

LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY

(Summary of a Panel Discussion of the Linguistic Society of New Zealand, held on June 16, 1958. Panel members: A.C. Keys, Chairman; K.J. Hollyman; E.A. Sheppard; B.G. Biggs.)

K. What is Linguistic Geography?

H. The simplest definition would be the presentation of linguistic facts in map form, according to the geographic location of their occurrence. The facts presented vary in nature, but have in the main been phonetic, with less attention to morphology and syntax; lexical facts have generally kept pace with the phonetic.

K. What were its beginnings?

H. They are closely linked with the history of the "enquête linguistique", which can now be conveniently followed in S. Pop's \*Bibliographie de l'enquête linguistique.

The earliest "enquête" was done by Johannes Schiltberger who printed the Lord's Prayer in several languages in his Reisen aus München in Europa, Asia und Afrika (1394-1427). The first close relationship of map and "enquête" is seen in Balbi's Atlas ethnographique du globe (1826), containing a polyglot vocabulary of 26 words which was long used as the basis for linguistic questionnaires.

The first true work of linguistic geography was undertaken by Devaux in the Dauphiné in 1870: the inquiry lasted forty years, and the work -- which included an Atlas -- was published (posthumously) only in 1935.

In 1873, 1875 and 1876, the Société des Langues Romanes conducted inquiries on the boundary between the langue d'oïl and the langue d'oc, with a map of the limit areas as one of its aims. The Report was published in 1876.

It was in this year that Wenker, who is usually credited with the first linguistic atlas, began his work.

K. Romance linguists define linguistic geography as the "cartographical study of the vernaculars". The other common term, "dialect geography", mostly used by German scholars, is less suitable but is, in some respects, illustrative. It is to the credit of the Neo-Grammarians that they were early in the field of

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\*An asterisk in this summary indicates that the work so marked figured in an exhibition of linguistic geography material on display at the meeting, and generously loaned by the Library of the University of Auckland.

(K) investigation into dialects, but they were preceded by Ascoli, whose studies were unaccompanied by any theoretical manifesto. Paul Meyer followed hard upon Ascoli.

In the earliest investigations most attention was paid to sounds; morphology came next, with syntax a rare third. An essential step forward was the idea of recording the results of investigations on a map or collection of maps, which enabled a variety of phenomena to be recorded in synoptic pictures, as it were, instead of being scattered through multifarious glossaries.

G. Wenker, who has been mentioned, was trying to prove the existence of dialect boundaries in North and Central Germany. A questionnaire, confined to phonetic peculiarities, was sent to schoolteachers and other "educated" persons. On the basis of the material obtained, one fascicule only, of 23 pages, appeared in Strasburg in 1881.

In 1909 came Weigand's Linguistischer Atlas des dacorumänischen Sprachgebietes, which was begun in 1895 and used the more efficient and reliable method of the "enquête directe", based on a pre-fabricated questionnaire. But in the important feature of the "enquête directe" itself he had been anticipated both by Gilliéron (Petit Atlas phonétique du Valais roman, 1881) and by Roussetot, with the reservation that neither of these used a systematic questionnaire, as did Weigand -- but based on 114 words only.

Only two years after Weigand began to investigate Dacia, Edmont set out on his extensive journeying, armed with a questionnaire that must have been prepared well in advance with his director Gilliéron. The \*Atlas linguistique de la France of Gilliéron and Edmont appeared during the years 1902 to 1910, most of it therefore, before Weigand's atlas of 67 maps appeared in 1909. The questionnaire used ran to more than 1900 words. Not content with sounds only, investigations comprised also morphology, syntax and vocabulary (both traditional words and neologisms). The survey was confined to Gallo-Romance areas in France, the 639 localities chosen therefore excluded Breton and Flemish speaking areas in French territory. The "enquête directe" was entrusted to Edmont, who was not an academically trained philologist, but who possessed a fine and perceptive ear, as was already evident from his descriptive study of his own patois.

What have been the subsequent developments in the Romance and Germanic fields?

H. There were a few other early ones too. In 1886-95, Fischer did a Geographie of the Swabian dialects, with 28 maps; in 1891-99 Zimmerli investigated the German-French frontier in Switzerland; and Weigand too had actually done an earlier work (1887-88) on Rumanian speakers in the Mt. Olympus region of Greece.

(H) In the Romance languages work has been both general and very specific. The year 1910 saw Millardet's Petit atlas linguistique des Landes, and the mapping of the Catalan-Languedoc frontier by Krüger and Salow. Griera's Catalan Atlas, begun in 1912, was completed in 1939. Two pioneering works which served to emphasise the tremendous importance of mapping work for dialectology were those by Bruneau on the Ardennes, and by O. Bloch on the \*Vosges méridionales. The preparation of the \*Walloon atlas was begun in 1924, and publication began in 1953.

Perhaps the greatest of the Romance atlases to date, and one which stressed the new close relationship between linguistics and ethnography was Jaberg and Jud's \*Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz (1919-1940). As the title suggests, the influence of the Wörter und Sachen school was strong, and a \*Supplement to the Atlas has appeared since on peasant crafts, by Scheuermeier, one of the enquêteurs for the Atlas.

