*Language and Social Behaviour* by W. P. Robinson. Pp. 223, Penguin Science of Behaviour, Harmondsworth, 1972, 60p.

This is an opportune book. At a time when students of psychology, sociology and linguistics are beginning really to appreciate the overlap between their disciplines, it is important to have available thorough critical reviews of current trends, which can provide both stimulus and corrective. The point applies *a fortiori* to scholars. Dr. Robinson's book gives just such a perspective for those wishing to investigate the multifarious relationships between language and social behaviour.

The theme of the book is language function. To understand 'how language works' we must supplement the study of its physical and structural characteristics by an adequate functional study. 'What are the rules of the linguistic system?' is a question which linguists have been trying to answer for nearly half a century. 'How is the system used as a means of communication and interaction, and why?' are questions which used to be asked (by Sapir, in the 1920s, for instance), but which have been almost totally ignored in recent approaches. Nowadays, within linguistics the climate has changed—thanks to work by Hymes and others on communicative competence—such that even generative grammarians are aware of the need for a social-functional pers-

pective for grammatical analysis, and some have actually begun to work in this direction (Fillmore, in the 1972 *Georgetown Round Table Proceedings*, for example). The orientation Robinson gives his book is thus very much in tune with present-day movements within linguistics. He is aware of the dangers of identifying a subject with the views of its leading exponent (in the case of lingustics, Chomsky), and he makes sure that his readership will ask themselves the question: is the kind of linguistics Chomsky plays (there is a nice games analogy going on at this point in the book, pp.198-9) the most fruitful kind for social psychologists? His conclusion is that it is not: formalizing the rules of the linguistic system is but a prelude to the main business of relating language to social behaviour. Thanks to Chomsky, we know how to formalize many of our insights into linguistic structure; we must now move on to ask why it is that we want to formalize language at all. And the answer to this question can only come from a study of language functions.

So Robinson gives us first a general classification and description of linguistic functions (Chs. 2-3), and then a detailed account of research into the use of language as a means of marking emotional states (Ch. 4), personality and social identity (Ch. 5), and rôle relationships (Ch. 6), of regulating social encounters (Ch. 7) and of identifying social class (Ch. 8). Chapter 9 deals with the question of socialization; and the whole thing is sandwiched neatly between an introduction (largely about the linguistic approach) and a concluding discussion of theoretical and methodological implications.

It should be obvious from this that the book does not provide a narrow presentation of a single linguistic theory: Robinson is eclectic, arguing that we should use generative insights where possible, and 'extend' our view of language to incorporate other insights which generative grammar at present cannot handle (p. 188). His main illustration of this is the need to include non-verbal vocal phenomena within any theory of language behaviour. He means such variables as tone of voice, intonation, speed, and other 'prosodic and paralinguistic' effects. As he works through his classification of sociolinguistic functions, he keeps coming back to these variables, so that by the end of the book one is given a very clear and complete picture of the importance of this general area, and of the gaps which research has yet to fill.

Criticisms are largely questions of emphasis. As a linguist, I found the introductory sections accurate and lucid, but I wonder whether they might not have been expanded in places. For instance, in view of the importance the author attaches to prosodic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic features of utterance, I miss an outline of what the distinctions are—particularly between 'para-' and 'extra-', which many authors confuse. Also, a generatively-inclined reader might be upset by the amount of exegesis of Chomsky's position: whether one accepts Robinson's arguments about generative grammar or not, I think more background information about what is still the dominant viewpoint in linguistics could have been provided. And the new Labovian linguists in the U.S. might also feel upset that in the discussion of Bernstein's work (pp. 156-7), the full range of Labov's attack is not given adequate presentation (the argument of 'The Logic of Nonstandard English', for instance). I would have liked to see, in this connection, a discussion of the (to my mind) misleading implications of the term 'code'. And I would dearly like to hear more

on the important but untouched question of what makes a good sociolinguistic informant: Robinson mentions the problem, at the very end of the book (p. 202); it might have been further discussed, perhaps with reference to linguistic and stylistic concepts of acceptability and appropriateness.

There are a few bibliographical misprints. The only possibly misleading one is that Phil Lieberman has lost his 'e', which might confuse the reader on p. 27 into thinking that it is Al Liberman who is intended. Doubtless also some generative grammarians will be cross at Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* turning up with an indefinite article! The emphasis in Maclay and Osgood's hesitation paper alters when you change 'and' to 'in'; and Hymes's 1964 article is on 'ethnographies' of communication, not ethnographics (itself, I am sure, a discipline of great potential).

These minor points do not diminish the value of this lively, lucid and constructive book, which I hope will become standard reading amongst linguists and educationalists, in addition to the social psychologists for whom it was primarily written.

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