



Wiener Werkstätte

Historical Sociolinguistics Conference 2015

*Strategies of Language Variation: Transcultural Perspectives*

Within the Cooperation Network Sociolinguistic Forum

**Barbara SOUKUP (Vienna)**

*Speaker / Author Design from the perspective of synchronic linguistics*

*As Johnstone (1999: 519) remarks, “The idea that linguistic choices can serve rhetorical purposes has a history of several centuries.” She then adds somewhat wryly, “The idea has been rediscovered by sociolinguists several times.” The purpose of this contribution is to review how sociolinguists currently deal with this idea, particularly within the realm of contemporary synchronic variation study. Specifically, I discuss the ‘Speaker Design’ approach to sociolinguistic variation (Schilling-Estes 2002, 2014), which largely centers on spoken language use, and outline the kind of work and theorizing it has produced so far. Then, I show how this approach can be transposed to investigations of conceptually written language use – as ‘Author Design’ – particularly in the analysis of historical texts. In this line, my goal is both to outline and assess the current status quo in the study of strategic language choice, as well as to expound on how it can be used to integrate variationist with historical sociolinguistics, for the benefit and gain of both fields of research.*

**Manfred GLAUNINGER (Vienna)**

*Semiotic aspects of linguistic heterogeneity*

*Against the background of an – at least implicit – semiotic construal of language variation/varieties which is a characteristic of modern sociolinguistic paradigms (cf. Eckert 2012) this lecture focuses on “language” (and thus linguistic heterogeneity) within the scope of a specific operational constructivist approach (cf. Glauninger 2012, 2014). In this context the following will be discussed: a) an epistemological (vs. ontological) inter-pretation of “(socio-)linguistics” and language as a “social” phenomenon; b) common linguistic strategies in the modeling of language as a system against the evolution of systematicity in systems theory; c) (the use of) language (variation/varieties, i.e. heterogeneity) as a sign and its socio-pragmatic and systemic implications; d) Peircean semiotics as a metatheory of (socio-)linguistics.*



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#### Bibliography

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Glauninger, Manfred Michael (2012): *Zur Metasoziosemiose des ‚Wienerischen‘. Aspekte einer funktionalen Sprachvariationstheorie*. *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 166, 110–118.

— (2014): *Salienz und System*. *Linguistik online* 66/4, 21–29.

#### Jan HOUBEN (Paris)

##### *Diglossia as reflected in the Sanskrit Grammarians*

*Just as structural and generative linguistics have a predecessor in Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) – who has several times been recognized as such – sociolinguistics has an important predecessor in Antoine Meillet (1866-1936), for whom language was “éminement un fait social” (Linguistique historique et linguistique générale, p. 230) – but he has been rarely recognized as such.*

*The Cooperation Network “Sociolinguistic Forum” and the organizers of this Conference have invited the speakers to address “issues resulting from taking up a current sociolinguistic perspective on the phenomena of variation / heterogeneity in conceptually written language in historical texts” and, more specifically, to address six specific questions. Accordingly, in the first part of this paper the issues and questions specified will be addressed. In the second part I will reflect on the dichotomies suggested by the organizers – written vs. oral, conceptually written vs. conceptually spoken, historical vs. non-historical – and investigate whether, and, if yes, to what extent, these dichotomies are useful in dealing with language use in ancient and classical India, especially as reflected in the work of Sanskrit grammarians such as Pāṇini (4th century BCE), Patañjali (2nd century BCE) and Bhartrhari (5th century CE). We will demonstrate why it is useful to accept an early stage of language use which precedes the two stages evoked by the organizers,*

*(a) “conceptually spoken present-day communication” and*

*(b) “conceptually written language in historical texts”.*

*The third stage preceding these two is*

*(c) “ancient, conceptually spoken language”*



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to which we have access only through ancient texts which are not yet “conceptually written”.

