Hjelmslev and the theory of linguistic correlations

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Introduction

The present volume describes the genesis and elaboration of the notion of participation in the theory of language by Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965), one of the most important structural linguists in 20th century language sciences.

The notion of participation, along with its conceptual constellation, constitutes a "theory within a theory" that has been largely overlooked by reception of Hjelmslev. Reasons for this are multiple: the poor international resonance that glossematics had after Hjelmslev's death, its forbidding terminology and the dense formalism developed since its first formulation in 1936, as well as the quick shift in the scientific panorama that took place during the Sixties were all factors that contributed to casting glossematics in the special kind of oblivion reserved for theories that were abandoned yet still tapped as sources. In the case of participation, however, there might be some supplementary reasons. The notion of participation has been interpreted as Hjelmslev's answer to Jakobson's and Trubetzkoj's idea of markedness (cf. Andersen, 1989, 2001; Karoli Christensen, 2007; Skafte Jensen, 2012) and thus discussed within the framework of neutralization phenomena. Its reach however goes well beyond that, since participation was properly conceived as the mechanism

according to which a linguistic system constitutes itself as such (Cigana, 2022b). The formalization of this mechanism rests upon some assumptions – like the primacy of form, of deductive approach and of panchrony – which today's linguistics would be inclined to perceive as belonging to speculation or, at best, to epistemology (thus, ironically, to extralinguistic postulates) rather than to empirical research. The main goal of this book is to present and question those assumptions, by situating the idea of participation on its own ground. Few attempts, if any, have been made in this direction, and yet such an approach is absolutely crucial for assessing the proper reach of Hjelmslev's idea, for establishing a proper comparison with other models, for fleshing out a proper critique, and for applying or further developing it.

The book is divided into three chapters, each of them revolving around key works of Hjelmslev. The first chapter (*Grammar, prelogism and linguistic subconscious*) deals with the onset of his thinking, the *Principes de grammaire générale* (1928), in which he lays the foundation for an immanent and general grammar, adopting a mentalistic stance while stressing the autonomy of linguistics vis-à-vis logic, psychology and sociology. Three main ideas are singled out as presuppositions for the later development of participation: (1) the subconscious functioning of grammar, (2) the presence in the structure of all languages of prelogical elements deemed to be unavoidable and constitutive, and (3) the operative hypothesis of the "meaningful content" (*hypothèse du contenu significatif*) according to which a morphological category is never devoid of signification but always synchronically provided with a general and abstract meaning. This hypothesis forms the basis for the later notions of "sublogic" and "conceptual zone" (*begrebszone*). The second chapter (*Form, correlation and participation*) in many respects represents the core of the book, as it deals with the most important works belonging to the Thirties, among which *La catégorie des cas* (1935-1937) and Hjelmslev's early essay *Structure générale des corrélations linguistiques* (1933, now in its first English translation 2022) which, although having appeared only posthumosly, was conceptualized and written in the Thirties. The third and final chapter (*Participation and procedure*) describes how the idea of participation was further developed during the Forties and framed within the procedure prescribed by glossematics: while being presented cursively in *Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse* (1943), due to its high technicality it was only fully codified in the *Résumé of a Theory of Language* (1975) – a work that, despite not presenting the theory in its definitive

version, still "was considered by Hjelmslev as a suitable *basis* for revision" (Whitfield, 1975, p. xiv). In this chapter I describe the modifications introduced by Hjelmslev in the model and its further ramifications up to the last significant contribution, the so-called Texas Lectures, *i.e.* the course given in 1961 in Austin (Texas), during which Hjelmslev assesses the place of glossematics within the panorama of contemporary linguistic theories, recapitulating its main tenets.

First chapter

(§ 1.1) Hjelmslev's main goal in *Principes de grammaire générale* (1928) is to lay the foundations for a comparative and general grammar based on immanency, *i.e.* an autonomous theory of grammatical categories identified through cross-linguistic comparison and described through the assumption that categories concretely found across languages (or "concrete states") are the realization of their counterparts encoded as virtual possibilities in a repository called "language" or "abstract state" (§ 1.3.2.1). Despite Hjelmslev's early mentalistic stance, the abstract state is not cognitively coloured: while being linked to the psychological substrate of human mind, it builds a system of all linguistic possibilities, linked together by mechanisms of compensation. The grammar of a single language has thus to be explained (a) as a systematic totality, which in turn is (b) an instantiation of the broader tapestry of *language* as such. Unlike traditional universal approaches, which only account for categories attested in all (known) languages, this more general approach is expected to be able to address both the presence and the absence of a given category across languages. Linguistics itself relies upon the hypothesis that grammar (as an object) is not a haphazard collection of elements, but a well-organised totality built upon a principle of order that also represents the condition for its description: to assert the existence of a system is to postulate the existence of an internal "logic" governing both the functioning and the transformation of a totality. The goal of general grammar consists then in discovering the laws of such logic. The haphazard nature of linguistic categories was maintained by pre-structural linguistics (cf. Jespersen) in open reaction to traditional speculative grammars, which overstressed the normative or the intellectual side of language (§ 1.2), resulting in illegitimate simplifications via emendation of alleged irregularities. Where concessions to such broader logic were made, these mostly situated it on the side of dis-

