REVIEW

Historiographia Linguistica. Volume I, Number I (1974)

Within the last decade there has been a renewed and vigorous interest in the history of linguistics and a journal devoted exclusively to the subject was bound to come into existence sooner or later.

The central

> objectives of HL are the discussion of the epistemological and methodological foundations of a historiography of the discipline and the critical presentation of particular areas of aspects of actual or potential research.

For each issue the editor plans to have

> at least three articles, one review article, a bibliography devoted to a particular topic in the field, and a number of reviews of recent publications.

The journal has been founded and is edited by E.F.K. Koerner, who has contributed extensively to the restudy and reevaluation of de Saussure's work currently taking place.

The issue under review contains, aside from a ten page editorial on the purpose and scope of HL, three articles (an essay by R.H. Robins which might be termed an exercise in the history of ideas, in this case the interplay between the rationalist and the empiricist approaches as they have been reflected in the study of language since Dionysius Thrax; a lengthy paper on Guillaume's interpretation and use of de Saussure's ideas; and a brief excursus into immediate pre- and post-revolutionary French linguistic thought); the issue further contains a very useful annotated chronological bibliography of western histories of linguistic thought from 1822-1915 (the second part from 1916-1961 is promised for Volume I, Number 2), a review article (Jankowsky's The Neogrammarians), four ordinary reviews, and a section for notes and announcements (in this case the editor's call for further information on a number of 19th century linguists, and a short biography of the generally ignored Swedish linguist Carl Svedelius with a note on the equally ignored Danish linguist Hylling-Georg Wiwel).

Judged by the "central objectives" of HL, the issue contains enough on areas or aspects of actual or potential research but preciously little on the epistemological and methodological foundations of a historiography of linguistics, something which Koerner himself realizes. He notes in his editorial that the present issue does not wholly reflect this aspect of the objectives, and he wistfully remarks that as editor he is subject more to supply than demand. This is undoubtedly true and one might ask, therefore, whether there is ever going to be a sufficient supply of articles dealing with the underrepresented category in this issue, and, for that matter, whether there is, indeed, a demand for it.

One might even go one step further and ask whether there is a need for epistemological and methodological foundations of a historiography of linguistics and I, for one, would be inclined to answer in the negative, not for a lack of interest in the issue at hand, but for the firm conviction that ultimately the epistemological and methodological foundations of a historiography of linguistics are not going to be different from those of any historiography. If there is any need at all for articles on this topic, it is not for a lack of foundations but for a lack of knowledge among linguists of such foundations. Significantly, e.g., only two historians who have concerned themselves with these issues rank mention in the new journal, Collingwood, to whom Koerner refers but whom he does not cite, and Fischer (1970), who is cited in Davis's review of Jankowsky. Surely the editorial should have been less discipline-oriented and more along the lines of showing what is available to us generally in the area of historiography, especially (as Koerner himself points out) since

> until today the history of linguistics has suffered considerably from amateur work performed by distinguished students of language who turned their interest to this particular aspect of the discipline (5).

Loosely listing a number of qualifications which a historian of linguistics should meet (and which, by the way, appear to me to be prerequisites for any kind of sound scholarly enterprise) is simply not enough.

According to Koerner, Collingwood made the distinction between chronicle and history and this is, presumably, the same distinction that Robins draws when he speaks of mere annalistic records (something "one must try to avoid" (12)) and discovering "some recognizably permanent themes that have in part determined the thinking of people whose

general situations are, superficially, vastly different from each other's and from our own" (12). I would maintain, however, and the contents of HL confirm this, that at this stage in the game we are still hopelessly in the annalistic records stage, and will continue to be for some time to come.

Reviews and articles alike in the journal abound with remarks about gaps in our knowledge and suggestions for further (annalistic records-type) research. These can be traced to the two main problems facing any historian confronted with such gaps: either the data are there but haven't been researched yet, in which case it is possible to make amends, or the data have been irretrievably lost, in which case our only recourse is to (more or less) sophisticated hypothesses as to what might have happened.

