

## **Linguist: Antal, László**

, b. 25 June 1930, Szob, Hungary. d. 23 Jan. 1993, Manassas, VA, USA; grammarian, semanticist, educator.

A. studied at the Eötvös Collegium, an elite institution that was systematically gutted after the communist takeover in Hungary, and his continuing espousal of structural linguistics has in many ways put him in opposition to the then prevailing neogrammarian and Marxist orthodoxies. His PhD thesis (written 1957, degree awarded 1960) discussed the phoneme from a Prague School standpoint, building on the work of Gy. → Laziczius. A. remained a structuralist all his life, with a fair amount of his criticism of early transformational grammar (published in revised format 1988, 1989, but part of his university lectures since the 1960s) substantiated by subsequent developments.

His most important contribution to the study of grammar was his rigorous application (1961) of structuralist methodology to the elaborate system of Hg. cases, which largely resisted the earlier neogrammarian attempts at analysis, inasmuch as neither the meanings nor the diachronic development of cases and case-like elements proved helpful in presenting a unified picture. Where his predecessors had been lost in the splendid disarray of data, Antal, at the burning light of the method, was able to create order where there had been chaos. He repeated this success with the Hg. system of conjugation (1977), where he discovered a unitary system of morphologically expressed tenses and modes.

A. wrote important works on meaning (1963, 1978), agreement phenomena (1991, 1992, 1993), content analysis (1964, 1976), coauthored the standard Hg. reference work on languages of the world (1970), translated and edited an 11-volume reader in modern linguistics (1981-86), and had wide impact on the field as an educator devoted to dragging Hg. linguistics into the 20th century in the face of much organizational resistance.

### **Linguist's works:**

(1957): A fonéma fogalmának tisztázásához, PhD thesis, unpublished. (1961): A magyar esetrendszer, Budapest. (1963): Questions of Meaning, The Hague. (1964): Content, meaning, and understanding, The Hague. (1970): A világ nyelvei (jointly with B. Csongor and I. Fodor), Budapest. (1976): A tartalomelemzés alapjai, Budapest. (1977): Egy új magyar nyelvtan felé, Budapest. (1978): A jelentés világa, Budapest. (1981–86): Modern nyelvészeti szöveggyűjtemény, Budapest. (1988): "Rules, analogies, category", *Word* 39, 21-27. (1989): "The role of transformations in the analysis of syntactic ambiguity", *Word* 40, 349-367. (1991): "Declension of nouns or declension of noun phrases in Hungarian?", *UAJb* 63, 91-98. (1992): "On two controversial issues of Hungarian grammar", *UAJb* 64, 13-22. (1993): "A note on the definite verbs in Hungarian", *UAJb* 65, 128-130.

### **Literature:**

J. R. Costello (1993): "L.A. 1930-1993", *UAJb* 65, 123-124. F. Papp (1994): "A.L (1930-1993)", *NyK* 94, 223-225.

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