CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The present investigation as presented in the treatise has attempted to meet the two basic aims which have guided the entire work. As an enquiry into the theory and procedures of morphology as developed by Jespersen in his works by undertaking an evaluation of the validity and relevance of Jespersen's theory of morphology in the context of the other aspects of his work and in the context of the present-day trends, the investigation has attempted two things: (i) reinstating Otto Jespersen as an important linguist in the mainstream of present-day linguistics, and (ii) outlining an adequate theory of morphology with special reference to English.

The study is carried out from a variety of perspectives on which Jespersen's theory is based. Jespersen's theory of morphology has been analyzed into its most significant and definable components. Chapter 4 presents a description of these components. The whole appraisal is founded on the set of criteria or parameters as developed and described in Ch. 5. An evaluation is undertaken as desired in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are, therefore, central to the development of the treatise. Chapter 4 is an attempt to crystallize and rigorously define the major components of Jespersen's theory of morphology. This takes care of all that he wrote pertaining to the morphology of English. For the purpose of objective comparison the presentation of this material is made as precise as possible.
Chapter 4 contains the parameters. The parameters embody the theory of morphology as I have visualized and developed it. The forty components of a general and particular type are worked out as aspects of a theory of morphology believed to be adequate and acceptable in the present-day linguistic context. It is after the two inventories of theoretical components are finalised that the critical evaluation and comparative analysis were begun. Chapter 5 as the body of material to be compared, studied and analyzed, is studied against the theoretical details of Ch. 4. In other words the theoretical components of Jespersen's morphology are made to stand against the components of what is expected to be an acceptable theory of morphology.

Chapter 6 and 7 are the fruits of the work. As a linear, non-empirical and non-experimental study the estimate of Jespersen's material may reflect considerable overlaps of aspects as well as inadequacies of treatment which one is compelled to overlook as there are no ways of avoiding this phenomenon. Of the forty units which are expected to cover Jespersen's material twenty are held to be general and twenty specific. The general parameters have appraised. Jespersen's morphology as a 'unified system', and the critical material does not pin-point any one aspect of morphology such as, say, the inflections. All the same an attempt is made to render these as much concreteness as I could.
The more specific parameters which constitute the second part of Chapter 4 have estimated the components of Jespersen's morphology in a one to one correspondence and in terms of most concrete aspects of Jespersen's work without dealing with the theory as a whole. Again the critical evaluation of the material meant degrees of correspondence to or degrees of departure from the particular parameter in question. Attempt is made again to bring down the discussion of these similarities, dissimilarities, merits and drawbacks of the work as objective, specific and concrete as I could. In several instances again the estimate meant a detailed discussion or exposition of the particular component of the theory without direct reference to the parameter since a statement of the particular parameter comes at the beginning of every unit in Chapters 6 and 7.

The appraisal is carried out in terms of a given set of 'critical points' both of merits and drawbacks. Stress is put on the exposition of the relevant material while only a mention is made of the drawbacks pertaining to every unit under discussion. To avoid the artificiality and narrowness of a comparative discussion the method followed in the unit is a listing of the detailed and relevant aspects of the particular component of Jespersen's theory. The statement of the parameter right at the beginning provide the necessary direction for the critical evaluation in every unit.
The present investigation aims at reinstating Jespersen to the mainstream of linguistic studies. The estimate of Jespersen's material on morphology in the treatise highlights in a systematic manner Jespersen's significant contributions to the theory of morphology. By analyzing the components of the theory as developed by Jespersen and by contrasting these components with those of the present-day understanding of morphology we have come to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what significant things Jespersen wrote and the details of his approach to the study of morphology.

Jespersen's theory of morphology provides certain significant directions for the analysis of word-forms. The fundamental problems of morphology which Jespersen tries to tackle are not different from those which the present-day linguist is facing. Jespersen's enquiry is at once oriented to discovering the relations underlying the apparently disordered elements of morphology. Equally important is his attempt to classify and categorise the various aspects of morphology in a corresponding to the intuition of the native speaker of the language. This includes a double relation: the relation of morphology on the one hand to phonology and on the other to syntax. We have seen that morphology provides directions to the understanding of the features of phonology and of syntax. Jespersen's treatment of morphology makes significant contributions to this aspect of morphology: an
area which is fully relevant to the present-day understanding of morphology.

Jespersen's insight of the characteristics of sound alternations have been elaborately dealt with. It is a recurring theme in his morphology. Sound alternation is looked at by Jespersen both as a structural as well as a historical fact. The synchronization which he attempts to achieve in the description of morphology is praiseworthy. Every aspect of morphology is studied from the viewpoint of sound alternations and the stress which Jespersen puts on the fact of sound alternations is clear from this. Another important aspect which receives characteristic treatment in the hands of Jespersen is morphosyntactics. 'The Philosophy', 'The Essentials' and 'Morphology' are full of instances of Jespersen's awareness of the morphosyntactic feature of language. The transformationalist understanding of the relation between morphology and syntax not as two different levels, but as a single level of language has its seeds in Jespersen whose treatment of these two aspects of grammar stands out in several respects from that of his contemporaries.

