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LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

EDITED BY

GEORGE MELVILLE BOLLING
Ohio State University

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Yale University

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University of Michigan

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Yale University

NUMBER X MARCH, 1932

THE EXPRESSION OF THE ENDING-POINT RELATION IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND GERMAN

BY

EDWARD SAPIR and MORRIS SWADESH

Edited by ALICE V. MORRIS

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The present paper is the beginning of a detailed study of the variety of ways of expressing logical relations in language. It is part of a series of studies sponsored by the International Auxiliary Language Association in the United States, Inc. The chief projects which have been begun are the 'Foundations of Language, Logical and Psychological, an Approach to the International Language Problem' and 'Comparative Studies in Selected National and International Languages'.[1] The 'Ending-Point' study furnishes material which should be useful for the proposed section on 'Fundamental Relational Notions and their Linguistic Expressions' of 'Foundations of Language' and for the proposed section on 'Formal Elements' in 'Comparative Studies'.

The outstanding features of the technique are:

1. A 'testing-frame' which may be used for the analysis of any form of expression, or implication, of a relation or combination of relations, in any language.
2. The definition of a relation by means of a 'rendering' whose essence is the naming of the relation of the second term to the first term. The rendering can be translated approximately literally and used as a test rendering in any language, e.g., the rendering of the ending-point relation as 'whose ending-point is'.
3. The use of distinctive and similar type (1) in the sample sentence, for the locution which expresses or implies the relation treated, and (2) in the testing-frame, for the words or symbols which give the meaning of such locution.

The above and other features are explained more fully at the beginning of Part II.

Here, even at the risk of repetition (see p. 30), the 'testing-frame' device for facilitating the analysis of examples (see p. 36) may be briefly described as follows. At the left of the page are entered sample sentences. To the right of the samples there are three 'testing' columns.

[1] See leaflet: 'Linguistic Research sponsored by the International Auxiliary Language Association', obtainable on request from the Association, Box 118, 525 West 120th Street, New York.

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The first one is for the subject (the logical first term[2]) of the relation, that which is oriented, called A. The third column is for the correlate (the logical second term[2]) of the relation, that to which A is related, called B. In these two columns are entered the terms of the relation in substantival form stripped of idiom and often highly generalized. The middle column is for the relation, symbolized by the entry r. An interpretation or 'rendering' of the relation, given ahead of the testing-frame, shows how the symbol r is to be read.

During the research which led to the ending-point paper a constant want was felt for a term to designate a locution or other linguistic device whose sole or principal function is to express a relation or combination of relations—a word to cover the functions served by prepositions, prepositional phrases and affixes, conjunctions, and case forms. The term 'relater' was adopted and has proved useful and convenient.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Professors Algernon Coleman (University of Chicago) and Henri F. Muller (Columbia University) for help with different parts of the French material; to Professor Peter Hagboldt (University of Chicago), Professor Hermann J. Weigand (Yale University), Dr. Ludwig Kast and Mr. Reimar von Schaafhausen for help with different parts of the German material, and to Miss Frances Faegre for help in preparing the tables in the Appendix. To other friends and fellow-workers also we are indebted for help along the roadside, and we take this opportunity to express to them our appreciation.

There remains much to explore in the field of the ubiquitous ending-point relation. Its expressions in the realm of time have scarcely been touched upon in the present study, nor have investigations been made regarding degrees of kinship or identity of 'transitive' and 'dative' relations with the ending-poing relation, nor concerning the latter's kinship to goal, purpose, result, etc.

The hope is expressed that this monograph may prove useful in future studies of the expression of locative and other relations. If such studies could be uninterruptedly pursued, in English, French and German, by a staff of two or three research assistants guided by skilled direction, it is believed that within a couple of years there might result definitions and classifications of relations and combinations of relations, expressed or masked by ordinary linguistic forms, which are more

[2] Note that 'first term' and 'second term' have nothing to do with word-order but refer exlusively to the logical priority of the subject which is being oriented over that by reference to which its orientation takes place.

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fundamental and complete than anything which yet exists. Based upon the uncovered, classified data, it should eventually be possible (among other things) to plot out a map of the common relational concepts which pervade language, accompanied by their prepositional and conjunctional symbols in the languages of the study,—a map to serve as a guide in translation and interpretation, as a new approach to certain parts of 'general language study', and as a norm for the simplification and clarification of the prepositional and conjunctional features of an international language.

A. V. M.

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[1] Section numbers correspond to those in Table I of the Appendix ('Comparative Table of Contents of Parts I and II'). Not all classes of ending-point expressions appear in each of the three languages of the study. Hence the omission of different numbers from the contents of each language.

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