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REVIEWS

Key Thinkers in Linguistics and the Philosophy of Language

Siobhan Chapman, Christopher Routledge (eds.)

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This dictionary-like book comes as a useful reference book for people interested in languages sciences. There are eighty entries alphabetically arranged in terms of the linguists' or philosophers' surnames. Each entry consists of three parts, with an introduction to the thinker's essential ideas as the main body, followed by "Primary works" by that thinker, which is in turn followed by "Further reading". The eighty articles come from thirty contributors (the two editors included). And the eighty 'key thinkers' are as follows:

Aristotle (384–322 BC), Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694), John Langshaw Austin (1911–1960), Alfred Jules Ayer (1910–1989), Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975), Roland Barthes (1915–1980), Émile Benveniste (1902–1976), George Berkeley (1685–1753), Basil Bernstein (1924–2000), Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949), Franz Boas (1858–1942), Franz Bopp (1791–1867), Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), Karl Brugmann (1849–1919), Deborah Cameron (b. 1958), Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), Noam Chomsky (b. 1928), Donald Davidson (1917–2003), Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), Rene Descartes (1596–1650), Michael Dummett (b. 1925), John Rupert Firth (1890–1960), Jerry Fodor (b. 1935), Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), Peter Geach (b. 1916), Nelson Goodman (1906–1998), Joseph Greenberg (1915–2002), Algirdas Greimas (1917–1992), Herbert Paul Grice (1913–1988), Jacob Grimm (1785–1863), Michael Halliday (b. 1925), Georg Hegel (1770–1831), Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), Charles Hockett (1916–2000), Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), David Hume (1711–1777), Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), Daniel Jones (1881–1967), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Jerrold Jakob Katz (1932–2002), Saul Kripke (b. 1940), Julia Kristeva (b. 1941), William Labov (b. 1927), Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), Gott-

fried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), David Lewis (1941–2001), John Locke (1632–1704), Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), Andre Martinet (1908–1999), Karl Marx (1818–1883), John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), Lesley Milroy (b. 1944), Richard Montague (1930–1971), George Edward Moore (1873–1958), Charles Morris (1901–1979), Charles Santiago Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), Jean Piaget (1896–1980), Kenneth Pike (1912–2000), Plato (427–347 BC), Karl Popper (1902–1994), Hilary Putnam (b. 1926), Willard Van Orman Quine (1908–2000), Frank Plumpton Ramsey (1903–1930), Rasmus Rask (1787–1832), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976), Harvey Sacks (1935–1975), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), John Searle (b. 1932), John Sinclair (b. 1933), Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904–1990), Peter Frederick Strawson (b. 1918), Deborah Tannen (b. 1945), Alfred Tarski (1902–1983), Tzvetan Todorov (b. 1939), Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetzkoy (1890–1938), Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). It is not the intention of this review to validate or invalidate the inclusion of any one of those eighty scholars as a noteworthy thinker because given the same opportunity we probably will come up with quite varied name lists of key thinkers, as determined by our academic background, research interests, knowledge of the vast field of language sciences, perspectives and foci, orientations and purposes, among other factors (cf. Sebeok 1966). However, there are certain issues that this book leads to that cannot go unnoticed, for example, what are the criteria of a “key thinker”? How is a philosopher’s influence on and relevance to linguistics determined and evaluated?

Linguists themselves, either theoretical or applied, are thinkers, as attested to somehow by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s (1749–1832) remarks “Jeder Mensch, weil er spricht, glaubt über die Sprache sprechen zu können.” (Language Vol. 15, 1939:123) The distinction between them, therefore, is not necessarily that between a thinker-linguist and a non-thinker-linguist. A key thinker-linguist is presumably a linguist who distinguishes himself/herself in terms of an original idea, a novel approach, or a unique theoretical framework and this idea, or approach, or framework of his/hers has either local (i.e. in one subfield, say, morphology or phonology) or global influence in the field of language sciences. However, if this standard is applied or adopted, many contemporary linguists missing from the above list become qualified, e.g. what about Jan Firbas (1920–2000), whose concept of communicative dynamism and the theory of functional sentence perspective are well-known (Firbas 1992)? What about František Daneš’s concept of thematic progression and his theory of three-level approach to syntax (Daneš 1964, 1974)? What about Petr Sgall and his group’s work on the theory of functional general description (Sgall 1967, 2006; Sgall et al. 1986)? And what about Susumu Kuno’s concept of empathy and his theory of functional syntax (1976, 1987, Kuno & Etsuko Kaburaki 1977)?

Besides, one could not but wonder why Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929), Henry Sweet (1845–1912), Otto Jespersen (1860–1943), and Vilém Mathesius (1882–1946) are not counted as “key thinkers” and missing from the list (all of them are included in Sebeok 1966; cf. Jakobson 1929, 1966; Hjelmslev 1942–1943; Haislund 1943; Trnka 1946; Wrenn 1946). Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, founder of Kazan School of Linguistics, a forerunner of structural linguistics, is known for his theory of the phoneme and phonetic alternations (1895; Stankiewicz 1972). Henry Sweet was representative of “The English School of Phonetics” as well as a distinguished grammarian (Sweet 1877, 1892, 1898, 1906, 1913; Firth 1946). Otto Jespersen’s

contributions touch almost every area of linguistics one can think of at the time, phonetics, morphology, syntax, history of language, philosophy of grammar, language teaching, and artificial language (Jespersen 1904, 1909–1949, 1913, 1924, 1928). Vilém Mathesius, founder of the Prague School of Linguistics, a forerunner of structural-functional linguistics, is noted for his theory and practice of linguistic characterology (1928, 1975).

The missing of these great names from this book makes one wonder if the development of linguistics is really that fast that the predecessors' work quickly becomes outdated, or rather if it is characteristic of present-day linguistic practitioners to be oblivious of their predecessors' work.

There are two suggestions for the improvement. First, historical accuracy should be attended to. There is an inaccurate account on page 140, "Jakobson moved to Prague in 1920, where he and Trubetzkoy co-founded the Prague School of Linguistics in 1926." The fact was it was Mathesius and Jakobson who co-founded the Prague Linguistic Circle (*Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, cf. Mathesius 1936; Vachek 1966; Toman 1995). Second, English translations, if any, should be referred to for writings in languages other than English. For example, on page 227, *Undersøgelse om det gamle Nordiske eller Islandske Sprogs Oprindelse* (1818) is listed as one of the two primary works by Rasmus Rask. It would be much more preferable to include its English translation right after the Danish title, i.e. *Investigation of the Origin of the Old Norse or Icelandic Language*, by Rasmus Kristian Rask; translated by Niels Ege. Copenhagen: The Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, 1993. And for those who can read Danish but have no access to the original, e-resources, if any, should be referred to, e.g. the digitized Rask 1818 edition is available at <http://books.google.com/>. The same holds true for Franz Bopp's 1833–1852 (p. 43), among others.

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