

# Introduction

Gunter Senft

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen

Anthropology is the discipline which is centrally concerned with the concept of culture (see Sarangi, this volume), and linguistics is the discipline which is centrally concerned with language, languages and how their speakers use them. Bronislaw Malinowski (1920:78) pointed out that "linguistics without ethnography would fare as badly as ethnography without the light thrown in it by language" and Charles F. Hockett (1973: 675) varied this theme emphasizing that "[l]inguistics without anthropology is sterile; anthropology without linguistics is blind".

In what follows I first characterize Wilhelm von Humboldt's contribution to the study of culture and language use - after a brief reference to Johann Gottfried Herder. Then I discuss some of the ideas of scholars like Malinowski, Boas, Sapir, Whorf and others who have been shaping the field and briefly outline some of its most important traditions, methods and topics. I finish with presenting some examples of interdisciplinary research which dealt, or still deals, with the interrelationship between language use, culture and cognition (see also Senft: 2006a). Before I start, however, I would like to point out that for me the overall topic of this volume - culture and language use - defines the research domain of the subdiscipline "anthropological linguistics" in its broad sense.<sup>1</sup>

In Johann Gottfried Herder's prize-winning essay for the Berlin Academy of Sciences on "The Origin of Language" ["Uber den Ursprung der Sprache"] we read the following rather enthusiastic passage on comparative linguistics:

The analogies of all savage languages confirm my statement: every language is wasteful and poor in its own way, all in a specific manner. As the Arab has so many words for stone, camel, sword, snake (things with which he lives), so is the Ceylon language rich in compliments - according to the inclination of its people, its titles and its verbal pomp [...]. In Siam there are eight manners for saying "I" and "we", depending on whether the master is talking with the servant or the servant with the master. The language of the savage Caribs is almost divided in two languages for women and men, and both have

1. I use and understand the term "anthropological linguistics" as synonymous with the terms "ethnolinguistics" and "linguistic anthropology". It goes without saying, however, that these terms can be used to signal different starting points for approaching the interdiscipline and for indexing the status of both disciplines within the interdisciplinary enterprise. See Foley (1997) and Duranti (1997). For a more narrow understanding of the tradition of "anthropological linguistics" from a North American point of view see Blount (this volume).

different names for the most commonest things - bed, moon, sun, bow - what a surplus of synonyms! But these Caribs have only four terms for colours, with which they have to refer to all other colours - what poverty! The Hurons have always a double verb for an animate and inanimate object; thus "see" in "to see a stone" and "see" in "to see a person" are always two different expressions; just follow this principle for the whole nature - what wealth! In the Peruvian main language the sexes refer to each other in such a strangely separate manner that the sister of the brother and the sister of the sister, the father's child and the mother's child are called differently; nevertheless, this language has no real plural! Each of these systems of synonyms is so closely related with custom, character and origin of the nation; but the inventive human mind characterizes itself everywhere. (Herder 1770: 149f. [my translation, G.S.])<sup>2</sup>

Herder clearly understands language as the expression and manifestation of a speech community's culture - and he thus addresses both linguists and anthropologists. Herder refers to examples, topics and themes that have always been, and still are, of great interest for anthropological linguistics. Moreover, in his last sentence he even emphasizes the importance cognitive sciences have for anthropological linguistics - a fact which we have realized within the humanities just recently again after all these years and which we now celebrate as the "cognitive turn" especially within linguistics and ethnology. Shortly after this general, though programmatic passage Herder directly addresses us linguists and drives it home to us that it cannot be sufficient to describe a language according to its formal rules in a grammar only. If we do so, we

[...] snatch its formalities [but we] have lost its spirit, we learn their language and do not feel the living world of their thoughts [...] There the blunt laws of the grammarians are said to be the divine which we venerate, and we forget the true

