200 YEARS OF SYNTAX

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200 Years of Syntax
A critical survey

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A CRITICAL SURVEY

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PREFACE

Among the different branches of linguistics, syntax has possibly been the one that experienced the strangest fate. Its study and its name date back to Classical Antiquity: think of Apollonius Dyscolus' treatise entitled simply *Perí syntáxeos*. Nevertheless, when "scientific" (or, it might be better to say, "professional") linguistics had its start, at the beginning of the 19th century, and for about 150 years afterwards, it was relegated to a rather marginal position in comparison to the mainstream of research. The monumental building of historical-comparative linguistics elaborated during the 19th century was mainly based on the phonological and morphological comparison of Indo-European languages; and the major issues of structural linguistics, in the first half of the 20th century, concerned phonological and morphological matters. Things changed radically in the second half of this same century, when syntax, in whatever theoretical framework, became the really "fashionable" field. My personal feeling is that most of today linguistic research deals (or attempts to deal) with syntactic topics. Such a feeling is not supported by any indisputable statistical data; however, a glance at the programs of the GLOW ('Generative Linguistics in the Old World') colloquia may show that it is not entirely unjustified. GLOW is surely not representative of many theoretical frameworks, since almost all of its members profess a "Chomskian orthodoxy"; but one has to keep in mind that research in generative grammar, and by Chomsky himself, was not limited to syntax: generative phonology and generative morphology have been thoroughly developed from the sixties until the present day. Nevertheless, the program of the last GLOW colloquium (Vitoria & Bilbao, April 2000) lists twenty talks, only three of which deal with phonological and one with morphological matters. The proportion has been more or less the same in all other GLOW colloquia held annually since 1977.

It would be interesting to ask for the reasons for this current predominance of syntax over other branches of linguistics; this is not, however, the goal of the present volume. It aims rather to correct a false image of the history of syntactic studies which derives from the situation outlined above: namely, that very few or no syntactic studies were elaborated before the 1950s. Actually, as will be seen throughout the entire book, syntactic matters were carefully investigated both during the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th

century. Moreover, the enormous development of syntactic research in the last fifty years or so has led to an analogous effect: even several ideas and analyses of the most recent decades have already been condemned to oblivion. I thought, therefore, that it was useful to present this considerable amount of research over the last two centuries in a systematic way and to put it at the disposal of the interested reader, whether her/his interest lies in the history of linguistics or in theoretical and descriptive syntax. As a guideline of this whole survey, I have chosen that of the relationship of syntax with psychology and of the vicissitudes of such a relation: while 19th century syntax was mainly psychology-based (or 'psychologistic', which is the term I shall use throughout the book), the syntax of the structuralist epoch essentially rejected a connection between syntax and psychology, although this has once again been assumed (although in very different forms) by the majority of the syntactic theories of the second half of the 20th century. In general, I have preferred to give more space to the presentation of the different syntactic approaches and analyses than to the polemics between the different schools. Similarly, I have also avoided almost any criticism of the ideas and the works presented: first, since I think that it is not always justified to criticize ideas from the past on the basis of today's knowledge; secondly, since I think that for the time being the most important task for the historiography of linguistics is to present ideas and materials of the (more or less recent) past, rather than to attempt to sketch great syntheses of the assumed development of the discipline. Here and throughout the book, I will avoid any discussion of the significance and the usefulness, not to say the necessity, of the historiography of linguistics for the theoretical and/or descriptive linguist. All I can say is that I do not assume that it is necessary for a linguist (or for any other scholar) to know the history of his research field, but I am also certain that to do so is by no means useless.

It is almost mandatory, among linguists, to close any preface such as the present one with a list of names of "teachers, friends and colleagues" to whom "thanks are due for helpful advice", with the added statement that "errors are my own". My list would be very long, since the research presented here is the result of a lengthy period of work, which in some cases dates back to my college years. I will therefore limit myself to list two kinds of people: my teachers and my friends and colleagues who read parts of the manuscript. Among the former, I would like to mention Aldo Giorgio Gargani, my teacher at the University of Pisa, in the Department of Philosophy, who initiated me to the study of the history of scientific ideas; Tullio De Mauro, whose acquaintance transformed me from a philosopher into a linguist; Alfredo Stussi, who generously followed my works in my early years as a graduate student; Giulio Lepschy, whose work in the history of linguistics has always

been a constant reference for me and who also read several chapters of the present volume, offering me a lot of insightful comments, as is customary for him; and, last but not least, the precious memory of Luigi Rosiello, another master of the historiography of linguistics, whose advice always was and still remains unvaluable. The friends who took pains to read parts of this work were Paolo Casalegno, Annibale Elia, Nunzio La Fauci, Lunella Mereu, Andrea Moro, and Alessandra Tomaselli; Konrad Koerner was in continuous contact with me during the long gestation of the present work, giving me important editorial suggestions: thanks to all of them, as well as to the anonymous referee of the book. Thanks are also due to the University of Verona for having financially supported the English version of the text.

Now, some words on the editorial criteria I have followed.

1. All quotations are taken from the last edition of the work cited; the year of the first edition is added within square brackets. If a given paper has been reprinted in a collective volume or in a volume of collected essays by the same author, the original source is entered as an independent item in the reference list, but page references are made to the volume edition.
2. All quotations from texts originally written in other languages have been translated into English. When a published English translation was available to me, I resorted to it; in the remaining cases, translations are mine.
3. English examples are given within single quotation marks. Examples from other languages are in italics: in such cases, I provided a translation of them within single quotation marks. Where necessary, the translation has been preceded by a literal gloss, introduced by the abbreviation 'lit.'. Sometimes, only the gloss is given.
4. The same syntactic phenomena often receive different labels in different syntactic approaches. For a standard terminology for referring to such facts in a 'neutral' way, I have chosen (whenever possible) that of Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1972; 1985).
5. All emphasized passages within quotations are original except where indicated. I have reproduced emphasis in italics, regardless of its original form.
6. The dates for the birth and death of the various scholars quoted throughout this volume can be found in the index of names, whenever I have been able to find them. However I did not always succeed in doing so: *Desint vires, tamen est laudanda voluntas*, as the Latin poet Ovid said. Such a quotation might stand as the epigraph of my whole book.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. *'History of linguistic science' and 'history of linguistic thought'*

The enormous development of the history of linguistics during the last few decades has not only enlarged our knowledge of linguistic studies in the past to a previously unimaginable extent, but has also raised a variety of methodological problems that any historiographer of linguistics has to face: such problems have been discussed in depth in several works, among which those of Koerner (1989; 1995) deserve special mention. However, I will not engage myself here in a systematic discussion of the problems and principles of linguistic historiography, but will limit myself to a few questions that are most directly connected with the main topic and the organization of the present volume.

The first of such questions refers to a distinction drawn by Giulio C. Lepschy in the opening pages of the *History of Linguistics* (Lepschy 1994:vii), namely that between the history of linguistic 'science' and the history of linguistic 'thought'. Lepschy says that the work he is introducing is a history of the latter, rather than of the former kind. This means, he goes on, that it aims more at investigating the attitudes towards language which prevailed in the different chronological periods and cultural settings, independently from their more or less 'scientific' status according to the standards of today's linguistics. Such a distinction, of course, has not to be interpreted as an absolute one; nevertheless, one would be inclined to say that works such as Leroy (1963), Mounin (1967), and Robins (1997[1967]) are mainly histories of linguistic thought, while Pedersen (1962) is rather an instance of the history of linguistic science. However, the picture of linguistic science offered by the last-mentioned work is surely too restricted, since it almost wholly identifies linguistic science with historical-comparative linguistics.

To write a history of linguistic science as a whole therefore appears to be a difficult enterprise: the reason is that scholars have not yet reached any agreement about what is really scientific in linguistics. In other words, a dominating paradigm (to resort to a term which has been somewhat abused of late) is still missing in linguistics. As far as syntax is concerned, generative theory (espe-

cially in its 'Chomskian' version) is possibly the best known theoretical model, or, it would be better to say, the one most quoted also by the "layman", but it is certainly far from having found general acceptance among professional linguists. It is therefore not accidental that Pedersen (1962), which is certainly partial, since it deals with the evolution of a single branch of linguistics, i.e. historical-comparative linguistics, is generally recognized as a history of (at least a part of) linguistic science: for the principles and techniques of historical-comparative linguistics are by now essentially agreed on by almost all linguists, their disagreement simply concerning the fact of whether historical linguistics is truly the only really 'scientific' linguistics or not (even if the supporters of the former, extreme, position, which was Pedersen's, are today very few). By contrast, no work comparable to Pedersen's has yet appeared concerning the history of syntax: Drăganu's (1945) posthumous work is still possibly the only one attempting to give a 'general' view of it (and, it may be added, it is still useful as a bibliographical source, especially for the period covering the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century).

Some essays in the history of linguistics (and, in particular, of syntax) of the last decades have mainly aimed at bringing into light those doctrines of past ages which appeared consistent with a particular conception of linguistic science. This has been, for example, Chomsky's attitude; but a similar attitude is also shown by Kneale & Kneale (1962) in their famous book devoted to the "development of logic": their avowed aim is not "to chronicle all that past scholars (...) have said about the science", but "to record the first appearances of those ideas which appear to us most important in the logic of our own day" (p.v). In an analogous way, many mathematicians or physicists seek, within the works of their predecessors, sketches of current theories, and overlook what appears to be wrong or superseded from the point of view of today's knowledge. In this respect, they differ greatly from professional historians of science, who instead aim at globally reconstructing the 'scientific thought' of a given age.

One might therefore think that a work such as the present one, which deals with the history of syntactic theories during the last two centuries, is faced with two alternatives: it could try, on the one hand, to globally reconstruct the 'cultural climate' in which the different theories originated and developed; or, on the other hand, to single out the results which still today appear important from a given theoretical point of view. In other words, it should choose between being an history of a given *period* of linguistic *thought* or of a certain *kind* of linguistic *science* (obviously, within the given chronological limits). The research line adopted here has instead been slightly different from both of these options, for reasons which I shall now discuss.

The present work does not aim at being a history of syntax in the *scientific* meaning of the term, where the standards of 'science' are established by a given syntactic theory: this is not because the present author is skeptical about the possibility of having really scientific syntactic theories, nor because he thinks that such an approach to the history of linguistics is inevitably wrong. Rather, he is convinced that there exist some 'ingenuous' (in the etymological sense of 'native', 'inborn') categories of syntax concerning which a history can be written, independently from the adoption of specific theoretical assumptions. Full objectivity is no doubt unattainable: each of us is unavoidably conditioned by her/his own beliefs. Nevertheless, nobody holds that such notions as 'subject', 'sentence', or 'word group' exclusively belong to a specific theory: they rather belong to a set of 'ingenuous' syntactic concepts, each of which can be redefined within a given theoretical framework. Such ingenuous concepts therefore represent the starting point for any syntactic theory, which can obviously modify both their scope and their value, or even dispose of them, but it cannot avoid facing them (I argued for such a thesis in Graffi 1991). Hence the coexistence of both ingenuous and theoretical concepts within linguistics (and, especially, within syntax) allows one to write a history of linguistic science while at the same time adopting a perspective of history of linguistic thought: investigating how given ingenuous concepts have been dealt with in some past theories can also offer some interesting suggestions to contemporary linguists. Such an interest lies, however, more on a level of theoretical affinity than of historical heritage. In the present volume, instances of theoretical affinities are the analogies between some analyses of Jespersen's and of generative grammar: e.g., Jespersen's notion of 'nexus-substantive' (see 4.1.7) closely reminds one of Chomsky's analysis of 'derived nominals' (see 8.4.5), or the notion of 'split nexus' (see again 4.1.7), of the generative concept of 'Raising' (see 8.4.4). A historical link may be hypothesized, for example, between Gabelentz's distinction between 'psychological subject' and 'psychological predicate' (see 3.2.2), on the one hand, and the Prague school pair 'theme' vs. 'rheme', on the other (see 5.2.2). In my view, one of the tasks of the history of linguistic thought is to ascertain if such kinds of influence did really take place, whether in a direct or indirect way. Indeed, the task of the history of linguistic science is that of determining, among other things, to what extent affinities such as those just quoted, express real identities between theories worked out in different periods.

As will have been observed, all instances of the history of linguistic thought as well of linguistic science quoted above are typical of an 'internal' history of the discipline, and such a kind of history is that which mainly characterizes the present survey. This does not wish to imply, however, that problems of 'external' history, namely of the relationships of linguistics with other

research fields or with the social and institutional environment at a given age, etc., do not have any importance: quite the contrary, their study is often useful, not to say necessary, to fully understand the content of the investigated theories within the history of linguistics as in that of any other scientific field. However, because of the limits that any work must impose on itself, the present volume does not take into considerations all such possible external factors, but concentrates on the relationships between syntax and a single non-linguistic discipline, namely psychology, or, rather, on the attitude that syntacticians have shown towards psychology in the period under investigation.