Jespersen's treatment of the suprasegmental features, especially the area of stress is another important contribution to modern linguistic studies. Jespersen showed clearly that a study of the components of morphology comes as an aid to our understanding of the suprasegmental features, as the morphemes constitute the segmental basis for the suprasegmental elements to function. A study of morphology in this regard cannot be
completed unless the suprasegmental features are adequately covered.

The present investigation in several ways have shown how Jespersen's treatment of the meanings of language are capable of providing new insights into the nature of meanings. 'Morphology' does not deal with meaning as an exclusive and isolated fact. Jespersen's treatment of 'form function and meaning' as inseparable components of language shows how a study of semantics or syntax as water-tight compartments cannot hold water. All aspects of morphology are treated from the three perspectives depending on the adequacy which an aspect call for. While in some cases Jespersen depends on formal or functional criteria for an accounting, in others he is compelled to depend on the criteria of meaning for the accounting of a particular phenomenon.

Insights into the historicity of language is yet another area in which Jespersen's work is remarkable. The role of the history of linguistic forms becomes clearly visible as we read the works of Jespersen. We have seen that Jespersen cherished a deep faith in the historical evolution of languages and the progress which every language undergoes in the course the historical evolution. Historicity, language progress and morphology are for Jespersen three intensely related aspects of language or rather three dimensions of one and the same linguistic process. Jespersen's theory of morphology goes a long way in explaining the role of history in understanding
the nature of human language. Historicity and language progress are oriented to what we have called throughout 'the productive and creative nature' of language.

Writing at a time when the structuralist linguists began to control the trends of the day with a strictly structural description of language, we find Jespersen on the one hand holding several of the structuralist views while on the other stressing the dynamic behavioural aspects of language. Linguistic dynamism is a central fact for him just as it is for the contemporary linguists. Jespersen would have been fascinated by the present-day tendency to seriously investigate into the sociolinguistic dimensions of language. Jespersen always saw language fully in consonance to its relation to society and endeavoured to orient his description of language in that direction. Jespersen's 'Mankind, Nation and Individual' (1925) is the testimony to his deep understanding of the sociolinguistic perspectives of language. Jespersen's notions of 'usage' is in line with the ideas of any present-day linguists for whom the sociolinguistic perspectives have become more and more central to linguistic studies. Here again Jespersen achieves a synchronization between the structural aspects, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives of human language. For the sake of a specialized and so-called scientific understanding of language he is not ready to shut his eyes on those realities of language which have seemed to many theoreticians as conflicting and often contradictory to a structural description of the content of language which is a
form of behaviour. In morphology too he achieved a synchronization between language as a set of structural oriented phenomenon.

Apart from reinstating Otto Jespersen to the mainstream of linguistics, the present treatise aims at outlining an adequate theory of morphology. The two are not separable aims but are intrinsic to the entire work on the morphology of Jespersen. A student of linguistics will find all the major aspects of morphology treated here. Jespersen forms the basis of the work. But the work supersedes a concern for Jespersen and goes beyond his morphology to the morphology of language. It is at this level and in an inherent manner the estimate of Jespersen's theory becomes a means. I think the significance of the present study is rooted in the two aspects of the work in an equal manner: a concern for Jespersen's morphology and a concern for an adequate theory of morphology.

Two facets of the present study help outline a theory of morphology: First of all the parametres as they are developed in Chapter 5 is an outline of an adequate theory of morphology. Each unit of the parametres is expected to be a component of the theory against whose validity Jespersen's material is studied. The nature and intrinsic structure of the parametres as a body of norms are explained in Chapter 2. The appraisal in the form of critical evaluation is undertaken in Chapter 6 and 7. The second facet of the general theory of morphology receives its shape in these chapters. Those who are not interested in
Jespersen as a linguist will find the material on morphology significant. The two facets together constitute what I have called a theory of morphology which holds a degree of validity beyond the person of Jespersen as a morphologist.

Finally one would like to conclude with a word more on Jespersen. Jespersen's theory of morphology and the works on language as a whole is the product of a man for whom the study of language was the vocation. It is the product of vast experience and thorough acquaintance with a number of languages: a quality which is essential for any one who sets out to study language from the viewpoint of a linguist. What is most significant in Jespersen, despite all the drawbacks and limitations is the fact that he is much more relevant and contemporary to present-day thinking on language than many other linguists who succeeded him. The components of his theory of morphology which have been stressed over and again do remain significant and relevant in spite of the changes that have come over in the study of morphology in particular and language in general.