2. The quoted passage reads in the original as follows: "Die Analogien aller wilden Sprachen bestatigen meinen Satz: jede ist auf ihre Weise verschwenderisch und dürftig, nur alle auf eigne Art. Wenn der Araber für Stein, Kamel, Schwert, Schlange (Dinge, unter denen er lebt!) so viel Wörter hat, so ist die ceylanische Sprache, den Neigungen ihres Volks gemäß, reich an Schmeicheleien, Titeln und Wortgepränge [...]. In Siam gibt es achterlei Manieren, ich und wir zu sagen, nachdem der Herr mit dem Knechte oder der Knecht mit dem Herren redet. Die Sprache der wilden Kariben ist beinahe in zwei Sprachen der Weiber und Männer verteilt, und die gemeinsten Sachen, Bette, Mond, Sonne, Bogen, benennen beide anders - welch ein Überfluß von Synonymen! Und doch haben eben diese Kariben nur vier Wörter für die Farben, auf die sie alle anderen beziehen müssen - welche Armut! Die Huronen haben jedesmal ein doppeltes Verbum für eine beseelte und unbeseelte Sache, so daß Sehen bei "einen Stein sehen" und Sehen bei "einen Menschen sehen" immer zweien verschiedene Ausdrücke sind; man verfolgte das durch die ganze Natur - welch ein Reichtum! In der peruanischen Hauptsprache nennen sich die Geschlechter so sonderbar abgetrennt, daß die Schwester des Bruders und die Schwester der Schwester, das Kind des Vaters und der Mutter ganz verschieden heißt; und doch hat eben diese Sprache keinen wahren Pluralismus! Jede dieser Synonymien hängt so sehr mit Sitte, Charakter und Ursprung des Volks zusammen; Überall aber charakterisiert sich der erfindende menschliche Geist". (Herder 1770: 149f.)

divine nature of language, which formed itself in its heart with the human mind. (Herder 1770: 173 [my translation, G.S.]).<sup>3</sup>

And with this position Herder again seems to be of immediate interest for us, as recent debates within linguistics on endangered languages and their adequate documentation reveal.

Without reference to Herder, but certainly under the influence of the ideas within the contemporary philosophy of language (Heeschen 1972: 29ff) Wilhelm von Humboldt developed his conception of language.<sup>4</sup> As Brigitte Nerlich and David D. Clarke (this volume) point out, Humboldt's thinking rooted in the philosophical tradition which begins with Leibniz; he was also strongly influenced by Kant and Fichte. For Humboldt (1830-1835: 426) language is 'the creative organ of thought' ("das bildende Organ des Gedanken"). The difference between languages represents 'not only one of sounds and signs, but a difference of world views itself' ("nicht nur eine von Schallen und Zeichen, sondern eine Verschiedenheit der Weltansichten selbst" (Humboldt 1820: 20)). And 'in every language [rests] a specific world view' ("in jeder Sprache [liegt] eine eigenthiimliche Weltansicht" (Humboldt 1830-1835: 224, 434)). Heeschen clearly worked out where Humboldt sees the foundation for the difference of languages:

During the formation of language the given objective as well as the subjective point of view becomes valid - the point of view the speaker actually takes with respect to the world; a language puts down a world view in its vocabulary. But not just the material the world spreads out in front of the senses is processed subjectively, the forms of understanding, too, cannot but appear in subjective refraction in the language; thus the grammatical view causes even bigger differences, because it creates the distinction of whole word groups, paradigms, and syntactic categories. At a certain moment the point is reached where the by now complete language gains power which is independent from the individual and which - on the basis of world view and grammatical form - predetermines the direction, in which the individual can move. In the same measure, in

3. This reads in the original: "[Wir] haschen [zwar] ihre Formalitäten [aber wir] haben ihren Geist verloren, wir lernen ihre Sprache und fühlen nicht die lebendige Welt ihrer Gedanken [...] Da sollen die stumpfen Gesetze der Grammatiker das Gottliche sein, was wir verehren, und vergessen die wahre gottliche Sprachnatur, die sich in ihrem Herzen mit dem menschlichen Geiste bildete" (Herder 1770: 173).

4. Humboldt liked Herder's poems, but it should be pointed out that he did not think high of Herder as a philosopher. It is obvious that Herder did not know much about foreign languages; moreover he had no idea of how to analyse and interpret linguistic data (see Wirrer 1996). Thus, as Heeschen (1972: 35) points out, Humboldt cannot be seen at all as being in the succession of Herder. Humboldt was highly influenced by Kant (see e.g., Humboldt 1820: 3f.); however, he refers to him explicitly only once in his linguistic writings (Humboldt 1830-1835: 593; see Heeschen 1972: 36).

