

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.