Data which pertain to a scholar's personality and the personalities of those surrounding him would unquestionably fall into the annalistic records category and they would tend to become more readily lost unless one deals with a group of inveterate diarists and writers such as the members of the Bloomsbury group. Alas, in linguistics we have not been fortunate enough in this respect. Admittedly such data are not very important when it comes to writing 'grand history', i.e., when one attempts a history of ideas. Similarly, when the time is 'ripe' for a new idea (or a new paradigm), the profession inevitably will swing towards it regardless of the resistance offered by certain members (and sometimes very influential ones) within it. Yet I believe that in order to do justice to both sides and to fully understand why a given idea was more readily accepted by one individual rather than another it is necessary to not only have access to their arguments but to their personalities as well.

Wunderlich has to refer to Guillaume's "Kontaktarmut" and "Eigensinn" which, he claims, account for both the rejection of Guillaume's theories by the majority of linguists and Guillaume's misunderstanding of de Saussure. Who of those present at Chomsky's and Pike's lectures at the 1964 Linguistic Institute at Indiana University will forget the absolute contrast in the presentation of their ideas: Chomsky speaking for a week in a detached and clearly reasoned manner to a full audience, and Pike losing his audience after the first lecture through his almost passionate pleading to gain a hearing? For my own part, I found Chomsky's linguistics more to my liking and I believe it would have carried the day in the end anyway. However, I have no doubt (and people voiced these sentiments as well) that, in what was viewed by many people as a lining up of the

two major contestants in the linguistic arena, people swung in the end towards Chomsky's ideas and away from Pike's because they found the personal presentation of these ideas by the one more appealing. Sapir and Bloomfield provide another interesting contrast: Pike once mentioned that if you wanted to know something from Sapir, you went to the man, if you wanted to know something from Bloomfield, you went to his book. (I cannot believe that this difference in their personalities did not have any influence on their linguistics and the people who responded to it).

But personality characteristics quite aside, how is the historian of linguistics to recover the unique intellectual atmosphere which existed during the mid-sixties among Chomsky and his students, such that by the time their ideas reached the rest of us they had already been discarded by their originators? The quickening pace and volume of linguistic ideas during that period (and to some extent still continuing) was at times breathtaking. Or what is the historian of linguistics to make of Koerner's identifying Dingwall as one of Chomsky's followers on the basis of his (Dingwall's) 1963 paper when those closer to Chomsky at the time (I do not know of Chomsky's personal reaction) completely disassociated themselves from Dingwall's paper and privately declared the paper grossly inaccurate? No doubt such (sometimes) anecdotal data belong in the category of annalistic records, and no doubt they are irrelevant to an account of the ideas as they present themselves through the ages. However, I believe very strongly that they are absolutely essential to our proper understanding of the complexities of a particular period and to a proper account of why idea A took precedence over idea B, at least for the time being.

As far as the history of linguistics in Papua New Guinea is concerned, Hooley (1964a) is undoubtedly partly correct when he states "that the history of New Guinea linguistics is a history of Christian missions in the island" (27); only after World War II did secular linguists enter the field (if one excepts for the moment the pre-World War II contributions by anthropologists such as Fortune in his Arapesh grammar and Malinowski in his Coral Gardens and Their Magic). However, it would seem that New Guinea linguistics made its real impact in the 19th century studies of armchair linguists like der Gabelentzes, who made use of mission and explorer-produced linguistic data (to this day the von der Gabelentzes have not been properly appreciated by linguists working in the field of Papua New Guinea linguistics - Hans Conon von der Gabelentz (1807 -74), author of Die Melanesischen Sprachen, is cited in Hooley (1964a.28 & 42) as Hans Christian von der Gabalenz, and Laycock and Voorhoeve, in

their history of research in Papuan languages (1971) concoct a mythological figure Hans Georg Conant von der Gabelentz, consisting of both Hans Conon von der Gabelentz and Georg von der Gabelentz (1840-93))[2]. Especially Georg von der Gabelentz, in collaboration with A.B. Meyer (1882), stressed the epistemological and methodological importance of Mischsprachen for the study of language and nearly a hundred years later the profession has come round again to this area of research. What makes his ideas doubly interesting is the fact that the data available to him were of such inferior quality.

Aside from this short-lived contribution of New Guinea linguistics towards linguistic theory, there is only one other contribution which appears to have had some impact on linguistic theory, viz. Malinowski's ideas through his association with J.R. Firth. This aspect of Malinowski's work is competently accounted for in J.R. Firth 1956 (for a bibliography of Malinowski's linguistic (as well as anthropological) contributions cf. R. Firth 1956).

