LINGUISTIC (AND OTHER) UNIVERSALS

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Introduction

1. All linguistics admits, explicitly or implicitly, of universals — at least a certain type of universals. Thus one asks oneself *what* are the phonemes (or the 'sounds') of a given language, *what* are the grammatical categories, *what* are the sentence types in this language, *in what way* has it changed in the course of its history, rather than *if* it has phonemes (or 'sounds') and grammatical categories, *if* it possesses the grammatical level of the sentence or *if* it has undergone linguistic change, and so on. Nevertheless it is a fact that modern structuralism, or at least certain branches of structuralism, have adopted, in the Humboldtian tradition, the principle (which in a certain sense is quite reasonable) that each language must be described from its own point of view. In so doing, they have gradually been led in spite of other, universalist, currents within structuralism itself[1]) to emphasize and even to exaggerate the differences between languages while ignoring structural analogies both in function and in form. In certain branches of structuralism people have gone so far as to try to define functional linguistic categories exclusively with reference to a single language (cf. I, 2.2.1.), extrapolating from this their universality. Thus the conference held at Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., in 1961, by posing explicitly, and on the basis of a remarkable quantity of pertinent information, the problems of universals and of the structural analogies characterizing sets of linguistic systems ('typology'), in effect marked, as Osgood noted at the conference itself,[2] a decisive turning point in modern linguistics, in particular, no doubt, in Bloomfieldian linguistics. But from the point of view of European linguistics one could also speak of a turning point with regard to one aspect of the Saussurian tradition, namely, it showed a vigorous revival of interest in the panchronic examination of languages, whose possibility — except as a theoretical principle — was denied by Ferdinand de Saussure.[3] Since then in structuralism itself, and later especially in generative grammar, linguists have set out in search of universals and have stressed, in theoretical discussions as well as in analytical and descriptive work, the analogies between linguistic systems. This is reflected even in

[1] E.g. certain works of Jakobson.
[2] *UL*, p. 236.
[3] *Cours*, pp. 138-9.

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introductory textbooks in linguistics: where they used to present certain structures of different languages as being radically different, now they often present the same facts as being basically rather similar, even identical. Today we are witnessing a true proliferation of universals, some more or less well founded, others more or less hypothetical.

2. In consequence the moment has come, it seems to us, to ask ourselves what is the direction, what are the possibilities and limits of the search for universals, and whether it is not, in several respects, a search for the Holy Grail — to be specific, for a Grail that we will never find, either because it does not exist or else because it could not possibly be in the spot where we are looking for it.

3. The problem of linguistic universals is closely linked to the problems of universal grammar, language learning, and typology, but we can not treat these problems here (concerning universal grammar, however, cf. footnote 61).

I: Universals of Language

1. Τὸ καθ'ὅλον λέγεται πολλαχῶς. In effect, what strikes one first in the research and statements of principle concerning linguistic universals is that observed and proposed universals are not universals in the same sense. While for certain authors the only universals worthy of the name and worth looking for are those which could be called 'true universals', being found in fact in all languages, other authors insist above all on statistical universals or universal 'tendencies', or even on 'universals' which, by definition, cannot be common to all languages.

2.0. In this regard we must distinguish, to begin with, according to their logical status, five types of universality — three primary and two secondary.

2.1.1. The three primary types are the following:

1) *Conceptual universality* or universality conceived of as *possibility;* from this point of view all linguistic categories, even a category observed in a single language, and even hypothetical categories which are not in contradiction with the notion of language, are universal in the sense that they constitute universal possibilities of language — they could occur in other languages which we do not know today or they could be adopted for some conceivable linguistic system.

2) *Essential universality* or universality conceived of as *logical necessity;* in this sense every property is universal if it falls within the notions of *langue* or *langage* or if it can be deduced from these notions.

3) Universality conceived of as *historical* (or *empirical) generality;* this is the universality of properties which one finds, in effect, in all languages, or at least in all known languages (and which, in this latter case — which is the true situation — one attributes by induction also to languages which one does not know at the moment of the generalization). This generality can be absolute or relative. It is relative (the most likely situation) if the properties in question are found not in all, but only in the majority of known languages; nevertheless from the theoretical point of view there

is no difference between these two types (cf. 2.2.3.1.). By contrast, essential universality is always absolute because it is necessary (cf. 3.2.2.).[4]

The universals corresponding to these three types of universality we will call, respectively, *possible universals, essential universals,* and *empirical universals.*[5]

2.1.2. The two secondary types are derivatives, by combination, of the three primary types. One of these derivatives combines possibility and generality by limiting the number of possible constituent elements of languages. The general ('universal') fact would be, consequently, in this case, the fixed class of possibilities, but each language would make a choice within this class, which choice naturally could be partially the same as that of other languages. In one variation of this derivative, not defined as such but which arises rather often, certain elements of the fixed class of possibilities would be found in all languages and consequently would be generalities in their own right. The other derivative combines possibility and necessity by admitting a necessary connection between certain possibilities. The universals corresponding to these two derivatives we will call respectively *selective* universals and *implied* universals (or, in accord with current terminology, implications).

2.2.0. Let us come back to each of the types of universals that we have just established to examine several problems which arise with regard to them.

2.2.1. All facts observed in languages — or even imagined for possible languages (properties, functions, functional categories, formal processes) must, without exception, be considered first of all as possible (conceptual) universals, that is to say as universal possibilities of language, independent of a given language, so that they can be defined and so that one can eventually pose the problem of their logical or empirical universality. This is, in fact, what one constantly does, even if one is not aware of it. Thus, for example, the 'parts of speech' are universals in this sense, and only because of this fact are they definable. On the other hand, as has often been asserted,[6]

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[4]For the distinction between conceptual universality and historical generality, cf. my *Logicismo,* pp. 12, 21, and 'Determinación y entorno', pp. 32-33. For the distinction between essential universality and empirical generality: *Sincronía,* p. 132. For the three types of universals: 'Bedeutung und Bezeichnung', p. 16, and 'Über Leistung und Grenzen der kontrastiven Grammatik', pp. 29-30. See also the distinction of Saporta, *UL,* pp. 48 ff., between universals 'universally available (belonging to some metatheory of linguistics)', universals 'universally present', and universals 'universally necessary (present by definition)'; the 'universally available' universals correspond to our possible universals, the 'universally necessary' universals to our essential universals, and the 'universally present' universals, if we separate out the necessary universals, to our empirical universals.

[5]Cf. the 'definitional universals' of Ferguson, *UL,* p. 42; the 'universally necessary' universals of Saporta, *ibid.,* p. 49; the 'analytic universals' of Moravcsik, p. 224 ('properties that all languages have by definition, by virtue of the fact that the term "language" applies to them'); the universals 'implicit in the nature of language, defining characteristics or necessary consequences of defining characteristics' of Householder, p. 24; and the 'defining set' of properties of human language established by Hockett, *UL,* pp. 7-10, 12. Several of the universals noted by Hockett aside from his 'defining set', *ibid.,* pp. 14-21, are also essential universals in our sense (for example, 3.1, 3.5, 3.6, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10).

[6]See, for example, B. Bloch and G. L. Trager, *Outline,* pp. 68-69, and in the discussion

one does not define the 'English substantive'. In a sense the 'English substantive' cannot be defined because, as a portion of a historical object (the English language), it is itself an object, and objects cannot be defined but only observed and described (and, of course, one can write their history). In trying to define the 'English substantive' one only describes it as expression and the behavior of this expression. In fact, with reference to a given language, one can only inquire whether or not a category exists in that language and, if it exists, what is its formal manifestation (its paradigmatic and syntagmatic behavior).[7] In reality there is no logical difference between, for example, the definition of the notion of infix and that of the notion of substantive: the two notions can be defined only universally and independently of a given language. The difference which exists is one of substance, that is to say it is due to the different nature of the two notions: the infix is a universal device of expression, while the substantive is a category of content, a universal modality of signification. If it were not so why would we call the 'English substantive' precisely a substantive? On the other hand, with reference to the 'English substantive', one could not pose the problem of universality — one could not inquire whether other languages (or all languages) have the 'English substantive' since, certainly, they cannot have it. It has been said occasionally that this possibility is granted by the fact that there is, nevertheless, a resemblance between the 'English substantive', the 'German substantive', the 'Latin substantive', etc. In reality, in this case, one has in mind the universal category, that is to say the common properties which constitute this 'resemblance' from the functional point of view. On the other hand, one could define a category entirely identical to the 'English substantive'. In this case, however, it would no longer be the 'English substantive' but a universal possibility of language, even if it could not be observed in other languages. A definition as such is always universal — it defines a limitless possibility. But a universal definition does not imply the objective generality of what it defines. Thus if one defines the adjective universally, this does not in any way imply that one attributes the adjective to all languages, since definition is not a judgment of existence — one defines it for every language in which it may occur.

2.2.2.1. As for essential universals we must insist particularly on the fact that they are deduced directly from the notions of *langage* and *langue* — in the sense that they are constituent elements or logically necessary consequences of the constituent elements of these notions — and not from their respective definitions.[8] A definition (if it is a 'real' definition) is the product of contemplating the pure notion,

of universals per se, S. Saporta, *UL*, p. 49.

[7]Cf. my discussion of these problems, 'Determinación y entorno', p. 33, and *Logicismo*, pp. 12, 21.

[8]In formulations concerning these universals there appears almost constantly a reference to definitions (cf. fn. 5). But Ferguson, *UL*, p. 42, observes quite rightly that this reference is not necessary: 'Such universals may be regarded as definitional, i.e., they are implicit in the linguist's concept of language, whether included in his formal definitions or not'. Personally we would say simply 'implicit in the concept of language'.

not vice versa. Moreover definitions are propositions; they affirm something about something, they imply analysis and synthesis (διαίρεσιν και σύνθεσιν), and because of this fact they can be false, while pure, intuitive, unanalyzed notions cannot be. Consequently, the only methodological possibility in this regard is to place oneself, as it were, 'before' the notions of *langage* and *langue* and to ask oneself if this or that property is a necessary attribute of the corresponding sets of facts so that one can apply to them the names *langage* and *langue*.[9] (But cf. 2.2.3.3. for a discussion of heuristics.)

