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object (*n.*) (**O, Obj, OBJ**) A term used in the analysis of GRAMMATICAL FUNCTIONS to refer to a major CONSTITUENT of SENTENCE or CLAUSE structure, traditionally associated with the ‘receiver’ or ‘goal’ of an action, as in *The cat bit the dog*. Traditional analysis distinguishes a **direct** versus an **indirect object**, to allow for sentences such as *The teacher gave a letter to the girl/The teacher gave the girl a letter*, which is marked in English by a contrast using PREPOSITIONS and WORD-ORDER, and in INFLECTING languages by different CASES (typically, the object case being ACCUSATIVE, the indirect object case being DATIVE). In GENERATIVE GRAMMAR, the direct object is called simply ‘object’, and contrasted with indirect object. A further distinction is that between **objective genitive** (i.e. the genitive functions as object, as in *the writing of the questions* = ‘X wrote the questions’), and ‘subjective genitive’ (i.e. the genitive functions as subject, as in *the shouting of the people* = ‘people shout’). Much discussion in LINGUISTICS has focused on clarifying the notion of ‘receiving’ an action, in relation to the other ELEMENTS of clause structure (SUBJECT, COMPLEMENT, etc.), distinguishing various kinds of VERB–object relationship, both in terms of SURFACE and UNDERLYING structure. Examples of problem sentences are *John is easy to please* (where *John* is the underlying object of *please*) and *The plants are selling well* (where in reality it is the plants which are the ‘logical receivers’ of the action).

In the study of inflected languages, **objective** may be used as an alternative to ACCUSATIVE; e.g. in English the contrast between subject and object forms of PRONOUNS (e.g. *she* ~ *her*) is sometimes referred to as a distinction between SUBJECTIVE and objective case. Some linguists talk about the ‘object of a preposition’ to refer to the NOUN PHRASE in *around the corner*. The term ‘objective’ has a special status in CASE GRAMMAR, where it refers to the semantically most neutral case, i.e. a noun whose role in the action is identified by the SEMANTIC interpretation of the verb itself. In GOVERNMENT-BINDING THEORY, objective Case is assigned to any noun phrase governed by a TRANSITIVE verb. See also APPLICATIVE, RAISING.

objective case see ACCUSATIVE

objective genitive see OBJECT

object language see METALANGUAGE

object-raising (*n.*) see RAISING

obligatory (*adj.*) A term in LINGUISTICS which refers to an ELEMENT that cannot be removed from a STRUCTURE without that structure becoming UNGRAMMATICAL. In the sentence *I put the pen in the desk, in the desk* is an obligatory ADVERBIAL. In early TRANSFORMATIONAL grammar, the term refers to one of the two types of TRANSFORMATIONAL RULE postulated by Noam Chomsky in his book *Syntactic Structures* (1957), the other being OPTIONAL. An **obligatory transformation** is one which *must* apply at a given stage in a DERIVATION, when its STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION is met, if a WELL-FORMED SENTENCE is to result, e.g. the rule which attaches AFFIXES to their BASE forms. In later versions of transformational grammar, the range of this notion changes as SURFACE STRUCTURES come to be derived from DEEP STRUCTURES by obligatory transformations, and the notion of optional selection comes to be replaced by choices made between the rules of the base COMPONENT.

obligatory contour principle (OCP) In some models of GENERATIVE PHONOLOGY, a principle which disallows adjacent identical elements in a REPRESENTATION. It was originally proposed for TONE languages, where it excluded sequences of identical adjacent tones (e.g. a sequence of High–High–Low would simplify to High–Low). The principle was later extended to SEGMENTAL phonology, especially in NON-LINEAR models, where it disallows any two identical FEATURES or NODES which are adjacent on a given TIER. Violations of this principle are handled through various processes, such as DISSIMILATION or the insertion of an EPENTHETIC VOWEL (as in the vowel which separates a sequence of two CORONAL SIBILANTS in such English plural forms as *buses*).

oblique (*adj.*) (**obl**, **OBL**) In languages which express GRAMMATICAL relationships by means of INFLECTIONS, this term refers to the FORM taken by a NOUN PHRASE (often a single NOUN or PRONOUN) when it refers collectively to all the CASE forms of a word except that of the UNMARKED case, or NOMINATIVE.

