Studies in the History of the Language Sciences

From Whitney to Chomsky

Essays in the history of American linguistics

John E. Joseph

FROM WHITNEY TO CHOMSKY

ESSAYS IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LINGUISTICS

JOHN E. JOSEPH
University of Edinburgh

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In memory of my mother
Glenlyn Pauline Creason Joseph
14 May 1924–18 April 1991

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J. E. J.
Edinburgh, 28 August 2002

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CHAPTER ONE

THE MULTIPLE AMBIGUITIES OF AMERICAN LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

The origins of American linguistic identity

Five centuries have passed since America and Columbus discovered each other, and for three and a half of those centuries, 70% of the total period, America lacked a linguistic identity. American and Canadian English and French were not acknowledged as distinct languages or dialects in either the Old or the New World, and American Indians were perceived and portrayed as, in effect, mute. America was the Silent Continent, despite having a population in 1492 estimated to be in the tens of millions.[1] If that seems staggering, it is because we have all grown up in the firm grasp of that Romantic view of a New World that was conveniently empty as well as silent.

Picture now, on the glacier-cut canyons or in the jungle wilderness of the 19th-century Americas, the figure of the explorer — grand explorers like Alexander von Humboldt in South America or Josiah Dwight Whitney in North America, or humbler scientific explorers like Henri de Saussure in Mexico and the Antilles. By coincidence, the three 19th-century linguists who would most directly shape the study of language in the 20th century were related to these explorers: Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) and William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894), brothers of Alexander and Josiah, and Ferdinand de Saussure

1. Such pre-historic population estimates must be taken with much scepticism, especially when, as here, there can be a political motive for exaggerating them: the higher the pre-Columbian population, the greater the European culpability for colonizing the Americas and, in some cases, reducing the indigenous populations to near or total extinction. However, even the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, which if anything has a vested interest in keeping the figure low, estimates the pre-Columbian population of the area corresponding to the present-day United States alone at between 5 and 15 million (as compared with a Native American population of about two million today), and this excludes the regions of greatest population concentration, which extended from Mexico to South America. At the other extreme one finds statements like the following: "Current anthropological work indicates that the number of native people in the Western Hemisphere may have approached something like 100 million, maybe about 80 million south of the Rio Grande and 12 million or so north of the river. Within about a century, that population had been destroyed" (Chomsky 1992: 13). This is in support of his view that on the American holiday Columbus Day "very few people are aware that they're celebrating one of the first genocidal monsters of the modern era. That's exactly what Columbus was. It's as if they celebrated 'Hitler Day' in Germany" (ibid.).

(1857–1913), son of Henri.[2] Whitney actually accompanied his brother on his most ambitious westward expedition.

Of course these relationships are not entirely coincidental — the six men shared the advantage of growing up in families which valued exploration of unfamiliar territory, geographical or linguistic, and instilled in them a sense of scientific duty. But none of them could have predicted the multiple and complex ways in which Humboldt's, Whitney's and Saussure's theories of language would interact to redefine a future century's understanding, or the role that American languages would play in redirecting linguistic method, or indeed how their own transcontinental relations would be reproduced and transfigured in future versions of where modern linguistics was seen as coming from.

The first ambiguity of 'linguistic identity' is that it can refer to the language someone speaks, or the type of linguistics they profess. Enough 'national schools' of linguistics have developed over the years that the two meanings cannot be neatly separated. This opening chapter looks at the development of American linguistic identity (which I use henceforth in the sense of the language one speaks) from 1492 onward, interweaving this with the development of American linguistic thought, not because I believe there was a direct causal relation between what American English (or Spanish or French) might become and what American linguistics might become, but because each can throw light on the question of whether a distinctive American identity arose because it had to, or because people wanted it to. Or some combination of the two.