2.2.2.2. Most of the immediately obvious and therefore generally admitted essential universals, are generic universals, that is to say very general properties with no specificity as to the 'facts' which correspond to them; thus, for example: *langage* appears necessarily in the form of *langues;* every language *(langue)* must have expression and content; every language implies a grammatical organization; every language changes in the course of its history, etc.[10] But one could also, no doubt, admit as essential universals a whole series of much more specific facts. Thus, for example, it appears necessary that the word exist in every language as a lexical unity, even though it is not at all necessary that it exist everywhere as a level of grammatical structuring.[11] It is not necessary that 'quality' be distinguished from 'process' and, thus, the adjective is not an essential universal. But it is necessary in every language to be able to assert something about something and, thus, every language must have procedures to distinguish *topic* and *comment (thème* and *rhème).*[12] It is not logically necessary that personal pronouns exist everywhere as an autonomous category, but it is necessary that every language be capable of distinguishing in some manner the persons of a dialogue from non-persons. And one can maintain also, with good reason, the

[9]Hockett, *UL*, p. 12, did recognize that one must imagine the absence of a property to establish if it is necessary or not: 'To show the importance of the features of the defining set, we can think of human language as we know it and consider the consequences of suppressing, in turn, each feature.'

[10]Cf. *Sincronía*, p. 132, where a series of other universals of this level are listed. At that time I considered also as universals in this sense the phonic (vocal) character of language and, consequently, the existence of a phonic system for every language. But in reality this characteristic is not logically necessary; we can imagine perfectly well languages with non-phonic expression. If on the other hand we claim that the vocal character of language is necessary (cf. 2.2.3.2.), we might also question whether phonetic change is also necessary. Hockett, *UL*, pp. 20-21, considers it, in effect, as universal. Nevertheless the justification that he gives for it does not concern *change* but only phonetic *variation*, which, by itself, does not bring on change proper. Personally I think that phonetic change can be justified only in relation to linguistic change in general, whereas semantic change can be justified independently of phonetic change.

[11]That is, there must be in all languages grammatical functions expressed at the level of the word (and independently of the functions proper to other higher, levels of grammatical structuring of the language), such as we observe, for example, in Italian or Spanish. On the other hand, the two levels of the minimal elements and the sentence are logically necessary, since their necessity derives from the very notion of grammatical structuring.

[12]The notion of predicate could well be identified with the notion of *comment*, but the notion of subject, in the sense in which it is used, for example, for the Indo-European languages, does not coincide with the much more general notion of *topic*.

necessity of the distinction between noun and verb, but of course as a distinction between *substantive function* and *verbal function,* not as a distinction between two lexical classes.[13]

2.2.2.3. Essential universals — especially if one considers them as belonging to the definitions or deduced from them — can, no doubt, seem less interesting than the empirical ones, at least as they relate to the scientific knowledge of languages.[14] But first of all, as we have seen, they are not deduced from the definitions. Besides, all the essential universals are not immediately evident and the fact that one can deduce them does not in any way imply that they are scientifically trivial. Thirdly, their consequences in relation to the structuring of languages (in particular their 'dynamic' consequences, cf. 3.3.) are often still less obvious. Finally, there is a hierarchy of essential universals which is interesting in its own right, that is to say for the general scientific knowledge of language.[15]

2.2.3.1. Empirical universals, in so far as they are observed and not logically deduced, are valid in an absolute way only for languages in which they have been observed, whereas for other languages they are valid only as probabilities and only until one finds exceptions (unless they can be justified by a logical necessity, but in this case they become essential universals). To admit their generality for all languages means always to set forth a hypothesis, that is to generalize inductively what has in fact been observed;[16] in contrast, the hypothesis of generality has no meaning for essential universals: a logical necessity is not a generalization — it is, at the outset, 'general'.[17] That is to say, the generality of empirical universals is logically 'extrinsic' (observed or supposed), whereas the generality of essential universals is 'intrinsic'. The logical nature of empirical universals does not change because of their presence in all known languages. If, for example one observes — as, in fact, we do observe — that open syllables occur in all known languages, this is still an empirical observation

[13] The often cited example of Nootka is not an exception to this, since Nootka also recognizes the distinction between substantive function and verbal function. The 'parts of speech' are in principle semantic functions and not classes of 'words' (forms in the lexicon). In the matter of the relationship between parts of speech and lexical classes, we can only observe a statistical universal or a universal 'tendency' — verbal categories 'tend' to be expressed by different classes of forms in the lexicon.

[14] Thus Moravscik, p. 224, declares them 'trivial'. Cf. also Osgood, *UL*, p. 238.

[15] Thus Householder reduces the 'defining set' of Hockett to three primary traits. We, ourselves, consider as essential traits of language *semanticity, alterity* (the fact that every linguistic act is addressed by a speaker to another speaker), *creativity,* and *historicity* (the fact that language appears in the form of languages). But, strictly speaking, historicity could be deduced from alterity and creativity, just as the *exteriority* of language (the fact that language is expressed in a substance) can be deduced from semanticity and alterity.

[16] Greenberg, *UL*, p. ix, recalls, with regard to universals, the well known assertion by Bloomfield that 'the only valid generalizations about languages are inductive generalizations'. We may observe that this assertion is tautological: generalizations, in their proper sense, are always 'inductive'.

[17] But one can, naturally, inquire if an empirically general fact might not be necessary and try to justify it from the logical point of view.

without necessary universality.[18] All known languages have consonants and vowels, but a language without vowels, or at least without functional vowels, is not impossible.[19] Let us suppose, for example, that in some language all the consonants are automatically followed by a determined vocalic element, or that every consonant of a certain class is automatically followed by a determined vowel: this language would have no functional vowels.[20]

2.2.3.2. But all this concerns only the logical status of empirical universals and in no way affects their importance. In fact, the fact that their generality is extrinsic from the logical point of view does not exclude the possibility of their being absolutely general *de facto* in human language such as we know it, nor does it exclude the possibility that they are motivated by other needs than logical necessity. Certain empirical universals present, in fact, in all languages could, no doubt, be due to coincidence — this is a possibility that one cannot exclude in advance, even though in reality it may be quite unlikely, given the number of human languages. But the rest would still have to be motivated. More precisely — if one excludes a historical motivation (through an ultimate common origin of languages) — they would have to be determined either by causes of a practical nature (languages, being historical 'techniques', are also governed by practical intelligence) or else by the physical and psychic make-up of man and the conditions of life on Earth.[21] Furthermore, certain statistical universals could also be motivated in this way. It is precisely this possibility of motivation which makes empirical universals interesting, not only for linguistics but for all the sciences of Man.[22]

[18] Other universals of this type: all (or almost all) known languages have nasal consonants; if in a language there is a single nasal consonant, that consonant is *n;* if there are two, they are *n* and *m* (Ferguson, *UL*, pp. 44-45); perhaps also: all languages have pronominal categories presenting at least three persons and two numbers (Greenberg, *UL*, p. 90); cf., however, fn. 24.

[19] Cf. Hockett, *UL*, p. 22: 'It would seem easy enough to devise a phonemic system that would have no stops at all, or no vowels at all, or the like.'

[20] Jakobson, *UL*, p. 211, considers a language in which every syllable would consist of a single phoneme as 'absolutely impossible, because the only form of syllable universally admitted is the sequence ≪ consonant + vowel ≫'. But this is a question of an empirical universal — such a language perhaps does not exist, but it is not absolutely (logically) impossible.

[21] For example, in the case of the vocal nature of language. To our knowledge, the best justification of this nature is still that of Herder, *Abhandlung*, I, 3 (a justification founded on a very suggestive analysis of the properties and possibilities of the sense of hearing, in comparison with the other senses of man).

[22] Cf. the distinction of Moravcsik, *l.c.,* between *accidental* [synthetic] universals and synthetic non-trivial universals ('properties that all natural languages have, though not by definition', and which could be biologically motivated); also the distinction of Householder, *l.c.,* between 'universals due to the fact (if it is a fact) that all human language goes back in line of cultural transmission to a single origin' and 'universals which are conditioned by the structure of the human anatomy, in particular of the brain, and are handed on in the germ plasm — (a) physiological, (b) neurological'. It is difficult to understand in what way the 'synthetic non-trivial' universals could be discovered by a linguistic theory, as Moravcsik contends, p. 225. If they are 'synthetic', it is because they are observed through experience, and not deduced by the theory. A theory can only put forth hypotheses about them (since a synthesis *a priori* is not conceivable

2.2.3.3. Essential language universals, being by definition 'general', are included among the universals present in all languages, which, in turn, are included among the possible universals.[23] Consequently, if one possessed a sufficiently extensive catalog of possibilities of language, the empirical step in research on universals could be that of asking which of these possibilities are 'general' universals (present in all languages) and which of these latter are essential universals. From the theoretical point of view this step is certainly not necessary for essential universals which are identified as such only by deduction. Nevertheless the empirical observation of these universals in many languages (especially if it is a question of 'specific' universals, cf. 3.2.) can be important from the heuristic point of view — namely: a) to avoid the danger of considering as logically necessary that which applies only to certain languages or even, perhaps, to a single language (this was one of the errors of the old universal grammar and, in part, also of the new); b) because certain facts observed as general could have a logical justification which, at first glance, escapes us.[24]

2.2.4. Selective universals have received well-earned acclaim in the realm of phonetic distinctive features thanks to Jakobsonian phonology. Nevertheless, even without the hypothesis of universality, phonology has always worked with a rather limited number of distinctive features which, at least from the empirical point of view, appears perfectly reasonable in this area of linguistics. The same thing is true of the material devices of language in the realms of grammar and the lexicon (word formation): the number of these processes is not infinite, and in many cases the number of possibilities is even perfectly determined (for example prefix, infix, suffix). In contrast, the analogous hypothesis[25] of the plerematic organization of languages — a hypothesis which has been advanced a number of times in different forms through the course of history and which has been revived in our day[26] — has every chance of being false if one considers the free nature of language (in the sense that its subject matter is infinite). But here also, even though the task may not be feasible in practice, it is possible in principle to establish which distinctive features are functioning in the languages of the world at a given moment in history, and there is always the possibility of at least establishing a list of the most frequent semantic features, which is certainly not without interest. Moreover in this domain also there are areas in which the number of possibilities is logically determined.

