ONE-WORD SOLECISMS AND THE LIMITS OF SYNTAX

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"I'm syntax free."
—Kim GORDON

1. Syntax Now and Then

By "syntax", we generally mean the combination of words into sentences (and, usually, intermediate subsentential structures[1]). It is a central tenet of Chomskyan linguistics that syntax constitutes a well-defined level of language; hence the Autonomous Syntax Principle:

> **ASP:** No syntactic rule can make reference to pragmatic, phonological, or semantic information. (Radford 1988: 31)

But much of this is controversial today. **ASP** is under attack from all quarters. One distinguished syntactician observes with pungent irony: "I am most convinced of the appropriateness of developing an *autonomous* syntax when the discussion involves areas far from my own research" (Ruwet 1991: xvii). Contemporary linguistics devotes much attention to the "interface" between syntax and phonology[2]. The borderland between syntax and semantics has been hotly contested; similarly that between syntax and pragmatics[3]. It is doubted that an autonomous syntax module is compatible with evolutionary biology (Lieberman 1992). Neurolinguistic data suggest that there exists significant interaction between syntactic and semantic processes (Gunter et al. 1997). From

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[1]Such structures are not recognized by Word Grammar (Hudson and van Langendonck 1991).
[2]For a review, see Golston (1995).
[3]See e.g. Bunge (1984: 131–141). Some recent remarks of Chomsky's, relevant to the debates, can be found in Stemmer (1999).

philosophers we hear numerous criticisms of strict modularity.

Autonomy, however, is not the only problem with syntax. First, there is abundant evidence to suggest that we need more than *words;* nonverbal tokens—in particular, gestures—are not readily dissociable from syntactic structures[4]. Second, syntax may not stop at the *sentence;* perhaps we need to take account of regularities that involve larger structures. (This is the premise of text or discourse grammar.)

These are all modern concerns, of course. But in what follows, I shall show that they were known in antiquity as well. Ancient grammarians were aware of the difficulty of extricating syntactic from semantic and pragmatic structure; of the close relation between verbal and nonverbal planes of language; and of grammatical phenomena that appear in linguistic contexts larger than a single sentence. One place we find these concerns is in writings on solecism: specifically, in some controversial cases of *single-word* solecisms.

2. Some Definitions and Their Rationale

Before we get to the controversial cases, we would do well to survey the ancient grammatical doctrine of *vitia*—that is, errors in language. The best-known definitions offer a binary division: barbarism (an error in a single word) vs. solecism (an error in multiple words). For instance (*G.G.* I.3, p. 170)*:*

> **D1.** A mistake in a single word is barbarism; one in multiple words is a solecism[5].

But there are others[6]. Among the most notable:

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[4]See Armstrong et al. (1995); McNeill (1992); McNeill (2000b).
[5]τὸ γὰρ περὶ μίαν [sc. λέξιν] ἁμαρτάνειν βαρβαρισμός ἐστι, τὸ δὲ περὶ πλείονας σολοικισμός.
[6]The best general discussion is that of Baratin (1989: 262–278).

D2 (Stoics). Of the errors, a barbarism is a sequence of speech sounds that is contrary to the usage of authoritative Greek speakers; a solecism is a meaningful utterance put together incongruently[7]. (Diogenes Laertius 7.59)

D3 (Pliny). Pliny says that a barbarism is a single word whose essence is contrary to nature. What is a solecism? That which is poorly said as regards art[8]. (122–123 Mazzarino)

D4 (*Scholia Londinensia*). Solecism is a mistake in the syntax of words in a sentence.… Barbarism is a mistake of pronunciation that arises in a word[9]. (*G.G.* I.3, p. 446–447)

For the Stoics (**D2**), the difference between barbarism and solecism is the difference between λέξις (language conceived of in its material aspect) and λόγος (language conceived of as a relation between matter and meaning)[10]. For Pliny (**D3**), it is the difference between *natura* (the given phonological form of a word), and *ars* (the systematic, rule-governed aspect of language; especially inflectional morphology)[11]. **D4** suggests a homologous view of language structure where γράμματα are the building blocks at one level (phonology), and words the building blocks at another (syntax)[12].

