Energeia und Ergon

Sprachliche Variation – Sprachgeschichte – Sprachtypologie

Studia in honorem Eugenio Coseriu

herausgegeben von
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einer integralen und integrierten Synchronie, die sowohl die Homogenität als auch die Differenziertheit als funktionelle Dimensionen berücksichtigt, das heißt, die zugleich strukturelle Sprachbeschreibung, Dialektologie, Soziolinguistik und Sprachstilistik ist und die nicht in verschiedenen voneinander getrennten Beschreibungen, sondern in einer einzigen kohärenten Beschreibung den ganzen Sprachbesitz wenigstens eines Sprechers darstellt, so wie er sich in der Rede manifestiert. Für eine solche integrierte Synchronie sind allerdings zur Zeit nicht einmal die Voraussetzungen gegeben.

Es ist hingegen auch grundsätzlich unmöglich, daß eine synchronische Sprachbetrachtung der Sprache als Möglichkeit und somit als Werden gerecht wird. Denn das, was nur Möglichkeit ist, gehört noch nicht zum beschreibbaren Dasein. Alle funktionellen Ebenen der Einzelsprache (Sprachnorm, Sprachsystem, Sprachtypus) erscheinen notwendigerweise auch in der Synchronie (= Funktionieren); folglich können und müssen sie auch beschrieben werden. In dem Maße jedoch, in dem es sich beim Sprachsystem und beim Sprachtypus um offene Möglichkeiten handelt, können diese in der Synchronie nur provisorisch und nur auf generische Weise angegeben werden, denn nur die Sprachentwicklung kann sie eindeutig bestätigen. Auch ist jeder Versuch, der Möglichkeit in höherem Maße Rechnung zu tragen, indem man sogenannte 'Tendenzen' feststellt[27], an sich schon ein Übergang zur Diachronie und dadurch zur Geschichte im eigentliche Sinne.

2.   Sich zum Primat der Geschichte zu bekennen, bedeutet aber keineswegs, daß man auf die strukturelle Beschreibung und auf die wichtigen Errungenschaften der strukturellen Sprachwissenschaft überhaupt, durch die man tiefe Einsichten in das Funktionieren der Sprache gewonnen hat, verzichten sollte. Im Gegenteil: Für die Beschreibung eines bestimmten Sprachzustands einer funktionellen Sprache ist die synchronisch-strukturelle Betrachtung nicht nur sinnvoll, sondern auch die einzig adäquate. Die Beschreibung eines Kulturgegenstands in einer Phase seines Werdens, das heißt, als eines Gewordenen, gehört aber zur Geschichte dieses Gegenstandes. Einen Gegensatz zwischen Beschreibung und Geschichte gibt es nicht; oder wenn, dann nur in der Hinsicht, daß die Geschichte die Beschreibung umfaßt, wohingegen die Beschreibung als Teil das Ganze nicht umfassen kann. Die Sprachbeschreibung *ist* schon Geschichte, jedoch nur eine partielle und provisorische Geschichte, die ihre nähere Begründung und ihre Bestätigung durch die Entwicklung erwartet.

In diesem Sinne muß man wohl dem Satz von Hermann Paul zustimmen: Sprachwissenschaft ist tatsächlich Sprachgeschichte.

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27 Zur Kritik dieses Begriffes: COSERIU (1958/[3]78: 230).

4.   "Linguistic change does not exist"

[Una lingua come sistema di segni] è un *ergon*, . . . frutto della *enérgeia* ossia dell'attività di generazioni di parlanti, volta per volta facenti uso dell'*ergon* a loro giunto.

V. Pisani, 1980

1.   Aims and Basic Concepts

1.1.   In this lecture I do not claim to solve the specific problems of our Conference,* such as: the problem of simplicity, of markedness, and so on; rather, I would like to show w h e r e and h o w these problems must be dealt with in the context of the main problem of linguistic change viewed from the standpoint of a dynamic conception of language as creativity (ἐνέργεια). I am convinced, however, that such problems will be solved, as far as their theoretical aspects are concerned, precisely when we show their real and epistemological status, at which point they will become simply general problems of historical description.