2. *Syntax and psychology: vicissitudes of a relationship*

The leading thread of my investigation has therefore been the idea that syntactic research over the last two centuries is characterized by an oscillating attitude towards its relationship with psychology: an initial 'psychologistic'[1] epoch was followed by an epoch wholly rejecting psychologism, and finally a new period arose during which most scholars again stressed the necessity of connecting syntactic investigations to psychological considerations. I said 'most' scholars rather than 'all' scholars. In fact, some linguists of the third period did not assume that syntax has psychological concerns: this was, for example, the case of Montague (see below:9.2). But the fact that even scholars such as Montague or his followers felt obliged to express their attitude towards the relationship between syntax and psychology shows that the existence of such a relationship was recognized as an absolutely central problem.

The three periods alluded to above will each be the subject of a part of the present volume: the birth of 19th-century psychologistic syntax, its rise and its fall are treated in the first part (chapters 2, 3 and 4); the second part (chapters 5, 6 and 7) deals with syntax of the structuralist period, which is characterized by a rejection of psychologism and by a striving for an 'autonomous' linguistics; finally, the third and last part (chapters 8, 9 and 10) has as its topic the exceptional proliferation of syntactic theories which characterized the second half of the twentieth century, whether 'psychologically oriented' or not.

Where can the chronological boundaries of such periods be put? Any answer to such a question cannot avoid being arbitrary, to some extent. I think that the beginning of the first psychologistic period may be assumed to coincide with the crisis of the general grammar model: such a crisis originated as an

[1] I employ this term rather than 'psychological' mainly for historical reasons: the term 'pyschologism' is resorted to by Husserl (1928[1900]) in his polemics against the 19th century view of logic, which was strictly connected to that of syntax I am going to survey (cf. below:2.4.3). The term 'psychologism' and the adjective 'psychologistic' which derives from it have, therefore, the advantage of immediately recalling a given epoch of the relationships between linguistics (and logic) on the hand and psychology on the other.

effect of the increasing development and success of historical-comparative grammar, one consequence of which was stress on the essential *diversity* among languages. Several features of general grammar still persisted within historical-comparative grammar during its early decades but the fate of general grammar was accomplished around the middle of 19th century, as an effect of attacks coming from two opposite sides namely by Schleicher and by Steinthal (see 2.1). The former scholar denied the possibility of a general syntax; the latter one stated that syntax has to be based on psychology and no longer on logic as had been assumed by general grammar (see 2.2). Hence, the birth of psychologistic syntax was, although indirectly, connected with the success of historical-comparative grammar, which imposed itself as a real paradigm in the Kuhnian sense during the first decades of 19th century. One could therefore maintain that psychologistic syntax is the first syntactic approach exclusively belonging to 19th century linguistics. Other forms of syntax practiced during the first half of the same century are more or less linked with ideas developed during the preceding ones. This is the reason why little or no space has been devoted in the present volume to works that chronologically belong to the 19th century but whose roots certainly lie in 18th century such as, for example, Bernhardi (1801; 1803; 1805). Reference to some linguists preceding the psychologistic period will however be made whenever this is deemed necessary to a better understanding of the immediate background of psychologistic syntax. Thus some ideas of K.W.L. Heyse and K.F. Becker will be investigated in some detail (see 2.1.1; 2.2.1).

Once the birth of psychologistic syntax is established as around the middle of 19th century, its end point has to be determined, and, more substantially, the choice of putting some linguists within such a period or in the immediately subsequent, 'anti-psychologistic' one has to be motivated. Why, in other words, are linguists such as Jespersen or Ries mainly dealt with in the first part of the present volume, rather than in the second one, unlike their near contemporaries Saussure or Bloomfield? After all, Jespersen's and Ries' criticisms contributed to the fall of psychologism within syntax: they explicitly tried to work out 'purely linguistic' syntactic categories (see e.g. 2.5.3; 3.1). There is, however, a difference between Jespersen or Ries and the founders of structuralism: it cannot be denied that the latter aimed at a whole break with their predecessors, while the former did not. This is shown by the fact that psychologistic linguists are seldom, if ever, quoted by the early structuralists, who, however, were well acquainted with their works. This attitude is macroscopic in Hjelmslev: his first book (Hjelmslev 1928) is full of quotations of linguists belonging to the epoch of psychologism but such references almost completely disappear from his works written after his turning to structuralism in the thirties. By contrast, reference to psychologistic syntax is constant in Jespersen's

or Ries' works: as a matter of fact, the grammatical systems worked out by the two scholars are not understandable, from a historical point of view, other than as a result of psychologistic syntax. Therefore it seems historiographically correct to put scholars almost contemporary with each other inside two different periods of the history of linguistic thought.

The reasons for the crisis of psychologism will be investigated in some detail in 2.5. The mistrust towards psychology which had begun to develop in the first decades of the twentieth century is expressed in the most explicit way in the opening pages of a classical work of the structuralist period:

> We have learned, at any rate, what one of our masters suspected thirty years ago, namely, that we can pursue the study of language without reference to any one psychological doctrine, and that to do so safeguards our results and makes them more significant to workers in related fields. (Bloomfield 1933: xv)

The 'master' referred to by Bloomfield was Delbrück, in his polemics against Wundt (see 2.3.4). Therefore, the frequently cited 'behaviorism' of Bloomfield was largely 'anti-psychologism', and such anti-psychologism was a general feature of structuralism shared by the different structuralist trends.

That structuralism almost exclusively focused on phonology and morphology is a commonplace that must be abandoned. Indeed, both European and American structuralist schools developed explicit and detailed techniques of syntactic analysis, several of which were taken up, more or less explicitly, by syntactic theories of the third period investigated within the present survey. The "intellectual climate", however, of the two periods is very different: the anti-psychologism of the structuralism age is replaced by a new, deep interest for the relationships between linguistics and psychology. Another feature which sharply distinguishes the new period from both the preceding ones is the relationship of linguistics to logic. In the psychologistic age, grammar explicitly "divorced" itself from logic; in the structuralist age, both disciplines marched on parallel paths, with little interest for each other (although there were some exceptions, such as Brøndal's work). By contrast, since around the middle of twentieth century an increasing number of logicians showed an interest in natural language and an increasing number of linguists became aware of the necessity of mastering the tools of symbolic logic (see 8.2). It was more or less in the same years that linguists rediscovered an interest in psychology: what was later called "the cognitive revolution" had begun. Such a revolution is normally linked to the name of Noam Chomsky, as is surely right; but the renewed interest for psychology characterized other linguists too even before him. The term 'psycholinguistics' was coined on the occasion of a conference held in 1953 at Indiana University (see 8.3.1).

In this same period, the term 'theory' begins to systematically occur throughout linguistic (hence also syntactic) works. Furthermore, an increasing

number of different theories is proposed: all of them, as said above, refer to the problem of the relationship between linguistics and psychology, and almost all of them resort, although to a different extent, to the devices of symbolic logic. The question may therefore be asked whether such different syntactic theories can really be compared and assessed against each other. For example, may a set of descriptions exist which are in some sense "neutral" with respect to any theory, or, to put it another way, may some unprejudiced linguistic facts exist which any theory has to account for? One position would be that such facts do not exist, since facts gain their significance only in the light of a given theory. My opinion has been stated in the preceding section: there exist some 'ingenuous' facts which are independent of any theory. However, the several approaches to syntax generically labeled 'theories' contrast with each other because of their different conception of what a theory is, and of what goals it has to pursue. According to some scholars, a theory defines the significance of facts; according to some others, it is more a set of devices whose goal is to analyze some independently given facts. Things are further complicated by the fact that theories radically diverging in their goals and in their interpretation of phenomena often resort to similar formal devices.

3. ***Overall design of the volume***

On the basis of the above considerations, I have not adopted, for the third part of the present volume ("The age of syntactic theories"), the same format as for the preceding two ("The age of 'psychologism' in linguistics" and "The age of structural linguistics"): namely, to provide a chapter introducing the different scholars (more or less in chronological order) which precedes two other chapters which examine some debated issues and some empirical topics of research. According to this format, the initial chapters of part I (chapter 2) and of part II (chapter 5) introduce (more or less in chronological order) the general views on syntax held by different scholars during the ages of psychologism and of structuralism, respectively. Then two further chapters follow (3 and 4 in part I, 6 and 7 in part II) which present the discussions of some specific issues and empirical questions. Among these discussions, I mainly focus on the problem of the definition of syntax and of its relationships with logic and psychology, on the one hand, and with other fields of linguistic analysis, i.e. morphology and semantics, on the other. Among the empirical topics, I concentrate on the questions of the structure of the sentence and of the word groups. In particular, I investigate the problems of sentence definition, of the status of the notions 'subject' and 'predicate', of the mutual relationships between the members of the word groups (e.g., the definition of 'head' vs. 'modifier') and of word order.

All three chapters of part III (8, 9 and 10), on the other hand, present trends within the syntactic research of the second half of the 20th century, discussing both their historical roots and their conception of what the aims and the means of a syntactic theory should be. No chapter systematically deals with a specific empirical topic, be it the sentence, or the word groups, or whatever. The reason for this choice has been that the techniques of empirical analysis developed by the various theories are often so different that it would have been necessary to introduce the relevant notions each time; and the set of investigated phenomena, which largely overlapped during both the periods of psychologism and structuralism, differs considerably among the theories of recent decades, depending on their different goals and concerns. In general, I have given little space to the polemics between the several schools except when a hint has been useful to better understand the different positions. I have rather preferred to concentrate on the theoretical principles assumed by each theory and on some of the empirical analyses worked out within this framework. When such analyses deal with the same subject (e.g., the structure of the clause, or the treatment of discontinuous constituents, etc.), a comparison of the several points of view on the basis of their treatment of 'ingenuous' concepts should also be possible. Of course, no such trends developed as Leibnizian monads, i.e. in total isolation from each other: quite the contrary, their mutual contacts and confrontations have been numerous, either as borrowings of concepts, or, as has just been said, as the result of acute polemics.

Let us now come to the specific content of the different chapters. The rise and fall of psychologistic syntax which was sketched in 1.2. is discussed in chapter 2. After investigating the remnants of the general grammar tradition in the first decades of 19th century (2.1.), 'Steinthal's program' is investigated in some detail (2.2.), since it marks the explicit beginning of psychologistic syntax. Then the development of this same program by other linguists, such as Gabelentz and the Neogrammarians, is presented (2.3.1-2.3.2). Wundt's psychologistic approach, explicitly alternative to Steinthal's, is discussed in 2.3.3-2.3.4. 2.4. and 2.5. deal with the crisis of linguistic psychologism, be it Steinthalian or Wundtian.

Some topics which were especially debated by psychologistic syntax and its subsequent critics are discussed in chapters 3 and 4. The general problems of the proper definition of syntax, of its relationships with other fields (mainly logic and psychology) and with other domains of linguistic analysis (mainly morphology) are presented in 3.1. Section 3.2. deals with the issue of the relationships between grammatical, logical and psychological categories, illustrated by means of the debates on the notions of subject and predicate and on impersonal constructions. The final outcome of such debates again shows the abandonment of psychologistic approaches to the definition of linguistic cate-

gories. An analogous line of development can be seen in the discussions about the notions of sentence (4.1.) and in the analyses of word groups (4.2.). Psychologistic syntax aimed at working out a conception of sentence which would replace the old logic-based one (based on the equation sentence = judgement). However, no agreement was found on the proper definition of sentence or as to which linguistic structures are to be classified as sentences and which not. Therefore, in this case too the outcome was a conception of the sentence which abstracted away from psychological considerations. The development of the analysis of word groups is strictly connected to the evolution of the concept of sentence. In the general grammar tradition, attributive word groups were considered as derived from predicational, i.e. sentential, structures. Such a conception of word groups was still held by the majority of syntacticians of the psychologistic age and it radically changed only when psychologism had virtually been abandoned, namely with Jespersen and Sechehaye.

Chapter 5 presents the views on syntax held by the different structuralist schools. The starting point is Saussure's position about syntax (5.1.1). The two main sections of the chapter roughly correspond to the period between the two world wars (5.2.) and to that since the second world war until about the sixties (5.3.). Two approaches which have not been forgotten by later generations of linguists are the Prague 'Functional Sentence Perspective' (see 5.2.2; 5.3.2) and so-called 'Immediate Constituent' analysis (cf. 5.2.3). If Immediate Constituent analysis was a kind of trademark of American structuralism, other interesting frameworks were developed by European scholars. By a curious "trick of fate", the syntactic approach of the structuralist period which is today the most quoted and utilized one was very little known at the time of its invention. I am referring to Tesnière's 'valency syntax' (cf. 5.2.6). Saussure's notion of 'syntagm' and its elaboration by Bally were the source of Frei's and Mikus' 'syntagmatics', which investigated a variety of constructions in detail (see 5.2.1; 5.3.1). Neither should the insights of the Copenhagen school be overlooked (see 5.2.4-5.2.5), nor De Groot's, Martinet's and Benveniste's (see 5.3.3-5.3.4). The final sections of the chapter deal with the frameworks which are most closely connected with the third period surveyed, namely the development of the distributional approach by the post-Bloomfieldian scholars (5.3.5) and Harris' 'transformational theory' (5.3.6).