2.2.5.1. The implications can be *theoretical* (deduced by means of conceptual analysis of the possibilities examined) or *empirical* (observed). Thus, for example,

[23]Cf. S. Saporta, *UL,* pp. 50-51.

[24]Cf. fn 17 and 'Über Leistung und Grenzen der kontrastiven Grammatik', p. 30. This is true also for theoretical implications (cf. 2.2.5.). If, for example, we observe that certain pronouns always present distinctions of person and number, we can wonder if this is not due to the nature of these pronouns.

[25]That is to say the hypothesis of a rather *limited,* and, at the same time *delimited* (already given and constant) number of distinctive features.

[26]Cf., for example, J. J. Katz and P. M. Postal, *An Integrated Theory,* pp. 162-3.

the implication that 'the unmarked term of a binary semantic opposition has two meanings in a language'[27] is a theoretical implication,[28] whereas to say 'if a language has inflection, it always has derivation'[29] is an empirical implication. From the point of view of their form, implications can be *unilateral (x implies y* [but y does not imply x]), or *bilateral* or *reciprocal (x implies y and y implies x); positive (if x, then y)* or *negative (if x, then not y).*

2.2.5.2. Theoretical implications imply at the same time the motivation for the connections that they represent, whereas empirical implications do not imply motivation. In the sense of a possible motivation, unilateral empirical implications would even be the exact opposite of the formally analogous theoretical implications. In effect, *if x, then y,* as an empirical implication, would signify 'if there is x it is because there is *y'* (that is to say, 'it is *y* which determines *x')*, whereas as a theoretical implication the same formula signifies: 'it is *x* which determines *y'.*[30]

3.0. So far we have considered the types of linguistic universals from the point of view of their logical status with reference to the notions of objective universality and generality. But in order for their import and meaning to be sufficiently precise in each case, the possible types of universals must be distinguished also from other points of view, namely, a) according to the levels of language to which they apply; b) according to the degree of generality of the aspects of language to which they apply; c) according to the perspective in which they occur with reference to languages; d) according to the semiotic plane to which they correspond; e) according to their formulation.

3.1. In language *(langage)* we must distinguish three levels: the universal level of speech *(parole),* the historical level of languages *(langues),* and the specific

[27]Cf. Greenberg, *Language Universals,* pp. 24-25.

[28]Cf. furthermore, the deduction of this implication in Sánchez Ruipérez, *Estructura,* pp. 17-19.

[29]Greenberg, *UL,* p. 90.

[30]Implications must be carefully distinguished from essential universals. Greenberg, *UL,* p. 58, observes that the 'non-implicational universals about language are in fact tacitly implicational since they are implied by the definitional characteristics of language'. No doubt this is true, but it is a question of two very different types of implication. Essential universals are implied by the very notions of language or languages, whereas 'implications', whether theoretical or empirical, are connections between particular possibilities. Essential universals are by definition general, that is, always present, whereas theoretical implications *can* be general (if the possibilities considered are), but they are not general by definition, and empirical implications are by definition not general (they are valid for classes of languages and not for the class 'language'). We do not understand in what way universals 'implied by definitional characteristics of language' could be 'empirically, not logically implied', nor what is meant by 'all languages are observed to have the characteristics in question' *(UL,* p. 83). If they are implied by the definition, they are logically implied and one does not need to look at every language to observe them. On the other hand, facts observed in all languages do not coincide automatically with facts implied by the definition of the idea of language. To suppose, for example, that the vowel *i* is present in all languages, would be an empirically general fact, but it would have no necessary relationship with the definition of language.

level of the discourse (or the 'text').[31] Linguistic universals can relate to each of these
levels. In research on universals people often speak of universals of *language* and they
mean by this 'that which is found in all languages'. Now in reality the universals of
languages *(langues)* do not coincide with the universals of language *(langage)*. All the
universals of *langues* are at the same time universals of *langage*, since the *langues*
do constitute a level of *langage;* but not all the universals of *langage* are necessarily
universals of *langues:* they could also be universals of speech,[32] or universals of
the text.[33] The universals which concern us here are, certainly, the universals of
languages *(langues)*. Nevertheless even if one limits oneself to this level, one must
take account of the universals of the two other levels of language, given that these
latter can have considerable consequences for the functional and formal structuring
of languages. At present, research in this area has barely begun.[34]

3.2.1. From the point of view of the degree of generality of the aspects of
language to which they apply, universals can be *generic* or *specific*. Generic universals
concern the principles and norms of language and languages considered in their general
mode of existence, and also in specific domains, but always without specifying the
facts in which these principles and norms are manifested; specific universals concern
facts specified as such. Thus, for example, 'all languages distinguish parts of speech'
is a generic universal; 'all languages possess the category of noun' is a specific univer-
sal.[35]

3.2.2. This distinction is, certainly, a relative one, 'generic' and 'specific'
being, in each case, correlative terms. Nevertheless the distinction must be made be-
cause the logical or empirical necessity that universals imply or postulate something
concerns only the degree of generality to which they apply: below this level they allow
variation. Now the degree of specificity needed is in inverse proportion to the degree
of generality of the universals. Universals of speech, considered independently of
a specific language, are all generic universals of a very high degree. The same is true
of almost all the universals traditionally accepted by linguists, including the opponents

[31]With regard to this distinction, which calls for a linguistics of speech and a linguis-
tics of the text, besides the well known linguistics of languages, cf. 'Determinación y entorno',
p. 31.

[32]Among the universals of Hockett's 'defining set' (cf. fn. 5), only three (2.7, 2.8, and
2.13) are universals of *langues;* all the others concern the 'message', that is, the act of speaking.
On the other hand, most of the universals that Hockett discusses outside of the 'defining set'
concern the level of *langues*.

[33]Thus if we call the type of content that occurs at the level of texts 'sense', we can
observe that sense constitutes an absolute universal of this level: every text has a 'sense' (even
texts that have no meaning and denote nothing).

[34]Cf., however, the important consequences which Kuryłowicz, in his report, draws
from the 'situationality' of the linguistic act.

[35]Cf. the distinction of Katz and Postal, *An Integrated Theory*, p. 160, and of Chomsky,
Aspects, pp. 27-30, between 'formal universals' and 'substantive universals', at the level of linguistic
systems ('grammars'). In these authors, however, we notice an inadmissible identification of uni-
versals of language with universals of linguistics (cf. fn. 44).

of universalism. This means that the need for universals to imply something about
the specific facts of languages is very slight.

3.3.1. Languages are produced endlessly — made and remade — by linguistic
activity. They can be considered in themselves, in a static perspective, or from the
point of view of the activity that produces them, and in a dynamic perspective, that is
as the purpose of this activity. This allows us to distinguish *static* universals from
dynamic universals.[36] Static universals are universal properties of the languages con-
sidered in themselves; dynamic universals are the principles and norms of the activity
which produces languages.[37]

3.3.2. In terms of principles and norms of an activity, dynamic universals
can have multiple, and at the same time different, manifestations in the same lan-
guage or in different languages, which, nevertheless, does not affect their oneness.[38]
On the other hand it is not necessary that the purpose that they imply be entirely
realized at a given moment. From the point of view of their realization in languages
considered as historical products, they appear most often as 'tendencies'. Thus we see,
among the universals motivated by reasons of a practical nature, the 'tendency' toward
symmetry in phonological systems and, in principle, in all other partial systems within
the language, or rather, from a more general point of view, the 'tendency' toward
regularity in linguistic systems.[39] From this arises another aspect of the non-trivial
interest in 'statistical' universals — that is universals that are not completely so from
the static point of view — namely that they can be manifestations of dynamic uni-
versals. On the other hand, in the dynamic perspective, all static universals — on con-
dition that we exclude chance and if permanent conditions of linguistic activity
are not involved — can be interpreted as manifestations of the principles which regu-
late the activity which creates languages, and one can distinguish dynamic universals
which have a constant manifestation and dynamic universals which have multiple and
varied manifestations.

3.4. From the point of view of the semiotic plane to which they correspond,
universals can be: *semantic* (concerning the content, lexical as well as grammatical),
formal (concerning the processes of expression), and *connective* (concerning the rela-

[36]'Diachronic' universals are only a special form of dynamic universals.

[37]Cf. Osgood's distinction, *UL*, p. 238, between *phenotypes* and *genotypes*, an illuminat-
ing distinction, especially if we do not interpret it as opposing 'empirical generalization' and
'theoretical generalization' and if we abandon the behaviorist framework in which Osgood places
it. This distinction and, in particular, the total import of the very pertinent ideas which Osgood
expounds about 'genotypes', which go far beyond psycholinguistics, has not yet been appreciated.

[38]Cf., for example, the great number of manifestations of the principle of anthropo-
centrism invoked by Kuryłowicz.