The emergence of American linguistic identities coincides with the Romantic Age in European thought, and both are multiply connected to the tumultuous political events of the time, most notably the American and French Revolutions. Yet between the European linguistic thought and American linguistic identities which were simultaneously emerging, lay a fundamental contradiction that has never been adequately problematized, let alone explained. In writings about American English and Canadian French by both Old and New World authors we find characterizations taken over from earlier descriptions of American Indian languages, descriptions which de-rationalize those languages and place their speakers in the role of the Other, whether as beast, infant, or

2. What is more, Ferdinand's mother's first cousin once removed, Count Albert Alexandre de Pourtalès (1812–1861), played a noteworthy role in an expedition through the American West that took on a certain literary importance. After a chance meeting with the writer Washington Irving (1783–1859), he accompanied him on his "Tour on the Prairies", the account of which in Irving's *Crayon Miscellany* (1835) did much to establish the mythology of the 'empty' continent in the American mind (see further Joseph 1984, 1986). Pourtalès own journal of the expedition was discovered and published in the 1960s (Pourtalès 1968). He later became a notable figure in Prussian politics and was for a time the rival of Bismarck. I am grateful to Jean-Bénédict de Saussure, grandson of Ferdinand's brother Léopold (on whom see Joseph 2000a), for clarifying to me that this Count de Pourtalès was the first cousin of Count Alexandre Joseph de Pourtalès (1810–1883), Ferdinand's and Léopold's maternal grandfather.

Noble Savage. Such notions are then transferred from Native American to Euro-American languages. Curiously enough, this happens just at the time when Romantic language theory is insisting that contact between languages, no matter how many words are borrowed from one to the other, does not alter their 'inner form' as determined by their grammatical structure and historical origins. This discrepancy between linguistic thought and linguistic identity will be another focus of the chapter.

Linguistic thought in the 'Age of Discovery': Nebrija

1492 is a pivotal date in the history of European linguistic thought, less on account of Columbus's voyage than because of the publication of the *Gramática castellana* of Antonio de Nebrija (c.1444–1522), the first important grammar of a modern European language. Of Nebrija and Columbus, it was the former whose efforts had immediate and direct impact upon European thought. The prologue to his grammar, addressed to Queen Isabella, famously begins:

> [L]anguage has always been the companion of empire, and has followed it in such a way that they have jointly begun, grown, and flourished, and likewise the fall of both has been joined. (Nebrija 1946 [1492]:5-6)[3]

There follows a series of examples of languages that have risen and fallen in tandem with great empires. Nebrija goes on to state why he is determined to *reduir en artificio* 'reduce to artifice' the Castilian language (p.9):

> And, since my thought and desire has always been to aggrandize the things of our nation and to give men of my language works in which they can better employ their leisure, which now they waste reading novels or stories enveloped in a thousand lies and errors, I have resolved before all else to reduce our Castilian language to artifice, so that that which is written in it now and in the future can follow a standard, and be extended for all time to come, as we see has been done in the Greek and Latin language, which, on account of having been subjected to art, remain in uniformity even though they have passed through many centuries.[4]

The three purposes Nebrija cites — to aggrandize the nation, better employ men's minds, and prevent the language from changing — are three of the central purposes of Renaissance linguistic thought generally. The phrases *reduir*

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3. "[S]iempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio, i de tal manera lo siguio que junta mente començaron, crecieron i florecieron, i despues junta fue la caida de entrambos." This and all the following translations are my own unless another translator's name is given.

4. "I, por que mi pensamiento i gana siempre fue engrandecer las cosas de nuestra nacion i dar alos ombres de mi lengua obras en que mejor puedan emplear su ocio, que agora lo gastan leiendo novelas o istorias embueltas en mil mentiras i errores, acorde ante todas las otras cosas reduir en artificio este nuestro lenguaje castellano, para que lo que agora i de aqui adelante en el se escriviere pueda quedar en un tenor, i estenderse en toda la duracion delos tiempos que estan por venir, como vemos que se a hecho enla lengua griega i latina, las cuales, por aver estado debaxo de arte, aunque sobre ellas an passado muchos siglos, toda via quedan en una uniformidad."

en artificio and *debaxo de arte* mean the same thing — 'artificial' in this period still has the sense of 'made in accordance with art'. Nebrija conceived of writing a grammar of a language as conquering it, bringing it down and under control; 'reducing' it as one reduces an enemy, and reducing it in size by eliminating those elements that do not accord with logic and regularity. Therein lies the 'art' of grammar. Toward the end of the prologue, Nebrija tells Isabella (p.11):

