

REVIEW

CHARLES F. HOCKETT. *A Manual of Phonology*. (Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics). Baltimore 1955.

Like the other works of its author, this book is lucid, well-informed, and contains no more than a fair share of nonsense.

As an example of nonsense may be taken the way in which the author sets up a principle of "phonetic realism" but concludes by saying: "There is one aspect of phonologic analysis where the usual principle of phonetic realism, in the writer's opinion, must be not merely suspended but almost reversed. This is the search for junctures..." What sort of a principle can this be? It runs like this:

"Segments which are in complementation are nevertheless phonetically distinct unless they resemble each other phonetically in such a way that the differences can be extracted from the segments themselves and assigned, instead, to the environments, in some phonetically realistic way". (p. 156)

The word *phonetically* occurs here three times. In the first occurrence it would seem to be a misprint for *phonemically*; in the third occurrence it would seem to be redundant. With what non-phonetic reality could we be concerned?

As an example is given the complementary distribution, in some languages, of intervocalic voiced and rim-positional voiceless consonants. The voice of the voiced consonants can be attributed to the environment, and thus be lopped off, so to speak, from the consonantal segment itself.

But now let us consider another case. After an unstressed vowel in Gothic spirants are voiced when the syllabic initial is voiceless and voiceless when the syllabic initial is voiced. Only the fact that the

voiced and voiceless spirants are distinctive in other positions makes them independent phonemes. Or at least so one supposes. Does Hockett really mean to say that, even if this were not the case, he would regard *s* and *z* as independent phonemes on the grounds that the voice of *z* could not be attributed to a voiced environment?

It should be noticed too that Hockett makes no attempt to apply the principle of phonetic realism, as he states it, to such Tragerian groups as /ah/ in that majority of dialects in which different allophones of /a/ would occur in /ah/ and /at/ apart from the quantitative difference. How can the special quality of *a* be lopped off and attributed to /h/ and /t/ respectively? This is not a merely rhetorical question; perhaps something might be done along these lines, though since the nuclear vowel is identified in terms of phonetic similarity one strongly suspects that one would have to attribute opposite features to *h* according to the dialect and according to the vowel within the dialect. But in fact Hockett does nothing along these lines. It seems therefore that, beside the case in which one has to apply his principle in reverse, there are other cases in which it must be forgotten entirely.

Since Hockett is generally an intelligent writer, one is forced to ask what can have happened to him in this case (which is unfortunately not unique). It may be suggested that he has fallen between two stools. He had in front of him a Tragerian ideal of scientific phonemics, which entails that it should always be possible to put a finger on some substantial feature of the text and say that this is the same feature as another in virtue of its similarity and complementary distribution. At the same time, though hardly confessing it even to himself, he was attracted by the idea that some sense should be made out of the relations between allophones. Now the most obvious case in which allophones do make sense, is the case in which they are due to assimilation. And *this* case can very well be accommodated without a grave departure from Tragerism. It suffices to notice, as Hockett says, that there are "two phonetic similarities in the picture: (1) the phonetic similarity between the sounds which are in complementary distribution; (2) the phonetic similarity of each of the sounds to the environments in which it occurs" (p. 156). But the whole point of taking this second similarity into consideration, is that the differences between the allophones are thereby accounted for. Any features of the environment, whether similar or dissimilar, which are responsible for the alternation, are equally relevant.

The unity of juncture again depends, not on the reversal of some otherwise applicable principle, but on the same principle, namely that all the variants can be accounted for in terms of environment. The difference between the release of /t/ in *night-rate* and the "drawl" in *slyness* is fully accounted for by the fact that one syllable terminates in an occlusive while the other terminates in a stressed vowel. Indeed the allophones are accounted for in a stronger sense than in most cases, since the allophones of juncture differ less from language to language than those of segmental phonemes.

Hockett has changed his mind on fundamental points far more often than most linguists. It is to be hoped that he will one day reconsider the whole basis of phonemic identification. Meanwhile his book may be recommended to the intelligent student.

C. E. Bazell

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