

Robert A. Hall Jr., *La Struttura dell'Italiano*. Armando Armando Editore, Rome, 1971, 431 pp.

This book by the well-known Romance philologist is the result of a total reworking of his *Descriptive Italian Grammar* of 1948. Its purpose is still "to present a synthetic view of the structural characteristics of the national language of present-day Italy" (Preface). The theoretical orientation is "consciously eclectic, since it seems to me that no particular 'school' is in exclusive possession of the truth or of the best method to analyze and formulate linguistic phenomena" (Preface). The book is, indeed, truly eclectic, which means that no theoretical position is taken and that no other criterion of correctness can be applied than observational adequacy of some data of the language. No claim to explanation is made. As for Transformational Grammar, this is, the author says, "useful for the formulation of certain relationships in syntax and derivation, but not at all for phonology or flexion". Whereas one can see the author's point about morphology, which has received rather poor treatment in TG thus far, it is strange that he should deny its "usefulness" in phonology: virtually all of the rather extensive sections on morphophonemics are straightforward generative phonology, though of a somewhat unorganized and ungeneralised kind. In practice, Hall's eclecticism is determined by his familiarity with certain ways of presenting data, and he happens to be most familiar with post-Bloomfieldian structuralism.

The book concentrates heavily on phonology, morphology and morphophonemics. Apart from a short introductory chapter which sets out the professed eclecticism in method, and some of the terminology and notations used, there is a chapter on phonology, intonation and orthography (pp. 19-66), one on flexional morphology (pp. 67-112), one on morphophonemic derivation (pp. 215-244), one on suffixation (pp. 245-342), one on prefixation (pp. 343-368), one on compounds (pp. 369-390). At the end there are two appendices, one with regular and irregular verbal paradigms, and one especially for learned borrowings from Latin. In between there are three chapters on syntax: a very short one of barely five pages on connectives, a chapter on the sentence (pp. 119-196) and one on the clause (pp. 197-214).

In this enumeration of the contents I have singled out the bits on syntax because of the striking difference in quality between these and the sections which are nearer to the surface. Whereas the latter are thorough and virtually complete (they obviously reflect many years of careful study and great familiarity with the language and its dialects), the former is extremely poor, much poorer than some of the better traditional grammars of the language. There is hardly anything on verbal complementation, on the syntax of nominalizations, on the syntax of negation, etc., etc. A few taxonomic charts, presented as Markovian Finite State diagrams, are said to represent "the structure" of some constituent or other of the sentence. Where the syntax comes close to morphology, the situation is slightly better. Clitic pronouns, for example, are discussed almost fully (pp. 159-162), but not quite fully and not always reliably. Thus, Hall does not discuss the co-occurrence restrictions (cf. D. Perlmutter, "Surface Structure Constraints in Syntax", *Linguistic Inquiry* 1.2 (1970) pp. 187-255, for analogous phenomena in Spanish and French) of dative personal pronouns with non-3rd person accusative personal pronouns in clitic position: *\*gli ti presenterò* (I'll

introduce you to him. Instead, he gives *mi ti ha segnalato* (he pointed you out to me) as fully grammatical, whereas it is at least doubtful, and according to many simply ungrammatical. He also gives *ne La ringrazio* (I thank you for it) as good ordinary Italian, whereas it is, if acceptable at all, at least archaic. I could not find mention of the fact that two consecutive phonetically identical clitics are excluded: *\*ci ci invita spesso* (he invites us there often), but: *mi ci invita spesso* (he invites me there often).

By contrast, the chapters from morphology up to the surface are rather impressive, given the theoretical limitations. That is, what is said on sentence intonation is very meagre, bound up as this is with syntax. Nor does the treatment excel in simplicity or forceful argument. But the segmental facts seem to be all there. I checked a few tricky peculiarities, and although it took me quite a while to trace them down, they were all there, though sometimes only a reference to literature was given (as for the opposition between *gn* and *ni*, as in *agnello*, *Danielli*, or between *gl* and *li*, as in *Oglìo/olio*).

Although some of the symbols and abbreviations used in the text are given in advance, on pp. 16–18, there is a large amount of additional symbolism which is not traceable unless one reads the complete text. Different sorts of morphophonemes, as well as various, I suppose, archiphonemes of deletion, assimilation, consonantal gemination, and the like, are introduced piecemeal as the text goes on. Then there is no index! The list of contents is fairly detailed, but not nearly enough for quick consultation. The idea is, apparently, that the book should be read and studied. But it lacks precisely the qualities which would make it suitable for that purpose. It is not theoretically coherent; it does not argue anything. It is merely a compilation of data, more or less systematically arranged. With an index and other aids of direction the book would be much more useful.

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Erika Kanduth, *Wesenszüge der modernen italienischen Erzählliteratur. Beiträge zur neueren Literaturgeschichte, Dritte Folge, Band 5*. Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, 1968, 203 S., DM 26,—.

Markus Gersbach, *Carlo Emilio Gadda. Wirklichkeit und Verzerrung*. Studiorum Romanicorum Collectio Turicensis, Vol. XIV. Ed. Th. Spoerri et R. R. Bezzola, Francke Verlag, Bern, 1969, 145 S.

Il volume di E. Kanduth si compone di tre saggi, dedicati rispettivamente a Dino Buzzati (pp. 13–81), Guido Piovene (pp. 82–136) e Alberto Moravia (pp. 137–190). La trattazione spesso contrastiva dei tre autori (due dei quali, Buzzati e Piovene, non certo privilegiati dalla critica soprattutto italiana) vale a superare i limiti inerenti ad ogni studio monografico pur senza cadere in categorizzazioni astratte e costituisce una valida introduzione alla problematica della moderna letteratura italiana.

A Carlo Emilio Gadda, il maggiore probabilmente tra gli scrittori italiani viventi, è dedicata la documentatissima monografia di M. Gersbach. Apre il volume un rapido ma esauriente schizzo biografico (pp. 3–10), cui tengon