> [S]ince Your Majesty has put under her yoke many barbarian peoples and nations of exotic languages; and with the conquest they were obliged to receive the laws which conqueror imposes upon conquered, and with them our language; through my *Art* they may come into the knowledge of the latter, just as now we ourselves learn the art of Latin grammar in order to learn Latin.[5]

Nebrija's grammar will allow the Queen's newly conquered subjects to learn Castilian, so that the laws of Spain can be imposed upon them and the Spanish Empire can exist and function. The Empire will extend only so far as its 'companion', the Spanish language extends. There is no sense here that Castilian 'belongs' to Castile or Spain in any natural sense, or that it embodies the Castilian soul. Nebrija's arguments are purely political and functional: Castile has conquered, and so her laws and language shall be imposed. Because the learning of Castilian by conquered peoples increases Spain's territorial dominion, the aggrandizement of language and empire go hand in hand.

That the study of grammar will improve the minds of those conquered, just as with novel-reading Spaniards, goes without saying. It will allow them to preserve their thoughts across time; and more fundamentally, will allow them to *think* — for no thinking being would reject civilization and spiritual salvation. That the American Indians were human beings in possession of souls was not immediately obvious to the Europeans; a papal bull of 1537 determined that they were. Missionaries thereafter studied indigenous American languages with the purpose of converting their speakers to Christianity, thereby increasing the territorial domain of Christendom and of their particular confession.[6]

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5. "[D]espues que Vuestra Alteza metiesse debaxo de su iugo muchos pueblos barbaros i naciones de peregrinas lenguas, i conel vencimiento aquellos ternian necessidad de recebir las leies quel vencedor pone al vencido i con ellas nuestra lengua, entonces por esta mi *Arte* podrian venir enel conocimiento della, como agora nos otros deprendemos el arte dela gramatica latina para deprender el latin."

6. Modern-day accounts of the role of missionaries in the colonial process tend to assume that they were either the dupes or the running dogs of the imperial powers under whose protection they operated. No doubt this was often the case to some extent, sometimes even to a great extent, yet the missionary zeal to convert the heathen was a genuinely central motivating factor and was linked intricately, not simplistically, to the political desire to colonize. The decline of religion in our own time must not allow us to forget that in the 16th and 17th centuries everyone was required by law to attend church and to participate in the process of winning divine favour for one's country over the country's enemies. With everyone in every country so engaged, how did any one people hope to get the upper hand? Greater fervency of faith was one

Of course, more than a few missionaries found a deep intellectual interest in the study of these languages and cultures, and modern literature is full of cases of them losing their faith in the confrontation with the Other culture, if not going native outright.

Examining how Europeans in this period regarded the internal structure of their own languages, we find a similar sense of territoriality. It is the period of creation of the national standard languages we know today. That process involved determining, first, which region's dialect would form the basis of the standard, a matter than in Italy is called the *questione della lingua*; and secondly, how much functional territory the emerging standard Italian, French, etc. could usurp from Latin, starting with popular literature and ending with the most conservative domains, law and religion; and finally, how much the expressive territory of the language could be expanded by adapting words and syntactic devices from the classical languages, principally through the medium of translation.

Linguistic thought in the Romantic Age: Humboldt

This essentially political outlook on language would come to be overshadowed in the 17th century by what we would today identify as a psychological approach, a focus upon language as not just a vehicle or receptacle, but a sort of template of human cognition. A template, moreover, that it is a cultural duty to maintain in proper order, for if the language was not in order, neither could the thought expressed in it be. Hence the great concern of the 17th and early 18th centuries with the perfecting of existing languages, the writing of universal grammars, and the creation of artificial, universal systems of written characters, dependent upon no spoken language, that would express thought directly and therefore perfectly.

In this light, the dearth of references to American languages by important linguistic thinkers of the period is unsurprising. Despite Pope Paul III's bull, it was unclear from the European point of view that indigenous Americans thought in a way comparable enough to the way Europeans thought to make analogies relevant. As for colonists, they were still reckoned as Europeans. But