Bottiglioni's Corsican Atlas (1928-32) showed a big departure in the form of the questionnaire: the technique of the sentence with a missing word was used, and has aroused considerable discussion. Another Italian Atlas was begun by Ugo Pellis in 1925, and he also covered Sardinia 1933-35.

Navarro began the Spanish Atlas in 1930, and one of Andorra by Griera is due to appear shortly.

The first Rumanian Atlas was produced by Puscariu (1922-37). The work was continued by S. Pop (1927-30), now head of the Centre International de Dialectologie in Louvain. Work is under way revising and extending past work in Rumania.

Since the war, the first atlases of the Nouvel Atlas linguistique de la France have appeared. This project, begun about 1936 under the direction of A. Dauzat, aims at a series of regional atlases. Those out so far are some volumes of those devoted to the \*Lyonnais (Gardette), \*Gascony (Seguy), and the \*Massif Central (Nauton). Several others must be nearing completion. The ethnographical side is a notable feature of these atlases. There is not a standard questionnaire for each region, as the enquêteurs have taken full account of local features and shaped their lists in the light of regional characteristics.

In Germany, work seems to have been throughout a continuation of Wrede's Deutsche Dialektgeographie (1900-08), publication of which began in 1908. Work is being directed from the University of Marburg. An atlas of Dutch dialects was prepared 1920-26, appearing in 1932, and a Swiss-German one in 1937. A \*Flemish Atlas, covering Flemish-speaking areas in both Belgium and France, has appeared; it was directed by W. Péc. An atlas of Alsatian dialects is under way.

K. What has happened with English?

S. (discussed the work of Diehl and Orton in England, and their \*Questionnaire in particular; also work in the U.S.A. such as Kurath's \*Word Geography of the Eastern United States.)

K. Have there been any similar developments in Polynesia?

B. Little dialect geography as such has been done in Polynesia, where the emphasis has been on lexical and, to some extent, phonological comparison. Though both linguistic geography and comparative linguistics are primarily concerned with the interrelationships of languages, the emphasis in the former case is on discovering differences, and in the latter case on discovering sames.

Edward Tregear collated a great deal of lexical material in his Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary (Wellington, 1891), which is still the most valuable single source for Polynesian cognates. Unfortunately the source material used was collected by untrained workers, and Tregear himself did not have sufficient linguistic training either to be fully aware of its deficiencies, or to attempt such correction as might have been possible. Churchill's<sup>1</sup> extensive works on Polynesia and Melanesia suffer from the same disadvantages, and in addition the author's concern with elaborate and untenable migration theories resulted in further distortion of the linguistic data.

Under the auspices of the Tri-Institutional Programme for Pacific Studies, G.W. Grace, a graduate of Columbia University, has made extensive comparisons of available lists of basic vocabulary. To date he has published<sup>2</sup> a tentative grouping of the Malayo-Polynesian languages of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

S.H. Elbert<sup>3</sup>, of the University of Hawaii has made a glotto-chronological study of the languages of Polynesia, confirming the linguistic division in an eastern and a western group, and suggesting a time depth of about 2,000 years for this split. The close interrelationships of the languages of Eastern Polynesia are confirmed by this study, which is the first to be made with phonemic or near phonemic data.

Donald Marshall of Harvard University has also done an unpublished glotto-chronological study of the languages of

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1. Especially The Polynesian Wanderings, Washington, 1911.
  2. Subgrouping of Malayo-Polynesian: a report of tentative findings, in the American Anthropologist 57 (1955), 337-9.
  3. Internal Relationships of Polynesian Languages and Dialects, in the Southwest Journal of Anthropology 9 (1953), 154-80.

(B) Polynasia.

In New Zealand a preliminary study of Maori dialects has been started. A list of several hundred words is being used and about one hundred Maori communities are being visited. To date clear east-west differences have been noted. Difficulty is being encountered in finding informants who have lived all their lives in one locality. It is expected that the study will confirm traditional accounts of tribal migrations within New Zealand. It is also within the bounds of possibility that dialect study within New Zealand will help to determine the locality, or localities from which the ancestors of the Maori migrated to New Zealand.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE

(Summary of a paper read to the Linguistic Society of New Zealand on August 11th, 1958.)

P.D. Hanan

The talk delivered under this title consisted of remarks on three topics: Chinese grammar, the system of tones in Chinese, and the Chinese character script. In those notes, the last two topics are omitted. It seemed pointless to describe the tones in print, and the character script might have been difficult to reproduce.

'Chinese' may of course mean many things. These notes concern what is known as putonghua, the language of the great majority of Chinese. Within this language, which is known variously in English as Standard Chinese, Mandarin, or National Language (Kuo-yü), the dialect of Peking is recognised as the standard.

The notation is that of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. Tones are not marked.

