

INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF
LINGUISTICS

WILLIAM BRIGHT

Editor in Chief

Volume 2

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1992

1830). But Jones's statement was the start of a new era of genetic or historical/comparative linguistics, which profited from the richness of both the Sanskrit language and the Indian grammatical tradition. [See also article on Ancient India above.]

The new era was characterized by a number of drastic changes: the decline of general grammar, as well as of philosophy of language; a strong interest in philological research and a sensitivity to language change; and above all, a change in the organization of grammatical and linguistic research. The professionalization of linguistics—first as comparative philology, then as comparative grammar and general linguistics—was most efficiently realized in Germany, which became the principal home of historical/comparative linguistics, eclipsing France and England. In retrospect, it seems that there was a certain awareness of this turning-point; the first bird's-eye views of the history of linguistics date from the period 1796–1816 (F. Thurot, 1796; D. Thiébaud, 1802; J.-D. Lanjuinais, 1816).

PIERRE SWIGGERS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AARSLEFF, HANS. 1967. *The study of language in England, 1780–1860*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- CHEVALIER, JEAN-CLAUDE. 1968. *Histoire de la syntaxe: Naissance de la notion de complément dans la grammaire française (1530–1750)*. Geneva: Droz.
- DROIXHE, DANIEL. 1978. *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire, 1600–1800: Rationalisme et révolutions positivistes*. (Langue et cultures, 10.) Geneva: Droz.
- HANZELI, VICTOR E. 1969. *Missionary linguistics in New France: A study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century descriptions of American Indian languages*. (Janua linguarum, Series maior, 29.) The Hague: Mouton.
- HOWELL, WILBUR S. 1956. *Logic and rhetoric in England, 1500–1700*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- KNOWLSON, JAMES. 1975. *Universal language schemes in England and France, 1600–1800*. (University of Toronto Romance series, 29.) Toronto.
- MICHAEL, IAN. 1970. *English grammatical categories and the tradition to 1800*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- MULLER, JEAN-CLAUDE. 1986. Early stages of language comparison from Sasseti to Sir William Jones (1786). *Kratylos* 31.1–31.
- PADLEY, GEORGE A. 1976. *Grammatical theory in Western Europe, 1500–1700: The Latin tradition*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- PADLEY, GEORGE A. 1985–88. *Grammatical theory in Western Europe, 1500–1700: Trends in vernacular grammar*. 2 vols. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- SALMON, VIVIAN. 1979. *The study of language in 17th-century England*. (Studies in the history of linguistics, 17.) Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- SCAGLIONE, ALDO. 1972. *The classical theory of composition from its origins to the present*. (University of North Carolina studies in comparative literature, 53.) Chapel Hill.
- SCHRÖDER, KONRAD. 1980–85. *Linguarum recentium annales: Der Unterricht in den modernen europäischen Sprachen im deutschsprachigen Raum*. 4 vols. Augsburg, Germany: Universität Augsburg.
- SWIGGERS, PIERRE. 1984a. *Les conceptions linguistiques des encyclopédistes: Étude sur la constitution d'une théorie de la grammaire au siècle des Lumières*. Heidelberg: Groos.
- SWIGGERS, PIERRE, ed. 1984b. *Grammaire et méthode au XVIIIe siècle*. Leuven: Peeters.
- VORLAT, EMMA. 1975. *The development of English grammatical theory, 1586–1737, with special reference to the theory of parts of speech*. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press.

Comparative-Historical Linguistics

The history and comparison of languages is the hallmark of 19th-century linguistics. The historical approach pervaded the century, and came to be viewed as the only 'scientific' approach to language. Genealogical comparison aimed at establishing language families and at reconstructing unattested proto-languages. Its results were spectacular—above all, the definition of the I[ndo-]E[uropean] family. [See Indo-European Languages.] Yet throughout the century, there was also strong interest in the description of the world's languages, and in the problem of their typological classification. In the latter period, we find advanced work in phonetics, dialectology, psycholinguistics, and other sub-disciplines. (For reference see Pedersen 1931, Robins 1967, Koerner 1975, Morpurgo Davies 1975, Christmann 1977, Gipper & Schmitter 1979, and Aarsleff 1983.)

