

ON BLOOMFIELD

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0. The aim of my paper read at the third meeting of the Linguistic Society of West Japan was to reconsider Bloomfield from a historical point of view.

Special references were given to the internal and external influences upon his synchronic theory.

1. It will be useful to consider the significance of an old theory (like Bloomfield's) from two viewpoints; one is "diachronic," i.e., what the theory owes to the previous ones, and the other is "synchronic," i.e., how it contribute to current linguistics.

1.1. The history of linguistics is validly divided into the internal history of linguistics and the external history of linguistics.

The former deals with influences of previous linguistic theories upon the linguistic theory in discussion (e.g., influences of Port-Royal grammar, Humboldt and Harris upon Chomsky). The latter deals with the relations of the theory with other disciplines, or with the society, politics, economics, etc. of the time (e.g., influences of Cartesian philosophy, psychology, symbolic logic, and Vietnam War upon Chomsky).

1.2. Old theories contribute to current linguistics in two ways, i.e., negatively, and positively. By negative contribution I mean that an old theory in question shows us some errors or defects which should not be repeated. Positive contribution is the assumption that there are new ideas hidden in an old theory. This is merely an 'assumption,' but without this assumption old theories would completely lose their *raison d'être* in the present age.

2. Some scholars and schools that distinctively influenced Bloomfield are, details aside, (i) internally, de Saussure, Jespersen, Neo-Grammarians, (ii) externally, A.P. Weiss, behaviorism, mathematics, and his own experience as a field worker.

3. Bloomfield's negative contribution is semantics, as he himself admits. His defects are being overcome by current linguistics, especially by stratificational grammar. His positive contribution, on the other hand, is 'postulational method.' With this method we can further the study of language, remove misunderstandings, and avoid unfruitful disputes (which some professors often do).