In order to obtain these goals I will present in a new form the essentials of my theory of linguistic change, a theory already exposed in its basic outlines 25 years ago in my book *Sincronía, diacronía e historia* (Montevideo, 1957/58 = A 84), but which has not always been understood, because of the "Hispanicum est, non legitur" and because of the oddity of my background in the "spirit of that time", especially in the Englishspeaking world. Today, thanks not least to some notions of generative grammar and to a better knowledge of Humboldt, the times are much better, so that I hope not to surprise you with a completely heterodox conception.

1.2.   As a basis for the understanding of the main problem alluded to, or rather of the corresponding theses, we need a certain number of categorial concepts and/or basic distinctions. The first of these distinctions should be made between "Nature" and "Culture", or between *Necessity* and *Freedom,* in the Kantian sense. Language belongs to the world of culture or freedom, that is, to the world of the intentional productive activities of man, such as art, science, technology, philosophy, and so on. These activities are essentially not only "productive", but "creative" as well. By *creativity* we understand a twofold productivity: Productivity as regards the produced "objects" and productivity as regards the production of the corresponding procedures of production (which themselves

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*   This paper was originally presented at the "UCLA Conference on Causality and Linguistic Change" (Los Angeles, May 1982). Since its content agrees to a large extent with the ideas of the scholar we are honouring here, however I take pleasure in dedicating it to him as a sign of my sincere admiration for his work and of the deep affection I have felt for him over the years. [Dieser Beitrag ist in der Festschrift für Vittore Pisani erschienen. Anm. d. Hrsg.]

can be "produced"). Thus creativity is the characteristic property of the human activities which not only apply rules of production, but at the same time change such rules. Finally, we need a particular concept of "causality", or rather we need to distinguish between *causality* in the strict sense of the word, *finality* and *conditioning*. In the case of linguistic change it is in fact possible, as in the production of any cultural object, to ask about the four "causes" distinguished by Aristotle: efficient, material, formal and final cause. But the e f f i c i e n t cause in the case of cultural objects is man as a creative subject, that is, generally speaking, freedom itself. And that is why the concept of efficient cause is of no use for the cultural sciences. In other words, searching for such "causes" is pointless in this area: one k n o w s what the cause is. The m a t e r i a l cause is here the matter from which a cultural object is made, and it represents only historical problems, those of origin (for instance, in the case of linguistic change: substratum, superstratum, and so on). The f o r m a l cause, if realized, coincides here with f i n a l i t y , and finality is the produced object itself in its cultural and functional value: thus the finality of the activity that produces the *Iliad* is the *Iliad* itself as a work of art, and the finality of the romance future tense is nothing else but this future tense itself in its function as a particular tense in a particular verb system. For this reason, we will apply the concepts of *cause* and *causality* exclusively to the efficient causes in the sphere of nature, that is, to the "causes, that, in the same conditions (or circumstances) n e c e s s a r i l y produce the same effects". On the other hand we will call *conditioning* the totality of the circumstances in which a creative activity occurs and which determine the accomplishment of this activity historically (that is, the circumstances which freedom in the form of practical intelligence takes into account in the creation of cultural objects: in the case of linguistic change, these are the so-called "intralinguistic" and "extralinguistic" factors).

1.3. The actual problem of linguistic change viewed from the standpoint of the conception of language as a creative activity can best be understood, in my opinion, if we start from the assumption that linguistic change "does not exist". By non-existence I mean a) the non-existence of change in the form largely accepted in linguistics; b) the imperceptibility of its existence in the sense in which it really takes place; and c) the fact that a newly-created linguistic phenomenon may often be interpreted at one and the same time as change and non-change: as renewal and as application.

