

Linguistic Data and Theories

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Overview

- 1 Language and Grammar
- 2 Analytic Vs. Synthetic Languages
- 3 Syntactic Categories
- 4 Phrasal Categories
- 5 Structure of Clauses
- 6 Sentence Composition Types
- 7 Complexities in Syntax

Language and Grammar

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Like all sciences, linguistics is divided into theoretical and applied.

- How do linguists, as language scientists, build up and formulate their theories when describing and explaining *What is human language and how language works according to the Scientific standards?*
- What kind of data would they examine?
- How do they analyse the data?
- What kind of methods and techniques of gathering data would they apply?
- What does it mean to "account for" the data with a theory

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 - semantics (the meaning of words and sentences)

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 - I am happy vs. The pen is happy
 - My friend is pregnant vs. My friend's car is pregnant
 - Colourless green ideas sleep furiously
- **Ungrammatical sentences** violate one or more syntactic rules or principles.
 - *My students is angry
 - *There is water bottles on the table
 - *I saw girl the tall

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- begin by collecting observations or produce data by experiments
- after a large and sufficient number of such observations or experiments, then proceeds to a generalization about these data
- After several attempts at generalizing, then may proceed to a new (modified) hypothesis by looking at new data
- start without any pre-knowledge or pre-conception about the linguistic object under examination

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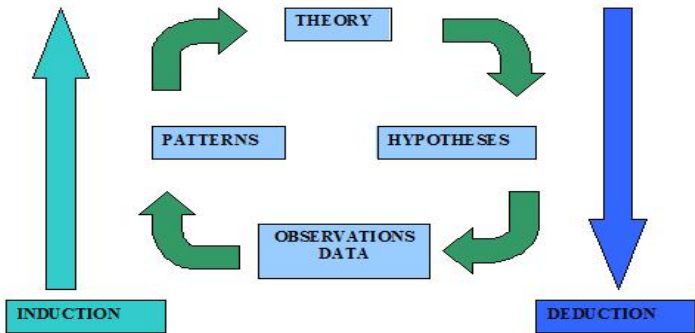
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- it assumes that the hypothesis is derived (deduced) from already existent knowledge and then tested by empirical data



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- In other words, it tends to test the truth or falsity of a given hypothesis against a carefully chosen corpus data

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- By contrast, the corpus-driven approach is inductive in that it chooses a targeted corpus and through cyclical analysis and interpretation of the corpus data
- it tends to generalize a rule or some kind of theory
- Finally, when the research circumstances allow for both corpus based and corpus driven analyses
- the researcher may hybridize both approaches combining the merits of deduction and induction at the same time

- finding out the rule-governing system of sentence formation

Study on Syntax

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- finding out the rule-governing system of sentence formation
- understanding how words and phrases are arranged
- concerning the relationship between the finite and the infinite

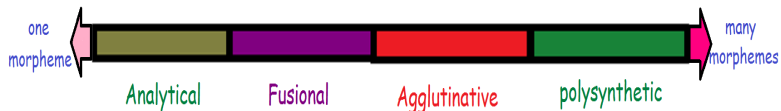
Analytic Vs.Synthetic Languages

Analytic languages

- language with a low morpheme-per-word ratio
- word order is significant
- E.g. Isolating languages

Synthetic languages

- language with high morpheme-per-word ratio
- word order is not significant and morphology is highly significant
- E.g. Agglutinating and fusional languages



Analytical languages are most common in Southeast Asia (Chinese, Vietnamese), but some such languages are also found among the Austronesian languages (Fijian, Tongan) and some Niger-Congo languages (Gbe, Yoruba).

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no se khong doc sach
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Example from Chinese:

Ta ba shu mai le
He NOM book buy Asp
'He bought the book.'

Example for derivation from Telugu:

pagalagottiMcipettamananivvalacukooleekapotunnaanu.

pagulu+a-kottu+iMcu+i-pettu+a-manu+a-ivvu+a-daluvu+i-konu+a-
leeka-poo+

tunn+1,sg,any

break+inf-strike+cause+cpm-benefactive+inf-tell+inf-permit+inf-
think+cpm-reflexive+inf-neg+go+prog+1,sg

'I could not think to permit someone to tell for my sake to break
something'

(pc, Prof. G. Uma Maheshwar Rao)

Polysynthetic languages:

Inuktitut (Canada) for instance the word-phrase:

tavvakiquitiqarpiit

roughly translates to ‘Do you have any tobacco for sale?’