Assessment of the century's achievement is influenced by two external phenomena. First, contemporary linguists were far more interested than their predecessors in writing their own history; they argued that they had created a 'new' and 'scientific' linguistics, which owed little or nothing to previous centuries (cf. Benfey 1869, Delbrück 1880)—and the 20th century inherited this view. Second, in the 19th century linguistics became institutionalized (Amsterdamska 1987): the first linguistic chair was founded by the new University of Berlin in 1821; by the end of the century, all German universities had at least one chair in the subject. Other Western

countries followed suit; the new arrangements highlighted the supposed discontinuity with previous centuries, while creating a link with the present.

1. Predecessors. Recent historiography has done much to bridge the gap between 19th-century linguistics and what preceded it (Droixhe 1978). Starting with the late Renaissance, we find relevant though disorganized work at varying levels of scholarship. First came numerous collections of linguistic data: glossaries, translations of the Bible or the Lord's Prayer, etc. Second, there were attempts at linking the known languages in language families, though no clear methodology was established. The belief that all languages were derived from Hebrew gradually disappeared; 'Scythian', 'Celtic', etc. are mentioned as 'original' languages. Third, we witness the discovery and publication of the earliest European texts: the efforts were desultory, but there were illustrious examples, such as the pioneering work on Anglo-Saxon and Gothic done in the 17th century. Finally, the general attitude toward the facts of language changed. The French Enlightenment asserted the primacy of language as a precondition of thought; the study of the origin and development of language then became a history of the human mind. This view was exemplified in France by the *Idéologues* and their predecessors, and in England by James Burnett Lord Monboddo; in Germany, the 'genealogical priority' of language is asserted by Johann Georg Hamann and Johann Gottfried von Herder. This was not yet historical linguistics, but it inspired an interest in etymology as a key to origins; the philosophical concern for origins can then be reinterpreted in a historical key. Perhaps the single most influential voice was that of the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716), who pleaded for complete collections of linguistic data to use as the basis for comparison; this would add to the knowledge not only of things, but also of the mind and its faculties, and of the origin of peoples.

2. Early discoveries. The end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century saw an explosion of linguistic data. Three linguistic collections—edited by Peter Simon Pallas (at the prompting of Catherine II), by Lorenzo Hervás y Panduro, and by Johan Christoph Adelung and Johann Severin Vater—appeared in this period; contemporaries noted that the number of known languages had risen from seventy-two to two thousand. The striking differences among languages called not only for a philosophical explanation, but also for new principles of classification.

The excitement surrounding all things Oriental at the time was increased by the 'discovery' of Sanskrit. Sporadic observations about the language, and even grammars in manuscript, appeared earlier; but the first editions, translations, and reference works were produced by British civil servants, judges, or soldiers. The connection of Sanskrit with Greek, Latin, and the European languages was immediately apparent; it was reconsidered and made famous by Sir William Jones [*q.v.*] in the third of his presidential discourses (1786) to the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. With Sanskrit, the West acquired a new tradition of grammatical analysis [*see article on Ancient India above*], and also learned an 'exotic' language (made more attractive by the beauty of its literature), which in lexicon and structure was similar to the classical languages, though this could not be the result of borrowing. The excitement was best expressed by Friedrich Schlegel's *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808), an influential book which oscillated between the mystic and the scholarly; it aimed, *inter alia*, at demonstrating the descent of the classical languages from Sanskrit.

The new linguistics, including the work of Schlegel, has traditionally been associated with the German Romantic circles. The concern of Romanticism for the early phases of language and culture—its identification of language and national spirit, its constant comparison of language and organism, and its historicism—are all relevant. Yet not all the founding fathers of linguistics were exponents of Romanticism, and the role of the Enlightenment has been underrated. Powerful pleading for a data-oriented linguistics based on comparative study is found in the work of scholars such as C. F. de Volney and Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat, who were closer to the French *Idéologie* than to the German Romanticism.

