Anthropology and Linguistics

Language and Culture in Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology (Harper, New York, 1964. 800 pp., $12.50), edited by Dell Hymes, is an excellent selection of important articles in the general and not too well-defined area of anthropological linguistics, or linguistic anthropology as Hymes prefers to call it. It is a most welcome and most valuable book for students of anthropology, for students of linguistics who wish to read beyond the narrow confines of technical linguistics, and for the interested layman as well. For the benefit of the latter it should be noted that highly technical papers have been largely excluded.

The anthology is organized into ten major parts. Each part is preceded by a general introduction followed by a brief specific introduction, of about a paragraph's length, to the selections that follow.

Part 1 deals with the "most significant conceptual approaches that have been proposed," part 2 with the evaluation of the differences and similarities among languages with emphasis on "exotic" languages, part 3 with the relationship between language patterns and world view, part 4 with the relationship between the "interests" of peoples and elaboration of vocabularies, part 5 with speaking and norms of interaction and the acquisition of such norms by children, part 6 with play and art in speech, part 7 with the varieties of speech in various communities and the nature of the boundaries of speech communities, part 8 with the dimension of social phenomena in language change, part 9 with the genetic and typological (nongenetic) classification of languages in a historical perspective, and finally part 10 with the "awareness of our own scholarly and scientific activity as one conditioned aspect of the place of language in culture."

The book covers well the area generally subsumed under the title "Language and Culture" in courses by the same name in most departments of anthropology and will be most valuable to both students and teachers of such courses. The detailed bibliographies—specialized ones at the end of almost every article and the general one at the end of the book—are probably the best available. One cannot help but feel grateful to Hymes for having selected and compiled these bibliographies. The value of the book is enhanced by several detailed indexes.

There are at least two basic approaches to the teaching of courses on language and culture. Hymes himself has ably argued for a course with a wide scope. This book is ideally suited for such a course. Lounsbury, on the other hand, represents what has been called a "minority opinion"—that of coverage by the student, mostly on his own, of a small area of language and culture in depth. I happen to subscribe to the latter view. Nevertheless, Hymes's book will be a useful base line, particularly because of the bibliographies, for studies in depth as well. Whether the book will prove to be a workable textbook for the latter approach to language and culture courses remains to be seen.

It is interesting that the appearance of this book clearly marks the end of an era in linguistics, but there is little evidence in the entire volume (perhaps by design) that linguistics, and with it much of social science in general, is in the middle of a scientific revolution like that discussed by Thomas S. Kuhn. I doubt that ten years from now a revision of this book will be heavily slanted toward Africa, Oceania, and Asia, as Hymes asserts. I believe that the direction of linguistic anthropology will be oriented more toward theory, particularly under the impact of transformational generative theory as proposed by Chomsky of Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Transformational generative theory is not just a methodological innovation but a revolutionary stance in relation to the aims of traditional linguistic theory. Its new aims are considerably closer to anthropology than was the structural-taxonomic approach of the period exemplified by this volume. My assertions can be easily substantiated by a few quotations from various portions of the book: (i) "It is the task of linguistics to coordinate knowledge about language from the viewpoint of language," and (ii) "It is anthropology's task to coordinate knowledge about language from the viewpoint of *man*" (p. xxiii). Although it may be true of structural-taxonomic linguistics, it certainly is not true of transformational generative theory that "in present day linguistics the methods and forms of descriptive statement loom large as ends in themselves. In anthropology they must always have the status of means" (p. xxii).

A full description of a language entails three steps, in order of priority: (i) a description of the language, (ii) a statement about the use or function of the language, and (iii) a statement about the acquisition of language by the human infant. Although both transformationalists and structural taxonomists use the same term "descriptive," they mean radically different things. For the latter, description is (in Kroeber's own words in the foreword of this book) an "asemantic, clean cut immediate [pragmatic] recognition of the elements" (p. xvii, brackets added). Description in the former requires an accounting of the tacit linguistic competences that speakers of a language have and which enter into their understanding of their language. This entails grammatical as well as semantic skills. It is far beyond any scientific endeavor to demand automatic discovery procedures for the elements of its theory. The discovery is essentially imaginative—a creative act independent of specific methodology. It is not the "form of descriptive statements" nor "language from the viewpoint of language" which is central. The aims of transformational generative theory and anthropology coincide because both treat language from the viewpoint of *man*. In fact, *all interesting statements about language must be statements about man.*

The potential contribution of trans-

formational generative theory to linguistic anthropology may be summed up as follows: By being mentalistic (purporting to explain mental processes such as the ability of speakers of a language to recognize partial and total similarities of sentences) the informant (native speaker = man) becomes central, and in a very real sense more important than the analyst. The methodology is completely formal, hence the theory is a combination of humanism and rigor. It claims metatheoretical constraints upon language—that is, to be a universal grammar. Substantive claims include the striking similarity of the deep structure of languages versus the vast differences of baroque surface structure. The impact of this finding on the Whorfian hypothesis remains to be examined.

