

status of the '+' or '-' is arbitrary — it is rather the [signalization of x] ~ [nonsignalization of x] that is telling for the internal structure of the opposition.)

Second, many investigators have assumed that because the unmarked may have the zero-interpretation, exactly in those contexts where the unmarked and marked are not (explicitly) opposed, then the zero-interpretation must reflect a 'neutralization', a suspension of the opposition of the two terms (on the model of phonology). However, this is a confusion of phonology with semantics. Because the phonological distinctive features have no other meaning than 'differentiatedness', in those cases where substitution (differentiation) is not possible, the opposition is 'neutralized' and is no longer valid. In grammatical and lexical semantics, however, the meaning of a given unit is based on the conceptual categories associated with it and is thus not dependent on substitution in all contexts. Indeed, one would expect that in certain contexts substitution would not be possible, because there would be a 'semantic congruence' between the given item and the context in which it is found. Communicators do generally want to convey coherent messages. So cases of nonsubstitution are in fact to be taken as strong evidence for the meaning of a particular item, not as evidence for the lack of meaning.

#### Further linguistic examples

Other examples of marked ~ unmarked relations in grammatical meaning include the following:<sup>7</sup> (1) The relation of number for the noun in the English grammatical system is defined by the opposition of 'more than one' ~ 'one', where 'more than one' (the plural) is marked. Since the singular is unmarked, it may be used in both the minus-interpretation (*one book, a man came* = 'not more than one', i.e., 'one') and the zero-interpretation (*man is an animal, the elephant is a strange beast, is someone there?, who's at the door?* = 'nonsignalization of more than one'; number is for the most part nonpertinent or unknown: cf. Jakobson 1957). (2) In many languages the personal pronouns are related as third person (unmarked) versus both first and second person (with a marked reference to the 'participants of the speech event'); in addition, in the opposition of second to first person, the first person is marked since it specifically refers to the 'producer of the given message' (cf. Benveniste 1946 and 1956, and Jakobson 1957). The unmarkedness of the third person may be seen in such examples as *he who hesitates is lost, would the gentleman like to order wine?* — usages showing that the third person does not invariably exclude a reference to the speech situation. The unmarkedness of the second

person (as against the first) is shown by examples such as the 'general you': *you never know, to go from Morrill Hall to Rothschild's you turn left at Stewart Avenue*; and speaking to oneself: *you dummy*. This pronominal example also shows that a 'three-way' system is often characterized by the intersection of two different (binary) oppositions. (3) In French, for a large part of the nominal system, the masculine gender is unmarked and the feminine gender is marked. Evidence for the masculine being the unmarked gender in French is the fact that it can stand for the category as a whole: e.g., *lionne* 'lioness' specifies the female, while *lion* 'lion' may include both female and male. In addition, if there is an adjective modifying two nouns, one masculine and one feminine, the adjective is put in the masculine plural: *des hommes et des femmes intelligents* 'intelligent men and women'. The masculine is also the gender used when the gender is unknown: *il y a des lions là-bas* 'there are some lions over there'; or, e.g., in questions: *qui est mort?* 'who has died?'; or when the gender is not at issue (e.g., when adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are made into nouns in French, without any other reference, they are masculine: *le beau* 'the beautiful', *le parler* '(way of) speaking', *le virement* 'que tu viens d'utiliser' 'the "truly" that you've just used'). In fact, a phrase like *le beau* 'the beautiful' refers either to a previously mentioned noun in the masculine singular (minus-interpretation) or to a male being who is *beau* (minus-interpretation) or to the simple nominalization of the adjective *beau* (zero-interpretation). (4) In Russian, the relation of perfective ~ imperfective aspect is defined by the opposition 'completion (accomplishment) of action' ~ 'action in itself'. In indicative mood usage, the perfective is the marked term (focus on completion of action) and the imperfective then either conveys the noncompletion of the action (minus-interpretation) or says nothing about completion (zero-interpretation). In imperative mood usage, there is a 'markedness reversal': the imperfective is the marked term (focus on the action itself) and the perfective then either conveys the completion of the action (minus-interpretation) or simply does not focus on the action (zero-interpretation) (see Karcevski 1927; Jakobson 1932, 1957). This example shows that the mark itself is independent of the opposition, in the sense that either pole of the opposition may take on the mark, depending on the context in which the opposition is used. Marks are not absolutes, but rather are constantly defined in terms of nonmarks and in terms of the context of which they are a part.

Marked ~ unmarked relations in lexical meaning include the following: (1) In the lexical opposition *homme* versus *femme* in French, *homme* is unmarked not only because of its gender, but also lexically — just as in English (see above), it may be used to stand for the category as a whole (*l'homme est inconnu* — *man the unknown*). (2) In the opposition of the