course. Hjelmslev's idea is instead to install such a logic on the very structure of language (or "scheme"), deemed to be irreducible to a rational code. Language serves multiple communicative and expressive purposes that go beyond those of a single group of speakers, stretching to humankind as such. Therefore, while grammar as a science does require logic, such a logic needs to be broader and flexible enough (Jespersen, 1924, p. 344, cit. in Hjelmslev, 1928, p. 23) to uniformly account for the many idiosyncratic features that can be encountered across languages. Echoing Steinthal and Herbart, Hjelmslev distinguishes between three kinds of logic (§ 1.3): (1) an imperative logic, which cannot serve as a proper basis for linguistics since its laws, much like social imperative norms, are intrinsically normative and strictly dependent on conscious thinking; (2) a "hybrid logic" also called "ethics of thinking" (Herbart), relying on the notion of "correctness", which on one hand does represent a valid object for linguistics (being tied to the formation of a standard in terms of average of usages), yet serves on the other hand as a regulative ideal never really attainable by language. This kind of logic is then also discarded. The only type of logic fit to serve as a basis for linguistics is a "purely descriptive" logic (3), called "psychological logic", which describes the whole range of mental operations without introducing any pre-emptive separation between normal vs. deviant, affective vs. intellectual, correct vs. incorrect, primitive (prelogical) vs. civilized or modern (logical) aspects. Such a descriptive logic has the double advantage of taking into account the subconscious working of the human mind, in which grammar is embedded (§ 1.3.1), and also the numerous "irregularities" (like neutralisations, defectivities, overlapping and lack of semantic motivation) that manifests the alogical (or rather "prelogical") systemic rationality of language (§ 1.3.2). The notion of subconscious plays a vital role in Hjelmslev's argumentation, defining the very boundaries of linguistics: grammatical phenomena are subconscious psychological operations rooted in natural or daily thinking. Accordingly, grammar is thus embedded in psychology, and yet it retains its own specificity (and thus irreducibility) vis-à-vis the field of non-linguistic psychological operations. Despite its importance, the notion of subconscious is never employed in a technical and univocal sense, although such polysemy is instrumental for connoting multiple features of grammatical phenomena. Tapping the most authoritative works in psychology and psycholinguistics of his time (like Marty, Steinthal, Herbart, Wundt and Şăineanu) while relying mostly on Henri Delacroix' *Le langage et la pensée* (1924), Hjelmslev qualifies the "gram-

matisms" (= grammatical elements and operations of combination) as sub-conscious in an attempt:

(1) to stress the mnemonic and automatic nature of operations of segmentation and combination of grammatical elements like semantemes (roots and affixes) and morphemes (§ 1.3.1.1), which represent the condition for the speakers' linguistic acts. Memory and automatism do not depend on rational motivation, but only on analogical repetition – a mechanism that cannot be captured within the narrow sphere of intellectual logical thinking. The ideas that language encodes are not pure representations, but distorted ones or rather intuitions of intuitions (cf. Steinthal's *Anschauungen der Anschauungen*), schematic images that need to be described according to their own constitutive principles, as received tradition or – like Sapir said, as "dogmas of the unconscious" – and not referentially, through something external. This is maintained in accordance with Saussure's claim that language is not a tool developed in view of the concepts to express, but rather a forming "energeia" (Humboldt);

(2) to highlight the fact that speakers *may*, but do not *need* to, be consciously aware of grammatical structure and mechanism[1] (§ 1.3.1.2): linguistic consciousness (or feeling) is focused on macrosyntagmatic units (like clauses, constituents and lexemes) and their semantic meaning, while the "significative order", i.e. the content of grammatical units like roots and morphemes, tends to be ignored or to be considered as purely mechanical as non susceptible of conveying any subjective information. However, it is always possible to bring those forms under conscious and theoretical reflection, precisely because they are not locked away in the unconscious dimension but are always potentially conscious. The subconscious nature of grammar then, far from being a flaw, is instrumental for linguistic versatility, as language can be tapped unreflexively and in any situation. The idea of a subconscious grammar is also interpreted in gestaltic terms, *i.e.* in the light of the relational nature of linguistic elements, which exist as a bundle of dependencies and not per se: only the positive outcome of their combination is then susceptible of overstepping the threshold of consciousness, and not the combinatory mechanism per se. This is attainable only via the theoretical reconstruction of the paradigm to which each element belongs as something recognizable to which the somewhat abstract description