I will briefly explore the possibility to deal with the latter by proposing a phenomenological analysis of word derivations according to Pāṇinian grammar in its 4th century BCE sociolinguistic context. These derivations make sense only if Sanskrit language use (what Pāṇini’s commentator Patañjali calls *bhāṣā*) has overlapping domains with Prakrit language use (of which we find the earliest approximate records in the third century BCE inscriptions of King Aśoka).

**Vincent ELTSCHINGER (Vienna)**

***Why did the Buddhists adopt Sanskrit?***

There are good grounds to believe that, from very early on, the Buddhist monastics and missionaries were encouraged to learn and preach the “Good Law” in their own regional dialects/languages. But for reasons that remain entirely unclear, attempts were gradually made to “Sanskritize” the canonical scriptures and to compose new narrative, philosophical and doctrinal literature directly in Sanskrit. Several hypotheses have been formulated as to why most Buddhist authors/redactors turned to Sanskrit from, say, the second century CE, but most often only in passing. These conjectures range from the supposedly appealing formal features of Sanskrit to the expediency of a transregional koinè and the proselytic needs of the Buddhist communities. As far as the speaker’s knowledge goes, however, no one has ever inquired into the opinion of the Buddhists themselves. Although such “emic” testimonies are extremely rare, some have come down to us in the various strata of the massive third- to fourth-century Buddhist *śūtra* entitled *Yogācārabhūmi*. The aim of this paper is to take a closer look at them and thus gain insight into at least some Buddhists’ ideas as regards the relevance of Sanskrit.



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**Chiara BARBATI (Vienna)**

*Heterogeneity in the language of the Sogdian Diaspora communities*

Generally speaking, we refer to Sogdians as the main caravan merchants along the Silk Road especially from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The center of ancient Sogdiana was around the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara (present-day Uzbekistan), but in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and above all after the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab conquest and, consequently, the Islamization of Sogdiana, prompted many Sogdians to move further east, in particular to China, and induced those who already lived there to remain. It has been amply demonstrated that they played an important role in the social, artistic, economic and political life in Central Asia and China until the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The history of the Sogdians is a history of communities in the homeland as well as along the Silk Road, shifting confederations of principalities which were surrounded by other Iranian and, above all, non-Iranian speaking communities (first of all, the Turkish and the Chinese ones). The Sogdian language (an eastern Middle Iranian language) which is often called the *lingua franca* of the Silk Road, is attested through a corpus which is fragmentary and spread over a wide geographical area as well as over several centuries. Leaving aside legend on coins as well as the epigraphic evidence, the Sogdian written material consists of non-religious and religious texts from the Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Manichaeian and eastern Christian communities along the Silk Road. To the first group belong: the so called "Ancient Letters" (letters reporting commercial activities, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century, route between Dunhuang and Loulan, Gansu and Xinjiang, China); the letters from Mount Mugh, (letters, legal, administrative and economic texts, 8<sup>th</sup> century east of Samarkand, Uzbekistan); documents from Penjikent area, (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century, Tajikistan); few medical fragments and magical texts (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century, Dunhuang, Gansu, China); a fragment of the story of Rustam, (an epic Iranian hero, 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century, Dunhuang Gansu, China); Turco-Sogdian texts, (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century, Dunhuang, Gansu, China). To the second group belong: a small fragment of *Ašəm Vohū* (one of the fundamental prayers in the Zoroastrianism, first centuries of CE, Dunhuang, Gansu, China); Buddhist texts, (mostly are translations from Chinese and Sanskrit, 6<sup>th</sup> century - 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, Gansu and Xinjiang, China); Manichaeian texts (mostly translations from Middle Persian and Parthian, 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century, Gansu and Xinjiang, China); Christian texts, translations



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of Syriac texts belonging to the Church of the East, 9<sup>th</sup> century – /11<sup>th</sup> century Bulayiq, Xinjiang, China).

