

Worlds apart? Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev: a tale of a competitive friendship

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Abstract. The paper contrasts the careers, theories and organizational contributions made by Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev respectively. Though both are prominent structuralists, they diverged on several important points as to their views of theories and language. Their histories are intertwined because they fought for supremacy in the field of linguistics and collaborated on the journal Acta Linguistica. Their different views were, however, not fully expressed in the 1930s since an important paper by Hjelmslev was suppressed and remained unpublished until 1973. During Jakobson's escape from Czechoslovakia Hjelmslev was instrumental in bringing Jakobson and his wife to Denmark where he worked for half a year before going on to Norway. We document the various meeting points and divergences as well as the close friendship which despite their theoretical differences united them.

Keywords: Roman Jakobson, Louis Hjelmslev, history of linguistics, history of structuralism

1. Introduction: Structuralisms

The aim of this volume as a whole is to give the reader an overview of structuralism, particularly from a European vantage point. We focus on the discipline where it all started: Linguistics. This implies a definition of what we mean by linguistic structuralism. By linguistic structuralism we mean all traditions of research

- a) which take as their starting point the distinction between internal linguistic structure and external forces,

- b) which readily acknowledge a distinction between static and dynamic linguistics
- c) and which take the autonomy of linguistics as a discipline to be a worthy goal.

Several distinct currents within the history of linguistics fulfill these criteria making it necessary to distinguish both a number of traditions and at least three phases in the development of structural linguistics.

The first phase would be from the appearance of Saussure's *Cours* 1916 and until the end of World War 2. In this phase, the centres of the movement are in the periphery of the linguistic landscape: The Netherlands, Switzerland: Geneva, Scandinavia (Norway: Oslo and Denmark: Copenhagen) and Prague.

The second phase would be from the end of World War 2 and until the appearance of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957). In this phase, structuralism establishes itself as hegemonic linguistics in the cultural centres of Europe, notably Paris.

The third phase would be identical to the period of dominance of Chomskyan linguistics and may still be in effect, though we would be inclined to think that it ended around the turn of the century. The characteristic feature of this period is that global linguistics falls under the hegemony of American Chomskyan linguistics, albeit with some notable exceptions such as Denmark (but not the rest of Scandinavia).

We shall not be concerned with the third phase in this paper. Rather, we detail one of the first phase European general linguistic traditions, the so-called glossematic tradition (Spang-Hanssen 1961, Rasmussen 1992, Gregersen 1991), and contrast it with those traditions which were represented by the name and efforts of Roman Jakobson (Flack 2016, Sériot 1999), i.e. Praguian phonology and Jakobsonian grammar. The idea is to get a better grip of what glossematics was and was not by using the inspiration and competition offered by Roman Jakobson as a backdrop. The paper is structured by the various Congresses of Linguists featuring both of our protagonists starting with the first one in The Hague (1928) and ending with the Oslo Congress of 1957.

2. The beginning: First International Congress of Linguists (1928) and the two protagonists, Jakobson and Hjelmslev

In 1928 the linguists of Europe and the United States of America met for the very first time as ‘general’ linguists. Until then, there had been congresses for the Oriental philologists and for the Americanists. In addition, there were a number of local societies, among them the *Société de linguistique de Paris*, but this call was unspecified as to which branch of linguistics you perceived yourself to belong to or which branch of languages you specialized in.

The initiative to the Hague Conference came from the Netherlands (Kiefer and van Sterkenburg 2012). C.C. Uhlenbeck (1866–1951) became the first president and Jos. Schrijnen (1869–1937) the first Secretary General of the organization, which was established during the Congress under the name of *Comité International Permanent des Linguistes*, the CIPL. Please note that this is an organization of and for linguists, not defined as being for the discipline, viz. linguistics. The creation of a venue for linguists proved to be decisive for the history of structuralism in that it created an arena of scientific combat for hegemony within the discipline. This is why we have chosen to structure this paper according to the landmarks of the very first Congress and the last Congress attended by our protagonist, Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965) and his friend-and-competitor-to-be Roman Jakobson (1896–1984).

Hjelmslev, however was not the only Danish linguist present. At this first international congress of linguists also two other Danish linguists, viz. Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942) and Louis L. Hammerich (1892–1975) met Roman Jakobson, Nikolaj Sergejevic Trubetzkoy (1890–1938) and Serge Karcevskij (1884–1955) for the first time. The latter three took centre stage at the meeting by promoting a phonological programme sponsored by the Linguistic Circle of Prague. Judging by the documentation of the Congress, the three Danish linguists did not take part in the formal discussions. However, the acquaintance with the ideas of the Prague phonologists had a decisive influence on the development of Danish linguistics. Brøndal was very positive to the new ideas of the Prague phonol-

ogists, and he became friends with Trubetzkoy (in particular) and with Jakobson. Hjelmslev was more interested in grammar and thus closer to Karcevskij. However, what made the strongest impression on Hjelmslev when he met the Prague phonologists and noticed their impact, was the effective organization of the Prague Circle. This is probably the main reason why he got in closer contact with Jakobson at the next international congress of linguists in 1931 (see below).

2.1 Introducing the protagonists

2.1.1 Roman Jakobson

Roman Jakobson was born 11th of October 1896 into a rather wealthy Russian Jewish family. His father was an engineer, originally an Austrian citizen, Josef Jakobson, and his mother Anna was born Volpert (Jakobson to the Swedish police, Jangfeldt 1977). As a very young man he wrote poetry (Toman 1995, 18). He was schooled in dialectology and ethnology and practiced what his teachers had told him in performing studies of the living language as used by the peasants around Moscow. Jakobson took a broad interest in their daily life studying not only the peasants' language, but also their narratives and their traditions (Toman 1995, 47 ff.). The early interest in art and folklore was to remain an enduring trait of Jakobson's research profile.

Roman Jakobson was a founding member of the Moscow linguistic Circle in 1915 and functioned as its president 1915–1920 (Toman 1995, Thomas 2014, Table 1). We shall come back to the concept of a circle below (section III). Jakobson's linguistic training took place before the 1917 revolution and was rather traditional: he was educated as a historical linguist and a dialectologist. Actually, the Moscow Circle, Jakobson's first Circle, formed part of the efforts at the Moscow Commission for Dialectology (Toman 1995, 47).

Jakobson took an active part in cultural life already before the Russian Revolution of 1917 and continued during the first revolutionary years in the aftermath of the revolution, joining the Russian version of the Futurist movement and he reminisces about this period as his Futurist years (Jakobson, Jangfeldt & Rudy 1998).

In 1920, Jakobson moved to Prague as a member of a Red Cross delegation whose mission it was to find and arrange for the homecoming of Russian prisoners of war. Once in Prague, Jakobson was among the founding members of the Prague Linguistic Circle (*Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, CLP) in October 1926 (Toman 1995; Thomas 2014) which was in some ways modelled on the Moscow Linguistic Circle but was also aimed at invigorating the cultural life and linguistic research of the then newly founded Czechoslovak republic.²⁹⁹ This, at least was the stated goal of the Circle's first president Mathesius (1882–1945) (Toman 1995, 71 ff.). Soon, primarily thanks to the efforts of Roman Jakobson and Vienna based Trubetzkoy, the CLP hammered out a common programme which was to initiate a new epoch in international linguistics: Phonology became the watchword.

Jakobson in his 1962b Retrospect underlines that the modernistic attempts of revolutionary Russia were part of a broader European picture presaging or directly leading to some of the fundamental tenets of structuralism, viz. human cultural efforts seen as internally structured and being parts of a larger general structure seen as a whole. Jakobson mentions the relative nature of relationships thereby also drawing on modern physics. Structure may be found not only in linguistics but (first) in the Cubism of Braque and Picasso (1908 and onwards) and possibly also within the field of music (Stravinsky) and certainly poetry (the Futurists). Jakobson collaborated with the poet Khlebnikov (1885–1922) and was a close friend of the revolutionary Russian poet Majakovski's (1893–1930). In other places he also mentions the philosopher and literary theoretician of formalism Shklovskij (1893–1984).

2.1.2 *Louis Hjelmslev*

This broad cultural background differs significantly from the background that Louis Hjelmslev reveals in his programmatic debut in 1928 with *Principes de grammaire générale*. Here, Hjelmslev draws upon the rich central European, primarily German, tradition of

299. For the cultural and philosophical background for the Prague school, see Raynaud (1990).

general grammar, a tradition which incidentally is remarkably absent from the authoritative history of linguistics in the 19th century written by Holger Pedersen (1867–1953) (1924). Pedersen was Hjelmslev's venerable teacher and predecessor as the University of Copenhagen professor of Comparative Linguistics (cf. Jørgensen, this volume).³⁰⁰ In the book you find some of the fundamental ideas of what would later be baptized glossematics, above all the principal aim: the foundation of a general linguistics, the establishment of an abstract system within which the categories are found as possibilities; moreover the claim that synchronic description must precede diachronic description and that linguistics must be immanent and empirical. Hjelmslev was trained by some of the leading authorities in Indo-European comparative linguistics, and viewed from that point of view the *Principes* is a testament of Hjelmslev's radical approach as a scholar. The wish for a revolutionizing of linguistics so that a general theory would become the central aim was fully shared by Jakobson. Hjelmslev and Jakobson further shared a common goal of a systemic, structural approach, and also the focus on which differences made a difference in the analysis such as the introduction of e.g. 'minimal pairs'. They did not, however, share all tenets but for their disagreements see below, sections 5.1 on phonology and section 5.2 on grammar.

Louis Hjelmslev was born 3rd of October 1899 as the oldest son of a Professor of Mathematics, Johannes Hjelmslev. Hjelmslev senior became a trusted member of the Danish research organization: To our knowledge he is the only person to hold high posts at the University of Copenhagen, as a member of the Carlsberg Foundation and as a central member of the Rask Ørsted Foundation for Research simultaneously. Thus, Hjelmslev junior grew up knowing a lot about Danish academic life, how it was organized and how it was financed. During his time of studies with Holger Pedersen

300. In the memorial speech Hjelmslev gave about Pedersen after his death in 1953 (Hjelmslev 1954), Hjelmslev explicitly remarks that one will search in vain for the ideas of v. Humboldt, Steinthal and other German philosophical or general linguists in Pedersen's famous book on the history of Linguistics in the 19th Century (Pedersen 1924).

Hjelmslev wrote a prize essay on Oscan and Umbrian (1920) which inaugurates his structuralist views. He then worked on his exams which were passed in 1923. Immediately after that, he was sent to Prague to study with Josef Zubatý (1855–1931). He was engaged to be married at the time to Vibeke Mackeprang, his future wife, and was pining for her and thus he apparently did not take part in much linguistic life in Prague. He did learn Czech though.

Hjelmslev wrote a huge manuscript for what was later to become the book *Principes de grammaire générale*. This was intended for a doctorate but his mentor Holger Pedersen wisely counselled him also to write something historical. Thus the *Principes* was instead published in an abbreviated version by the Royal Danish Academy (Gregersen 1991a, 181 ff.). The Academy generously provided Hjelmslev with a large number of copies and in 1929 he distributed them to his old and new friends, among them Karcevskij. Taking Pedersen's prudent advice Hjelmslev in addition wrote a doctoral dissertation in the guise of a technical treatise on a central theme of Baltic linguistics, inaugurated by Ferdinand de Saussure: the Lithuanian and Latvian changes of intonation (Hjelmslev 1931).³⁰¹ He was given notice by the Dean of the Faculty at the University of Copenhagen that he would get his degree in June 1931. This paved the way for his bold initiative: To create a Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen.

3. The entrepreneur Hjelmslev establishes the Cercle Linguistique de Copenhagen (1931) on the model of the Cercle Linguistique de Prague (1926)

3.1 Prehistory and first decade of the Linguistic circle of Copenhagen

The second international Congress of linguists took place 1931, in Geneva. Though it was not planned as such, it turned out to become also a commemoration of the late Ferdinand de Saussure who was

301. Those who have missed examples illustrating real language in Hjelmslev's later works should acquaint themselves with his 1931 doctoral dissertation. Long stretches are taken up with examples and counterexamples making it more of a collection of materials than any other work by him.

used as a patron saint in interventions both by the Genevans and the Praguians. All the main structuralists, including, Brøndal, Hammerich, Hjelmslev, Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy, were present and this was the congress which would mark the breakthrough of phonology. Importantly, Hjelmslev took the initiative to establish the Cercle linguistique de Copenhague by calling a preparatory meeting before the congress but the founding meeting took place after the event of the Congress.

The degree of dr. phil. secured made it possible for Hjelmslev to invite a group of young linguists (the oldest one was 39 years old) to a meeting at his home “where he would present a plan [...] of organizing regular reunions for discussions of common interests, optionally creating an association” (quoted after Gregersen 1991b, 67 (our translation)).