What is common to the various definitions? I propose that ancient

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[7] ὁ δὲ βαρβαρισμὸς ἐκ τῶν κακιῶν λέξις ἐστὶ παρὰ τὸ ἔθος τῶν εὐδοκιμούντων Ἑλλήνων, σολοικισμὸς δέ ἐστι λόγος ἀκαταλλήλως συντεταγμένος.

[8] *Plinius autem dicit barbarismum esse sermonem unum, in quo vis sua est contra naturam. | quid est soloecismus? quod male per artem dicitur.*

[9] ἔστι δὲ σολοικισμὸς ἁμάρτημα περὶ τήν σύνταξιν τῶν μερῶν τοῦ λόγου.... βαρβαρισμός ἐστιν ἁμάρτημα προφορᾶς ἐν λέξει γινόμενον.

[10] Cf. Sluiter (1990: 23).

[11] The key to understanding *natura* here is these sentences of Diomedes: *natura verborum nominumque inmutabilis <est> nec quicquam aut minus aut plus tradidit nobis quam quod accepit. nam si quis dicat* scrimbo *quod est* scribo, *non analogiae virtute sed naturae ipsius constitutione convincitur* (*G.L.* 1, p. 439). I translate as follows: "The nature of verbs and of nouns is fixed (unchangeable) and it passes on to us nothing more and nothing less that it accepts. Whoever says *scrimbo* instead of *scribo* is proven wrong not by virtue of (an) analogy, but rather by the disposition of the nature of the very verb". (This rendering involves several controversial choices, which I defend at length in my doctoral dissertation (in progress).) That is: the nature of words consists of a fixed, ordered sequence of *litterae,* without the possibility of substitutions (*immutabilis*), subtractions (*nec quicquam aut minus*), or additions (*aut plus*). The reader will notice that the statement effectively denies the four operations of the *quadripertita ratio* (*immutatio, transmutatio, adiectio, detractio*). Thus a word's *natura* is basically its phonemic shape.

[12] Cf. Sluiter (1990: 43–46); Luhtala (2000: 26).

grammarians are trying to distinguish between two levels of language: (1) phonology, and (2) morphosyntax. It is clear that the Stoic λέξις refers to the sounds of language (compare the famous example βλίτυρι, a λέξις that is not a λόγος, i.e., has no meaning[13]). It is evident from the examples Pompeius uses in the context of Pliny's definition (*mamor* for *marmor* 'marble' and *columa* for *columna* 'column') that *natura* in **D3** has to do with the phonological aspect of language[14]. The definitions represent the morphosyntactic aspect variously: as simply a collocation of words (**D1**), as linguistic forms that can enter into strings which convey propositional content (**D2**), as the portion of language that is systematic and rule-governed (**D3**), and as a syntagmatic composite of words (**D4**).

The metalanguage varies, and some definitions are more theoretically oriented than others. For instance, the *plura verba* definitions (**D1** et similia) clearly reflect the exigencies of the schoolroom: they are easy to assimilate and easy to apply. **D2** is firmly embedded within the context of a larger Stoic philosophical system, and it can only be understood in that context. **D4** may strike many modern readers as the most attractive and successful of the attempts.

There is more here, however, than inadequate metalanguage and terminological quibbling. The grammarians frequently disagree as to whether a particular error should be considered a barbarism, a solecism, or neither. If we examine the definitions, we come to realize that they entail differences in both the intension and extension of the terms *barbarism* and *solecism.* Let's take as an example the phonetic *vitium* known by the Roman grammarians as *mytacism.* In

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[13]Diogenes Laertius 7.57.