### Lack of inflection in Chinese.

The lack of inflection in Chinese has led people to ask whether Chinese has a grammar at all. Chinese is one of the extreme examples among isolating languages. That is to say, from the mere form of a word, one cannot, in Chinese, deduce its case, gender, mood, voice, or number. Some of these conceptions and relationships do not apply in Chinese. Such that do, as well as others which do not apply in languages most of us are familiar with, are denoted, where necessary, in one of two ways:

- 1) By the addition to the sentence of an appropriate word or words. 'Word' is rather vague here; at the most it will mean a fully syntactic word, at the least it will mean a syllable 'bound' to another word. In the latter case, such words approximate to, but are not identical with, inflections in languages such as Latin.

E.g. Ta you ma - 'he has some horses' or 'he has a horse' (ma = horse)

Shu zai nar - 'the books are there' or 'the book is there'  
(shu = book)

Wo chu kan ta - 'I am going (i.e. will go) to see him' or  
'I am going (i.e. am on my way) to see him' or  
'I went etc.' (wo=I, chu=go, kan=see,  
ta=he or him).

If the context does not make clear which of the above meanings is the

right one, some specifying word must be used, e.g. in the first two examples, some such specifying word as 'a', 'some', 'the three' etc. must be used. In the third example, some such word as 'yesterday', 'when I was in Shanghai', 'in the act of', must be used.

- 2) by position in the sentence. From the above examples, for instance, one can deduce, as in their English equivalents, that ta, shu and wo are the subjects of their verbs. In this kind of sentence, the subject will precede its verb, while the object (ma, nar, ta) will follow it. Again, since ma and shu are not otherwise specified, ma is to be taken as indefinite ('a', 'some') because it follows the verb, while shu, because it precedes the verb, is to be taken as definite ('the').

### Parts of speech in Chinese.

It is possible to establish what parts of speech there are in Chinese by utilising the two features described above. From what kind of word a given word "goes with", we can determine the class it belongs to. Let us take the case of a class for which in English we have no equivalent, the class of Measures, or Classifiers:

<u>yi zhang zhi</u>	'a/one sheet of paper'
<u>yi zhi bi</u>	'a/one pen'
<u>san zhi bi</u>	'three pens'
<u>si bei shui</u>	'four glasses of water'
<u>yi ge ren</u>	'a/one person'
<u>yi pi ma</u>	'a/one horse'
<u>san ben shu</u>	'three books'

In the above examples there are three classes of words, Numerals (yi, san, si), Measures (zhang, zhi, bei, ge, pi, and ben), and Nouns (zhi, bi, shui, ren, ma and shu). For each of these classes, one of its principal properties is that it participates in the order Numeral-plus-Measure-plus-Noun. Assuming the existence of a class of Numerals, one could, from a sufficiently large number of examples like the above, establish first a class of Measures, and then a class of Nouns. By using similar criteria, for example by finding what words may be followed by the suffixes le or zhi, or by finding what words may be preceded by the negatives bu or mei, or by the word hen 'very', the various other classes can be established.

### The principal classes, or parts of speech.

Abbreviations: Dem = demonstrative, M = measure, N = noun, V = verb, SV = stative verb or adjective, C = coverb, A = adverb, FA = fixed adverb, MA = movable adverb, VO = verb-plus-object compound, PV = postverb, T = timeword, P = placeword, PN = pronoun, RC = resultative compound, Num = numeral, OP = ordinal prefix.

1. Demonstrative;

E.g. zhe 'this', na 'that'. Participates in order Dem+M+N, e.g. na zhang zhi 'that sheet of paper'. Also in order Dem+Num+M+N, e.g. zhe san zhang zhi 'those three sheets of paper'. May precede shi 'is', as its subject, na shi yi zhang zhi 'that is a sheet of paper'.

2. Ordinal prefix:

E.g. di. OP+Num+M+N, as di yi ge ren 'the first person'.

3. Numeral:

As described above. E.g. Num+M+N, san ben shu etc.

4. Measure:

E.g. zhang, measure for zhuozi 'table', and for zhi 'paper' in sense of a 'sheet'; zhi, measure for bi 'pen' etc.; ben, measure for shu 'book'; ge, measure for the majority of nouns that can be used with numerals; pi, measure for ma 'horse'. Measures may be usefully divided into four groups:

- a) ordinary measures. This is the Measure for which we have no equivalent in English. Ge, the commonest measure, is of this group, and can be used, at a pinch, for almost any of the others. Other measures can be used only with certain nouns, e.g. the measure ba, which conveys the suggestion of 'grip, grasp', and is also a noun meaning a 'handle', is the measure for words like 'scissors', 'knife', and 'chair (with a back)'. The measure zhang 'stretch, sheet, expanse' is the measure for the word which means 'table'. A certain amount of consistency can thus be discerned, but in the last resort, the measure must be learned with its noun.
- b) partitive measures. E.g. zhang in yi zhang zhi 'a sheet of paper', bei in yi bei shui 'a glass of water'.
- c) autonomous measures. These are certain words which in their meaning already imply a division of time or space. They participate in the order Num+M, or Dem+M, or Dem+Num+M. That is, they function as other measures, except that they have no noun following them. E.g. san tian 'three days', si sheng 'four provinces', wu li 'five miles'.
- d) measures which limit the meaning of a verb. Like the measures described under (c), these are not followed by a noun. E.g. shua is the verb 'to brush'; shua yi xia means 'give (it) a brush'. Xia, a word which in other functions means 'to go down', is here a measure. Its effect is to restrict the meaning of the verb in the same way as the verb 'brush' is restricted in 'give it a brush'; e.g. zou is 'to walk', zou yi tang is 'to have a walk, go for a walk'. A reduplicated verb is a special case of this; zou yi zou, literally 'to walk a walk', also means 'to have a walk'.