As a matter of fact, there are three ways in which what has been called "linguistic change" does not exist: first, it does not exist as a modification in an "object" conceived of as being continuous, as a process of change in external phenomena (as, for example, *a* > [becomes] *e*); second, it usually does not exist for the speakers of a language, who normally are convinced — so far as their own activity is concerned — that they are continuing a linguistic tradition without change; and third, it often does not exist in language as δύναμις (as system of procedures), but rather only in language as ἔργον, as a product of already given procedures of the production of language, which as such do not become different.

2. Linguistic Change as Creation of Language

2.1. Because of the needs of scientific research, especially of analytical and descriptive practise, every language is made into an o b j e c t , it is objectified to be something external. This is surely necessary on operational grounds, nor is it dangerous as long as one is concerned only with description, with the identification of language "products", and as long as one does not forget how a language really exists. But it is dangerous when one deals with theoretical problems, for theoretical problems cannot be solved on the basis of an abstraction; and it is dangerous when we deal with historical problems, if the so-called "language evolution" is attributed to such an abstraction. Yet this is precisely what happens in the case of linguistic change. The difference between two objectified, consecutive states of a language (for example $A : B$) is interpreted as linguistic change, as a process by which one fact becomes another, that is, at the same time, as the uninterrupted continuation of a part of this fact, which is thought to represent its i p s i t y , its "being itself" ($a >$ [becomes] e). The totality of such differences is then viewed as a single phenomenon (once again, "linguistic change", or linguistic "evolution"), and one searches for its objective "causes", ultimately for a single general, continually active cause, since the objective "result" ("change") is conceived of as o n e general phenomenon.

2.2.1. A language, however, does not exist as an object or an organism of nature, and thus it does not have an organic continuity independent of the consciousness of its speakers. A language is an historically given "technique" of speaking: it exists only as a tradition of the ability to speak, that is, as a traditional t e c h n i c a l k n o w l e d g e , or as a "competence" which has been handed down by and to the individual members of language communities. Thus, what is interpreted as "linguistic change" is not a process of change in language products (*a* does not become *e*!) but rather the c r e a t i o n o f l a n - g u a g e t r a d i t i o n s , the historical objectivization of what has been produced in speech; that is to say, nothing other than *language as it is being created*. It is true that in this way certain traditions also die out (which is to say, they are abandoned), but this does not mean that t h e s e traditions as such have b e c o m e the n e w traditions which have replaced them.

2.2.2. First of all, every fact of "becoming" is in the language a "replacement". This is not merely a question of formulation, for the understanding of different aspects of language development depends on it; as, for instance, the fact that the old traditions and the new ones into which they seem to develop can coexist (as for example in old Spanish *ai - ei - e*, sometimes even in the same text), and that there is no difference between sound change (where continuity is assumed) and grammatical and lexical change (where continuity usually is not assumed).

Yet it is much more important that the problem of linguistic change not be understood as a problem of the replacement of an earlier fact (such as: why has *A* been replaced by *B*?), but rather as a problem of the arising of a newer fact: not from the point of view of the products, but as producing process; i.e. not "Why A → (B)?" but "Why → B?". In the case of language the already given tradition dominates to such an extent that people regard the historical product as primary and the change as secondary. In other areas of culture, where creativity stands out in the first place, we ask rather how the new facts

arise and consolidate, and not how the old ones are replaced. Incidentally, posing the problem from the point of view of the products is not fully unjustified in the case of language, as on the one hand linguistic relativity almost always arises in a given language technique, and on the other hand the new facts for their part must be integrated into this technique. Nevertheless, the same is true for language as for other forms of culture: in language too, "change" and growth is the primary event, and the product handed down the secondary one: *in linguistics too we should look forwards, not backwards.*