[39]Cf., in this regard, the dynamic universal formulated by H. Paul, *Prinzipien*, p. 227:
'Jede Sprache ist unaufhörlich damit beschäftigt, alle Ungleichmässigkeiten zu beseitigen, für
das funktionell Gleiche auch den gleichen lautlichen Ausdruck zu schaffen'. Obviously in this
formulation he does not mean 'every language' as a product, but the activity which creates lan-
guages. The *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* is not, as is often supposed, a manual of diachronic
linguistics, but, in reality, a remarkable treatise on dynamic universals.

tion between the two planes). In principle, languages have heterogeneity of formal devices with relation to semantic functions and heterogeneity of semantic functions with relation to formal devices: analogous functions can be expressed by different devices and the same type' of device can express different functions. This is precisely the reason for the interest in research on connective universals, that is, what turn out to be constant connections between certain functions and certain types of devices.[40]

3.5. In their formulation, universals can be *positive* or *negative*. But the positive ones admit also a form which is formally negative, and the negative ones a form which is formally positive. Thus 'all languages have x', 'no language lacks x', 'no language has y', 'all languages lack y'. These variations are an external fact, determined by the presuppositions of the questions to which these formulations are supposedly the answers. From the objective point of view, absolute negative universals of the type 'no language has y' are of little interest since the negative possibilities are infinite. On the other hand, negative formulations are objectively interesting in the case of relative negativity, that is, when it is a question of properties of language which themselves have a negative sense, as in the case of numeric limitation of the possibilities ('no language has more than n entities of the type x'), implied absences (the concomitant absence of two possibilities), or the exclusion of certain possibilities from a logically determined series. But all of these cases allow for positive correlative formulations.[41]

II
1. Universals of Language and Universals of Linguistics

1. The universals of language must be rigorously distinguished from the universals of linguistics. Universals of language are properties of language itself which can be isolated and identified by linguistics, whereas universals of linguistics are properties of linguistics which are justified only on this level by the internal demands of linguistics as a science.

2. In a certain sense, of course, all scientific notions having to do with language belong to linguistics, and therefore every linguistic theory, explicit or implicit, is universal since it is located at the level of notions, which by definition are 'universal' (cf. I, 2.2.1.).[42] In this sense every form of linguistics, as well as every specific branch

[40] In this realm still, research is rare and well established facts are few; but cf. Greenberg's observation on the plural, *UL*, p. 74, as well as the implications that he draws regarding word order.
[41] Thus, for example: 'no language has as its preferred order one of the following: Verb-Object-Subject, O-S-V, O-V-S', a formulation which implies (and is implied by) the related positive formulation: 'the three preferred orders, among the six possible, are: S-V-O, S-O-V, V-S-O' (Greenberg, *UL*, p. 61).
[42] From this point of view, a title such as *Universals in Linguistic Theory* is pleonastic, since it contains twice the notion of universal. Bach and Harms, moreover, explicitly admit it in

of linguistics — grammar as well as lexical semantics, historical grammar as well as dialectology — has its 'universals', that is its notions, its categories, its defined or tacitly adopted schemes of interpretation, in principle applying to every possible language, at the level of theory as well as at the level of analysis and description; and, from this point of view, the *cognatio litterarum* of the historical grammar of the Renaissance was a universal in the same way as the *phonetic law* of the neogrammarians or the notion of *opposition* in structural linguistics.

3.1. But we must distinguish *real notions* from *formal notions*, that is notions about the subject matter of a science versus notions concerning the postulates, the methods, and the processes of that science. It is, of course, true that every theory about a real object is an interpretation, and not a copy, of reality and that scientific notions — the real ones no less than the formal ones — have their precise sense only within the framework of a theory. This does not mean, however, that real notions are entirely arbitrary, having no relation to the object of the theory, but formal notions *are* in fact arbitrary from the point of view of the object. Now linguistics, like every science, has, in addition to real notions, formal notions justified by its own intrinsic demands, for example by exigencies of economy, elegance, simplicity, or coherence of the system of description and analysis, by the need for coherence with certain postulates, or even by the need for universality of description. And in these specific cases its decisions are often formal ones. Thus the notion of the *phoneme* is, certainly, a notion established within a certain theory, but it is a 'real' notion; it has, or claims to have, a *correlatum* in the reality of language such that the definitions of this notion, as well as discussions about the phoneme, refer necessarily to this reality.[43] The same is true for notions such as *verb, substantive, sentence,* etc. On the other hand if, through the exigencies of the method of description, one admits juncture as a phoneme (a phonematic segment), the notion becomes, in this application, a formal one.[44] In

their preface (p. vi): 'Every paper in the volume is concerned in one way or another with questions of general linguistic theory, that is by necessity with "universals" '.
[43] The character of the notion does not change because of the fact that we can say that the phoneme (that is its *correlatum* in the reality of language) does not exist. In effect, this is possible only in the case of real notions. The objects of formal notions always exist — it is the conventions themselves that they express.
[44] Consequently, we cannot agree with Katz and Postal who define universals uniquely with reference to linguistics: 'Thus a formal universal is a specification of the form of a statement in a linguistic description, while a substantive universal is a concept or a set of concepts out of which particular statements in a linguistic description are constructed. The list of all substantive universals that the theory of linguistic descriptions makes available to particular linguistic descriptions is the stock of theoretical concepts that may be drawn upon in the construction of the rules and lexical formulations of a given linguistic description' (*An Integrated Theory*, p. 160). In a theory and in a linguistic description we observe universals of language as well as universals of linguistics. Chomsky's sentence, *Aspects*, p. 28: 'The study of linguistic universals is the study of properties of any generative grammar for a natural language' is acceptable if by 'grammar' we understand 'grammatical system of a language' and if we understand that the system itself is generative, but it is not acceptable if by 'grammar' we understand the grammar as description and by 'generative grammar' a particular type of grammar.

the same way, if, in the case of a language having only two vowels and having a constant syllabic structure of the type CV, one decides, for reasons of economy of the system of description, to consider the vowels as distinctive features of the consonants,[45] this decision is a formal one, concerning the description and not the language described.

3.2. We call universals of *linguistics* those universals which correspond to the formal notions and decisions of linguistics.[46] If, for example, one observes that all known languages which have /ɛ/ also have /e/, and one generalizes this observation in the form of an implication between /ɛ/ and /e/, this is an implicational universal of language. If in a theory /ɛ/ is allowed only if it contrasts with /e/, this is also an implication, but an implication of linguistics. The two implications can be formulated in an identical fashion: 'No language has /ɛ/ if it does not have /e/', but their meaning is radically different. The first asserts the concomitant presence of two phonemes in the language, the second asserts their concomitant presence in the interpretation. The first, if it applies to all languages, is a hypothesis: a language which possesses /ɛ/ but not /e/ will be, from this point of view, an exception. The second is valid at the outset for all languages, and it is always true because it is tautological with reference to the formal decision on which it is based; a language which possesses [ɛ] but not [e] will not be an exception from this point of view: we would say that it has a single phoneme /e/ and that it has no /ɛ/, since its [ɛ] is not opposed to an [e]. This is because the first implication observes a state of affairs, whereas the second, in reality, expresses only an exigency of the model of description, from which, on the other hand, one can deduce nothing in the empirical sense. The same is true for an implication such as 'every language which has consonants also has vowels, and vice versa' (assuming that the implication also has a 'real' sense): as an implicational universal of language it signifies that consonants and vowels reciprocally imply each other in languages; as an implicational universal of linguistics it can signify that consonants and vowels reciprocally imply each other in the interpretation. Thus, in the case of our hypothetical language without functional vowels (cf. I, 2.2.3.1.) we could say, from the point of view of a certain theory, that this language, since it has no vowels, has no consonants either.

4.0. Universals of linguistics are perfectly legitimate on the level of linguistics, at least in the sense in which they are used and to the extent that they are justified at this level. And they do not hinder research in the universals of language as long as they are not confused with these latter. Now this is exactly what happens rather often; that is, one says, in effect, 'languages have *x* because the theory (or the description)

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[45] Cf. the case interpreted in this way by Hockett, *UL*, p. 19.

[46] An analogy can serve to clarify this distinction further. Suppose, for example, that all the plains (or at least the plains that are defined as such in geography) were green; this would be a 'real' universal of the aspects of the earth, which could be established by geography. If, on the other hand, independently of the 'real' color of the plains, we decide that all the plains will be represented by the color green on maps, this would be a universal of geography (or cartography).

has (or has need of) *x*'. This sort of statement is an example of *transitus ab intellectu ad rem*, due in particular to the identification of the level of conceptual analysis with the historical level of languages and of the level of description with the level of the described object.

4.1. Let us consider, for example, the thesis — often repeated ever since Aristotle — according to which every verb would contain the verb 'to be', so that ὁ ἄνθρωπος βαδίζει and ὁ ἄνθρωπος βαδίζων ἐστί would be 'the same thing'.[47] This thesis has been criticized a great deal in modern linguistics. Now in reality it can have a very precise, and at the same time perfectly reasonable, meaning if we interpret it at the level of conceptual analysis, that is to say as an analysis of the notion of 'verb'. In fact, if one conceives of the verb as a part of speech, which has, above all, the function of transforming 'words' into 'sentences', the *dicibile* into a *dictum*,[48] then one can certainly say that the verb 'to be', in its function as copula, represents pure verbality, and that in this sense every other verb contains a lexical meaning (which we can call *Lex*) and the verb 'to be'. Nevertheless, in this case, the βαδίζων which is found in the explanation of βαδίζει is not the βαδίζων of the Greek language (where βαδίζει and βαδίζων ἐστί do not mean the same thing), but the name of a lexical meaning, indeterminate as to category, and ἐστί is not Greek ἐστί (which also has other functions), but only the name for pure verbality. It is as if we were to say that every verb is *Lex* + 'verbality', in the sense in which we have just defined them.[49] But conceptual analysis as such does not say that the verbs of different languages 'are formed from' a combination of certain lexemic elements with the verb 'to be' of these languages (which might not even exist), it does not assert the primitive character of the verb 'to be' in the diachronic or historical sense, it does not even attribute the verb to all languages (if this is a fact, the fact must be established through other considerations). And above all, carefully conceived analysis does not attribute autonomous existence to the entities that it extracts — it simply *explains* what is *implied* in the notion; it does not suppose a synthesis of these entities. If, then, aside from this analysis, we say that the verb 'to be' is everywhere the primitive verb and that verbs emerge in languages by combination of a lexeme with the verb 'to be', it is a universal of historical linguistics, specifically a universal in the form of a hypothesis which, to become a universal of language, must be verified and which,

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[47] Aristotle, *Met.* Δ, 1917a, 26-30. We should remark, however, that with Aristotle it is not a question of a linguistic interpretation but only of the fact that these two expressions represent the same type of predication (predication of activity).