Latin, intervocalic /m/ is realized differently depending on whether it occurs word-finally or elsewhere. Word-finally, its expression is nasalization of the preceding vowel (or a nasal off-glide); elsewhere it is a voiced bilabial nasal [m]. The pronunciation of final -*m* as [m] is called mytacism (*mytacismus*)[15]. Grammarians disagree, however, as to whether mytacism constitutes barbarism. If barbarism is defined as a mistake that occurs in a single word, then mytacism is ineligible, since it can only occur in the juncture between *two* words (Servius *in Donatum, G.L.* IV, p. 445). But some grammarians (presumably recognizing barbarism as concerned with errors at the phonological level) do consider it a barbarism[16].

It is my contention that Greco-Roman grammarians, in attempting to tease apart levels of language structure, confronted substantial linguistic issues—ones that are still of interest in contemporary linguistics. In the remainder of this paper, I shall explore three related case studies of ancient controversies concerning the limits of syntax. My focus is on two authors: Apollonius Dyscolus and Quintilian.

3. Case 1: Deixis and Indexicality

A frequent objection to the *plura verba* definitions of solecism involves the use of a deictic pronoun inflected for the wrong gender: e.g. οὗτος in reference to a female. Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Mathematicos* 1.212–213) addresses the problem, as does Apollonius Dyscolus (*G.G.* II.2, p. 273):

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[14]*G.L.* V, p. 283.

[15]See Nyman (1977). Note that the phonetic realization of /m/ affects the perception of the word boundary, so that a spelling pronunciation of -*m* will cause the word boundary to be perceived in the wrong place.

[16]Donatus (p. 654 Holtz): *sunt etiam malae compositiones, id est cacosyntheta, quas nonnulli*

> I haven't forgotten that some people have upset the *communis opinio*—that barbarism is an error involving a single word, and solecism the concatenation of incongruous words. They assert that solecism occurs in a single word if someone utters *hoûtos* with regard to a woman or to more than one person[17].

Here we have a single word, but one that appears to be used ungrammatically. It can't be a barbarism, because it's not deviant at the phonetic (or submorphemic) level[18]. And so the grammarians—who take the sets of barbarisms and of solecisms to constitute mutually exclusive and exhaustive subsets of the set of grammatical errors—conclude that it must be a solecism.

Apollonius, however, is quick to dismiss these grammarians (*G.G.* II.2, p. 274):

> It is apparent that the utterance per se is correct, but the use of the gender has been flip-flopped, contrary to the natural deixis of the utterance. And it's clear that this newly invented (ersatz) solecism concerning the pronoun *hoûtos* is impossible at night, and that we must add to the definition: "unless the syntactic construction occurs at nighttime"[19].

In other words, the grammaticality of an utterance must be considered to be independent of any contingent truth (Blank 1982: 29). A *reductio ad absurdum* serves to emphasize the point. If we add as a condition on the use of οὗτος that there be a male present, then grammaticality will be contingent on lighting, since sex identification cannot be reliably performed in the dark (*G.G.* II.2, p. 274). And that does seem an absurd consequence.

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barbarismos putant, in quibus sunt mytacismi, labdacismi, iotacismi, hiatus, conlisiones…

[17] οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνο δέ με λέληθεν, ὥς τινες ἐπετάραξαν τὴν παρὰ πᾶσιν συμφώνως πιστευθεῖσαν δόξαν, ὡς μιᾶς λέξεως κακία ἐστὶν ὁ βαρβαρισμός, ἐπιπλοκῆς δὲ λέξεων ἀκαταλλήλων ὁ σολοικισμός, αὐτοὶ εἰσηγησάμενοι τὸ καὶ ἐν μιᾷ λέξει καταγίνεσθαι σολοικισμόν, εἰ κατὰ θηλείας φαίη τις οὗτος ἢ πλήθους ὑπόντος… Cf. Luhtala (2000: 163–164).

[18] So Sextus observes (*M.* 1.213).