In the two subsequent chapters (6 and 7), I mainly concentrate on topics some of which have already been discussed while dealing with syntax in the psychologistic age, in order to bring to light the differences as well as the similarities between that age and the structuralistic one. Hence the whole of chapter 6 is devoted to "structuralistic approaches to sentence analysis". In particular, the impact of the Saussurean opposition *langue/parole* on the conception of the sentence will be examined, together with the problems connected

with the classification of sentence types, the opposition 'sentence' vs. 'utterance' and that 'sentence' vs. 'clause' (6.1.). Section 6.2. presents some structuralist analyses of sentence structure which discuss, from a different point of view, some issues already dealt with during the psychologistic age, such as the opposition between the 'grammatical' vs. the 'psychological' or 'actual' analysis of the sentence or the subject/predicate relation. Chapter 7 is devoted to the techniques of analysis developed within the different structuralist frameworks, which especially concern the structure of word groups. 7.1. sketches a comparison between the typology of constructions in American and in European structuralism. This is followed by two sections which illustrate the different analytical techniques, grouped according their 'non-procedural' (7.2.) vs. 'procedural' character (7.3.). Special attention is devoted to the treatment of the topic of 'discontinuous constituents' (7.3.5), since it will become central for several theories dealt with in the third part of the volume.

The first chapter of Part Three (chapter 8) opens with an attempt at classifying the different syntactic theories according to their roots and to their subsequent ramifications (8.1.). Generative grammar, especially in its 'Chomskian' version, has been the theory most often referred to by linguists of recent decades, either in a positive or in a negative way; therefore, ample space is given in chapter 8 to its birth and how it reached its 'standard' form (8.4.). This presentation of generative grammar is preceded by a sketch of the impact that some trends of 20th century symbolic logic had on the analysis of natural language syntax (8.2.), as well as of other syntactic approaches which were worked out more or less in the same years as generative grammar but independently from it, such as tagmemics and Greenberg's typological syntax (8.3.).

Chapter 9 starts with an assessment of the impact brought about by 'standard' generative grammar (9.1.) and goes on to investigate some alternative trends of research: Montague Grammar (9.2.), some typological and functionalist syntactic theories (9.3.), and, finally, some theories which, while originating from it, worked out an often very different perspective of language analysis from 'standard' generative grammar (9.4.). The development of 'standard' generative grammar, here labeled the 'Chomskian program', from the beginnings of the seventies until recently is investigated in Chapter 10.

In many cases, the reason for the differentiation of theoretical frameworks can be found in the diverging views of the relationship between syntax and psychology: for example, while Chomsky saw this in the investigation of what he called 'Universal Grammar' (cf. 10.1.), namely the putatively innate system which would make language acquisition possible, other linguists maintained that it should be implemented by the construction of a 'psychologically real' syntactic theory, namely one whose rules would match the processes of sentence production and comprehension. The survey of the ways in which the re-

lationship between syntax and psychology has been conceived, therefore, appears as a possible interpretive key which runs through the different syntactic frameworks of the last two centuries.

PART I

THE AGE OF PSYCHOLOGISM IN LINGUISTICS

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE AND FALL OF 'PSYCHOLOGISTIC' SYNTAX

0. *Introduction*

19th century linguistics is commonly identified with historical-comparative linguistics: for example, Robins' (1997[1967]) chapter devoted to that age bears the title "Comparative and historical linguistics in the nineteenth century". However, topics that one might consider as belonging to "general" linguistics were investigated in that century; the great achievements of historical-comparative grammar had rather the effect of inducing a drastic change both in their conception and in their treatment. In the domain of syntax, such an effect mainly consisted in the abandonment of the tradition of linguistic thought known as *grammaire générale*, which may be said, with an unavoidable amount of arbitrariness, to have its starting point in the year 1660, when the Port-Royal work of the same title was published for the first time (Arnauld & Lancelot 1676[1660]). Historical-comparative linguistics induced a relativistic perspective to linguistics: it showed that change and diversity were essential, not accidental, features of language. This result sharply contrasted with the general grammar tradition, according to which language was primarily a "mirror of the mind", the image of a human reason which was essentially invariable across times and places.

The abandonment of general grammar by historical-comparative linguists of the 19th century was, however, neither immediate nor complete. Many of the categories of the old model were difficult to replace adequately. The present chapter therefore opens with a section (2.1.) which illustrates the work of the last representatives of the general grammar tradition in the first decades of the 19th century (such as Becker), as well as some ideas about syntax held by the early historical-comparative linguists (Bopp, Rask, Grimm, Pott) and by Humboldt. It will be seen that these latter scholars too, in spite of some programmatic statements, were themselves not totally free from the general grammar tradition. Such a tradition essentially based linguistics, and especially syntax, on logic: this was conceived as the doctrine of correct reasoning, based on the assumption of a universal human reason. It was therefore possible to com-

pletely abandon general grammar if a new discipline, other than logic, could be found on which to base linguistics. A very eclectic scholar, who was at one and the same time a philosopher, a linguist and a psychologist, namely Heymann Steinthal, found this new discipline: psychology, the foundations of which he essentially derived from Herbart's work. Steinthal's program will be presented in 2.2. One can assume that Steinthal initiates a new era of syntax, which I call that of 'psychologistic' syntax. Another creation of Steinthal's, together with Moritz Lazarus, was 'ethnopsychology'. It had the task of accounting for the cross-cultural differences, language being the most significant one, by ascribing different 'collective minds' to the different peoples. One of the consequences of the birth of ethnopsychology was a significant development of linguistic typology, by Steinthal himself and by other scholars after him, such as Gabelentz (see 2.2.3; 2.3.1).

In the last decades of the 19th century, a psychologistic approach was also adopted by the leading historical-comparative linguists of that period, the Neogrammarians, some of whom had been Steinthal's students (see 2.3.2). At about the same time , a new kind of psychologism appeared, connected with Wilhelm Wundt's work (see 2.3.3). Wundt had elaborated a system of psychology which aimed at replacing Herbart's (which Steinthal had adopted) but which nonetheless went on basing linguistics (and syntax in particular) on psychological considerations. Wundt also developed ethnopsychology in his own way. The Neogrammarians (especially Hermann Paul) did not accept Wundt's views and continued to adopt Steinthal's psychological model; furthermore, they also rejected ethnopsychology, both in Steinthal's and in Wundt's version. The main lines of the debate between Wundt and the Neogrammarians are surveyed in 2.3.4.

The debates, however, were not only internal to several psychologistic approaches, but, at the end of the century, psychologism itself (be it Steinthalian or Wundtian) began to be put into question. Among the sharpest critics of psychology, one may quote the philosophers Franz Brentano, Anton Marty and Edmund Husserl. They also significantly contributed to the analysis of syntactic problems (especially Marty), often proposing solutions which contrasted with the commonly assumed ones within psychologistic circles (see 2.4.).

Psychologism in general entered its crisis at the beginning of the 20th century (see 2.5.). As far as syntax was concerned, the effect of such a crisis was the abandonment of the attempt to base syntax on psychology. In some cases, as with the French school, a new discipline, namely sociology, was referred to as a new possible basic science for linguistics (see 2.5.2). Other scholars inclined to adopt a "purely linguistic" attitude: this was the case of Jespersen and Bühler (see 2.5.3-2.5.4). Such a new attitude was characteristic of structural linguistics; it will be returned to in chapter 5.

1. *The legacy of the* grammaire générale *and its abandonment*

1.1 *'Philosophical' grammar*

As has been stressed by several scholars (e.g., Rosiello 1967), the tradition of *grammaire générale* was not monolithic: the grammarians of the second half of the 17th century and of the 18th century, while often also explicitly declaring their respect for the Port-Royal framework and their closeness to it, developed many new approaches to syntactic matters which often differed from one grammarian to another. Furthermore, two topics of inquiry developed in the 18th century which were scarcely treated in Port-Royal grammar: the nature of word groups and the comparison of the different word orders in the different languages. The question of the *ordre naturel* was connected to this last topic. The work which initiated the research about word-groups was undoubtedly Girard (1747), whose theory of *membres de phrase*, together with its developments in later scholars, we will discuss below in 4.2.1. Girard's ideas did not meet with much success in France, but they exerted a considerable influence on German grammarians (cf. Jellinek 1913-14 I:468; Forsgren 1973:132-133; 1985:43; 1992:112). The first treatise about word order(s) is probably a work published in 1669 by the Frenchman Louis Le Laboureur but the discussion continued in the 18th century, when two positions emerged: the first one, which we can call the position of the 'grammarians', held e.g. by Girard, Du Marsais and Beauzée, maintained that the *ordre naturel* was SVO, and therefore that French was an example of it; the second position, held by grammarians such as Batteux but also by philosophers such as Condillac and Diderot, refused the idea that the word order exemplified by a particular language could be deemed as the 'natural' one, and in some cases also expressly denied the 'naturalness' of the SVO order (on the whole matter, see Jellinek 1913-14 II:425-464). Despite all these differences, however, some common features, shared by many grammarians of the period between the middle of 17th century and the first decades of the 19th century, allow us to consider them as a unitary group, the followers of a single tradition, i.e. the tradition of General Grammar. Most significant among the features which they share in common are in our view the following assumptions, which are overtly stated by Port-Royal grammar: 1) there is a strict connection between categories of thought (often also called 'logical' categories) and categories of language; 2) despite many superficial differences, all languages of the world express the same categories of thought. The various 'general' grammarians always remained faithful to these ground assumptions, while their technical approach to several syntactic problems changed, often considerably, during the two centuries or so in which their framework flourished. Perhaps the best example of these changes is given by the so-called 'copula-theory', i.e. the analysis of every sentence into Subject, Copula and Predicate. As will be seen in more detail in 3.1 and 4.1.1, the cop-

ula-theory, which was a cornerstone in Port-Royal system of syntax, was gradually abandoned by some of the last scholars beloning to the tradition of General Grammar. These scholars were members of the *Frankfurter Gelehrterverein für deutsche Sprache*; among them, we will deal in particular with Karl Ferdinand Becker.[1] Actually, these grammarians, whose work dates from the first half of 19th century, were in closest contact (both geographical and chronological) with the linguists who mark the beginning of a new era: Humboldt on the one side and the first historical-comparative linguists on the other (Bopp, Grimm, Rask, and, in the following generation, Pott and Schleicher). It may be interesting, then, to inquire whether there are some common features, if any, between the last heirs of the tradition of 'grammaire générale' and the alleged beginners of a new era in linguistics.

Becker's philosophical views show similarities to Schelling's philosophy of nature, as has already been observed, among others, by Forsgren (1973:18; 100). He was, furthermore, in close contact with the philosopher and logician Adolph Trendelenburg, who dedicated his *Logische Untersuchungen* (Trendelenburg 1870[1840]) to him. Trendelenburg praised Becker as "a man who tried to work out an organic conception in the domain of language and revived grammar with a philosophical mind". On the other hand, the influence of historical linguistics on Becker is certainly rather small. However, he quotes Grimm at length and discusses Bopp's proposals as well. In short, Becker, even though he is not heavily influenced by the fast development of historical-comparative grammar, is certainly well aware of its existence and of its results. Moreover, we have to note that he refers, with great respect, to Humboldt.

Becker (1841[1827]) is divided into four sections dealing respectively with the "Organism of language in general", with phonetics (*Organische Lautbildung*), with morphology and the classification of parts of speech (*Organische Wortbildung*), and with the syntax of the simple and the complex sentence (*Organische Satzbildung*). Becker's view is based on his notion of language as an 'organic whole': language is organic not only in its origin, but also in its internal organization, as with any other manifestation of the living organism (cf. Becker 1841[1827]:9-10). In such an overall organism, the different elements lie in a relationship of 'polar opposition', and this is the only way to understand them correctly. The first and most general opposition is the one between 'activity' and 'being' (cf. Becker 1841[1827]:63). The starting point for the development of all concepts is 'movement' (this notion also has a central role in Trendelenburg); cf. Becker (1841[1827]:65).[2] All root words in lan-

[1] Forsgren (1973; 1985; 1992) are especially useful for the knowledge of this last period of General Grammar in Germany.

[2] Indeed, the twelve 'root concepts' of Becker are all concepts of movement: 'go' (*gehen*), 'shine' (*leuchten*), 'sound' (*lauten*), 'blow' (*wehen*), 'flow' (*fließen*), 'grow' (*wachsen*), 'give'

guage are verbs, since all root concepts are concepts of activity (p.83). Hence all substantives are derived from verbs (p.89).

