

历史比较语言学概论

*A Survey
of
Historical Comparative
Linguistics*



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内 容 提 要

《历史比较语言学概论》是国内一本较为系统地介绍历史比较语言学的专著。它详细阐述了历史比较语言学的产生背景、运行轨迹、流派、特征与贡献,还对方言地理学、语言年代学作了简要说明,对20世纪语言学研究也作了轮廓式介绍,以便综观历史比较语言学在整个语言学研究中的位置与作用。

本书可供英语专业和汉语专业的师生以及其他语言爱好者参阅。

序

两千多年前,古希腊学者和哲学先驱就开始通过研究语言来探索世界,比如在语言与自然的关系、语言与思维的关系、语言与逻辑的关系等方面,就有大量文献可供考证。柏拉图的命名说、亚里士多德的约定俗成说、斯多噶学派对“格”等抽象语法概念的探索,均已为人熟知。

历史比较语言学,故名思义,应在二维坐标上展开。纵轴引伸历史,横轴涵盖比较基数。悠悠历史,学派相争,都在这一人文坐标上留下了无数聚集点,在现代语言学文献中随处都可以轻易地找到其蛛丝马迹。尽管人有喜新厌旧的自然倾向,有人时不时地会对古典语言语法理论横挑鼻子竖挑眼,倾向于忽视当代语言学理论也是以古典理论或传统做法为依据的这一事实。其实,乔姆斯基的生成语言学理论,哪怕再新颖,本质上也是古典唯理语法的翻版,是一种螺旋性升华的结果。夸克等人的《当代语法》,也是集历史上各派语言学说之大成,而不是来源于虚无。

因此,研究或了解历史比较语言学就有着重大的现实价值。它不但可以帮助我们把握诸语言或一种语言在历史发展中各个不同阶段的语音、语法和词汇对应关系,加以相对客观地比较和对照,还能提供有关语言彼此之间的亲属关系、历史演变过程和结构变化等信息,帮助揭示同源语言或方言之间共同成分在历史不同时期中的状态和演化规律,以构拟出这些语言的基础语,或确定亲属语关系的远近而重建原始语。此间,琼斯、葆朴、格里姆、洪堡特、施莱歇尔、施密特、维尔纳等学者或哲人功不可磨,因而对这些人研究和描写,就有重大的学术意义和现实意义。研究这些人,还

可以加深我们对达尔文的生物进化论和黑格尔的对立面互变、质量互变、否定之否定等思想的理解。

刘国辉先生编著的这本书,起的正是这样一种作用。本书资料翔实,内容覆盖面广,反映了作者广博的语言学功底和“焚膏油以继晷、恒兀兀以穷年”的敬业精神,很有一读的价值。

熊 学 亮

复旦大学外文系

1999年10月2日

前 言

如果从 1786 年算起,历史比较语言学(Historical Comparative Linguistics)至今已有整整 214 年的历史了,也就是有两个多世纪了。1786 年英国东印度公司的殖民官员威廉·琼斯(William Jones)在加尔各答召开的亚洲学会上作了一篇题为《在第三届年会上关于印度人》(Third Anniversary Discourse on the Hindus)的发言,提出了梵语(Sanskrit)与欧洲古老语言希腊语(Greek)和拉丁语(Latin)同出一源的假设。1816 年德国学者葆朴(Franz Bopp)发表了第一篇很有价值的论文《论梵语与希腊语、拉丁语、波斯语和日耳曼语词变位体系的对比》(Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanscritsprache in vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen sprache)。虽然威廉·琼斯早就宣布过梵语与欧洲古老语言同出一源的假设,但葆朴在翔实的材料的基础上,建立了系统的理论,因此人们常常把 1816 年作为历史比较语言学的诞生年。

经过近两个世纪的风风雨雨,历史比较语言学作为一门语言学学科终于立住了脚,展示了自己的风采,而且开了花,结了果,显示了自己的生命力。自从它诞生的时候起,广大语言学者就在不断探索,寻求人类语言的真谛——也就是人类语言之源,人类语言之种类与规律等等。历史比较语言学不仅借鉴了 19 世纪生物界的达尔文进化论,而且借鉴了当时的黑格尔辩证法。历史比较语言学跟生物界一样也从世界各地搜集、整理语言标本,然后进行分类、分析、归纳,最终得出语言与生物界一样都有着不断演变进化的客观历史规律。黑格尔关于事物普遍联系和发展的辩证观点也在历史比较语言学中充分体现出来了,研究者通过语言历史发展中各个时期的语音、词汇、语法对应关系的对比研究,证实了印欧

语的有机联系,证实了古梵语、希腊语、拉丁语和现代印欧语的一脉相承关系,并构拟出了它们的共同祖先——上古印欧语的主要面貌。因此可以说,历史比较语言学的建立是现代语言学的第一个里程碑。此后人们才知道跨越本族语,去寻找它的“亲属语言”,并从中探讨它们的联系与发展规律。当然历史比较语言学有其自身的局限:首先是其采用历时的研究即纵向研究,而忽视了共时的研究即横向研究;其次就是把语言这个复杂的社会系统简化为自然界的有机体,忽略了语言的社会性;第三就是忽略了语言中人的因素。正因为这样,才导致了20世纪上半叶结构主义语言学的共时研究以及下半叶转换生成语言学的语言与思维的纵深研究。尽管如此,19世纪的历史比较语言学为普通语言学建立了牢固的科学基础,为20世纪语言的本体研究、语言与思维关系的研究、语言的应用研究等铺平了道路。

