

Hypothesis A/Hypothesis B

Linguistic Explorations in Honor of David M. Perlmutter

Donna B. Gerds, John C. Moore, and Maria Polinsky, editors

**The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England**

© 2010 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information about special quantity discounts, please e-mail special_sales@mitpress.mit.edu

This book was set in Times New Roman and Syntax on 3B2 by Asco Typesetters, Hong Kong. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hypothesis A-Hypothesis B : linguistic explorations in honor of David M. Perlmutter / Donna B. Gerdts, John C. Moore, and Maria Polinsky, editors.

p. cm. — (Current studies in linguistics ; 49)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-262-13487-3 (hardcover : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-262-63356-7 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Linguistics. I. Perlmutter, David M. II. Gerdts, Donna B. III. Moore, John C., 1955– IV. Polinsky, Maria.

P125.H87 2010

410—dc22

2009013168

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Preface

This collection of linguistic studies is a Festschrift to honor David M. Perlmutter, Professor Emeritus, University of California, San Diego. He was born October 28, 1938, in New York City. His father, Victor M. Perlmutter, was an artist and educator; his mother, Fruma Shapiro Perlmutter, was a teacher and social worker. They moved frequently during his childhood, so he lived in many different parts of the United States, graduating from Rich Township High School, Park Forest, Illinois, in 1955. He entered Harvard College and graduated magna cum laude in 1959. His honors thesis in Social Relations, “Commitment to Norms and Social Control: The American Shakers,” was supervised by famed sociologist and “communitarian” Robert N. Bellah. He entered the MIT graduate program in linguistics in 1964, earning his PhD in 1968 with his dissertation *Deep and Surface Structure Constraints in Syntax*. He held professorships at Brandeis University (1967–1970), MIT (1970–1977), and the University of California, San Diego (1977–2005), as well as at the Université de Paris VIII (fall 1972) and the Richard Turner Professorship in the Humanities at the University of Rochester (1993–1994). He also taught at the Scandinavian Summer School of Linguistics (Säby, Sweden, 1970; Gentofte, Denmark, 1971), Brown University (spring 1974 and 1975), UCLA (fall 1984), and at Summer Linguistic Institutes of the Linguistic Society of America (University of Massachusetts 1974, UCLA 1983, Stanford 1987 (Edward Sapir Professor), and UC Santa Cruz 1991). He has received much recognition for his scholarship. His fellowships include a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1977–1978, the I. W. Killam Fellowship at the University of British Columbia in 1980–1981, a Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California, in 1987–1988, and the University of California President’s Fellowship in the Humanities in 1990–1991. He has had NSF grants and visiting research positions at the University of Tokyo in 1973 and the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, Germany, in 1999. He served as president of the Linguistic Society of America in 2000. Since retiring from UCSD in 2005, he continues to do linguistic research and has

begun work on a book for a general audience about the importance of sign languages for understanding the origin of languages.

Anyone who has studied linguistics in the last half century has been affected by the work of David Perlmutter. He is probably best known for founding Relational Grammar (RG) with Paul Postal, but in fact he is one of the most versatile linguists around. And though he has made contributions in a number of areas of linguistics, including theoretical morphology and sign language phonology, his most significant contribution has been through his teaching and his mentoring. He is quite simply the best teacher many of us have had the pleasure to learn from, and he has provided for us a superior model that we have emulated in our own teaching. Moreover, through his mentoring he has taught us much about formulating and investigating linguistic hypotheses, showing us firsthand how to work through the syntactic analysis of a large-scale problem and how to ask the right questions to lead to a suitable solution.

The authors of these twenty-three papers, who are his colleagues, his students, and his students' students, keenly feel that Professor Perlmutter has had a direct and lasting influence on their careers and thus are eager to express their appreciation by dedicating the enclosed chapters to him. The topics covered in these chapters are all ones on which Professor Perlmutter has published influential work. Among the topics addressed are grammatical relations and their mapping (Farrell, Gerdts, Marlett, Rhodes, and Zaenen); unaccusatives, passives, impersonals, and their ilk (Babby, Harris, Legendre and Smolensky, Maling, and McCloskey); issues in complex verbs, complex clauses, and *wh*-constructions (Aissen, Chung, Davies and Dubinsky, Frantz, Joseph, LeSourd, and Moore); and the nature of sign languages (Bickford, Meier and Lillo-Martin, and Padden et al.).

One noteworthy aspect of Professor Perlmutter's research is the fact that he has published detailed analyses of a variety of languages as well as more broad-based crosslinguistic comparisons. This book honors his commitment to the study of the world's languages. Nine of the chapters deal with topics in Indo-European languages: English (Davies and Dubinsky), French (Legendre and Smolensky), Greek (Joseph), Irish (McCloskey), Polish (Dziwirek), Portuguese (Raposo), Romanian (Bateman and Polinsky), Russian (Babby), and Spanish (Moore). Three chapters deal with sign languages (Bickford, Meier and Lillo-Martin, and Padden et al.). Six chapters, all based on original fieldwork, deal with languages of the Americas: Hal-komelem (Gerdts), Ojibwe (Rhodes), Meskwaki (LeSourd), Seri (Marlett), Southern Tiwa (Frantz), and Tzotzil (Aissen). One chapter is on the Austronesian language Chamorro (Chung), one is on Bantu languages (Zaenen), and three are crosslinguistic (Farrell, Harris, and Maling).

We would like to express our appreciation to the many people who helped make this book possible. First, we thank our colleagues who took on the crucial task of anonymously reviewing contributions. Their comments greatly improved the quality

of the book. Our appreciation goes to MIT Press editors Tom Stone and Ada Brunstein for shepherding this through to completion. Thanks to Zoey Peterson, who served as editorial assistant for the project. Generous funding for the production and editing of the book came from the University Publication Fund, Simon Fraser University; the Department of Linguistics, University of California, San Diego; and the Center for Research in Language at UCSD.

Last, of course, we would like to thank David Perlmutter. The authors, reviewers, and many other scholars, more than we were able to accommodate in this book, send their best regards. Preparing a *Festschrift* in honor of a scholar who is still actively engaged in the field affords two great pleasures. First is the satisfaction of knowing that he will have the opportunity to read and comment on the contributions. Second is having a chance to interview him about his life and work, though it rapidly became clear that the best person to write about him is David himself, not only because he has great insight into the history of linguistics, but also because he is a great storyteller. Thus, we are delighted to have him participate by writing the brief survey of his career as teacher and scholar with which the book begins.