It is probably on the basis of this naturalistic and organicistic view that Becker maintains that child language develops autonomously, free from parental and environmental conditioning: the child's early progresses in language are "astonishingly rapid", and s/he does not speak "to satisfy an external need", but because "s/he finds pleasure in speaking, as in any exercise of organic forces" (Becker 1841[1827]:5). Imitation is of very little import: the child does not imitate the word s/he has heard as s/he "imitates the call of the cuckoo", but, by producing the word, s/he produces the concept and the thought as well (p.7). Becker's view on the origin of language does not therefore seem too different from Humboldt's or Steinthal's. One difference lies in the fact that, whereas Becker says that "thought immediately becomes speech", in Humboldt's and Steinthal's view thought is rather formed by language (cf. below: 37). Therefore Becker is still tied, undoubtedly, to the tradition of General Grammar, which can ultimately be traced back to Port-Royal. However, his view of the relationship between 'logic' and 'grammar' also shows some interesting elements of novelty. Language is no longer strictly conceived, as in the Aristotelian tradition, as a simple phonetic expression of thought, but thought and sound are defined as being the two sides of language (the 'logical' and 'phonetic' side, respectively), inseparable from each other (cf. p.12).

Following this path, Becker also distinguishes a 'logical form' in language which is not to be directly identified with 'thought', even if is strictly determined by it. Becker assumes that each of the three kinds of syntactic connections he recognizes (the 'predicative', the 'attributive' and the 'objective' relationships; for more on them see below:4.2.1) forms an 'organic unity', which is realized only by virtue of the different ranking of its constituent words. This ranking, in its turn, is due to the fact that all these relationships mean either the subsumption of a particular into a universal, or the reduction of a universal to a particular. As a consequence, one of the members of each relationship is the 'superordinate factor': the general into which the particular is subsumed, or the particular to which the general is reduced. The other member of the relationship is the 'subordinate factor'. For example, consider the three relationships (predicative, attributive and objective, respectively) *Gold is dehnbar* ('Gold is ductile'), *ein toller Hund* ('a rabid dog'), *frißt Gras* ('devours grass'): the words *dehnbar*, *toller* and *Gras* are, each one in its relationship, the 'superordinate' factor; *Gold*, *Hund* and *frißt* the 'subordinate factor'. The 'logical form' lies in the 'organic unity' realized by the different logical values (superordinate

(*geben*), 'take' (*nehmen*), 'bind' (*binden*), 'divide' (*scheiden*), 'wound' (*verletzen*) and 'cover' (*decken*); cf. Becker (1841[1827]:77). All other concepts derive from those mentioned through later processes of derivation and composition.

vs. subordinate) of the constituent elements. The three different syntactic relationships which realize this unity instantiate its 'grammatical forms' (Becker 1841[1827]:162-167). Logical form and grammatical form are intimately connected, "fused", and "can be separated only from the point of view of investigation" (p.579). Logical form and grammatical form in Becker's sense are not to be equated with 'content side' and 'expression side', respectively. Indeed, it would seem that both lie on the content side and have their own means of expression: 'logical form' has intonation and word order, 'grammatical form' has inflection. In languages like Chinese, which lack inflection, grammatical relationships directly express logical form, since they are indicated just by intonation and word order (ibid.).

Summarizing this discussion, we could say that this complicated hierarchy of entities and planes is a good example of Becker's attitude towards General Grammar. Linguistic, and especially syntactic, structures (the 'grammatical forms') are no longer viewed as a simple mirroring of independently given logical categories even if they are still based on some of them, like the asymmetric relation of the particular to the general and vice versa, which brings about 'logical form'.[3] Later critics of Becker (first of all Steinthal) did not see novelties in his view of language. At any rate, we would not do him justice if we considered him as no more than a belated follower of the General Grammar tradition, because of the importance of many linguistic analyses worked out by him (see below:3.1; 4.1.1; 4.2.1; 4.2.3).

Indeed, on many occasions we will see that the whole of 19th century syntax is marked by a kind of 'Oedipus complex' towards the tradition of General Grammar: the majority of linguists treat it as the whipping boy but at the same time they make frequent recourse to its techniques and to its notions (see, for example, below:3.1).

1.2 *Humboldt's views on syntax*

Given the depth and width of Humboldt's work, I do not make any claims to exhaustiveness in presenting his positions here; nor I will discuss the copious literature about him in any detail. Instead I will limit myself essentially to stress his points of contact with the General Grammar tradition as well as his innovative proposals in the domain of syntax.

Humboldt is generally renowned for having insisted on the *differences* between languages. Also the title of his last and most famous work (Humboldt 1836) explicitly refers to this fact. However, on many occasions he also refers

[3] According to Forsgren (1992:36), Becker, speaking of 'logical form', does not aim to put grammar under the rule of logic: 'logical form' would rather mean 'semantic interpretation of grammatical phenomena'. I think that this interpretation somewhat exceeds Becker's intentions, but it is on the right track.

to 'General Grammar' as the 'standard' to which every particular language has to be related and without which grammatical comparison would be impossible. "For it encompasses and develops what is common to all idioms, by virtue of the identity of the thought laws and of the essential nature of language" (Humboldt 1903-1936 VI[1827-29]:342). According to him, therefore, the universality of human thought accounts for some features which are present in every human language. These are the 'grammatical relationships', which must be "visible in all languages in some way" (Humboldt 1903-1936 VI[1827-29]:340). The grammatical relationships are based on the "identity of the laws of thought" (Humboldt 1903-36 V[1824-26]:451).[4]

Evidence shows, however, that the grammatical relationships of General Grammar are differently shaped in different languages. Cf. Humboldt (1903-1936 VI[1827-29]:342) and the following passage as well:

> *Grammatical formation* arises from the *laws of thinking* in language, and rests on the *congruence of sound-forms* with the latter. Such a congruence must in some way be present in every language; the difference lies only in *degree*, and the blame for defective development may attach to an insufficiently plain emergence of these laws in the soul, or to an inadequate malleability of the sound-system. But deficiency on the one point always reacts back at once upon the other. (Humboldt 1988[1836]:140)]

The way in which languages express thought and the grammatical relationships belonging to General Grammar is therefore assumed to be the standard on the basis of which the classification and evaluation of languages can be performed. See e.g. Humboldt (1903-1936 IV[1822]:294):

> The exactness of thought gains ground if grammatical relationships are exactly matched by logical ones; and the mind is all the more attracted to formal, hence pure, thought if the language makes this familiar with a sharp differentiation of grammatical forms.

Humboldt maintains that inflectional languages are those best suited to express these grammatical forms and their relationship to logical ones. This statement is directly connected to his 'syntactically based' view of typology, to which we will return. The 'explicit', i.e. morpho-phonetical, realization of grammatical relationships varies from language to language (cf. Humboldt 1827a:42). Isolating languages are the least explicit, inflectional languages the most explicit ones.

These statements by Humboldt do not sound too different from some of Becker's. The opposition of 'logical' and 'grammatical' relationships, for ex-

[4] As Seuren (1998:113) remarks, "Humboldt stresses the unity of language in general as much as he does the diversity of individual languages, and the influence of the mind upon language as much as the other way around".

ample, closely resembles Becker's distinction between 'logical' and 'grammatical' form (cf. above:2.1.1). Furthermore, the conception of language as an 'organ' that develops (Humboldt 1836:§9) reminds us of Becker's view.[5] In his letter to Becker (Humboldt 1827b), however, Humboldt, while expressing agreement with him on many topics, nevertheless wants to stress his different position as far as the notion of 'organism' and the relationship of language to the individual and to society are concerned: the concept of 'organism', Humboldt writes, must be understood "in a much wider sense" than the purely phisiological one.

Surely, a more "pragmatically-oriented" view of language, as well as many of Humboldt's other statements, like the one that language is not *érgon*, but *enérgeia* (however difficult the interpretation of this last statement may be) demonstrate novelty in respect of the tradition of general, or 'philosophical', grammar. Furthermore, the analysis of more specifically syntactic questions also shows some of Humboldt's innovations with respect to such a tradition, together with some remnants of it.

It has to be stressed that the role of syntax in Humboldt's general theory of language is much more central than for other linguists of his generation, especially those oriented in the direction of historical-comparative grammar. As a consequence, typology is conceived by Humboldt from an essentially syntactic point of view (see Ramat 1985): inflectional languages are superior to languages of other types because 1) they exactly trace the borders of the unit 'word', while at the same time 2) they express in the clearest way the relationships which tie the different words together and make them form a sentence. Isolating languages do not express these relationships; incorporating languages do not clearly distinguish between the word and the sentence. Agglutinating languages are an intermediate, imperfect stage between isolating languages and inflectional languages (cf., e.g., Humboldt 1836, §14).

In Humboldt's system of syntactic typology, an outstanding position is assigned to three of the traditional 'parts of speech': the verb, the conjunction and the relative pronoun. They exemplify the three different ways in which 'the act of spontaneous positing by bringing together (synthesis)' ("Act des *selbstthätigen Setzens* durch Zusammenfassung (Synthesis)") is accomplished (Humboldt 1836, §21:cclxvi-cclxvii; 1988:184-185). The first synthesis is accomplished by the verb. It is the center of the simple sentence, inside which it is sharply distinguished from the other parts of speech, since it is the only one having the capacity of "synthetic positing as a grammatical function":

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[5] It cannot be forgotten, however, that the metaphor of language as an organism was quite widespread in that age. On the meaning and the consequences of this metaphor, see Morpurgo Davies (1997:4.3).

> The *verb* (to speak first of this by itself) differs in a sharply determined way from the noun, and from the other parts of speech that might possibly occur in a simple sentence, in that to it alone is assigned the act of *synthetic positing* as a grammatical function. [...] Between it and the other words of the simple sentence there is therefore a difference which forbids us to count it along with them in the same category. All the other words of the sentence are like dead matter lying there for combination; the verb alone is the center, containing and disseminating life. Through one and the same synthetic act, it conjoins, by *being*, the *predicate* with the *subject*, yet in such a way that the being which passes, with an energetic predicate, into an action, becomes attributed to the subject itself, so that what is *thought* as merely capable of conjunction becomes, in *reality*, a state or process. (Humboldt 1988[1836]:185)

Languages are differentiated and evaluated according to the ways in which they realize this 'synthetic strength' of the verb (Humboldt 1836, §21:cclxviii). In many languages, the borders between noun and verb are difficult to trace, and these languages are to be judged the least developed ones; however, the verb cannot be omitted in any language ("das Verbum keiner Sprache fehlen kann"; Humboldt 1836, §21:cclxxvii; 1988:191).

An even stronger synthesis, in Humboldt's meaning of the term, is brought about by the conjunction. Indeed, it "shows the relation of two clauses to each other", and therefore it accomplishes a "double synthesis" (Humboldt 1836, §21:ccxci-ccxcii; 1988:200-201). As the presence vs. absence of real verbs is a measure of the greater or lesser development of a language, so too is the presence vs. absence of 'real' conjunctions (by 'real' conjunctions, most probably, Humboldt means clausal conjunctions as opposed to phrasal conjunctions). Hence less developed languages often lack conjunctions, or they use as conjunctions words properly belonging to other classes, and very frequently they simply juxtapose sentences (Humboldt 1836, §21:ccxcii; 1988:201).

According to Humboldt, the particularity of the relative pronoun lies in its dual nature: pronoun and conjunction at once. Its essence is therefore lost in languages which do not have the possibility of clearly expressing this dual nature. This means that a real relative pronoun can be found only in languages which show noun inflection. The majority of less developed languages therefore need to replace it with a particular construction. As an example of such languages Humboldt quotes preposed relative clauses in Quechua (cf. Humboldt 1836, §21:ccxciii-ccxciv; 1988:201-202).

Let us now compare Humboldt's observations about such topics with their treatment inside the tradition of the *grammaire générale*. First of all we have to remark that the opposition between simple and complex sentence is really crucial for Humboldt. It has been seen above that the verb is distinguished, by virtue of its 'synthetic strength', from any other part of speech inside the *simple* sentence. This strength is still greater for the conjunction and for the relative

pronoun, since they connect clauses. As will be seen in more detail below (4.1.2), the notion of the dependent clause is a relatively late achievement of grammatical theory: it possibly originated in the Port-Royal distinction between *propositions composées* and *propositions complexes* and its importance gained general recognition only by the end of the 18th century. Also the syntactic peculiarity of the relative pronoun (i.e., its conjoining two sentences) seems to be a discovery of Port-Royal grammar, of which its authors are proud (cf. Arnauld & Lancelot 1676[1660]:67). This peculiarity does not seem to have attracted the attention of many later grammarians: the detailed surveys by Jellinek (1913-14) and by Sahlin (1928) attest only to morphological descriptions of the relative pronoun in 18th century grammars. Humboldt seems therefore to have gained the highest profit from the Port-Royal grammar analysis of this subject and he keenly connected it with his typologically-oriented view of syntax.