2.2.3. From this point of view linguistic change is not "change" but *the construction, the making of language:* it is the originary phenomenon through which a language arises, comes into being. Thus, the formula "A is replaced by B" must be correctly understood: it concerns language as p r o d u c t , not the p r o c e s s of linguistic change. The elements A and B are equivalent products at different stages of the produced language, not in the linguistic change. They are of the same range, i.e. they have the same position in the language as a set of traditions; but from the point of view of linguistic change (= originating of a fact of language) A is only the material with which B is done: the m a t e - r i a l   c a u s e of B. Incidentally, there are also — not only in vocabulary — linguistic traditions that die out without being replaced and there are new traditions that do not replace older ones; and only from a formal point of view we may consider the straight-forward disappearance of traditions as a "replacement by zero", and the arising without replacement, as a "replacement of zero". Moreover, the material for a linguistic "change" (= creation) can come from another language, and one cannot say e.g. that the meaning of lat. *comprehendere* "replaces" that of gr. συλλαμβάνω.

2.2.4. So, linguistic change is the historical process by which language disappears or arises, by which linguistic traditions die out or come into being, and by which often new traditions partially or wholly take the "place" of those dying out in the system of tradi-tions which we call a language. Certainly, what becomes different through change is the specific language itself as a historical product, as a set of traditions; and in this sense we can speak of "linguistic change", i.e. of change *in* a language or in languages. But properly speaking this does not mean that a language as an objective product (*ergon*) changes: it means that a language is produced. In the right perspective, languages are not continually changing: they are continually being produced, being done.

3.   The Three Problems of Linguistic Change

3.0.   The historical process of linguistic change in this sense, however, does not imply a single problem but three different problems or types of problems, which belong to three different levels: a) the universal problem of linguistic change (why do languages change at all?); b) the general problem of linguistic change (how and under what intra- and extra-linguistic conditions do languages normally change?): c) the historical problem of every individual change, that is, the problem of justifying the creation of a particular tradition and possibly the replacement of an earlier tradition. These problems must be seen as distinct from each other; in particular, the answer to the first question does not answer the second question, nor vice versa. Only the first question is a theoretical one. The second is an empirical question of generalized language history: the question of what happens ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, mostly in language history. The third one is in every instance a historical question in the proper sense of that word.

3.1.1.   The first question is answered sufficiently by identifying the essence of linguistic change, that is, by tracing it back to the universal principles which are given in the corres-ponding concept: linguistic change is the historical objectivization of linguistic creativity. Language "becomes" — is created — historically, because language is, in fact, a creative activity and at the same time one which is directed towards other people: I call this last dimension of language, otherdirectedness, *alterity.* Linguistic change is not a result, a product of causes, but is the immediate manifestation, the primary emergence of the creativity and alterity of language. As pure creativity, linguistic change is originating of language; as creativity *in* a specific language and as historical objectivization, it is origi-nating of *a* specific language. Thus, it simply is not true that linguistic change in itself at the universal level is an enigmatic phenomenon: "Explaining" linguistic change is at this level u n d e r s t a n d i n g linguistic change, i.e. understanding what linguistic change *is.* Those who search for causes (or for o n e cause) at this level, and do not find any, simply misunderstand the nature of linguistic change, and the nature of language itself, for lin-guistic change is nothing else but *language coming into existence.* Here we need not search for an efficient cause at all: this is given by man as the creative subject; nor need we search for a general objective finality: it is given in each linguistic change itself. Indeed, what we do not yet know for sure and what must be the object of linguistic research is what motivations are the most frequent in the history of languages. But this question cannot be answered by language theory as such.