3. The comparative method. The new data could be looked at from the angle of philosophical grammar, which aimed at universals; or through the lens of Romanticism, which magnified the national character of each language. In either case, a reappraisal was needed. Wilhelm von Humboldt [*q.v.*] contributed more than anyone else to an awareness of this need; he was seriously involved both in theoretical problems (e.g., what is language?), and in the concrete analysis and classification of linguistic data. His followers, including August Pott [*q.v.*] and Heymann Steinthal, kept alive the interest in theory and typology when it became threatened by increasingly technical discussions. Yet Humboldt also

described in detail the operation of the COMPARATIVE METHOD [*q.v.*]; he stressed that, while the sharing of grammatical forms 'which have a close analogy in their sound' was a proof of kinship between languages, structural similarity was not.

The way in which linguistic kinship was demonstrated was new. Initially, emphasis moved from lexical to morphological comparison. In the 18th century, the latter method had been used to demonstrate the relationship of Hungarian with Lappish, Finnish, and other languages. That work remained isolated; but a Dane, Rasmus Rask (1787–1832), and two Germans, Franz Bopp and Jacob Grimm [*qq.v.*], had profound influence in the first part of the century. Starting with different backgrounds and aims, they built up a body of concrete results which were adopted by subsequent generations. Rask edited early Germanic texts and produced outstanding grammars of Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon. In a book written in 1814 (published in 1818), he demonstrated the kinship of Germanic with Greek, Latin, and Slavic through an accurate analysis of lexical and grammatical correspondences which also listed the regular permutations of 'letters' between languages. Bopp, who came to linguistics from Sanskrit studies, argued for the study of language for its own sake, and not merely as ancillary to literature or history; he published in 1816 the first detailed comparison among the verbal systems of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Persian, and Germanic, which he derived from a common lost ancestor. His aim, well in tune with a rationalistic approach, was to show that all verbs originally included a form of the verb 'to be'. The method was new and survived: words were segmented on formal and functional criteria, and similar segments were compared across related languages, in order to distinguish inherited from innovated forms. Thus Bopp produced the first comparative IE grammar (1833–52), which in successive versions exploited data from Sanskrit, Iranian, Greek, Latin, Germanic, Slavic, Lithuanian, Celtic, and Armenian.

Grimm, who began with a concern for the earliest phases of national culture and concentrated on the development of Germanic, analyzed both the various dialects and the various phases of each dialect in that language group. On the model of Rask, he also introduced an unsophisticated but detailed phonological analysis of each language phase, and stressed the regularity of phonological correspondences between related languages and between successive stages of the same language.

The famous Grimm's Law (so named by Rudolf von Raumer and by some English scholars, though a first full statement is found in Rask) defined a series of phonological correspondences between Germanic and other ancient IE languages; as Grimm said, it had 'important consequences for the history of the language and the validity of etymology', and also 'provided sufficient evidence for the kinship of the languages involved.' Grimm's work served as a model for the analysis of linguistic groups other than Germanic, but also challenged the results of both universal grammar and prescriptive grammar.

4. Language classification was inspired by the model of the natural sciences. [*See Genetic Classification.*] Initially at least, the distinction between genealogical affinity and typological similarity was blurred. Both were based on morphological comparison—until it was made clear that, for genealogical purposes, it was necessary to compare the phonological form of functionally similar elements; for typological analysis, what mattered was the general structure. In 1808, Friedrich Schlegel argued that the basic distinction was that of 'inflected' (or 'organic') languages vs. 'non-inflected' languages. Yet in his work, inflection was a quasi-mystical concept which applied only to IE languages. The most successful later classification divided languages into INFLECTED (e.g. Sanskrit), AGGLUTINATIVE (e.g. Turkish), and ISOLATING (e.g. Chinese); but even at this stage, all related languages were taken to belong to the same typological class. No agreement was ever reached about typological classification; but throughout the century, general reflection about language was connected with typological discussion, partly because of Humboldt's influence. For Steinthal (1823–1899), classification theory was a modern substitute for the old general grammar; it was in the context of a typological discussion that August Schleicher [*q.v.*] attempted a reconsideration of the validity of our descriptive categories.

5. Reconstruction and etymology. By the end of the 1840s, the main lines of inquiry were clear. Extensive philological work led to new editions of early and later texts, and to grammatical descriptions. Grimm's work for Germanic was imitated in Romance, Slavic, and other groups. Pott established the basic word correspondences between IE languages, and laid the foundation for later reconstruction of the IE lexicon. Outside IE, the comparative method was applied to other language groups: American Indian, Bantu, Altaic, Dravidian, etc.