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possibility, which produced the Christian mystics such as St Teresa of Avila in this period; greater asceticism was another, appearing in Puritanism and certain other (mainly protestant) manifestations; decreased tolerance of Jews, observable at this time through much of the Christian world; but nothing was more likely to persuade God than the deeds of a people in converting as many heathen as possible into the Christian faith. The concern for the sake of the heathen was a concern for one's own good — the two were never in conflict. If colonial possessions increased national wealth and thus contributed to national security and glory, no one doubted that divine grace was the necessary and sufficient requirement for having all these things. Here, as throughout history, some individuals were genuinely concerned about their fellow human beings, but it is impossible to say that this was accompanied by no selfish motives in a culture in which selfless love for others is reckoned to gain one eternal glory.

late in the 18th century some remarkable changes occur, coinciding with the onset of what is traditionally called the Romantic age, though some of its greatest figures thought of themselves as anti-Romantic. In the period's most important treatise on language, we find the following judgement passed on Renaissance thought like Nebrija's:

> But that in which the above-mentioned view leads us chiefly astray is, that it considers language far too much as a spatial territory, to be extended, as it were, by captures from without, and thereby misapprehends its true nature in its most essential individuality. (Humboldt 1836:36 [1999:33])[7]

The phrase 'its true nature in its most essential individuality' captures the core linguistic concern of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who died the year before his *magnum opus* was published in 1836. It means that a language should not be judged by number of speakers or land mass occupied — these being not essential but contingent factors, accidents of history that throw no light on the language's true nature. Rather, says Humboldt, we should consider its *innere Sprachform*, "inner linguistic form", which inheres not in the infinitely expandable territory of vocabulary, but in the very finite domain of grammatical structure; not how many concepts a language can express, but how it goes about expressing them.

Evaluated by Renaissance standards, a language like Sanskrit would count for little, having neither speakers, expressions for the basic concepts of modern life nor sacred status in Christianity. Yet for Humboldt, Sanskrit is the queen of languages, with a nobility, logic and symmetry of structure that no later language, excepting only Greek, has ever approached. Furthermore, as the oldest language of the Indo-European or 'Aryan' family then known, it stood at the head of those tongues that have made by far the greatest contribution to human civilization. No territorial or political considerations could alter these facts.

Could it be a coincidence that this language of unsurpassed nobility, logic, and symmetry of structure should stand at the head of the greatest cultural line? Not for Humboldt. Might it then be that the literary products of Sanskrit culture are what brought the language to its elevated state? Again the answer is no:

> Thus *civilization* and *culture* are often credited with what cannot in any way proceed from them, but is effected by a power to which their own existence is due.
>
> As to *languages*, it is a very common idea to attribute all their features and every enlargement of their territory to these factors, as if it were merely a question of the difference between *cultivated* and *uncultivated* tongues. If we call upon history to

7. "Worin jedoch jene eben erwähnte Ansicht hauptsächlich irre führt, ist, dass sie die Sprache viel zu sehr als ein räumliches, gleichsam durch Eroberungen von aussen her zu erweiterndes Gebiet betrachtet und dadurch ihre wahre Natur in ihrer wesentlichsten Eigenthümlichkeit verkennt."

> witness, such a power of civilization and culture over language is in no way confirmed. (Humboldt 1836:33-34 [1999:32])[8]

That leaves only one alternative: that it is language which determines culture and civilization. And if this is so, then — given that cultural achievement is the only available means of measuring the intellectual capacity of a people — it should follow that language structure determines intellectual capacity. Humboldt attempts to prove this by drawing up a typology of the structural types of the languages of the world: inflectional, like Sanskrit; incorporating, like American Indian languages; and isolating, like Chinese. These are the three 'pure' types, in addition to which he recognizes the 'impure' type of agglutinating languages, which do not even merit the citation of an example by him. Presumably languages so mixed as to appear to be of this type originally belonged to one of the other three.

Humboldt's typology is more precisely one of language *families* — English, for example, would be reckoned as inflectional because it descends from the Indo-European line, even though it has lost nearly all traces of inflection and behaves much more like an isolating language. Humboldt finds that the inflecting languages are indeed those whose speakers have made the greatest contributions to world civilization, and deduces therefore that having an inflecting language gives a nation superior mental capacity. He offers a further explanation for this: the process of inflection, in which where a root expressing a fundamental concept takes endings that express subordinate concepts, reproduces the natural logic of the mind.