This preparatory meeting was held June 24, 1931, i.e. before the Second Linguistic Congress in Geneva. Having returned from the Congress, where he had had discussions with the leading Praguians, Karcevskij, Jakobson and Trubetzkoy, Hjelmslev issued a formal invitation to a regular founding meeting to be held September 24, 1931, The Young Turks had agreed to invite two older professors but only Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942) who was a Professor of Romance at the University of Copenhagen (and his wife) responded.

It has some implications for our argument below to note here that was it not for Louis Hjelmslev, the Linguistic Circle would not have come into existence. He was the moving spirit, the entrepreneur – who learned his lesson from Prague.³⁰² He also was a dominant figure in the life of the Circle for its first three years until he had to move from Copenhagen in the autumn of 1934.

Hjelmslev mentions in the circular he sent out before the first meeting of the founding members September 1931 that he had had exchanges with members of the Prague Linguistic Circle at the second Congress of Linguists, the Geneva congress of 1931 (repeated in [Hjelmslev] 1951:8). No specific names are given. But at the meeting itself, 24th of September 1931, Hjelmslev informed the others

302. In the case of Prague, this is not quite equivalent. Mathesius had organized a circle but it was Roman Jakobson who radicalized it (Toman 1995).

present that he had promised Roman Jakobson that he would organize a description of the Danish standard language according to Praguian principles and as part of the *Internationale Phonologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.³⁰³ This, then would be one of the first aims for the newly founded Circle enrolling it in the phonological army on the move as one of several foot soldiers.

In 1934, taking advantage of his degree in Indo-European comparative linguistics, Hjelmslev became the first teacher of Indo-European and general linguistics as a ‘docent’ (equivalent to ‘Reader’) at the newly³⁰⁴ founded University at Aarhus. Since that is in Jutland, many hours away from Copenhagen, he was not very active in the Linguistic Circle from the fall of 1934 and until 1937 when he succeeded Holger Pedersen in the chair of Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen. During this period Brøndal and his associates dominated in the life of the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen (Gregersen 1991b, 98–101).

After 1937, when Louis Hjelmslev was back, he and Viggo Brøndal had spirited academic discussions in the Circle meetings, often spurned by the other members who loved to listen to the two giants crossing swords (Fischer-Jørgensen 1981). But these two main figures of Danish structuralism had gradually developed to become each other’s favourite enemies. The early friendship turned into the opposite already in 1933 when Brøndal prevented the publication of Hjelmslev’s second major statement of principles, the so-called *Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques* manuscript (which would only be published posthumously as Hjelmslev 1973a). In 1937 Brøndal had tried (in vain) to persuade the Faculty at Copenhagen to appoint himself – and not Hjelmslev – as Holger Pedersen’s successor. Finally, in 1942 when Brøndal was terminally

303. This is also mentioned in the first circular of the Association under the headline: Synchronic phonology of various languages: “L. Hjelmslev (Copenhague) se propose de publier une description phonologique du danois moderne.” Jakobson (1932b, 325). In the same Bulletin, it is mentioned that Viggo Brøndal prepares a treatise on the system of vowels (ibid. 324). Cf. Brøndal (1936) in *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague* 6.

304. Aarhus University started in 1928.

ill, he confronted Hjelmslev in an attempt to deprive him of the future leadership of the Linguistic Circle. Hjelmslev emerged victorious (Brøndal died shortly afterwards) but he did not escape scars (Gregersen 1991b). From then on, the only Danish structuralist programme on the table in Copenhagen was that of glossematics, a programme which took pride in combating any transcendental (including any Brøndalian) perspective on linguistics.

3.2 The Structure of Linguistic Circles

There is no doubt that the idea of creating a circle was inspired by Prague. But which specific features of the Prague circle could be imported at all? In this section we focus on the organization and document how closely the Copenhagen Circle was modelled on the original Prague Circle.

3.2.1 Discussion meetings, not a lecture society

At the planning meeting before the actual foundation mentioned above, Hjelmslev had given an introduction where he made no secret of the fact that there was both a positive reason: the possibility for Danish linguists to join in the discussions started at the first Congress of Linguists in 1928 and continued at the second one, and a negative reason to create a new organization. The negative reason accords very well with what Toman writes about the Prague Circle. Toman quotes Mathesius:

Neither learned societies nor scholarly groups were able to create an atmosphere in which discussion could flourish. ... The Prague Linguistic Circle is an exception to this. In its meetings which take place twice a month, and are alternately located at the English Department of Charles University and at members' homes, more than half of the time is reserved for discussion; and it is usually quite difficult to make the participants part, notwithstanding the late hour. In my opinion, there are two reasons for this: first, the intimacy of the atmosphere, which is a result of the fact that the Circle is a closed society whose members have grown together through frequent contact; secondly, there is identity of

intellectual interests which exercises mutual attraction. (Mathesius 1929, 1130, cit. in Toman 1995, 155)

Learned societies were not the answer to the crisis in research. A collaborative effort was. And regular meetings outside of the formal institutions would create for the young linguists an intimate arena for discussion.

3.2.2 *Common reference points: critical reception of the current international literature, hosting international like-minded researchers*

The very idea of creating a working association for young like-minded linguists presupposed that at the outset they shared some ideas about what they wanted to do with linguistics but also and more importantly a will to share presuppositions. A critical reception of current ideas in order to find a common way forward was stimulated by having young researchers review new literature and having them present their own ideas for discussion (cf. Fischer-Jørgensen 1998). Little by little a library was formed and when the *Acta Linguistica* came into existence as the leading journal for structuralist linguistics (1939), cf. below section 4.3, Copenhagen would benefit from receiving a host of books for review while also benefitting from the numerous exchange arrangements which were put into place with other societies and associations.

This library of international literature was to be an asset for the members, in particular the younger members, who could not afford to buy so many books themselves. Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (1911–2010) reports in her memorial speech on Roman Jakobson and Denmark that her teacher L.L. Hammerich got the Prague publications straight from the press – and regularly passed them on to her for her to read (and to keep). Thus the *Travaux* made lasting impressions on her (Fischer-Jørgensen 1997, 18). To sum up: The international literature was made available for members and critically discussed at the meeting creating ‘the magic of a common language’ as Toman puts it. Add to this that the circles were the obvious meeting point when foreign researchers visited the country. Thus there was constant traffic between Copenhagen and Prague

(cf. below on the visits to Czechoslovakia by Hjelmslev and Brøndal and the visits by Jakobson to Denmark).

3.2.3 *A plan of publications distributed according to genre: Bulletins du Cercle, Travaux du Cercle and finally a journal, i.e. the Acta Linguistica*

The organization of the linguistic circles which Jakobson participated in shared the characteristic that they were well organized and no less well published. Jakobson himself made numerous contributions to the Czech press, there were minutes for every meeting and all jubilees were duly celebrated. Contributions from Prague and abroad found a venue in the *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*. The famous fourth volume in this series included a number of central contributions by Jakobson.

Hjelmslev closely emulated the CLP but added the publication of a *Bulletin* probably modelled on the *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*. For the first *Bulletin* in 1933 he offered a manuscript based on his presentations of a theory of grammatical correlations. The committee did not, however, accept this offer (cf. the ‘avis au lecteur’ in Hjelmslev 1973). As mentioned above, this was the first confrontation between Brøndal and Hjelmslev. It was certainly not the last one but it had the unfortunate consequence that this significant paper was not published at the point in time when it would arguably have made a difference. The paper e.g. contains a detailed critique of Roman Jakobson’s approach to the theory of linguistic categories, in particular his binarism.

The first *Bulletin* covering the year of 1934 appeared in 1935. Some additional volumes did appear but then the series stopped with no. VII (covering the years 1940–41 but only appearing 1946), only to be restarted after Hjelmslev’s death with the collected *Bulletins* VIII–XXXI appearing 1970 and covering the period 1941–1965. Finally, the bulletins were incorporated into the *Acta Linguistica* as they are still.

The first volume in the series of *Travaux du Cercle Linguistiques de Copenhague* appeared in 1945. The CLC never succeeded in presenting any truly collective publication like the famous *Thèses* of the CLP, the closest equivalent being *Travaux* V, a festschrift dedicated

to Hjelmslev on his 50th birthday (1949). Jakobson contributed to this book and this is indeed the starting point of the correspondence between Jakobson and the somewhat younger Eli Fischer-Jørgensen which would last until Jakobson's death (Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020).

We treat the history of the *Acta Linguistica*, the journal which originally was to have been a joint Prague-Copenhagen effort, briefly below, section 5.3.

3.2.4 *The committees*

The CLP seems to have had a system of committees (Toman 1995 calls them commissions and mentions four of them, 119). In the history of the CLC they were equally pivotal. The CLC established three committees already at their first meeting, a phonological one (with Brøndal and Hjelmslev among its members), a grammatical committee (same story) and finally a committee for caucasiology with only two members, Hjelmslev and Kai Barr (1896–1970). Soon a bibliographical committee would also be established.

The background for having a phonological committee was, as mentioned above, partly that Hjelmslev had promised Roman Jakobson to initiate a phonological description of modern Danish, but in the preparations for the founding meeting, Hjelmslev also mentioned Baudouin de Courtenay, Saussure, Gauthiot, Sapir as well the Praguians (Gregersen 1991, 74).

Hjelmslev made no secret of the fact that he hoped that the grammatical committee would have the same impact for grammar as Praguian phonology had had for the study of phonology. It is even mentioned in the minutes: closely modelled upon the phonological offensive the grammatical committee was to sketch a programme, show its applicability in a few case studies and then present to the International Congress a proposal for international cooperation (Gregersen 1991b, 75). Hjelmslev had talked to Karcevskij about this possibility and at the meeting he urged haste since the Praguians, according to Karcevskij would expand into grammar soon, based upon the Karcevskij approach (probably his *Système du verbe russe*, Karcevskij 1927).

Brilliantly planned, but unfortunately it did not work out that way. Most likely because there were two theories of grammar present

in the committee and two theoreticians, Viggo Brøndal and Louis Hjelmslev. This is the subject of section 5.2, below.

4. Circles: a structuralist alternative to societies

4.1 Circles and societies

Toman 1995 (*passim*) and Radunovic 2017 both discuss the concept of a circle against the backdrop of the learned societies which were characteristic of how academic life was organized before the advent of structuralism. The society is above all a place and occasion for lectures. The circle, however, is an arena for discussion and, we might add, for forging theoretical weapons to be used in the international battle for hegemony within a field. This presupposes a certain balance between the creative individual and his or her group. The creative individual must reap the benefits of a critical assessment of his or her contributions while the less creative individuals get the benefits of belonging to a group.³⁰⁵

There were developments within the CLP documented by Toman which gradually made the circle look more like a political battle

305. That this also might be a matter of life stages such that the young benefit incomparably more than the established researchers is an important theme for Margaret Thomas's analysis of Jakobson's circles (Thomas 2011) where she poses the question of why he did not establish a Circle in Cambridge, Mass. In this connection it might be illuminating to quote from a letter Jakobson wrote to Fischer-Jørgensen in 1949: "As for your mention of the theories of the Prague School and the Americans, I still less believe in the existence of such schools. America presents a great variety of approaches, and some Yale linguists are erroneously considered in Europe to represent the American linguistic doctrine. It is rather an interesting but not at all typical minority. And in the linguistic life in such American important centers as Harvard, New York, or San Francisco, you will find almost no traces of the influence of this group. I feel still more that the notion /2/ [of] "Prague School" is an artificial abstraction. I feel almost nothing in common with Mukařovský, no common denominator between Vachek and Havránek, etc." (Roman Jakobson to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen 14.03 1949 (letter 2), cit. in Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 121 ff.). The historical context of this statement might make it less general: Havránek and Mukařovsky were both behind the Iron Curtain whereas Jakobson was being investigated by the FBI for his possible Communist leanings.

organization than an academic union of liberal individuals (Toman 1995, 153 ff.). At the outset, the CLP was a house with many different inhabitants, guided by the idea that if they acted in unison they could make a difference. They were dead set against positivism which they saw as monographic treatments of endless disparate facts; they were for radical theory, for modernism as anti-historicism and more or less vaguely for joint ventures. They did, however, gradually develop a common purpose and that found its perfect outlet at the International Congresses of Linguists. Thus they participated with gusto at the first Congress where a joint paper by Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy was a sensation, e.g. making Antoine Meillet feel that Indo-European linguistics was ‘*démodé*’ (quoted by Jakobson in his report on the congress in *Prager Presse* (Jakobson 1928c, 197)). At the second Congress in Geneva 1931 they made history by presenting their acclaimed *Thèses*.

