

Conference *WW_HistSlx* 2015

Strategies of Language Variation: Transcultural Perspectives

Within the Cooperation Network *Sociolinguistic Forum*

24th–25th April 2015

Apostelgasse 23, A-1030 Vienna

Abstract

In the course of the discovery of a genuinely semiotic and thus communicative dimension of heterogeneity / variation in natural languages, as well as upon dealing with this dazzlingly complex phenomenon from the point of view of scientific evolution, sociolinguistics has, starting with the last quarter of the 20th century, reached its third distinctive stage of development.

Theoretical approaches to the phenomenon from the perspective of *interactional / (social) constructivist* sociolinguistics (such as the *contextualization or speaker- design paradigm*, but also modern sociolinguistic research on *style*) have become continuously more differentiating and increasingly elaborate. At the same time, their focus is traditionally on conceptually *spoken* present-day communication (including *written orality* in digital media). Conceptually *written* texts constitute - except for a few, rather minor contributions - still white spots on the map of the corresponding subject area. Similarly, the historical dimension remains vastly underexplored.

For this reason, the proposed meeting specifically addresses issues resulting from taking up a current sociolinguistic perspective on the phenomena of variation / heterogeneity in conceptually *written* language in *historical* texts. Contributions to the meeting discuss texts from a wide range of historical periods, treating a broad array of languages from all around the world.

The overall objective of the conference is to explore the application of modern sociolinguistic theory building to conceptually written language across time and space, and thus to advance and potentiate linkages between the fields of sociolinguistics and classical philology.

To this end, the papers from the various philological disciplines featured at this meeting will not discuss the phenomenon of language variation (as used by authors and as reflecting considerations e.g. of audience, addressee or socioculture) under any *a priori* assumptions and knowledge regarding the treated language(s). Rather, participants of the conference are called on to base their discussion of variation and heterogeneity in their data on a model and theory geared towards an audience of synchronic and diachronic sociolinguists at large. The goal is to identify structures and usage strategies relating to socio-cultural, socio-historical, and general language-related conditions under a cross-linguistic prerogative. The papers shall thus not be limited to a pure description of the phenomena of variation and heterogeneity as encountered in their texts, but will provide an analysis according to the above-mentioned research approach that is to stimulate a comparative discussion.

Accordingly, the following are some guiding questions for the meeting: Issues that should be addressed in the contributions

- a. In addition to the 'matrix language' (the most used one), which other languages or varieties can be found in your treated texts (e.g. in the form of style shifts and code-switching)?
- b. How frequently do these languages/varieties occur? Are the different linguistic systems easily distinguishable, or are some words difficult to assign to a specific language/variety?
- c. What social significance or 'meaning' (social associations) do these different languages/varieties bear?
- d. What rhetorical effects can the use of these languages/varieties be linked with?
- e. To what extent can be assumed that the audience (the addressees / readers) of the texts understood such rhetorical effects?
- f. Are there any contemporary or historical meta-linguistic materials commenting on the use of different languages/varieties in the surviving texts? What comments are made?

Organizing team (in alphabetical order)

Chiara BARBATI (ÖAW, IFI)

Andrea CUOMO (ÖAW, IMAFO)

Vincent ELTSCHINGER (ÖAW, IKGA; UNI Wien, Institut für Südasien-, Tibet und Buddhismuskunde)

Christian GASTGEBER (ÖAW, IMAFO)

Manfred GLAUNINGER (ÖAW, ICCLT; UNI Wien, Institut für Germanistik)

Claudia RÖMER (UNI Wien, Institut für Orientalistik)

Pavĺína RYCHTĚROVÁ (ÖAW, IMAFO)

Barbara SOUKUP (UNI Wien, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik)

Program

Friday, 24th April

Session I: Thematic Introduction

CHAIR: Wolfgang **DRESSLER**

10.00–10.30

Barbara **SOUKUP** (Vienna)

Speaker / Author Design from the perspective of synchronic linguistics

Session II: Sanskrit

CHAIR: Gianfilippo **TERRIBILI**

11.30–12.00

Jan **HOUBEN** (Paris)

Diglossia as reflected in the Sanskrit Grammarians

12.00–12.30

Vincent **ELTSCHINGER** (Vienna)

Why did the Buddhists adopt Sanskrit?

Session III: Iranian

CHAIR: Jan **HOUBEN**

14.30–15.00

Chiara **BARBATI** (Vienna)

Heterogeneity in the language of the Sogdian Diaspora communities

15.00–15.30

Gianfilippo **TERRIBILI** (Rome)

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

Saturday, 25th April

Session IV: English and Byzantine Greek

CHAIR: Barbara **SOUKUP**

10.30–11.00

Herbert **SCHENDL** (Vienna)

Medieval English code-switching

11.00–11.30

Christian **GASTGEBER** (Vienna)

Documents of the Patriarchal Chancery:

Aspects of variations relating to the addressees (audience)

11.30–12.00

Andrea **CUOMO** (Vienna)

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

Session V: Babylonian, Turkish and Arabic

CHAIR: Chiara **BARBATI**

14.00–14.30

Martina **SCHMIDL** (Vienna)

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

14.30–15.00

Claudia **RÖMER** (Vienna)

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

15.00–15.30

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

Corpus of Tunisian Arabic

ca. 16.30

Round Table: Historical Sociolinguistic Research: ideas, cooperation, common approaches