observational adequacy see ADEQUACY

observer's paradox A methodological problem identified with reference to SOCIO-LINGUISTICS by William Labov (b. 1927): how can linguists obtain naturalistic data about speech through observation or interview, given that the presence of the linguist (whether actively participating in a dialogue or acting as a silent observer) will exercise an influence on the way people talk? Several techniques have since been devised to divert a speaker's attention away from the fact that they are being observed, such as by introducing a conversational topic which is likely to engage the speaker's full attention.

obsolescence (*n.*) (1) In HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS, a term used to describe the gradual loss of a LEXICAL item because changes in the language or in the external world eliminate the opportunity or motivation for its use. Examples of **obsolescent** words in English would be the terms referring to vehicles from a previous era,

such as *landau* or *hansom*. These words have not gone completely out of use, as they will be heard from time to time at vintage rallies and in other special contexts, but most people would not use them. When a word does go totally out of general use, it is said to be **obsolete** – as with *comptable* and *comradery*. See also **ARCHAISM**.

(2) In **SOCIOLINGUISTICS**, a term used to describe the gradual loss of a **LANGUAGE**, which takes place when its transmission between generations ceases, and the number of its native speakers diminishes. See also **LANGUAGE DEATH**.

obsolete (*adj.*) see **OBSOLESCENCE** (1)

obstruent (*adj./n.*) A term used in the **PHONETIC** classification of speech sounds to refer to sounds involving a **CONstriction** which impedes the flow of air through nose or mouth, as in **PLOSIVES**, **FRICATIVES** and **AFFRICATES**. In the **DISTINCTIVE FEATURE** approach of Chomsky and Halle (see **CHOMSKYAN**), the term is used in the same sense, but its status is that of **PHONOLOGICAL** opposition to **SONORANT**.

obviative (*adj./n.*) A term used in **LINGUISTICS** to refer to a **fourth-PERSON FORM** used in some languages (e.g. some North American Indian languages). The obviative form ('the obviative') of a **PRONOUN**, **VERB**, etc. usually contrasts with the third person, in that it is used to refer to an entity distinct from that already referred to by the third-person form – the general sense of 'someone/something else'.

occlude (*v.*) see **OCCCLUSION**

occlusion (*n.*) A term used in **PHONETICS** referring to the duration of the **CLOSURE** which is made while a **PLOSIVE CONSONANT** is being articulated. Plosives are sometimes referred to as **occlusives** because an articulator completely closes off (**occludes**) the **VOCAL TRACT** at a single place of **ARTICULATION**. **CLICKS** are produced by occluding the vocal tract in two places.

occupational dialect see **DIALECT**

oesophageal (*adj.*) A term used in **PHONETICS** for sounds or **VOICE** initiated at or below the oesophagus; also spelled **esophageal**. An oesophageal technique of voice **PRODUCTION** is often taught to patients following laryngectomy.

off-glide/on-glide (*n.*) Terms used in **PHONETICS** to refer to the **AUDITORY** effect of **ARTICULATORY** movement at points of **TRANSITION** between sounds. An **OFF-GLIDE** is a movement which occurs as the **VOCAL ORGANS** leave the position taken up by one speech sound and travel towards the position required for the next sound (or towards a position of rest). An **on-glide** is the correlative movement which occurs as the vocal organs approach their **TARGET** position for the articulation of a sound either from a previous sound, or from the position of rest.

offset (*n.*) see **ONSET**

omega (*n.*) A Greek letter sometimes used as a symbol for WORD.

on-glide (*n.*) see OFF-GLIDE

onomasiology (*n.*) A term sometimes used in SEMANTICS to refer to the study of sets of associated concepts in relation to the LINGUISTIC FORMS which designate them, e.g. the various ways of organizing LEXICAL ITEMS conceptually in thesauri.

onomastics (*n.*) A branch of SEMANTICS which studies the ETYMOLOGY of institutionalized ('proper') names, such as the names of people ('anthroponymy' or 'anthroponomastics') and places ('toponymy' or 'toponomastics'); also called **onomatology**. In a looser usage, 'onomastics' is used for personal names and 'toponymy' for place names.

onomatology (*n.*) see ONOMASTICS

onset (*n.*) (1) (O) A term used in PHONETICS and PHONOLOGY to refer to the initial functional element in a linguistic UNIT. The notion has been especially used in relation to the description of SYLLABLE structure, but it is also sometimes found in other contexts, such as in relation to INTONATION or RHYTHM units. A distinction is sometimes drawn between 'simple' syllabic onsets (containing only one segment) and 'complex' onsets (containing more than one segment). The **maximal onset principle** (or 'CV rule') states that a . . . VCV . . . string is universally syllabified as . . . V.CV . . . In MORaic phonology, onsets are thought not to contribute to syllable weight (unlike RHYMES – the notion of 'onset/rhyme asymmetry'). In OPTIMALITY THEORY, the onset constraint requires that all syllables begin with a consonant.