5. Noun:

Functions in ways described above, e.g. is virtually never found immediately after a numeral or a demonstrative. A measure almost always precedes it in these cases. When otherwise unspecified, as we say above, is taken to be definite when it precedes the verb in its clause, and indefinite when it follows the verb.

6. Adverb:

Of two kinds, monosyllabic and limited to the position immediately before the verb, and polysyllabic and allowed in any position provided it is before the verb. Dou 'all' is an example of a so-called Fixed Adverb, that is, of the former kind; e.g. tamen dou laile 'they have all come' (tamen = they, lai = come, le is a verb suffix). In the sentence xianzai ta bu zai nar 'now he is not there', xianzai 'now' is an example of the latter kind, that is, of a so-called Movable Adverb. In this case it even precedes the subject. Bu 'not' is a Fixed Adverb.

7. Verb:

May be followed by various complements or suffixes, of which the commonest are le, which indicates completed action, and zhi, which indicates continued action. Some other verbs may on occasion function as complements, e.g. wan 'to finish', when used as a complement, means 'finished doing such-and-such'; xie 'to write', xiowanle (xie + wan + le) is 'finished writing'.

A verb is negated by preceding it with one of the negatives bu or mei, which are Fixed Adverbs.

As has been implied above a verb has no special forms for voice or mood. The context will determine whether a verb is to be taken in an active or a passive meaning.

Chinese verbs have no tense. The same form of the verb may imply past, present or future time. When it is necessary to be explicit that something has already happened, the verb suffix le may be used. Similarly if it is necessary to affirm that a certain thing did happen on a previous occasion, or has happened at least once, the verb suffix guo may be used; e.g. ta chuguo Zhong-guo 'he has been to China' (chu = 'go', Zhong-guo = China). These cannot be considered as tense-forms, for they are not invariably used whenever the verb is in the past. They are used only when it is necessary to be explicit about these aspects of tense.

8. Stative Verb:

Corresponds often to the adjective in English. It needs no verb 'to be' however, when used predicatively; e.g. na ben shu hao 'that book is good (better)'. A stative verb may modify a noun or a verb. The modifying relationship is usually shown by the use of the particle de, e.g. yi zhi hen hao de bi 'a very good pen' (hen = very). A stative verb may be followed by the verb suffix le, but in

this case it indicates not completed action, but the onset of the state expressed by the verb's meaning; e.g. bing- 'be ill', but bingle = 'got ill, get ill'.

#### 9. Coverb:

A coverb participates in the order (Subject) plus Coverb plus Coverb's object plus Main verb (plus Main verb's object or complement); e.g. zai zhuozi-shang xie zi (literally, 'be on the table-top write characters') 'write on the table'; zai 'to be in, on, at (a place)', is here a coverb, zhuozi-shang is the object of zai; zi 'character(s)' is the object of the main verb xie 'to write'.

As in the above example, the coverb often translates a preposition in English, e.g. ta yong bi xie zi 'he writes with a pen' (yong= use).

#### 10. Postverb:

A few verbs, called postverbs, follow the main verb, and participate in the order, main verb plus postverb plus postverb's object; e.g. 'gei' is in one function a full verb meaning 'to give'. It may however be used as a postverb after such a verb as jie 'to lend' or 'to borrow'. E.g. jie gei ta 'lend to him'.

#### 11. Verb Object Compound:

Verb object compounds are a compound composed of verb plus generalized object, e.g. chi fan (lit. 'eat food') 'to eat'. They are usually to be translated by a single intransitive verb in English. The object may be modified. Nian shu 'to study' (lit. 'to read books'); 'to study for three years' is nian san nian shu (lit. 'to read three years books').

#### 12. Resultative Compound:

A compound composed of verb plus verbal complement, of which the complement is the result of the action of the verb; e.g. kanjian 'to see' is composed of kan 'to look at' plus jian 'to perceive'. The potential forms of such verbs are formed by inserting bù 'not' or de 'able' between the verb and its complement; kan-de-jian 'able to see', kan-bu-jian 'unable to see'.

#### 13. Timewords and Placewords:

Timewords and placewords are like nouns in that they can be used as subject or object, but unlike nouns, they cannot follow a measure. Their position in the sentence or clause is like that of movable adverbs, they may precede or follow the subject, but they must come somewhere before the main verb; e.g. Ta mingtian lai or Mingtian ta lai 'he is coming tomorrow' (mingtian=tomorrow).

#### 14. Pronouns:

Like nouns, except that they never, of course, follow a measure.

### Subordination in Chinese.

Generally speaking, the modifier precedes the modified in Chinese; e.g. hen hao de shu 'very good book'; Zhong-guo de tochan 'China's special-product, a special product of China'. This applies also to phrases and even clauses; e.g. zuotian lai kan wo de ren (lit. 'the yesterday come see me de man') 'the man who came to see me yesterday'. This relationship is frequently shown by de.