Yup’ik (Alaska):

angya-li-ciq- sugnar- quq-llu

boat- make-FUT- PROB- 3sg.NOM-also

‘Also, he probably will make a boat’

Eskimo (West Greenlandic):

tusaa-nngit-su-usaar-tuaannar-sinnaa-nngi-vip-putit

‘hear’-neg.-intrans.participle-‘pretend’-‘all the time’-‘can’-neg.-

‘really’-2nd.sng.indicative

‘You simply cannot pretend not to be hearing all the time’

Syntactic Categories

Two types of syntactic categories:

① Lexical:

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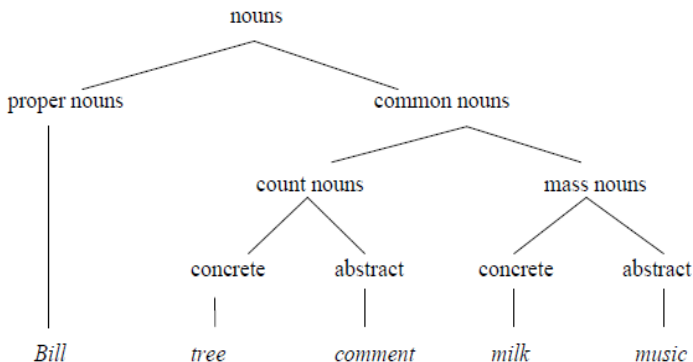
- content words and receive **inflection**
- open class : nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs
- closed class: pronouns and number words

② Functional:

- functional words do not receive inflection i.e. **indeclinables**
- prepositions/postpositions, conjunctions, interjections, demonstratives, intensifiers, quotatives etc.

1. **Nouns** are words used to refer to people (boy), objects (backpack), creatures (dog), places (school), qualities (roughness), phenomena (earthquake) and abstract ideas (love) as if they were all “things.”

Nouns



- Proper names don't take a determiner
- Proper names and mass nouns don't pluralize
- Count nouns require a determiner
- Mass nouns do not take the indefinite determiner *a*

	Proper noun	Count noun	Mass noun
1.	*the Bill	The tree	The milk
2.	*three Bills	Three trees	*Three milks
3.	I met Bill	*I saw tree	I hate milk
4.	*a Bill	a tree	*a milk

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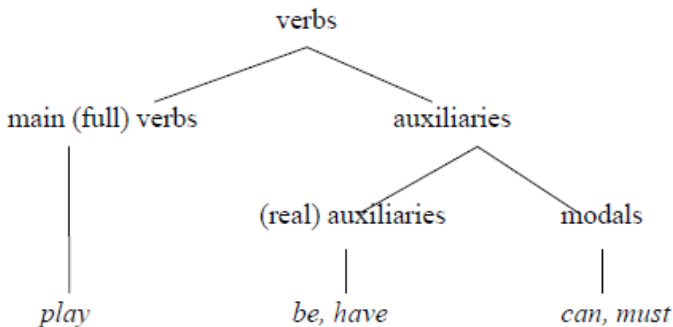
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- 1 number (boy-boys)
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- 3 case (queen's)

2. **Verbs** are words used to refer to various kinds of actions (go, talk) and states (be, have) involving people and things in events.

Verbs



Grammatical features of the verb:

- ① tense (walk vs. walked)

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- 3 mood (come vs. don't come)
- 4 agreement (gender-number-person)

Ta. kutub ṣā kōlkoMṭā.v- aik kaṭṭ- iṇ- āṇ.
Qutub Shah Golkonda- ACC build- PST- 3.SG.M.

Te. kutub ṣā gōlkoMḍa- ni kāṭṭ- ā- ḍu
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'Qutub Shah built the Golkonda.'

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- (1) **Fortunately**, we didn't miss the train.
- (2) Peter walked **slowly** back to the car.
- (3) That was **extremely** useful.

