Language Structure and Language Use

Essays by Charles A. Ferguson

Selected and Introduced
by Anwar S. Dil

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Language Science and National Development

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Ferguson

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Language, Culture, and Communication

Essays by Joseph H. Greenberg

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If it is speech that distinguishes man from the animals, then anthropology, the science of man, should have a special affinity with linguistics, the science of language. So, at any rate, thinks Joseph H. Greenberg, one of this country's most distinguished anthropologists. His writings on linguistics, of which the twenty-two essays collected here are representative, range from *Linguistics and Ethnology* (1948) to *Is Language Like a Chess Game?* (1971).

Professor Greenberg's respect for the autonomy of language has not led him away from the study of culture. On the contrary, he persists in viewing language as a living thing that evolves in a manner analogous to any biological organism. All languages, he argues, are created equal but, because of non-linguistic factors, not all have developed in the same way. Language, in short, is the mirror of both history and culture. It follows that linguistics is a social rather than a natural science.

The essays fall into three main groups. In the first, a group's entire language situation is explored in terms of the interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic variables. Examples are *Urbanism, Migration, and Language* (1965), which deals with language and government policy, and *Sociolinguistic Research in Africa* (1966), a concise survey of research needs. The second emphasizes the relation between linguistics and the other behavioral sciences. Here, a dominant theme is the way in which, amid the endless variety of tongues and cultures, linguistics discloses uniformities that are universal in scope. Finally, such major theoretical essays as *The Nature and Definition of Language* (1968) and *Linguistics as a Pilot Science* (1971) are likely to affect the future direction of linguistics as a science. 382 pages. 1971

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Essays by Charles A. Ferguson

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Are British and American English one language or two? Why is a thirsty Greek far more likely to ask for *neró* than for *ídhor*, although both words mean "water"? What does it mean to speak of a language being "modernized"? In these eighteen remarkable essays, Charles A. Ferguson shows why questions such as these must be raised by anyone seriously interested in the nature of language. He also shows why linguistics, the science of language, is an essential tool for dealing with the problems of developing countries.

At least half the essays have a direct bearing on practical language problems. In *Linguistic Diversity in South Asia*, the concept of variety forms the basis for a definition of language that ties in linguistics with the analysis of social structure. Two essays describe new methods for taking stock of a country's linguistic resources; four others discuss how those resources can be developed. The remaining two essays in this group display the author's firsthand acquaintance with such countries as Pakistan and Ethiopia, in which a variety of languages and dialects compete for dominance.

The other nine essays are contributions to the discipline of linguistics as such. But even here Professor Ferguson rarely misses an opportunity to put his science to work. Thus in *Linguistic Theory and Language Learning* he argues that linguistics has much to offer professional language teachers. In the now-classic *Diglossia*, the dilemma of people who use two forms of

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Acknowledgments

The Linguistic Research Group of Pakistan and the Editor of the Language Science and National Development Series are deeply grateful to Professor Charles A. Ferguson, Chairman of the Committee on Linguistics of Stanford University and Honorary Life Member of the LRGP, for giving us the privilege of presenting his selected writings as the inaugural volume in our series established in response to the general appeal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of Unesco to scholars and academic institutions to dedicate 1970 as the International Education Year.

The Editor completed work on this volume during 1969-70, while he was in residence as Visiting Scholar with the Committee on Linguistics, Stanford University. He received financial assistance during the period from the Center for Research in International Studies, Stanford University.

We are indebted to the editors and publishers of the following publications. The ready permission on the part of the holders of the copyrights, acknowledged in each case, is a proof of the existing international cooperation and goodwill that gives hope for better collaboration among scholars of all nations for international exchange of knowledge.

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Linguistic Diversity in South Asia. International Journal of American Linguistics 26:3. 1-8 (1960).

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Problems of Teaching Languages with Diglossia. Georgetown University Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics: Monograph No. 15, Report of the Thirteenth Annual Round Table Meeting, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1962, pp. 165-77. By permission of the School of Languages and Linguistics, Georgetown University.

Assumptions about Nasals: A Sample Study in Phonological Universals. Universals of Language, ed. by Joseph H. Greenberg (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1963), pp. 53-60. By permission of the M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Contrasting Patterns of Literacy Acquisition in a Multilingual Nation. Language Use and Social Change, ed. by W. H. Whiteley (London: International African Institute, in press), pp. 234-53. By permission of the International African Institute.

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The Role of Arabic in Ethiopia: A Sociolinguistic Perspective. Georgetown University Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics: Monograph No. 23, Report of the Twenty First Annual Round Table Meeting, Georgetown University Press, 1970, pp. 355-68. By permission of the School of Languages and Linguistics, Georgetown University.

