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Review of Heinz Vater, Das System der
Artikelformen im gegenwartigen Deutsch , Max
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teacher knows that there is no great supply of competence anywhere. Even if Gleason were right in arguing for a language-centered curriculum, the implementation of his argument today would only aggravate a situation in which anybody who once read a grammar sets himself up to teach the English language while whole school systems plunge from one morass into another in pursuit of The New English.

I do not believe these plunges can be halted: money from Washington is raining so hard that, instead, the whole country will become a morass. A reasonable alternative to morass-plunging, however, could be built on the recognition that English as a subject is not a unified and 'fundamental liberal discipline' but a historical accident, that conditions in our schools are so varied that no one curriculum is suitable for all the schools of the nation or of a state or of a single city, and that the best curriculum will fail without competent teachers. It is a relief to close a largely unfavorable review with repeated praise for Gleason as an eminent linguist who has given time and thought and effort to teacher-training. If men of equal distinction in English departments would follow his example, something useful might get done.

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Das System der Artikelformen im gegenwärtigen Deutsch. VON HEINZ VATER.
 Pp. [vi,] 126. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1963.

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Vater's monograph is a valiant attempt to deal with an intractable subject. Its value consists in its wealth of detail and in the astute observations made on the usage and meanings of the forms and constructions considered. Its faults lie

not so much in the execution as in the underlying conception of the nature, methods, and goals of linguistic analysis. This conception is basically that of Hjelmslev, but the failings are shared by many other current approaches to linguistics.

Vater undertakes to answer the following questions (p. 1): (a) What sort of grammatical category does the article represent? (b) Which linguistic forms are to be included in this category? (c) What is the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of the individual forms and of the whole category 'article'? The answer to (a) is given first in terms of syntactic position: the article comprises those expressions that can occur in the position *D* in nominal groups of the form *D* + *Substantive*. Rather mysterious reasons are given for excluding some forms: *welcher* because it is used only in questions, *solcher*, *viel*, *wenige* because they occur along with articles and exhibit in part morphological characteristics of adjectives; other omissions are unexplained, e.g. *etwas* (as in *etwas Brot*). The answer to (b) can be given most readily in the form of an enumeration (see the chart below). Vater uses just under the first half of his book to arrive at this result, to set forth his assumptions about language and linguistics, and to delimit the field of investigation: twentieth-century Normalsprache, lying between elevated and colloquial style.

As for (c), the elements used to specify the meanings of the individual expressions are called 'Inhaltsfiguren' (glossemes of content). Every form is given a positive, negative, or 'indifferent' specification (*a* 'merkmalhaft', *A* 'Negation von *a*', α 'indifferent' with respect to *a*). Thus Vater operates with a ternary system of meaning elements, which I shall henceforth refer to as 'features'. (Incidentally, it seems likely that in the system of syntactic and semantic features recently introduced into transformational theory, such features are best treated as ternary also.) The largest part of the book consists in the justification and explanation of these features, arrived at by repeated application of the 'commutation test' to various sentences from Vater's corpus. The results are tabulated in various charts, of which the one on page 113 is the most perspicuous. I reproduce the entire chart but in a slightly different form (with +, -, 0 in place of the system of lower case, upper case, and Greek letters used by Vater; I retain his letters as heads for the columns and as keys to the list of features below the chart).

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>jeder</i>	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0
<i>dieser</i>	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+
<i>jener</i>	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	0
Possessivum	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	0
<i>alle(r)</i>	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0
<i>der</i>	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
\emptyset	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>ein</i>	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
<i>mehrere</i>	+	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-
<i>einige(r)</i>	0	0	-	+	-	0	0	0	-
<i>irgendwelche</i>	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	-
<i>irgendein</i>	+	-	-	0	-	0	0	-	-
<i>mancher</i>	+	+	-	0	-	+	0	+	-

a Gliederung, *b* Vielheit, *c* abgrenzende Gesamtheit, *d* Situationsbezogenheit, *e* einschließende Gesamtheit, *f* Distribution, *g* Zugehörigkeit, *h* Identität, *i* Bezug auf Nahes. (*kein* is not included because it does not 'substitute' without meaning-change with any of the others, it is negative for another feature 'Vorhandensein' for which all the above are positive; *sämtliche(r)* is considered a variant for *alle(r)*; the short forms *im*, *zur*, etc. are similarly considered variants of *Preposition* + *der*. I use \emptyset in place of *0* for the null-form of the article.)

Finally, to complete this summary of Vater's answers to the questions posed above, the meaning of the whole system is given as follows: 'Der Artikel zeigt Umfang und Gliederung der im Substantiv ausgedrückten Klasse von Sachverhalten an, wobei "Umfang" vom Nicht-Vorhandensein [*kein*] über das in einer bestimmten Situation Vorhandene bis zum Vorhandensein der ganzen Sachverhaltsklasse reicht' (121).

