C O U R S E   P A P E R

The Attribute in English

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Traditional grammatical theories

The purpose is to supply a frame of reference for analysis of conversational language as a theory of grammar. Here we shall consider the three major grammatical theories, emphasizing the points on which theory is most comparable to them. The three general approaches to grammar which are most significant for contemporary linguistic theory are: 1. the "traditional" approach, which dominated the theory of grammar from about the second century B.C. until the twentieth century, 2. the "structural" approach, which was the dominant theory in American linguistics from the 1920's until the mid-1950's and 3. the "transformational" approach, whose present primacy dates from the publication of Chomsky's "Syntactic Structures" in 1957.

The three theories are delineated by their responses to such problems as 1. the method of defining grammatical categories, 2. the possibility of a universal grammar, and 3. procedures of discovery, explanation and justification. Since they also had at least implicitly, views on the same subjects, theory can be compared with the others on those terms. So in this chapter we shall characterize each linguistic theory in terms of its view of definition, of universal grammar, and of the scientific status of grammar.

It is appropriate to begin with a consideration of traditional grammar, for it is to this approach to grammar that opposes its own view. We recall that theory of grammar as a better alternative to traditional grammar. So in order to understand and evaluate criticisms of traditional grammar, it is essential that we know what that theory is.

Simply stated, traditional grammar may be characterized as the "word class" or "parts of speech" approach to grammar. We are applying the label "traditional grammarian" to more then twenty centuries of grammarians, including the ancient Grrek and Roman grammarians Dionysius Thrax, Varro and Priscian; the Port Royal grammarians; and such twentieth century authors as Curme and Nesfield. The common thread that links the thought of these diverse personalities is the view

that any language consists of elements that can be grouped into a few primary categories. A grammatical description of a language is a classification of its words in terms of these categories. The set of eight categories and their properties (the so-called "secondary grammatical categories", such as gender, number, case, tense, etc.) constitute a complete conceptual apparatus for the classification of the words in any language. A grammar is thus essentially a classificatory scheme, although for some authors it will include a discussion of syntax, the way expressions belonging to these categories combine to form sentences.[1]

The main link between traditional grammarians is historical; the system of eight word-classes, developed by the Greeks, was appropriated with little modification by their Roman and medieval successors, who passed it on to subsequent generations of grammarians up to the present day, when it is still employed in teaching grammar to elementary and high school students.

Besides the set of grammatical categories, other common features of traditional grammatical theory are the semantic method of defining the parts of speech, the taking of written rather than spoken languages as the subject matter of grammar, and the view that grammar "prescribes", as well as "describes", linguistic usage. The theory of universal grammar, along with a view of grammar as a deductive "science", developed in the Middle Ages. To take a closer look at traditional grammatical theory, let us trace it historically from its beginnings in the Hellenistic period to its high point in the "Cartesian" era.[2]

Another structuralist reason for rejecting traditional universal grammar and its semantic basis is the view that traditional grammarians describe instead of describing linguistic structures. This charge merits serious consideration, for it bears on the problem of what the legitimate theoretical aims of grammar should be. By considering the structuralist view on this, we shall be able to assess the legitimacy of Reichenbach's brand of theorizing.

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[1] Бондарко Л.В . Грамматическая категория и контекст. Л. 1971. стр. 76

[2] Курилович Е . История английской грамматики . М . 1964. стр. 107

So the problem is to distinguish objectionable forms of prescriptivism from justifiable attempts at theorizing about grammar. In this section we wanted to see what structuralists mean by prescriptivism, distinguish it from the kinds of theorizing essential to grammar, and in the light of and assess the validity of the structuralist charge against traditional grammarians.