which the nations have created the language, the created reacts on them in a paralysing or in an inspiring way. (Heeschen 1972: 255f. [my translation, G.S.]<sup>5</sup>)

Humboldt (1830-1835: 434) describes this situation as follows:

With the same act with which [Man] spins language out of himself he spins himself into this language, and every language draws a circle around the nation it belongs to. Getting out of this circle is only possible by stepping over into the circle of another language at the same time. (Humboldt 1830-1835: 434 [my translation, G.S.]<sup>6</sup>)

Thus, as Nerlich and Clarke (this volume) point out, Humboldt came up with a rather complex language relativity thesis. However, his relativity thesis does not imply that humans are captives of their specific languages. On the contrary, 'the system coagulated to world view and grammar provides the individual with material for a new wealth of ideas and forms' ("das zum Weltbild und zur Grammatik geronnene System wird dem Individuum Material zu neuer Ideen- und Formenfulle" (Heeschen 1972: 255) [my translation, G. S.]). Language improves in the course of its development as an 'organ of thinking' in the same way as it deepens thinking. Works of literature and science come into being and allow for an additional wealth of innovative ideas.

Spontaneity of the creative powers become apparent in the use of language [...] in the dialectics between primary, sensual world-outlook, world view and poetic individual world-outlook the freedom of language use - language as 'energeia' - gains its space. (Heeschen 1972: 256 [my translation, G.S.]<sup>7</sup>)

5. This reads in the original: "Während der Bildung der Sprache macht sich sowohl der objektiv vorgegebene wie auch der subjektive Standpunkt geltend, den der Sprecher zur Welt tatsächlich einnimmt; eine Weltansicht legt die Sprache in ihrem Wortschatz nieder. Aber nicht nur das Material, das die Welt vor den Sinnen ausbreitet, wird subjektiv verarbeitet, auch die Formen des Verstandes können nicht anders als in subjektiver Brechung in der Sprache erscheinen; die grammatische Ansicht bedingt so noch viel größere Unterschiede, weil sie gleich die Verschiedenheit ganzer Wortgruppen, Paradigmen und syntaktischer Kategorien schafft. Einmal ist der Punkt erreicht, wo die nun vollständige Sprache eine vom Individuum unabhängige Macht gewinnt und durch Weltbild und grammatischen Bau Bahn und Richtung vorherbestimmt, in der sich der Einzelne bewegen kann. Denn in dem Maße, in dem die Nationen die Sprache geschaffen haben, wirkt das Geschaffene auf sie lahmend oder begeisternd zurück" (Heeschen 1972: 255f.).

6. This reads in the original: "Durch denselben Act, vermöge dessen [der Mensch] die Sprache aus sich heraus spinnt, spinnt er sich in dieselbe ein, und jede zieht um das Volk, welchem sie angehört, einen Kreis, aus dem es nur insofern hinauszu gehen möglich ist, als man zugleich in den Kreis einer anderen hinübertritt" (Humboldt 1830-1835: 434).

7. This reads in the original: "[Die] Spontaneität der schöpferischen Kräfte erweist sich im Gebrauch der Sprache [...] in der Dialektik von primärer, sinnlicher Weltansicht, Weltbild und poetischer individueller Weltansicht verschafft sich die Freiheit des Sprachgebrauchs, die Sprache als Energeia, Raum" (Heeschen 1972: 256).

Insights like this one justify why Nerlich and Clarke (this volume) characterize Humboldt's theory of language as a 'pragmatic' theory in which the notion of the 'act of speaking' is central. They point out that Humboldt always emphasized the pragmatic grounding of language: language is not something which exists independently of its users. Trabant (1986) has shown that this insight has far-reaching consequences - for both linguistics and anthropology:

For only by researching languages as they are used by individuals, in texts - the place where the physiological power of language meets the speaking individuals' dynamic force - linguistics can answer that question which is the general basis for Humboldt's anthropological search, namely the question of what is imagination and genius, the question of how man creates something new. (Trabant 1986: 203 [my translation, G.S.])<sup>8</sup>

Researchers who exclude in their linguistic analyses the aspect of actual language use within a specific speech community or who consider it marginal, linguists who are only interested in the structure of a language from a system linguistics point of view, scientists who understand rules and algorithms of grammar as the sole object of their research have to bear the scorn and the scolding expressed in the xenion "The linguist" - which was meant for Adelung (see Trabant 1986: 197):