The method evolved, but methodological and theoretical discussions were rare. Even for Pott, the most theoretically minded of all technicians, Grimm's account of sound changes in Germanic had more importance than many a philosophical grammar full of abstractions.

The historical approach prevailed even among non-linguists. A short essay (1821) by the Danish mineralogist J. H. Bredsdorff (1790–1841), about the causes and ways of language change, remained isolated; but it was the first attempt to establish general principles. Classicists were mostly hostile to the new discipline; but in 1812 Franz Passow laid down the requirements for a dictionary on historical principles, and implemented them in a Greek lexicon (1819–23) that served as a model for the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1884–1928). Independently, Jacob Grimm and his brother Wilhelm conceived of a similar enterprise, the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1852).

6. Schleicher and organicism. In the second half of the century, the comparative method acquired stricter guidelines with August Schleicher, whose *Compendium* (1861–62) replaced Bopp's *Comparative grammar* of IE. Attention concentrated on phonological change; Schleicher attempted a reconstruction of the unattested forms of the parent language, and established rules of derivation which led from them to the attested data. The relationship of cognate languages was given graphic expression in the form of a tree, with binary branchings which represented the successive divisions of the parent language into subgroups, languages, and dialects. Schleicher's technical work summarized with impressive clarity some of the achievements of his predecessors, and added to them. His general views, however, were far more extreme. For him, languages were real organisms, which had a life of their own; they developed according to natural laws through a prehistoric period of growth, followed by decay and differentiation. 'Glottik' or linguistics was a part of natural history, and followed the method of the natural sciences. The Romantic connections between language and culture, or language and history, were rejected.

7. The Neogrammarians. With Schleicher, organicism reached a point of no return. Scholarly reaction was strong: Michel Bréal in France, G. I. Ascoli in Italy, J. N. Madvig in Denmark, and William D. Whitney in the United States, as well as Steinthal and Anton Scherer in Germany, all argued that linguistics had to be brought back into history. In the 1870s in Germany, anti-organicism became associated with a group of young scholars who congregated round the Leipzig Slavist

August Leskien; they were given in jest the name 'Junggrammatiker' ('Neogrammarians' is the usual mistranslation). In the 1878 preface to the *Morphologische Untersuchungen*, which counts as the manifesto of the movement, Karl Brugmann and Hermann Osthoff maintained that language could not be studied separately from the speaker. They called for a more explicit and stricter methodology, based on a UNIFORMITARIAN approach: the same principles operated in all phases of language. The study of modern languages and dialects was as important as that of the most ancient phases; 'glottogonic' speculation had to be abandoned. Yet language change was still the center of interest, and the Neogrammarians thought that two main factors were responsible for it:

- (a) PHONETIC CHANGE was gradual and unconscious, and operated without exceptions (the regularity principle). It was stated in phonetic laws of the type [t] > [d]: in a given language or dialect, in a given period, and in a given phonetic environment (e.g. between vowels), [t] was always replaced by [d]. Whenever this did not happen, an explanation had to be found; etymologies and reconstructions based on vague similarities and not on phonetic laws were worthless.
- (b) The second factor was ANALOGY [*q.v.*]—words or grammatical elements were altered on the model of other forms with which they were associated in the mind of the speaker. The development of individual morphemes could not be studied in isolation from the whole linguistic structure. Indeed, in his influential *Principien der Sprachgeschichte* (1880), Hermann Paul argued that analogy is responsible not only for innovations (e.g. *cows* replacing *kine*), but also for the normal creativity of language: speakers do not repeat forms and sentences which they have heard, but recreate them analogically.

The Neogrammarians were attacked; but in the midst of the controversies, we observe an explosion of nearly definitive work in historical and comparative phonology and morphology; friends and foes alike built on each other's results. The contemporary achievements of experimental phonetics (e.g. Henry Sweet and Eduard Sievers) were also influential. No doubt the new approach, geared as it was to understanding change, was highly technical, and in some ways aphistorical; it marked a form of retrenchment from the broader aims of Romanticism. Yet it also asked for a more explicit

methodology, and for a clearer statement about the activities and goals of linguists.

