Karel Šmuk