### Word Order in Chinese.

The above notes have mostly concerned the question of word order. It should not be imagined, however, that the order of a Chinese sentence is always Subject-Verb-Object. To take merely one exception, in many cases the object is placed before the subject. It then becomes the topic of the sentence; e.g. na ben shu wo mei kanguo 'I haven't read that book' (that book I have not read).

### The Complex Sentence in Chinese.

The long complex English sentence has no precise equivalent in Chinese. The clauses in a Chinese sentence usually have a less explicit relationship than those in an English sentence.

It has been said that there are no true conjunctions in Chinese. Chinese conjunctions are in form Movable Adverbs and the relationship between clauses is usually shown by means of such words, or pairs of words; e.g. sweiran .... dansh, 'although'; jioush (MA) .... ye (FA), 'even if'; yinwei .... suoyi, 'because'; yaosh, 'if'; jiran, 'since'; etc.

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

(Summary of a paper read to the Linguistic Society of New Zealand on  
September 22nd, 1958.)

K.J. Hollyman.

The basic concepts of linguistics have tended to follow those of other sciences. In the 19th century, when the classification of species and the study of their evolution dominated the natural sciences, linguistics was concerned with the parallel themes of comparison and genetic relationship. With the change in emphasis towards structure and function, apparent in a natural science like biology, and also in other fields such as sociology, linguistics also turned to structural and descriptive study. Despite the many trends such a division must ignore, it therefore seems reasonable to separate modern linguistic history into two parts: the naturalist period (19th century), and the structuralist period (20th century).

I. The naturalist period saw the foundation of the historical-comparative method. Earlier work by Wm. Jones (1786) and Fr. von Schlegel (1808) was carried through by Franz Bopp in 1816 with a comparison of verb conjugation in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Persian and German; and the foundation work for Indo-European relationships was his Vergleichende Grammatik (1833-49), based on a comparison of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Gothic, German and Old Slav. The same demonstration was made independently by Rask, a Dane, on the basis of Germanic, Greek, Latin, and Balto-Slav. The corner-stone of the comparative method was the principle of the constancy of phonetic correspondences, and although at times a naïve evolutionism (Schleicher) and unjustified conclusions about the nature of primitive Aryan society (Pictet) produced confusion, the achievements were striking.

Later on, the comparative method was applied to living languages of the Indo-European group: Germanic, Romance, Slav. The leaders here were Osthoff and Brugmann, who may be considered the founders of the school of Junggrammatiker or Neo-Grammarians whose views on the constancy of phonetic change were so rigid that a swing away from them was not surprising. Given the immutability of phonetic laws, all exceptions -- and they were legion -- had to be explained on the basis of analogical influences. Etymological dictionaries were studded with hypothetical forms and postulated influences. Even a more temperate view, such as that put forward by J. Vendryes in 1902,\* favouring the term "tendencies"

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\* Réflexions sur les lois phonétiques, in Mélanges Meillet, 1902; reprinted in Choix d'études linguistiques et celtiques, 1952.

rather than "laws", and dividing these into those of general scope, affecting all languages (dissimilation, metathesis, etc.), and those particular to individual languages, could not prevent the development of an entirely new approach.

II. The founder of the structural approach, despite the fact that men like Baudouin de Courtenay and Reichling preceded him, was undoubtedly the Swiss Ferdinand de Saussure. An Indo-Europeanist of considerable distinction, Saussure gave a series of lectures on General Linguistics between 1906 and 1911 from which his students in 1916 produced a reasonably coherent doctrine in the Cours de linguistique générale. The key contribution of Saussure was his insistence on the need to study a state of language and its systematic functioning at a given time. This synchronic approach was put forward as rigidly opposed to the traditional historical or diachronic approach. Saussure favoured a dichotomic approach: paralleling this opposition, he also opposed langue (the system, socially imposed on the speaker) to parole (the individual's use of the system), and signifiant (acoustic image of word) to signifié (sense borne by the signifiant).

The influence of Durkheim's sociology is strong in Saussure, as it is in the work of Meillet, founder of the French school, which has consistently had a noticeable sociological emphasis. Psychological influences stem mainly from Wundt, and may be seen in direct followers of Saussure such as Séchehaye and Bally. Formalist tendencies in Saussure have been greatly developed by Hjelmslev in his "glossematic" approach which is probably the oldest contender for the title of "panchronic". There has grown up, in fact, since Saussure, a host of linguistic schools including, apart from those mentioned, functionalists (Prague), neolinguists (Italy), idealists (Germany: Vossler), structuralists (U.S.A.), and so on. The most important development has undoubtedly been the development of a functionalist phonetics (phonologie, phonemics) by Trubetsky and the Prague school. One may well say, in fact, that the greatest achievements of the structural approach have to date been in this field, and that as yet its application to morphology, syntax and vocabulary has hardly begun, or at least has yet to produce convincing results.