If language structure is connected to intellectual capacity, does this not support the Renaissance belief that imposing a European language upon American Indians will enable them to think? Humboldt would not have thought so, indeed he would have rejected the question as outdated and dehumanizing. All human languages enable their speakers to think, in his view, even if some do this better than others. Less clear is whether an 'imposed' second language would affect the way a people think. The examples of pidgin and creole languages show how the native language structure persists even when a foreign word-stock is taken on, and it is in the structure, not the vocabulary, that Humboldt believes the 'inner form' lies, and that is linked to thought. And even where language mixture appears to have moved languages away from their original inner structural form, that inner form is still present, though hidden. A

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8. "So wird der *Civilisation* und der *Cultur* oft zugeschrieben, was aus ihnen durchaus nicht hervorgehen kann, sondern durch eine Kraft gewirkt wird, welcher sie selbst ihr Dasein verdanken.

"In Absicht der *Sprachen* ist es eine ganz gewöhnliche Vorstellung, alle ihre Vorzüge und jede Erweiterung ihres Gebiets ihnen beizumessen, gleichsam als käme es nur auf den Unterschied *gebildeter* und *ungebildeter* Sprachen an. Zieht man die Geschichte zu Rathe, so bestätigt sich eine solche Macht der Civilisation und Cultur über die Sprache keinesweges."

case in point is English, which, after centuries of linguistic evolution, likely bound up with multiple conquests and movement of peoples, retains only traces of its original inflectional structure. Nevertheless it still possesses the inner form of the primordial inflecting language, in Humboldt's view. For him, then, widening the territory of a language should be an undesirable thing, since it can only lead to degeneration of the language's original inner form.

Today's reader may be inclined to worry that the supposed superiority of inflecting languages reflects early 19th-century prejudices rather than the logical functions of the mind, and certainly anyone who today discoursed on the 'intellectual capacity of nations' would be dismissed as a racist, though it is anachronistic to call Humboldt one. As a public official in Prussia he risked a great deal in order to become a hero in the struggle for the civil rights of Jews, and in his writings he was careful to refer to nations and peoples, and *not* to races, as he might easily have done. Moreover, the statements with which some have attempted to convict him of racism have been lifted out of a context which in fact establishes the intellectual superiority of the very people he is supposedly defaming (see further Joseph 1999a).

The 'nation' as Humboldt conceives it is — like the 'inner form' of language itself — a Platonic Idea. Popper (1945:25-26) characterized the Idea thus:

> The things in flux, the degenerate and decaying things, are ([...]) the offspring, the children, as it were, of perfect things. And like children, they are copies of their original primogenitors. The father or original of a thing in flux is what Plato calls its 'Form' or its 'Pattern' or its 'Idea' [...]. It is [...] more real than all the ordinary things which are in flux, and which, in spite of their apparent solidity, are doomed to decay; for the Form or Idea is a thing that is perfect, and does not perish.

The resurrection of Platonic idealism is part of the heritage of Rationalism that came to dominate European thought between the time of Nebrija and that of Humboldt. In the late 18th-century milieu in which Humboldt was educated, there coexisted an idealistic and rationalist vein associated primarily with German thinkers, including Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), and later Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), and an empiricist one that had arisen in Britain and France in the wake of Francis Bacon (1561–1626), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), Pierre Gassendi (1629–1655) and John Locke (1632–1704), and which included George Berkeley (1685–1753), David Hume (1711–1776), Denis Diderot (1713–1784), Étienne Bonnot, abbot of Condillac (1714–1780), John Horne Tooke (1736–1812) and the *idéologues*. The Scottish common sense school formed a bridge between the two, as did, in a different way, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). With so much intellectual give and take, it becomes difficult to define distinct schools of thought; Humboldt stands in many ways at the conjunction between the two

strands. But his insistence on the ideal nature of inner form is firmly within the Platonic tradition, where he shares the company of his close contemporary Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). A further manifestation of this idealism is Humboldt's assertion — using Greek terms, no less — that language is not *ergon*, but *energeia*: not something produced, but the potential for production, something truly virtual in nature.

We could adapt Popper's description of the Platonic Idea to Humboldt's thought as follows: Existing languages — always in flux, degenerate and decaying — are the offspring, the children, as it were, of perfect languages. And like children, they are copies of their original primogenitors. The father or original is more real than all the ordinary languages which are in flux, and which, in spite of their apparent solidity, are doomed to decay; for the original form of the language is a thing that is perfect, and does not perish. It is preserved within the language, as its Inner Form.