How is this theoretical poverty in the face of the extreme richness in linguistic data to be explained? Again, I believe, it is partly a function of the personalities who decided to make Papua New Guinea linguistics their special field of competence and partly, I believe, it is a function of their background. But in both of these our data are woefully inadequate. A great amount of 'mere annalistic recording' still needs to be done, especially in regard to the 'giants' (the von der Gabelentzes, Dempwolff, Codrington, Ray, P.W. Schmidt, Capell, and Wurm). We have some data on P.W. Schmidt (Burgmann 1966) and now Capell (Elkin 1970 and Wurm 1970).

Hooley 1964a and Laycock and Voorhoeve present only an overview of the history of Papua New Guinea linguistics and we still lack detailed information on the linguistic research carried out by many of the missions. What is especially needed are accounts of the work and linguistic background of the Catholic missionaries associated with P.W. Schmidt and the Anthropos Institute, and that of the German Lutheran missionaries who worked under Dempwolff at Hamburg. What we have at present are widely scattered bits of information on various kinds of research done, but no account of the continuities and interconnections existing between various missionary researchers; e.g., nearly every dissertation in linguistics at the Australian National University (and, of course, elsewhere as well) provides a short account of the linguistic research carried out to date in the area

of the specific language the dissertation deals with, but nearly all of these accounts are of a factual nature pointing out the progress of research in the language and next to nothing on the individuals who carried out this research (Z'graggen (1971) is a good example of this, through his account of the work of the S.V.D. missionaries in the Madang District in which he also briefly describes the tragic loss of manuscripts during World War II, the results of nearly ten years' linguistic work by the Catholic missionaries). In other words, we do not even have an approximation of something like Schütz's 1972 account of the history of linguistic research in Fiji (the title of his book, The Languages of Fiji, is a gross misnomer).

Dempwolff, who came to New Guinea as a medical doctor, dedicates his Vergleichende Lautlehre des Austronesischen Wortschatzes to Meinhof under whom he had studied, so that for the Lutheran linguistic studies, at least, there is a direct line of descent from Meinhof through Dempwolff to a number of Lutheran missionaries, foremost among them Pilhofer, who dedicated his Grammatik der Kâte Sprache to Dempwolff and who was available to the other Lutheran missionaries for linguistic (and other) advice. For a very summary account of the linguistic research carried out and the problems encountered by the early Lutheran missionaries see Pilhofer (1963:66-8)[3]. For the linguistic research carried out early in the century and the problems encountered by the Catholic missionaries on New Britain see Meyer 1932. But it must be stressed that none of these accounts approaches in any way what we might call an adequate history - as chronicles they are hopelessly inadequate, as histories of ideas, useless. A great amount of hard work still needs to be done.

This brings us again to the original subject of this review, HL. I was at first tempted to label its appearance premature, but I have since come to consider it timely. In spite of my generally pessimistic attitude in regard to an adequate history of linguistic thought with our present factual (i.e., annalistic) knowledge we should attempt it, nevertheless, if only to work out a framework for further annalistic-type research. In this sense the journal fulfills a genuine need.

There are two minor criticisms - the editor is making his presence felt rather too strongly in the form of footnotes and additional comments to the contributors' papers and there are unpleasantly many misprints. The first, I suppose, is a matter of taste, the second could definitely be improved.

FOOTNOTES

1. These quotations are from the statement of aims and scope on the inside front cover of HL.

2. These lapses are all the more notable as both von der Gabelentzes are cited correctly a number of times in Capell 1954 and 1962. If Laycock and Voorhoeve had bothered to cite the full title of von der Gabelentz and Meyer 1882, they might have noticed there the name of Hans Conon von der Gabelentz as being different from that of Georg von der Gabelentz.

3. Peter Sack informs me that in the area of phonology, one could tell from the symbols used by the analyst approximately which part of Germany he came from: Schellong and J. Flierl Sr are said at one time to have compared their notes on Jabêm in order to clear up any discrepancies and while doing so, found that whatever differences existed were due to their having come from different parts of Germany, Schellong from the North, Flierl from the South, each one selecting symbols for Jabêm which corresponded most closely to sounds in their home dialects. Sack (1971:49) has also pointed out that Dempwolff 1931 is attributed wrongly to Detzner in Hooley 1964b.