You may anatomize language, however, its carcass only;  
spirit and life fleetingly escape the crude scalpel.  
[my translation, G.S.]<sup>9</sup>

8. This reads in the original: "Denn nur indem sie die Sprachen in ihrem Gebrauch durch die Individuen untersucht, in den Texten, diesem Ort der Begegnung der physiologischen Macht der Sprache und der dynamischen Gewalt der sprechenden Individuen, kann die Sprachwissenschaft jene der anthropologischen Suche Humboldts generell zugrundeliegende Frage beantworten, die Frage nämlich nach der Einbildungskraft und dem Genie, die Frage, wie der Mensch Neues schafft" (Trabant 1986: 203).

9. This reads in the original:

"Anatomieren magst du die Sprache, doch nur ihr Kadaver;  
Geist und Leben entschlüpft flüchtig dem groben Skalpell."

A "xenion" is a satirical poem that consists of two lines only. Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller wrote and published this xenion in their "Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1797". Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806), the target of this poem, was a highly influential German-language scholar.

On the basis of Humboldt's understanding of language it has to be emphasized, however, that it is the sense of language itself that remonstrates against being treated as a dead skeleton:

The sense for language, the sense for that sense which Humboldt defined as the individual organ of thinking and as the sounding instrument of unison, linguistic phantasy stimulated by genius and study seems to require the mediation meant with the word "human" if linguistics should make sense. (Trabant 1986: 207 [my translation, G.S.])<sup>10</sup>

Language has to be seen first of all as a cultural achievement and as a cultural tool. Language is a mirror of the culture of its speech community. And - as Nerlich and Clarke (this volume) in their critical, condensed aperçu on Humboldt's pragmatic philosophy of language point out, Humboldt emphasized the strong interrelationship between language, culture and cognition.

Thus it is evident that we can trace the request for, and the foundation of "anthropological linguistics" back to the 18th and 19th century. In the 20th century we find Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the founders of modern cultural anthropology, as the great apologist of anthropological linguistics (see Young 2004, Senft, this volume, Senft 2006b). In 1920 he stated explicitly that "[...] there is an urgent need for an Ethno-linguistic theory, a theory for the guidance of linguistic research to be done among natives and in connection with ethnographic study [...]" (Malinowski 1920: 69). And in his famous programmatic introduction to his monograph "Argonauts of the Western Pacific" he emphasized the following:

[...] the goal of ethnographic field-work must be approached through three avenues:

1. *The organisation of the tribe, and the anatomy of its culture* must be recorded in firm clear outline. The method of concrete *statistical documentation* is the means through which such an outline has to be given.
2. Within this frame, *the imponderabilia of actual life*, and the *type of behaviour* have to be filled in. They have to be collected through minute, detailed observations, in the form of some sort of ethnographic diary, made possible by close contact with native life.
3. A collection of ethnographic statements, characteristic narratives, typical utterances, items of folk-lore and magical formulae has to be given as a *corpus inscriptioinum*, as documents of native mentality.

10. This reads in the original: "Der Sinn für die Sprache, der Sinn für jenen Sinn, der als individuelles Organ des Denkens und als klingendes Instrument der Über-Ein-Stimmung von Humboldt bestimmt wurde, die durch Genie und Studium angeregte linguistische Phantasie, scheint nämlich die mit dem Wort des Menschlichen gemeinte Vermittlung zu fordern, wenn Sprachwissenschaft Sinn haben soll" (Trabant 1986: 207).

These three lines of approach lead to the final goal, of which an Ethnographer should never lose sight. This goal is, briefly, to grasp the natives point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world. (Malinowski 1922: 24f.)