1. Hence the difference from the notion of "unconscious".

can be attached – an operation that is partly empiric observation partly calculus;

(3) to maintain a peculiar character of linguistic laws (§ 1.3.1.3), whose normativity does not derive from external imposition but rather from within. Linguistic norms are formed by the same implicit agreement that can be found in the most basic forms of social contract (cf. Andrei, 1927). Language has a psychological nature, being grounded in the shared psychic architecture of human mind: it crops out from communication considered as inbuilt psychological impulse (*besoin de communication*) which requires a synchronically stable code (= a language);

(4) to assess the inter-individual nature of grammatical norms (§ 1.3.1.4), which is thus situated midway between the individual dimension of psychology and the extra-individual dimension of sociology. Linguistics and grammar form an autonomous domain within collective psychology since language itself relies on the common functioning of human mind, *i.e.* on operations shared across individuals, not independently from them;

(5) to claim that grammar is first and foremost *form*, *i.e.* a subconscious set of combinatory operations which the very grammatical units are made of (§ 1.3.1.5). Form itself is said to be immediately grasped in the verbal image albeit being subconscious in itself. It thus mediates between what lies below and above the threshold of consciousness, being therefore instrumental in enabling theoretical thinking to access the working of the subconscious prelogical mind. Such mediation, however, is due to a still ambiguous definition of form, which at this stage merges *expression* and *manifestation*: in the first sense, form codifies the contents of consciousness by imposing on them an objective pattern; in the second sense, it materialises the "latent ideas" of language (Bréal, 1868) by assigning them phonetic substance. Hjelmslev will later distinguish these two functions by calling the first *denotation* (the semiotic function between expression and content) and the second *designation* or *manifestation* (between form and substance);

(6) to claim that language is not exclusively tied to cognitive or intellectual operations (cf. Sapir, 1921), but that it schematically codifies the content of consciousness that stems from the spheres of intellect, emotion and volition alike, *i.e.* from the totality of human experience (§ 1.3.1.6). Thus, linguistic form is underspecified in relation to those spheres; accordingly, formalism is a suitable way to chart affective and intellectual elements alike, being neutral in respect to this division. Again, this assump-

tion is instrumental in ensuring the possibility of apprehending and describing participation phenomena that are deemed to be affectively felt (cf. Lévy-Bruhl, 1910, 1922, 1927, 1949) and thus lying beyond the grasp of the logical mind.

The idea of the subconscious functioning of language is maintained in opposition to a normative linguistic approach and is then coupled with the claim of the prelogical structure, invoked by Hjelmslev in order to water down Lévy-Bruhl's skeptic assessment towards the possibility of a general grammar. Lévy-Bruhl's prelogism was instrumental in stressing the need for descriptive particularism, countering comparative generalizations that override structural differences between languages and societies. This is in Hjelmslev's eyes a legitimate claim, yet it goes too far: there is little point in starting by assuming a specific kind of institution (be it language, society or mentality, be it logically or prelogically oriented) and trying to describe the other extreme. Hjelmslev's hypothesis is that prelogism does not characterise a specific kind of institution (namely, the primitive mentality) pitted against the other (the civilised one), but is a panchronic feature of language as such, susceptible of being found in the structure of any idiom. Manifestations of prelogism (§ 1.3.2.2) include (1) the presence of concrete forms in grammar, (2) a discrepancy between grammatical and logical articulation of categories, (3) participative phenomena like syncretisms and fusions. The first aspect (1) is taken up in *La catégorie des cas* (1935, 1937) and is strictly connected to "localism" – the assumption according to which grammatical case can be explained on the basis of a spatial intuition working on both a topical (concrete) and a syntactic (abstract) level. The second aspect addressed an indifference towards logical distinctions: prelogical mentality is not impervious to logic, but rather completely permeable – a feature that recalls the mutual permeability or "participation" that mythical thinking sets (or feels) between things and entities. This feature is connected to the later idea of an asymmetrical inclusion of logic/exclusion into prelogic/participation (cf. Hjelmslev, 1933a; 1975). The third aspect, the affective nature of Lévy-Bruhl's participations, is not explicitly discussed by Hjelmslev. The reason for this is that the very distinction between intellectual and affective was already somewhat removed or at least watered down: participation belongs to the system of language, and the system encodes intellectual and affective elements alike (from more cognitively charged elements like grammatical gender, number, etc. to more affective-coloured categories like interjections), regardless of where they originate from. Moreover, if the system is at the same time a principle of organisation and of intelligibility, and if participation is a specific organ-

