

# Acknowledgments

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/fos.13.03ack>

Pages xi–xiii of

**Languages Within Language: An evolutive approach**

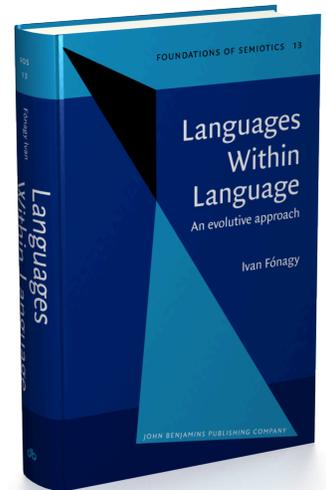
**Ivan Fónagy**

[*Foundations of Semiotics*, 13] 2001. xiii, 828 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

For further information, please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website at [benjamins.com/rights](http://benjamins.com/rights)



---

## Acknowledgments

---

The writing of this book has taken many years, and I have received much help and encouragement during this work. It is appropriate that an acknowledgement be given to persons, past and present, without whom this book could not have come into existence.

I am deeply indebted to the theory of psychoanalysis. I want to express my thanks to disciples of Sigmund Freud with whom I have come into contact. With my fatherly friend, István Hollós, I was able to discuss the instinctual bases of speech and language evolution during the preparation of his fundamental work entitled *Der Aufstieg von der Triebsprache zur menschlichen Sprache*, still unpublished. Another important inspiration came from Imre Hermann, who first developed a psychoanalytic approach to thought processes. I also owe much to the further development of Freud's thought on language, literature, and culture by Sándor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham, Otto Rank, Theodor Reik, Wilhelm Reich, Hanns Sachs, Ernest Jones, Ernst Kris, and Victor Rosen. I gratefully remember the scholarly and friendly advice and encouragement I received from Heinrich Meng.

The work essentially centers around questions of dynamics, change, and evolution of language. Heinz Werner was the first to adapt the methods and results of evolutionary psychology to the study of language. My references to concrete passages in his works do not give anything like justice to the extent of my indebtedness to his oeuvre.

At an early stage I attempted to approach the dynamics of language primarily at the phonetic level, looking for the expression of mental content by speech sounds. In this area, I was helped by Felix Trojan's biologically oriented psychophonetics, which was applied to the study of neurosis by Paul J. Moses' and Peter Oswald's semiotics of 'soundmaking'. Charlotte Balkanyi's psychoanalytic approach to speech defects and language gave me valuable incentives. I got useful insights from the multifarious phono-stylistic essays of Pierre Léon, and from George F. Mahl's explorations in nonverbal vocal and gestural behaviour.

It was of great importance for me that the systemic approach of the Prague School of phonology was expanded by one of its founders, Roman Jakobson, with his more psychologically oriented analysis, as summarised in *The Sound*

*Shape of Language*, with Linda Waugh as co-author. Dwight Bolinger made a further step in this direction by interpreting intonation as a language in its own right. His writings were as helpful to me as his friendship and amicable correspondence.

Saussure's basic principle of opposing the systemic synchronic and non-systemic diachronic linguistics was felt to be insufficient by Roman Jakobson, who established a systemic diachronic and a dynamic synchronic concept of language. In his statistical analysis of phonological variants in the speech (or rather in the linguistic consciousness) of French prisoners of war, André Martinet (1945) offered a most stimulating example of dynamic synchronic analysis in the domain of phonology.

In the first half of the century, German scholars in the fields of Romance languages and literatures developed a new 'stylistic' approach to compensate for the lack of such a dynamic synchronic analysis. I am especially indebted in this area to the works of Leo Spitzer. Spitzer was able to comprehend the movement and change of lexical and syntactic phenomena by means of highly sensitive analyses of literary texts. He taught me to see how structural and lexical dynamics create aesthetic surplus value.

Eduard Sievers' daring enterprise, the analysis of the melody of literary texts and their authors' vocal characteristics, encouraged my (much more limited) attempts in this domain. I was especially fortunate in having been able to verify his approach with the help of Milán Füst, an outstanding Hungarian poet and writer.

The aesthetic messages conveyed by the special verbal and thematic organisation of literary texts, beyond the sentence, first became evident to me in reading the poetic works and theories of German Romantic literary theorists. The young Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and Tieck likened the structure of literary works to musical compositions. I would like to express my belated thanks to Professor János Koszó, who introduced me to the universe of German Romanticism. Clarification about the potential parallels between music and literature was gained in frequent conversations with Bence Szabolcsi, who drew my attention to the existence of a standard musical language in each epoch on which the highly individual work of the great composers was built.

My understanding of the synchronic dynamic aspect of language has also been influenced by the Marxist concept of dialectics. It has prepared me to see in the contradictions inherent in present-day language the projection of linguistic change.

In view of this manifest intellectual experience, there is one conscious silence in the book: the lack of an attempt at analysis of stylistic phenomena in their sociological context in both the synchronic and the diachronic sense. Conversa-

tions on this matter have been conducted with Leslie Bodi, who has already attempted to establish such connections between rhetorical figures, literary genres, and specific socio-historical conditions.

The final editing of this book was an especially onerous task due to the various styles corresponding to a variety of disciplines (ranging from experimental phonetics to poetics) and the time periods at which parts of it were originally written. I am most grateful therefore to Ms. Anne Porcelijn and Ms. Bertie Kaal, and to the careful and competent copyeditor and typesetter of the manuscript, my hidden co-author, Mr. Peter T. Daniels, who generously undertook the final formulation of the text, a task made especially difficult by my predominantly French and Hungarian language habits.

Professor Dr. D. C. Muecke has provided valuable comments on the language and subject matter of the chapter “Why poetic language?” Looking now at his suggested corrections, I am full of admiration for his ability to always find the simplest possible solutions for expressing all I wanted to say more exactly than I would ever have been able to formulate.

Individual chapters were scrutinised and commented on by my colleagues Leslie Dienes, Anthony Hind, and Ferenc Kiefer.

Judith Fónagy organised and edited the bibliography of this book. I am very grateful to her for having undertaken this onerous task, made especially difficult by the number and diversity of the references.