3.1.2.   At this level we can only infer the type of motivation and say whether one or several motivations are to be assumed. To do this, however, we have to consider the usual course of the process of every linguistic change and make a certain number of distinc-tions. I made these distinctions in this form quite a few years ago, and they were made later by others in very similar form, so that today they, as well as their consequences, are widely known. However, I must mention them, not in order to claim priority for myself, but because certain wrong conclusions and erroneous assumptions circulating in linguistics have not yet been wholly eliminated. First we must make a clear distinction between *innovation* in discourse (performance) and *change* in language (competence). And as regards linguistic change as a process in a community of speakers we must distinguish four phases: *adoption* (of an innovation by an individual), *diffusion* (adoption by several individuals), *selection* (alternating use of the older and the newer tradition), *mutation* (abandonment of one of the two traditions and retention of the other, or establishment of a certain distribution of both traditions in the same "dialect" or eventually in different "dialects"). Hence, the basic form of linguistic change is adoption, which always takes place individually (even if several individuals accept at the same time the same innovation in their language). Diffusion is only a series of successive adoptions: selection is in itself a fact of discourse; mutation is only the final point of the process of linguistic change in a given community of speakers.

3.1.2. These distinctions make it easier to understand certain aspects of linguistic change and to solve correctly certain problems, especially the problem of graduality and the problem of regularity in linguistic change. Adoption takes place in the Saussurean *langue*, that is, in a language technique, and for this reason it can never be gradual and "imperceptible": it is always instantaneous. Sound change is in this respect not different from grammatical change, and phonetic change is not different from phonemic change. The illusion of graduality arises from the alternative use in the selection phase, and from diffusion. Likewise, any adoption which does not concern a single form, but rather a systematic procedure, is regular, that is, generally applicable. As regards regularity, there may be differences concerning their structural level as well as differences in quantity — a change may concern for example the system or the norm, o n e unity or a connected series of unities, a unity or series of unities in any context or only in one specific context, and so on; but there are no differences in quality.

Therefore we must make a clear distinction between *intensive generality* or regularity (generality in a language technique, in a system of procedures) and *extensive generality* or plain generality (generality in a speech community): linguistic change is essentially "general" (regular) from the intensive, but not from the extensive point of view: in the latter respect it is always generalization or diffusion, that is, a series of adoptions. The illusion of an extensive generality given from the beginning arises primarily due to the fact that analogous innovations may come about and be retained at different points of a language area more or less at the same time (certainly always individually). And furthermore, in the selection phase, regularity may be suspended in single cases or in whole series of cases: and from this arise the "exceptions", for example in the case of the so-called "phonetic laws". Consequently the traditional principle of viewing regularity as primary and the exceptions as secondary is completely justified. As a matter of fact, regularity belongs to the act by which a language fact is created, and in such an act a procedure is regular for the simple reason that in each case it is a single fact: it is a pattern for classes of future uses. For example in the case of sound change the "phonetic law" does not represent the final result, but the starting point of the corresponding process in the speech community. But it is true that with various adoptions a given change can be interpreted in various ways. Due to this and to the "exceptions" which result from selection, the illusion of initial irregularity comes about, especially the interpretation of phonic change as spreading from one word to others. If for example certain speakers of Spanish say *amao* but *prado*, they apply a different rule than those who say *amao* and *prao*: for the latter, *ao* stands for every *-ado*, for the former, it only stands for the *-ado* in participles; and this does not mean at all that the change "spreads" from the participles to other forms.

I will explain my example. We must assume three phases, i.e. three different "languages": 1) *-ado,* 2) *-ao* (Part.) / *-ado* (in the other cases), 3) *-ao* (in all cases). Because of the selection between 1) and 2), certain more frequent participles are more numerous in speech. Because of the fact that *-ao* participles are contained in 2) as well as in 3) and because of the selection between 2) and 3), participles ending in *-ao* are more frequent in speech than other *-ao* forms. But this does not mean that the change *-ado > ao* "spreads" from participles to other forms (or from the more frequent to the less frequent participles).