isation of the system itself, it follows that there cannot be a gap between the epistemic stance of describing participation and the affective stance of experiencing it (§ 1.3.2.2). The whole view is made operational through the "hypothesis of the meaningful content" (§ 1.3.3), according to which any grammatical category (morphemes and semantemes alike) is constantly provided with a synchronic abstract meaning (*Grundbedeutung*), acting as a cross-linguistic content invariant lying at the core of any specific member of a given category. In *Principes*, only the category of article is described through this method, but in subsequent research carried out in the Thirties (cf. Hjelmslev 1935; 1937a; 1938 and even 1956a) Hjelmslev applies it to different grammatical systems: the different cases found in different languages can be univocally described as nuances of a general idea of "direction", associated with that category as its corresponding "sublogical" meaning[2]. This method, and especially the reduction of the possible nuances to a closed set, was meant to be developed later (cf. § 2.5.2), yet the "hypothesis of meaningful content" represents its necessary presupposition. In fact, it weaves together into a method the aforementioned elements: (1) the meaningful content is "sublogic" in the sense of "subconscious", since it is seldom apprehended by linguistic feeling due to its abstractness; (2) such intensional abstractness is conceived of in terms of extensional distribution[3]: the content of a given category needs to be abstract (= broad) enough to uniformly account for the multiple usages instantiated by its members – usages that may contradict a logico-normative interpretation. (3) Hence the need to chart the distribution of those forms on the basis of language internal (pre)logic.

Second chapter

(§ 2.1) From several points of view, the studies carried out in the Thirties can be seen as a continuation of the programme of general grammar laid down in *Principes*: after the successful Second International Con-

2. The ablative and instrumental cases of Latin represent the idea of removal (the negative nuance ÷), the accusative represents an approximation (the positive nuance +), while the nominative has a purely vague and fully underspecified value. This value possibility is called "indifferent" in compliance with Lévy-Bruhl's feature and in order to avoid conceptual overlapping with the "zero" nuance, which in Hjelmslev's eyes is algebraically different, namely more precisely defined cf. § 2.4.3.

3. A manifestation of the descriptivist stance (inclusive) vis-à-vis the normative one (exclusive).

gress of Linguists (Geneva 1931), Hjelmslev focuses on the issue that closes his previous work: the identification of the criteria for distinguishing between morphemes and semantemes (bases) and for describing the internal organisation of each morphological category. The central works of this phase – namely *Structure générale des correlations linguistiques* (§ 2.2, Hjelmslev, 1933a; 1933b; cf. Cigana, 2022b), *La catégorie des cas* (1935; 1937) and the course given at Aarhus University in 1934, *Sprogsystem og sprogforandring* (1934) – revolve around the main problem of establishing the "possible number and mutual relationships of morphemes within one and the same paradigm" (Hjelmslev, 1933a [Engl. translation forthcoming]). A set of assumptions lies at the core of this new phase of Hjelmslev's elaboration: (1) a proportional ratio exists between quantitative and qualitative aspect (resp.: the number and value of elements) of any grammatical paradigm. (2) Such ratio depends on the relationship that opposes each term of a given paradigm to any other (Saussure) – a relationship called "correlation" (§ 2.3.5). (3) Correlations operate within a paradigm (or category) and in fact define it, being thus essential in describing how its elements are selected for syntagmatic combinations[4]. (4) The network of functions (correlations and relations) represents the necessary presupposition of linguistic description vis-à-vis linguistic feeling which, while being an important factor to be accounted for in explaining how language is realised in communication, is too subjective and "local" (§ 2.3.2). (5) The same category (say: grammatical case) may constitute different systems or configurations of terms across different languages, so that there is no guarantee that even the same term occurring in categories of two different languages (for instance: genitive in Latin and Greek) has the same value. Hence the need for a foothold to account for both identity and diversity in languages – even more so as change is conceived of as being always at work and thus as the default state of linguistic system itself, to be explained in terms of the interplay of categories[5] (§ 2.3.4). In order to describe how any linguistic paradigm is constituted, the first problem to be solved is how to describe oppositional paradigms of different sizes. Each term of a given paradigm is equal to any other, since its de-

4. Both syntagmatic combinations and paradigmatic correlations are functions, thus belonging to form (§ 2.3.1).

5. Hjelmslev firstly distinguishes between idiosynchrony and idiodiachrony (state and change within one system), on one hand, and pansynchrony and pandiachrony (state and change across multiple systems), on the other. Later he rebaptizes these terms as respectively synchrony, diachrony, panchrony and metachrony.

fining function is that of belonging to the corresponding paradigm. The standard concept of opposition is not apt to describe such uniformity typical of organic totalities, since it can only occur between two terms: in case of richer systems consisting of multiple terms (like the case-system of Tabassaran, allegedly consisting of 52 elements), these are necessarily described as tree-structures, *i.e.* as hierarchies of binary branching choices, multiplying the underlying relevant oppositions. The question is thus to find a way to describe complex systems (consisting of more than 3 elements) in a uniform way, *i.e.* through a single operation of partition.