Transformational generative theory is also revolutionizing linguistic typology because it clearly distinguishes two types of universals: substantive universals (the universals of structural-taxonomic linguistics) and formal universals or conditions for speech (that is, statements about the structure of man's innate language processing faculties). By explicitly accounting for the linguistic competences of native speakers, the theory will clarify the relationship between linguistic and nonlinguistic competences, which I feel is the central issue of language and culture.

It is in the light of the return of man into linguistics and linguistic anthropology that Boas' insight of 1939 may begin to be realized in the next decade: " . . . the scientific understanding of man will in all likelihood grow from our understanding of language" (p. 9).

OSWALD WERNER
Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

Space-Science Olympics and the COSPAR Symposia

Space Research V. Proceedings of the Fifth International Space Science Symposium (Florence, Italy), 1964. D. G. King-Hele, P. Muller, and G. Righini, Eds. North-Holland, Amsterdam; Interscience (Wiley), New York, 1965. xix + 1248 pp. Illus. $45.

Here is a situation that somehow has got out of hand: the publication of the annual COSPAR symposia on space research. This volume is intended to be an almost complete record of the 162 papers in the physical sciences presented in May 1964 at Florence. (The papers in the life sciences will be published separately.) As such, it contains, according to the table of contents, 154 papers, but on inspection 54 of these prove to be abstracts only. These abstracts represent papers that were to be published in full elsewhere, were not submitted by the editorial deadline, or were rejected for some reason by the editorial committee.

This 5.6-pound, 1248-page tome is typical for the series, but the price of the volume and the price per page have each been increasing steadily until they have now almost doubled during the past 4 years. Surely the number of individual research workers who purchase such an expensive collection of papers must be small, a fact that largely defeats the main virtue of the publication of symposia—wide dissemination of current research results in a special topic.

It is occasionally argued that this series offers Western scientists a convenient opportunity to see at least a sampling of what is being done in other countries, particularly in the Soviet Union. (One might think that this advantage would also apply in the opposite direction, especially since Russian abstracts are included for most of the papers. I understand, however, that no more than a few tens of copies of recent volumes have been sold in the U.S.S.R.) Personally, I am not impressed with this "sampling" argument. The journal literature serves the same function much better (if not so conveniently for the casual reader), and today the Russian work is largely available in English translation with only a modest delay. Indeed, this availability not only obviates this type of "Proceedings" but makes them virtually obsolete shortly after they are published. Publication of original research is the proper function of the periodic research journals, and any infringement on this prerogative is likely to lead to an inferior product:

First, within COSPAR and the various national committees, abstracts of the papers are reviewed before the papers are accepted for the symposium, and the session chairmen and certain others at the symposium are sometimes asked to review the papers as presented orally and advise the editorial committee as to whether it is appropriate for COSPAR to publish the full paper. Still, this procedure is obviously less discriminatory and restrictive than a conscientious review of the final manuscript (a procedure not followed for these volumes).

Second, symposia serve a marvelous function in bringing together people who work in related areas to talk informally and present incomplete, as well as finished, pieces of work to a critical audience. The premature publication of much of this material (because of deadlines that are not set by the authors) defeats the very objective of raising the quality of the final product. Justifiably, the trend among the various "abstract journals" is not to include individual papers published in symposium volumes.

The editors have clearly worked conscientiously and selflessly to bring out a volume involving so many individuals from so many countries at a rate (within about 8 months after the symposium was held) that at least approaches the speed of some of the faster journals. It must be very discouraging to them, therefore, to see the number of typographical errors in the volume despite the fact that these errors were marked on the proofs.

In reviewing volume 2 of this series three years ago, D. R. Bates pleaded for some self-restraint on the part of the organizers of symposia and asked that they try to forestall "the ruthless final war—the war for land between the librarians and the farmers." I think that, in addition, the publications committee of COSPAR should reappraise the possible types of commemorative volume, with the view of best serving the interests of space scientists. And the participants might well enquire of themselves whether they want their very best work to appear first in a symposium "Proceedings."

To summarize, it appears that the various countries, especially the United States and the Soviet Union, are playing a kind of space-science olympics on the pages of these volumes, and it seems clear that the quality of the papers is thereby adversely affected.

JOSEPH W. CHAMBERLAIN
Space Division, Kitt Peak National Observatory, Tucson, Arizona