(2) In PHONETICS, a term used in the ARTICULATORY description of SEGMENTS, referring to a phase (the **onset phase**) at the beginning of a segment during which the VOCAL ORGANS are approaching the maximal degree of CONSTRICTION (the 'medial phase'). Onset phase specifically contrasts with **offset phase**, which shows the movement of the vocal organs towards the medial phase of the next segment.

ontogeny (*n.*) The application of this general term in LINGUISTICS refers to the chronological ACQUISITION, development and decay of LANGUAGE in the individual, as opposed to in the SPEECH COMMUNITY as a whole (PHYLOGENY); also referred to as **ontogenesis**. **Ontogenetic** notions are particularly encountered in child language studies.

opacity (*n.*) see OPAQUE

opaque (*adj.*) (1) A term used in GENERATIVE PHONOLOGY to refer to the extent to which the applications of a given RULE to a given FORM cannot be seen in the PHONETIC OUTPUT at the end of the DERIVATION. The **opacity** of a rule is contrasted with its TRANSPARENCY.

(2) In the context of generative SYNTAX, **opaque** refers to a set of CONDITIONS specifying the grammatical CONTEXTS in which an expression cannot be FREE. For example, in the construction *They believe [each other are intelligent], each*

other is an opaque context, and cannot be CO-INDEXED with an item outside it. The structure is ILL FORMED because the ANAPHOR *each other* has to be BOUND with its GOVERNING category (the EMBEDDED TENSED CLAUSE), but there is no appropriate NP present to enable this to happen. By contrast, *each other* is in a transparent context in *They believe [each other to be intelligent]*; here, it can be co-indexed with an NP outside the clause (*they*).

(3) In SEMANTICS, a (referentially) **opaque** or **intensional** context is one in which the substitution of CO-REFERENTIAL terms potentially results in a change of TRUTH VALUE. For example, *John believes that – is happy* is an opaque context: it is possible that *John believes that George Bush is happy* might be true, even while *John believes that the 43rd president of the USA is happy* is false, even though the terms *George Bush* and *the 43rd president of the USA* refer to the same individual. Contexts in which this sort of substitution cannot result in a change of truth value are called **transparent** or **extensional**.

(4) A term used in NON-LINEAR PHONOLOGY, as part of the characterization of the DOMAIN within which ASSIMILATION RULES apply: in long-distance assimilations (such as VOWEL HARMONY), intervening CONSONANTS are said to be either **opaque** or **transparent**. An ‘opaque’ segment is one already characterized by the NODE or FEATURE which is being SPREAD by an assimilation rule, and thus blocks the application of the rule; a segment which permits the application of a rule is said to be ‘transparent’.

open (*adj.*) (1) A term used in the four-level PHONETIC classification of vertical TONGUE movement in VOWEL sounds based on the CARDINAL VOWEL SYSTEM, the others being CLOSE, ‘half-close’ and ‘half-open’. It refers to a vowel made with the tongue in the lowest possible position, i.e. the mouth as wide open as possible, as in [a] and [ɑ]: the most open vowels in English are in words like *cat* and *cart*. The area of articulation immediately above ‘open’ is known as **half-open** or **mid-open**, as in [ɛ] and [ɔ] (the nearest English vowels being in words like *get* and *got* respectively). In a three-level classification of vowel sounds, the lowest group are known as ‘low’ vowels (as opposed to ‘high’ and ‘mid’).

(2) **Open** is used in the classification of lip positions, referring to the visual appearance of the lips when they are held relatively wide apart, but without any noticeable ROUNDING, as in such sounds as the [ɑ] in *part*. It is contrasted with SPREAD, NEUTRAL and rounded positions. A similar notion is involved in the classification of JAW SETTINGS.