Having formulated the problem in these terms, Hjelmslev claims that his research knows "no forerunners" (§ 2.4). As a matter of fact, however, the same issue was tackled by others too, albeit from different angles: Hjelmslev himself acknowledges a certain number of linguists for having contributed to the solution in different ways: by stressing the existence of a quantitative pattern in the constitution of paradigms (Vostokov, § 2.4.1)[6], by stating the necessary asymmetry of any binary opposition, due to the intrinsic vagueness of the unmarked term (Peškovskij, § 2.4.2), by having specified the logical ratio between two or three terms and introducing the "neutral term" (Karcevskij, § 2.4.3), by having explicitly developed a model for analysing asymmetric contrast (cf. Jakobson, § 2.4.4) despite the aforementioned disadvantages. These contributions manifest some interesting affinities with Hjelmslev's thinking in terms of the general framework: Karcevskij, for instance, offered stimulating remarks about the objective nature of morphological values that codify the subjective contents of the speakers' consciousness, about the non-logical nature of linguistic classification or the non-additive ratio of language categories – considerations that are in line with Hjelmslev's own argumentation. In the following paragraphs, some more affinities are identified in a number of other theories that presumably served as inspiration for Hjelmslev, rather than as proper sources: the theory of language by Georg Michael Roth; the issue tackled by Togeby (1965) concerning the role of Theodor Kalepky in his conceptualizing paradigmatic contrast and the contribution by Svend Ranulf are discussed, before I address Hjelmslev's own model (§ 2.5).

6. This however has been impossible to verify, no such claim appears to be found in Vostokov's *Russian grammar*. Hjelmslev's mention of Vostokov echoes that of Jakobson in spite of the fact that the reason given is different: Jakobson quotes Vostokov for having stressed the existence of asymmetrical paradigmatic contrast (markedness) between Russian categories.

Georg Michael Roth (§ 2.4.5) never conceptualized the participation law in the way Hjelmslev suggested (A vs. A & non-A), although he did try to justify the grammatical category of case by deducing it from a single concept (*Anschauung*) via a progressive series of binary or ternary divisions. The idea associated with grammatical case, namely an external relationship between two representations, is a complex idea, as case can be found at the same time in the governing term and in the governed one. Hence the need to assume that some ideas are simple, while others may be complex, incorporating the simple ones as internal moments. Such insight was applied unsystematically by Roth to other grammatical categories too, so that Hjelmslev's mention seems more like an ideologically oriented attempt in finding an authoritative forefather rather than an actual historiographical reconstruction. This does not exclude the possibility of finding some interesting elements of consonance between the two models. The same reassessment is in order in the case of Theodor Kalepky (§ 2.4.6). Despite Togeby's claim, Kalepky cannot be held as a true forerunner for the idea of asymmetrical contrast: while he did stress the need to discuss the opportunity of nuancing contrary and contradictory oppositions, acknowledging the existence of *mediale Fälle*, he operates within a framework that was too much non-structural for being considered a source. For instance, his idea of semantic weakening (roughly accounting for grammaticalization) is incompatible with Hjelmslev's hypothesis of meaningful content. Finally, Svend Ranulf (§ 2.4.7) put forward the idea of a "logic of absolute ambiguity" (*Logik der absoluten Vieldeutigkeit*) in his dissertation *Der eleatische Satz vom Widerspruch* (1924), quoted by Hjelmslev as a way to explain the pre-rational orientation of ancient thinking. According to Ranulf, this form of ambiguous logic explains the various fallacies featured in pre-Aristotelian Greek thought, and notably in most of Plato's *Dialogues*. This claim exposes itself to the same criticism addressed to Lévy-Bruhl's notion of prelogic (taken up by Ranulf himself), yet the aspect closest to Hjelmslev's framework lies elsewhere, namely in the way Ranulf formalizes the laws of concept-formation of his logics, by resorting to a symbolism that can indeed be found in Hjelmslev's system too (A = *abc*, B = *ab*, etc.) and by postulating that ambiguous concepts overlap, flowing into each other, due to the fact that they share some or all constitutive features.

Hjelmslev's own proposal (§ 2.5), elaborated in consonance with those insights rather than developed from them, includes a vast array of terms and relies upon some basic postulates:

(1)   that any linguistic form (be it a category or a member) is conceived of as an invariant supporting a given number of qualities, *i.e.* parts or usages as its variants (cf. Hjelmslev, 1939c). This means that a category (like case) is articulated in different members (nominative, accusative, ablative, etc.), and each member (like ablative) is articulated in multiple particular usages (context-bound variants, like instrumental, provenience, removal, causal, origin, etc.);

(2)   that the internal articulation of a category is organised oppositionally. Contrary and contradictory oppositions (respectively A vs. B, and A vs. non-A) do not exhaust the prelogical functioning of language, so a third kind of opposition is introduced and formalized according to the law of participation, A vs. A & non-A (§ 2.5.1);

