

Titel: BREV TIL: Louis Hjelmslev FRA: Charles Ernest Bazell (1956-02-01)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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Dear Hjelmslev,
Many thanks for your letter.

The examples of complementarity, specification and autonomy which you now give seem quite clear to me. But there remain some puzzles:

(1) In OSG p.23 footnote you give the relation of vowel and consonant as an example of complementarity. I would only understand this for a language in which in all positions vowel is commutable with consonant and vice-versa, which is of course rarely if ever the case. Hence this example suggests that I have not grasped the scope of the terms' application.

(ii) According to your examples, the logical equivalents of the relations would appear to be as follows:

complementarity	conjunction
specification	implication
autonomy	exclusive disjunction
???	inclusive disjunction

The last case would be: ^{for}der er fundet et eller flere paradigmer, hvor A og B begge forefindes, og et eller flere paradigmer hvor B forefindes men ikke A, og flere paradigmer hvor A forefindes men ikke B.

I cannot understand why this fourth relation should be excluded. (In fact it is this relation which would appear to answer to combination among the syntagmatic relations: A may occur with B in the text, or A may occur without B and B without A.) (But you say of autonomi: der findes intet paradigme hvor A og B begge forefindes. This would answer to the syntagmatic relation: der findes intet syntagma hvor A og B begge forefindes.)

(iii) I had understood permutation as follows: AB is intercommutable with BA, but A and B are not intercommutable. This seems to me a complex paradigmatic relation, not a syntagmatic relation. (Or, in other words, a paradigmatic relation between syntags.)

(iv) Your examples seem to be composed of both paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations: e.g. 'i et givet sprog samtlige nominer kan højes ift to genera': (a) there is a syntagmatic relation between noun and gender (e.g. 'selection' if gender is also found with verbs), and (b) there is a paradigmatic relation between the genders. Could one not give examples in which no syntagmatic relation is involved?

There are some other puzzles but they might possibly solve themselves when I have the answers to these. I am anxious not to misrepresent your views. I am sending a copy of the letter to Miss Fischer-Jørgensen whose correspondence on such subjects has always been illuminating to my unglotsematic mind!
Yours very sincerely

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P.S. Just to make things clearer. If I now understand you, the scheme in full would be as follows:

Logical relation	Syntagmatic relation	Paradigmatic relation (correl)
If (but not only if) A, then B.	selection	specification
If and only if A, then B	solidarity	complementarity
If A, then B or not-B, and vice-versa/combination	???	↑ ???
If A, then not B	???	autonomy

The absence of the fourth Syntagmatic relation has been often noticed, now again by Siertsema, who says that you declare it to be 'improfitable'. But now in the case of the paradigmatic correlations you speak of three logical possibilities. Certainly the logical possibilities are four in number, and the 3rd paradigmatic relation answers to the not improfitable relation of overlapping distribution (e.g. some nouns have both masculine and feminine, some have only one and some have only the other).

On the other hand the syntactic relations of Wierichsen, which have often been compared with yours (e.g. by Gegeby) are really three only. This is because the fourth relation (incompatibility) obviously cannot hold between units actually together in a given text. It is not known what place his relations (which for the rest are identical with those of Bloomfield) have in your system. The relations you describe at p. 34 are a fourth different kind of relation. I tried to deal with all four types, and several others, in my unfortunately very untidy little book on 'Linguistic Form'. It would be welcome that the glossematists should state the meta-criteria on which one type is held more essential than others.

Yours sincerely

PFS The university address is Debiyat Fakültesi,

Bevazıt
Istanbul.

Unfortunately we are not at Topkane, which you give as the address. A pity, since the old site of our faculty, and the building itself, were most beautiful. The use of the old address is apt to delay the delivery of the letter, and in addition to give us a painful twang of nostalgia!