[19] καὶ φαίνεται ὅτι ὅσον ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ὁ λόγος κατώρθωται, παρὰ δὲ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γενομένην δεῖξιν τὰ τοῦ γένους ἐνήλλακται. σαφές τε ὡς οὐδὲ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐγχωρήσει ὁ καινότερον ἐπινοηθεὶς διὰ τῆς οὗτος ἀντωνυμίας σολοικισμός, καὶ δέον προσθεῖναι τῷ ὅρῳ, ὅτε μὴ ἐν νυκτερινῷ καταστήματι εἴη τὰ τῆς συντάξεως…

Apollonius's position, however, is not without its shortcomings. First, he treats deictics and anaphors inconsistently[20]. An anaphor incorrectly declined—e.g. a feminine relative pronoun with a masculine antecedent—constitutes a focal case of solecism. Yet for Apollonius a deictic incorrectly declined has nothing to do with solecism. Another difficulty with Apollonius's position becomes evident when we examine a further passage (*G.G.* II.2, p. 275):

> Someone who says **(S1)** *hoûtos me etupsen* 'He hit me' doesn't make a grammatical error; for it follows grammatical structure. But if someone says about a woman: **(S2)** *hautê me etupsan* 'She hit (PLURAL) me', he commits an egregious solecism owing to the incongruity of the lexical forms, even though he gets the gender right[21].

But we should reconsider the sentences Apollonius contrasts. **S2** is acceptable never; **S1,** sometimes. If I use **S1** of a woman, the problem is not that **S1** is false; rather, that it contains an illegitimate use of the word οὗτος. What is at issue is not knowledge about the world (as Apollonius asserts), but knowledge about language; in other words: acceptability, not truth.

Let me clarify the matter by imagining two parallel situations. (1) Some young children (around age 2–2 1/2) confuse first and second person pronouns, saying, for instance, *You want cookie* rather than *I want a cookie.* Here it is likely that they take the pronouns as names (*I* = 'mother or caregiver'; *you* = 'child'). They simply have not yet learned the correct use of personal pronouns[22]. (2) In

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[20]Recall that we owe the modern distinction between anaphoric and deictic pronouns to Apollonius (Bosch 1983: 4–6).

[21] τὸ οὖν κατὰ θηλείας λεγόμενον **(S1)** οὗτός με ἔτυψεν οὐχ ἁμάρτημα τοῦ λόγου· τὸ δέον γὰρ τοῦ καταλλήλου ἀνεδέξατο. εἰ γοῦν ὑπούσης θηλείας φαίη τις **(S2)** αὕτη με ἔτυψαν, ὁμολόγως σολοικιεῖ διὰ τὸ ἀκατάλληλον τῶν λέξεων, κἂν ἀληθεύει τὸ γένος.

[22]Clark (1978: 100–102); Fay (1979: 251); Charney (1979: 521); Tanz (1980: 52); Chiat (1981: 79–81); Loveland (1984: 548).

my beginning Latin class, a female student (speaking *propria persona*) says *conatus sum* 'I tried', when she should have said *conata sum.* I presume that she is aware of her own sex; what she doesn't know is that she's supposed to use a feminine participle here.

In sum, indexical expressions are special. It is a defining property that our interpretation of them depends on contextual coordinates such as SPEAKER and ADDRESSEE[23]. And, further, the *acceptability* of such expressions can only be determined within a particular context. We simply cannot offer an adequate account of indexicals if we exclude the contextual component from the grammar.

4. Case 2: Gesture and Nonvocal Language

Quintilian reflects on related problems in the grammatical chapters of his *Institutio Oratoria* (1.5.36)[24]:

> A more learned question is whether solecism can also occur in single words, e.g. if someone calls an individual to himself by saying *venite* 'Come! (PLURAL)'; or if he dismisses several people with *abi* 'Go away! (SINGULAR)' or *discede...* Some people even suppose that the same mistake can occur in a gesture, when the voice says one thing, but the hand or the nod of the head says another[25].