What prescriptive grammar is:

The features of what structuralists call prescriptive grammar can be summarized as follows:

A prescriptive grammar PG of a given language L is:

a) one which doesn't characterize L in terms of the categories and structures used by the mass of speakers of L. instead it describes the usage of L by a certain subset of L-users, such as:

literary figures, whose works are held in high esteem

the subclasses of L-users having the highest socio-economic status

the subclass of L-users having the most education

b) Pg generally is something more than just a summary of the usage of a special class of L-users. PG usually constitutes an attempt to tidy up L by making its structures correspond to some standards of logical correctness. PG thus idealizes L.

c) the form of L characterized by PG is said to be the only correct form of L, and hence it is asserted that all L-users ought to use the PG form of L. so only one of the many possible forms of L is the correct one. Sometimes the claim is maid that the correct form is timelessly correct; it remains the right form of L despite historical changes in the actual usage of L.

Some traditional approaches to grammar fit the above description. For example, the Greek and Latin grammarians did not base their grammars on the current spoken forms of their languages. They viewed colloquial speech as a

corruption of the ideal form of language. For Thrax true Greek was the old Ionic of the Homeric epics. For Donatus and Priscian the correct form of Latin was that of the writers of the Golden Age, such as Cicero and Vergil. These men were motivated by the desire to preserve dying cultural traditions. In attempting to do so they assumed that the usage of the greatest authors in their languages was the norm for all usage of the languages. Similarly, there have been attempts by grammarians to make the usage of the privileged classes or of the educated classes normative for al users of a language.[3]

The prescriptive grammarian goes a step farther than merely describing the usage of esteemed authors or of the privileged classes. He generally wants to say that the version of L described in his grammar is the perfect form of L. the speech of the masses is imperfect; it requires correction by being altered to correspond to the absolute standard. A typical statement of this point of view occurs in a letter from Jonathan Swift to the Lord Treasurer of England in 1712:

My lord in the name of all the learned and polite persons of the nation, complain to your lordship that our language is extremely imperfect; that its daily improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily corruptions; that the pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied abuses and absurdities, and that in many instances it offends against every part of grammar.

What is the source of the perfection of the ideal form of L? How does the prescriptivist justify his claim to having captured the perfect form of a language?

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[3] Курилович Е . История английской грамматики . М . 1964. стр. 53

His appeal is to the canons of logic. It is claimed that the L of his grammar is the logically perfect form of L. But what is meant by the logically perfect form of a language? Robins, in discussing the analogists of Alexandria, gives us the following explanation:

The analogists insisted on the inherent orderliness and regularity of language, particularly in its grammatical aspect and undertook to show that grammatically comparable words exhibited similar inflectional paradigms and similar patterns of accentuation, and that grammatical categories were congruent with the semantic categories of the denotata of the words concerned.

Unfortunately, Robins gives us no useful examples of the prescriptivism of the analogists. But the point can be illustrated by some constructed examples. First, inflectional pattern and denotation should correspond. For example, all proper nouns referring to male persons should have the same case endings. But Gulba is a man's name of feminine gender in Latin. So the prescriptivist would presumably recommend that the word be changed to Galbus, so as to have the same declension as names such as Marius, Tuliius, Marcus, etc.

Secondly, the syntactic role of a word should correspond with its meaning and inflection. The best example we could find of this is not from a bona fide grammarian but from Reichenbach himself. He gives us the following analogical argument:

Consider the sentence, John is a slow driver. In this sentence SLOW is uninflected, thus giving the impression that it is an adjective. An adjective, so

Reichenbach argues, should modify a name. But SLOW in the above sentence doesn't tell us what kind of a person John is; it tells us how he drives. Thus it modifies the function ___ IS A DRIVER, which is equated with another function, _____ DRIVES. Since it modifies a function, SLOW should have the adverbial form SLOWLY, as it would have in JOHN DRIVES SLOWLY. Hence Reichenbach is prescribing that there be a parallelism of meaning, syntactic function, and inflection. And this apparently is what is meant by the claim that grammar should be logical – that all words having common syntactic functions correspond also in the ways they have meaning and are inflected. A "logical" grammar in this sense need not have an explicit deductive structure; it just has to have syntactic, semantic and inflectional regularities.