Jakobson sent a letter to Trubetzkoy describing the spirit which had changed the Prague Circle:

The initiative core of the circle has now concluded that the circle in its function as a parliament of opinions, as a platform for a free discussion, is a relic, and that it has to be transformed into a group, a party, which is tightly interlocked as far as scientific ideology is concerned. This process is taking place at present with much success. An initiative committee of sorts has established itself in the circle, including Mathesius, a very able linguist, Havránek, Mukařovský, Trnka and myself. This transformation of the circle literally inspirited its members; in fact, I have never seen such a degree of enthusiasm in the Czechs at all. (Roman Jakobson to N.S. Trubetzkoy 16.04.1929, after Toman 1995, 154).³⁰⁶

The development gradually took the CLP from a parliament to a party, it seems. The CLP even had a paragraph of exclusion. Members who were found to counteract the purpose of the Circle would be excluded. At the end, only one person was in fact excluded (Toman 1995) but members had to sign a declaration saying that they

306. Toman notices that in the reprint of the Jakobson Trubetzkoy correspondence, the word ‘party’ was omitted (Toman 1995, 6).

would work for the purposes stated. Actually, Hjelmslev signed it 20th of February 1939 (Toman 1995, note 7, 288).

4.2 *The two circles in their national context*

Conditions in Copenhagen were in some respects the same as in Prague but also in important respects different. This analysis of the differences aims to establish as a given that the Copenhagen Circle was focused on matters linguistic in the strictest sense whereas the Praguians responded to societal needs of another kind by addressing wider issues.³⁰⁷

Copenhagen was a city characterized by an established, very secure and very well-respected historical linguistics; it was monocultural through and through and regarded itself as the leading academic city in Scandinavia. Prague, in contrast, was multilingual and replete with academic refugees from Ukraine and the Soviet Union. Besides the famous Charles University there was a German university and newly established universities at Brno and Bratislava. Thus there were also new jobs to be had. Add to this, that the Czechoslovak Republic itself was new and in search of a Central European identity *vis à vis* Russia and Germany. The Circle had a mission to accomplish here and an interested audience, in particular when they addressed issues related to purism and normativity (Toman 1995, 162). Thus the interest in the language of poetry and language contact could also be seen as a response to the Circle's national context.

5. Forging structuralism but which one? (1931–39)

In this section we detail the continuous dialogue between Jakobsonian and Hjelmslevian approaches to the analysis of both expression and content.

307. We shall not go into the matter of (pan)Slavic identity and Eurasianism though we are fully aware that these themes are essential at least to an understanding of what the ideological aims of Trubetzkoy's efforts were (cf. Sériot 1999; Toman 1995, ch. 10).

5.1 Phonology and/or Phonematics, equivalents or alternatives?

The Prague effort was focused on phonological analysis. In November 1934 Roman Jakobson wrote to Louis Hjelmslev in continuation of his promise of 1931 to deliver a phonological description of modern Danish inviting him to give a paper at the phonological section of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in London 1935. This is the first (surviving) letter in the correspondence between Jakobson and Hjelmslev (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 95).

Some background: The phonologists were aware that Copenhagen was a potential ally for the movement. They originally opted for Viggo Brøndal and elected him as a member of the Board of the International Association of Phonology when meeting in 1933 at the Rome Congress (Jakobson 1935, 83). Brøndal was from 1934 the chairman of the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle which was duly thanked for its backing (*ibid.* 84). Brøndal lectured in Prague 1936 and 1937 (Baecklund-Ehler 1977, 23) and seemed the right choice for a Danish connection although he was not really a phonologist.

Though the Linguistic Circle at Copenhagen had turned out to be a disappointment in so far as it had turned down Hjelmslev's effort at forging a new structuralist grammar, Hjelmslev was not alone. He had met and joined efforts with the trained phonetician and field linguist Hans Jørgen Uldall (1907–1957). The glossematic twins Hjelmslev and Uldall decided to accept Roman Jakobson's invitation but asked for two slots: One for a general introduction which would also be a theoretical contribution, and one for the actual analysis of Danish from a phonological (or, as it turned out, a 'cenological') point of view.

The paper given by Hjelmslev in London 1935 was a blatant attack on some aspects of phonology. It constituted the opening of an internal front inside the structuralist movement between the transcendentalists and the internalists which was to dominate the developments at Copenhagen. Apparently, the paper also was perceived as an attack. It made Trubetzkoy think that to a certain degree Hjelmslev was to be considered an "enemy" of the phono-

logical cause (Jakobson 1975, 345).³⁰⁸ It is thus relevant to describe what had happened in the field of phonology, from the invitation (or Hjelmslev's own offer) to give a phonological description of Danish in 1931 and until Jakobson's invitation to Hjelmslev in 1934. Already in October 1931 Hjelmslev had presented a review of a text of Trubetzkoy in the CLC, criticizing that Trubetzkoy let 'phonemetics' be based on articulatory-acoustic phonetics, and on the psychological basis of 'Sprachgefühl' (Gregersen 1991b, 81). October 19, 1931, Hjelmslev wrote to Holger Pedersen commenting on his own use of the term 'phonologique' in *Etudes Baltiques*, Hjelmslev (1931):

Det er med velberaad hu, at jeg har bibeholdt 'phonologi(qu)e' i den betydning, det altid har haft og stadig har i fransk, og at jeg (for øvrigt i overensstemmelse med Jakovlev), der samarbejder med Pragerskolen) benytter fonematik for læren om fonemer. Jeg böjer mig nødig for den terminologiske terror, den – i øvrigt saa fortræffelige – Pragerskole har søgt at udøve; næsten alle de i Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague IV foreslaaede betegnelser er jo uhyrligheder, som för eller senere maa ændres, f.eks. gennem den i Genève nedsatte terminologiske kommission. (KB NKS 2718 folio)

[I have consciously kept 'phonologi(qu)e' in the sense it has always had and still has in French, and similarly I use phonemetics (by the way in accordance with Jakovlev who is a collaborator of the Prague school) when referring to the doctrine of phonemes. I would hate to succumb to the terminological terror which the school of Prague, in other respects so brilliant, has sought to impose; almost all the suggested terms in the Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague IV are atrocities which sooner or later will have to be changed, e.g. through the commission on terminology established in Geneva.]³⁰⁹

308. Whereas Uldall would probably soon be converted to the faith, Brøndal assured him (ibid.).

309. Hjelmslev is referring to the TCLP 4, 1931, 309–322: *Projet de terminologie phonologique standardisée*.

The official version of this harsh statement is a short terminological introduction in the dissertation, but formulated rather more vaguely, and with no reference to the Praguians at all.

Apart from the terminological introduction, however, Hjelmslev had not published anything in the field of phonology/phonematics until the presentation at the Congress in London. So it might not have been so obvious to the phonological leadership what was to be expected from the Danes except a description according to best Praguian practice of Modern Danish. Hjelmslev had agreed to deliver a phonological description, hence he was invited to give a paper on just that in the section of the Congress organized as a showcase for the International Association for phonological studies.³¹⁰ Hjelmslev and Uldall for their part were very much aware that the London Congress would be some sort of a battle field between the Prague phonology and the quickly developing new structural theory of what they would call glossematics.³¹¹ In a letter (December 7, 1934) to Uldall, Hjelmslev proposed that they give coordinated papers. He reasons:

Saa meget har jeg I hvert fald lært af fonologerne, at det er af politisk betydning at demonstrere, at vi er et helt regiment. Wir marschieren! Hvis man ikke laver massepsykose, kan man ikke gennemføre noget særstandpunkt på nogen kongres. Dette har staaet mig klart siden 1931, og jeg lavede oprindeligt Lingvistikredsen i det haab, at vi kunne optræde som en flok med en grammatisk teori, et haab, som Brøndal lagde øde.³¹² Jeg har nu nyt haab for fonematikken. (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 31)

[I have learned that much from the phonologists that it is politically important to demonstrate that we are a full regiment. Wir maschieren! If you do not create mass psychosis you are not able to follow through on any particular point of view at any congress. This has been clear to me

310. But it might have been the case that Brøndal in his dealings with both Trubetzkoy and Jakobson at the Rome congress had warned them that Hjelmslev had developed a number of heretical views.

311. At this point in time it was still called phonematics.

312. Cf. here 5.2.

since 1931 and I originally established the Linguistic Circle in the hope that we could be a collective with a grammatical theory, a hope which was laid waste by Brøndal. I now have new hope for phonematics.]

The central idea of the theory, now called ‘phonematics’, presented by the two Danes is the “demand that the individual phonemes should be defined on the basis of possibilities of combination, implications (i.e. phonemically determined alternations), and alternations (in the restricted sense of grammatically determined alternations)” (Fischer-Jørgensen 1975, 116). However, *vis à vis* the Praguians, Hjelmslev’s introduction seems more important as a general statement:

By *phonematics* I understand a science which treats phonemes exclusively as elements of language [...] As phonemes are linguistic elements, it follows that no phoneme can be correctly defined except by linguistic criteria, i.e. by means of its function in the language. No extra-lingual criteria can be relevant, i.e. neither physical nor physiological nor psychological criteria. [...] The phonological phoneme is defined as a *sound-idea* or a *phonetic intention*, and phonology establishes the systems of phonemes exclusively on sound-ideas and language feeling (Hjelmslev [1936] 1973, 157).

After Hjelmslev’s presentation, Uldall presented the description of the Danish phonematic system, and here among other interesting innovations introduced a new description of the dentals /t/, /d/, and /ð/ (cf. below, later in this section).

Let us pause here briefly. Both Jakobson and Trubetzkoy were inclined to describe the arena of linguistics as a battleground. Just one example out of many. Having discussed the structural view coming to the fore at the Copenhagen Congress in 1936, Roman Jakobson goes on using the political discourse of a party:

Die vereinzeltten Versuche, gegen diese Grundsätze anzukämpfen, wurden als verfehlt zurückgewiesen (Jakobson 1936b).

Hjelmslev's distancing himself from the psychological bases of the phoneme definition might not have been seen as that heretical by Jakobson, however. As Jakobson later wrote (quoted above): "Trubetzkoy's 'psychologism' often considered in internation[al] literature as a mark of the Prague School was emphatically refuted from the beginning, by almost all Prague linguist phonemicians." (Roman Jakobson to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen 14.03 1949 (letter 2), cit. in Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 121 ff.).

In 1937, Hjelmslev published a paper *Accent, intonation, quantité* which does include some critique of Jakobsonian views, (viz. Jakobson 1931), but the next important step in their mutual discussion undoubtedly occurred on October 25, 1937. On that day Hjelmslev, invited by Jakobson, presented his paper on *Forme et substance linguistique* to the CLP.³¹³ In this paper, Hjelmslev (1938, 1939a) stated that linguistic form is independent of the substance in which is manifested, that form can only be recognized and defined by making abstraction from substance. Hjelmslev again explicitly distanced himself from the phonologists' definition of the phoneme on the basis of substance (Hjelmslev 1973, 99). According to Baecklund-Ehler (1977, 23) this presentation seems to have troubled Jakobson very much.

Jakobson at that time seemed to become more independent of Trubetzkoy, insisting on both *distinctive features* instead of phonemes as the basic units and on *binarism* instead of a flexible approach to oppositions as fundamental concepts in phonology (but still advised detailed attention on the part of linguists to the relation between form and substance).

It is interesting in this connection to read the first part of the dialogue summarizing Jakobson's experiences in Denmark 1939 at a distance. Jakobson reminisces:

My months in Denmark, where I was in close collaboration with the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle with Viggo Brøndal (1887–1942) and Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), major figures in the history of the great

313. Hjelmslev would also give a paper on his work with the Rasmus Rask heritage at the Scandinavian Seminar (in Czech, cf. Jakobson 1937).

Danish linguistic tradition, forced me to concentrate deeply on the theoretical bases of phonology. On my own part, I questioned the attempts of the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle to remove phonic substance as an object of our science, and I insisted on the opposite necessity of detailed attention on the part of linguists to the relation between form and substance. At the same time, these discussions led me to carry to its logical conclusion the principle of relativism in phonological analysis. This principle had been enunciated already in the first two volumes of the *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, where the very idea was considered as a secondary notion, derived from the idea of phonological relations. But despite the premise, one can find here and there in the phonological works of the Prague orientation during the late 1920s and 1930s instances where phonological units are defined in absolute psychological or physical terms, rather than relational ones. I must admit that these debates on methodology in Copenhagen taught me to maintain a greater rigor in my definitions so as not to substitute illicitly absolute material terms for the strictly relative terms demanded by exact science (Jakobson and Pomorska 1983, 35–36).

The story as told with hindsight thus became that Jakobson learned from the Copenhagen discussions. It is evident that he has learned from Hjelmslev (and not Brøndal with whom he largely agreed already before arriving) but that he has not been convinced by Hjelmslev to change sides: The linguist still has to pay detailed attention to the relation between form and substance. Relativism as it was used e.g. in *Preliminaries* to contrast formant structures, is the approved result.