3.1.4. The distinction between *innovation* and *adoption* also helps us to put the question about the motivation of change in the right form. As a general principle, innovation as such can also be unintentional, that is, it can also be "causally" conditioned in a real sense, for speech is also a psycho-physically conditioned activity. But a causally conditioned innovation surely has little chance of being adopted and spread: there are for instance no examples of slips of the tongue that would have been generalized. Adoption, on the contrary, is an exclusively mental act that takes place in the language as a technique, that is, on the level of "linguistic knowledge"; therefore it is always intentional though intuitive (this is in principle not different from usual language learning), and so it can have no "cause", but only a final (functional, cultural, social or aesthetic) motivation. On the other hand, there cannot be in principle only one motivation for all linguistic changes, for linguistic change is not o n e fact, but a general class of facts, and embraces ultimately the whole language. But what is more: linguistic change is innovation a n d adoption; and a linguistic change in the language of a community is a series of adoptions, i.e. the change is repeated, newly performed, upon each adoption. Thus it cannot be assumed that the motivation of innovation and adoption m u s t be the same, nor that during the spreading of the change the same motivation should be valid for all adoptions. Of course, the general subjective motivation is always the "alterity" (we take over the language of someone else), but there are different types of concrete alterity. The objective general motivation is always the finality (the end product itself), but by comparing the newly-created fact and the one to be replaced, different types of finality become apparent. S i m p l i f i c a t i o n for example is a type of objective finality; the adoption of the language of a prestige group corresponds to a type of subjective finality, of socio-cultural motivation. As for the circumstances under which the speakers renew their language, they are only c o n d i t i o n s and not c a u s e s of linguistic change: they actually tell us that a linguistic change *may* take place, and not that it *must,* because, for this to be achieved, the circumstances must actually be taken into account by the speakers: only finality makes them actual conditions of change. In this sense, conditions are a form of secondary dependent motivation. A change does not take place e.g. b e c a u s e there are differences in prestige, but rather t o g a i n prestige: it does not take place because a rule is complicated, rather to simplify it. Finality has of course absolute value, but only as actual, realized finality. For this reason, a certain type of finality cannot be assumed for all cases in which it can be imagined on account of an objective situation. If, for example, a neutralizable opposition is reduced to one member, then very often this member is the neutral one, but not always and not necessarily. Complicated rules are often simplified and rules with restricted application are often generalized; but even in such situations there need not be any linguistic change at all, or change may happen in the opposite, unexpected direction.

3.2.1. For the second question, one can only be concerned with the "how" of linguistic change and with an explanation of its rhythm in the history of languages. For instance: what types of innovations are most often diffused and under what circumstances does linguistic change take place in a strikingly accelerated rhythm? Here we are concerned with the more common types of subjective and objective finality that motivate linguistic change, and with the types of conditions which the speakers thus take into account; in

other words: with determining how freedom acts in most cases in the production of languages, that is, with the n o r m s of the corresponding activity. So the actual question here is not "what are the causes of linguistic change?" but rather "how does freedom usually act in the construction and reconstruction of languages?" "Explaining" linguistic change is at this level identifying the m o s t f r e q u e n t types of final motivation. For this reason, the norms we establish as far as our second question is concerned can only be objects of empirical-historical, not of theoretical research. For example, to prove the norm of simplification as such, it must be shown that simplification occurs more frequently, or much more frequently than the opposite. On the other hand, it belongs to the essence of such norms that they are not absolute and they allow exceptions, for indeed they are not "causes" with necessary "effects". The fact that in the cultural sciences only such norms can be established, is not a weakness of these sciences; on the contrary, it is their strength, for they are a specific feature of the cultural sciences which has no equivalent in the natural sciences.

3.2.2. As far as the rhythm of language-development is concerned, we are convinced that an accelerated rhythm depends on two general conditions: weakness (lack of stability) in language tradition — for example because of language mixing or socio-cultural revolutions with a corresponding decay of traditional culture — and coexistence of contrary principles in the language type (viewed historically: the transition from one language type to another); such as in the cases of: Latin → Romance: Old French → Modern French; Old English → English. In cases when these conditions are not present, or only one of them is present, for example in isolated and culturally uniform communities or in languages with a largely uniform language type, the rhythm of language development is much slower; as for example in the case of Icelandic or the Turkish languages.