(3)   that a category is conceptualized as a sublogical zone that functions like a "ballot" (*Stemmeseddel*), a metalinguistic device upon which each member can be captured according to the way(s) it is distributed on it (§ 2.5.2). In order for the diagram to capture the functional behaviour of the members, it is logically divided into two- ($+/\div$ or *a-b*) or three sub-areas ($+/\circ/\div$, or *a-c-b*). Each member can then be charted according to which subarea of the diagram it covers, according to three oppositional regimes: (a) a contrary couple β-B (positive and negative), (b) a contradictory couple γ-Γ (neuter, complex) and (c) a simple couple (which includes a precise or intensive term α, which can be positive, negative or neuter, and the indifferent or extensive one, A, which covers the whole area of the diagram and thus includes all other values). The result is an asymmetrical geometry of oppositions that differs from other concurrent models (like for instance Viggo Brøndal's system, Algirdas Greimas & François Rastier's semiotic square, Claude Zilberberg's tensive model) for two main reasons: (a) it builds upon a clear distinction between *logical valences* ($+$, $\circ$, $\div$) and *linguistic (prelogical) values* (α, A, β, B, γ, Γ) that can be mapped upon the former but not reduced to them; and (b) it introduces the completely vague correlate, ⁞A, whose vagueness is of a double kind: intra-correlate (the logical valences are all covered) and inter-correlate (the completely vague term can include, and stand for, the precise one) (cf. §§ 2.5.3, 2.5.5).

The establishment of those six (and later seven) correlative forms α, A, β, B, γ, Γ (§ 2.5.4) relies on some further concepts, namely:

(4)   the concept of "insistence" (§ 2.5.7), which enables the definition of participative contrary and contradictory correlates, by assuming that each term covers the entirety of the sublogic zone but elects a field of "preference" ($+$, $\circ$, $\div$, $+\div$) in which its variants are concentrated. This results in a high-

er frequency of usage of the variant(s) that correspond to that field. From a purely epistemological point of view, insistence is defined by the common field included in the first-degree derivates of the correlate considered;

(5) the concept of "orientation" (§ 2.5.8) which accounts for the basic insight that quantitatively similar systems may still differ from one another. Orientation relies upon the idea that each system elects a single field acting as its "pole", which is called the "intensive case" and thus serves as a "compass" (for instance, *a*), while all other fields are said to be extensive. So, a similar category can be differently oriented (allegedly explaining some semantic differences in the way languages encode grammatical functions). The question raised by Zilberberg (1985), about how to distinguish between ⁚β (intensive) and ⁚B (extensive) since they are symmetrical, is then answered insofar as the intensive case holds across all correlates: thus, all correlates insist respectively on the intensive case *a* (signalled by ⁚α) and on the extensive case *b* (and *c*, if needed). It is true, however, that in case of a lack of an α-correlate, the orientation cannot be established and must be inferred by other means. Other drawbacks are also discussed, like among others the issue of a neutral orientation;

(6) the concept of "dimension", a cornerstone in Hjelmslev's method of analysis called "dimensional analysis" (1933a). Metalinguistically speaking (§ 2.5.9.1), dimensions represent the presupposition for extending the method beyond simple systems; empirically speaking (§ 2.5.9.2), each dimension represents a parameter (nuance) of the fundamental meaning of a given category. The general category of case is for instance three-dimensional, insofar as its fundamental meaning ("spatial relation") can be nuanced in terms of approaching/distancing (1st dimension), inherence/adherence (2nd dimension) and subjectivity/objectivity (3rd dimension); while the general category of article, being simpler, is only monodimensional, only supporting a single parameter for the fundamental meaning of "reality" (already known/unknown). Categories are thus broken down into dimensions, *i.e.* the parameters of the sublogic zone that act like Cartesian coordinates on which to distribute the members of the categories. Members are in turn broken down into glossemes, or fundamental invariants according to the value they assume on each dimension. A case-category consisting of six-members can for instance be broken down into a two-dimensional system, and reduced to five fundamental invariants (glossemes, expressed by the Greek letters) conceived of as parts of dimensions:

	α	A
β	1	2
B	3	4
γ	5	6

Glossemes are moreover conceived of as participative elements since the entirety of the zone is covered and since each member to some extent overlaps with the others. Glossemes, *i.e.* the formal version of distinctive features, can be semantically interpreted according to their extensional definition. Assuming that the vertical dimension represents the approaching/distancing parameter, β can be defined as preferably insisting on the approaching-nuance, B as preferably insisting on the distancing-nuance, and so forth. Each dimension supports up to six terms (the aforementioned correlates), so any linguistic system swings between two extremes (cf. § 2.6.2) a *theoretical minimum* (two terms) and a *theoretical maximum* (6^3 = 216 terms). According to Hjelmslev, each category also has preferential configurations (*optima*) that serves as a teleological goal guiding its evolution (for instance, the *optimum* of case is set on 4 terms, while the *optimum* for comparison is set on 0 terms, which corresponds to complete lexicalisation). Dimensions also work as "implicational universals": for instance, a two-dimensional category of case always lacks the third parameter (subjectivity/objectivity), and in case of a reduction to a monodimensional system, it will always lose the second parameter (inherence/adherence);