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- ⑧ Addition: *in addition, besides, as well as*

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Determiners are placed in front of a noun to specify quantity (e.g., one cat, many cats) or to clarify what the noun refers to (e.g., my cat, that cat, the cat)

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Determiners are placed in front of a noun to specify quantity (e.g., one cat, many cats) or to clarify what the noun refers to (e.g., my cat, that cat, the cat)

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1. Noun Phrase

Functions as Subject, object, indirect object etc.,

- N = John
- DET N = the boy
- DET ADJ N = a little boy
- DET N PP = a boy in a bubble

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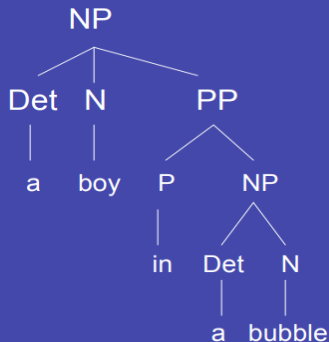
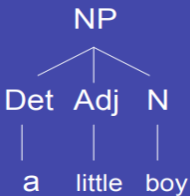
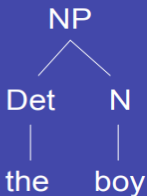
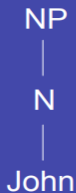
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Phrase structure rule for NPs:

NP = (Det) (Adj)* N (PP)

Phrase structure trees



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PP has a preposition as its head and this is usually followed by a noun phrase .

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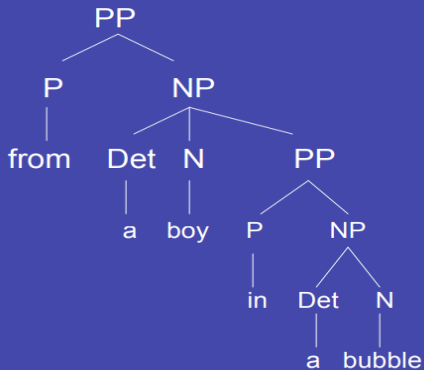
PP has a preposition as its head and this is usually followed by a noun phrase .

- P NP = With long hair

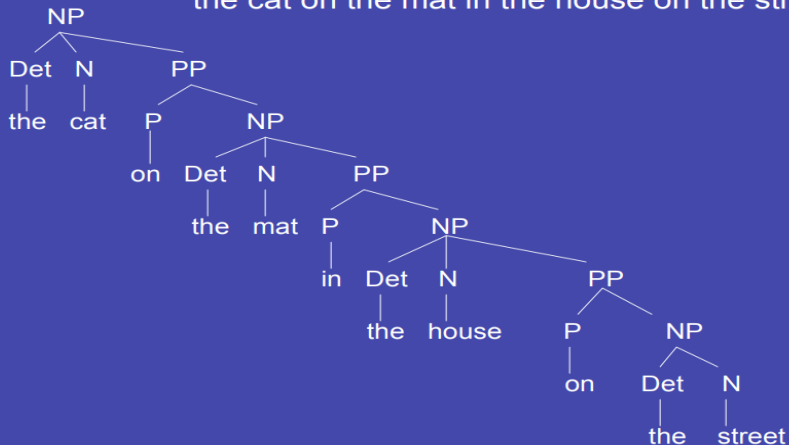
Phrase structure rule for PPs:

PP = P NP

Phrase structure trees



the cat on the mat in the house on the street



2. Verb phrase

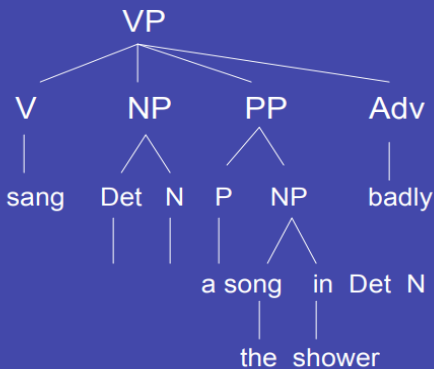
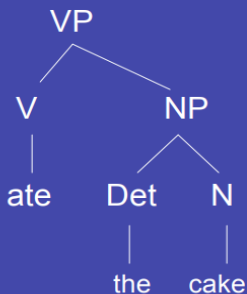
- V = They **sleep, sit, work** (intransitive verbs)
- V NP = I **hit, kiss, see** him (transitive verbs)
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Phrase structure rule for VPs:

VP = V (NP)* (PP) (Adv)*



Sentences

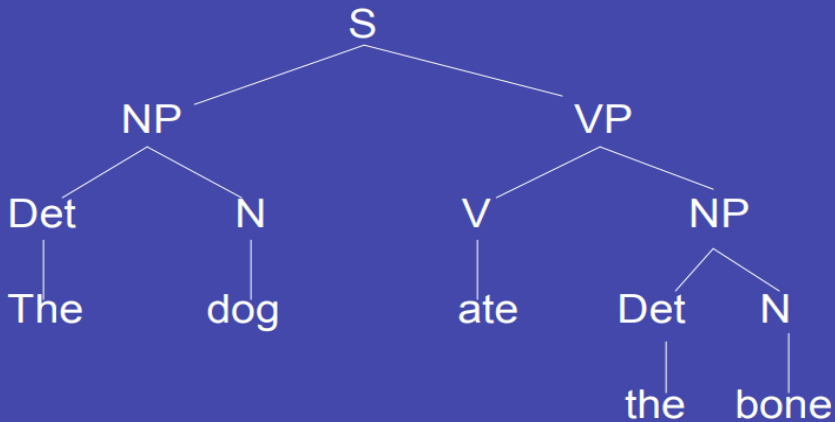
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Sentences