As for the verb, we have already seen that it is considered by Humboldt essentially in its syntactic function, i.e. in its capacity to connect the subject and the predicate, while grammatical tradition mainly focused on its morphological properties. Yet, the syntactic function of the verb had already been stressed with the same energy as Humboldt by Port-Royal grammarians. They insisted on the characteristic of the verb as *vox significans affirmationem*, and they explicitly argued against some earlier definitions which were of a more morphologically-oriented or more semantically-oriented nature: the verb as *vox significans cum tempore* (Aristotle), the verb as *vox flexilis cum tempore et persona* (Buxtorf), the verb as 'signifying actions or passions', the verb as 'signifying elapsing things' (Scaliger); cf. Arnauld & Lancelot (1676[1660]:94-104). Port-Royal grammarians, however, took two further steps. The first one was to maintain that 'to be', viz. the 'substantive' verb, is the only 'real' verb. The other verbs (the 'adjective' ones) derive from the coalescence of other meanings with the proper verbal meaning of 'to be'; such coalescence is due to the 'natural tendency of men to abridge their expressions'. The other step taken by Port-Royal grammar was to identify sentence with judgement (see below:4.1.1). Humboldt, on the contrary, always speaks of the 'finite verb', without suggesting at all that it has to be identified with the copula (see also below:3.1),[6] and maintains that the *logical* notion of judgement must be distinguished from the *linguistic* one of sentence (for more on this topic see below:4.1.1). With such observations, Humboldt paves the way to the divorce of grammar from logic that will be the cornerstone of Steinthal's theory of lan-

[6] I do not mean that Humboldt was the first linguist to abandon the Port-Royal conception of the verb: actually, such a position can be found, e.g., in Du Marsais (cf. Sahlin 1928:116;306), as well as perhaps in other scholars. I am only stressing the differences between his position and the Port-Royal one.

guage.[7] We have to bear in mind that Humboldt does not maintain that grammar and logic are totally unrelated, but only that they do not coincide. The exact borders between them must be defined (Humboldt 1903-36 VI[1827-29]:345-346), but their relationship remains close.

Humboldt still appears linked to the General Grammar tradition also in the treatment of another topic: the notion of 'natural order'. Examining Burmese, a verb-final language, Humboldt (1836, §24:ccclxxii; 1988:250-251) notes that this position of the verb is not the natural one, which would be the position between subject and object, 'in the natural sequence of ideas':

> The sequence of the *parts of the sentence* is such that the subject comes first, then the object, and lastly the verb [...]. The place of the *verb* in this construction is obviously not the natural one, since in the sequence of ideas this part of speech is interposed between subject and object.

A few pages later (1836:ccclxxviii; 1988:254), however, some interesting observations on word order can be found, which seem to anticipate Weil's (1879[1844]) work. We will come back to them in 4.2.4, below. This approach to word order problems is a further example of the wavering between the old and the new which characterizes Humboldt's treatment of syntax.

1.3 *Syntax and the development of historical-comparative grammar*

It is a rather widespread view that contributions to syntax offered by 19th century historical-comparative grammarians were scarce and generally poor. This opinion is not wholly unfounded even though it is not to be fully accepted. As will be seen in what follows immediately, and in the subsequent chapters as well, the first generations of historical grammarians actually did not pay much attention to syntax, while this field was investigated in depth by many linguists belonging to the neo-grammarian group and by their contemporaries. In the present section I will give an overview of the attitude towards syntax held by the so called 'founders' of historical comparative grammar (Bopp, Rask, Grimm) and by two scholars of the generation immediately following them (Pott and Schleicher).[8] The positions of the Neogrammarians will be analyzed

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[7] Humboldt opposes logical categories to linguistic ones in other places as well. E.g., in Humboldt (1827a:68-69), subject and predicate are defined as 'purely logical' categories. According to Di Cesare (1991:lxxvi), Humboldt made 'a fundamental contribution' in making grammar free from logic and in giving prominence to the latter discipline over the first one.

[8] See Morpurgo Davies (1997:14-15) on the well-established custom of classifying the leaders of historical-comparative grammar in subsequent generations, with each assigned into a particular role in the development of the field. Thus we would have the 'forerunners', the 'founders' , the 'perfectioners' and the 'settlers'. The weakness of such a classification, which originates from the hagiographic history of 19th century linguistics, is shown by the difficulty of assigning certain scholars to the right generation. E.g., was Rask a 'founder' or a 'forerunner',

later, since they necessarily presuppose Steinthal's work, to be dealt with in 2.2.

Bopp's relationship to the tradition of General Grammar was stressed by Meillet (1937[1903]:457-458) and by other scholars (cf., e.g., Verburg 1949-50). In 3.1. we will read through some of Bopp's passages which give ample evidence of the influence that Port-Royal grammar was still exerting on his work. Note, however, that all these passages are drawn from the English version, *Analytical Comparison* (Bopp 1820), of Bopp's first book (Bopp 1816). Very little space is given to the role of the 'substantive verb' in the analysis of the sentence and of the forms (like Latin *potest*) that he derived from a sentential structure in his later *Vergleichende Grammatik* (Bopp 1857-1861). In fact, syntax has very little room in *Vergleichende Grammatik*: no specific part of the treatise is devoted to it and the items *Satz*, *Subjekt*, *Prädikat* as well as the others referring to the basic concepts of syntax do not even appear in the index of the work (compiled by Carl Arendt, 1863).

Syntactic problems are seldom dealt with also by Rask, even in his descriptive, i.e. non-historical, works. In general, his grammatical sketches of languages (like, for example, the ones contained in Rask 1838, which are devoted to Swedish (pp.1-54), German (pp.162-190) and French (pp.305-382)) are confined to phonetics/phonology and morphology (derivational as well as inflectional). Discussions about the notion of the sentence and its essential constituents (subject and predicate) seem to be lacking in his work.

Rask's attitude towards the tradition of general/philosophical grammar is difficult to evaluate: in a short and sketchy paper entitled *Guidelines for a short review of the whole domain of linguistics* (Rask 1838:283-294; newly edited in Rask 1932-33:361-372), he writes that "so-called *General Grammar* [...] seems [...] to belong to language research (*Sprogforskningen*) rather than to grammars (*Sproglæren*)" (Rask 1838:291; Rask 1932-33:369). "The proper aim" of *General Grammar* (or 'philosophical grammar', or 'philosophy of language': Rask (1838:293; 1932-33:371) equates these different expressions) is "the description of the relationship of *language* with thought in general" (Rask 1838: 293-4; 1932-33: 372). In general, it would seem that Rask opposes *General Grammar* to particular grammars, as made explicit in another paper, *About the philosophy of language* (Rask 1932-33: 373-378).[9] Here Rask says that one of the tasks of the philosophy of language is "to *understand* the occurring phenomena all the way to their innermost motivation" (Rask 1932-33:376). It is interesting to note that this 'philosophical' approach is framed in a naturalistic-organicistic

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and Pott a 'founder' or a 'perfectioner'? I therefore adopt such labels only for practical convenience.

[9] I quote this paper only from the Rask's edition by Hjelmslev, since the original edition is not available to me.

view of language: "language is a natural object and its science is similar to natural history" (Rask 1932-33: 377).

It must be stressed that the relationship between language and thought is not described by Rask in as simple and direct a way as the Aristotelian tradition represented by Port-Royal grammar would assume:

> Thought is an endlessly subtle, unembodied, impalpable object, which is not easy to understand, to catch and to glance at so that one can discover its absolutely exact form, and in any case it is not thought and its forms, but words, sounds and their relationships and combinations that one has to deal with in grammars. (Rask 1932-33: 378)

Regarding many technical aspects, however, Rask seems to be still linked to the tradition of General Grammar. For example, in a paper devoted to Danish grammatical terminology (Rask 1838:244-283), he introduces a list of 'forms' which sounds rather similar to Girard's inventory of *membres de phrase* (cf. Girard 1747 and below:4.2.1).[10] Rask lists the following units: subject; vocative, direct object, indirect object, genitive, circumstantial.[11] Girard lists seven *membres de phrase* (or *parties constructives*): *subjectif* (subject); *attributif* (verb and its nearest concomitants, like negation); *objectif* (direct object); *terminatif* (indirect object); *circonstanciel*; *conjonctif* (conjunction); *adjonctif* (vocative and the interjection). As can be easily seen, five units are essentially the same both in Rask and in Girard. The verb and conjunction are missing in Rask since he explicitly deals only with nominal word groups (cf. Rask 1838: 273). Rask seems to hint at a universal value for his six 'forms' (cf. Rask 1838: 282).

What perhaps marks Rask's closeness to the General Grammar tradition most is his explicit assumption of a 'natural order', which is of course Subject-Verb-Object: "therefore it is natural that the subject precedes and the object follows the verb, which ends up by standing in the middle when the thought presents itself in a quiet way" (Rask 1838:278). Rask adds that this order differentiates modern languages, more "quiet", from ancient ones "where sensibility was more vivid" (Rask 1838:279). Rask assigns a certain importance to this contrast between the two different kinds of mentality and their relationship to language. For example, mainly contemplative and quiet peoples (like the modern ones) do not formally distinguish between the nominative and the vocative, but more wild and passionate peoples (like Greeks and Romans) make the distinction. In general, the two different cases (nominative and voca-

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[10] The knowledge of Girard's doctrine was not limited to French grammarians; some German scholars were influenced by it as well. See Jellinek (1913-14 II:374;468;476), Forsgren (1973:132-133) and Forsgren (1992:112). Cf. also below:4.2.1.

[11] I have somewhat adapted Rask's original Danish terminology, except for the last item, *Omstændighedsform*, literally 'circumstantial form'.

tive) seem to stem from language development, which goes from raw and isolated expressions to more sophisticated and connected ones (for this subject in general, see Rask 1838:275-276). One could assume that this last kind of remark has more to do with a view of language typical of the Romantic age than with General Grammar. As a provisional conclusion, I would agree with the evaluation of Rask given by Morpurgo Davies (1997:127), according to which Rask is not a pure representative of the 'new age' in linguistics (as maintained by the standard historiography of 19th century linguistics), nor the last hero of General Grammar, as Hjelmslev (1951) depicted him. The "old" views of General Grammar and the "new" perspectives of historical-comparative grammar coexist in him as in many other scholars of his time.

A Romantic view of language is, as one would expect, clearly expressed by Grimm in the introduction to his *Deutsche Grammatik*:[12] "I was interested in stressing those particular structures, which, in my view, have to be explained by the warlike life and customs of our ancestors, and which exude all the sensuality of bygone ages" (Grimm 1898[1837]:vi). However, one may find some traces of a more or less close connection with General Grammar in Grimm's work too. For example, he considers, more or less traditionally, language as 'the expression of thought'. Also, his view of the sentence as necessarily formed by a subject and a predicate seems to fit rather well into the tradition of General Grammar: "To speak means to utter what has been thought [the thought]. Every thought connects an object with a representation, hence every sentence of speech requires a subject and a predicate" (Grimm 1898[1837]:2). On the other hand, his treatment of specific syntactic problems appears more innovative than Bopp's or Rask's: e.g., the phrase 'substantive verb' to designate the verb 'to be' is quite common through the *Deutsche Grammatik*, but Grimm does not suggest the analysis of every clause in the form Subject-Copula-Predicate (for more details see below:3.1). At any rate, Grimm's descriptions of syntactic phenomena, even if unsystematic, are surely much more numerous and detailed than the ones offered by the other historical-comparative grammarians of his generation and the successive one. For instance, Grimm deals with the following problems: the definition of subject, including the subject of infinitival constructions (Grimm 1898:23;129-130); the

[12] The *Deutsche Grammatik* appeared in four volumes between 1822 and 1837; the first volume (1822), dealing with phonology and morphology, had already appeared as first edition in 1819. The volume on syntax, the fourth one, appeared in 1837. *Deutsche Grammatik* was re-edited by Wilhelm Scherer, Gustav Roethe and Edward Schroeder between 1870 and 1898. This new edition contains, among other things, the handwritten notes that Grimm had been putting on his own copy of *Deutsche Grammatik*, in the course of his entire life. These notes, whose aim was mainly to clarify and partly correct the printed text, were inserted by the editors in square brackets.

distinctive properties of the verbs and their classification (pp.2-4); the problem of impersonal verbs (pp.262-267); the theory of case (passim). In the next chapter, I will return to some of these topics in more detail.[13] For the time being, one can note that Grimm seems to share Humboldt's position with respect to the verb: he stresses that the verb is always independent in the simple clause, while the noun is often dependent (Grimm 1898[1837]:294).

