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

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{Signified} & \text{signifier} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

- communication

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{Signified} & \text{signifier} & \text{signifier} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

- 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
- 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 → Latin → Portuguese
  Tolai
  Paamese
  Fijian
  Maori

- 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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voiced</th>
<th>voiceless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labial</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velar</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

new Czech dům – domek *a house – a small house* (vowel quantity, quality)
old Czech dóm – domek (vowel quantity, ó – ů)

Reliability of the reconstruction
- the protolanguage is a linguistic model

Span. *kabo* Reconstruction: *kapo*
French *je* Original protolanguage: *kaput*
It. *kapo*
Rom. *kap*
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wan</td>
<td>e:n</td>
<td>ains</td>
<td>ðe</td>
<td>uno</td>
<td>ad'ın</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu:</td>
<td>twe:</td>
<td>tsvai</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>due</td>
<td>dva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>əui:</td>
<td>dri:</td>
<td>dsvai</td>
<td>twa</td>
<td>tre</td>
<td>tr'i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fu:</td>
<td>fi:r</td>
<td>fi:s</td>
<td>katr</td>
<td>kwatro</td>
<td>tfr'ir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fav</td>
<td>fəif'</td>
<td>fynf</td>
<td>s'ek</td>
<td>ts'ŋkwe'p'al'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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: ˌwɜːld
        British English: ˈwɜːld

Swedish  Stockholm  s

Czech  sít  to seed
       šít  to sew

- method of discerning phonemes: minimal pairs

d – dʲ (d’)
Czech  déme  d  (jdéme)  we are going
       d'émé  dʲ  (jděme)  let us go
French  djö  d  (mon Dieu)  my God
       d’ö  dʲ  (mon Dieu)  my God

i: - y: (ü)
German  fiːk  i:  (vier)  four
       fyːk  y:  (für)  for
Czech  mǐ:  i:  (mí)  my
       myː  y:  (mí)  my – non standard, but
       individually possible

a – á
central Czech  milaː  a:  (milá)  nice
       milaː  a:  (myla)  washed – non standard prolonging
       of vowels in last syllables

Diachronic view on the phonetic and phonemic changes:
world  American English: ˌwɜːld
        British English: ˈwɜːld

n – ŋ
Old English  sǐŋə  ŋ  (singer)
Modern En.  sǐŋə  ŋ  (singer)
       vs.
       sínə  ŋ  (sinner)
Types of sound changes

Lenition and fortition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stronger</th>
<th>Weaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Latin


*flo:sis – flo:ris* of the flower

Sound loss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Written form</th>
<th>Spoken form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chat</td>
<td>fa</td>
<td>cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fils</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Written form</th>
<th>Personal pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>histua</td>
<td>histua</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sound addition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Czech</th>
<th>Modern Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*izba</td>
<td>jizba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okno</td>
<td>vokno (dial.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metathesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engl.</th>
<th>relevant</th>
<th>revelant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>permanentka</td>
<td>permanentka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>velryba</td>
<td>verlyba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Tagalog Ilokano

*Tubus* subut redeem

Tamis samqit sweet

Fusion and fission

French: vowel + nasal – nasalized vowel

*bɔn – bɔ̃* good

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>li:ziŋ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>li:ziŋk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assimilation

English  \(im\)- imbalance before bilabial consonants
\(in\)- inconsiderate before velars
\(in\)- inadmissible, indivisible before other sounds incl. vowels

Dissimilation

Afrikaans  \(*sxo:n – sko:n\) clean
\(*sxoudor – skoudor\) 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**: \(si\(sta\)
- **Salisbury**: \(salzbai\)
- **Barnoldswick**: \(ba\(lik\)

Morphological changes
- **basic unit: morpheme**
- **boundary shifts:**
  - Germ. *Hamburg-er* (Berlin-er) – En. *hamburg-er*
    - ham-burger
    - (cheese-burger, egg-burger, fish-burger)
  - Fr. *cerise* \([s\acute{a}riz]\) – En. *cherrie-s*
    - Back formation – singular: cherry
    - (*one cherries, *two cherrieses)
- **analogy: A : B :: C : D**
  - example: \(\text{meaning}_a : \text{meaning}_b :: \text{form}_a : \text{form}_b\)
    - Lat. *September* \(\text{Rus.} \text{sent\'abr}\)
    - *October* \(\text{ok\'abr}\) \((<^*\text{Octember})\)
    - *November* \(\text{noj\'abr}\)
    - *December* \(\text{d\'ek\'abr}\)
Syntactic changes
Morphological types:

- Isolating type

  Hiri Motu (Papua New Guinea)
  
  Lauegu sinana gwarume ta ia hoia Koki dekenai.
  “My mother fish one she bought Koki at”

  - Agglutinating type

  Sye (Erromango island in Vanuatu)
  
  Ov-nevyarep u-tw-ampy-oym-ur u-nto y
  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:

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Isolating morphological reduction

Inflecting  Agglutinating phonological reduction

morphological fusion
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Old Slavonic

*nova    ja > *novaja > nová > ta nová
New_fem the_fem the_new_fem new_fem the_fem

isolating expression agglutinating inflecting isolating

Old Czech

new_fem the_fem

isolating expression agglutinating inflecting isolating