In 1949, Hjelmslev would turn 50 and his colleagues in the CLC decided to publish a joint work celebrating his theoretical efforts. Jakobson was invited to contribute a paper for *Recherches structurales* as the Festschrift was called, and chose to write “On the Identification of Phonemic Entities”. Here Jakobson actually quotes Hjelmslev from the London Congress 1935, that “no phoneme can be correctly defined except by linguistic criteria”. In order to give an example of the above-mentioned relativism/relational terms, Jakobson uses the example from Danish presented by the Uldall Hjelmslev team in London:

In different positions the relation strong/weak can be rendered by different variants [...] In Danish this opposition strong/weak is rendered, for example by *t* vs. *d* in strong position, and by *d* vs. *ð* (Jakobson 1949, 211; this example is reused in *Preliminaries* (Jakobson, Fant & Halle 1952, 5–6)).³¹⁴

After their direct confrontation in 1937 and Jakobson's period in Denmark (1939–1940), the next time Jakobson and Hjelmslev discussed phonematics/phonology was at a meeting in the CLC on May 26 1950.³¹⁵ The discussion was introduced by Eli Fischer-Jørgensen (see Fischer-Jørgensen 1966). In a letter to Fischer-Jørgensen, Jakobson expresses his thanks to her for a “lucid exposition of our view on the ultimate phonemic entities” (Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 149). To Hjelmslev he writes: “The discussions with the friends from our Linguistkredsen was for me the most dramatic and instructive course I passed through.” (30.07.1950, (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25). According to the resumé of the meeting in Fischer-Jørgensen (1966, 24f.), Hjelmslev's principal critique of Jakobson's theory was again that the “distinctive-feature analysis is purely substantial.” In Jakobson 1979, 52, he still refers to Hjelmslev's “attack” at the CLC-meeting in May 1950.

314. See also a critical letter from Fischer-Jørgensen to Jakobson addressing precisely this analysis in Jensen & D'Ottavi (2020), 174 ff.; Jensen (2021).

315. As with all meetings in the CLC, this meeting is listed in the relevant Bulletin, in this case Bulletin VIII-XXXI. The reference there directs the patient researcher to the paper by Fischer-Jørgensen on “Form and Substance in Glossematics”, published in the *Acta Linguistica* X,1. In section 4.1 Fischer-Jørgensen lists three reasons given by Hjelmslev for rejecting the distinctive feature analysis “In a discussion with Roman Jakobson in the linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, 26.5.1950, and in private discussions” (note 77). Among the three reasons we find the third one of theoretical interest: “There is a jump in the analysis when we pass from phonemes (taxemes) to distinctive features, because this point means per definitionem that the analysis on the basis of selection is exhausted. On the feature level, there will be solidarity between the categories. The categories voicing, labiality etc. cannot occur separately (as is the case with vowels and consonants, where a syllable can consist of cv or v alone) but are all present in all taxemes” (Fischer-Jørgensen 1966, 24).

The dialogue between Hjelmslev and Jakobson continued in the form of references: In 1956 Jakobson (with Halle) criticized Hjelmslev's "algebraic" approach, while in 1971, six years after the death of Hjelmslev, Hjelmslev's focus on form "out of touch with substance" is called "futile".

However, Jakobson in this period sometimes still goes to Hjelmslev to find the better term. In the Jakobson Papers at MIT you find a note: "Hjelmslev VIII Congress, 107: 'complementary distribution' much better term of 'mutual exclusion' (Daniel Jones)" In Jakobson's Retrospect 1962 (SW 1, 641), you find: "'mutual exclusion' (in other terms 'complementary distribution')", though without mentioning either Jones or Hjelmslev.

Hjelmslev in general refers to Trubetzkoy and not to Jakobson, when writing on the Prague School in phonology. In the proposal to elect Jakobson as a member of the Royal Danish Academy, Appendix A below, he positioned Jakobson as a member of "the circle of linguists mainly of a Slavic origin who assembled around N.S. Trubetzkoy" and his organizational skills are highlighted just as much as his linguistic oeuvre. This is probably both because Hjelmslev positioned himself as Trubetzkoy's major adversary within the group of structuralists and because he saw Jakobson as a prolific and innovative researcher but not as a great theoretician. Though Jakobson was early overtly critical of Ferdinand de Saussure (which was the impetus to the intervention by Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy at the first Congress of Linguists), in particular of his distinction between synchrony and diachrony, it is probably fair to say that Jakobson never attempted to formulate a full-fledged theory of language which could be compared with what is in *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* (the OSG), Hjelmslev 1943). In the proposal to elect Jakobson to the Royal Academy, Hjelmslev refers to Jakobson's lectures at the University of Chicago and announces that this synthesis, "an integrated theory of language structure" will appear as the title "Sound and Meaning". But the book never appeared.

There are important similarities between the stances towards phonological analysis taken by our two protagonists Jakobson and

Hjelmslev. They both use the function of commutation between the expression level and the content level in order to find the primary units of the phonological analysis. They also both of them dissolve the phonemes into features but here the similarity stops: Jakobson always gives the sound substance an important place in the establishing of phonemic patterns (e.g. the French one, in Jakobson & Lotz 1949). And in *Preliminaries* he further proposed a limited set of universal distinctive features to be defined on a basis which is articulatory as well as acoustical and auditive. Jakobson deliberately insisted on the close relationship between form and substance in his analysis. He also – admittedly partly as a result of his discussions with the Copenhageners – included a relational approach in the establishing of phonological units.

Hjelmslev, on the other hand, rejected the reference to substance in the definition of the ‘phoneme’, in glossematics called ‘expression taxeme’. The taxeme “is defined purely formally as a point of intersection in a net of functions, and independently of its manifestation in substance” (Fischer-Jørgensen 1975, 128). The equivalent to the feature level in the glossematic theory is the analysis into glossemes which again is devoid of substance and carried out separately for each category, i.e. the consonants and the vowels since their definition is based on their different role in the establishment of the next higher unit, the syllable. In glossematics great importance is attached to the establishment of categories according to syntagmatic relations, and thus to distributional phenomena. But the main difference lies in the insistence of Hjelmslev to integrate the analysis of expression (*signifiant*) and content (*signifié*) in one grand all-encompassing theory based on dependencies.

5.2 Grammar: CLP vs. CLC

It seems that Serge Karcevskij (the structuralist grammarian who had been a pupil of Charles Bally (1865–1947) and had taken a course with Saussure) was *the* member of the Prague Circle with whom Hjelmslev at the outset had most in common. Hjelmslev had a profile as a (general) structuralist grammarian already before the

first Congress of Linguists and he sought friends and inspiration based on that. Karcevskij was an obvious choice.³¹⁶

The letters start before the Second International Congress of Linguists in Geneva, August 1931. Karcevskij, though still a member of the CLP, moved from Prague to Geneva in 1927 and thus mainly inspired the CLP from a distance. Hjelmslev had sent out complimentary copies of Hjelmslev (1928) after the Hague Congress. One of them was sent to Karcevskij. In January 1931, Karcevskij thanked Hjelmslev for the book and mentioned two works of his own, on the Russian verb, and, in an introductory form, the system of Russian in general. They continued their correspondence up to and after the Geneva Congress. In a later letter (Hjelmslev to Karcevskij, November 19, 1931), Hjelmslev referred to the Prague linguists' wish to have a phonematic description of Danish and mentioned the phonological committee established under the auspices of the CLC.³¹⁷ In the same letter he presented his ideas concerning grammar: the newly established grammatical committee of the CLC was set to discuss a description of Latin, prepared by himself based on Hjelmslev (1928), as an example later to be followed in grammatical descriptions of different languages, as a parallel to the Praguian initiation of collaborative international work within the field of phonology (cf. Gregersen 1991b, 75). Hjelmslev wrote to Karcevskij that he wanted to present the results at the Rome congress in 1933. It is thus again obvious that Hjelmslev wanted to assume the position in the study of structural grammar that the CLP had achieved in phonology and that he wanted the Praguians (or at least Karcevskij) to know that.

It is worth noting the date of the letter to Karcevskij, because only two weeks later, on December 4, 1931, Brøndal, as an elected member of the CLC grammatical committee, in a letter to Hjelmslev proposed a programme for a joint effort in structural grammar.

316. Their correspondence has been kept as part of the Hjelmslev archives at the Royal Library in Copenhagen (KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25) and has now been digitalized as part of the Project INFRASTRUCTURALISM.

317. "Le comité phonématique s'occupera de la description phonématique du danois dont nous avons parlé à Genève".

Brøndal proposed to start with the category of gender in Latin, and suggested a method with 6 values, 3 simple and 3 complex ones. (Viggo Brøndal's ideas would, in fact, be presented in a paper at the third International Congress of Linguists, Rome 1933). In his significant answer (cf. Gregersen 1991a, 222), Hjelmslev changed the level of the proposed work from being about the level of categories to being about the possibility of different types of categories in general foreshadowing what he would flesh out in the paper that Brøndal rejected in 1933 (cf. section 3.1 above). The collaboration between the two leading Danish structuralists soon turned out to be impossible.

While Brøndal and Hjelmslev tried to bridge their differences in an effort to create a new structural grammar in Copenhagen, Jakobson was in fact taking the first steps towards a 'structural grammar', partly referring to Karcevskij's works on Russian. In an obituary for Karcevskij, Jakobson (1956) wrote that "Karcevskij was the first linguist of the Saussurian trend to attempt a systematic description of such a typically 'grammatical' language as Russian; the earlier research of this school was concentrated on the more 'lexicological', occidental languages."

The work of Karcevskij is an important step in the Prague Circle's attempt to enter grammatical studies. In 1932–33, Jakobson (1933) wrote that the Prague Circle tried to transfer the methodology from phonology, not only to the field of grammar, but also to cultural sciences.³¹⁸ Already in October 1931 Jakobson in a letter to Trubetzkoy (Jakobson 1975, 222) presented his ideas concerning the study of the Russian verb. They were published for all to read

318. This is a leitmotif in Roman Jakobson's career. He constantly wants to embrace the entire field of the *Geisteswissenschaften* and repeatedly parallels the linguistic endeavor with the ethnological and social sciences. In this, he is more in line with Uldall, see in particular Uldall 1957, 29 and the analysis of marriage types on page 40. It is a matter of some interest that Francis J. Whitfield in his translation of Hjelmslev 1943 adds the field of social anthropology instead of psychology as the science of non-linguistic content substance based on Hjelmslev's own copy and discussions with him (on page 70) cf. Whitfield 1993, 129.

in a *Festschrift* for Mathesius, August 3 1932.³¹⁹ The book includes several other contributions on grammar, among others Karcevskij on Russian substantives. In the paper, Jakobson transposed Trubetzkoy's concept of *merkmalhaltig/merkmallos* ('marked'/'unmarked', i.e. markedness) from phonology to grammar. While Trubetzkoy did not always insist that oppositions be binary, in this article Jakobson analyzed several morphological correlations in Russian from an explicitly binary point of view,³²⁰ the main references being Peškovskij and Karcevskij.

On April 27, 1933, Hjelmslev gave a paper at the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen with the title "Structure générale des systèmes grammaticaux" (Gregersen 1991a, 220ff; Gregersen 1991b, 86ff.). In the printed version of this paper (Hjelmslev (1933a, [1973]), he criticized the universality of Jakobson's binarism. He further discusses Trubetzkoy/Jakobson's idea of 'merkmalhaftig' ('markedness') and proposed as an alternative his own concepts *extensive* and *intensive*. Hjelmslev wanted to publish a paper based on this and another lecture (on case) in the first instalment of the programmed *Bulletin du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague*. However, as mentioned above, the majority of the committee on publications, including Brøndal decided to decline the offer. Hjelmslev had wanted to use this article as a notable preparation for his grammatical offensive at the third International Congress of Linguists, Rome 1933, thus preparing the ground for a major Copenhagen impact aimed to create a distinctive structural grammar. This was his way to escape the failure of the original 1931 Brøndal-Hjelmslev collaboration in the grammatical committee. If Brøndal wanted to participate he could do so on his own (and he did, cf. Brøndal 1933), provided Hjelmslev could do

319. When Hjelmslev authored the proposal to elect Roman Jakobson as a foreign member of the Danish Royal Academy, this was one of the papers he referred to (cf. below Appendix A, note 20).

320. Writing on grammar, Jakobson could write an article based on his dogma of binarism without being too much in conflict with Trubetzkoy who was doing his main research in phonology. Trubetzkoy actually seemed not to be so happy with Jakobson's exposition, see Trubetzkoy's letters in Jakobson (1975, 222f; 242). For a more detailed presentation of the discussions between Trubetzkoy and Jakobson on markedness theory, see Andersen 1989.

the same. The discussion about and the final refusal of the offer to publish the paper as the leading article of the CLC's first Bulletin was to be the first skirmish in a long-lasting battle behind closed doors between Hjelmslev and Brøndal, a battle which lasted until the death of the latter in 1942. Hjelmslev (1933a, [1973]) was not published until 1973, after the death of both Brøndal (1942) and of Hjelmslev himself (1965). And while Brøndal participated in the Rome Congress, Hjelmslev did not.³²¹

Thus, Hjelmslev's critique of Jakobson's grammatical efforts was not published in the 1930s, and it is not clear whether it ever came to Jakobson's attention.