[48] Cf. what Aristotle says of ῥῆμα, *De Int.*, 16b, 6-7. καὶ ἔστιν ἀεὶ τῶν καθ'ἑτέρου λεγομένων σημεῖον; and Humboldt, *Über die Verschiedenheit*, pp. 608-9.

[49] Cf. the essentially correct interpretation of Meiner, *Versuch*, pp. 80-81, in his definitions of the verb and the adjective: '*Verba*, die etwas unselbständiges bezeichnen und zugleich die *Copulam propositionis* mit in sich schliessen. Daher sie zu weiter nichts, als nur alleine zu Prädikaten gebraucht werden können ... *Adjectiua*, die zwar, wie die *Verba*, etwas unselbständiges bezeichnen, aber nicht so, wie die *Verba*, eine *copulam propositionis* mit in sich schliessen'; also Humboldt, *l.c.*

as we well know, does not prove true.[50] If in the description of a language one decides to analyze the verbs as *Lex* + 'to be', it is a universal of description which must be justified by the exigencies of this level. And if one considers that in the particular language being described the elements *Lex* and 'to be' exist as autonomous entities at a certain level of linguistic intuition and that the speakers, in the 'production of sentences', combine these entities to form verbs, one attributes to the language a universal of description.

4.2. This is, *mutatis mutandis,* what happens in a recent interpretation of substantive nouns,[51] according to which these nouns could be considered in generative grammar as being derived from relative clauses in the 'deep structure'. Thus *the man* could be interpreted as a replacement by transformation of a deep structure of the type *the one who is a man,*[52] which would constitute a 'universal of language'. We could remark, first of all, that, though motivated at the outset by a correct intuition about nouns such as *professor, linguist, structuralist (nomina adiecta* or *appellationes)* — which have, in fact, a certain affinity with relative clauses and whose syntactic behavior is often different from that of nouns such as *book, tree, man (rerum nomina* or *nomina absoluta)*[53] — this interpretation succeeds in doing away with the very distinction which gave rise to it. But, granted that this distinction may be recoverable at another level of analysis, the important fact is that we are dealing with a universal of linguistics, which can be justified in a certain type of grammar, and not with a universal of language. In reality what the interpretation in question says is simply that a substantive noun can be considered as 'substantiveness' + *Lex*. Now in the case of *man,* this formula expresses an analysis performed by linguistics, not an actual synthesis in the language. In fact, in the languages that we know, the nouns — at least primary nouns (which is the case also with *man)* — are already given; they are not 'synthesized' by the speakers, at the moment of producing the sentences, by a combination of 'substantiveness' and *Lex*. If there are languages in which the lexical meaning and the class are autonomous and where, consequently, all the nouns are 'synthesized' in the act of speaking, these languages are, because of this fact, different from languages in which the primary nouns appear already 'categorized', and we do not have the right to obliterate this difference by attributing synthesis to all languages on the pretext that in both cases it is a question of lexical meaning and categorial meaning, while ignoring the fact that the status of these meanings is not the same in

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[50]In effect, the verb 'to be' is 'primitive' in the logical sense, that is in the sense that it is the simplest verb, and not in the historical sense. Historically the contrary, rather, is true. In general, language goes from the complex to the simple, rather than the other way around. Thus, for example, the article (simple actualizer) has arisen in many languages through the reduction of the much more complex function of the positional deictics ('demonstratives').

[51]That of Bach, *ULT*.

[52]The form *the one who is a man* of course is only the English translation of a much more abstract structure in which the substantive noun *man* is not present in this form in the predicate of the relative clause.

[53]The distinction between *rerum nomina* or *nomina absoluta* and *appellationes* is found in Vives, *De censura veri*, p. 146. The term *nomina adiecta* is ours.

the two groups of languages.[54]

4.3. To carry further the interpretation that we have just discussed, one could assert that in general lexemic words corresponding to categories of words — substantives, adjectives, verbs — could be 'derived' from a common indeterminate base which could later be marked, according to the circumstances, as substantive, adjective, or verb;[55] thus English *tall* and *tallness* could be interpreted as having the same base. At the same time this would be, apparently, a more universal base than that of 'lexical classes' since it would do away with disagreements between languages in this area: the same base could be transformed, for example, into an adjective in one language and into a verb in another language. Now already in the case of a single language this interpretation is not without difficulties. It is certainly true that for didactic purposes one could say, for example, that the lexical meaning is that which is in common in each of the terms of the Spanish series *blanco-blancura-blanquear* and *negro-negrura-negrear,* and the class meaning is that which is different for each of the terms in each series but identical for the pairs *blanco-negro, blancura-negrura, blanquear-negrear*. But this does not imply in each case a direct derivation from *Lex* + class meaning, since in Spanish *blancura, blanquear* and *negrura, negrear* are developed from *blanco* and *negro* respectively and imply that these terms are already determined as adjectives. In English, too, we do not have *Lex* 'tall' + Adj., *Lex* 'tall' + Substantive, but rather *tall,* Adj. ⟶ *tallness,* Substantive. And the order of development can be different in analogous series.[56] But this is only a marginal difficulty which could be easily resolved, within the framework of the same theory, by adopting specific transformations for each language. Thus, for example, starting with the indeterminate base, one would derive *tall* first of all and then go on to *tallness*. Let us ask, rather, if even the base that one adopts in this interpretation can be a linguistic universal. First of all, this interpretation means that the lexemic (primary) words can be considered, respectively, as *Lex* + substantiveness, *Lex* + adjectiveness, and *Lex* + verbality. This is perfectly acceptable as an analysis; but if we consider this analysis as corresponding to an actual synthesis in the language we have the same difficulties that we have seen in the case of *man* — *the one who is a man* in terms of the ready availability of these meanings and the possibility of 'synthesizing' them in different languages. Secondly, in each case in the above formulas, *Lex* applies to a lexical meaning in a given language. Now the organization of lexical meaning is not the same in different languages.

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[54]It may be true that the 'synthetic' interpretation of nouns makes English similar to Nootka, which according to Bach, *l.c.,* would be progress towards universality; but this has nothing to do with universals of language. In research on universals of language, it is not a question of *making* languages similar, but of observing to what extent they are in fact similar; it is a question of looking for universals, not of adopting them by suppressing or reducing, in the description, the differences between linguistic systems. The exigency of universality of a grammar, in the descriptive sense, can justify universals of linguistics, but not universals of language.

[55]It is Bach, again, who asserts this, *ULT*, pp. 120-121.

[56]Thus, for example, It. *vero-verità,* but Sp. *verdad-verdadero*. This is not without consequences for the 'production of sentences' — cf. in fact, It. *un vero amico* — Sp. *un verdadero amico,* but It. *È vero* — Sp. *Es verdad*.

Consequently, if we apply the analysis to several languages, or to all languages, simultaneously, the common base cannot be *Lex*, but only an extralinguistic reality denoted by the functionally different lexemes in the different languages: a *designatum* which may be represented by means of a universal logical language.[57] Consequently, what the interpretation in question says is that the same reality can be denoted by different categories of words, in a single language just as well as in different languages. Now the linguistic universals implied in this observation are: 1) that all languages have categories of words; 2) that these categories can be different; 3) that the use of categories of words does not depend, in principle, on the reality denoted. On the contrary, the identity of the reality denoted is, by definition, a non-linguistic fact — it is only the purely negative point of reference, with reference to which one considers languages. If we decide to begin the description of languages at the level of the reality denoted — or of this reality considered as conceived by a non-linguistic thought — and to reach the linguistic functions and structures only by means of transformations of an extralinguistic deep structure, this is a formal decision of a certain type of grammar, a decision that we can accept or not, but which cannot justify any linguistic universal. It means simply that, in this type of grammar, language and languages — with their similarities and differences — appear only at a lower level of the description. We may observe also that the class meanings are not unimportant either; they correspond to differences 'in der Weise der Erfassung',[58] in the manner of conceiving and presenting objective reality linguistically, and they cannot be presented as 'asemantic' transformations of an identical deep structure. In any case, research on linguistic universals begins only where language and languages begin. It is only at this level that we can reasonably ask, for example, to what extent languages have the same word classes and to what extent the same facts of reality are denoted by the same classes in different languages.

4.4.0.   Furthermore, the very notions of 'deep structure' and 'transformation', at least in the sense in which they are most often used in linguistics today, belong in the domain of universals of linguistics and not in that of universals of language.

4.4.1.   In fact, if by 'deep structure' we mean the semantic structure of

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[57] Besides, this difficulty appears also in the case of *man — the one who is a man*. Are we talking, for example, about *homo, Mensch* or *vir, Mann*? Certain lexemes *can* be identical, from the point of view of denotation, in different languages (they *can* delimit the same extralinguistic realities); but we do not know it in advance and, in any case, this possibility can not be supposed for *all* the lexemes of *all* languages: on the contrary, it is rather limited.