The Editor also wishes to record his thanks to Professors Joseph H. Greenberg, John J. Gumperz, Einar Haugen, Wallace E. Lambert, Joshua A. Fishman, and other language scholars who have sent us materials for our forthcoming volumes. Professor Munier Chowdhury of the University of Dacca, Professor Afia Dil of the Education Extension Centre for West Pakistan, and Mr. L. E. Seltzer of Stanford University Press deserve our gratitude for encouragement and advice. Saeqa Dil of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has done a good job of typing the manuscript for which she deserves a special word of appreciation. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Jean Beeson who has been helpful in compiling Dr. Ferguson's list of publications and Mr. James J. Duran who assisted in proof reading.

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Introduction

Charles A. Ferguson was born in Philadelphia in 1921. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a Ph. D. degree in Oriental Studies in 1945. His doctoral dissertation was on the phonology and morphology of Standard Colloquial Bengali. From 1946 to 1955 he analyzed and taught languages at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D. C. In 1955 he joined the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University as lecturer in linguistics.

In 1959, when the Center for Applied Linguistics was established under the auspices of the Modern Language Association of America, Charles Ferguson was appointed its first director. When he left the Center in 1967 to take up a full-time teaching and research position at Stanford University, the Center had become an independent institution, with a staff of about a hundred, and from an unknown position it had gained international stature. Among the continuing activities of the Center with which the name of Ferguson is closely associated, mention should be made here of its promoting the teaching and testing of English as a second language, cooperating with the Latin American linguistic programs, increasing the flow of

linguistic information at the international level, and establishing programs in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

From 1964 to 1970, Ferguson served as chairman of the Committee on Sociolinguistics of the Social Science Research Council. Among other activities, the Committee has sponsored the Conference on Language Problems of Developing Nations (1966), the Conference on Pidginization and Creolization of Languages (1968), and the Summer Workshop in Sociolinguistics (1968). The Committee has sponsored the publication of an international journal, Language in Society, beginning in 1972.

Professor Ferguson has taught at the universities of Georgetown, Michigan, Washington, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and at the Deccan College, Poona, India. He has attended numerous national and international conferences, and has visited major centers of linguistic activity in many parts of the world. In January, 1964, the Linguistic Research Group of Pakistan (LRGP) invited him to participate in the Second Pakistan Conference of Linguists at Lahore. In the inaugural session of the conference it was my privilege to present Honorary Life Membership of the LRGP to him in recognition of his "outstanding contribution to modern linguistic studies and research." Ferguson's work is of special significance to Pakistani linguistics because of his eminence as a scholar of the Arabic and Bengali languages.

Ferguson has had firsthand contact with a variety of sociolinguistic problems. In 1968-69 he served as the Director of the Language Survey of Ethiopia, part of a five-nation Survey of Language Use and Language Teaching in Eastern Africa. The primary objective of these surveys is to enable national and international agencies to take stock of the sociolinguistic resources of the countries involved, in order to plan for better national development.

In his present position as Chairman of the Committee on Linguistics at Stanford University, Professor Ferguson directs research projects in language universals, child language development, and language planning processes. One project deserving special mention here is concerned with the study of Third World language problems. Attention is being focussed on the use of common national languages, especially in higher education and government, and on the need for competency in languages of wider communication.

Ferguson belongs to that small group of linguists who have been concerned with extending the scope of modern linguistic studies by establishing points of contact with other branches of knowledge. His continuing effort in this direction has helped to bring the work of linguists closer to current research interests in the social sciences and international development, thus making both social scientists and educators more aware of the importance of language.

A second notable feature of Ferguson's work so far, lies in his emphasis on application of linguistic knowledge to practical language problems — to the eventual benefit, I should add, of theoretical linguistics.

Perhaps I can best evaluate Ferguson's contributio to language science if I call him the linguists' linguist. There is in his work a certain quality of suggestiveness, as if he were more interested in opening new areas of linguistic interest for others through his explorations. Ferguson seems to take specia delight in trying his hand at problems that do not lend themselves to an easy definition; he is content to pinpoint some of the complexities, and then suggest how they might be handled. It is, therefore, not surprising that some of his studies have inspired subsequent work by others. For example, the article on diglossia (1959) has led to more than a score of important

studies of this phenomenon. In this respect Ferguson belongs to that select group of scholars whose real achievement lies in the ideas that they stimulate in others.

The eighteen articles selected for this volume cover the period from 1959 to 1970. They represent the wide range of Ferguson's search for universal features of language structure and language use.

Anwar S. Dil

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EDITOR'S NOTE

These articles have been reprinted from the originals with only minor changes made in the interest of uniformity of style and appearance. A few changes in wording have been made in consultation with the author. In some cases bibliographical entries and notes have been updated. Footnotes marked by asterisks have been added by the Editor.

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