

Linguistica ONLINE

Issue Seven

ISSN 1801-5336

Readings in Axiomatic Functionalism

I

February 2008 • Department of Linguistics and Baltic Languages, Masaryk University

Linguistica ONLINE

ISSN 1801-5336

electronic journal of the Department of Linguistics and Baltic Languages at Masaryk University

home: <http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/>

email: linguistica@phil.muni.cz

editor: Aleš Bičan (bican@phil.muni.cz)

READINGS IN AXIOMATIC FUNCTIONALISM I

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/issues/issue-007.pdf>

prepared by: Aleš Bičan (bican@phil.muni.cz)

published: February 18, 2008

copyright of all material submitted is retained by the author or artist

CONTENTS

Issue Seven

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/issues/issue-007.pdf>

Foreword by Aleš Bičan

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/issues/intro-007.pdf>

Aleš Bičan

Signum-theory in Axiomatic Functionalism (in margin *Ontological Questions in Linguistics* by Jan W. F. Mulder and Paul Rastall)

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/bican/bic-003.pdf>

previously published in *Sborník prací filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity A 55* (2007)

Barry Heselwood

Simultaneous phonemes in English

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/heselwood/hes-001.pdf>

previously unpublished

Paul Rastall

Linguistic units and *-en* verbs in English

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/rastall/ras-001.pdf>

previously unpublished

Barry Heselwood

A methodological argument against Mulder's parallel vs diverse determination distinction

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/heselwood/hes-002.pdf>

previously published in *La Linguistique* 31 (1995)

Paul Rastall

Mulder's parallel and diverse determination distinction, A reply to Heselwood

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/rastall/ras-002.pdf>

previously published in *La Linguistique* 33 (1997)

Barry Heselwood

Parallel and diverse determination revisited: A reply to Rastall

<http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/heselwood/hes-003.pdf>

previously unpublished

FOREWORD

Aleš Bičan

In this issue of *Linguistica* ONLINE I am happy to introduce the readers to a linguistic approach known under the name *Axiomatic Functionalism*. It is a functionalist and structuralist approach to linguistics, though it extends over to semiotics as a whole. The approach was originally set forth by Jan W. F. Mulder in his doctoral dissertation *Sets and Relations in Phonology*, published in 1968 in Oxford, England. It was further developed by Mulder in association with the now late Sándor G. J. Hervey at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. The approach is closely related to functionalism around the French linguist André Martinet and has even some affinities to functionalism of the Linguistic School of Prague, especially to the theories of its classical pre-World War II era. It is for that reason the present issue of *Linguistica* ONLINE is hoped to be useful and interesting to many linguists. Not only from the comparative point of view but also because Axiomatic Functionalism has a lot to offer as an example of a scientific theory.

* * *

The first paper in this issue is the editor's own article on Axiomatic Functionalism called "Signum-theory in Axiomatic Functionalism" and serves as an introduction to the approach. It was originally a review of *Ontological Questions in Linguistics* by Jan W. F. Mulder and Paul Rastall but on advice of a fellow linguist it became an introduction to Axiomatic Functionalism with special attention to one aspect of the approach, the theory of sign. It also discusses Martinetian double articulation and explains why Axiomatic Functionalism does not agree with the traditional interpretation of this principle.

The rest of the papers were written by Barry Heselwood of the University of Leeds, English, or by Paul Rastall of the University of Portsmouth, England. It is very pleasing these two scholars submitted their original articles to *Linguistica* ONLINE.

Barry Heselwood's first, previously unpublished article "Simultaneous phonemes in English" discusses one aspect of the phonotactics of English, namely the problem of word-initial clusters. It has been often remarked that the sequence of the particular phonemes of these clusters is fixed and generally not permutable. The article discusses this fact in connection with the theory of phonology in Axiomatic Functionalism and proposes a solution according which the non-permutable clusters are to be regarded as simultaneous bundles called *phonthemes*. It further explores this notion and applies it to the phonic data of English.

The first article by Paul Rastall "Linguistic units and *-en* verbs in English" has not also been previously published. It touches upon the grammatical theory of Axiomatic Functionalism and explains the nature of linguistic units and distinctions between them, in particu-

lar between morphological and syntactical complexes. The theoretical framework is applied on a class of verbs in English called *-en* verbs. Rastall argues that the class is actually very diverse, ranging from genuine morphological complexes where the *-en* element is clearly a suffix, to so-called pseudo-composites where the *-en* element cannot be identified as a separate morphological entity. As such the article offers several alternative analyses different to the traditional ones.

The last three articles may be a little bit technical and theoretical in nature but they offer several interesting insights. They all discuss two notions of the theory of Axiomatic Functionalism introduced by Jan W. F. Mulder: the distinction between “diverse determination” and “parallel determination”. This distinction is mostly applicable in grammar where it aims to account for the syntactical difference between the immediate constituents in constructions like “the blue vase” (parallel determination) vs. “John likes Mary” (diverse determination).

In “A methodological argument against Mulder’s parallel vs diverse determination distinction” (originally published in *La Linguistique* 31 (1995)) Heselwood argues against the distinction and explains why “parallel determination” and “diverse determination” cannot be maintained as valid concepts in Axiomatic Functionalism. His claims were later countered in “Mulder’s parallel and diverse determination distinction, A reply to Heselwood” by Rastall, originally published in *La Linguistique* 33 (1997) and now reprinted in *Linguistica* ONLINE. Heselwood in turn wrote a further response and submitted it to *La Linguistique*. However, for one reason and another, the response has never been published and it is now for the first time that it is published here as “Parallel and diverse determination revisited: A reply to Rastall”.

As a whole the three articles are a nice example of how a scholarly discussion should look like. One should never take anything as a given and should be able to question it. Both Heselwood and Rastall explore various aspects of Mulder’s distinction and arrive at different conclusions, and though apparently not in absolute agreement they show the strength of Axiomatic Functionalism: the intrinsic ability to test its consistency, adequacy and simplicity and its openness to be improved by logical thinking. Few linguistic approaches can, alas, honestly claim the same.