[58] Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, p. 249. Bach, *ULT*, p. 122, considers that his interpretation of 'lexical classes' constitutes at the same time a refutation of the 'Humboldt-Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis. But we cannot agree. The hypothesis of Whorf is, in fact, false. Moreover, it cannot be attributed without restrictions to Humboldt, according to whom the pole of universality is no less important than the 'individual' character of each language. But one cannot refute Whorf's hypothesis by separating denoted reality from categorial *signifié* and adopting a non-linguistic deep structure, since it refers to linguistic thought (that is, to linguistically organized thought) and since, from this point of view, if the same reality is denoted in one language by an adjective and in another language by a verb, these two languages do not say 'the same thing' (cf. fn. 69).

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syntactic relationships, which does not coincide with the relationships in the spoken string (which, besides, since it is a string, is an 'order' and not a structure), it is obviously a universal of language. But there is no syntactic-semantic structure common to an active sentence and its passive equivalent. In this case we have an extralinguistic equivalence in the denotation. Now the depth of languages does not go beyond the structure of signification. If, in this case too, one speaks of deep structure, it is a universal of linguistics, adopted to resolve certain problems of a certain type of grammar.[59] In another type of grammar one could contend that it is precisely the semantic structure which is the 'deepest' and that it is this structure, and not the denotation, that is primary. The same thing is true if, in a theory, one asserts that the modifying adjective 'is derived from' the predicate adjective and that the expression *le ciel bleu* implies in some way the statement *le ciel est bleu*. In another theory one could maintain, with good reason, that it is rather *le ciel est bleu* which 'is derived from' *le ciel bleu* and that the analysis *le ciel — bleu* (the linguistic separation of the quality inherent in a 'substance') is a necessary condition of the synthesis (re-attribution of the quality to the 'substance') that this sentence represents. And one could also find purely syntactic arguments supporting this thesis (e.g., that there are in fact attributive Substantive-Adjective constructions in which the verb *to be* is suppressed and which do not coincide with the constructions in which the adjective functions as modifier).

4.4.2.   As far as transformations — if we exclude the transformations necessary to go from the syntactic-semantic structure to the spoken string — we must distinguish 'real' transformations from transformations belonging to the linguistic technique. 'Real' transformations are processes of language which are revealed in the paradigmatic structure of linguistic systems. Thus, for example, Fr. *beauté* is, in its content, a transformation by nominalization of *beau-belle* in a predicative function; in effect the final product *beauté* ('the fact of being beautiful') contains the lexical base of departure ('beau-belle'), the predicative function ('to be') and the result of the nominalization ('the fact of'). We could say the same about processes of subordination or about the genetic relation of content between a semantic 'genitive' of the personal pronoun and the possessive pronoun.[60] To the extent that such processes exist in all languages, we can speak of universals of language. On the other hand, there are no processes in languages to transform an active statement into its equivalent passive, nor, naturally, to go from a common deep structure (which does not exist as linguistic structure) to either the active or the passive — in this case it is a matter of choice of utterance, and this can be realized in either the one way or the other. And there is

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[59] If by 'deep structure' we understand semantic structure proper (structure of the linguistic content) and by 'surface structure', the procedures of expression, we may doubt the assertion of Chomsky, *Aspects*, p. 117, according to which 'much of the structure of the base is common to all languages'. In our experience, languages are not less different in the organization of their content than in their expression. It is entirely another question if by deep structure we understand a non-linguistic or 'prelinguistic' structure (the structure of 'unorganized speech').

[60] In this sense Nebrija, *Gramática*, III, 8, considers Sp. *mío, tuyo* as 'derived' from *de mí, de ti*. In this he follows the interpretation given by Priscian for Latin.

no 'real' transformation in the case of the predicate adjective and the modifying adjective — here it is a matter of a relationship between analogous functions in different syntactic paradigms. If in this case, too, we adopt transformations these are operations of linguistics.

4.4.3.   All this does not mean, naturally, that it may not be legitimate to speak of 'deep structure' and 'transformation' in a sense rather close to the one used currently. We do not discuss here the adequacy of these notions nor their operational usefulness in a certain type of grammar. This is a task which falls to the theory of grammar, which may eventually be able to conclude that a 'synthetic' grammar (cf. II, 2.) in fact has need of these notions. But the metatheory of universals must observe that in this case we are dealing with universals of linguistics and not universals of language.

5.   Let us remark finally that research into universals would have no meaning if it were simply a matter of the ideas and operations of linguistics (cf. fn. 44): we would have no need to look for universals in language; it would be enough to observe them in linguistics, and we would obtain as many different lists of universals as there are different forms of linguistics. Furthermore these lists would be of no use in the matter of different types of universals since we would always be dealing with universals in the conceptual sense (cf. I, 2.1.1.) and since, in this sense, a notion such as 'inclusive plural' is no less universal than, for example, that of 'lexical category'. But obviously the aim of research into universals cannot be to draw up a lexicon of the terminology and a repertory of the techniques of linguistics. On the other hand, it may be useful to set up a catalog of all the traits that linguistics has considered or considers as general properties of language or languages. But in this case, too, we would have, alongside a series of universals of language, universals imposed on language by one or another form of linguistics because of the confusions of levels that we have just called attention to. In particular, universal grammar tends, by its very nature, to impose universals on language and to adopt non-linguistic universals.[61]

[61] In fact, 'universal' grammar exists only in this sense. By universal grammar we mean here the grammar which claims to be universal in terms of a concrete description, by adopting, at least at a certain level, the same description for all languages, and which it would be better to call instead *general grammar*. But naturally every grammar is universal as a *theory* of grammatical notions and as a *model* of grammar valid for any language whatever. If the model itself is of the 'general' type, this model is subject to restrictions concerning this type in the concrete description, but not on the theoretical plane, since this model also is available for every possible language — the fact that it may not be applicable affects its generality but not its 'universality'. This means that the grammar is universal in the sense of (conceptual or essential) universality, but it cannot be universal in the sense of empirical generality (cf. I, 2.1.1.). Thus the Port-Royal grammar or that of Meiner are perfectly valid, in principle, as grammatical theories, but fundamentally false as general grammars; in contrast, the universal grammar of J. Harris *(Hermes: or, a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar,* London 1751) is almost entirely valid, given that it is almost entirely a theory of language and grammatical functions. In the sense of empirical generality, grammar can be 'universal' only to the extent to which there are in fact general empirical universals (existing in all languages). But, in this regard, it is 'universal' (that is, *general)* grammar which depends on research on universals, and not vice versa.

2. Universals, Content of Thought, and Denotation

1.0.   In the discussion of universals 'of linguistics' we had occasion to point out that we must not look for universals of language in the reality denoted but in the linguistic functions themselves (cf. II, 1.4.3.). In fact, from the linguistic point of view, we must distinguish clearly between universality of the *designata* and universality of the *significata*.

1.1.1.   The *designatum* is the extralinguistic reality (experienced, imagined or thought) to which a sign or a construction of a language applies in the act of speaking. The *significatum* or *signifié* is the content of a sign or a construction of a language as given in that language itself.[62] Between the signs or the constructions of a language and the 'reality' to which they refer there is a relationship of denotation; between the *signifiés* there is a relationship of signification. Of course, the distinction between reality denoted and *signifié*, as they apply to lexical signs, is well known. Thus we know that Fr. *noir* and Lat. *niger* can, in a specific speech act, denote exactly the same color, but the *signifié* of the two is not identical since *niger* means 'shiny black', as opposed to Lat. *ater,* 'dull black'. But the same distinction must also be made for grammatical constructions and functions. Thus, if in the situations in which Latin employs expressions of the type *homines dicunt,* another language employs only expressions of the type *homo dictitare,* this latter language certainly denotes real 'plurality', but it has no 'plural' (of the noun) as *signifié* or semantic function.[63] Between Latin and our hypothetical language there is, in this case, identity of denotation but not of signification.

1.1.2.   The same denotation can correspond to several semantic functions and, on the other hand, the same semantic function can correspond to several denotations; this is just as true for a single language as for different languages. That is, we can observe the following relations:

Thus the denotation 'instrumental' of the French construction *avec x,* which we observe in such sentences as *je coupe le pain avec le couteau,* can be expressed in French by other semantic functions (for example: *au moyen d'un couteau, en utilisant un couteau,* etc.) and, on the other hand, the construction *avec x* can enter into other relationships of denotation (for example: *avec du sucre, avec un ami, avec inquiétude,* etc.). The same 'instrumental' denotation is expressed in Latin by the 'ablative' function *(cultrō),* in Russian by the 'instrumental' function *(nožem),* in

[62] Cf. 'Bedeutung und Bezeichnung', p. 105.
[63] We reserve the adjective 'semantic' for relationships of signification; thus 'semantic function' signifies 'a function determined by a given semantic relationship in a given language'.

German, as in French, by a 'co-presential'[64] *(mit einem Messer)*, but the ablative of Latin, the co-presential of German and even the instrumental of Russian can be employed also in other relationships of denotation in each of these languages.[65] Consequently, from identity of denotation we can deduce nothing about the identity of semantic functions.

1.1.3. The distinction between 'denoted reality' and 'signifié' (semantic function) coincides, basically, with the distinction established by H. Steinthal, following Humboldt, between 'content of thought' *(Denkinhalt)* and 'internal language form' *(innere Sprachform)*.[66] In fact the instrumental function of the French construction *avec x,* in the case of *je coupe le pain avec le couteau,* can be considered as 'thought'; but it is not expressed by a semantic function which corresponds to it — from the linguistic point of view it is subsumed under a much more general function. We might better speak of 'material of thought' to the extent that it is a question of 'prelinguistic' thought not yet formed by a semantic function in a given language, of a fact of 'unorganized speech', which could be expressed by different semantic functions in a single language, and also in different languages.