(7) "solidarity laws" (§ 2.5.10), Hjelmslev's version of Trubetzkoj's *Strukturgesetze*, that fixes the possible combinations of correlates on each dimension. An early formulation (1934) of the laws is discarded to make the law less broad (if all combinations are allowed, there is no sense in establishing a combinatory calculus in the first place), and the 1935-formulation is based on the idea that 1) no correlate can occur alone, 2) two-term systems are always built as α-A (extreme participation), 3) β and B correlates cannot occur alone and 4) are solidary with either γ or Γ. In 1940 the laws of solidarity were reformulated to make the calculus more inclusive, via a reformulation of α-correlate and the introduction of a new $Γ_2$ correlate (cf. resp. §§ 3.5.3, 3.5.4). In this version, found in the *Résumé of a Theory of Language*, $Γ_2$ can occur alone or with any other correlate. Apart from that, conditions 3-4 still apply. This enables the description of sys-

tems that previously were considered problematic, like systems consisting of 7 or 11 elements. In the Thirties, the analysis of those systems involved the assumption that those inventories actually included more terms (up to the next regular inventory), but that the "missing" terms were latent. Such latency was in turn interpreted as symptomatic of an ongoing evolution towards either a reduction or an expansion of the system.

This assumption shows to what extent Hjelmslev tried to lump together into a single analytical device not just panchronic and synchronic aspects but also metachronic aspects linked to language change (§ 2.6.5). In fact, the same laws that govern the formation of a system are also said to govern its transformation, as constitution and evolution are two complementary aspects (§ 2.6): any system is subject to external tendencies (towards simplification, towards rationalisation, towards motivation), imparted by sociolinguistic and historic circumstances; those however are only external forces that hold back or catalyse the inbuilt movement of the system. Such movement depends on "dependencies", *i.e.* on configurations between members of the system itself: a three-term system like βBγ can become a four-term system by necessarily acquiring a Γ element; a four-term system can only become a five-term system by losing either γ or Γ and acquiring the α-A couple, and so forth. According to this hypothesis, moreover, changes are canalised by some specific compensatory phenomena (§ 2.6.3), such as syncretisms (possible neutralisations, occurring between members of a category) and dominations (occurring between categories belonging to the same group, nominal or verbal), both occurring between intensive (marked) and extensive (unmarked) elements. Intensive dominating categories engender simplification in the governed category, whereas extensive dominating categories engender complexification. Another element which should account for metachronic evolution is the so-called "tension" (§ 2.6.4), a state in which the formal configuration of a system and its manifestation do not match. A symptom of this is the difficulty in assigning a univocal extensional (formal) definition to the elements of the system – a feature to be inferred metalinguistically (§ 2.6.4.1) which has empirical reverberations (§ 2.6.4.2). Tension is counterbalanced by "equilibrium" and defined through the concept of "affinity", by which Hjelmslev intends the fact that certain substances are better suited to manifest certain forms.

Overall, during the Thirties, Hjelmslev progressively moves away from previous psychological commitments, favouring a formal, constructivist posture instead. This turn depends on the idea that, in order to grasp the structure of linguistic phenomena, a purely descriptive stance does not suf-

fice: linguistic facts need to be complemented by a wider epistemological stance. The departure from empirical grounds, however, is only apparent, as language is deemed to have in itself an epistemic reach. This is maintained throughout the Forties and onwards – a period during which we witness an "internalization" of participation: from being a phenomenon manifesting prelogic mentality, it becomes incrementally a panchronic feature of language, a formalized law of system-formation and finally a principle of analysis. This development is consistent with the idea that the best description is the one that respects the functioning of language, re-enacting its very structure on a metalinguistic level.

