

INFLUENCE OF DIACHRONIC LANGUAGE PROCESSES ON THE LANGUAGE VARIABILITY

1. BASIC TERMS

Synchrony and diachrony

Classification of languages:

- areal classification of living languages
- classification according to the number of speakers
- typological classification
- genealogical (generic) classification of languages

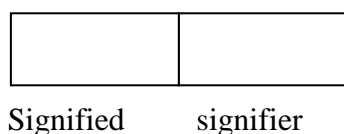
Ferdinand de Saussure: Course in General Linguistics (1913, published by his students)

- language as a system consisting of units and relations among them
- synchrony: language system at one time point
- diachrony: language development

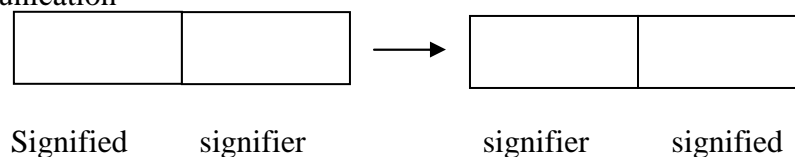
Arbitrariness of (a language) sign

Ferdinand de Saussure:

- a two-side model of (a language) sign



- communication



- the relation between the signified and the signifier is arbitrary

TASK:

Does the existence of iconic words refute the assumption of the arbitrariness of (a language) sign?

En. *cuckoo*

sign for a tree

American sign language

Cz. *kukačka*

Chinese sign language

Germ. *der Kuckuck*

It. *cucù*

Rus. *kukushka*

Concept of language relationship and a protolanguage

- Copying (borrowing) a word (from the Middle East En. *coffee*, Germ. *Kaffee*, Rus. *kofe*, Cz. *káva/kafe*)
- Relationship between languages

Sir William Jones, speech about Sanskrit (1786)

- Sanskrit, Greek, Latin are descendants of a common source, as well as Gothic, Celtic and the Old Persian
- The relations between languages
- The parallel development of languages

Languages undergo changes – all languages, all the time

- Protolanguage → Bahasa Indonesia
Tolai
Paamese
Fijian
Maori
- Latin → Portuguese
Spanish
French
Italian
Romanian
- language death

Methods of language reconstruction

Old Slavonic **golva* → Cz. *hlava* head
Pol. *głowa*
Rus. *golova*
Upper Sorb. *hłowa*

Comparative method

- comparison of different languages, the common ancestor is looked for (protolanguage)
- every reconstruction works with changes which are probable, systematic
- as few changes between the protolanguage and the descendants as possible
- reconstructions should fill in the gaps in the systems rather than create unbalanced systems

Old Slavonic:

	Voiced	voiceless
Labial	p	b
Dental	t	d
Velar	k	?

Internal reconstruction

- comparison of variants in one language, a former phase of the same language is looked for (prelanguage)

new Czech	dům – domek	<i>a house – a small house</i>	(vowel quantity, quality)
old Czech	dóm – domek		(vowel quantity, ó – ů)

Reliability of the reconstruction

- the protolanguage is a linguistic model

Span.	<i>kabo</i>	Reconstruction:	<i>*kapo</i>
French	<i>fef</i>	Original protolanguage:	<i>kaput</i>
It.	<i>kapo</i>		
Rom.	<i>kap</i>		

Determining relatedness

Finding families

- systematic meaningful correspondences in lexical items, morphology, and generally grammar
- Nonlinguistic features of speech communities, such as religion, race, genetics, or cultural practices, provide no evidence for language classification. Speech communities can and do shift languages, cultural practices, and religion.
- We cannot prove that two languages are not related.

Subgrouping

- Numbers in assorted European languages:

English	Dutch	German	French	Italian	Russian
<i>wʌn</i>	<i>e:n</i>	<i>ains</i>	<i>õe</i>	<i>uno</i>	<i>ad'in</i>
<i>tu:</i>	<i>twe:</i>	<i>tsvai</i>	<i>dø</i>	<i>due</i>	<i>dva</i>
<i>θ.i:</i>	<i>dri:</i>	<i>dʁai</i>	<i>tʁwa</i>	<i>tre</i>	<i>tr'i</i>
<i>fɔ:</i>	<i>fɪ:r</i>	<i>fɪ:ʁ</i>	<i>katʁ</i>	<i>kwatro</i>	<i>tʃitir'i</i>
<i>fʌv</i>	<i>fɛif</i>	<i>fɪnf</i>	<i>s̃ɛk</i>	<i>tʃɪŋkwep'at'i</i>	

2. TYPES OF DIACHRONIC CHANGES

Sound changes: phonetic and phonemic change

- phonetic description (phonetics); the basic unit: phone
- phonemic description (phonology); the basic unit: phoneme

world American English: ɪ
British English: ə

Swedish *Stockholm* s
ʃ

Czech *si:t* s (sít) to seed
ʃi:t ʃ (šít) to sew

- method of discerning phonemes: minimal pairs

d – d^j (d^ʃ)

Czech	<i>deme</i>	d	(jd eme)	we are going
	<i>d^ʃeme</i>	d ^j	(jdě me)	let us go
French	<i>djō</i>	d	(mon Dieu)	my God
	<i>d^ʃō</i>	d ^j	(mon Dieu)	my God

i: - y: (ü)