(3) A term used in the two-way classification of SYLLABLE structure, referring to a syllable which ends in a VOWEL, as opposed to the CLOSED syllable, which ends in a CONSONANT. This feature is sometimes referred to as a ‘free’ syllable. The open syllable is the first syllable type to be productively used by children, in the early stages of PHONOLOGICAL development. It also constitutes a syllable type (consonant+vowel) which seems to be a UNIVERSAL feature of LANGUAGE.

(4) A term sometimes used in the GRAMMATICAL CLASSIFICATION of WORDS to refer to one of two postulated major word-classes in language, the other being CLOSED. An **open class** is one whose membership is in principle indefinite or unlimited. New items are continually being added, as new ideas, inventions, etc., emerge. NOUNS, VERBS, ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS are open-class items, whereas CONJUNCTIONS, PRONOUNS, etc., are closed. The distinction is not quite as clear-cut as it seems, as the class of PREPOSITIONS in English, for example, is relatively

open (e.g. *in accordance with*, *on account of*, and many more), and within the so-called open classes of words there are several closed sub-systems, e.g. AUXILIARY verbs. But the contrast between 'open' and 'closed' is widely recognized.

(5) In language ACQUISITION studies of the two-word stage of grammatical development, the term refers to the variable ELEMENT in a CONSTRUCTION, the other being referred to as the PIVOT. For example, in the set *daddy there, cat there, drink there*, *there* is the pivot word (a member of a small, 'closed' class), and *daddy*, etc., are members of an **open class**.

(6) A term used in the classification of types of JUNCTURE or TRANSITION, referring to the features which help to define a word boundary, before silence; also known as 'plus juncture'. **Open juncture** is opposed to **close juncture**; 'open transition' to 'close transition'.

open class see OPEN (4), (5)

operation (*n.*) In FORMALIZED analyses, a term normally used in its general mathematical sense of a FUNCTION whose ARGUMENTS are all drawn from the same set. In less formal analyses, it is often used more loosely to refer to any change or PROCESS performed on a linguistic REPRESENTATION. For example, in GRAMMAR, the relationship between present and past TENSE in English can be described as an operation which adds the SUFFIX *-ed* to the STEM, as in *walk* → *walk+ed*. RULES are one kind of formal operation. See also OPERATOR (2).

operator (*n.*) (1) In FORMAL SEMANTICS, a term used in two main ways: (a) referring to any symbol or EXPRESSION which can BIND a VARIABLE, such as the universal or existential QUANTIFIERS or the LAMBDA binder ('variable binding operators'); (b) referring to any symbol or expression which denotes an OPERATION (or more loosely, any FUNCTION), especially if it is a LOGICAL CONSTANT.

(2) In some approaches to English GRAMMAR (notably QUIRK GRAMMAR), the first AUXILIARY VERB to be used in a verb phrase. It is so called because it performs an **operation** on the CLAUSE, such as marking the change from STATEMENT to QUESTION. For example, in *The cat has been eating*, *has* is the operator (cf. *Has the cat been eating?*).

(3) In ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR, any of a set of formal items which govern the behaviour of units in inter-CLAUSAL construction. Examples include ASPECT, which affects the VERB; MODALITY, which affects the CORE part of the clause; and TENSE, which affects the clause PERIPHERY.

oppositeness (*n.*) see ANTONYMY, COMPLEMENTARY, CONVERSENESS

opposition (*n.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS to refer to linguistically important differences between UNITS. The term is used primarily in PHONOLOGY, where contrasts between DISTINCTIVE FEATURES of sound, or between the presence and absence of a feature, are referred to as oppositions. The difference between /p/ and /s/, for example, can be seen as a combination of two oppositions – PLACE and MANNER OF ARTICULATION. One of the first attempts to classify the oppositions in this sense was in the PRAGUE SCHOOL's theory of **distinctive oppositions**, as first formulated in Nikolai Trubetzkoy's *Principles of Phonology* (1939). The main types of opposition recognized are:

(1) **bilateral v. multilateral**: the opposition between English /t/ and /d/, for example, is *bilateral*, because these are the only units in the system which are ALVEOLAR/PLOSIVE, and they are differentiated by the single feature of VOICING; the opposition between say, /t/ and /v/, however, is *multilateral*, because there is more than one parameter of contrast, e.g. /d/ v. /f/.

(2) **proportional v. isolated**: the opposition between /f/ and /v/ in English is *proportional*, because there are other oppositions in the language which work in parallel, e.g. /s/ v. /z/, /ʃ/ v. /ʒ/; on the other hand, the opposition between, say, /v/ and /l/ is *isolated* – there are no other segments that are contrasted in this particular way, i.e. VOICED LABIO-DENTAL FRICATIVE v. VOICED LATERAL.

