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GRAMMATICAL RELATIONS
AND RELATIONAL GRAMMAR

Edited by Brian D. Joseph

May 1982

The Ohio State University
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
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WORKING PAPERS IN LINGUISTICS # 26

Grammatical Relations and Relational Grammar

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Papers By

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In recent years, syntacticians have increasingly come to focus on the role played by traditional notions such as subject, direct object, and indirect object in the organization of the syntax of particular languages and of language in general. The importance of these so-called "grammatical relations" has thus become a major issue in descriptive studies in syntax as well as in theoretical studies. This interest in grammatical relations has given rise to a theoretical framework, commonly referred to as Relational Grammar, in which grammatical relations are taken to be primitive, undefinable notions that occupy a central role in the theory, but it extends into other theoretical frameworks as well, such as the Lexical Functional Grammar of Bresnan and Kaplan, in which grammatical relations are recognized as important but do not play as central a role in the overall theory.

The papers in this volume represent a contribution to the growing body of literature dealing with grammatical relations and their place in syntactic theory and description. The first three papers explore the role of grammatical relations in language-particular descriptive studies on Plains Cree, Picuris, and Modern Greek respectively, while the other papers are more concerned with theoretical aspects of general constraints on the use of grammatical relations in language descriptions or of their representation in linguistic theory. Some of these papers work within a Relational Grammar framework whereas others adopt, or argue for, different theoretical frameworks, such as Montague Grammar. What all of these papers have in common, though, is their examination of the role of grammatical relations in syntax.

Several of the contributions began as papers for seminars held within the Department of Linguistics in 1981 (Jolley's for B. Joseph's seminar on Relational Grammar and Nerbonne's for A. Zwicky's seminar on Argumentation in Linguistics), while the others have an independent origin—the paper by Zaharlick, a member of the faculty of the Department of Anthropology at Ohio State University, was read as an invited lecture before the Department of Linguistics in February 1981, Dowty's paper was given as part of the Harvard University Conference on Grammatical Relations in December 1981, and Joseph's paper on Greek advancements to subject was read at the winter meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in December 1981.

At this point, it is best to let the papers speak for themselves, though special thanks must be rendered to Ms. Marlene Deetz Payha of the Department of Linguistics for her skillful and speedy preparation of the typescript for this volume.

BDJ
March 1982
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