German	<i>f<i>ɪ</i>:ɪ</i>	i:	(vier)	four
	<i>f<i>y</i>:ɪ</i>	y:	(für)	for
Czech	<i>m<i>í</i>:</i>	i:	(mí)	my
	<i>m<i>y</i>:</i>	y:	(mí)	my – non standard, but individually possible

a – á

central Czech	<i>mila:</i>	a:	(milá)	nice
	<i>mila:</i>	a:	(myla)	washed – non standard prolonging of vowels in last syllables

Diachronic view on the phonetic and phonemic changes:

world American English: ɪ
British English: ə

n – ŋ

Old English	siŋgə	ŋ	(singer)
Modern En.	siŋə	ŋ	(singer)
	vs.		
	sinə	n	(sinner)

Types of sound changes

Lenition and fortition

Stronger	Weaker
p	b
p	f
f	h
x	h
b	w
v	w
a	ə
d	l
s	r
k	ʔ

Latin	<i>*ami:ko:som – ami:ko:rum</i>	of the friends
	<i>*flo:sis – flo:ris</i>	of the flower

Sound loss

French	Written form	spoken form	
	<i>Chat</i>	<i>ʃa</i>	cat
	<i>Fils</i>	<i>fi</i>	son

English	Written form	personal pronunciation
	<i>History</i>	<i>histəʊ</i> <i>hist.ʊ</i>

Sound addition

Old Czech	modern Czech	
<i>*izba</i>	<i>jizba</i>	room
<i>okno</i>	<i>vokno</i> (dial.)	window

Metathesis

Engl.	<i>relevant</i>	<i>revelant</i>	
Czech	<i>permanentka</i>	<i>pernamentka</i>	(season ticket)
Czech	<i>velryba</i>	<i>verlyba</i>	(whale)

Systematic metathesis: languages of the Philippines – consistent switching of word-final s and initial t

Tagalog	Ilokano	
<i>Tubus</i>	<i>subut</i>	redeem
<i>Tamis</i>	<i>samqit</i>	sweet

Fusion and fission

French: vowel + nasal – nasalized vowel
**bɔn – b̃ɔ* good

English	<i>li:ziŋ</i>	
Czech	<i>li:ziŋk</i>	(leasing) – supported by the written form

Assimilation

English	<i>im-</i>	imbalance	before bilabial consonants
	<i>iŋ-</i>	inconsiderate	before velars
	<i>in-</i>	inadmissible, indivisible	before other sounds incl. vowels

Dissimilation

Afrikaans	* <i>sxo:n</i> –	<i>sko:n</i>	clean
	* <i>sxoudər</i> –	<i>skoudər</i>	shoulder

TASK:

Many places in England have spellings that do not reflect their actual pronunciations. Suggest the kinds of phonetic changes that may have taken place as suggested by the original spellings:

Cirencester	<i>sɪstə</i>
Salisbury	<i>salzb.ɪ</i>
Barnoldswick	<i>ba:lɪk</i>

Morphological changes

- basic unit: morpheme
- boundary shifts:
 - o Germ. *Hamburg-er* – En. *hamburg-er*
(*Berlin-er*) *ham-burger*
(*cheese-burger, egg-burger, fish-burger*)
 - o Fr. *cerise* [sæʁiz] – En. *cherrie-s*
Back formation – singular: *cherry*
(**one cherries, *two cherrieses*)
- analogy: A : B :: C : D
 - o example: meaning_a : meaning_b :: form_a : form_b
 - Lat. *September* Rus. *sentʹabrʲ*
 - October* *oktʹabrʲ* (<**October*)
 - November* *nojabrʲ*
 - December* *dʹekabrʲ*

Syntactic changes

Morphological types:

- Isolating type

Hiri Motu (Papua New Guinea)

Laegu sinana gwarume ta ia hoia Koki dekenai.

My motherfish one she bought Koki at

“My mother bought a fish at Koki.”

- Agglutinating type

Sye (Erromango island in Vanuatu)

Ov-nevyarep yu-tw-ampy-oyh-or u-ntoy

Plural-boy they-will_not-want_to-see-them in-sea

“The boys will not want to see them in the sea.”

- Inflectional type

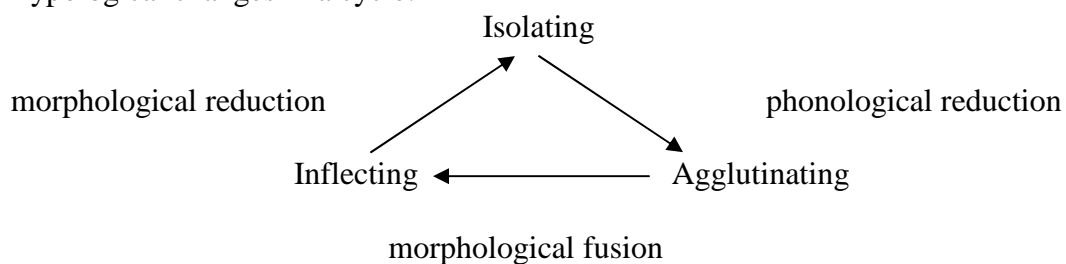
Lat.

Marcell-us amat Sophi-am

Marcellus (subj.) loves Sophia (obj.)

“Marcellus loves Sophie.”

Typological changes in a cycle:



Old Slavonic

**nova ja*
New_fem the_fem

isolating expression

> **novaja* >
the_new_fem

agglutinating

Old Czech

nová > *ta nová*
new_fem the_fem
new_fem

inflecting

isolating