

P.H. Mathews, Morphology. Cambridge University Press, London, 1974; x + 236pp.

This book is the first title in a new series, the Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. The series is intended to provide introductory textbooks in the major areas of linguistic study, as well as restatements of current positions by "leading authorities".

Mathews states in his preface that this book is a rewritten and expanded version of his earlier Inflectional Morphology (1972), and is intended for "specialists in particular European languages as well as . . . postgraduate and undergraduate students of general linguistics" (vii). Morphology ("that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the 'forms of words' in different uses and constructions") has not been fashionable lately. The decades of syntax and semantics (1960's and 1970's) presented morphology with a basic theoretical problem: if the word is not a theoretical entity, then the division of morphology and syntax has no theoretical status either.

The twelve chapters of the books are divided into roughly three sections discussing (1) introductory material (two chapters), (2) lexical versus inflectional morphology (one chapter) and five chapters dealing with inflectional morphology, and (3) the relationship between morphology and the lexicon, syntax, phonology, and generative grammar (the final four chapters). Thus, half the book is devoted to inflectional morphology (an indication of the author's area of interest and theoretical position).

The two introductory chapters are interesting, the first concluding with a discussion of the morphological challenge to the universalist hypothesis; morphologically, languages vary from those having the word as a basic unit to those in which the "word" does not exist, and this fact, according to Mathews, demands an explanation that does not rely on a universal base for all languages. The second chapter continues with definitions and a discussion of the term "word", as an abstract unit and as a lexeme,

and further distinguishes between the word form, word proper, and lexeme. The major portion of the book follows in six chapters, the first giving the criteria and historical perspectives on lexical versus inflectional morphology. The following chapters discuss the traditional treatment of inflection, morphemes (as basic grammatical and distributional units), sandhi in its various forms and modifications, morphological processes; this section concludes with a discussion of properties and their exponents. The final four chapters of the work discuss the relationship between morphology and other areas of linguistic description; this is the section that gives Mathew's detailed criticism of the inability of the generative grammarians (Chomsky and his followers) to adequately deal with the problems of morphology in the areas of lexicon, syntax, and phonology.

The book is thorough and well-written in a non-technical style, and each chapter gives annotated references to related readings. The book does not contain a Bibliography, but the principal references are given at the beginning with the abbreviations by which they are referred to in the text. One personal criticism of the book is that the example material is drawn almost entirely from Indo-European languages (especially Greek and Latin), and it is for this reason, as well as the theoretical nature of the book, that it is not suited for use as a text in morphology courses in most third world countries.

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