The third characteristic of prescriptive grammar is that it claims not only that the L described is the one and only correct and such as is not affected by historical changes in actual usage. Robins comments on the Alexandrian view of a timelessly correct Greek:

One task that several grammarians of this period assumed was the wholly mistaken one of preserving the Greek language from decadence. They felt it their duty to find out how Greek should be written and spoken and so fix it in that form, unchanging. Language was considered too much as the expression of thought complete in itself, and its dependence on context, the world around, for its functioning and meaning was largely ignored. There was also an adequate undertaking of linguistic change; grammar was given the impossible task of

ascertaining the real or true state of the language and fixing it at least as far as literature was concerned, in that state.

So the marks of prescriptive grammar are that it is essentially designed to express the usage of a special class of CL-users, that it amends even this form of CL to make it correspond to canons of regularity, and that the product thus achieved is asserted to be the correct form of CL which ought to be used by all CL-users, at all places and all times. Now what, precisely, is wrong with this view? Bloomfield gives a standard account of structuralist objections to prescriptivism: he contends that the snobbery it supports is completely unjustified. The form of the language, on a par with the modes of usage of other classes of speakers. Qua language it is no better or no worse than the others.[4]

Against the claim that a certain form of the language is the timelessly correct form because it is logically perfect, Bloomfield argues that such a claim is aprioristic. The surface features must be determined by empirical techniques, and one can't impose a rigid model on a language prior to investigating the surface structure of the language. And, anyway, logical arguments about language structures are refuted by the fact. Finally, the mistake of looking for a timeless form of a language is based on a misunderstanding of the historical nature of languages. Languages are constantly undergoing change, and from a linguistic standpoint, one historical form is no better than any other.

Bloomfield suggests the following antidotes for prescriptivism: first, the

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[4] Буслаев Ф.И. Философия грамматики. М 1959. стр. 92

linguist should study the speech of actual users of a language. The speech of the higher social classes is to be treated in the same way as that of lower classes. No idealized interpretations of a language should be substituted for colloquial usage. Writing is rejected as a primary source of linguistic data, as it does not accurately represent spoken usage and tends to be somewhat idealized in nature. The linguist thus should describe the patterns he encounters in a linguistic community is to use its languages.[5]

Secondly, without making value-judgments, one must distinguish the various usages of a language by different geographical or socio-economic groups. Bloomfield gives the following rough classification of the main forms of speech within a speech-community:

1. literary standard, used in the most formal discourse and in writing, example: I have none

2. colloquial standard, the speech of the privileged class, example: I haven't any or I haven't got any – in England only if spoken with the southern "public school" sounds and intonation.

3. provincial standard, in the United States probably not to be differentiated from 2, spoken by the middle class, very close to 2, but differing slightly from province to province, example: I haven't any or I haven't got any, spoken in England, with sounds or intonations that deviate from the "public school" standard.

4. sub-standard, clearly different from 1, 2 and 3, spoken in European countries by the "lower middle" class, in the United States by almost

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[5] Jerspersten O. A grammar of the English language on historical principles. L. 1953. p. 59

all but the speakers of type (2-3), and differing topographically, without intense local difference, example: I ain't got none.

5. local dialect, spoken by the least privileged class; only slightly developed in the United States; in Switzerland used also, as a domestic language, by the other classes; differs also from village to village; the varieties so great as often to be incomprehencible to each other and to speakers (2-3-4), example: a hae nane.

A classification of the above sort enables us to distinguish equally valid forms of the usage of a language, each of which in its own sphere is effective for communication. Any of these forms may be the subject of descriptive study by the linguist. Rather than specifying any particular form as the correct one, he merely states what form it is and who its users are. To those who want to make the colloquial standard the correct form it should be pointed out that most standard languages developed out of provincial dialects which were used by the upper classes in cities which became the capitals of unified nations. Thus London English and Parisian French became the colloquial standards. So no form of a language has been taken as the correct form throughout the history of the language. And when one sees a form as merely one of several forms in present usage, he should be disinclined to take it as the correct form now.