Here Malinowski drives it home to his discipline that it just cannot pursue its research interests without linguistics.<sup>11</sup> As Senft (this volume) points out, Malinowski understood language 'in its primitive function as a mode of behaviour, as a mode of action, rather than as a countersign of thought - and he illustrated this understanding by the concept he called "phatic communion", a type of speech which serves to establish personal bonds but does not serve any purpose of communicating ideas (for a critical discussion of this concept see Senft, this volume).<sup>12</sup> In Malinowski's pragmatic theory of meaning the insight that the meaning of a word lies in its use is central. For him meaning is function within context. Understanding context requires that the researcher interested in the relationship between culture and language use has to do fieldwork (see Senft, this volume). Like Boas (see below) Malinowski insisted that adequate data could only be collected in the field. Only participant observation combined with other tools of data gathering, like for example interviews (see Briggs, this volume) or specific elicitation procedures (see Senft, this volume), enables the researcher 'to grasp the native's point of view'. Thus, all fieldworkers and ethnographers (see Agar, this volume) set out to learn meanings and contexts which lie outside the concepts and habits of prior experience.<sup>13</sup> Malinowski's aim to understand the interaction between culture and meaning (see especially Malinowski 1923), his theory of context of situation which bound language to the situational moments and cultural contexts of use (see Agar, this volume) also laid the foundation for the 'British school' of linguistics, also known as 'Firthian linguistics' (see Östman & Simon-Vandenberg, this volume). This approach tried to tie down context and make it operationally approachable. Firth strongly advocated for a linguistics which studies language as a form of meaningful human behavior in society. With his approach he was taking initial steps into a new field of linguistics, namely pragmatics.

11. For a detailed description of Malinowski's linguistic interests and his ideas for a theory of language see also Senft 2005.

12. By the way, Malinowski's concept of "phatic communion" became central for Robin Dunbar's research on the origin of language (see, e.g., Dunbar 1996).

13. The contributions of Cliff Goddard to this volume present techniques for the analysis of word meanings (see his article on "Componential Analysis") and for articulating culture-specific norms, values and practises (see his article on "Cultural Scripts").

In 1975 Michael Silverstein repeats Malinowski's request for integrating linguistics into anthropology in his discussion of the relationship between the two disciplines. Lamenting about the actual state of the art of both fields he states the following:

On the one hand [...] the pursuit of anthropological studies without the use and investigation of the native language of the people being studied is unthinkable in theory, although all too frequently the case in practice. On the other hand, the pursuit of grammatical studies without the understanding of the function of the speech forms being studied is actually impossible in theory, although again linguists have simply assumed that this is the correct and necessary approach. (Silverstein 1975: 157f.)

But why then was anthropological linguistics or linguistic anthropology confronted at all with problems concerning its legitimation? In his attempt to reconstruct the history of anthropological linguistics, Agar points out that Franz Boas, the founder of American anthropology, also understood language as an unalterable prerequisite for his research: "[...] language was then [...] a part of anthropological field work, and the point of fieldwork was to get to culture. Culture was the destination; language was the path; grammar and dictionary marked the trail" (Agar 1994: 49; see also Agar, this volume). Or, as Regna Darnell (this volume) has it, Boas saw language as a symbolic form through which culture becomes accessible to study. Like Humboldt - who quite strongly influenced him - Boas was convinced that languages have an inner form, that they deserve to be described in their own terms. With his recognition that Indo-European categories actually distorted languages on which they were imposed began cultural relativism, as Darnell (this volume) notes. She also states that the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of the relationship of habitual thought to linguistic categories (see below) has its roots in the Boasian insistence on the unique perceptual patterning of each language.

However, Boas is also one of the founders of descriptive-structural linguistics that found its first important expression in Leonhard Bloomfield's (1935) monograph "Language". With this book linguistics in the USA raised from a subdiscipline of ethnography, from a tool for anthropological field research to an independent discipline in its own right. However, the new discipline was no longer interested in the actual use of language and in language in its ethnographic context. Linguistics now was defined as the study of the sound system and the grammar of a language; there is no room for semantics in Bloomfield's "Language" - this field is delegated to psychology and 'science'. The further development of American structural linguistics led to the complete neglect of actual users of language (or better: English) and of contexts, in which speakers use their language (resp. English).<sup>14</sup> In 1965 Noam Chomsky proclaimed

14. Bickerton (1971: 457) polemically refers to Chomskyan linguistics as "linguistics without a speaker". See Senft (1982: 1-5).

in his famous book "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax" the "ideal speaker/listener in a completely homogenous speech community" (Chomsky 1965: 3) whose language competence linguists describe and analyse via introspection. Linguists attempting to describe language in the lowlands of empirical research were disregarded within this paradigm. The various reformulations of Chomsky's theory can still claim important status (and many positions at universities) in linguistics, probably also because 'the analysis of a few hundred examples from languages one hardly understands is just a dirty business compared with the development of clean theories' (see Klein 1979: 95; also Senft: 1991: 43-45).