It would be possible to argue about a number of details, but there would be little point in doing so. A reader who is willing to work through the book will learn a good deal about the usage and meanings of the forms discussed and will be moved to think about a number of syntactic and semantic problems in German. I would like to explain, however, why the work as a whole strikes me as unsatisfactory. The following remarks are not so much criticisms of the author as of the sort of linguistics which he is doing. My criticisms are directed at two aspects of the work: the lack of testable results and the lack of a general substantive framework for giving some noncircular and understandable interpretation to the semantic features posited.

The so-called commutation test plays a basic role in the discussion of the meaning of the articles. Vater takes a sentence containing a form that he has decided to include in the category 'article'. He then replaces it by every other form in the category and asks whether the result is still a possible German sentence, and, if so, whether or not the resultant sentence means the same as the original one. If the result is 'same' (if the forms are 'substitutable'), then the two forms must share some feature of meaning; if not, then they must differ in at least one such feature. The results of applying this test repeatedly are registered, suitable labels and explanations given for the features posited, the results tabulated in displays such as the one given above, and the job is done. Assuming that we understand what is meant by the features—and I must confess I still do not have a very clear idea of most of them—how do we go about using the results, making predictions about new sentences not discussed by Vater in order to test the analysis? This question is hard to answer. Thus, referring to the chart above, we find that the form *ein* must always denote (be compatible with other forms denoting?) 'Gliederung' but never 'Bezug auf Nahes', while it may or may not have the other features. But under what conditions may it have one or another specification for these other features? And how are we to test whether, in a given sentence, it implies negation of 'Bezug auf Nahes' (as predicted by the chart)? Consider the sentence *Ein Mann, der jetzt hier im Zimmer gleich neben mir sitzt, hat mir das gesagt*: do we have 'Bezug auf Nahes' or not? Or take the sentence *Ein Hund kläffte*: what conditions (apart from Vater's explicit citation and discussion of just this sentence) force or allow us to say that the use of *ein* here entails '—Vielheit' or '—Identität'? Vater gives parenthetical discussion of various

sentence types and situations in which one or another feature must be excluded or included, but there is no systematic statement about the grammatical or semantic characteristics of sentences that allow or require the possible specifications of the posited features.

For example, there are limitations on the use and interpretation of the articles in predicate nominals, as illustrated in the following sentences:

- (1) ^vEr ist Advokat.
- (2) Er ist ein Advokat.
- (3) Er ist der Advokat ...
- (4) *Er ist jeder Advokat.
- (5) Er ist dieser Advokat ...
- (6) Er ist jener Advokat ...
- (7) Er ist mein Advokat.
- (8) Sie sind alle Advokaten.
- (9) ?Sie sind mehrere Advokaten.
- (10) ?Sie sind einige Advokaten.
- (11) Sie sind irgendwelche Advokaten.
- (12) Er ist irgendein Advokat.
- (13) *Er ist mancher Advokat.

The first two sentences illustrate a use and feature of the article which is not considered by Vater at all. In (3), various features (e.g. *e*) are simply excluded; this is also true for (5) and (6). (8) is possible only with a different syntactic structure. If Vater had concerned himself with giving the apparatus for specifying various features, or with supplying interpretations for new sentences, such situations could hardly have been ignored.

The difficulty is that Vater offers no explicit procedure for making predictions about the results obtained. With regard to semantics, there are two possibilities: (1) A semantic theory might specify various structures of semantic elements which underlie sentences in a given language; the syntactic and phonological theories would then map these into possible sentences. Such a conception is provided by Lamb's stratificational model, although available descriptions of the 'sememic stratum' remain distressingly vague. (2) The syntax might specify possible structures of linguistic elements; the semantic theory would then provide an interpretation (or none or several) for each such structure, and the phonological component would map the structures into sentences (after they had passed through a transformational component). This is the view of Katz, Fodor, and Postal, although available examples (i.e. theories about a given language rather than theories about such theories) remain fragmentary. It would be possible to get testable results from either kind of theory. Discussions such as Vater's, on the other hand, which deal with a considerable chunk of real language, remain completely anecdotal and hence untestable. Such a work—and there are many others of this sort—provides important materials for a theory about a subsystem of a language, but does not provide the theory itself.