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Phrase structure rule for S:

S = NP VP



$S \rightarrow NP VP$

Structure of Clauses

A clause is a group of related words containing a subject and a verb.

It is different from a phrase in that a phrase does not include a subject and a verb relationship.

- independent clause/ matrix clause
 - Contains a subject and a verb, expresses complete sense i.e. finite
 - e.g. I went to the market
- dependent clause/ subordinate clause
 - Contains a subject and a verb, does not express complete sense i.e. non-finite
 - e.g. **If I go out**, I usually take my umbrella

Independent Clauses

1. Coordinate clause

A coordinate clause is a clause belonging to a series of two or more clauses not syntactically dependent one on another

- He gets up early in the morning and goes out for a walk.
- He is poor but he is honest.
- You must work hard or you can't succeed.

Independent Clauses

2. Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are pairs of conjunctions which work together to coordinate two items. They always appear in pairs.

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- either/or - I want either the cheesecake or the chocolate cake.
- both/and - We'll have both the cheesecake and the chocolate cake.
- whether/or - I didn't know whether you'd want the cheesecake or the chocolate cake, so I got both.
- neither/nor - Oh, you want neither the cheesecake nor the chocolate cake? No problem.
- not only/but also - I'll eat them both - not only the cheesecake but also the chocolate cake.
- not/but - I see you're in the mood not for desserts but appetizers. I'll help you with those, too.

Independent Clauses

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Relative clauses are not complement clauses.

Relative clauses modify a noun phrase, whereas complement clauses are arguments which are selected by a verb, noun, or adjective.

Dependent Clauses

1. Relative Clause

- A relative clause begins with a relative pronoun and functions as an adjective.
- introduced by a relative pronoun, *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*
- E.g. I want a book in a language which I can read.

Dependent Clauses

2. Adverbial clause

- introduced by a subordinating conjunction: because, as, if, since, when, while, whereas, although, etc.
- typically function as adverbials
- E.g. I'll tell you about that after we are married. (time adverbial)
- E.g. Since they could see me, their presence in the hall disturbed me. (adverbial of reason).
- E.g. She could do the work herself if it was necessary. (adverbial of condition).

Sentence Composition Types

- 1 Simple Sentences
 - one independent clause
 - E.g. I like Mysore

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- E.g. My Dad laughed when I told a joke.

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④ Compound-Complex Sentences

- at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses
- E.g. Ponny forgot her friend's birthday, so she sent her a card when she finally remembered.

1. Ambiguity

- (i) Attachment ambiguity: (Structural Ambiguity)
- It occurs when the grammar can assign more than one parse to a sentence.
- e.g. I saw a man with a binocular
- It is ambiguous because the phrase 'with a binocular' can be part of the NP headed by 'binocular' or a part of the VP headed by 'saw'

1. Ambiguity

- (ii) Coordination ambiguity
- In coordination ambiguity, different sets of phrases can be conjoined by a conjunction like 'and'.
- the phrase `old men and women` can be bracketed as `[old [men and women]]` , referring to old men and old women , or as `[old men] and [women]` , in which case it is only the men who are old.
- the men and women or boys
- Depending upon how the scope of the conjunctions is interpreted, this phrase can mean 'either men and women, or men and boys', or 'either men and women, or boys'.

2. Garden-Path Sentences

- The government plans to raise taxes were defeated.
first interpretation : The government is planning to raise taxes...
final interpretation : The plans of the government to raise taxes were defeated.
- The old man the boat
first interpretation : The man, who is old...
final interpretation : The boat is manned by the old.
- The horse raced past the barn
.....fell.