This means that the truest way to 'know' a language is not to observe or analyze it in its present state, for that is a degenerate state much changed from the original form, which is what is real. Observation and analysis are valuable only as tools for getting past appearances and back to that hidden reality. Taking again the example of English: an analysis of English that (like most modern grammars) ignored the residual evidence of a case system (preserved only in pronouns — *he, his, him* etc.) would be rejected by Nebrija on the grounds that it did not subject the language to the art of traditional grammar; but would be rejected by Humboldt on the grounds that it was fooled by superficial appearances into ignoring the deep reality of the English language, the inner form that, though much decayed, continues to reside in the spirit and genius of the language that provide continuity with its distant past.

American linguistic identity

I mentioned earlier that American linguistic identity was a late development in European thought, indeed one that is still in progress. The outstanding study of its history, Julie Andresen's ground-breaking *Linguistics in America* (1990a), describes four different strategies used by Europeans in the age of Rationalist thought to 'de-rationalize' American Indian languages, starting with the 'Indian-beast strategy':

> In the face of all evidence of the existence of the American Indian languages, of the descriptions which might have been used accurately, and even of the recognition of different language families ([...]), the eighteenth-century European concluded that the American Indian and the American Indian languages did not really exist within the realm of the human and the rational. (Andresen 1990a:89)

Andresen cites James Burnet, Lord Monboddo (1714–1799) who allowed that "the Pope, by his bull, decided the controversy well, when he gave it in favour

of the humanity of the poor Americans" — but then in an excess of generosity went on to state: "And, indeed, it appears to me, that [the Orang Outangs] are not so much inferior to the Americans in civility and cultivation, as some nations of America were to us, when we first discovered that country" (Burnet 1970 [1774–1809]:347-348). The second strategy is the 'Indian-infant' strategy, "associating the Indian with the ancient Europeans viewed as children" (Andresen 1990a:90). Andresen cites the title of a 1724 book by Joseph-François Lafitau (1681–1746), *Mœurs des sauvages amériquains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps*, and notes that "This attitude, contrasting the Indian-infant to the European-adult, is very widespread in European anthropological texts and endures until the end of the nineteenth century, and even beyond" (ibid.). Indeed, there is still a certain current of European thinking that regards Americans as cultural children, to be treated with paternalistic indulgence, if not contempt.

In the following text from the Rev. John Eliot's (1604–1690) *Indian Dialogues* of 1671, the two strategies appear to be in use simultaneously, as the Christianized Indian Piumbukhou tries to convert his heathen brothers:

> If foolish youths play in the dirt, and eat dung, and stinking fish and flesh, and rotten corn for company's sake, their sachem makes this law: if you come forth from the filthy place and company, and feed upon this wholesome and good food I have provided, then you shall be honoured and well used all your life time. But if you so love your old company, as that you choose rather to feed on trash, and venture to perish among them, then perish you shall, and thank yourself for your foolish choice. This was our case at first, and is yours to this day. You walk in darkness, defile yourselves with a filthy conversation, you feed your souls with trash and poison, and you choose to do so for your company's sake. Behold, God calls you to come out from among them, and touch no unclean thing, to converse among the wise, and offereth you pardon, life, and salvation in heaven, in glory, among all the elect, saints and angels. (Bowden & Ronda eds 1980:86)

This, be it noted, is by the greatest 17th-century champion of American Indians and their languages, author of one of the first Indian grammars (1666) and the first man to translate the Bible into an Indian tongue (1663).

In the late 18th century appear two variants of what Andresen calls the 'Noble Savage strategy'. In one of these, exemplified by the Adario of Baron de Lahontan (1666–1715?) and the Ingénu of Voltaire (1694–1778), the Indians speak, beautifully, in French, and this

> is not only proof of their intelligence, it also suggests [...] the denial of a language barrier. The essence of this strategy for derationalizing the American Indian languages [...] is located in the refusal of the least possibility of linguistic relativity. [...T]he Ingénu and Adario [...] are not struggling to express themselves 'properly' in French with interference from their native language. It is rather as if these Indians, in speaking French, are passing from a world of silence into the world of dialogue. When an