In the meantime, various schools have made considerable modifications of certain fundamentals of Saussurean doctrine. In Europe, the synchronic-diachronic dichotomy is no longer accepted as entirely valid; subdivision of langue and parole into langue-discours-parole, and so on, seems to be culminating in a reframing of the concept into something like structure-usage.

Linguistics today is far more complicated than it was in the 19th century. Leaving aside the problem of differing schools and theories,

we may divide modern linguistic research into three major approaches, in ascending order of complexity:

1. Descriptive Linguistics,\* covering the synchronic or diachronic study of individual languages;
2. Comparative Linguistics, covering the synchronic or diachronic comparison of languages; the 19th century genetic approach is one branch of diachronic comparative linguistics;
3. General Linguistics, which attempts to frame the general laws governing language, whether they apply synchronically, diachronically or panchronically.

General Linguistics is in a sense the descendant of the "Grammaire générale" of the 17th and 18th centuries. The first chair in General Linguistics was held by Maurice Grammont, whose Dissimilation consonantique (1895) established the division of phonetic laws into general and particular mentioned above.

The most recent development arises from the application to linguistics of the methods of communications engineers. The mathematical formulae of the theory of information are used as the basis for statistical studies. The major achievement to date is in the construction of translating machines. As these can use only word-form and word-order in determining sense for translation purposes, the approach has close similarities with the structural methods used by American linguists, based on studies of the substitution possibilities of linguistic forms, and their distribution, without reference to meaning.

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\* "Descriptive" often used as a synonym for "synchronic", is here used in a non-technical sense.

AMERICAN LINGUISTICS TODAY

(Summary of a paper read to the Linguistic Society  
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Bruce Biggs

The distinctively American approach to linguistics has developed from the study of unfamiliar spoken languages. It is, in part, the outcome of problems raised by such study. Although most linguistic work being done in America today is descriptive and synchronic there are interesting marginal fields of research, involving scholars from other fields, and a good deal of co-operation between linguists, mathematicians, psychologists, communications engineers and so on.

In articulatory phonetics K.L. Pike's work has provided for descriptions of sounds not allowed for in such systems of description as, for instance, the International Phonetic Alphabet. Since 1943 the prospects for acoustic, rather than articulatory descriptions of speech sounds, are much enhanced by the developments in acoustic physics, and communications engineering. Linguists are using such instruments as the sound spectrograph to decide the distinctive sound features crucial to phonemic differentiation in specific languages.

Research into machine translation is fostered by government funds, and there seems to be no reason to doubt the ultimate success of research in this field. This success however is dependent upon complete descriptions, based on formal features, for languages concerned.

The interrelationships between language and culture are the subject of current co-operation between linguists and psychologists and anthropologists. Much of the interest in such research has been aroused by B.L. Whorf's provocative thesis that the structure of the language one uses influences one's perception and understanding of the real world.

In the field of historical and comparative linguistics Morris Swadesh has propounded the theory that certain areas of vocabulary, known as the basic vocabulary, tend to change at a slow and fairly uniform rate for all languages, at all times. This has interested the culture historians and anthropologists and they rather than straight linguists have shown the greatest interest. Polynesian languages and other branches of Malayo-Polynesian are being studied from this point of view. Again, however, successful research will depend upon adequate source material to be provided in most cases by descriptive linguists.

Martinet, a French scholar recently in America, is particularly concerned with the application of the phonemic approach to historical linguistics, and he is also active in studying the dynamics of sound change, a field left severely alone by some key figures in American linguistics, for example, Bloomfield himself.

Greenberg, at Columbia University, is interested in the general statement of problems, techniques, and principles of historical linguistics. He supports strongly the significance of vocabulary as against grammatical features in determining language interrelationships, and maintains that the question of genetic versus other types of relationship is always meaningful, thus denying the concept of a mixed language.

In spite of this apparent diversity there is a common area of theory and principle from which most American linguists work. The Americanist sees linguistics as divided fairly clearly into two main branches, the descriptive and synchronic, and the historical. They are complementary, not antagonistic fields, but the methodological importance of distinguishing between them is generally recognised.

The formal, rather than the semantic criterion for distinguishing categories in language is the cardinal principle of modern linguistics. At least as fundamental is the recognition that objectively different sounds may be linguistically the same—this is the phonemic principle.

Recent developments suggest that distinctive features, rather than the bundles of sound we call phonemes, are crucial in the linguistic codes of all languages. If this is so it is probable that all languages are elaborate codes built up from fewer than twenty different signals.

In analysing a language the descriptivist usually distinguishes clearly between several levels of analysis, almost always between phonemics (the significant sounds), and morphemics (the smallest meaningful sequence of phonemes, and their arrangements in some such unit as the word;) and usually between morphemics and syntax (the arrangements of words within larger units).

The techniques and principles of phonemics may fairly claim to be scientific, in that the results obtained by them are susceptible to testing, and in that different linguists will come up with analyses which are comparable, if not identical. Morphemics is less well developed, but a great amount of work has been done with interesting results, in the past thirty years. Especially interesting is the work of C.F. Voegelin and his students who, following an earlier model set by the anthropologist and linguist Franz Boas, express morphological arrangement as quasi-mathematical formulae. The problem of syntactical statements has not been solved, and many linguists at this point will abandon formal for semantic criteria.