Pott's evaluation of General Grammar is not totally negative. either. With respect to the relationship between grammar and logic, Pott holds a position less critical than Steinthal (see below:2.2.2). One has to remember that Pott's polemics against Steinthal is connected to the struggle between the two scholars to achieve the position of the 'rightful heir' of Humboldt. Pott strongly criticizes many points of Steinthal's interpretation of Humboldt: e.g., he charges Steinthal with having abandoned 'Humboldt's sun' to enter 'Herbart's labyrinth' (see Pott 1880a:xxxiii). Directly polemizing against Steinthal, Pott gives a (partial) defense of logic and General Grammar: "in our view, neither logic, nor, with the necessary qualifications, the so-called *General Grammar* are such that, as Steinthal prescribes, they could or should simply and under any circumstances be dispensed with. (p.xliii)". Logical categories, albeit in a particular way, play a role in language: "Logical categories are, so to speak, mixed, or, e.g. in conjugation, even interwoven; they are not equally distributed or applied throughout all idioms and they are not equally contained in language and in its parts" (p.lxxix). Pott, anyway, seems to distinguish between what one could call "pure logic" (and he calls "teacher of thought laws") and the "logic of languages". Pott's view of the relationship between them could be summarized with the following passage, which immediately reminds us of Humboldt's positions (see above:21):[14]

> Certainly, the world of *sensations* and *thoughts* in general remains identical, or analogous, to itself: hence logic must surely constrain any language to give a linguistic expression, *in whatever way*, to the notions of *space* and *time* for example and to the resulting *relationships*, as well as to most general concepts or *categories* (in Kant's sense) and to many others of a more subordinate kind. But that logic has *no* direction to give to languages about the ways of expressing *how*, and concerning the possible *forms in which* it should do so. (Pott 1880:dxxxi).

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[13] Lühr (1989) develops an interesting comparison between Grimm's and Becker's approaches to syntax. Her conclusion is that Grimm was influenced by Becker in his theoretical conception of syntax as he developed a new and independent methodology of research: inductive vs. deductive. This sounds a bit too mechanical especially insofar as it concerns Becker, but Luhr's paper contains many correct remarks. For example, it notes that Grimm's interest in impersonal constructions has no equivalent in Becker's work.

[14] Pott himself (1880a:ccxviii) says that Humboldt did not totally give up General Grammar.

General Grammar cannot be fully abandoned: it is still very useful for the clarification of grammatical concepts (Pott 1880a:cci). Pott maintains that the way of doing General Grammar must be different from that adopted in the 17th and 18th centuries. This conception of General Grammar, which assigned the same structure to all languages was surpassed, by Humboldt (p.ccccx). The 'new' General Grammar has to be based upon 'reality' although it cannot avoid having recourse to philosophical insights (p.dxxix).

Pott's definition of syntax is explicitly borrowed from the philosophical tradition: quoting a passage from Herder, he equates what the latter calls 'connection of concepts' (*Verbindung der Begriffe*) with 'syntax' (Pott 1880a:clvi). Actually, Pott still seems grounded within the tradition of philosophical grammar regarding many points of his syntactic analysis. Although in some cases he is polemical towards Becker's view of language (Pott 1880b:461, where he sharply criticizes Becker's theory of "twelve cardinal concepts"), the kind of sentence analysis he seems to adopt is rather similar to Becker's. In particular, Pott seems quite close to the theory of the three *Satzverhältnisse* ('predicative', 'attributive', 'objective'; see below:4.2.1), with the addition of a further relationship, the one between subject and verb (Pott 1880a:xciii).

Summarizing so far, one could say that syntax was not totally neglected by the first historical-comparative grammarians, although they were engaged with it to different extents: Grimm and Pott seem more interested in syntactic problems than Bopp and Rask, who, however, do not totally overlook them either. The approach to these problems is in most cases not particularly different from the one held by the last representatives of the General Grammar tradition. The situation radically changes with Schleicher. As is well known, he makes a fundamental distinction between linguistics (*Linguistik*, *Glottik*) on the one hand and philology on the other. Linguistics, unlike philology, is not a historical science but it is rather similar to natural sciences. One of the main points of difference between linguistics and philology lies in the fact that the notion of "free human will" plays a fundamental role in the latter but not in the former (Schleicher 1850:2-3). Syntax does not (completely) belong to linguistics whose central role is assigned to morphology: morphology "totally falls to linguistics; syntax, which depends more on the individual's thought and will, tends rather towards the side of philology" (p.4).

A further proof of the almost exclusively morphological point of view adopted by Schleicher is offered by his treatment of the distinction between noun and verb and of the possibility vs. impossibility of assigning it a universal value (cf. Schleicher 1865). According to Schleicher, the opposition noun/verb belongs exclusively to Indo-European languages. This is due to the fact that it is illegitimate "to presume functions where no phonetic form signals their presence" (Schleicher 1865:502). And since not every language distinguishes

nouns from verbs morphophonologically, this distinction cannot be assumed to be a universal one. In fact, Schleicher argues, if the functions formally expressed only in some languages were actually universal, one could expect to find traces of these categories in every language: but this does not happen, as can be easily seen, for example, from the fact that a language like German does not show all the same tense distinctions as Ancient Greek (aorist, imperfect and perfect), or the gender distinctions of Slavic languages (like the one between animate and inanimate within the masculine gender); cf. Schleicher (1865:504-505). The end result is, therefore, that "languages which do not phonetically distinguish nouns and verbs do not even differentiate between noun and verb" (p.506). Languages which have not developed a distinction between verbs and nouns are similar to those animals which are so primitive that they use the same organ both for breathing and for digestion (ibid.).

Schleicher's work, therefore, marks the point of least interest in syntax in 19th century linguistics. This lack of interest was plainly connected to his conception of language as a "natural organism", "external to man". This view of language was harshly contested by Heymann Steinthal, who strongly maintained a psychologistic view: this had as one of its consequences a renewal of attention in syntax. We now turn to Steinthal's linguistic conceptions.

2. *Steinthal's program and the birth of psychologism in linguistics*

2.1 *Hegel, Herbart and Humboldt's influence on Steinthal*

Speaking of an 'original synthesis' may sound a bit strange. However, I think that this is the right way to designate Steinthal's theory of language. Indeed, it exhibits an entirely particular and innovative look in comparison to the theories which preceded it precisely because of the massive heterogeneity of its sources. This innovative capacity was accorded to Steinthal by many scholars, especially between the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. For instance, Ziemer (1883:5) ascribed to Steinthal the virtue of having started the psychology-based conception of linguistics whose end product was to be the neogrammarian movement. And Delbrück, in the historical introduction to his monumental treatise on the syntax of Indo-European languages (Delbrück 1893-1900 I:58), stated that he felt himself 'thankfully obliged' to Steinthal and that a book like *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (Paul 1920) could not have been written if his work had not already existed. A few decades later, Steinthal's fame undoubtedly lessened: Delacroix (1930[1924]:35) was somewhat committed to restate his importance, which lay in having recognized that language has to be understood and explained through psychology. Delacroix, like Delbrück, maintained that the germs of Paul's *Prinzipien* were already present in Steinthal's work.

One can still agree with Delacroix's evaluation. Steinthal's historical importance surely lies in having seen the strict linkage between linguistics and psychology, even though he was not necessarily the first to do so.[15] Furthermore, Steinthal considers the origin and the development of language not as a product of social convention but as a moment in the intellectual development of the individual. Finally, since he aimed to account not only for language as an individual cognitive capacity but also for language diversity, Steinthal worked out the notion of 'ethnopsychology' (*Völkerpsychologie*). *Not one* of these research lines (psychologism in linguistics, development of language seen as intellectual capacity, ethnopsychology) is likely to have originated with Steinthal. A psychologistic view of language was already held by Humboldt, as we have seen, and by the Hegelian linguist K.W.L. Heyse (see below). The view of language as a developing intellectual capacity is again an achievement of Humboldt's, and ethnopsychological prospects come partly from Hegel. Steinthal, however, succeeded in merging these various research lines into a unique system. He also defined a set of problems which lay at the heart of linguistic research beween the middle of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. Most linguists of that time, in fact, dealt with such problems, even if their solutions were often different from Steinthal's, or even opposed to them. Linguistic facts were indeed being constantly treated, in that age, as psychological facts. A psychologistic way of speaking (especially characterized by the use and the abuse of the word 'representation') marked every piece of linguistic research. The problem of language origin viewed as the development of intellectual capacities was the center of interest for many scholars: some of them, like, for instance, Paul, essentially agreed with Steinthal's conclusions, while some others, like Marty, opposed them (cf. below:2.4.2). Finally, ethnopsychology underwent considerable development due above all to Wundt's work; but it also had to face sharp criticisms, especially by Paul (cf. below:2.3.2). Ethnopsychology, furthermore, gave rise to the discipline named 'typology' by Georg von der Gabelentz (see 2.3.1). The fast decline of Steinthal's fame beginning in the first decades of the 20th century is most probably due to the fact that the *kind* of psychology adopted by him (which one could name 'associationistic' or 'representational' psychology) was coming to a crisis just in that period. As will be seen in what follows, such a crisis involved all psychological systems of that kind, Wundt's system included.[16]

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[15] An analogous attitude could be found in Humboldt before him (cf. Seidel 1935:42). Steinthal was nonetheless the first to build a psycholinguistic system based on Herbart's theories, as Seidel himself acknowledges.

[16] Funke (1927:part II) groups together Humboldt, Steinthal and Wundt as representatives of the same approach to psychology. Funke's position is certainly biased since he was strictly linked to Marty (see below:2.4.2). It attests an attitude that, being adverse to any 'representa-

I now turn to the scholars who, directly or indirectly, provided Steinthal with the elements for accomplishing his 'original synthesis'. The most important of them undoubtedly are Hegel, Herbart and Humboldt.[17] It is appropriate to remember that Steinthal was not a direct student of any of these scholars, nor could he have been: he was born in 1821, and enrolled in Berlin University in 1842, while Hegel died in 1831, Herbart in 1841 and Humboldt in 1835. Instead, he attended Bopp's lectures in linguistics as well as Trendelenburg's in logics and metaphysics. Both were supervisors of his *Habilitationsthesis* (Bumann 1965:4-5; 8). Steinthal's relationship with his mentors, therefore, was only indirect. In respect of Herbart and Humboldt, the relationship took place only through their writings. With regard to Hegel, it was mainly due to the work of a grammarian who was influenced by Hegelian philosophy: Karl Wilhelm Ludwig Heyse. Steinthal got into contact with him in 1848.[18]

Heyse's main theoretical work is his *System der Sprachwissenschaft* (1856), which remained unfinished and was published after his death by Steinthal himself. That Heyse largely follows Hegel's system of triads is clear from its very beginning. Heyse (1856:6-7) opposes an 'empirical' grammar to a 'scientific' one. Three points of view, or levels (*Stufen*) can be distinguished within the latter: 1) the 'subjective' one, 2) the 'purely objective' one and 3) the 'concrete' one. The tradition of General Grammar belongs to the first level: its basic error is trying to find the essence of language outside language itself, i.e. in the domain of pure thought (p.12). Historical-comparative linguistics belongs to the second level: it is preparatory work necessary for philosophical linguistics, but in itself it offers no knowledge of language essence and development (pp.14-15). The third level is that of 'philosophy of language', or 'linguistic philosophy'. It must start from "the idea of language in itself" (*von der Idee der Sprache an sich*), investigate its realization in all languages of the world and understand them as a "realization system" of that general idea (p.19). Philosophy of language has therefore to investigate the development of the "idea of language" in its essential moments. These are: 1) "the domain of generality": language as an organ of the human spirit. 2) "The domain of particular-

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tional' psychology, tends to forget the differences between Steinthal's conception and Wundt's, which had been considered as strongly opposed to each other until a few decades before (see below:2.3.3).

[17] Cf. Bumann (1965:1-2). Bumann's book is especially useful as a source of information about Steinthal's life and thought.

[18] On the contacts between Steinthal and Heyse, see Bumann (1965:6; 20-21). Heyse always stated that he autonomously worked out his linguistic theories even if he explicitly admitted that his philosophical formation was "entirely dependent on Hegel"; cf. Bumann (1965:20). – Heyse's father, Johann Christian August, was the author of a German grammar which, in various editions, had no less than 29 impressions in the years from 1814 to 1923. For more information on J.C.A. Heyse and his grammatical work, see Naumann (1986) and Forsgren (1992).

ity": language as an organ of the spirit of a people. 3) "The domain of uniqueness": language as an organ of the individual.

The question of language origin and language development has a very important place in Heyse's view. Heyse (1856:47) concedes that such a problem, viewed from the angle of historical linguistics (i.e., seen a *chronological* problem), is a pseudoproblem. He maintains, however, that it is absolutely fundamental from a philosophical point of view. Language is not an 'organism' autonomous and external to men, as Becker holds, but an organ of the human spirit (p.59). The statement that language is a necessary development of human organic life is a sign of "crass materialism" (p.61). On the contrary, language is the production of a natural development of the spirit, where two apparently contradictory elements agree with each other: "general and objective spirit" on the one side and "subjective spirit as free activity of the individual" on the other (p. 62). Language is an inseparable duality of concept and sound: they interpenetrate and define each other. Hence it is inappropriate to consider language as the expression of a system of concepts given in advance, or as the instantiation of the opposition between 'activity' and 'being' (see above:18). Becker starts building language from concepts, while he should end with them (Heyse 1856:68).