The preceding remarks were directed at the form of the 'theory' presupposed by Vater. The following criticism is directed at the substance of his results, which

suffer from the lack of a suitable metalanguage for talking about the meaning and function of the forms of the article. This fault is closely connected with two prevalent ideas: (1) linguistics is concerned with form and not 'substance'; (2) the meaning and function of the forms analyzed are to be interpreted in terms of the object language alone—that is to say, the meanings are 'sprachimmanent' and have nothing to do directly with 'reality' (cf. e.g. n. 34, p. 70). Most linguists would probably subscribe to the idea that the elements and features used in phonological descriptions must be tied up ultimately with facts of physiology and physics, although there would be many disagreements about the way in which this connection is to be established and also whether or not such a study should be called a part of linguistics. In the same way, the function and meaning of the forms discussed by Vater must be related to the results of some discipline bearing the same relation to syntax and 'sprachimmanente' semantics as acoustic and articulatory phonetics bear to phonology. In the areas touched upon in this book, modern logic offers the most in the way of substance for such a tie-up, although it would have to be extended to cover functions not ordinarily considered by the logician. In this lack of a suitable substantive theory of syntactic functions and meanings, Vater is, of course, in good company. He cannot be criticized for the lack of such a theory, but some proponents of structural linguistics can be criticized for excluding by definition the search for such a theory. Hjelmslev's 'glossematics' seems to have reached the extreme in the attempt to make linguistics into a discipline in which the only general concepts are completely devoid of content and the only activity is the application of various 'tests' to yield a registration of formal relations among the elements of a linguistic system.

The remarks just made might be clarified by adding a few suggestions about the directions that such a substantive theory might take. One might ask, for a start, just how one would go about making statements in a language such as German that would translate sentences involving the universal and existential quantifiers of logic. Beyond this, one would have to posit certain universal functions to account for elliptical expressions never discussed by logicians. One such function is the one which permits the formation of 'temporary names' (*der Mann* in the sense of 'the one we are talking about'). Another area which is outside logic but which has received some attention from philosophical analysts of language is the theory of deixis, obviously involved in some of Vater's distinctions. Finally, there are functions that deal with the knowledge and beliefs of the speaker.

Thus, consider Vater's discussion of the feature 'Identität' (*h* in the chart). Both demonstratives as well as *der* are positively specified for 'abgrenzende Gesamtheit' (another difficult concept), but in some instances where this feature is present, only *der* can stand:

- (1) Von weitem sah man eine Kirche. *Die Kirche* stand auf einer Anhöhe.
- (2) Es war ein hübsches Dorf. *Die Kirche* stand auf einer Anhöhe.

Diese and *jene* can replace the first but not the second *die*. Hence, says Vater, the demonstratives must contain a feature lacking in *der*. This feature is called Identität, and it is said to require a reference to something already known and

made explicit by extralinguistic context or previous mention. A glance at the chart will show that this feature is also positively specified for *mancher*. Vater argues that *mancher* implies previous familiarity: *Manche Bäume haben einen glatten Stamm* is supposed to entail *Ich kenne Bäume mit glattem Stamm*, while the same sentence with *irgendwelche* (— Identität) is said to mean *Es soll Bäume mit glattem Stamm geben*. This explanation would seem to lead to the statement that *Manche Menschen sind im siebenjährigen Krieg gestorben* entails *Ich kenne Menschen, die im siebenjährigen Krieg gestorben sind* (surely not so). But compare the following series (involving in part forms excluded from Vater's category of 'article'):

- (1) Einige Bäume haben einen glatten Stamm.
- (2) Mehrere Bäume haben einen glatten Stamm.
- (3) Manche Bäume haben einen glatten Stamm.
- (4) Wenige Bäume haben einen glatten Stamm.
- (5) Viele Bäume haben einen glatten Stamm.

The speaker who utters the first two sentences has merely made an observation. In the last three, however, he has committed himself to a knowledge about trees in general and some expectation about the quantitative relationships obtaining among various kinds of trees (in a given situation or in general). Whatever features are involved here surely have nothing to do with the 'Identität' of *dieser* and *jener*.

As the last discussion suggests, there is no 'system' and no one 'class' meaning or feature comprising just the forms discussed by Vater. If we ask what forms and distinctions serve to signal identity of reference in German sentences, we must consider not only articles but also, for instance, names and pronouns (as well as forms excluded presumably on morphological grounds, such as *derselbe*). If we ask what forms signal 'Vorhandensein' of the denoted class or individual, we must consider the syntactic structure of the sentences in which the expressions occur. And if we want to make predictions about the meaning of the expressions involving articles, we must consider not only the features that are associated with other members of the construction (as Vater does in some places), but we must also give some mechanism for providing interpretations of the composite expressions.

Die Sprachmischung in Luthers Tischreden: Studien zum Problem der Zweisprachigkeit. Von BIRGIT STOLT. (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen, 4) Pp. 314. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964.

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This book is a study of the mixture of Latin and German found in Veit Dietrich's and other scribes' records of Martin Luther's *Table talk*. It contains a general introduction (8–51) and treatments of Luther's language mixture within the single sentence (52–171), in hypotactic sentence constructions (172–212), in paratactic sentence constructions (213–36), and in unlinked adjacent clauses (236–59). The data are compared to those of other mixed texts, such as