There is an important asymmetry here concerning the two Danish leaders. As told above, Jakobson was in close contact with Brøndal, but no letter before 1935 has survived. Brøndal wrote his letters by hand and did not keep copies. And as for the originals: In the correspondence with Fischer-Jørgensen, Jakobson explains that "when I worked in Brno I had an intensive correspondence with Viggo [Brøndal], but when the Nazis entered Czechoslovakia, my entire archive was burnt and eighteen pails of ashes remained." (Roman Jakobson to Eli Fischer-Jørgensen, 13.12 1977, Letter 95, Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, 323). Brøndal was also a great admirer of Trubetzkoy's and dedicated his (posthumously published) collection of *Essais de linguistique générale* (Brøndal 1943) to his memory. Trubetzkoy refers to discussions with Brøndal at the third Congress, that in Rome, and since Brøndal was elected to the Association for phonology and participated in its meeting at the Rome Congress, we can safely assume that from then on Brøndal was perceived as being friendly to the phonological movement in general and to its key figure Trubetzkoy and his junior brother in arms Jakobson in particular.

The first direct discussion in writing between Hjelmslev and Jakobson on grammar would be on case systems. As mentioned above, Hjelmslev had given a paper on case systems in CLC, May

321. Hjelmslev repeats some of his criticism of Jakobson (1932) in his notes for his lessons at Aarhus University in the autumn of 1934; these were, alas, also printed only after Hjelmslev's death (as Hjelmslev 1972).

1933, but published the result, his book *La catégorie des cas*, only in 1935. In the book, there are no references to Jakobson, but some to Brøndal and one to Karcevskij. For the first time Hjelmslev published his theory concerning the role of participation (which was the theme of his lectures from 1933 leading to the refused paper). In the book Hjelmslev defined ‘grammar’ as the “theory of ‘fundamental meanings’ [Ger. *Grundbedeutungen*, Fr. *significations fondamentales*] or values and of the systems constituted by them”³²² (Hjelmslev 1935, 84). The ‘fundamental meaning’ of an individual member of a category is obtained by abstraction from the meaning of its variants and by taking into account the opposition of the other members of the category. The category of case is defined as expressing a relation between two objects, whereas the individual cases are defined by means of the three dimensions: direction, cohesion, and subjectivity/objectivity. Each dimension may contain from 2 to 6 members. The number and type of members are derived from a logical system of oppositions in which participation plays a great role. A member may be either *intensive* or *extensive* (Hjelmslev 1935, Fischer-Jørgensen 1966). In his analysis of case, Hjelmslev not only included inflectional morphology, but also took word order into consideration, though this feature was traditionally seen as belonging to syntax.

In 1936, Jakobson presented an in depth discussion of Hjelmslev’s ideas on case (Jakobson 1936a). While Hjelmslev had treated the *category* case in general and briefly presented several case systems, Jakobson’s focus is on the Russian case system. This case system usually is presented with 6 cases/forms (which might have been difficult to deal with in a symmetrical, binary description). Roman Jakobson, however, partitions two of the cases in two, so that he gets 8 cases, and presents them in this way (Jakobson 1936a, 281). For each opposition, the marked case is either to the right of or beneath the unmarked one:

322. “La grammaire est la théorie des significations fondamentales ou des valeurs et des systèmes constitués par elles ...”.

$$\begin{array}{cccc}
 (\text{N} & \sim & \text{A}) & \sim & (\text{GI} & \sim & \text{G II}) \\
 \wr & & \wr & & \wr & & \wr \\
 (\text{I} & \sim & \text{D}) & \sim & (\text{LI} & \sim & \text{L II})
 \end{array}$$

Jakobson thus succeeded in making only binary distinctions. In his treatment of Hjelmslev (1935), Jakobson did not mention Hjelmslev's 'sublogical' system with the participation laws,³²³ and thus did not mention the use of *extensive* and *intensive*. Jakobson, however, gave a brief specific critique of Hjelmslev's analysis of Gothic cases. Jakobson further substituted the term *Gesamtbedeutung* for Hjelmslev's *Grundbedeutung*, and criticized Hjelmslev for including word order in his case analysis. In this connection, Jakobson quoted Brøndal with approval for sharply separating case theory and morphology in general from syntax, i.e. separating the levels of case morphemes and word order (Jakobson 1936a, 245, 287). Both statements are in explicit contrast to Hjelmslev's approach. Jakobson thus directly plays Brøndal out against Hjelmslev. Jakobson had corresponded with Brøndal on Brøndal 1935, and Brøndal visited Jakobson in Prague in 1936. Hjelmslev for his part reacted in a note in Hjelmslev (1937a), where he defended his use of *Grundbedeutung*.

5.3 Jakobson and Hjelmslev (and Brøndal) create the structuralist flagship *Acta Linguistica* (1937–39)

Already in the first Bulletin of the *Association internationale pour les études phonologiques*, Roman Jakobson had written:

La rapidité du développement ainsi que les dimensions de l'échelle sur laquelle se déroule le travail phonologique international, exigent

323. However, interesting enough, he quotes his own 1932 article with alfa and beta instead of A and B. It thus is more similar to Hjelmslev's paper. For a more detailed account of Jakobson's and Hjelmslev's ideas of markedness/participation, see Andersen 1989.

impérieusement la publication d'un périodique special pour la phonologie. (Jakobson 1932b, 322)

When Hjelmslev visited Prague and Brno 1937, he and Jakobson started negotiations to found an international journal for structural linguistics. As Jakobson had also discussed this with Brøndal the relationship between Brøndal and Hjelmslev became an issue (Gregersen 1991b, 103 ff.). When the *Acta Linguistica* finally was to be launched in 1939, the idea was that the two main editors, Brøndal and Hjelmslev would write a common editorial. Jakobson was in Copenhagen precisely at that point in time and according to Baecklund-Ehler 1977, he and Brøndal discussed what would later be Brøndal's solely authored editorial, appropriately entitled 'Linguistique structurale'. Apparently, Jakobson had endorsed it. Hjelmslev, however, would not sign it and wrote his 'La notion de rection' (Hjelmslev 1939b) instead. At least from that point and onwards it must have been clear to Jakobson that in his dealings with Copenhagen he would soon be forced to choose between Brøndal and Hjelmslev.

Having left Scandinavia with the last ship to reach the United States from Sweden in 1941, Jakobson lost all contact with Europe until 1945. Brøndal died in 1942 so when Jakobson and Hjelmslev reopened their correspondence in 1945, the choice of a collaborator (and main editor of *Acta Linguistica*) had been forced by external circumstances. However, Jakobson would still refer to Brøndal's editorial as a great introduction to the structural point of view (Jakobson 1971b, 714).

Contrasting the two editorials gives us a clue to two different approaches to what structuralism was, and should be. Brøndal's account is expansive and appeals to world views and other sciences in an attempt to advertise a general new approach to the human and social sciences. Structuralism is a general programme for a radical break with the past. Hjelmslev's paper, on the other hand, is technical, focused on language internal dynamics and probably also more parochial in that it is clearly a programme for a glossematic approach. The Brøndal approach leads on to what we have in the introduction called phase 2 structuralism and as such is more in

line with the way Roman Jakobson thought of structuralism (cf. Hastrup on Lévi-Strauss this volume). The Hjelmslev line, on the other hand, would dominate the actual journal, the *Acta Linguistica*, for the years to come.

What then were the implications for a general coherent structuralist movement of the fact that two of the possible leaders, Jakobson and Hjelmslev diverged in important ways? For us this implies that structuralism should be analyzed at several levels: The structuralists in general agreed to take Saussure as their starting point. This was, however, more natural for Hjelmslev than for Jakobson. Hjelmslev had the same background and had studied some of same phenomena as Saussure and he had read Saussure very closely. Jakobson, on the other hand, from the outset was critical of the blindness ascribed to linguistic change in Saussure's *Cours* (he stresses the teleology of change) and never accepted the dichotomy between diachrony and synchrony as a fundamental tenet. In the above, we have documented that a split inside the structuralist movement was created between: On the one hand those who sided with Jakobson and wanted to integrate linguistics with other sciences, be they natural sciences (e.g. phonetics) or cultural (e.g. ethnology). On the other hand, those who sided with Hjelmslev and took autonomy much more seriously and sought to build a structural linguistics without any reference to anything outside the realm of language. This great divide led the former to what the latter would critically label 'transcendentalism'. Similarly, the former criticized the latter for the futility of a formal or even 'algebraic' approach. It is still an open discussion whether the two strands would necessarily be construed as structural-functional versus formal or whether this is a contingent fact about the actual practice and theory of Jakobson and Hjelmslev.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. We want to get back to before WW2. How did Jakobson get to Copenhagen?

6. 1939: Hjelmslev (and Brøndal) active in the success of rescuing Jakobson

According to Toman's translation of Jakobson's Activity Report for the Years 1939–1945, Jakobson left Prague after several weeks of hiding on the 23rd of April 1939. Apparently, he and his wife Svatava arrived in Copenhagen on the same day (Jakobson in the police report to the Swedish police, Jangfeldt 1997, 147). They were greeted at the Main Central Station by Hjelmslev. Jakobson thinks back to this occasion in his letter to Vibeke Hjelmslev bringing his condolences on the occasion of Hjelmslev's death 1965:

A few days ago Svatja' and I spoke about Louis, and to both of us one scene was the most vivid: when we miraculously succeeded in passing through Germany and saw through [the] window of our coach the tall and jovial figure of Louis, who then for a moment suddenly disappeared, and we were frightened because we associated with him the vision of salvation (Tatsukawa 1995, 17; cf. KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25).

Having arrived from Prague, Jakobson ([1939] 1962a) lectured at the University of Copenhagen on “the structure of phonemes” and also gave a lecture in the Linguistic Circle. According to the *Rapport sur l'activité du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague 1931–51*, this was on “Le signe zero” (25th of May 1939, annual meeting of the Circle). (Rapport, 29). In the Bulletin, there is a reference to the contribution by Jakobson to *Mélanges Bally* with the same title. At the meeting, Jakobson gave examples of the contrast between a marked and an unmarked element manifesting no overt distinction taken from phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and stylistics. His treatment comes close to Hjelmslev's in that e.g. the present tense is seen as both a present and a no-tense. Both Brøndal and Hjelmslev had comments at the meeting. Brøndal's comments seem to be quite critical of Jakobson's ‘otherwise very enlightening’ presentation. Hjelmslev directly questions whether Jakobson does not confound syntagmatics and paradigmatics in generalizing from the contrast between an expressed ending and a zero to the neutralizations and participative relationships (Bulletin V, 14).

The next pressing problem was to find an income for the Jakobsons. However, soon the Rask-Ørsted foundation gave a grant to L.L. Hammerich and Holger Pedersen so that Jakobson and his collaborator, a young Danish linguist by the name of Helge Poulsen (who incidentally was married to a Czech who was very kind to both Roman Jakobson and his wife Svatava, cp. Fischer-Jørgensen 1997, 22), could prepare a manuscript by one Tönnies Fenne for publication.³²⁴ This grant was for 2.000 Danish kr. equaling approximately 70.000 DKK in today's money (equal to approximately 9.000 Euro). Of this grant, the 1500 kr. were paid out during Jakobson's stay while 500 remained at the Foundation for later expenses (according to the Annual report of the Rask Ørsted Foundation, 11). The remaining 500 kr. were paid out during 1940–41 (*ibid.* 24), most likely to Helge Poulsen.

Jakobson proceeded first to Norway where he had Alf Sommerfelt (1892–1965) as his close friend. When Norway was invaded by the Nazis, he fled to Sweden. The escape has been well documented by Jahr 2017 and by Jangfeldt 1997.³²⁵

324. This project turned out to last for many years and Jakobson did not live to see its final publications (vol.s III and IV in 1986). He did however finish the first and the second volumes (Jakobson 1961, 1970). The history of the project is given in outline in note 295 in Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020. The edition is mentioned several times in the letters between Fischer-Jørgensen and Jakobson (see Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020, index) and also in the letters between Hjelmlev and Jakobson, e.g. in the first letter after the end of WW2 1945.

325. One correction is needed though. Jangfeldt apparently identifies Karlgren as the Swedish professor of Slavistics at the University of Copenhagen. This is highly unlikely. It must be the Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren who was a member of CIPL and had recently moved from Göteborg to Uppsala. Legend has it that the only words Jakobson kept saying to the Swedish authorities was 'Karlgren'. Legend also has it that this was enough.