3. Recursiveness

- This is the cat that bit the rat that ate the cheese that Jack bought
- They came for dinner and they stayed all night and they left right after breakfast but they were still late and were punished when they got to school

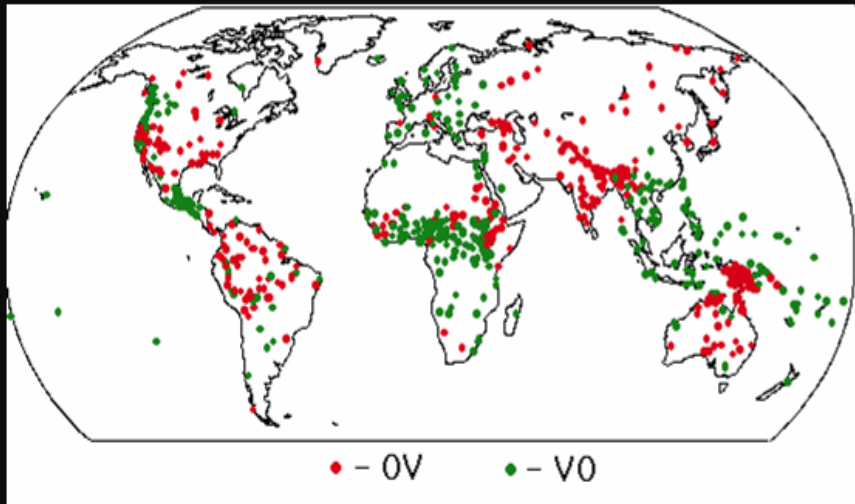
4. Ellipsis

- She dances better than he does
- I did it; he didn't.
- Elliptical reference between sentences frequently relies on structural symmetry between the two related expressions.

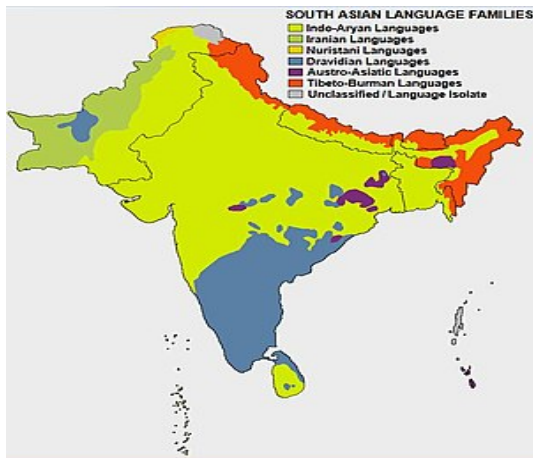
Word Order Distribution of Languages

Basic Word Order	Proportion of Languages	Examples
Subject-[Verb-Object]	42%	English, Indonesian
Subject-[Object-Verb]	45%	Japanese, Turkish
Verb-Subject-Object	9%	Welsh, Zapotec
[Verb-Object]-Subject	3%	Malagasy
[Object-Verb]-Subject	1%	
Object-Subject-Verb	0%	

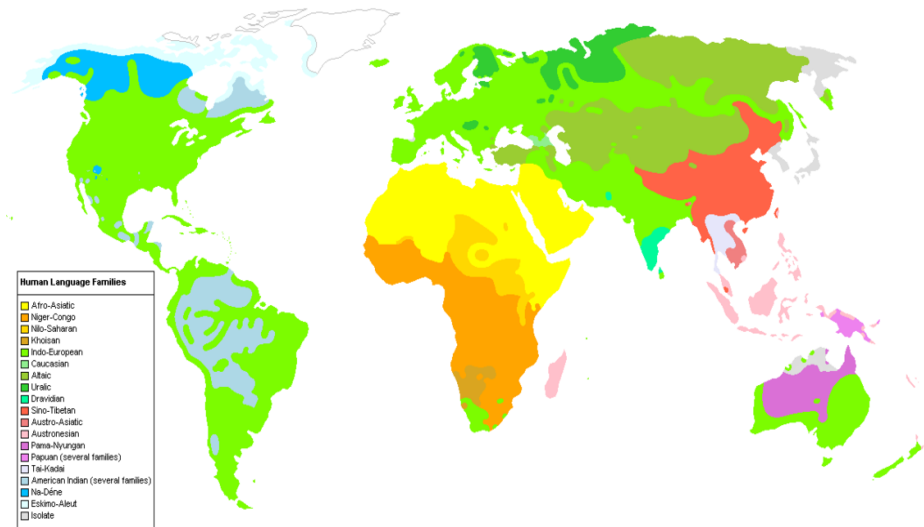
Russell Tomlin, *Basic Word Order:
Functional Principles*, (Croom Helm, London, 1986) page 22



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