1.2. It is the same if the reality denoted is considered as conceived through a post-linguistic thought (that is, rendered independent of the semantic functions of languages) and which we represent, for example, by means of a logical notation. From the point of view of language, a 'logical language', to the extent that it claims to be universally valid and excludes the semantic functions of the so-called 'natural' languages (which, after all, are the only languages that exist), is a denotative system which, with reference to linguistic *signifiés,* is on the same level as the reality denoted — it is an 'image' of this reality. In effect, a 'symbolic' notation is such in the proper sense of the term — it *presents* reality, it 'symbolizes' it, but it does not 'signify' it. The difference between images, properly so called, of real situations such as those denoted, for example, in *Peter hits Paul, Peter is bigger than Paul,* and symbolic notations, such as Ag — Act — Obj ('Agent — Action — Object'), A > B, arises from the generality of these latter, from the fact that these notations are valid for all situations of these types. We could say the same for symbolic notations less elementary than those of our example — they are always general outlines of the denotation, generalized reproductions of the reality denoted.

1.3. Consequently, in what follows we will speak simply of 'denotation' and 'denoted reality' *(designatum),* without making the distinction — necessary in other respects — between prelinguistic thought, extralinguistic reality as such, and reality considered as conceived through a logical thought — from the point of view of language it is always a question of the 'material' of semantic functions.

2.1.1. Now in the linguistic research of many logicians as well as in certain movements of current linguistics, especially in generative grammar, and particularly in the generative grammar which adopts as 'deep structure' a structure called 'semantic' (in reality the structure of the *designatum),* languages are considered precisely from the point of view of the denotation. Apparently this is often done within a single language, as when common deep structures are established, for example, for the pairs *Caesar Pompeium vicit — Pompeius a Caesare victus est, A ist grösser als B — B ist kleiner als A, La porte est ouverte — La porte n'est pas fermée.* But since in all these cases the deep structures in question are simply the *designata,* we can easily apply them to several languages at the same time or even, in principle, to all languages; and in generative grammar, of course, this was quickly perceived. Thus, languages with an ergative construction, in which one says approximately what could be illustrated in German by 1) *es schläft ihn;* 2) *es schlägt ihn;* 3) *es schlägt ihn von seiten von Paul,* used in the situations in which the French say: 1) *il dort;* 2) *on le bat, il est battu;* 3) *Paul le bat, il est battu par Paul,* have naturally the same 'deep structure' as languages with a 'subjective' construction, since the situations denoted in the one case and the other are the same. It has already been observed that we can adopt the same 'deep structure' for expressions such as *A is taller than B — A surpasses B in tallness* in a single language just as well as in different languages which, it turns out, allow only one of these possibilities;[67] and obviously we could go further and attribute the same deep structure also to African languages which say, in analogous cases, 'A is tall, he surpasses B', or even to Australian languages which say 'A is tall, B is short',[68] given that in all these cases it is a question of a *designatum* of the type A > B. Therefore these deep structures are presented as 'universals of language' by the linguists who adopt them.[69]

**2.1.2.** The very fact that, in order to establish deep structures, we use the

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[64] This 'co-presential', however, is not entirely identical with the co-presential of French.
[65] Cf. 'Bedeutung und Bezeichnung', pp. 117-118.
[66] Cf., in particular, *Die Classification*, pp. 61-62: 'Es ist also *zwischen dem, was von den Menschen vermittelst ihrer Sprache* und dem, *was von der Sprache selbst ausgesagt wird, was in ihr an und für sich selbst liegt,* wohl zu scheiden.'

[67] Cf. what Bach says, *ULT*, pp. 121-122.
[68] We draw these examples from Greenberg, *UL*, p. 69.
[69] Householder, p. 42, observes concerning the deep structures adopted by the generativists most recently: 'And how does it mean any more than to say "Anything that can be expressed in one language can be expressed in any other"? '. We would say, rather: Everything that is denoted by one language can be denoted also by another. In effect, if one language says *puer aegrotus est* and another language says only something like 'puer aegrotat', this latter denotes the same reality as the former, but, strictly speaking, it does not express the same thing. In principle, languages *speak* of the same things, but they do not *say* 'the same thing'. As for the possibility of *saying* effectively 'the same thing', this possibility exists, and it is even rather great, but it is not unlimited. If a language makes a distinction that another does not make, this latter can make the same distinction by adding supplementary information; thus for Lat. *ater* we can say in French *noir opaque.* But the contrary is not true. In the form of Latin in which *ater* and *niger* are distinguished, one cannot say simply 'black'. In the same way, if, for the reality denoted by Fr. *il dort,* a language says only 'es schläft ihn', it cannot say 'il dort'. One could, of course, in such cases, *explain* what the other says; in Latin one can explain that Fr. *noir* corresponds to *ater-niger* without distinguishing the luminosity; in German one can explain through *es schläft ihn* what a language with ergative construction says for Germ. *er schläft;* but this is metalanguage — it is no longer simply 'language', it is linguistics.

technique of paraphrasing, reveals something about the point of view that we adopt in this operation. In effect the paraphrases correspond to equivalences of denotation, to 'cognitive synonyms', not to linguistic synonyms.[70] With reference to the denotation, a translation into another language is also a 'paraphrase', and a paraphrase in the same language is nothing but an 'internal' translation. This means that these are, actually, relationships of denotation and not semantic functions of the languages we are dealing with. And the fact that, to represent deep structures, one often resorts to a symbolic notation is equally symptomatic in this regard.

2.2.1. In functional linguistics as well as in the present-day schools of linguistics which are under discussion, it is basically a question of the relationship between reality and languages:
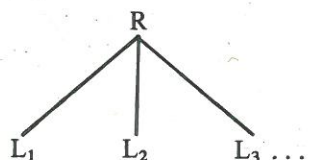
But whereas in functional linguistics people have tried to show that languages are different in the way that they denote the identical reality, that they do not analyze the reality denoted in the same way, in one part of current linguistics great efforts have been made, and a whole technique has been developed, to demonstrate that in spite of the differences between languages the reality denoted is, nevertheless, the same. That is to say, they assert simply that systems L_1, L_2, L_3, etc., are not basically different because they can all be traced back to the level of R. In this manner they are supposed to have discovered a universal base of language and to have surpassed functional linguistics which, of course, never would have been able to discover it.

2.2.2. Now, obviously, the efforts to which we allude fall short of their goal, they are in vain, and their result is tautological. They fall short of their goal because, undertaken in order to show that the analogies between languages are more numerous than we had thought, they end up by showing that languages coincide in their denotation. But this is not the same thing as showing analogies between languages. Analogies can be observed only on the level of L_1, L_2, L_3, etc., not on the level of R, which is the common base of reference, on the basis of which we establish the analogies as well as the differences between languages. The level of R, in whatever way one conceives of it (pre-linguistic thought, objective reality, 'universal' thought) is by definition exterior to languages, since it is not yet (or is no longer) L_1, nor L_2, nor L_3, etc. Furthermore, this level is quite simply external to language; in fact it could be mani-

[70]We may observe, also, that most often we speak of equivalences of sentences. But, since it is a question of situations denoted, these are, in reality, equivalences of texts or, at least, of sentences used as entire texts. It is not rare to find, corresponding to one sentence in one language, several in another; cf. the relationship between Germ. *er holt Wasser*, It. *va a prendere dell'acqua*, and the expressions in languages which say, in this case 'he goes, takes, brings water', or also the example *A is taller than B* — 'A is tall, he surpasses B'.

fested by means of another system of expression (music, painting, gestures) and, in this sense, the finger pointing toward the door would have the same deep structure as *Sortez!*, *Fuori!*, or *Hinaus!* The efforts referred to are in vain because, with an extraordinary expenditure of energy and talent, they conclude, after long detours, by demonstrating that in all languages we speak about the same reality, something which is already conceded at the outset. Finally, their result is tautological because, given that the deep structure that they adopt is extralinguistic, it simply means that languages differ, not by virtue of the reality that they denote (or the 'material' that they organize), but only as languages.

2.3.1. All this does not mean that the reality denoted has no importance, nor that it can be ignored. On the contrary. It does not belong to language but, precisely for this reason, it is the reference point necessary for any semantic consideration of language, both in practice and in theory. In the semantic analysis of a language one must refer to the reality denoted to be able to observe in what fashion this language analyzes it, that is to say, what are the traits of the reality which are adopted as distinctive traits of their *signifiés*. To describe a language 'from its own point of view' does not mean to ignore the relationships which become apparent between this language and reality, but only to describe this language from the point of view of *its* analysis of reality, and not as a denotative system, that is, not from the point of view of a non-linguistic analysis of this same reality. For the same reason, the consideration of reality (or of 'content of thought') imposes itself on translation, language learning, and the semantic comparison of languages. In translation, one does not go directly from language L_1 to language L_2 — which, anyway, is not possible, since the *signifiés*, to the extent that they belong to a given language, are not 'translatable' — but only through the level of R; in effect, in translation it is a matter of denoting, by means of the semantic functions of L_2, the same 'realities' denoted by the semantic functions of L_1, in a given text. In learning language L_2 through the medium of language L_1, it is a matter of discovering the analogies and the differences that L_2 presents with reference to L_1, in its own analysis of reality. And in the semantic comparison of languages, it is necessary to show, precisely, in what way the same reality is analyzed in different languages.