Heyse also faces the problem of the contradiction between language as a natural product of the human mind on the one hand, and the diversity of languages on the other. All humans are brothers by virtue of human reason (Heyse 1856:49-50). This common nature, however, has different degrees of accomplishment which are determined by the different cultural levels of the different nations, as well as by the different natural and environmental conditions (p.51).

Many of Heyse's ideas can be found in Steinthal's work. As Bumann (1965:21) has observed, it is even difficult to indicate which ideas are really Heyse's and which Steinthal's. Some questions, like the opposition between 'language' as a general capacity of the human mind and different 'language*s*' are at the heart of Steinthal's research program (which is, in this aspect, also influenced by Humboldt). Another problem that Steinthal went on investigating is language origin, which he considered, like Heyse, a philosophical, not a historical, problem. Surely, the most marked Hegelian features disappear in Steinthal. His arguments do not proceed through triads anymore, and, what is more important, 'phenomenology of the spirit' is replaced by Herbartian psychology.

According to Bumann (1965:6), Steinthal's interest in Herbart's psychology dates from 1847, hence it is more or less contemporary to his becoming acquainted with Heyse. This interest was probably caused by the anti-idealistic and especially anti-Hegelian atmosphere widespread by that time in Berlin, partly because of Trendelenburg's work (of whom Steinthal himself was a stu-

dent). I do not hereby mean that there exist major analogies between Herbart and Trendelenburg's philosophical systems: the anti-Hegelian attitude, however, was a common feature of the two scholars. Steinthal, by virtue of what I have called his "original eclecticism", draws some fundamental ideas from Hegel, directly or through Heyse. He wants, however, to replace 'spirit' (*Geist*) with Herbart's 'mind' (*Seele*) and with the 'representations' which originate within it. On the other hand, just as he does not accept Hegel's idealistic metaphysics, he does not agree with Herbart's realistic one either.

Among Herbart's psychological hypotheses, the so-called 'psychic mechanics' was the one that most influenced Steinthal. This mechanics is formed by the representations which combine with each other in different ways according to their nature and their respective similarity or dissimilarity. A student of Herbart's, M.W. Drobisch,[19] gave the following description of this combinatory interplay:

> Representations which reach the highest degree of clearness within consciousness either at the same instant or immediately after each other bring about connections which are permanent and which cannot be lost not even if both representations are forgotten for whatever length of time. The reawakening of only one of the two representations is enough to recall the other to consciousness as well, to a certain degree of clearness at least. [...] Such connections are called, in general, the *associations* of representations. If one wants to distinguish the connection of homogeneous representations from that of disparate representations, one could label, like Herbart, the former ones 'fusions', and the latter 'entanglements'.

These considerations coming from the Herbartian school clearly illustrate the main features of that 'associationistic' and 'representational' psychology which we referred to at the beginning of this section and which characterized many of the scholars we are to speak of (even if there are considerable differences and in some cases even oppositions between them). Drobisch's quotation also refers to the fact that representations can disappear from consciousness, without being lost: they can reappear later. These processes are caused by what Herbart calls the "boundedness of our consciousness", inside of which there is room only for a limited number of representations. When new representations are added, the old ones are 'displaced' and fall under the 'threshold of consciousness'. They can, however, be recalled into consciousness if favorable conditions hold.

'Unconscious representations' and their mechanism have a great role in Steinthal's linguistic theory, and they also gave psychologistic support to the neogrammarian resumption of the concept of analogy. In the interplay of repre-

[19] *Empirische Psychologie nach naturwissenschaftlicher Methode*. Leipzig: Voss, 1842 (quoted from Delbrück 1901:24).

sentations which forms 'psychic mechanics', Herbart's redefinition of the notion 'apperception' also finds its place. It no longer means, as in Leibniz or Kant, the highest unity of consciousness, but "the assimilation and the elaboration of representations by means of a series of other representations, of new ones by means of old, sometimes of old ones by means of new" (Bumann 1965:29). Steinthal also took this meaning of 'apperception' from Herbart, while Wundt assigned a rather different meaning to it (cf. below:2.3.3).

Among the scholars who can rightly be considered the inspirations of Steinthal's thought, Humboldt was the first to catch his interest. Humboldt also remained his fundamental point of reference during his entire academic life. As Bumann (1965:5) tells us, Steinthal was actively involved with Humboldt's theories from his first terms at the university. His doctoral dissertation (Steinthal 1847) explicitly takes a Humboldtian perspective and a detailed confrontation with Humboldt's doctrines pervades all his major writings (even if Steinthal's thought gradually became more autonomous and even critical of Humboldt's). Remember, finally, that Steinthal also edited Humboldt's linguistic writings.[20] I will now list the Humboldtian ideas which mostly influenced Steinthal's thought, perhaps modified in ways which are not always made explicit.[21] I will not check, however, the extent of Steinthal's fidelity to his source in any particular way, since what concerns us now is not Humboldt's doctrine but its use by Steinthal.

One of Humboldt's statements which mostly influenced Steinthal was the well-known one that language is not *érgon*, but *enérgeia*, together with its (almost) immediate corollary: the view of language as continuing creativity (cf. Aarsleff 1988:xx). According to Steinthal (1871:86), there is no difference between the early creation of language, its being learnt by the child and its daily use. Given this perspective, language is obviously not considered an "invention" by a social group with a communicative goal, but as a moment in the development of human self-consciousness. Clearly, Steinthal wished to underline his difference from Humboldt on this point: he maintained that he had made Humboldt's views 'immanent' since he had put the problem in a psychological, rather than a metaphysical, framework. Once again, it is not important for us to establish if Steinthal was actually right (however see above:fn.15). One has, however, to bear in mind that the assumption of an 'anticonventionalistic' view of language origin does not necessarily also imply the assumption of an 'innatistic' view. Such an assumption, indeed, was not made by Steinthal, at least not explicitly.

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[20] *Die sprachphilosophischen Werke Wilhelm von Humboldts*. Herausgegeben und erklärt von Dr. H. Steinthal. Berlin 1884.

[21] E.g., Porzig (1923:153) remarks that Steinthal took the concept of 'inner linguistic form' from Humboldt, but he employed it in a way that was largely different from Humboldt's.

Steinthal took from Humboldt also the idea that an inseparable connection binds language and thought. This connection was not conceived of in the tradition of General Grammar, which considered language as the expression of an independently given thought: instead, Steinthal viewed language as a "thought-forming organ" (Steinthal 1888:65). In this context, the notion of 'inner linguistic form' which Steinthal took from Humboldt became crucial. He developed and modified it in an essential way, but I think that he did not betray its original value. As should be obvious, such values are very difficult to define in an exact way: the endless debates about it are well-known.[22]

Delbrück (1904:47-48) sees an ambiguity in the concept of inner linguistic form: according to his interpretation, Humboldt should have distinguished, even if not explicitly, a "general" inner linguistic form from a "national" one. The first form would be shared by the whole human race; the second one would be peculiar to each nation. About twenty years later, Porzig (1923:151) maintained that inner linguistic form was an "ideal norm" on the basis of which any empirical language has to be evaluated. Porzig also held that these two conceptions of inner linguistic form struggle with each other in Humboldt's system. The first conception is of a more "psychological" kind and it refers to a state of the individual speaker. The second conception is more "logical", and refers to the proper expression of the "ideal contents of thought".

It would therefore seem that three different values may be assigned to the notion of 'inner linguistic form'. Of course, they do not contradict each other; on the contrary, they are interconnected: but they are different nonetheless. The three values are: 1) an individual psychic object; 2) a characteristic peculiar to a language; 3) a characteristic of language in general. Whether this interpretation correctly and fully accounts for the problematic Humboldtian concept or not, it is certain that all three values of inner linguistic form we have listed can be found in Steinthal's work. That of the individual psychic object comes into play when language development is dealt with. The remaining two play an essential role in the classification and evaluation of the various language groups (see below:2.2.3).[23] Among the additions and modifications performed by Steinthal to Humboldt's original concept of inner linguistic form, one can note the following ones: 1) the distinction of three 'stages' within it with respect to

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[22] I refer to the debates within the Humboldtian tradition. As will be seen below (2.4.2), a highly different meaning was given to the phrase 'inner linguistic form' by Marty.

[23] On this topic, Steinthal's terminology certainly does not make things clearer: as will be seen, he opposes 'form languages' to 'formless languages'. The puzzle can be solved, however, keeping in mind that, according to Steinthal (1860a:89), grammatical formation is present in all languages to a certain extent. It is the "idea of language" which is realized in a different way according to the different languages. See also below:2.2.3.

language development; 2) the building on its basis of a typological classification of languages very different from Humboldt's.

2.2 *The "divorce" of grammar from logic*

In a letter to Heyse (who was by then seriously ill) dated 10/1/1855, Steinthal wrote: "Sie müssen länger leben; ich verliere in Ihnen meinen einzigen Leser; und ich habe keine große Lust, für dieses Grimmsche und Beckersche Volk zu schreiben [you must go on living; I am losing with you my only reader; and I do not feel like writing for those Grimmian and Beckerian people]" (quoted from Bumann 1965:21). Evidently Steinthal felt in total disagreement with the purely historical view of language (which he personified with Grimm) and with the tradition of General Grammar (which he personified with Becker). We have seen in 2.1.1. that Becker's attitude towards such a tradition was not so slavish as one would imagine from Steinthal's account. We have even said (see above:19) that Becker's views on language origin do not seem too distant from Humboldt's and Steinthal's. We have also noticed, however, that Becker still conceives of language as an expression of thought, while Humboldt and Steinthal tend to assign it a more active role: a "thought-forming" capacity.[24] At any rate, Steinthal considers Becker as the champion of General Grammar and engages a sharp polemic against him in *Grammatik, Logik und Psychologie* (Steinthal 1855). This book, however, is not limited to such a polemic: he aims at showing the essential inappropriateness of any logic-based approach to language study, which he wants to replace with a psychology-based one.

In order to put Steinthal's case against logic in a correct historical perspective, it is very important to bear in mind that 'logic' is still used in a Port-Royal sense by Steinthal and by his contemporaries as well.[25] In other words, logic is conceived of as the standard of correct reasoning, as the "art of thinking". The transformation of logic in a calculus, its ensuing separation from philosophy and its gradual mathematization was still in its infancy: Boole's *Mathematical Analysis of Logic* appeared in 1847. Steinthal was certainly not acquainted with these new trends. A perhaps more astonishing fact is that such new tendencies are not even hinted at by any other linguists until the 1930's.[26] Logicians whom

[24] But remember the strict relation posited by Humboldt between 'laws of thinking' and 'grammatical forms'; see above:21.

[25] On the conceptions of logic across the different ages, see the insightful remarks in Seuren (1998:133-139).

[26] E.g., Jespersen (1924:114) quotes Peano but no reference to Russell is found throughout the entire volume, not even in the discussion about the verb 'to be'. It is difficult to think that Jespersen (or any other European scholar) could know the former but not the second. Jespersen is likely to have considered his own system and Russell's 'logistic' as mutually incompatible. It is not by accident, therefore, that a paper like Næs (1932), which is based just on logistic, had

they quote and discuss always stem from the Port-Royal, or, at any rate, from the philosophical tradition (like Brentano).[27] The reason for such behavior lies probably in the fact that psychologism, which dominated all of theoretical linguistics between the 19th century and 20th century, felt uncomfortable with the new symbolic logic. Today's logicians, in turn, show very little interest in the logicians of the psychologistic age, whom linguists knew very well. It is no accident that the monumental work by W. & M. Kneale (1962) does not mention Sigwart or Wundt, and it mentions Brentano only once (in a footnote), and it relegates J.S. Mill to the chapter dealing with "Logic after the Renaissance".

Let us now turn to the essential lines of Steinthal's polemic against logic-based grammars. Language and thought do not coincide: it is possible to think without words, as is the case in animal thought or in deaf-mute thought or in logical and mathematical deduction (Steinthal 1855:153ff.). Hence logic as the science of correct thinking, and especially of correct judgement cannot be identified with grammar. Language is independent from logic: therefore logic cannot even be the standard on which language has to be evaluated. Also, the principles according to which a grammarian or a logician judges the formation of sentences are essentially different. E.g., a sentence like 'This round table is square' fully satisfies the grammarian, but the logician condemns it, since it is 'nonsense'. On the other hand, sentences like *Dieser Tafel sind rund* [lit. 'this table are round'] or *hic tabula sunt rotundum* [lit. 'this (masc.) table (fem.) are round (neuter)'] do not worry the logician but they are condemned by the grammarian (Steinthal 1855:220).[28] Hence grammar isn't identical with logic since its categories are not the logical ones. It is, however, organized as an empirical science: therefore, the laws of the logical organization of knowledge apply to it.