*The language of this diverse, if fragmentary corpus is remarkably heterogeneous and eludes attempts of synthetic, systematic description. Various explanatory models have been adduced to account for this heterogeneity, mostly focusing on purely linguistic language change, dialect variation and language contact. Where sociolinguistic considerations have been taken into consideration, they focused on diastatic models or on discussions of cultural terms. I propose a broader look which fully considers the historical context of the communities in which the texts were produced and in particular the important aspect of translation literature.*

*Focusing on the written material belonging to the Sogdian Diaspora communities in Xinjiang, the present contribution is aimed at answering the following questions: under what circumstances was the language testified by our texts susceptible to influence? And to what extent? What are the circumstances that triggered phenomena of language variation? And is it possible to establish criteria of variation?*

**Gianfilippo TERRIBILI (Rome)**

***Language variation and defensive strategies of religious identity:  
the case of Dēnkard III and Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature***

*The paper aims to present as a case study the linguistic and stylistic peculiarities characterizing the third book of the Dēnkard, one of the most authoritative texts within Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature (IX-X AD). Modern scholarship has often regarded the obscure style as well as the lexical and syntactic intricacies of many Pahlavi texts as due to the progressive loss of acquaintance in Middle Persian language that affected learned priests. Although this period of transition marked a turning point in Iranian linguistic history, the analysis suggests a different approach considering the linguistic and stylistic features of the Dēnkard III as a coherent system, functional to the author's aims. Indeed the sophisticated textual structure, which includes rhetorical devices as well as high percentages of unusual morphosyntactic patterns and technical terminology, points*



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*out the grammatical awareness of the author in his use and reshaping of the linguistic instrument. The variations will thus be related to the social and cultural context in which the text was composed, arguing how the language was intentionally moulded in order to fulfil the dialectic strategies pursued by the writer. In the multilingual environment of Early Islamic Iran, the Dēnkard III, though based on a conservative literary tradition, hoped to establish a new and alternative linguistic model, an effective support for proper apologetic, exegetic and philosophical arguments. Along with the content, also the written pattern becomes a means to assert religious and intellectual identity; it can in fact be reconsidered as part of the reaction performed by the leading class of a subordinate and decreasing community against the pressures exerted by the surrounding society's transformation. In order to provide a more comprehensive glimpse on the implementation of the old literary language, the research will underline the outward/inward dynamics which address both the sustainability of theological dialectic against the politically dominant religious community (outward interaction) and the leading-role claims of a group within a politically subordinated community (inward interaction). This second aspect offers an interpretative key concerning how the priestly elite's circle tried to preserve the leadership of a waning community, struggling to keep firm its social prestige, authority and favourable revenues even through the mastery of literary proficiency. The Dēnkard III's linguistic strategies may therefore suggest considerations on either the dynamics involving dominant and subordinate communities, or the power balance among groups of a community experiencing dramatic changes within its social and economic structures.*

**Herbert SCHENDL (Vienna)**

***Medieval English code-switching***

*The multilingualism of medieval England has produced not only numerous monolingual texts in Latin, French and English, but also a wide range of texts, both non-literary and literary, which show a wide range of code-switching between these three languages of literacy. The linguistic choices made by the writers of medieval texts, especially mul-*



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*tilingual ones, frequently carry sociolinguistic and pragmatic functions, whose interpretation has to be based on a detailed analysis of sociolinguistic variables. There is clear evidence that written code-switching was widely accepted and hardly stigmatized in medieval England. In spite of these facts, historical English linguistics still tends to adopt a predominantly monolingual perspective in the linguistic and sociolinguistic study of the Middle English period, both in its theoretical outlook and its choice of data.*

*The present paper will discuss the great potential which the analysis of medieval written code-switching offers for the study of the linguistic situation of the period. Code-switching has to be seen as a reflection of late medieval multilingualism which is inseparably linked to linguistic choices which multilingual scribes and authors had to constantly make in their daily routine. It generally reflects their impressive multilingual competence, not the lack of it, as so often claimed not only in older research. Based on the analyses of different text types carried out in recent years, the paper will also address the guiding questions of the symposium, such as functions linked to the use of different languages, the variation resulting from this and the question of drawing borders between languages; finally, the occurrence and relevance of metalinguistic commentaries on the use of different language.*