7. After the war: Consolidating the different structuralisms

The 1948 Paris Congress was where the Copenhageners hoped their structural theories would have the same impact as had the Praguians' phonology at the 1928 Congress in The Hague. Hjelmslev had become the Danish member of CIPL, the organizing committee, and he had accepted the invitation to give a report which was in line with the one he had given to the Brussels congress which was cancelled because of WW2. Unfortunately, he did not deliver on time and his presentation had to be given at the Congress itself. Jakobson was prevented from attending this congress. Whether this had any connection to the fact that he was being investigated by the FBI (Heller & McElhinny 2017, 171) is a matter for further archival research, but it seems likely. He was, however, very eager to have information of the Danes' participation. In a letter, July 28 1948, to John Lotz (who presented Jakobson's report at the Congress), Jakobson asks news about the Czechs, the Poles, Benveniste, the Balkan Slavs and so on. However, first of all he asks: "How was Hjelmslev and his partisans?"³²⁶

Since Jakobson could not participate in person, Hjelmslev had written to him and asked him to accept being the president of the international council for the *Acta Linguistica* (Louis Hjelmslev to Roman Jakobson July 10 1948, KB 2008/17, box 7). Jakobson wrote in his answer that he would be delighted to accept (telegram from Jakobson to Hjelmslev July 18 1948, KB 2008/17, box 7) – and then did not hear any news at all from Hjelmslev until he wrote to him:

Dear Louis,

From Vibeke's friendly letter to Svat'a I learned that you are writing to me. But since then nothing has come. I have had no news from you about the Congress, about the meeting of the *Acta Linguistica*, about all

326. Jakobson's copy of the letter (MIT MC.0072 Box 43 Folder 38). In Jakobson's correspondence with Fischer-Jørgensen (1949–82) (Jensen & D'Ottavi 2020) you find many examples of his great interest in all kinds of matters linguistic in Denmark.

the things you had promised to discuss with me. I hope you received my telegraphic answer to Paris. Write me, dear friend, and let me know, by the way, in what way you sent me Dahl's dictionary, because it still hasn't reached us. Did you receive our volume about the ancient Russian epopee that I sent you in the Spring. My Summer was literarily very active and I hope to continue this activity during the coming semester which is my leave. But I will write you more about our present and future when I finally hear from you (Roman Jakobson to Louis Hjelmslev September 20 1948. Jakobson's copy of the letter: MIT MC.0072 Box 42 Folder 23).

Apparently the books (Dahl's dictionary) arrived on the 8th of October and Jakobson wrote that in a brief notice. The next letter is from the 22nd of November:

Dear Louis,

I just received the third issue of *Acta Linguistica* and I learned from the title page that I was elected President of the International Council. I am very grateful, and I am still more surprised that in spite of all my letters I haven't heard from you. I hope nothing bad has happened, and I am eager to have some lines from you (Jakobson's copy of the letter: MIT MC.0072 Box 42 Folder 23).

Still no letter the other way. Actually, it was only when Jakobson planned to go to Denmark in 1950 that he heard from Hjelmslev. By then he had been elected to the Royal Danish Academy (at Hjelmslev's suggestion, cf. below and Appendix A) and even more significant as a testament of friendship: Jakobson had contributed to *Travaux V, Recherches structurales*, a festschrift to Louis Hjelmslev (cf. above Section 4.1). The letter reached Hjelmslev when he was teaching at Lund (Albanian!) and Hjelmslev states that he is sure that he has written to Jakobson. Jakobson visited Denmark, was present at the meeting in May at the CLC when the two giants discussed their views on phonology face to face (cf. section 4.1 above), and the next passage is about this trip and rather businesslike. But the next section is different:

2. Next – and not less emphatically – I should like to thank you for your interesting contribution to the volume which was presented to me on my anniversary, as well as for the personal greeting sent to me by your wife and yourself. There can be no mistake that I sent you my thanks in October 1949; it is a pity to think of this letter having been lost: you must have considered me very ungrateful indeed. I wrote to all the authors who had contributed to the volume, and to everybody who had sent me their greetings; I have certainly not left you aside! (Louis Hjelmslev to Roman Jakobson March 23, 1950; cf. KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25)

It is a matter of some interest that Jakobson answers like this:

Dear Louis:

I was happy to have finally a letter from you. I am sorry to learn that there were some letters from you which were lost. By the way, not only I but neither Lotz nor Martinet received any letter from you concerning their papers for your Symposium (Roman Jakobson to Louis Hjelmslev April 1, 1950; cf. KB Acc 1992/5, Kps. 25).

There is no doubt in either of our minds that Jakobson had a great talent for liking people and making them like him but also that Hjelmslev had as great a talent for friendship. But it must be admitted when you read the letters exchanged between them that there is an asymmetry. Hjelmslev would write letters profusely thanking Jakobson (and his wife) for the times they spent together and he would write when he wanted to ask Jakobson to do something specific or to furnish him with details about visits, but there is no small talk in the letters. Moreover, Hjelmslev apparently had no idea how strange it seemed to Jakobson as one of the most prominent contributors to the TCLC V, a volume dedicated to Hjelmslev on his fiftieth birthday, that Jakobson (nor for that matter Lotz or Martinet) did not receive at least a note of thanks. We are here entering dangerous territory for it was often the case that Hjelmslev thought he had done something which in fact he had not. If you read the letter above, you will see that he was convinced that he had in fact written a note of thanks to everyone ('there can be no mistake

that'), even though the facts contradict him. There are no copies in the archives to substantiate this. His lack of self-consciousness proved to be fatal when it was discovered that he had some sort of neurological disease and that that was at least partly responsible for his slow tempo in the 50s and 60s.

Jakobson in his first letter asks news about Rosally Brøndal, Viggo Brøndal's widow. This indicates either that he was determined to treat the Danes as a close-knit group of friends (irrespective of the facts he knew about the bitter strife between Brøndal and Hjelmslev), or that he could not care about such things. Nevertheless, for Hjelmslev this must have been a reminder that Jakobson had preferred Brøndal and thus one more indication that the friendship between Jakobson and him was a kind of *faute de mieux*.

We have mentioned that in 1949 Hjelmslev, three years after his own admission into the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, proposed that Jakobson be elected a foreign member of the Academy. The proposal was backed by Ad. Stender-Petersen, Kåre Grønbech, Kaj Barr, L.L. Hammerich and last, but certainly not least, by Holger Pedersen. Jakobson was duly elected 1949. In appendix A, you will find the Danish original and a translation of the proposal in order to elucidate which features of Jakobson's career were profiled for the Royal Academy members in 1949. One obvious observation: Jakobson is given a pedigree of Slavic linguists, and not necessarily those he would himself have pointed to. Moreover, Trubetzkoy is singled out as the real genius of the phonological movement. With the *Grundzüge*, (Trubetzkoy 1939) we have a finished work which for Hjelmslev was the real bible of the phonological movement, a movement which had inspired him to create both an organization, the CLC, and a different type of structural theory, i.e. glossematics. Jakobson never produced anything like the *Grundzüge*.

The years from 1941 till 1952 mark the unique chance of glossematics as both a theory of language and as a method of analysis to break through to the young linguists of Denmark and further on to the international scene. The beginning was that Hjelmslev during the war wrote a number of interlocking works, the brief introduc-

tion to the study of language (Hjelmslev 1963, *Sproget*, translated by Whitfield in 1970), the *OSG* (Hjelmslev 1943), actually the only work to be printed immediately, and finally attempted to complete his manuscript on the theory of language that he had worked on with Uldall (this remained unprinted until Whitfield edited and translated it as Hjelmslev 1975). In addition, Hjelmslev gave a long series of lectures on the theory of language. Since the lecture series was transcribed in short hand and transferred into long hand and finally typewritten by one of the students, we are today able to document what Hjelmslev said (in the same sense as the *Cours* is a testament to what Saussure meant). The glossematic offensive culminated in a series of meetings in what was called the glossematic subcommittee of the CLC 1950–1951 and in a visit by Uldall to Copenhagen. The idea was that Hjelmslev and Uldall would jointly finish the publication of the theory of language promised in their leaflet to the 1936 Congress in Copenhagen.

To make a very long story very short: None of this worked out quite as it had been planned and none of the works appeared. So neither the often promised theory of language nor its carefully thought out practice were available for other researchers than the happy few who were in personal contact with Hjelmslev. The chance for the international break-through had come and gone and the window of opportunity never opened again.

At the last international congress that Hjelmslev participated in, the 1957 Oslo Congress, he was scheduled to report on: “Dans quelle mesure les significations des mots peuvent-elles être considérées comme formant une structure?” The report (Hjelmslev 1957a) is printed in the *Actes* (Sivertsen 1958) and was reprinted in Hjelmslev 1959 under a different title (viz. ‘Pour une sémantique structurale’). The paper is a good representative of the later period of Hjelmslev’s writings. References to the author’s various other works are plentiful and most of it reads like a *précis* of *Prolegomena* (Hjelmslev 1943) with particular reference to semantics. Semantics seems to have preoccupied Hjelmslev in his later years. There are some minor comments on the idea of creating universals based on substance but mainly the report is notable because it stipulates very well what structural semantics must do: Create subsets of closed

classes out of the larger open classes. Thus the idea of semantic fields is circumscribed.

At the same congress, Jakobson reported on typology. And the Copenhagen linguists, in particular Fischer-Jørgensen, made their presence known by giving reports and papers which were noted. To end this story about the congresses of linguists: Jakobson reported even at the Congress in Bucharest (1967) on Linguistics and other sciences, a report (Jakobson 1969) which is reprinted in the Kiefer and van Sterkenburg collection of papers to celebrate the CIPL. By that time, he was the celebrated grand master, the only one of the giants to survive.

8. Conclusion: Louis Hjelmslev and Roman Jakobson in the history of linguistics

Both Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev sought intensively to influence the development of a structuralist approach. Jakobson was the initiator and/or founder of three important linguistic circles over a period of thirty years: Moscow 1915, Prague 1926, New York 1943, (Thomas 2014). The Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, founded and inspired by Hjelmslev, was in fact the only strong force in this period which was not directed by Jakobson. That is in itself an important reason why it is interesting to study the relationship between Jakobson and Hjelmslev in the history of linguistics.

It is difficult to assess the current status of Jakobson and Hjelmslev in the historiography of Structuralism. There is no doubt that most histories of structuralism are focused on the influence of the early period, and in particular on the influence of the first phase on the second phase, that of – primarily Parisian – 50s and 60s structuralism. For that reason, Jakobson features as the inspiration for Claude Lévi-Strauss (Merquior 1986, chapter 2; Hastrup, this volume) while Hjelmslev is credited with inspiring Roland Barthes and Algirdas Julien Greimas (Dosse 1991, 90–93; Badir, this volume).

But we are concerned with the historiography of linguistic structuralism, and here there are several difficulties. The first one is a difference in public relations. Jakobson published an enormous amount of work during his lifetime and was eager to document it

in endless series of *Selected Writings*, as indeed it happened while he lived and has continued after his death. Almost everything is available in some form or other. This is not the case with Hjelmslev, a situation we are only redressing as we write this paper. There are significant lacunae in the publication line of Hjelmslev, lacunae which were very evident during his lifetime: First of all, he never himself published his theory of language. It was published posthumously by Whitfield (Hjelmslev 1975). But of even more significance for our period, his important paper 'Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques' was refused when he offered it for the very first Bulletin of the then newly started CLC (1933), cf above section 3 and 5. It was later planned for the first *TCLC* (1945) but again was not published. Finally, it was published posthumously in *Essais Linguistiques II* in 1973. Thus, we as historians of linguistics simply know more about Hjelmslev's thoughts and interventions in the then current debate than his contemporaries could possibly know. Apart, of course, from the happy few who were present when he presented his ideas at the CLC (the meetings took place April 27 and May 18, 1933, Hjelmslev 1951, 25).

When looked at from the distance of today, Hjelmslev's contributions seem to be much more coherent and deeply thought than they could possibly seem to Jakobson or any of his other contemporaries. On the other hand, it is just as significant that Jakobson never finished what he thought would be his magnum opus, the book 'Sound and Meaning'. Maybe we never did see the full potential of a Jakobsonian sign theory?

When we look at these two deeply enigmatic figures side by side, we can in the few letters they exchanged, see a friendship with largesse and cordiality from both sides; maybe it is most movingly expressed in the letter that Louis Hjelmslev never read, the letter Roman Jakobson sent to Vibeke Hjelmslev in commemoration of her late husband's life. Jakobson and Hjelmslev had spent some moments together in perfect relaxation and they had shared some exquisite moments of joy. But their paths diverged so that we as historians see their differences much more clearly now: Jakobson held on to binarism even despite heavy critique from Fischer-Jørgensen

and others, and he probably never got a chance to read Hjelmslev's incisive critique in his (1933a, [1973]) paper. Hjelmslev, in contrast, followed his early inclination, already documented in his (1928), to create a perfectly immanent theory of language and wanted to divorce linguistics from all other sciences (only in order to give it back its rightful place among the sciences).