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| Bloomfield, Leonard. | <u>Language.</u>                       |
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| Hockett, C.F.        | <u>A Course in Modern Linguistics.</u> |

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|------------------------|--|
| Harris, Zellig S.      | <u>Methods in Structural Linguistics.</u><br>(572.8, H.31). A difficult book by<br>an extreme structuralist. |
| Joos, M.               | <u>Readings in Linguistics.</u> (408.2, J.81)<br>Reprints of important articles.                             |
| Gleason, H.A.          | <u>An Introduction to Descriptive<br/>Linguistics.</u>   |
| Greenberg, J.H.        | <u>Essays in Linguistics.</u>  |
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| Piko, K.L.             | <u>Phonemics.</u>  |
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| Whorf, B.L.    | <u>Language, Thought, and Reality.</u>    |

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BURNS'S LANGUAGE: A CONDENSED SUMMARY OF A TALK  
GIVEN TO THE LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

by

Thomas Crawford

[At the beginning of my talk, I gave a brief account of the Scottish Regional Dialects at the present time, and of their history. Cyclo-styled sheets were issued, containing examples of Burns's language at all levels: English English, Scots English, General Scottish, Special Vocabularies, and Regional Dialect proper.]

In approaching Burns's poems from a linguistic point of view, it is necessary to put aside such purely literary considerations as the "sound values" of the verse, or the poet's preference for verbs of motion, simple similes, and the personification of abstract ideas. Instead of examining these matters, the linguist must concentrate on such questions as the total size of Burns's vocabulary; the relative proportions of the Scots and English sides of his vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation (so far as these can be ascertained); the significance to be ascribed to Burns's use of Scots and English, sometimes in different poems and sometimes in the course of a single poem; and the extent to which Burns's poetic vocabulary was a specifically Ayrshire or South-Western one.

Burns's poetic vocabulary consists of some 11,400 words<sup>(1)</sup>, of which roughly 2,000 are specifically Scots words<sup>(2)</sup>, as opposed to easily recognizable phonetic variants of Standard literary words (e.g. unlawfu' for unlawful). From a purely quantitative point of view this means that Burns had a larger poetic vocabulary than Milton's 8,000 words - but, as might be expected, it is not nearly so large as Shakespeare's, which has been variously estimated at between 15,000 and 25,000 words<sup>(3)</sup>. If, however, we were to include Milton's prose works in our estimate of his total vocabulary, the final number would obviously be much greater than 8,000. The same would apply to Burns's vocabulary too, though to a lesser extent. The 712 pages of his correspondence (all, except for one letter, and a few facetious passages and phrases scattered throughout the correspondence,

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1. J.B. Reid, Complete Concordance to the Poems and Songs of Robert Burns, Glasgow 1889, Preface.
  2. This is the approximate number of words glossed in The Poetry of Robert Burns, edd. W.E. Henley and T.F. Henderson, 4 vols., Edinburgh 1896-7, Vol.IV, pp.115-176.
  3. The estimate that Shakespeare used 15,000 words and Milton 8,000 was made by Marsh in the 19th century. And cp O. Jespersen, Growth and Structure of the English Language, Oxford 1948, p.199.

written in standard literary English) would almost certainly increase his known vocabulary to at least 14,000 words - and diminish the proportion which distinctively Scottish words bear to the whole.

It is wrong to over-estimate the degree of conflict in Burns's mind between Scots and English linguistic forms. Literary Standard English came as naturally to him as vernacular Scots, and he recognized the ability to modulate into Standard as a source of poetical strength. In the words of a contemporary witness:

When I pointed out some evident traces of poetical imitation in his verses, privately, he readily acknowledged his obligations, and even admitted the advantages he enjoyed in poetic composition from the copia verborum, the command of phraseology, which the knowledge and use of the English and Scottish dialects afforded him....(4)

Burns's poems can be arranged in series according to the number of specifically Scottish linguistic features which they contain. First, there are poems written in what might be called "English English" - i.e., works which on the printed page do not appear to differ from Southern English pieces written in mid-eighteenth century Literary Standard, with its set forms (e.g., heroic couplet, formal ode) and characteristic poetic diction. Examples are the "Address to Edinburgh" and "It was the charming month of May." It must be remembered that as read aloud by a Scot even poems of this first group would sound differently from the same poems read by an Englishman, though these phonetic variations are not sufficient to make any great alteration in total meaning.

Secondly, there are the poems written wholly in "Scots English" or "Anglo Scots." This is a form of English which comes perfectly easily to Burns, and into which he modulates when he begins in Scots and then goes on to make a general or rhetorical statement arising out of a situation first described in the vernacular. Examples are: "To a Mouse," st. II; "The Cotter's Saturday Night," sts. XIV-XXI; and the following passage from "Tam o' Shanter":

But Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or like the snow, falls in the river,  
A moment white - then melts for ever;  
Or like the borealis race,  
That flit ere you can point their place;  
Or like the rainbow's lovely form  
Evanishing amid the storm.

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4. R. Anderson to J. Currie, 28 Sep. 1799; printed in Burns Chronicle 1925, p.12.