The need to sharply differentiate between grammar and logic implies the necessity of clearly distinguishing the logical categories of 'concept' and 'judgement' from the linguistic ones of 'word' and 'sentence'. Grammar does not deal with concepts, but with "images of concepts". Whoever tries to single out concepts starting from language makes the same mistake as someone who tries to reconstruct history starting from the pictures of historical personages. In

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Jespersen's theories among its critical aims. They were criticized, among other things, for utilizing the logic of classes only, and not the logic of relations, and for wrongly assigning a special role to the grammatical function of 'subject'. "New" logic, therefore, especially criticized linguistics for its still being linked to the Aristotelian model. But the problem of which kind of logic is the most appropriate for natural language analysis is still totally open, of course.

[27] An exception is Michaelis' review of Frege's *Begriffsschrift*, which appeared in Steinthal's and Lazarus' journal *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* (Michaelis 1880). However, interest in Frege by linguists of that age seems to be limited to that event.

[28] For the different treatment of this problem given by Husserl (1928), see below:2.4.3.

an analogous way, sentence and judgement do not coincide (Steinthal 1855:175). "*If therefore the judgement is the image of the real activity, so the sentence is* - not at all the image of the judgement, but - *the image of the psychological process* by which the judgement has formed" (Steinthal 1855:195). Hence Steinthal replaces logic with psychology, concept with image, judgement with sentence, which is defined as "the apperception of a mental content" (Steinthal 1860a:100). As a matter of fact, this divorcing of grammar from logic never became definitive: in his scientific practice, Steinthal often made recourse to 'logical' notions, as we will see when dealing with impersonal constructions and with the notion of 'subject' in general (see below:3.3.1).

2.3 '*Ethnopsychology' and language classification*

As already mentioned in 2.2.1, a problem which Steinthal felt obliged to solve was the diversity of languages. With Humboldt's work and with the development of historical-comparative grammar, language diversity, which could be considered as an accidental fact in the framework of General Grammar, had gained the rank of an essential, not to say constitutive, feature of human language. As has been seen, Steinthal was a follower of Humboldt and had Bopp as one of his teachers. Furthermore, the problem of the opposition between 'language' and 'languages' was caught by Heyse, too. Steinthal, for his part, wished to put all these problems in a psychologistic framework. To do so, he had to add to general psychology another kind of psychology, namely 'ethnopsychology' (*Völkerpsychologie*). The first type of psychology dealt with language as a human capacity; the second one aimed at explaining the differences between languages.

One has not to think, however, that ethnopsychology was conceived as a mere ancillary science to linguistics. This was not so for Steinthal nor for Lazarus before him. Its founders thought that ethnopsychology was necessary to give an explanation of all psychological facts which are not accountable for in terms of individual psychology; among them, linguistic ones occupy the first place. Such facts can be adequately explained, according to Steinthal and Lazarus, only on the basis of the interrelations that individuals contract with each other within a community. Lazarus and Steinthal (1860:5-6) maintained that

> inside the human community fully particular psychological relations, events, and creations occur which do not concern at all man as an individual, nor originate from him as such. [...] In short, one is dealing with the mind of a totality which is different from all minds belonging to this same totality and which governs all of them. Let therefore the man as mental individual remain the topic of *individual psychology*, such as psychology has been until now; but let's put besides it, as its continuation, psychology of the social man or of human society, which we call *ethnopsychology*. (Lazarus & Steinthal 1860:5-6)

We will see in the following sections that ethnopsychology gained considerable success and that its elaboration probably reached its peak with Wundt. Paul (1920:10) started his attack against ethnopsychology by remarking that such a term means "two essentially different things": on the one hand, "the doctrine of general conditions of spiritual life in society", and on the other, "the particular features of the spirit of different the peoples". Ethnopsychology therefore deals with the social nature of language and with the diversity of languages as well. Paul saw one of the intrinsic weaknesses of this discipline precisely in this duality of tasks. From a historical perspective, one may remark that the first kind of problem later became the main topic both for sociologically-oriented and of pragmatically-oriented theories of language; the second kind developed under the name of 'linguistic typology'.

Let us now deal with the language classification worked out by Steinthal within his 'ethnopsychological' perspective. Its key notion is 'linguistic form' (on the different meanings of which see above:37). The main distinction is therefore the one between 'formless languages' (*formlose Sprachen*, A) and 'form languages' (*Form-Sprachen*, B). Within each of these two groups, Steinthal opposes 1) 'juxtaposing' (*nebesetzend*) languages to 2) 'modifying' (*abwandelnd*) ones. These latter languages can accomplish their modifications in a variety of ways. The end result is the classification which follows.

A) Formless languages:
   1) juxtaposing: languages of 'posterior India' (Thai and Burmese)
   2) modifying: a) Polynesian languages; b) Uralo-Altaic languages; c) Amerindian languages.

B) Form languages:
   1) juxtaposing: Chinese.
   2) modifying: a) Egyptian; b) Semitic; c) 'Sanskritic' (i.e., Indo-European).

What characterizes 'formless languages' is "the expression of formal content specifications as if they were matter" (Steinthal 1860a:317); for example, if the plural is expressed by means of words such as 'many', 'all', or the tense by means of particles such as 'once', or the prepositions by means of substantives such as 'front', 'back' (ibid.).

By contrast, the expression of grammatical relations through inflectional means is a characteristic of 'form languages'. As a consequence, also Subject/Predicate relations are expressed in the most developed way in form languages, which have a finite verb and a nominative ending. According to Steinthal (1855:364-365), however, the salient feature of form languages does not lie in subject-verb agreement, but in the fact that a relationship with the subject is explicitly shown by verb inflection. The subject in its turn can be expressed

or not (and it is always 'mentally added' anyway). The essential property of verbs in such languages lies therefore in the expression of personal relation.

The expression of the predication relation is poor in formless languages: in Annamese, the words 'mountain high' can mean both 'the high mountain' and 'the mountain is high' (Steinthal 1860a:325; cf. Steinthal 1847:24). Chinese opposes the two constructions through word order, but according to Steinthal such a process shows that "the development of the idea of language" is still slight, since word order is "a rhetorical means" (Steinthal 1847:24-26; 1860a:328). Only the most developed form languages (i.e., the Indo-European ones) are free of "poor expression" of the predication relation. In the Semitic languages, however, these poor expressions may sometimes occur. Such languages lack the copula and distinguish attributive from predicative constructions according to the finite vs. non-finite form of the noun or of the adjective. If both show the same form, the construction is attributive; on the other hand, if the noun, for example, shows the finite form and the adjective the non-finite one, the construction is predicative. If the predicate is definite, the third person singular pronoun is normally used as copula. When both subject and predicate, however, are definite, there are no formal means to distinguish between them. Hence it becomes necessary to take recourse to word order, but, as we have just seen, this is an unsatisfactory means, according to Steinthal (1860a:264-266).

In Steinthal's view, the most developed Indo-European languages (hence the most developed languages of all) are Greek (among ancient languages) and German (among modern ones). The fact that the German predicative adjective is not inflected would seem to bring about a contradiction between such an evaluation and what has just been said about the expression of predication through formal means. Steinthal, however, maintains that such a way of expressing the predicative relation is totally adequate (and it is therefore another proof of the excellence of German), since "a nominative has no real sense within a predicate", the only task of the predicate being that of ascribing a property to the subject "in a wholly abstract way". Therefore, "the most appropriate form" is the abstract stem (Steinthal 1860a:303).

3. *Developments of psychologism*

3.1 *Ethnopsychology in Gabelentz*

The general psychological view of language held by Steinthal achieved considerable success, as we have just said. Also, the special 'ethnopsychological' perspective of research inspired many scholars. Their investigations, however, had different developments, which were often critical of the original model (a possible exception is Misteli 1893). Among those linguists inspired by Steinthal, but essentially independent of him, one has surely to quote Georg von der Gabelentz, who published two important essays about 'comparative syntax' in

Lazarus and Steinthal's journal (Gabelentz 1869; 1874-75). In his main work, Gabelentz (1901[1891]:3) distinguishes three meanings of the term 'language': a) 'discourse' (*Rede*); b) 'a totality of expressive means for any thought'; c) 'linguistic capacity' (*Sprachvermögen*), i.e. "a faculty innate to all peoples of expressing thought by means of language". In this connection, one can see a partial similarity with some distinctions proposed by Steinthal. Within 'language in general', Steinthal distinguished 'speech' (*Sprechen*), 'linguistic capacity' (*Sprachfähigkeit*), 'linguistic material' (*Sprachmaterial*) and 'language' (*Sprache*). The relationship between language as a universal human capacity and language diversity is another topic common to Gabelentz and Steinthal (the latter is expressly acknowledged as a forerunner in the field at the beginning of Gabelentz 1869). For Gabelentz (1874-75:130), 'comparative linguistics' is constituted by two parts: the *genealogical* one, which orders languages according to their kinship, and the *ethnopsychological* one, whose aim is to account for "the possible relationship of linguistic expression and the concepts or thoughts to be expressed".

Gabelentz then follows the research line traced by Steinthal, and, before him, by Humboldt: the analysis of the relationship between language and *ethnos*. Gabelentz also introduced the term 'typology' in linguistics[29] and sketched the future tasks of the discipline in terms one would today label 'implicational' (Gabelentz 1901[1891]:481). We have to remark, however, that the criteria which govern Gabelentz's typology are rather different from the ones followed by Humboldt and by Steinthal (and this difference is often stressed by Gabelentz himself). First of all, Gabelentz frequently insists on the prerequisite that the investigation of "exotic" languages be done first-hand by the typologist and not on the basis of grammars or dictionaries compiled by other scholars. Moreover, he denies the alleged superiority of Indo-European languages over other language groups. As a consequence, the opposition between 'form languages' and 'formless languages' disappears in his system. The fact that Gabelentz was a specialist of East Asian languages surely helped him to adopt such views. Indeed, if a language only uses syntactic means to express grammatical relations, this fact does not imply that its grammar has a lesser "forming strength". Speaking of Chinese, Gabelentz (p.362) notes: "that the effort towards formation was weaker here than in our Indo-European ancestors can be hardly maintained. Chinese has only followed other ways and worked out a different matter: not word-formation, but syntax". Here Gabelentz was

[29] This term was evidently felt to be so new that it was not even understood: Gabelentz's (1894) article, commonly (and here as well) quoted as "Typologie der Sprache... etc." is originally entitled "*H*ypologie der Sprache", which of course makes no sense. As the editors of *Indogermanische Forschungen* say, proofs were about to be sent for correction to Gabelentz when his death was announced.

facing a problem already touched on by Steinthal: the different evolution affecting two 'form languages', Indo-European and Chinese, the former supposedly reaching a higher development in respect of the latter (cf. Steinthal 1860a:277-278; see also above:42). Steinthal, as has been seen, labeled the means used by Chinese to indicate the predication relation (i.e., word order) 'rhetorical': Gabelentz, on the contrary, views it as a wholly syntactic process. At any rate, Gabelentz remarked, many of the features allegedly showing the superiority of Indo-European languages with respect to other language groups are not restricted to those languages only. Moreover, Indo-European languages show features which could be considered as typical of 'inferior' languages. Gabelentz (1901[1891]:327) quotes the fact that the nominative case appears both on the subject and on the nominal predicate: this is a confusion that Finnic languages, for example, do not incur.

In addition, the notions of 'inner linguistic form' and 'outer linguistic form' derived from Humboldt and Steinthal are also thoroughly revised by Gabelentz. He states that no language can be considered 'formless'. The only questions to ask are what is formed in any given language and by which means such a form is brought about. The former question is "about the inner form", the latter one "about the outer form" (Gabelentz 1901[1891]:327). After a detailed survey of Humboldt, Steinthal and Misteli's points of view, Gabelentz notes that a good deal of the linguistic facts adduced by these scholars as representative of the different degrees of linguistic form concern more the outer form than the inner one (p.343).

Moreover, Gabelentz very consistently pursues the investigation of the actual connections between the structure of a given language (or a given group of languages) and the 'spirit' of the peoples who speak it. For example, comparing Malay languages and Semitic languages, which show remarkable structural similarities such as the verb in first position, he notes that remarkable affinities also exist between the histories of the two peoples. As Phoenicians were great seamen and the Arabs great explorers, so Malays boldly sailed the open sea (pp.411-415).

Hence Gabelentz rejects the evaluation side of ethnopsychology, i.e. the attempt to describe different languages as different degrees of realization of the 'idea of language'. On the other side, he fully accepts what we could call the relativistic side of ethnopsychology, namely the hypothesis that an inseparable connection exists between the structure of language(s) and the structure of thought.