REFERENCES

BURGMANN, A. 1966 /1954/ P.W. Schmidt als Linguist. In Sebeok 1966, pp.287-328.

CAPELL, A. 1954 A Linguistic Survey of the South-Western Pacific. Noumea, South Pacific Commission Technical Paper No. 70.

1962 A Linguistic Survey of the South-Western Pacific. New and Revised Edition. Noumea, South Pacific Commission Technical Paper No. 136.

DEMPWOLFF, O. 1931 Einige Probleme der vergleichenden Erforschung der Suedseesprachen. Anthropos 26, pp.157-70.

DINGWALL, W.O. 1963 Transformational grammar: form and theory. A contribution to the history of linguistics. Lingua 12, pp.233-75

ELKIN, A.P. 1970 Arthur Capell. In Wurm and Laycock 1970, pp. 1-8.

FIRTH, J.R. 1956 Ethnographic analysis and language with reference to Malinowski's views. In R. Firth 1956, pp. 93-118.

FIRTH, R. (Ed.) 1956 Man and Culture. An Evaluation of the Work of Bronislaw Malinowski. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

FISCHER, D.H. 1970 Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought. New York, Harper and Row.

GABELENTZ, Georg von der and MEYER, A.B. 1882 Beitraege zur Kenntnis der melanesischen, mikronesischen und papuanischen Sprachen, ein erster Nachtrag zu Hans Conon's von der Gabelentz Werke, "Die Melanesischen Sprachen." Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Classe der Koeniglich Saechsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften. 3. Band, pp. 1-266.

HOOLEY, B.A. 1964a A Brief History of New Guinea Linguistics. Oceania 35, pp. 26-44.

1964b The Morobe District - New Guinea. Oceanic Linguistics 3. pp. 201-47.

HUESKES, J. (Ed.) 1932 Pioniere der Suedsee. Werden und Wachsen der Herz-Jesu Mission von Rabaul zum Goldenen Jubilaeum 1882-1932. Hiltrup, Herz-Jesu Missionshaus.

LAYCOCK, D.C. and VOORHOEVE, C.L. 1971 History of Research in Papuan Languages. In Sebeok 1971, pp. 509-40.

MEYER, O. 1932 Missionar und Wissenschaft. In Hueskes 1932, pp.185-96.

PILHOFER, G. 1963 Die Geschichte der Neuendettelsauer Mission in Neu-guinea. Band 2. Neuendettelsau, Freimund-Verlag.

SACK, P. 1971 Recent Population Movements in the Inner Huon Gulf. Notes on the Documentary Evidence. Typescript.

SCHÜTZ, A.J. 1972 The Languages of Fiji. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

SEBEOK, T.A. (Ed.) 1966 Portraits of Linguists. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

1971 Current Trends in Linguistics. Volume 8. Linguistics in Oceania. The Hague, Mouton.

WURM, S.A. 1970 Arthur Capbell as Linguist. In Wurm and Laycock 1970, pp. 9-27.

WURM, S.A. and LAYCOCK, D.C. (Eds.) 1970 Pacific Linguistic Studies in Honour of Arthur Capell. Canberra, The Australian National University.

Z'GRAGGEN, J.A. 1971 Classificatory and Typological Studies in Languages of the Madang District. Canberra, The Australian National University.

Ranier Lang
New Guinea Research Unit
The Australian National University

CORRIGENDUM

A.W. Sparkes "Language, Idea and Thing". Kivung Volume 5, Number 3 (December, 1973).

On p.145 one sentence is misprinted:

> "My own amateur and incomplete empirical investigations have led me to the conclusion that, in political discourse, as distinct from discourse about political discourse, the phrase 'the general interest' rarely, if ever, functions as part of an adverbial or adjectival phrase."

This sentence should read:

> "My own amateur and incomplete empirical investigations have led me to the conclusion that, in political discourse, as distinct from discourse about political discourse, the phrase 'the general interest' rarely, if ever, functions as an independent substantive. Its most typical use is as part of an adverbial or adjectival phrase."

Our apologies to Mr Sparkes for this error.