Scots English, in contrast to English English, must be read aloud by a Scot for its full emotional meaning to become apparent. Only on the printed page, and when considered in isolation from their context, do the eight lines just quoted seem "English" in the way that Pope and Shakespeare are English; when read as part of a larger whole, they are just as Scottish as anything else in "Tam o' Shanter." True, contact clauses such as "falls in the river" are not specifically Northern features; but they are very common in colloquial Scots, and are found elsewhere in Burns. "River" and "ever" are examples not of assonance but of rhyme; to this day, Scots pronounce "ever" as [ɪvər]; and the apparently poetic "evanishing" is perhaps more Scots than English<sup>(5)</sup>.

Thirdly, Burns may often use a Scottish vernacular literary language, or scripta, which is not the language of any particular area (i.e., not a regional dialect), but rather "General Scottish" - with its own technical vocabularies<sup>(6)</sup>, archaisms, proverbs, idioms and colloquialisms, and understood all over Southern, Central and Eastern Scotland. Though Burns always reserved the right to modulate into either Scots English or regional dialect if it suited his purpose, many of his best poems draw on that General Scottish poetic diction which he inherited from Robert Fergusson and Allan Ramsay. I cannot, however, agree with Professor F.B. Snyder when he goes so far as to say that "the dialect of the poems was not the natural language of the poet, but was made to appear so by the skill with which [he] handled it."<sup>(7)</sup>

Fourthly, Burns sometimes draws on regional dialect proper - i.e., on the speech of Ayrshire and the South West, as distinct from that of Lowland Scotland as a whole. This is apparent only in vocabulary, in words which appear to have a specifically west of Scotland provenance, e.g., crunt, a blow; daimen, odd, scarce; kiaugh, trouble; messan, cur, mongrel; raucle, strong, bitter; snirtle, snigger; tawie, tractable; thummart,

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5. The word was used by King James VI in Basilicon Doron (1603), p.104, and elsewhere in his writings; most of the earlier examples of "evanish" in the N.E.D. are from Scottish authors; there are additional citations in the Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue; and in Burns's own century, Allan Ramsay used it in The Gentle Shepherd.
  6. Cp. "Tam Samson's Elegy" for Burns's use of the technical vocabulary of the sport of curling; "Willie Wastle" for terms derived from the weaving trade; and "The Inventory" for farming vocabulary.
  7. In "A Note on Burns's Language" in Modern Language Notes, XLIII (1928), 518.

poecat; wiel, eddy; wintle, stagger, wriggle; winze, curse<sup>(8)</sup>. But these South-Western words form only a minute fraction of the 2,000 or so specifically Scots words in Burns's poetical vocabulary, and even a poem where the speaker is an Ayrshire farmer uses the general Scottish agricultural vocabulary rather than words which are confined to the West alone<sup>(9)</sup>.

In assessing the value of Burns's works as evidence, the linguist should remember that, like all great writers, Burns was especially sensitive to the language of those around him. His poems draw on the speech habits of many social groups in eighteenth-century rural Scotland - fanatical Calvinists, moderate Church reformers, musicians, quack doctors, bawdy young men ("fornicator loons"), husband-hunting girls, sportsmen, Freemasons, farmers, weavers, tinkers and wandering beggars. Since the ends Burns proposes are aesthetic ones, Burns's language is not in the first instance deployed for documentary purposes, but is a careful selection of words and idioms that tends, except in special circumstances, to exclude the local and the parochial. Although it borrows many words and phrases from earlier Scottish vernacular poets, Burns's language is seldom the artificial creation that Professor Snyder has made it out to be<sup>(10)</sup>. In some poems, such as "Death and Dr Hornbook," and "In simmer, when the hay was mawn," Burns comes so close to the idioms, proverbs and the intonation-patterns of his native district that one cannot but feel: "Here is no sleight-of-hand; this is how men and women actually talked."<sup>(11)</sup>

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8. D. Murison, "The Language of Burns" in Burns Chronicle 1950, pp.39-47. It is, of course, possible that one of the results of the present survey of Scottish dialects, designed to culminate in a Scottish Linguistic Atlas, will be to prove that some of the words listed here have a wider distribution than is at present believed.
9. See "The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie, on giving her the accustomed Ripp of Corn to Hansel in the New-Year." Of the words in this poem for which entries exist in the volumes of the Scottish National Dictionary that have so far appeared (A - I), only one (donsie, ill-tempered, unmanageable) has a specifically South-Western sense; but in other senses the same word is known all over Scotland, and even in some American dialects.
10. See above, n.7.
11. The ultimate basis of this judgment is of course a subjective one, but it can to a certain extent be corroborated from the intonation-patterns and idioms of modern Scots, and justified by comparison with Burns's treatment of such special languages as can be tested from other sources - e.g. the speech of the "Saints" in "Holy Willie's Prayer," which can be placed beside a large number of Calvinist sermons and theological works containing similar turns of phrase. If it can be proved that Burns did stick closely to the actual speech of Calvinist ministers and Elders, it would seem probable that he was at least as accurate in his reproduction of the give-and-take of small town conversation in "Death and Dr Hornbook."