(3) **privative, gradual and equipollent**: a *privative* opposition is a BINARY one, where one member is seen as MARKED by the presence of a feature, which its opposite member lacks (i.e. it is ‘unmarked’), as in the /p/ v. /b/ distinction in English; in a *gradual* opposition, degrees of difference in a language are recognized along a scale of some kind, as in a language with four front vowels /i/, /e/, /ɛ/ and /æ/ where (according to Trubetskoy) it would not be desirable to analyse the four degrees of vowel height in terms of privative pairs, such as ‘high’ v. ‘low’; in an *equipollent* opposition, the members are seen as logically equivalent to each other, contrasted neither gradually nor by a binary feature; e.g. the distinction between /p/ and /k/ cannot be analysed, according to Trubetskoy, as a difference along a single phonetic continuum, nor can /p/ be seen as ‘non-velar’, or /k/ as ‘non-bilabial’.

(4) **constant and neutralizable**: a *constant* opposition exists when its members can occur in all possible positions, e.g. wherever /p/ might be found in a language, a contrast with /b/ will also be found; in English, the /t/ v. /d/ distinction is *neutralizable*, because in some positions there is no such contrast, the opposition being realized by the same sound, as when /t/ follows initial /s/, e.g. *stick* does not contrast with **sdick*.

optative (*adj./n.*) A term sometimes used in GRAMMATICAL description, to refer to a category of MOOD which expresses a desire, hope or wish. The optative mood (‘the optative’) is chiefly known from Classical Greek. Optative expressions in English use the MODAL VERBS or the SUBJUNCTIVE: *May they get home safely, Heaven help us!*

optimal (*adj.*) see OPTIMALITY THEORY

optimality theory (OT) In PHONOLOGY, a theory developed in the early 1990s concerning the relationship between proposed underlying and output REPRESENTATIONS. In this approach, an INPUT representation is associated with a class of candidate OUTPUT representations, and various kinds of filter are used to evaluate these outputs and select the one which is ‘optimal’ (i.e. most well-formed). The selection takes place through the use of a set of well-formedness CONSTRAINTS, RANKED in a hierarchy of relevance on a language-particular basis, so that a lower-ranked constraint may be violated in order to satisfy a higher-ranked one. The candidate representation which passes the highest ranked constraint is the output form. For example, in English the negative prefix *in-* (e.g. *insufficient*) has two output forms, *im-* (before bilabials, as in *impossible, immodest*), and *in-* elsewhere (*inarticulate, involuntary*, etc.). The co-existence of these forms means

that there is conflict between the class of FAITHFULNESS constraints (which require identity between input and output) and the class of constraints which impose restrictions on possible sequences of sounds – in this case, a constraint requiring that adjacent CONSONANTS have identical place of articulation – which needs to be resolved by an appropriate ranking of the relevant constraints. Optimality theory thus aims to account for a wide range of phenomena by specifying the interaction of a small number of UNIVERSAL constraints, which apply variously across languages in producing phonological representations. A particular constraint may achieve high ranking in one language (i.e. its output accounts for many surface forms) and low ranking in another (i.e. its output accounts for only a small class of forms). Although initially developed in relation to phonology, during the later 1990s optimality theory came to be extended to MORPHOLOGY and SYNTAX.

optional (*adj.*) A term in LINGUISTICS which refers to an ELEMENT that can be removed from a STRUCTURE without that structure becoming UNGRAMMATICAL. In the sentence *I saw the pen on the desk, on the desk* is an optional ADVERBIAL. In early TRANSFORMATIONAL grammar, the term refers to one of two types of RULE postulated by Noam Chomsky in his book *Syntactic Structures* (1957), the other being OBLIGATORY. **Optional transformations** may apply at a certain stage in a DERIVATION; but it is not essential for the WELL-FORMEDNESS of the SENTENCE that they do so, e.g. the transformation from POSITIVE to NEGATIVE, ACTIVE to PASSIVE, or DECLARATIVE to INTERROGATIVE. In later versions of transformational GRAMMAR, the range of this notion changes, as more structural rules come to be incorporated into the BASE component of the grammar, and are thus handled by obligatory rules. A few rules handling STYLISTIC alternatives remain optional.

