

Geoffrey N. Leech, **Principles of Pragmatics**, Longman, London and New York 1983, xiv + 250 pp.

Geoffrey N. Leech is a scholar of great linguistic erudition, well-known to Czechoslovak Anglicists — and not only to Anglicists — as a co-author *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (R. Quirk et al., London and New York 1972) and the author of a very readable *Semantics* (Penguin Books 1974), as well as from his personal visits to Czechoslovakia. He has a special gift for following the modern trends in linguistics without losing sight of the firm ground of its previous achievements. In addition to this, he is one of those who are able to combine the need for scholarly precision with a popular way of writing. All these qualities find their reflection in the thirtieth title of the Longman Linguistic Library, *Principles of Pragmatics*.

The book consists of ten chapters, which are preceded by a *Preface* and *A note on symbols*, and followed by *References* and *Index* (of names and linguistic terms).

Chapters 1–3 (*Introduction, A set of postulates, Formalism and functionalism*) constitute the theoretical framework of the book. Leech's treatment of the formal and the functional approach to language exemplifies his line of thinking and his personal approach to linguistic facts (p. 46): '(a) Formalists (eg Chomsky) tend to regard language primarily as a mental phenomenon. Functionalists (eg Halliday) tend to regard it primarily as a societal phenomenon. (b) Formalists tend to explain linguistic universals as deriving from a common generic linguistic inheritance of the human species. Functionalists tend to explain them as deriving from the universality of the uses to which language is put in human societies. (c) Formalists are inclined to explain children's acquisition of language in terms of a built-in human capacity to learn language. Functionalists are inclined to explain it in terms of the development of the child's communicative needs and abilities in society. (d) Above all, formalists study language as an autonomous system, whereas functionalists study it in relation to its social function. On the face of it, the two approaches are completely opposed to one another. In fact, however, each of them has a considerable amount of truth on its side.'

In the theoretical part of the book, Leech tries to show that grammar (i. e. phonology, syntax, and semantics) is predominantly formal, while pragmatics is predominantly functional. This idea is further developed in detailed commentaries on the following postulates (p. 5):

- P1: The semantic representation (or logical form) of a sentence is distinct from its pragmatic interpretation.
- P2: Semantics is rule-governed (= grammatical); general pragmatics is principle-controlled (= rhetorical).
- P3: The rules of grammar are fundamentally conventional; the principles of general pragmatics are fundamentally non-conventional, ie motivated in terms of conversational goals.

- P4: General pragmatics relates the sense (or grammatical meaning) of an utterance to its pragmatic (or illocutionary) force. This relationship may be relatively direct or indirect.
- P5: Grammatical correspondences are defined by mappings; pragmatic correspondences are defined by problems and their solutions.
- P6: Grammatical explanations are primarily formal; pragmatic explanations are primarily functional.
- P7: Grammar is ideational; pragmatics is interpersonal and textual.
- P8: In general, grammar is describable in terms of discrete and determinate categories; pragmatics is describable in terms of continuous and indeterminate values.

According to Leech, formalism and functionalism are complementary approaches. Any linguistic account that is faithful to the facts and is — at the same time — as simple and generalizable as possible must take both the approaches into consideration. This is not to say, however, that the particular branches of linguistics may not find one approach more appropriate than the other. Dealing as it does with language phenomena in the very act of (interpersonal) communication, pragmatics is most suitably studied from the functionalist point of view.

In Chapters 4–6 (*The interpersonal role of the Cooperative Principle, The Tact Maxim, A survey of the Interpersonal Rhetoric*), Leech presents his rhetorical model of pragmatics, making a distinction between the interpersonal and the textual rhetoric. Each of the two rhetorics consists of a set of pragmatic principles, which may be further specified by maxims and sub-maxims. In this part of the book, Leech skilfully shows how the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle actually perform their functions in everyday communication and — what is still more important — how these two principles interact. The Cooperative Principle (of Grice) is mainly concerned with the 'informative' aspect of communication (between the speaker and the hearer (addressee), specifically with the extent of information (Maxim of Quantity), its truth (Maxim of Quality), its relevance (Maxim of Relation), and its clarity (Maxim of Manner). This pragmatic principle in itself cannot explain '(i) why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean; and (ii) what is the relation between sense and force when non-declarative types of sentence are being considered' (p. 80). The explanation can be found in the interplay of the Cooperative Principle with other principles. Of these, the Politeness Principle appears to be the most important from the viewpoint of everyday communication, and it is one of the main achievements of the book that Leech elaborates the Politeness Principle in such a way that it can be applied to and used in linguistics. Each of the six maxims of this principle has two sub-maxims, of which the former tend to be more important than the latter (p. 132):