**Christian GASTGEBER (Vienna)**

***Documents of the Patriarchal Chancery:***

***Aspects of variations relating to the addressees (audience)***

*Two unique register books of the 14th c. document the day-to-day activities of the Holy Synod in the Patriarchate of Constantinople; about 900 documents of synod sessions (incl. letters of the patriarch) are preserved from a time of political as well as theological turmoil in two original manuscripts, partly contemporary copies of the patriarchal notaries, partly autographs of persons concerned. These documents of the patriarchal chancellery provide insight, too, into a linguistic differentiation of addressees according to their linguistic level - a fact, that surprises as the bureaucratic system of a chancellery seems to be rigid and inflexible.*



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*The texts vary on a large scale of linguistic differentiation and underline a particular awareness of linguistic respect of the addressee's level of education. A linguistic approach to these documents not only reveals particular grades of balancing between high-level and vernacular language, but discloses quite more a sense for intended variation in the chancellery, because other documents of the same time were issued in totally differing linguistic level.*

*These unique documents reflect the daily practice of one of the highest chancelleries in the Byzantine empire and illustrate a kind of medieval speaker design and audience relevance – a very promising approach for historical sociolinguistics. The intended variation in vocabulary, grammar and style disclose a broad range of linguistic modulation and confront with the question, if addressees are ascribed to a particular linguistic level due to reliable information (e.g. incoming letters) or due to stereotypes of education level and language practice (e.g. foreigners).*

**Andrea Massimo CUOMO (Vienna)**

***Greek manuscripts as a major source for the study of linguistic variation in Late Byzantium***

*This paper will focus on the concept of linguistic variation in Medieval Greek.*

*In my talk, I am going to cover two main points:*

*In the first part, I will be looking at the high-register variety of Byzantine Greek, i.e. an archaizing style based closely on the literary variety of the Attic dialect first developed in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. More concretely, I will be discussing some examples taken from literary texts dating back to the 14th Century.*

*In the second part, I will be addressing the question whether and how authors and readers in Palaeologan Constantinople were trained to write in “Atticizing Greek”.*



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**Martina SCHMIDL (Vienna)**

***The formal, the casual, the personal – the rhetoric of Late-Babylonian letters***

*This paper is going to deal with the rhetoric of Neo-Babylonian letters, fo-cus-sing on appellativa and their usage in various contexts. The texts in question will be focused on the so-called “Long Sixth Century” covering the period between the fall of the Assyrian Empire (612/610) until the Babylonian revolts against Xerxes (484), drawing on earlier material if necessary. The epistolographic sources of the first millenium BCE stem from private and institutional, i.e. temple, households.*

*As could recently be shown in the NFN project “Imperium&Officium” based in Vienna, some private letters can be situated in an archival context which makes the senders and recipients identifiable (letters neither use either dates nor family names). This in turn enables us to distinguish the usage of styles of certain people in specific situations. Stylistic variation is used within a household to convey notions of social prestige, be it within the wider range of the family or between legally distinguished social classes such as slaves and their masters. Although this sounds like a straight-forward concept, social factors of various kinds play a much larger role in influencing the choice of words of a sender. Within this wider field, this talk will take a closer look at appellativa since they are used to convey the relative status of sender to addressee. Therefore, they can give insight into social associations intrinsically connected with the chosen style. Special significance will be assigned to the appellation of women of high social standing as it can be shown to transcend the lines of sex by referring to a different gender as a means of respect and adoration (this switch has only recently discovered, to a certain extent because of scientific hesitancy to accept this form of variation as a real means of style in these contexts).*