oracy (*n.*) see ORAL (2)

oral (*adj.*) (1) In PHONETICS, ‘oral’ is opposed to NASAL, referring either to the ARTICULATORY area of the mouth, as in the phrases ‘oral CAVITY, ‘oral chamber’ or to the specific sounds that are made there. The opposition is usually with the nasal cavity (and with nasal sounds), but the PHARYNX, oesophagus and lungs are also excluded from the notion of ‘oral’. In the DISTINCTIVE FEATURE theory of PHONOLOGY, ‘oral’ is specifically opposed to ‘nasal’, these being postulated as two of the contrasts needed in order to specify fully the sound SYSTEM of a language. In some models of FEATURE GEOMETRY, an ‘oral cavity NODE’ is introduced, corresponding to the articulatory notion of an oral cavity CONSTRICTION. It is represented between the ROOT node and the PLACE node, thus DOMINATING place and [\pm CONTINUANT] nodes.

(2) The usual adjective for the manifestation of LANGUAGE in its spoken, as opposed to its written form. The term **oracy** has been coined, on analogy with ‘literacy’, to refer to ability in speech and listening comprehension, but this term is used more in discussion of language skills and curricula in mother-tongue education, and will not generally be found in technical studies in LINGUISTICS and PHONETICS.

order (*n./v.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS to refer to the pattern of relationships constituting or UNDERLYING a LINEAR SEQUENCE of linguistic UNITS. Sometimes,

no distinction is made between the sequential arrangement of observable FORMAL ELEMENTS (defined, for example, in terms of SURFACE STRUCTURE) and the abstract pattern of relationships assumed to underlie the surface arrangement: notions such as 'WORD-ORDER', 'MORPHEME order', 'SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT order', etc., are often seen in this way. Usually, however, a systematic distinction is made between these two LEVELS of analysis, the former being referred to as SEQUENCE, and the latter as 'order'. That there is no necessary one-to-one correspondence between surface sequence and underlying order can be shown in such sentences as *She took off her hat/She took her hat off/Her hat she took off*, etc., where the same basic subject-verb-object order is REALIZED in different surface sequences. This notion – that there is an underlying abstract 'ordering' of elements from which several surface arrangements can be derived – is a fundamental insight of TRANSFORMATIONAL GRAMMAR. In this approach, also, the term **ordering** is used to refer to the application of the RULES of a grammar in a given succession, a crucial principle which prevents the generation of UNACCEPTABLE STRINGS, and enables SIMPLER analyses to be made. Several specific ordering conventions have been suggested (see the notions of CYCLICAL, LINEAR, CONJUNCTIVE, DISJUNCTIVE, BLEEDING, FEEDING, EXTRINSIC and INTRINSIC ordering). In natural generative PHONOLOGY, the **no-ordering condition** requires that no extrinsic ordering of rules be permitted. See also BRACKETING PARADOX, RULE-ORDERING PARADOX.

order of mention In PSYCHOLINGUISTICS, a term referring to a use of language where the order of events in the outside world is paralleled by the order in the sequence of SEMANTIC UNITS within the utterance. For example: *After John shut the door, he spoke* follows order of mention; *Before John spoke, he shut the door* does not.

ordinal (*adj./n.*) A term used in some models of GRAMMATICAL description referring to the class of numerals *first*, *second*, etc. ('ordinal numbers' or 'the ordinals'), by contrast with the CARDINAL numbers *one*, *two*, etc.

organs of speech see VOCAL ORGANS

orphan node see NODE

orthoepy /ɔ:'θəʊɪpi:/ (*n.*) In HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS and PHILOLOGY, an old term (dating from the seventeenth century) for the study of correct pronunciation and of the relationship between pronunciation and the writing system. Several works provide early detailed descriptions of the sounds of contemporary languages.

other-repair (*n.*) see REPAIR

OT perspective see INPUT (3)

output (*n.*) (1) A use of the general sense of this term in GENERATIVE GRAMMAR to refer to a SENTENCE which is produced after the application of a RULE or set of rules. It contrasts with INPUT, which refers to the linguistic construct which triggers the application of a rule.