- (I) TACT MAXIM
  - (a) Minimize cost to *other*
  - (b) Maximize benefit to *other*
- (II) GENEROSITY MAXIM
  - (a) Minimize benefit to *self*
  - (b) Maximize cost to *self*
- (III) APPROBATION MAXIM
  - (a) Minimize dispraise of *other*
  - (b) Maximize praise of *other*
- (IV) MODESTY MAXIM
  - (a) Minimize praise of *self*
  - (b) Maximize dispraise of *self*
- (V) AGREEMENT MAXIM
  - (a) Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*
  - (b) Maximize agreement between *self* and *other*
- (VI) SYMPATHY MAXIM
  - (a) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*
  - (b) Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*

The operation and the interplay of pragmatic principles, their maxims and sub-maxims may vary according to speech situations, language communities and cultural areas. At the same time, different languages may vary in exploiting different formal means in order to comply with the same pragmatic principles and their maxims. Hence general pragmatics is closely related to both grammar (pragmalinguistics) and sociology (socio-pragmatics).

The common denominator of Chapters 7–9 (*Communicative Grammar: an example; Performatives; Speech-act verbs in English*) is the application of Leech's theoretical views to several sets of grammatical phenomena. The example of communicative grammar

relates different negative and interrogative forms to their various pragmatic utilizations. In Chapters 8 and 9, Leech argues that 'a rhetorical view of pragmatics requires us to take a different view of performatives and of illocutionary acts from that which is familiar in the "classical" speech-act formulations of Austin and Searle. The view is put forward that Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts should be reinterpreted as a semantic taxonomy of speech-act verbs.' (P. xi.) The only thing to add is that Leech more than succeeds in his argument.

Chapter 10 (*Retrospect and prospect*) recapitulates the preceding discussion and draws attention to some of the important issues that are frequently dealt with in pragmatics but could not have been included in the book.

'If there is one idea of importance in this investigation, it is the notion that illocutionary force can be translated into the problem-solving paradigm of means-ends analysis, and that pragmatic interpretation can also be formulated as problem-solving within a different paradigm — that of hypothesis formation and testing. Within this same general framework for studying communicative linguistic behaviour, "indirect speech acts" have appeared as problem-solving strategies of the same kind as "direct speech acts", except that the means-ends analysis is more complex and oblique.' (P. 229.) This is what Leech himself says in his concluding remarks. Any reader of the book, however, will undoubtedly find not only one but quite a number of ideas of paramount importance, not to speak of hundreds of excellent examples and incisive linguistic descriptions. Leech's *Principles of Pragmatics* shows convincingly what many linguists all over the world have felt when reading philosophically and logically oriented treatises and essays on language pragmatics: the ideas are basically sound and inspiring, but they lack a true-to-facts linguistic background. The hypotheses seem to work in general, but they gradually stop working when applied to the complex phenomena of everyday language use. There has been a great need for a genuine linguistic approach which would accommodate the thought-provoking non-linguistic stimuli to the specific requirements of linguistics. And this is exactly what Leech's book has done.

Aleš Svoboda

Leiv Egil Brevik, *Existential 'There'*, *Studia Anglistica Norvegica* 2, Bergen, 1983, XIV + 458pp.

L. E. Brevik's book is a large-scale synchronic and diachronic study of English existential clauses containing the non-locative morpheme *there*. It is based on the excerption of 4,031 pages of Old Middle and early Modern English texts and both spoken and written present-day English texts containing a total of 755,000 words. Since all the previous treatments of existential *there*, adhering strictly to a single linguistic theory, had failed to explain its use satisfactorily, the present author adopted an eclectic method of investigation.

The book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 offers a critical survey of earlier studies of existential clauses (sentences). Chapter 2 refers to the semantic, syntactic and phonological differences between existential *there*, denoted as *there*<sub>1</sub>, and locative *there*, denoted as *there*<sub>2</sub>. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with the conditions of the use and non-use of *there*<sub>1</sub> in present-day and earlier English. In chapter 5, *there*<sub>1</sub> is compared to functionally similar devices used by other languages. Chapter 6 presents a tentative hypothesis about the origin of *there*<sub>1</sub>. The conclusions arrived at in chapters 1–6 are summed up in chapter 7. These are the most important points.

In present-day English, *there*<sub>1</sub> and *there*<sub>2</sub> have sharply distinct, syntactic and semantic functions and different phonological realizations. *There*<sub>1</sub> functions as a dummy subject and does not appear to have a referential meaning; it tends to be realized as /ðə(r)/ or /ðe(r)/ and never has a nuclear pitch movement. *There*<sub>2</sub> functions as a locative adverb and usually carries the meaning 'at the particular place'; its realization is /ðee(r)/ and it is capable of bearing a nucleus. The use and non-use of *there*<sub>1</sub> in present-day English is conditioned by its pragmatic function. It serves as a presentative signal of a subject conveying new information and appearing in post-verbal position; it co-occurs with intransitive verbs of 'appearance on the scene' (most frequently with lexical *be*), which allow the subject to become the communicative core. *There*<sub>1</sub> and *there*<sub>2</sub> are already differentiated in Old English. *There*<sub>1</sub>