Roman Jakobson is usually seen as a key figure, possibly after Trubetzkoy's death, the key figure, of the phonological movement, but maybe the phonological movement was not that coherent.³²⁷ Maybe there are two schools of phonology, Trubetzkoy's and Jakobson's? Trubetzkoy in his 'Grundzüge' neatly severs phonetics as a natural science from the linguistic point of view, i.e. phonology. Jakobson wanted to integrate the two and did so with gusto and elegance in his theory of distinctive features.

But the 'Copenhagen school' was even less of a coherent whole: Hjelmslev abandoned the traditional view of linguistics encompassing a morphology and a syntax, for him morphology would take care of everything. But Brøndal, and later on his pupil Paul Diderichsen (1905–1964), though the latter was counted among the most important followers of Hjelmslev's, insisted on the division. And both Hjelmslev's closest collaborators Fischer-Jørgensen and Uldall expressed views which were closer to Jakobson's.

So, both the Praguians and the Copenhageners were in fact split and could not create a uniform approach, merging theory and method into a consistent Praguian or Copenhagen structuralist paradigm. In this, the first phase of structuralism is characteristically (and wonderfully) different from the third phase, Chomskyan linguistics. But in the history of linguistics, it may just be the case that the third phase was or is the exception. Never before and never since then had/has one approach to linguistics been so victorious so as to completely dominate the field.

In the present post-Chomskyan situation, the study of language would do well to revert to the many structuralisms of the first phase

327. Maybe Jakobson was right about 'schools' being a chimera, cf. the quote from his letter to Fischer-Jørgensen (1949, note 8 above).

to dig out what is still of value. In this endeavour a new pedigree for modern linguistics will be created where both Jakobson and Hjelmslev will have their rightful places once again.

Appendix A

Louis Hjelmslev et al.'s proposal for the election of Roman Jakobson as a foreign member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters dated 31st of January, 1949. Danish original:³²⁸

Til Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs historisk-filosofiske klasse.

Undertegnede foreslaar herved, at professor dr. phil. Roman Jakobson, Columbia University, New York, optages i Videnskabernes Selskab som udenlandsk medlem.

Roman Osipovič Jakobson, der er født 28/9 1896 i Moskva og fik sin uddannelse i Rusland, men fulgte sin familie da denne som følge af de storpolitiske begivenheder ved slutningen af første verdenskrig begav sig til Vesteuropa, bosatte sig i tyverne i Tjekoslovakiet, først i en aarrække i Praha, hvor han bl.a. var medredaktør af "Slavische Rundschau", og derefter i Brno, hvor han siden 1932 virkede som professor i russisk filologi ved Masaryk-universitetet. Paa grund af de storpolitiske begivenheder forlod han i 1939 Tjekoslovakiet og tog ophold først i København og derefter i Oslo, hvor han en tid virkede som russisk lektor; 9. april 1940 flygtede han til Sverige og tog derfra til de Forenede Stater, hvor han udnævntes i sit nuværende embede, som professor i slaviske sprog ved Columbia University.

I sine ungdomsaar beskæftigede Jakobson sig med russisk dialektologi (han var i mange aar medlem af det russiske akademis dialektkommission)³²⁹ og med versets teori,³³⁰ emner, som ogsaa senere til stadighed har beskæftiget ham. Men han /2/ fandt hurtig tilknytning til den kreds af sprogforskere af slavisk nationalitet, som samlede sig omkring N.S. Trubetzkoy, og som udbyggede en strukturel sprogteori paa grundlag af den tradition der udgik fra F.F. Fortunatov, W. Porzežiński og J. Baudouin de Courtenay, som disse slaviske sprogforskere senere forsøgte at sammenarbejde med de analoge (men ingenlunde identiske) synspunkter der i Vesteuropa var fremsat af F. de Saussure og hans elever. Da ogsaa Trubetzkoy (født 1890, død 1938) i begyndelsen af

328. A number of typos have been silently corrected.

329. His first major work on this is *Fonetika odnogo severno –velikorusskogo govora s namečajuščejšja perexodnost'ju*, Praha 1927.

330. See especially: *O češskom stixu preimuščestvenno v sopostavlenii s ruskia*, Berlin-Moskva 1923; *Základy českého verše*, Praha 1926.

tyverne slog sig ned i Centraleuropa (siden 1922 som professor ved universitetet i Wien), og ligeledes den med Jakobson omtrent jævnaldrende russiske lingvist Serge Karcevskij begav sig til Vesteuropa (hvor han noget senere blev professor ved universitetet i Genève), paavirkede disse russiske sprogforskere, vistnok især ved Jakobsons virksomhed, i ganske særlig grad en række yngre sprogforskere i Tjekoslovakiet, der sammen med dem under Vilém Mathesius' førerskab i 1929 stiftede Cercle linguistique de Prague [ukorrekt: skal være 1926, VBJ & FG], der satte den strukturelle sprogforskning paa sit program. Allerede aaret i forvejen, paa den 1. internationale lingvistkongres i Haag 1928, hvor spørgsmaalet om den synkroniske grammatiks metode var sat paa dagsordenen som et af hovedproblemerne, gjorde Jakobson, Karcevskij og Trubetzkoy sig bemærkede ved at indgive et svar paa dette spørgsmaal, hvor de saakaldte 'fonologiske' synspunkter (dvs. fonemsynspunktet) blev gjort gældende (Karcevskij indgav desuden et svar paa samme spørgsmaal af noget større rækkevidde, og ogsaa Mathesius indgav et udførligt svar efter lignende retningslinier), og disse synspunkter kunne paa kongressen paa frugtbar maade mødes med Genèvekolens, af Ch. Bally og Alb. Sechehaye i tilknytning til Saussures lære fremsatte teser. Dette var i høj grad medvirkende til, at de fonemteoretiske og overhovedet strukturelle synspunkter vakte opmærksomhed i den lingvistiske verden og i de følgende aar blev genstand for en livlig debat, som kan siges endnu i vor tid at fortsættes, ligesom det gav stødet til at der i mange lejre rundt om i verden begyndtes et aktivt forskningsarbejde fra disse synspunkter. Jakobson var frem for nogen sjælen i alle disse be-/3/stræbelser, og var i besiddelse af ypperlige egenskaber til at gennemføre dem; han er i besiddelse af en overordentlig sproglig lærdom og indsigt, en utrættelig arbejdssevne, en omfattende international orientering, et udstrakt personalkendskab i den lingvistiske verden og et fremragende organisationstalant. Som næstformand i Cercle linguistique de Prague, en stilling han beklædte fra kredsens stiftelse indtil den anden verdenskrig, var han (i ganske særlig grad i de senere aar, da Mathesius ved sygdom var forhindret i aktiv medvirken) den egentlige administrative leder af denne kreds, der udvidede sig med et antal udenlandske medlemmer, indledte et udstrakt internationalt samarbejde, og for en stor del blev toneangivende i det lingvistiske arbejde paa det europæiske kontinent, og blev forbillede for tilsvarende organisationer i andre lande (først for Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, der i 1931 stiftedes efter lignende retningslinier). Nævnes kan bl.a., at Cercle linguistique de Prague gennem afholdelse af Réunion phonologique internationale i

Praha 1930 og gennem udsendelse af en serie "Travaux", der efter indbydelse har staaet aaben for udenlandske medarbejdere, har spillet en stor rolle i det internationale lingvistiske liv. Jakobson tog endvidere initiativet til dannelsen af Association phonologique internationale, hvis leder han var, og hans personlige initiativ ligger bag adskillige fremtrædende foretagender inden for vor tids strukturelle lingvistik, bl.a. ogsaa bag det internationale tidsskrift *Acta Linguistica*, der siden 1939 udkommer i København, og i hvis internationale raad Jakobson har sæde, siden 1948 som præsident. Siden sin ankomst til de Forenede Stater har Jakobson ogsaa spillet en fremtrædende rolle i samarbejdet mellem amerikanske fonemteoretikere og strukturalister i det hele og i deres internationale forbindelser; han var medvirkende ved stiftelsen af Cercle linguistique de New York og er medlem af redaktionen af dennes tidsskrift "Word". – Medens det paa 2. internationale lingvistikongres i Genève 1931, hvor 'fonologiens' metoder var sat paa dagsordenen som et af hovedproblemerne, var overdraget Trubetzkoy at afgive rapport herom, var det paa 4. internationale lingvistikongres i København 1936 Jakobson, der afgav rapport over den fonologiske teori om sprogforbund; til 6. internationale lingvistikongres i Paris 1948 havde Jakobson efter opfordring afgivet en skriftlig rapport om forholdet mellem synkroni og diakroni inden for lydlære og grammatik (rapporten maatte fremlægges af J. Lotz, da Jakobson var personlig forhindret i at være til stede). Det vil tilstrækkelig fremgaa heraf, hvilken fremtrædende position Roman Jakobson indtager inden for organisationen af vor tids internationale lingvistik. Roman Jakobson er imidlertid ikke blot organisator, men tillige – som den selvfølgelige forudsætning herfor – en overordentlig aktiv, flittig og produktiv forsker. Han kombinerer vidtstrakt lærdom med stor videnskabelig fantasi, og han maa anses for en af de mest originale repræsentanter for de fra Praha-kredsen udgaaende synspunkter. Selv om han ifølge sin uddannelse og ifølge sin embedsvirksomhed saa vel tidligere i Brno som nu i New York er slavisk filolog, er hans interesseomraade den almene lingvistik; han arbejder med adskillige andre sprogomraader end netop det slaviske, og har i sine arbejder fremlagt store, bredt anlagte sammenlignende synteser og hypoteser vedrørende sprogstruktur i almindelighed, saaledes at ogsaa de arbejder af ham, der ifølge deres titel omhandler specielle sproggrupper, ofte har langt videre perspektiv.

Af stor betydning for fonemteoriens udvikling og for dens anvendelse paa slavisk omraade er den sammenfattende fremstilling af den slaviske genetiske fonemlære, han har givet i Travaux du Cercle linguistique de

Prague bind II, 1929, under den beskedne titel *Remarques sur l'évolution phonologique du russe comparée à celle des autres langues slaves*, et arbejde der, selv om det ifølge sagens natur, paa grund af anlæggelsen af nye synspunkter og metoder, kun kan have foreløbighedens karakter, rykkede den slaviske sproghistorie over paa et nyt grundlag, og desuden meddelte vigtige strukturelle hypoteser af almen art. De mere almene synspunkter findes nærmere præciseret i afhandlingen *Prinzipien der historischen Phonologie /5/* (i *Travaux IV*); en ny bearbejdelse heraf er for tiden i trykken under titlen *Principes de phonologie historique* og vil udkomme i Paris i forbindelse med den franske udgave af Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge der Phonologie*. I fortsættelse af sin ungdoms interesse har Jakobson rykket versets teori ind under sine 'fonologiske' synspunkter (nævnes kan bl.a. hans meddelelse paa 1. internationale fonetikerkongres i Amsterdam 1932: *Über den Versbau der serbokroatischen Volksepen*), ligesom *Cercle linguistique de Prague* i hele sit arbejde, utvivlsomt for en ikke uvæsentlig del under Jakobsons indflydelse, har lagt vægt paa at anlægge strukturelle synspunkter paa det poetiske og litterære sprog. Dette er antagelig ogsaa aarsagen til at Jakobson inden for fonemlæren er kommet til at interessere sig i særlig grad for de prosodiske fænomener, for hvilke han har fremsat højst tankevækkende hypoteser.³³¹ I sin meddelelse paa 3. internationale fonetikerkongres i Gand 1939, med titlen *Observations sur le classement phonologique des consonnes*, har Jakobson fremsat et omfattende og højst interessant forsøg paa en strukturel klassifikation af konsonanterne (kontoiderne). I 1939 lykkedes det ham gennem en omfattende syntese at naa til en helhedsopfattelse af lydssystemets ontogenetiske og fylogenetiske udvikling, idet han paa grund- /6/ lag af en meget omfangsrig dokumentation kunne sandsynliggøre, at barnets sprog opbygges efter en hierarkisk orden som genfindes inden for sprogtypologien, og at afatikerens sprog afbygges i nøjagtig modsat orden; denne teori, der for første gang bringer læren om børnesprog og sprogforstyrrelser ind under et systematisk helhedssynspunkt, blev offentliggjort 1941 i *Språkvetenskapliga sällskapet i Uppsala förhandlingar* for 1940–42 under titlen *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*; en ny fremstilling med titlen *Les lois phonique du langage enfantin* er for tiden i trykken i forbindelse med den franske udgave

331. E.g. "Die Betonung und ihre Rolle in der Wort- und Syntagmaphonologie," *Travaux du Cercle ling. de Prague IV*, 1931; "Über die Beschaffenheit der prosodischen Gegensätze", *Mélanges van Ginneken*, 1937; "Z zagadnień prozodji starogreckiej", *Prace ofiarowane K. Wójcickiemu*, 1937.

af Trubetzkoy's Grundzüge der Phonologie. – Jakobson har desuden fremsat meget dristige, men banebrydende hypoteser i sin højst originale lære om sprogforbund, oprindelig fremsat paa russisk i bogen *Karakteristike evrazijskogo jazykogo sojuza*, 1931, senere videreført i afhandlingen *Über die phonologischen Sprachbünde* (i *Travaux du Cercle ling. De Prague IV*) og i den ovenomtalte rapport paa Københavnskongressen 1936.