今天我们回顾历史比较语言学的概貌是有其现实意义的:首先,它为我们今天的语言研究提供了方法论——比较法。比较法在今天仍不失为一种好的语言研究方法,如当今的比较语法、比较语言学、对比语言学以及比较文学便是。其次,在今天这个开放的世界里,我们不仅需要学习英语,也需要学习其他语种,以便更好地为改革开放,走向世界奠定基础。为了更好地学习和掌握各种语言,历史比较语言学中的一些理论和方法可以助我们一臂之力。第三,通过历史比较语言学学习,可以开阔我们的视野。我们不仅可以了解不同语言的一些规律特点,而且还可以更好地了解世界各国人们的生活习俗、文化、历史以及宗教等。

本书仅仅介绍了有关历史比较语言学的轮廓,只是本人学习、科研的一个汇总。由于笔者学识水平有限,加之资料不足,书中难免没有错误或遗漏,敬请专家、同行批评指正,特此为谢。

刘 国 辉

1999年10月于四川师范学院

Foreword

It has been two hundred and fourteen years so far, i.e. more than two centuries for Historical Comparative Linguistics from the year 1786 on, in which William Jones, the colonial officer, in British East Indian Company, gave a lecture titled the *Third Anniversary Discourse on the Hindus* at Asian Academic Society's meeting held in Calcutta, developing a hypothesis that Sanskrit and ancient European languages: Greek and Latin, have a common origin. In 1816 Franz Bopp, the German scholar, published his first rather valuable treatise called Über das Conjugationssystem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache. Although William Jones a long time ago declared his hypothesis that Sanskrit and ancient European languages have the same source, yet Franz Bopp, based on detailed linguistic materials, built up his systematic theory. Thus people usually regard 1816 as a year for Historical Comparative Linguistics to come into being.

After about two centuries of protracted tortuous struggle, Historical Comparative Linguistics stands firmly on its feet as a science of language, exhibiting its own style, blooming and bearing fruit, which displays its vitality. From the emergence of Historical Comparative Linguistics, a large number of linguistic scholars successively explored the true essence of human language, that is, the origin, type, law, etc. of human language. To attain its goal, Historical Comparative Linguistics utilized not only Darwin's biological evolution theory of 19th century, but also Hegel's dialectics at that time for reference: Historical Comparative Linguistics, like bi-

ology, first collected and sorted out language specimens from the world around, then analyzed, summarized and finally drew a conclusion that language has, too, an objective and historical law of continuous evolution; Hegel's dialectic views on the universal connection and development of things were obviously embodied in Historical Comparative Linguistics. In the light of Hegel's theory, the scholars of Historical Comparative Linguistics made a quite exhaustive and comparative study of the corresponding relations of sound, vocabulary and grammar of different periods in the process of language development, verifying the organic association of ancient Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and modern Indo-European languages which were used to reconstruct their common ancestor—Indo-European language of remote ages. So we may say the establishment of Historical Comparative Linguistics is the first milestone of modern linguistics. From then on, people came to understand how they could go beyond their own native language to seek "kin-language", by exploring their mutual relations and their developing laws. Sure Historical Comparative Linguistics has its demerits: first, diachronic or vertical study with no respect of synchronic or horizontal study; second, simplification of language, a complex social system into an organic thing of the natural world regardless of language sociality; third, man's role in language not paid due attention. It is because of this that a further profound study was conducted in the synchronic research of structuralistic linguistics in the first half of 20th century and in the relations between language and mind by Transformational Generative Linguistics in the second half. In spite of the above mentioned weak points, Historical Comparative Linguistics of 19th century has laid a solid, scientific foundation and paved the way for the studies of general linguistics, language ontology, language and mind, and the application of language as well. Therefore the achievements of Historical Comparative

Linguistics will never be obliterated.

Today we review some general ideas of Historical Comparative Linguistics, which is of realistic significance: for one thing, it offers us methodology of language study—Comparison Approach, which is, nowadays, still a good one for language research. Comparative grammar, comparative linguistics, contrastive linguistics and comparative literature of present day are such examples; for another, in our contemporary open world, we need not only learn English, but other languages to better lay down foundations for reformine, and opening to the outside world. To learn and master various languages better, some theories and approaches of Historical Comparative Linguistics may lend us a hand and serve us. In the end, the study of Historical Comparative Linguistics has opened our field of vision, making us get some idea of properties of different languages and of living style, culture, history, religion and so forth of different people across the nations.

This book is simply an outline concerning Historical Comparative Linguistics. It is a summings-up of self-study. Owing to varied factors such as the author's knowledge, linguistic materials, there are, no doubt, a lot to be desired in this book. Any valuable, reasonable suggestions from experts of the linguistic field are welcome, for which I do appreciate from my very heart.

Liu Guohui
Sichuan Teachers' College
October, 1999

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