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Kindersprache, Aphasie und Allgemeine Lautgesetze by Roman Jakobson

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as 'learning to speak a foreign language, or learning to pronounce foreign words and names'. The author's phoneme theory, as is to be expected, is identical with that of Daniel Jones. He disregards the signal-like aspect of the unit which the linguist calls phoneme, being interested merely in a unit which can be easily used in recording speech. The theoretical objections to this non-linguistic point of view have been stated often, notably by Twaddell and by Vachek, and need not be repeated here.

In the reviewer's opinion an introduction to phonetics should not neglect to deal with the following topics: the place of phonetics within linguistics and its relation to phonemics; the physiology of sound-production; the physics of the sound-wave; the psychology of audition; the experimental and direct means of sound-study. The author deals with hardly any of these, and in teaching the IPA symbols to his students ignores even the symbols used in transcribing foreign languages, 'since we are concerned primarily with the transcribing of our own speech'. In view of this fact the title of his work is hardly justified. From the purely pedagogical standpoint it is surely desirable to train students in transcribing foreign languages and to give them a firm theoretical background, even if their interests are entirely practical. It is hoped that the author will include more material of this type when he undertakes the intended revision and amplification of his work.

One minor matter: On page 7 the author refers to the X-ray studies of Russell, who, he says, 'has shown that a variety of positions may be used in the production of a given sound'. It is more correct to say that a vowel (Russell's interest is chiefly in vowels) 'has a typical or characteristic position around which variations may take place . . .'.¹

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KINDERSPRACHE, APHASIE UND ALLGEMEINE LAUTGESETZE. By ROMAN JAKOBSON. (Språkvetenskapliga Sällskapet i Uppsala Förhandlingar 1940-2.) Pp. 83. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1941.

Outwardly slender, this book is one of the most important contributions to the study of child language. It shows how to make the phenomena of child language and of aphasia useful for linguistics. Linguistic scholars have up to the present shown only a marginal interest in these phenomena. That must be largely due to the circumstance that the observations of individual students seem to present a bewildering array of facts which are difficult to reduce to a common denominator. This is where Jakobson's study fits in to bridge the gap. He tries to find basic principles operating in the building up of children's linguistic stock and, in reverse order, in the breaking down of the linguistic stock of those afflicted with aphasia. He further compares these processes with conditions prevailing in various types of languages, finding 'everywhere the same hierarchy of values' (52).

¹ C. E. Parmenter and S. N. Treviño, Vowel Positions as Shown by X-Ray, *Quarterly Jour. of Speech* 18.366 (1932).

His attention is principally devoted to the realm of sounds, his approach being phonemic rather than phonetic. His investigation is the first phonemic analysis of children's language learning and of aphasia. To those who see similarities between the methods of phonemics on the one hand, and those of phenomenology and Gestalt psychology on the other, in the attention all of them pay to vital structural analysis and essential (*ganzheitlich*) synthesis, it is significant that Jakobson places a quotation from Husserl at the head of his work.

I share with Jakobson the conviction that the study of child language is of great importance for linguistics, being the only opportunity we have of observing human speech in a nascent state (he quotes this formulation from Karl Bühler, 1). I agree with him that child language (and aphasia) can and must be incorporated in general linguistics (he calls it comparative linguistics in the wider sense of the word, 76). My fundamental conviction, however, that we have not reached the stage when trustworthy generalizations concerning children's language learning can be made is not shaken by this book. We still need many more monographic studies, particularly from observers with linguistic training. In many details Jakobson's postulates are simply not borne out by the facts of observation. In part this defect is due to the insufficient amount of data thus far collected. Some of the objectionable generalizations, however, could have been avoided by more careful use of the available literature. Jakobson gives six pages of bibliography. It contains a limited but good selection of titles on child language. Its special value lies in the inclusion of many items from the Slavic languages and of those concerning speech defects.

Some of Jakobson's tenets will have to be revised as the study of child language progresses. This fact, however, does not detract from the fundamental merits of his study. Even at the present stage no student of child language should pass up his contribution. It is eminently suited to help him see great lines of development in the overwhelming wealth of details of which the language-learning process is made up and to the faithful collection of which he must devote his efforts. I abstain from all criticism of details. The sole purpose of my review is to prevent this publication from being overlooked by any scholar working in the field.

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