Both problems involve a linguistic form that is unobjectionable per se, but is inappropriate when uttered in a given context. The former is a clear parallel to οὗτος; the latter, I think, deserves special attention. To start, we should imagine a verbal affirmation, accompanied by the famous "Head Toss", which signifies

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[23]Cf. Nunberg (1993); Iida (1996: 164–170).

[24] For the opinions of later Roman grammarians on these problems, see Vainio in this volume.

[25] *illud eruditius quaeritur, an in singulis quoque verbis possit fieri soloecismus, ut si unum quis ad se vocans dicat 'venite', aut si pluris a se dimittens ita loquatur: 'abi' aut 'discede'.... in gestu etiam nonnulli putant idem vitium inesse, cum aliud voce, aliud nutu vel manu demonstratur.*

negation (a gesture still used in Greece and southern Italy)[26].

To recognize a solecism here entails conceiving of vocal and gestural modalities as belonging to an integrated system of communication. Such a model seems desirable to many linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists today. There is evidence that both in comprehension and in production speech and gesture share a stage of cognitive processing (Langton et al. 1996). With regard to a functional analysis, Kendon (2000: 61) has asserted that "gestures are organized in relation to the spoken phrases they accompany in such a way that we must say that they are part of the very construction of the utterance itself". And the idea that gesture played a key role in the evolutionary development of human language is enjoying a revival (Armstrong et al. 1995)[27].

Moreover, recent philological research has demonstrated that a number of *prima facie* difficulties in classical texts can be explained away if we posit a gesture (or the presumption of one). For instance, at Plato *Apology* 38b1–4, we read νῦν δὲ—οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν.... What does γάρ explain? Most likely, a gesture of negation, signifying the idea 'that's not possible': "But as matters now stand, <GESTURE: that's not possible>, since..." (Boegehold 1999: 114–115). The gestures that accompany spoken language played an important part in ancient rhetorical theory and practice[28]. Quintilian, whose text is crucial on this subject (11.3.65–136), observes that "the hands almost talk themselves"[29]. Also worth

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[26]McNeill (1992: 61).

[27]The idea goes back to antiquity, e.g. Lactantius *Inst. Div.* 6.10.13–14: *homines…primo nutibus voluntatem suam significasse, deinde sermonis initia temptasse.* Cf. Lucretius 5.1022, Vitruvius 33.22, and the important discussion of Cole (1990: 63–64). One should compare Rousseau's ideas on the relation of primitive vocal and gestural language in the first chapter of the *Essai sur l'origine des langues.*

[28]Cf. Graf (1991); Aldrete (1999: 3–97).

[29]*Hae* [sc. *manus*], *prope est ut dicam, ipsae locuntur* (11.3.85).

mentioning is Saul Levin's hypothesis that the Greek correlative pair μέν...δέ

correspond to a movement of the hand, and a nod of the head, respectively

(Levin 1978–9).

The gestural solecism helps us better to understand the οὗτος solecism, I

believe. Ostensive deixis in speech is frequently accompanied by an indexical

gesture—a physical act of pointing (Klein 2000: 94; Boegehold 1999: 85)[30].

Keeping that fact in mind, consider Quintilian's next remarks (1.5.37–38):

> Neither do I fully agree with this opinion [sc. that one-word
> solecisms occur], nor do I fully reject it. For I say that it happens in
> a single word only if there is something else that has the semantic
> value of a second word, to which the aforementioned word may be
> referred—so that *solecism occurs in the combination of those tokens by
> which referents are signified and our meaning is indicated*. And that I
> may escape all quibbling, let's say: sometimes in a single word, but
> never in a word all by itself[31].