2.3.2. Equivalent denotations internal to one and the same language — of the type *A is taller than B* ~ *B is shorter than A*, *A sees B* ~ *B is seen by A* — are not without importance either. Knowing a language also means knowing the semantically different resources that it offers to denote the same 'realities'. In traditional grammar this is well known. Thus in every scholarly grammar of Latin we find, for example, the different possibilities that Latin possesses to express 'purpose', and equivalences such as *(legati venerunt) ut pacem peterent* ~ *qui pacem peterent* ~ *ad pacem petendam* ~ *pacem petentes* ~ *pacem petituri* ~ *pacem petitum*, etc. Functional grammar, because of its analytic point of view, was necessarily led to neglect the examination of this aspect of languages. In fact, this is the task of another type of grammar, namely 'synthetic' (or onomasiologic) grammar, which starts from denotation, the 'thought content' to be expressed, and ends up at expression in a given lan-

guage. It is true that in starting from denotation one ends up by producing, as they say, 'all the correct sentences of a language', but this is done by passing *through* the semantic functions of that language without considering these functions, and even without being able to consider them,[71] and consequently without being able to say why the same realities can be denoted by different expressions, and different realities by identical expressions, something which every speaker of the language in question knows perfectly well, even if in an intuitive way. It follows from this that a grammar which starts from denotation to produce 'all the correct sentences of the language' — if it pretends to be an integral and exhaustive description of that language — is not adequate and does not correspond to the intuition of the speakers. In effect, native speakers do not speak about simple reality as such but about a reality already organized by their language, and for them it is a question of formulating sentences in accord with the distinctions and the functions of this language. But it does not follow from this that 'synthetic' grammar is superfluous. In reality it is necessary, but it has no meaning except as used beside — and in conjunction with — 'analytic' (or semantic) grammar, which establishes the functional paradigms of the language in question.[72]

2.4. The error, therefore, is not in concerning oneself with the reality denoted. The error is in adopting the point of view of the denoted reality as an exclusive point of view, in considering this reality as a level of language, and in attributing to it 'universals of language'.

3.0. This implies that even the universals of denotation must be established in the language and from the point of view of linguistic functions, not vice versa. A universal of denotation is a 'general' relationship (existing in all languages) between a linguistic function and a denoted 'reality'.

3.1. Stated in a very general form ('all languages have something to denote the reality *s'*), this relationship does not imply identical delimitation of denotation nor of signification: the same semantic function could correspond also to other realities, and the same reality could correspond to several functions. Thus, for example, 'all languages have a lexical function to denote the hand'; but the denotation of the hand could be subsumed under a more general function or, on the contrary, be divided up between several functions. Seen in this way, research on universals of denotation does not appear to promise much, since, in this case — at least as it concerns the reality known by all human beings — it is probable that the only possible universal would be precisely the generic universal that we have just formulated.[73]

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[71] In fact, the limits of the functions do not appear in each sentence, but only in the paradigmatics of the language. Thus, the limits of the function Fr. 'avec x' are not all evident in the sentence *je coupe le pain avec le couteau.*

[72] Gabelentz, who established the distinction between synthetic grammar and analytic grammar *(Die Sprachwissenschaft*, p. 84 ff.), observes, quite rightly, that the grammar of every language must be done twice: 'die Sprachen wollen synoptisch, einmal in Rücksicht auf ihre Erscheinungen, und dann in Rücksicht auf ihre Leistungen beurtheilt werden' *(ibid.*, p. 479).

[73] One could also establish negative universals; but their number is by definition infinite.

It has been asserted, for example, that possession is expressed in all languages. But, first of all, 'possession' is a rather poorly defined category. If we consider a particular type of possession ('the fact of owning material or spiritual goods'), we notice that — except in 'technical' languages — this type is not expressed as such in the Romance, Slavic, and Germanic languages, or else it is subsumed under a much more general function (something such as 'real or conceptual connection as dependence or interdependence'). Thus, in French and German the 'possessives' (the verb 'to have' and the possessive adjectives) appear, in principle, for all types of this relationship, and the differences in usage concern only the distinction between 'dependence' $(x \rightarrow y$: '*y* depends on *x*') and 'interdependence' $(x \leftrightarrow y$: '*y* depends on *x* and *x* depends on *y*') and, within 'dependence', the distinction between 'relationship seen from the perspective of *x*' vs. 'relationship seen from the perspective of *y*'.[74] Besides, it is possible that there may be languages which delimit, precisely, 'the fact of owning *x*' or even which distinguish different types of 'fact of owning *x*'.

3.2.1. In a stricter sense, a universal of denotation would be a constant correspondence between denoted reality and semantic function, that is, a general reciprocal implication between the same denoted reality and a specific semantic function. In this regard we can distinguish three possible cases: 1) that the functions coincide constantly in the denotation while at the same time being of different semantic nature (this, for example, would be the case of an exclusive function to denote 'the state of illness', but expressed, according to the language, by an adjective, by a substantive, or by a verb); 2) that between the functions in question there is also identity of semantic nature; 3) that these functions are analogous also in their material expression. The probability of these cases occurring decreases rapidly from 1) to 3).

3.2.2. But in this regard there is another possibility that appears to us much more important, namely, that there may be coincidence in denotation for several functions taken together, for 'paradigms', in spite of differences between the functions internal to each paradigm. In effect, when we say, for example, that Latin *ater-niger* correspond to French *noir*, we mean that *ater* and *niger* taken together denote precisely the reality denoted by French *noir*; if this were not true the comparison would be meaningless. In the same way, when we compare certain lexical fields — for example It. *fiume-ruscello* || Fr. *fleuve-rivière-ruisseau*, or adjectives denoting temperature, or names of colors in different languages — we admit implicitly that these fields, considered in their entirety, coincide in denotation, even though this coincidence does

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[74] Expressions such as *Peter has eyes, This hand has fingers, Paul has a father*, etc., appear strange at first glance, but it is only because they assert what we already know through the 'general knowledge of reality'. In fact, if this reality were negated or placed in doubt, or if it were presented as extraordinary, then these expressions would become perfectly normal (thus: *This hand has no fingers — Yes, it has fingers*). Besides, there is a whole series of contexts in which these expressions can occur; cf. 'Bedeutung und Bezeichnung', pp. 113-114. Among verbs which express 'possession by dependence', Germ. *gehören*, used with the dative without a preposition, is most often limited to possession as a relationship of ownership *(Das Haus gehört dem Lehrer)*, whereas Fr. *appartenir* is not subject to this limitation (cf. *Les mains appartiennent au corps)*; but in German we also have, for example, *der Tugend gehört Belohnung*, 'it is proper that virtue should be rewarded'.

not exist for each of the lexemes of which they are comprised. Now in grammar also there are 'fields' (the lexical 'fields' after all are only paradigms of the lexicon); for example, deictic systems, systems of person, etc. And the possibility exists of establishing 'fields' in the same way for complex syntactic structures. The paradigms of the higher levels of grammatical structure are, unfortunately, rather poorly known, given the deplorable state of studies in functional syntax proper. But it is in this direction, it seems to us, rather than in particular functions, that important possibilities open up for research in universals of denotation.

Conclusions

'All languages are different from each other' — 'All languages are constructed according to the same principles and are, in this sense, identical'. These are two contrary, but not contradictory, assertions. In effect, languages are not different in the same sense in which they are similar, and the differences do not in principle concern the same level as the similarities. Languages are different in their semantic and material organization, but they are all constructed with a view to the same general function and are all historical realizations of what Humboldt and Steinthal already called 'the idea of language'. Moreover, there are in languages similarities which go beyond essential universality, that is, similarities not necessitated for every possible language by the very idea of 'language'. This is why research into linguistic universals is important and promises to be fruitful, precisely and especially in the sense in which languages are in principle different. It is these analogies that can reveal to us what are the necessary norms followed or freely adopted by all speakers in the course of history in their act of creating languages.

But linguistic universals must be sought in language itself, not outside of language. We cannot look for them in linguistics, because this latter may be artificially universalist; and we cannot look for them in the reality denoted, because the identity of reality is conceded beforehand. Neither can we look for them in a thought conceived in advance as 'universal'. On the contrary, the study of thought processes can hope to receive important benefits from research on the universals of language: Language is undifferentiated λόγος and, because of this, it is the primary λόγος, anterior to all other types of λόγος. We may add that universals must be sought in the manifestations of language and not in its denotata. The justification of universals may, itself, be extralinguistic. All language is a human universal whose justification certainly is not linguistic.

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LINGUISTICS AND HUMANISM

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0. Some years ago, dealing comparatively with the subject of 'Humanism' in Greece and India (Heilmann 1967a: 3) I distinguished three different meanings of the term, taking the most comprehensive as the basis and reference of my analysis: 'every system of thinking in which man realizes entirely an ethical ideal of life based on a conscious and productive *Weltanschauung*'.

In fact, this ideal is a dynamic concept which changes both in time and space, a mutable but legitimate justification of the thinking and behavior whether it produces a peripheric conception of man, as in India, or whether it leads as in Greece to the anthropocentric vision which is at the basis of the entire western civilization and mentality.

Science is an essential and unwaivable aspect of thinking and behavior. True science, which cannot be reduced to a mere barren technicism, cannot in fact be divorced from a conscious and considered philosophy of man in his being and becoming. It is inevitable that science bears the stamp, the imprint of this philosophy, which, though it varies from age to age, always aims towards the same goal.

This conviction justifies the title given to the following pages, which are not intended as a technical or theoretical contribution to the vast, complex problem of present-day linguistics, but rather as the expression of the effort at introspection of whoever, in a world torn by overpowering technological requirements and by the upheaval of protest, attempts to justify himself to himself in his role as 'technician' and 'man'. It seems certain that this lot falls appropriately to the linguist in that it is he who investigates in language ('the ultimate and deepest foundation of human society', Hjelmslev 1963: 3), human totality at its truest and most intimate. This, substantially, is the lesson of the last page of Louis Hjelmslev's *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language:* 'Linguistic theory is led by an inner necessity to recognize not merely the linguistic system, in its schema and in its usage, in its totality and in its individuality, but also man and human society behind language, and all man's sphere of knowledge through language. At that point linguistic theory has reached its prescribed goal: "humanitas et universitas" ' (1963: 127).

If therefore we constantly take man as the point of reference in subsequent developments in science, only then will we be able to acquire a genuine spiritual penetration of reality and of those values on which man himself laboriously and unceasingly builds his own perennial destiny of progress and relapse, development and turning back, new and old.

Today it is more necessary and impelling than ever to seek out the human