3.3. For the third question, one is always concerned with the exhaustive justification of a particular change in the history of a language: i.e. How creativity has operated and has been integrated in a definite language at a definite time. The corresponding answers give one possibilities for identifying classes and types of motivation, that is, for answering the second question; and these classes and types, in turn, supply the framework and background (the "working hypotheses") for answering questions of this third type.

4.   Language as Procedure and as Product

4.1. The speakers of a language are normally convinced that they do not change the language, but only realize it; they do not even recognize objectively "new" facts which they themselves created as new facts, but consider them as already "existing" or view them at least as a mere continuation and application of their language tradition.

4.2. This fact is certainly connected in the first place with the weight and the status of tradition in language as contrasted with other forms of culture, forms in which creativity and the originality of individual creation is most striking. At the same time, however, this conviction of the speakers points to an intuition of the characteristic nature of language, namely to the basic difference between language "making" and language "made", be-

tween language as an open technique, as a system of procedures, and language as a product, as that which is made with the help of these procedures, or between language as a system of rules of various degrees of generality and language as the already accomplished application of these rules to a given material. Language as a system of procedures and hence of technical possibilities always contains more than every instance of produced, realized language, that is, each language possesses a "future dimension". It is in this sense that I think we have to interpret Wilhelm von Humboldt's assumption that language is never wholly "there": "denn die Sprache kann ja nicht als ein daliegender, in seinem Ganzen übersehbarer oder nach und nach mittheilbarer Stoff, sondern muss als ein sich ewig erzeugender angesehen werden, wo die Gesetze der Erzeugung bestimmt sind, aber der Umfang und gewissermassen auch die Art des Erzeugnisses gänzlich unbestimmt bleiben" (HUMBOLDT: 1835/1963: 431). Here the question is obviously not that of the so-called production of sentences on the basis of given rules, but rather that of the production of language itself, that of the production of "rules" on the basis of more general rules. This means that what from one point of view is a procedure of production is from another point of view a product, and that the speakers have an intuitive knowledge of these relations in their language.

5.   Norm, System and Type. Application and Interpretation

5.1.1. The conception of linguistic change as "non-change" (as the mere application of previously given rules or procedures) indeed presupposes a distinction between levels of language technique. These levels are: the actually-realized technique which can be handed down as an already produced language (*language norm*), the technique as a system of functional oppositions and procedures (*language system*) and the technique as a system of types of functions and procedures, or rather as a system of principles for language production, principles which underlie these functions and procedures of a language system (*language types*).

5.1.2. Most, and in a certain light *all*, changes in language norm correspond to the already given functions and procedures of the language system, and most of the changes in the language system correspond to already given principles of the respective language type. Thus, the romance imperfect of children's games, the so-called *imparfait préludique*, for example in Spanish "*entonces yo era el rey y tu eras la reina* (in the game we will now play)", seems to be of relatively recent date in most of the Romance languages, and in this sense it represents a "change" in language norm; but it corresponds to the already given functional range of the romance imperfect as a tense of "non-actuality". A new derivation like the form *firmamental* cited by Saussure as a form "possible" in French would also be a new event, a change in the language norm, but only application (functioning) of the language system. In the same way the language type is applied in the extension or change of the language system. Thus the type of the Romance languages (with the exception of Modern French) is governed by a general principle: "internal (paradigmatic) determinations for internal (non-relational) functions, external (syntagmatic) determinations — that 'periphrastic' expressions — for external (relational)

functions". And this principle applies in these languages, beginning from Vulgar Latin: in the case of non-relational functions, as number, gender and primary verbal tenses, the paradigmatic expression was maintained or systematically restored and enlarged, whereas in the case of relational functions, as case and comparison, the paradigmatic expression was also consequently abandoned and reduced, and this partly continues well into our time (take for example the case forms of personal pronouns). The Romance languages, especially the languages of the southern domain, from Portuguese to Rumanian, are so strikingly similar to one another, not only because of their common material basis and because of mutual influences, but primarily because they have been historically produced by means of the same language technique, especially at the level of language type. The term "tendency" has been used in this connection. But "tendency" (or "trend") in itself is a formal concept: in concrete terms the question is that of a progressive application of the same principles of production.