Jakobson har endvidere givet meget betydningsfulde bidrag til den almene grammatik, baade til konjugationens og deklinationens teori,³³² og til tegnets teori, specielt til undersøgelserne af nultegnets karakter.³³³ En samlet teori for sprogstruktu- /7/ ren har han fremsat for nylig i en længere forelæsningsrække ved universitetet i Chicago, som han for tiden forbereder til offentliggørelse i udvidet form under titlen *Sound and Meaning*. – Til den planlagte nye udgave af *Les langues du monde* har Jakobson udarbejdet afsnittet *langues paléosibériennes*, og i forbindelse dermed har han i de senere aar foretaget nogle for størstedelen endnu ikke offentliggjorte undersøgelser over giljakisk.

Roman Jakobson er en af de førende sprogforskere i vor tid, og baade paa grund af hans videnskabelige originalitet og vidsyn og paa grund af hans store arbejdskraft og organisatoriske internationale position ville det, ikke mindst paa et tidspunkt hvor der med rette lægges saa megen vægt, ogsaa fra dansk side, paa at genknytte de internationale videnskabelige forbindelser, være af betydning at indvælge professor Jakobson i det danske Videnskaberne Selskab. Det kan desuden sluttelig være rimeligt at henvise til, at professor Jakobson har en vis særlig tilknytning til Danmark: han har, som ovenfor nævnt, opholdt sig i København; han har paa mange maader haft, og har stadig, samarbejde med danske lingvister; han har holdt gæsteforelæsninger ved Aarhus og Københavns Universitet, er medlem af *Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague* og er (som ovenfor anført) præsident for det internationale raad der er knyttet til det i København udgivne internationale tidsskrift for strukturel lingvistik *Acta Linguistica*.

København, den 31. januar 1949.

332. "Zur Struktur des russischen Verbuns", *Charisteria Mathesio*, 1932; "Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre", *Travaux du Cercle ling. de Prague VI*.

333. "Signe zéro", *Mélanges Bally*, 1939; "Null-Zeichen", *Bulletin du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague IV*.

K. Barr, K. Grønbech, L.L. Hammerich, Louis Hjelmslev, Holger Pedersen, Ad. Stender-Petersen – affatter.

Source: The Royal Academy archives, Prot. Nr 245/ 1949. Thanks to Rikke Reinholdt Petersen who retrieved the documents for us. There is also an addition written by Ad. Stender-Petersen concerning Jakobson's qualifications as a Slavic philologist.

Translation (by the authors):

We, the undersigned, hereby propose that Professor dr. phil. Roman Jakobson, Columbia University, New York be elected to the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters as a foreign member.

Roman Osipovič Jakobson, who was born 28th of September 1896 in Moscow and was educated in Russia but followed his family when they as a consequence of the political events at the end of the first world war emigrated to Western Europe, in the 20s settled in Czechoslovakia, at first for some years in Prague where he was a co-editor of *Slavische Rundschau*, then in Brno where he from 1932 was active as a Professor of Russian philology at the Masaryk University. Because of the political events, he left Czechoslovakia in 1939 and settled first in Copenhagen then in Oslo where he for a time was active as a lecturer in Russian; 9th of April 1940 he fled to Sweden and from there he went to the United States where he got his present chair as a Professor of Slavic languages at Columbia University.

In his youth Jakobson worked on Russian dialectology (he was for many years a member of the commission for dialectology of the Russian Academy) and on the theory of verse, themes which he has reverted to time and again. But he soon found a place in the group of linguists with a Slavic nationality who gathered round N.S. Trubetzkoy and who based their structural theory of language on the tradition emanating from F.F. Fortunatov, W. Porzeźiński and J. Baudouin de Courtenay, which these Slavic linguistic researchers later sought to merge with the analogous (but in no way identical) points of view which in Western Europe had been developed by F. de Saussure and his pupils. When Trubetzkoy too (born 1890, died 1938) in the early 20s settled in Central Europe (from 1922 as a Professor at the university of Vienna) and likewise the Russian linguist Serge Karcevskij, a contemporary of Jakobson's, moved to Western Europe (where he somewhat later became a Professor at the

university of Geneva), these Russian researchers, probably primarily through the efforts of Jakobson, influenced in particular a number of younger linguists in Czekoslovakia, who joined them in establishing the Cercle linguistique de Prague (1929 [incorrect for 1926, VBJ & FG]) under the leadership of Vilém Mathesius, a circle which announced structural linguistics as its programme. Already a year before, at the first international Congress of linguists in the Hague 1928, where the issue of synchronic linguistics was on the agenda as a main problem, Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trubetzkoy made themselves known by sending in an answer where the so-called 'phonological' viewpoints (i.e. the phonemic point of view) were maintained (Karcevskij sent in a separate answer to the same question with a broader scope and also Mathesius authored an extended answer following the same line of reasoning) and these views were at the congress able to fruitfully integrate with those of the school of Geneva, i.e. the theses advanced by Ch. Bally and Alb. Sechehaye in accordance with the teachings of Saussure. This was to a large degree instrumental in making the views of phoneme theory and those in general of structural points of view known to the linguistic world, and in the next years this led to a lively debate which may be said to continue to the present day and to an active programme of research along the same lines in many corners around the world. Jakobson was the leading spirit in all these endeavours and was extremely well equipped for that role; he is in possession of deep knowledge of language, an indefatigable capacity for work, a wide-ranging international orientation and a huge personal knowledge of the linguistic world as well as an eminent talent for organization.

In his capacity as the vice chairman of the Cercle Linguistique de Prague, a position he held from the inception and until the second world war, he was, in particular during the later years, when Mathesius because of illness was prohibited from active duty, the real organizer of the activities of the Circle, which expanded by including a number of foreign members, initiated extensive international collaborations and for a large part became the leading force on the European linguistic scene, thus functioning as the ideal for similar organizations in other countries (first for the Cercle Linguistique de Copenhagen which was founded in 1931 along similar lines). It should be mentioned that the Cercle Linguistique de Prague through its organization of the Réunion phonologique internationale in Prague 1930 and by its publication of a series of Travaux, which by invitation was open for contributors from other countries, has played a major role in international linguistics.

Jakobson, furthermore, took the initiative to the formation of the Association phonologique internationale, whose leader he was and he personally has been the instigator of a number of important initiatives within contemporary structural linguistics, among others also the international journal *Acta Linguistica* which since 1939 has been published in Copenhagen and in whose International Council Jakobson was a member and since 1948 has been the President. Since his arrival in the United States, Jakobson has also had a prominent role in the collaboration between American theoreticians of phonemics and structuralists in general and their international relationships; he was active in the foundation of the Cercle Linguistique de New York and is among the editors of its journal "Word". While at the 2nd International Congress of Linguists in Geneva 1931 where the methods of 'phonology' were on the agenda, Trubetzkoy was charged with the report on this subject, on the 4th International Congress of Linguists in Copenhagen 1936 it was Jakobson who reported on the phonological theory of Sprachbünde; for the 6th International Congress of Linguists in Paris 1948, Jakobson had delivered a written report on the relationship between synchrony and diachrony within the domains of sound and grammar having been asked to do so. (The report had to be presented by J. Lotz since Jakobson was unable to be present in person.)

It will be sufficiently clear from the above which eminent position Roman Jakobson has in the organization of modern international linguistics. However, Roman Jakobson is not merely an organizer but in addition – and as the obvious precondition – an extremely active, diligent and productive researcher. He combines deep and wide-ranging knowledge with a great scientific imagination and he must be regarded as one of the most original representatives for those views which originate with the Prague circle. Even though he by training and in accordance with the chair he occupies as well earlier in his time at Brno as now in New York, is a Slavic philologist, his area of interest is in fact general linguistics; he works within several other linguistic fields than just the Slavic one and he has in his scientific works proposed grand comparative syntheses and hypotheses regarding linguistic structure in general so that the works from his hand which according to their title are concerned with particular language groups often have far wider perspectives.

Of great importance for the development of the theory of phonemes and for its application within Slavistics is the comprehensive review of the Slavic genetic theory of phonemes which he has given in *Travaux*

du Cercle Linguistique de Prague vol. II, 1929, modestly entitled *Remarques sur l'évolution phonologique du russe comparée à celle des autres langues slaves*, a paper which though in the nature of the matter because of its new perspectives and methods can only be preliminary in character, shifted the history of the Slavic languages to a new foundation and furthermore brought important structural hypotheses of a more general nature. The more general views are made more precise in the paper *Prinzipien der historischen Phonologie /5/* (in *Travaux IV*); a new edition of this is currently in press under the title *Principes de phonologie historique* and will appear in Paris in connection with the French edition of Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge der Phonologie*. In continuance of his early interests, Jakobson has brought the theory of verse into his 'phonological' views (mentionable is among other works his paper given at the 1st International Congress of Phonetics in Amsterdam 1932: *Über den Versbau der serbokroatischen Volksepen*), just as the Cercle Linguistique de Prague, undoubtedly to a considerable degree due to the influence of Jakobson, in all its work has made a point of including structural perspectives on poetic and literary language. This is presumably also the reason why Jakobson within the study of phonemes has come to be particularly interested in prosodic phenomena, on which he has proposed some very thought-provoking hypotheses. In his contribution to the 3rd International Congress of Phonetics in Gand 1939, entitled *Observations sur le classement phonologique des consonnes* Jakobson has given a comprehensive and highly interesting attempt at a classification of the consonants (contoids). In 1939 he succeeded through a comprehensive synthesis in reaching a holistic view of the ontogenetic and phylogenetic development of the sound system in that he on the basis of a very extensive documentation could make it likely that the child's language is structured according to a hierarchy which may be discovered in the typology of languages as well and that the language of aphasics lose distinctions in precisely the opposite order; this theory which for the first time brings together the theory of language acquisition and language disturbances under a common systematic holistic view was published 1941 in *Språkvetenskapliga sällskapetets i Uppsala förhandlingar 1940–42* under the title *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze*; a new version, entitled *Les lois phonique du langage enfantin*, is in press at the moment in connection with the French edition of Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge der Phonologie*. – Jakobson has furthermore stated very daring but trail blazing hypotheses in his highly original idea of *Sprachbund*, originally given in Russian

in the book *K xarakteristike evrazijskogo jazykogo sojuza*, 1931, later carried forward in the paper *Über die phonologischen Sprachbünde* (in *Travaux du Cercle ling. de Prague IV*) and in the abovementioned report to the Copenhagen Congress 1936.

Jakobson has also contributed significantly to general grammar, both to the theories of conjugation and declination and to the theory of the sign, especially the character of the zero sign. He has proposed a general theory for the structure of language in a comprehensive series of lectures at the University of Chicago which he at present is preparing for publication in an enlarged version under the title *Sound and Meaning*. – For the planned new edition of *Les langues du monde*, Jakobson has prepared the section on *langues paléosibériennes* and in this connection he has in recent years carried out some, for the majority as yet unpublished, investigations of Gilyak.

Roman Jakobson is one of the leading linguists of our time and both because of his scientific originality and his vision and because of his great capacity for work and his organizational position in international linguistics, it would, not least at a point in time when – and rightly so – weight is laid upon the reinvigoration of international scientific collaboration, also from Denmark, be of significance to elect Roman Jakobson to the Royal Danish Academy. It might be reasonable finally to refer to the fact that Professor Jakobson has a certain particular connection to Denmark: he did, as mentioned above, stay in Denmark; he has in many ways had, and still has, collaborations with Danish linguists; he has given visiting lectures at the universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus, he is a member of the *Cercle linguistique de Copenhagen* and he is (as stated above) the president of the international council for the international journal for structural linguistics, the *Acta Linguistica*, which is based in Copenhagen.

Copenhagen, 31. January 1949.

K. Barr, K. Grønbech, L.L. Hammerich, Louis Hjelmslev, Holger Pedersen, Ad. Stender-Petersen – author.³³⁴

334. This is undoubtedly incorrect; Hjelmslev is the author of the main text, i.e. the text presented here. As stated above, there is an addition by Ad. Stender-Petersen specifically about RJ's contributions to Slavic philology but it is not more than half a page long.

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