So: a solecism can involve not only incongruity between multiple verbal

elements, but also incongruity between a single verbal element and a nonverbal

element. Quintilian's words are strikingly reminiscent of W.D. Whitney's

functional definition of language (1897: 1–2):

> Language, then, signifies rather certain instrumentalities whereby
> men consciously and with intention represent their thought, to the
> end, chiefly, of making it known to other men: it is expression for
> the sake of communication. The instrumentalities capable of being
> used for this purpose, and actually more or less used, are various:
> gesture and grimace, pictorial or written signs, and uttered or
> spoken signs.

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[30]Pointing is an extremely important act from the perspective of human (and primate) communication. In human infants, approximately 50% of pointing is accompanied by vocalization; and "[l]anguage-trained apes do appear to use pointing as a paralinguistic gesture to disambiguate the targets of particular signed communicative acts" (Leavens and Hopkins 1999: 423, 424). Cf. Camaioni (1997); Clark (1978: 96). Aldrete (1999: 17–34) treats at length Roman orators' use of indexical gestures.

[31] *huic opinioni neque omnino accedo neque plane dissentio; nam id fateor accidere voce una, non tamen aliter quam si sit aliquid, quod vim alterius vocis optineat, ad quod vox illa referatur: ut soloecismus ex complexu fiat eorum quibus res significantur et voluntas ostenditur* [cf. Lactantius's *voluntatem significasse*, supra. n. 27]. *atque ut omnem effugiam cavillationem, sit aliquando in uno verbo, numquam in solo verbo.*

The communicative perspective allows us to reinterpret deictic solecisms. Suppose I point to a female and say οὗτος...; I have committed a solecism because my speech and my gesture are not congruent.

I'd like to draw attention to a neglected passage that demonstrates the potential for an integrated account of speech and gesture in the ancient grammatical tradition. In the *Ars* ascribed to Remmius Palaemon, we find a class of indexical pronouns—called *minus quam finita*—which includes *tu, ille, iste,* and *hic* (*G.L.* V, p. 541):

> For even *tu* is not fully definite, unless you've pointed your finger at a person. Therefore these are called *less than definite* (*semidefinite?*).... So that we may differentiate the person we want from many others, we either add a proper name or point with our finger[32].

Such forms are incomplete in themselves and must be saturated by some other token—either verbal or nonverbal. The author of this treatise clearly recognized that the use of indexicals must be considered in a linguistic context that includes more than just words.

5. Case 3: Relative Grammaticalness

Quintilian introduces one more type of single-word solecism: inappropriately inflected answers to *qu-* questions; for example, *ego* as a reply to the query *quem video?* (1.5.36):

> And also when a response is discrepant with the question, e.g. if you reply *ego* 'I' to *quem video?* 'Whom do I see?'[33].

This example raises some nontrivial difficulties. Normally, to say that *me* rather

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[32] *nam et ipsum* tu *non plene finitum est, nisi in personam direxeris digitum: sic ergo minus quam finita dicenda sunt....sed ut de multis significemus quem quaerimus, aut nomen adicimus aut digitum intendimus.*

[33] *nec non cum responsum ab interrogante dissentit, ut si dicenti 'quem video?' ita occuras 'ego'.* Cf.

than *ego* is the correct form for the response, we would look to some other

inflected word(s) in the sentence. But there are none. We can address the issue by

assuming that a verb—*vides*—is gapped[34]. While *me vides* is unobjectionable, **ego

vides* is certainly solecistic. But whence this ghostly verb? We can't explain why

ego is wrong here (i.e., provide an ἔλεγχος) without referring to the shifted form

vides (note that this example, like the others, involves indexicality). But then we

can't explain the inflected form of the pronoun (something that seems squarely

situated in morphosyntax) without reference to rules that belong to a domain

larger than that of the sentence.

The issue that arises has been termed "relative grammaticalness" (van

Dijk 1977: 44). By itself *me* does not constitute a grammatical sentence; but as the

answer to *quem video?* it is perfectly acceptable, whereas *ego* is unacceptable in

that role. In confronting the phenomenon, one acknowledges the desirability

(necessity?) of grammatical rules that apply to discourses (sentence sequences)[35].