The Attribute

The **attribute** is a secondary part of the sentence which qualifies a noun,

a pronoun, or any other part of speech that has a nominal character.[6]

An attribute can be either in pre-position or in post-position to the word it modifies.

What did she do with herself... in **that little** hole?

Under a tree **opposite Knightsbridge Barracks...** he took out once more the morocco case.

As a result of the loss of inflexions, the attribute in English, as distinct from Russian, does not agree with the word it modifies in number, case, or gender. It may be expressed by almost any part of speech.[7]

Ways of expressing the attribute. It can be expressed by:

1. An adjective (the most common way of expressing an attribute):

This **big** girl is very lazy.

I am speaking about the **big** girl, not the **little** one.

He seems a very **silent, awkward, bashful** lad.

Meanwhile she was the **gayest** and **most admired** woman.

2. A pronoun (possessive, defining, demonstrative, interrogative, relative):

His shrewd, steady eyes had lost none of their clear shining.

Each of these ladies held fans in their hands, and each, with, **some** touch of colour, **some** emphatic feather or brooch, testified to the solemnity of the opportunity.

I looked at her — at her, and at none other, from **that** moment.

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[6] Blokh M.Y A course in theoretical English Grammar. M. 1983. p. 74

[7] Kaushanskaya V. A. and others. «A grammar of the English language». Moscow 1973. p. 147

James once went down to see for himself **what** sort of place this was that they had come from.

In that great London, **what** time had they to be sentimental?

It should be kept in mind that possessive pronouns are often not translated into Uzbek. On the other hand when translating from Uzbek into English one should often insert possessive pronouns.[8]

He extended **his** hand to me.

У кулини мен томон узатди.

«Бор, кулингни юв», - деди она.

«Go and wash **your** hands,» said mother.

3. A numeral (cardinal or ordinal):

In his final examinations he won six distinctions...

The **second** generation of Forsytes felt that he (Bosinney) was not greatly to their credit.

4. A noun:

(a) In the common case. One of the marked features of the English language is the wide use of nouns in the common case as attributes in pre-position; in Uzbek nouns are never used as attributes in pre-position.

I recognized him as Dougal Todd, the **village** painter and carpenter.

Мен Дугал Тоддни танидим. У махаллий кишлок буёкчиси ва дурадгори эди.

Or

Мен махаллий кишлок буёкчиси ва дурадгори - Дугал Тоддни танидим.

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[8] Бўранов Ж. Инглиз ва ўзбек тиллари қиёсий грамматикаси. Т. 1973. 57 бет

He was pleased that the girl seemed impressed because it showed **business** instinct.

Кизга бу нарса таассурот колдирганидан у хурсанд булди, чунки бу кизнинг савдога мойиллигини курсатарди.

He wore a large **straw** hat.

У ката тукилган шляпада эди.

As seen from the above examples the attributive nouns are rendered in Uzbek either by nouns in the genitive case used in post-position or by adjectives. (b) In the genitive case. This kind of attribute is generally used in pre-position.[9]

Her father's nerves would never stand the disclosure.

Отасининг асаблари бу хабарни хазм кила олмасди.

However, an attribute expressed by the preposition *of* + a noun in the genitive case is used in post-position (the so-called Absolute Genitive): *this clever joke of mother's; a book of my brother's.*

How could   he go up to Oxford now, among all those chaps, those splendid friends **of Crum's?**

In this case the noun modified is always used either with the indefinite article or with a demonstrative pronoun. The latter makes it emphatic. The same construction may be used with possessive pronouns in their absolute

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[9] Бўранов Ж. Инглиз ва ўзбек тиллари қиёсий грамматикаси. Т. 1973. 60 бет

form: *a friend **of mine**; that pretty sister **of his**.*

5. A prepositional phrase:

To think that a man **of his abilities** would stoop to such a horrible trick as that!

And the impressions **of six years** are not got over in such a space of time.

