

Preface to the second original edition

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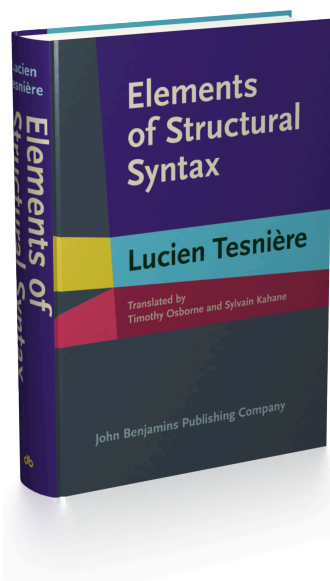
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Elements of Structural Syntax
Lucien Tesnière
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while at the same time he demanded the same revolutionary leap of faith associated with the structuralist schools, faith in the superiority of *rational* attitude as opposed to purely empirical practice.

Structural syntax falls within the current efforts to renew the teaching of grammar, these efforts having taken hold in English and more recently in German. The movement is developing rapidly at present, a fact that is evident in the founding of the Scottish school for the formation of teachers of living languages under the direction of the dialectologist and structuralist Catford, and it is evident in the offer made to Hans Glinz, the author of *Die innere Form des Deutschen*, to direct the Pedagogical Institute.

It is not without some bitterness that we ponder what the state of language pedagogy in France would be like now [in 1959] had the direction of an Institute of Applied Linguistics like the one in Edinburgh been given to Tesnière 25 years ago in 1934.

J. Fourquet, Professor at Sorbonne University, 1959

Preface to the second original edition

A new edition of Tesnière's book has become necessary, six years after the first edition.

I did not at all share the skepticism expressed by some that the book would have only a few dozen readers, but I also did not expect that the first edition would be sold out in such a short time.

I expected that converging developments in Europe and America toward a rigorous theory of linguistic structures would motivate many to discover the relevance of Tesnière's ideas, that language instruction could not remain ignorant of progress in basic linguistics, and that at the moment when practical problems arose from this progress, the solutions proposed by Tesnière would be welcomed.

As remarkable as the current acceleration of these two movements is, the diffusion of Tesnière's syntax would have perhaps only just begun if another trend had not appeared that I did not foresee: the appearance of machine translation and information retrieval with the help of electronic processors. Mathematical circles, which are free from the resistance that slowed the pace of Tesnière's work, have had to establish a program of rigorous linguistic analysis. These circles have found suggestions in Tesnière's work that are immediately useful to their efforts. Tesnière's book has been read at Euratom and C.E.T.A in Paris and Grenoble. When these circles discuss the Tesnière-Hays graphs and compare them to those of Chomsky-Harris, it is apparent that the *Éléments de syntaxe structurale*, or at least the central theses therein, is among universally recognized works.

A new era is beginning, one in which researchers who were previously separated according to their initial field of expertise – mathematics, psychology, philology – are coming closer together and contributing to the edification of a unique type of linguistics. This is a period in which many are thinking about the first difficulties encountered with computers and in which they are striving to expand on the notions of the base. The extent to which Tesnière's ideas address central aspects of these endeavors is now evident. Among the fruitful ideas that have recently been presented as new, more than one of them was already present in Tesnière's book.

For those who strive to read Tesnière's book attentively and with reflection, the *Éléments de syntaxe structurale* remains a fundamental work, a goldmine in which there are many discoveries yet to be made.

J. Fourquet, Professor at Sorbonne University, 1965