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**Claudia RÖMER (Vienna)**

***Modern Turkish texts in flux. On some side effects of the Turkish language reform***

*Language reform is a deliberate form of language change, which represents one aspect of diachronic variation. One of the consequences of the Turkish Language Reform is that Ottoman texts have to be translated or transformed into Modern Turkish, a process that has been extended to Modern Turkish texts as well. These latter keep being revised and re-formulated, sometimes, but not always, under headings like hazırlayan ... “prepared by ...” or bugünkü Türkçeyle “in today’s Turkish” on the front pages of their new editions. This practice is equally common with literary, legal, and political texts, whereby a number of questions arise. Has an author or a speaker, or even the legislator not deliberately composed his/her text and chosen a certain wording or sentence structure? How is style affected by versions revised by others than the original author? Is there any consistency within one re-edition, or from one revision to the other of the same text, or from one period of the Turkish Republic to the other?*

*At a conference held in Vienna in 2014 I discussed some of these problems on the basis of examples taken from various versions of Atatürk’s Nutuk (or, using the modern term Söylev), the monumental speech he delivered in Ankara at the opening of the second congress of Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, the Republican People’s Party) from October 15-20, 1927.*

*In this case, all later editions except the one of 1934 were published after Atatürk’s death, so that he himself could not have any influence on the outcome any more. Therefore, one might ask oneself how the authenticity of a given text can be preserved and the author’s message conveyed.*

*This time, I will turn to a literary work, namely the short story “Knidos Afroditi” by Halikarnas Balıkcısı, whose original name was Cevat Şakir (1890-1973). According to the editor’s preface of two modernised later editions the author was at least partially involved in re-formulating his own text. However, as we do not know which are the changes he himself agreed to in detail and which are the ones done without consulting him, besides the editor’s having his general consent.*

*As I did in my previous presentation on Atatürk’s Speech, I will, among others, use Genette’s approach (Gérard Genette: Palimpseste. Die Literatur auf zweiter Stufe.*



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*Aesthetica. edition suhrkamp. 1683. Neue Folge Band 683. Aus dem Französischen von Wolfram Bayer und Dieter Hornig. Frankfurt am Main 1993. (original title : Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré. Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1982). Within the framework of transtextual relations, we can define the revised versions of original texts as hypertexts vis-à-vis the original texts, i.e. the hypotexts. Some transpositions are called thematic by Genette, and they are the ones where „the transformation of meaning is obvious, even official and deliberate.“ (Genette 288), where from one edition to the next one can observe stylization (“creating style where there was none or maybe only a very neutral one” (Genette 310-311), or where there is reduction or amplification (Genette 313-316).*

**Stephan PROCHÁZKA and Ines DALLAJI (Vienna)**

*Corpus of Tunesian Arabic*

*Our paper presents work in progress on a digital corpus of transcribed texts in the Arabic dialect of Tunis. Besides serving as the primary source for the ongoing work on a dictionary, the corpus is also used to investigate a number of selected topics dealing with the morphology and syntax of contemporary Tunis Arabic. As for the dictionary, it will not only contain all the lexicographic data of the corpus but also data from other publications. Thus the project aims to document the variety of the Tunisian capital with a special focus on the speech of the generation below thirty. The capital of Tunisia has seen – like almost all large cities in the Arab World – enormous changes during the last 40-50 years. As a result of massive migration from the countryside to the city and its suburbs, the speakers of the original city dialect of Tunis have gradually become a minority. This becomes immediately clear when one has a look at the following numbers: In 1956 the metropolitan area had 561,117 inhabitants, in 2004 almost 2.5 million, i.e. almost five times more. The original dialect of Tunis was for the first time described in the then ground-breaking study by Hans Stumme in 1896. Another monumental work was published 1984 by Hans-Rudolf Singer, who did, however, his fieldwork campaigns during the early 1960s. These two large studies and ours are roughly 50 years apart*



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*from each other which will enable us to have a diachronic look at this important dialect of Arabic. Although for many other languages a time span of 120 years would sound not very impressive for a diachronic study, in the case of Arabic dialects it is rather long, as there was nearly no research on them before the end of the 19th century. According to our texts the dialect of the younger generation differs significantly in the use of vocabulary, but there are also some phonological (e.g. the distribution of //q/ and /g/ and the use of diphthongs that was typical for women's speech) and morphological features. As for the latter we will focus on plural doublets in particular.*