Within the context of this search for a greater methodological awareness, we may consider the various developments which, in the last quarter of the 19th century, mark the beginning of a shift toward new interests: semantics (e.g. Bréal), sociolinguistics (Hugo Schuchardt), theoretical and descriptive linguistics (Whitney, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Ferdinand de Saussure). [See article on Early Structuralism below.] Even so, the prevailing ethos of 19th-century linguistics remained historical; it is no small tribute to this bias that the concrete historical work produced by the Neogrammarians and their contemporaries was still consulted in the 1980s, and that the techniques they developed remain in constant use. [See also Comparative Method; Historical Linguistics; Phonological Change.]

ANNA MORPURGO DAVIES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AARSLEFF, HANS. 1983. *The study of language in England, 1780–1860*. 2d ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- AMSTERDAMSKA, OLGA. 1987. *Schools of thought: The development of linguistics from Bopp to Saussure*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- BENFEY, THEODOR. 1869. *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft und orientalischen Philologie in Deutschland seit dem Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: Cotta.
- CHRISTMANN, HANS H., ed. 1977. *Sprachwissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- DELBRÜCK, BERTHOLD. 1880. *Einleitung in das Sprachstudium: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Methodik der vergleichenden Sprachforschung*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel.
- DROIXHE, DANIEL. 1978. *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire, 1600–1800*. Geneva: Droz.
- GIPPER, HELMUT, & PETER SCHMITTER. 1979. *Sprachwissenschaft und Sprachphilosophie im Zeitalter der Romantik*. Tübingen: Narr.
- KOERNER, E. F. K. 1975. European structuralism: Early beginnings. In Sebeok 1975, pp. 717–827.
- MORPURGO DAVIES, ANNA. 1975. Language classification in the nineteenth century. In Sebeok 1975, pp. 607–716.
- PEDERSEN, HOLGER. 1931. *Linguistic science in the nineteenth century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Reprinted as *The discovery of language: Linguistic science in the nineteenth century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).
- ROBINS, ROBERT H. 1967. *A short history of linguistics*. London: Longman. 3d ed., 1990.
- SEBEOK, THOMAS A., ed. 1975. *Current trends in linguistics*, vol. 13, *Historiography of linguistics*. The Hague: Mouton.

Early Structuralism

The term 'structuralism' is used to refer to a mode of thought that has had a strong impact on many disciplines during the 20th century. It assumes that the individual phenomena of human experience exist, and are intelligible, not in isolation, but rather through their interconnections. They can be accounted for rationally—rather than just described and classified, or intuitively grasped in their unique peculiarity—if one looks at them in their relational character, sees their connections as constituting a structure, and finds that behind the apparently endless variation of their different shapes and combinations, there is a limited set of abstract patterns subject to simple general rules. (For reference, see Wahl 1968, Lepschy 1982.)

1. Structuralism in the humanities. The 1960s were the period of maximum development of structuralism in the humanities; many trends, particularly in French intellectual circles, were then called 'structuralist'. One can mention the historical methodology practiced by the school of the *Annales* under the influence of Ferdinand Braudel; the variety of Marxist philosophy developed by Louis Althusser; the psychoanalysis elaborated by Jacques Lacan; the critique of social and cultural institutions produced by Michel Foucault; the radical semiotic criticism of Julia Kristeva and the group of *Tel Quel*; the semiotic interpretations of Roland Barthes; the narratological analyses of Claude Bremond, Tzvetan Todorov, and Gérard Genette—and, particularly influential even outside its specific domain, the structural anthropology elaborated by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

2. Structural linguistics. In many cases, these structuralist trends in the humanities drew inspiration from linguistics, and acknowledged their intellectual debt to certain influential linguists, in particular Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson [*q.v.*]. The label 'structural linguistics' has been used in two different senses, one more specific and one more comprehensive.

In the more specific sense, the label refers to a trend in American linguistics represented by Leonard Bloomfield and linguists inspired by his work. They tried to adopt the methods of Behaviorist psychology and a Neopositivist philosophy of science, which are now widely thought to be too restrictive even in the physical sciences, let alone in linguistics and the humanities. [See