(2) In OPTIMALITY THEORY, an **output** is the optimal REPRESENTATION of an INPUT form, following the application of the mechanisms of the theory. It corresponds most closely to what people actually say. See GENERATOR and EVALUATOR.

output–output constraints In OPTIMALITY THEORY, a set of CONSTRAINTS which mandate PARADIGMATIC uniformity, ensuring that related forms have the same properties.

overcorrection (*n.*) see HYPERCORRECTION

overextension (*n.*) A term used in language ACQUISITION studies to refer to one type of relationship between adult and child MEANING, as expressed in LEXICAL ITEMS. In overextension, the child's lexical item has a wider range of APPLICATION than the equivalent term in adult language, e.g. when *dog* is used for other animals apart from dogs. The term is usually contrasted with UNDEREXTENSION.

overgeneralization (*n.*) A term used in language ACQUISITION studies, referring to the process whereby children extend their use of a GRAMMATICAL feature to CONTEXTS beyond those found in the adult language, e.g. when they **overgeneralize** the regular past-TENSE FORM in such items as **goed*, **wented*, **goned*.

overgeneration (*n.*) A term used in GENERATIVE LINGUISTICS to characterize a RULE which generates ungrammatical structures as well as GRAMMATICAL ones.

overlapping (*n.*) (1) A term used in PHONOLOGY to refer to the possibility that a PHONE may be assigned to more than one PHONEME (**phonemic overlapping**). The notion was introduced by American STRUCTURAL LINGUISTS in the 1940s. The overlapping (or 'intersection') of phonemes was said to be 'partial' if a given sound is assigned to phoneme A in one PHONETIC CONTEXT and to phoneme B in another; it would be 'complete' if successive occurrences of the sound in the *same* context are assigned sometimes to A, and sometimes to B (compare the notion of NEUTRALIZATION). An example of partial **overlap** is found between /r/ and /r̥/ in some DIALECTS of English, where both are realized by the TAP [ɾ] in different contexts: /r/ → [ɾ] after DENTAL FRICATIVES, as in *through*; /r̥/ → [ɾ] between VOWELS, as in *bitter*. An example of complete overlap occurs in the case of [ə], which may stand for most occurrences of English STRESSED vowels, when they occur in unstressed positions (e.g. *telegraph* – *telegraphy*, where the first and third vowels reduce to [ə]).

The notion of complete overlap was generally rejected, on the grounds that it would lead to an unacceptable INDETERMINACY in phonemics which would destroy the principle of phonemic analysis as an independent LEVEL. One would not be able to tell, on the basis of pronunciation alone, which phoneme a phone belonged to. The need to preserve some kind of phonemic integrity for successive instances of the same sound led to the maxim 'Once a phoneme, always a phoneme', and to the notion of BIUNIQUENESS (or one-to-one correspondence between phones and phonemes). However, even partial overlap provides considerable difficulties for the notion of INVARIANCE, which is fundamental to the biuniqueness hypothesis, as has been argued by Noam Chomsky, among others.

It is evident that it is not always possible to predict the phoneme a phone belongs to, simply by considering its phonetic properties.

(2) A term used in language ACQUISITION studies to refer to one type of relationship between adult and child MEANING, as expressed in LEXICAL ITEMS. **Overlapping** meanings, or **overlap**, as the name suggests, occur when the meaning of a lexical item for the child is not identical with that for the adult (see OVEREXTENSION and UNDEREXTENSION). In cases of no overlap ('mismatch'), a child's lexical item has no point of contact at all with the meaning of that item in the adult language, e.g. one child used *door* to mean 'walk'.

overt (*adj.*) (1) A term used in LINGUISTIC analysis to refer to the relationships between linguistic FORMS which are observable in the SURFACE STRUCTURE of a SENTENCE; opposed to COVERT. Examples of overt relations include WORD-ORDER, CONCORD and PHONOTACTIC SEQUENCE. The term is also sometimes used of elements (e.g. an 'overt subject' in PRO-DROP LANGUAGES) and processes (e.g. WH-MOVEMENT).

(2) A term used in SOCIOLINGUISTICS as part of the analysis of the way linguistic FORMS carry social prestige: in **overt prestige**, forms are valued which follow the NORMS recommended by powerful groups or institutions within society (such as public schools, broadcasting institutions and usage manuals). An example would be the forms associated with Standard English. This kind of prestige is overt because the forms are openly and publicly recognized as socially desirable. An opposition is drawn with COVERT prestige, where VERNACULAR DIALECT forms are positively valued, emphasizing local solidarity and identity. See also CHANGE FROM ABOVE.

overtone (*n.*) see HARMONIC