Here it should be mentioned that the treatment of these prepositional phrases in English syntax is different from their treatment in Uzbek syntax where most of them are regarded as prepositional objects.

The letter **from her sister** reassured her.

Опасидан келган хат уни хурсанд килди.

(*from her sister* is an attribute; опасидан is a prepositional object)

Very often in translating English ***of***-phrases into Uzbek nouns in the genitive case without any preposition are used; they are mostly regarded as objects:

the captain **of the ship** — корабл капитани

(of *the ship* is an attribute; корабл капитани is an indirect object)

a cup of **tea** — бир пиёла чой

(of *tea* is an attribute; чой is an indirect object)

6. An adverb:

(a) In pre-position:

In Uzbek an attribute cannot be expressed by an adverb in pre-position. Consequently in translating these sentences into Uzbek we use adjectives: *the then* *secretary* — **уша пайтдаги** *котиб*.

In the light of **after** events one cannot but sympathize with them.

Охирги булиб утган вокеалардан кейин уларга хамдардлик билдириш керак.

(b) In post-position:

A voice **inside** said, «Come in.»

Хона ичкарисидан овоз чикди «Киринг!»

The room **above** is large and light.

Тепадаги хона ката ва ёруг.

The man **there** is my brother.

Анави киши − менинг акам.

Will it be a step **on** or a step **back?**

Бу **олдинга** кадамми ёки **оркага**?

The above examples show that in Uzbek an adverb can also be used as an attribute in post-position. However, not every English attributive adverb in post-position can be rendered by an adverb in Uzbek.

7. Participles I and II or a participial phrase:

The participle in the function of an attribute can be used in pre-position and in post-position. In the latter case it is mostly used with accompanying words:

On the opposite side of the road to the   site of the **destroyed** church is a fine avenue of old trees.

It looks brighter over there. I think it is only a **passing** shower.

I was dazzled by the snow **glittering on the tree tops.**

8.   A prepositional phrase or a prepositional construction with a gerund:

Sally hated the idea **of borrowing and living on credit.**

The thought **of having it copied again and again** set him to smiling.

The idea **of its being barbarous to confine wild animals** had probably never even occurred to his father for instance ...

9.   An infinitive, an infinitive phrase, or an infinitive construction. The infinitive as an attribute is always used in post-position:

They must have more companionship, more opportunity **to broaden their life.**

All right, go back to your office, you've got work to do.

But it was not easy to carry out the resolution **never to approach her.**

This is an English article **for you to translate into Uzbek** by to-morrow.

An **apposition** is **a** special kind of attribute which is expressed by a noun (with or without accompanying words) which characterizes or explains the word modified by giving the person or thing another name. There are two kinds of apposition, the **close** apposition and the **loose or detached** apposition.

The close apposition

A close apposition is not separated by commas and stands in close connection with the word modified. These word-groups generally consist

either of the name of a person and a noun denoting relationship, or a geographical name and some common noun, e. g. *Professor Brown, Captain Marryat, Aunt Polly, President Roosevelt,* etc.

Even **Aunt** Ann was there.

Professor Sommerville practised what he preached.

In these word-groups the noun modified is the name of a person or a geographical name, the first component is a common noun in apposition.

N o t e. — In case the common noun is preceded by a possessive or a demonstrative pronoun, it becomes more important and acquires a stronger stress.

Consequently the relation between the components of the word-group is reversed. The first component is modified by the name of a person or a geographical name which is an apposition:

That boy **Peter** has a literary turn of mind. He is sure to become a writer.

Sometimes the apposition consists of the preposition *of* + noun, e. g. *the town of Daventry, the city of London.*

The loose or detached apposition.

A loose apposition is not so closely connected with the noun. It is always separated by commas and has a stress of its own.

Dr. Winchcliffe, my **predecessor,** was a classmate of my father's.

With her elder and younger sisters she lived now in the house of Timothy, **her sixth and youngest brother,** on the Bayswater Road.

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