6. Conclusion

Ancient grammarians' debate about the boundary between barbarism and

solecism was not, as von Fritz (1949: 359) described it, merely pedantic. Rather it

involved issues of substance—with which contemporary linguistics remains

concerned.

In dividing grammatical errors into barbarisms and solecisms—and

particularly in caring about exactly where the line is drawn—grammarians

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Taylor (1993: 278).

[34]Cf. Neijt (1980: 102–103).

[35]Alternatively, one may declare that question-answer sequences don't really involve syntax at all and can be explained by recourse to general information processing strategies (Bartsch 1988: 10–11). This answer would hardly have appealed to Apollonius or other ancient grammarians; and it doesn't adequately deal with the fact that inherently syntactic phenomena are involved

demonstrate an interest in the problem of linguistic levels. At one level, there is a small set of speech sounds *(litterae,* γράματτα) that combine into larger units. At a higher level, a large number of words, together with inflectional morphemes, combine according to an entirely different set of rules. This notion corresponds, at least in part, to an awareness of what Hockett called "duality of patterning" (1961: 45–48). Errors at each level are distinct, as they involve the violation of different sets of norms. In the case of barbarism, one produces a sequence of phonemes that doesn't occur in the lexicon; in the case of solecism, one combines the building blocks of the sentence (stems and inflectional morphs) in violation of morphosyntactic regularities.

The binary division is widespread. But some grammarians place a third error alongside barbarism and solecism:

> There are three types of linguistic error: barbarism, solecism, and
> *acyrologia*[36]. (Ps.-Herodian, p. 295 Nauck)

The term ἀκυρολογία denotes the use of a word with the wrong semantic value:

> *Acyrologia* occurs when someone uses an improper word and
> ignores a more appropriate one, e.g. if someone says *runchos* 'snout'
> of a person instead of *prosôpon* 'face'[37]. (Ps.-Herodian, p. 313 Nauck)

Here we have a three-level model:

phonology	morphosyntax	semantics
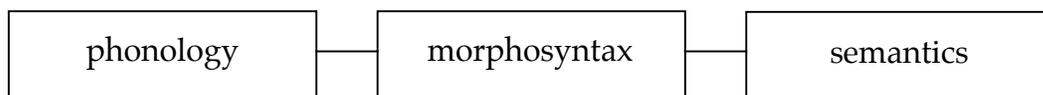
The case studies I have presented in this paper provide evidence that ancient language theorists took the delineation of linguistic levels seriously. In them we see grammarians exploring the limits of syntax: territory that impinges

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(shift from first to second person; case marking of pronoun).

[36] τρεῖς οὖν γίνονται κακίαι περὶ λόγον· σολοικισμός, βαρβαρισμὸς καὶ ἀκυρολογία.

[37] γίνεται δὲ ἀκυρολογία, ὅταν τις ἀκύρῳ φωνῇ χρήσηται παρεὶς τὴν κυριωτέραν, οἷον ἐάν τις

on semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. I began with a naïve, seemingly uncontroversial definition of syntax: "the combination of words into sentences". The case studies seem to call into question the adequacy of that definition. First, words are not enough, if we are to take non-verbal communicative tokens and deixis into account; and, second, the sentence is not an adequate upper limit, if we are to deal with the issues raised by question-answer sequences.

Apollonius and Quintilian represent two voices from what must have been a long-standing controversy. Clearly these matters were much discussed; clearly there was a considerable repertoire of arguments; and clearly there existed serious disagreement between various individuals and schools. The controversy reflects the real difficulty of modeling natural language and of trying to fit its often messy data into discrete partitions. Linguists today face the same difficulties when they ask *Is syntax autonomous?* If we can ask that question, we can hardly fault the ancients for asking *Are there one-word solecisms?*[38]

εἴπῃ ῥύγχος ἀνθρώπου ἀντὶ τοῦ προσώπου.

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