5.1.3.   This means, then: development (change) of the norm and mere application of the language system; development of the language system and mere application of the language type. An important methodological consequence of this is that the distinction between synchrony (functioning) and diachrony (change), or rather between the application of rules and the change of rules, must be abandoned as a real distinction for such developments. For in reality there is diachrony of the norm within synchrony — functioning — of the system, and diachrony of the system within synchrony of the language type.

5.2.   The application of procedures and principles presupposes, however, an intuitively made interpretation of these procedures and principles. But the interpretation can also be a "reinterpretation", it can also diverge from the "objective" (more general) interpretation. Thus, certain speakers of French interpreted the /z/ of the liaison as a plural prefix; hence forms as zieux, quatre-z-officiers, or even in standard French Vous êtes Italien without liaison and vous êtes Italiens with. In Rumanian, the imperatives in -i and -e were reinterpreted as corresponding to an opposition 'intransitive/transitive', for by chance this was actually the case with many verbs (compare, for example dormi, "sleep", fugi, "run", as opposed to scóate, "take out", bate, "hit"), and in our days many verbs of the 3rd and 4th conjugation that may be transitive as well as intransitive, do have two imperative forms (plĭngi, "weep", but plĭnge-l, "deplore him"). Objectively one can surely say that there is a "change" in such cases. But the speakers behave even in the case of a reinterpretation as if they were not changing the language, for they are convinced that their interpretation is correct, that is, that the corresponding procedures are already "given" in the language.

5.3.   More thorough investigations would show, I think, that language norm changes almost exclusively through the application of the system, the system in turn changes largely through the application of language type and partly through reinterpretation, and language type changes almost exclusively through reinterpretation.

6.   Conclusions

Linguistic change is, if one views language as ᾿ενέργεια, a primary linguistic phenomenon, that is, it is not "change", rather the historical construction of languages. This construction takes place largely through the application of procedures of production given in the language itself. From this point of view the concepts being discussed here belong to different conceptual levels and to different parts of the problem of linguistic change. The concepts *finality* and *causality* belong to the theory of linguistic change. *Causality,* in the true sense of the term, is a spurious concept with respect to language, because linguistic change cannot have any "causes" at all. This concept should, then, be replaced by the concept *motivation.* *Finality,* on the other hand, is in the right place here, since the motivation of linguistic change is, indeed, finalistic; it is advisable, however, to make a distinction between *objective* and *subjective finality.* Concepts like *simplicity, economy,* and *markedness* refer to forms of objective finality and belong to empirical-historical research. As far as they refer to the activity of the speaker, these terms denote *norms* of this activity. These norms tell us not *why* but *how* linguistic change occurs; and not how absolutely and necessarily, but how ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ: in most cases. And it is exactly these norms that constitute the object of an investigation of linguistic change: the linguistic question is not *why* but *to what end* and *how.* The objective *conditions* of linguistic change (e.g. "system pressure") also belong to empirical-historical research: these conditions, however, must not be regarded as "causes" nor as independent "motivation": they belong to the secondary motivation. One may of course call the *norms* as well as the *conditions* "causes", but these are different senses of the term "cause". The *tendencies,* as far as they are, strictly speaking, intralinguistic, that is, as far as they concern the internal structure of the language, are manifestations of the historical functioning of language types. Finally, *application* and *reinterpretation* must be added to our set of concepts; these last two concepts denote the most general formal kinds of accepted innovations and thus of linguistic change.