Third chapter

This process, concerning how dimensional analysis and its participative basis are framed within glossematic procedure, is described in the final chapter (§ 3). The question of the allegedly "absence" of participation in the *Prolegomena* is dealt with (§§ 3.2, 3.3), showing that it is not actually the case, given that dimensional analysis is actually discussed at chapter 20. Moreover, participation plays a strong role in the *Résumé* (1943-45) as well as in the lectures held by Hjelmslev from 1940s onwards (Hjelmslev, 1942-43, 1943-45, 1961b/c, cf. § 3.6). In order to discuss how participation works within the procedure the overall structure of analysis as set down in the *Résumé* is presented (§ 3.5). Participation is defined correlatively to exclusion. Moreover, the distinction between participation/exclusion distinction is orthogonal to the distinction between contrary/contradictory/simple oppositions, giving rise to five possible kinds of correlations (exclusive contrary, exclusive contradictory, simple, participative contrary and participative contradictory, cf. § 3.5.2), which are to some extent mutually convertible (§ 3.5.5). These five correlative modalities set up two different kinds of paradigmatic analysis, resp. called "free articulation" and "bound articulation" (§ 3.5.1), both intervening in different stages of the procedure for setting up functional categories and in the division of these into functival categories and into elements (taxemes) until glossemes are reached. The difference between free articulation and bound articulation is that the latter deals with a restricted spectrum of correlative possibilities (namely the exclusive sets: $\beta B\gamma\Gamma$ and $\beta B\gamma\Gamma_2$), since it deals with "macro-levels" of analysis (roughly: periods to parts of sign). When it comes to microanalysis, carried out below the level of sign and within each paradigm, the procedure switches

to "free articulation", which describes the interrelations between members without a given "basis of analysis" (§ 3.4) and thus needs to operate with the whole range of correlates ($\alpha A \beta B \gamma \Gamma \Gamma_2$). This is maintained in compliance with the idea that linguistic systems manifest a specific set of features (like a generalized state of overlapping, according to which all members are to some extent reciprocally "entangled", as it were) that require finer-grained categories to be described. Overall, the whole model is slightly revamped, never rejected (cf. § 3.6.2) but actually extended from the analysis of grammatical categories (in the Thirties) to all linguistic categories, including those belonging to expression (§ 3.6.1). In order to carry out such an extension, more concepts are introduced, like the distinction between correlations that are "strong" enough to build a category and those that cannot (resp. "polarities" and "homologies", cf. § 3.5.6) and the necessary tools to deal with the underspecification of formal configurations (§ 3.5.7). The general remarks (§ 3.5.8) and conclusions (§ 3.6.3) insist on the strong cohesive character of Hjelmslev's theory of participation, that establishes a method for non-binary cross-linguistic analysis devised for "(1) integrating more explicitly into a unit the various shades or references within the meaning; (2) opposing each unit to all other units of the paradigm; and (3) using these oppositions to define the unit as a bundle (simultaneous configuration) of the terms of these oppositions" (Lotz, 1949, p. 185)[7]. The ultimate goal behind this method was to set up a formalized framework for describing the structuring of linguistic categories[8], serving for sound cross-linguistic comparison and ultimately allowing to calculate "all possible categories for all possible linguistic worlds" (Gregersen, Canger, 2001).

The development of a model of oppositions is an inevitable requirement for all those linguistic or semiotic theories that rely on content/expression and syntagm/paradigm distinctions. How Hjelmslev's model was received and how it can be modified represent two aspects of his theoretical inheritance to be tackled in further studies.

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7. This citation actually describes Lotz' own method for analysing the nominal bases of Hungarian. However, it also agrees well with Hjelmslev's method. This might not be a coincidence, as around the end of the Forties Lotz was working in close connection with Hjelmslev: Lotz' 1949 article is an evidence of this collaboration.

8. This is what Hjelmslev himself claimed, by asserting that "The theory of participation and the statistics of variations, both included in the theory, serve to meet the requirements of a description that accounts for gradual transitions between classes, where such transitions exist" (*La théorie de la participation et la statistique des variations, prévues toutes deux dans la théorie servent à répondre aux exigences d'une description qui rend compte des transitions graduelles entre classes, là où de telles transitions existent*, Hjelmslev, 2022, p. 99).

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N.B. I documenti inediti a cui si è fatto riferimento nel volume sono inseriti di seguito e classificati secondo il sistema di *permanent identifiers* sviluppato in seno al progetto "Infrastructuralism", finanziato dalla Fondazione Carlsberg e dedicato alla costruzione di un database digitale dei manoscritti inediti dei linguisti strutturalisti danesi prossimamente accessibile al sito glossematics.dk. Ciascun *permanent identifier*, inserito tra caporali singole < >, consente il reperimento online del documento digitalizzato ed è costruito da una stringa complessa, come per esempio: acc-1992_0005_095_Structure_0100_045. La prima parte di stringa (acc-1992_0005) designa il fondo di riferimento (in questo caso, l'archivio Hjelmslev); fa seguito il numero del faldone (_095_), e una parte che denota il documento specifico (_Structure_0100); chiude la stringa il numero di pagina di cui consta il documento (_045). In *Bibliografia*, il *permanent identifier* è inserito nella sua interezza, escluso il numero di pagina. Nel testo, invece, viene citata solamente la parte specifica al documento citato, incluso il numero di pagina, riportato secondo le convenzioni bibliografiche standard (*in casu*: p. 45).

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