But let us come back once more to Franz Boas. He was not only one of the founders of American structuralism. He was also the influential teacher of Edward Sapir, who - together with Benjamin Lee Whorf - developed an interest for researching the indigenous languages of the North-American Indians. Edward Sapir kind of impersonated Malinowski's ideal fieldworker: he was president of both the American Anthropological Association and the Linguistic Society of America! Like Humboldt Sapir was convinced that language is essentially dynamic and he spoke of a language's genius, like Malinowski he insisted in studying language in the context of its use, and like Boas he was convinced that every language has its own unique way of conceptualizing social reality (see Vermeulen, this volume). Whorf also investigated language as a cultural phenomenon. With Malinowski he shares the conviction that language is a form of behavior, however for Whorf this behavior is of significantly mental nature. Thus, he theorized about the role of language in cognition and the place of 'linguistic thinking' in our understanding of language as a whole (see Lee, this volume). Whorf's cooperation with Sapir, their descriptions and analyses of indigenous languages of the North-American Indians, and Whorf's perspectives on linguistics resulted in the formulation of the linguistic relativity principle:

We are [...] introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some ways be calibrated. (Whorf 1958: 5)

This idea with respect to the interrelationship between language and thought became famous as the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" - as the linguistic relativity principle was referred to in the 1950s (see Lee, this volume, also Lee: 1996) - and it is striking to see many parallels in the understanding of the relationship of language, experience and thought between Herder and Humboldt on the one hand and Sapir and Whorf on the other.<sup>15</sup>

15. Note again that this does neither mean nor imply that there is any kind of a clear line of succession with respect to the scholars mentioned here. Humboldt's ideas are much more refined and differentiated than Whorf's.

With research instigated by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, with the rise of American sociolinguistics and its efforts to understand, describe and analyse variation in language (with William Labov as probably its most important representative), and with the research within the "ethnography of speaking"-paradigm founded by John Gumperz and Dell Hymes (see Fitch and Philipsen, this volume; also Niedzielski and Preston, this volume) who rooted this tradition in theories and insights presented by Malinowski, Boas and Sapir anthropological linguistics gradually won recognition again - not only within American (see Blount, this volume) but also within European linguistics. With the rise of sociolinguistics dialectology - a linguistic subdiscipline traditionally rather open for anthropological linguistic ideas - regained importance by concentrating much more on researching spoken language in everyday contexts and use<sup>16</sup> than on developing language atlases, finding isoglosses, and collecting most typical and archaic expressions for various dialects. Moreover, this sociolinguistic turn and the reception of the "ethnography of speaking" paradigm also revived the study of "intercultural communication" again - a field which gets more and more important in our times of globalization (see Hinnenkamp, this volume). Finally, the reception of Austins and Searle's ideas with respect to speech act theory resulted in the strengthening of "pragmatics" as the subdiscipline of linguistics that researches rules and regulations which determine the choice of specific, situation-adequate varieties or registers in the social interaction of speakers.<sup>17</sup> Michael Silverstein points out that researching the function of speech behavior is one of the central aims of anthropological linguistics. In sharp contrast to the Chomskyan "mainstream"-linguistics of that time he states

[...] that the study of grammar cannot in principle be carried on in any serious way until we tackle the ethnographic description of the canons of use of the messages corresponding to sentences. Reformulating this result, we may say that grammar is open-ended, not closed, and a part of the statement of the total meaning of a sentence is a statement of the rules of use that are involved in proper indexicality of elements of the message. This means, again, that if we call the 'function of a sentence the way in which the corresponding message depends on the context of situation, then the determination of the function of the sentence, independent of its propositional value, is a necessary step in any linguistic analysis. Thus a theory of rules of use, in terms of social variables of the speech situation and dependent message form, is an integral part of a grammatical description of the abstract sentences underlying them. Rules of use depend on ethnographic description, that is, on analysis of cultural behavior of people in a society. Thus, at one level we can analyze sentences as the embodiment of propositions, or of linguistic meanings more generally; at another level, which is always implied

16. See for example Ruoff (1972); also Senft (1982: 3, 163-173).

17. The rise of pragmatics was also documented by the foundation of the "International Pragmatics Association" in 1986.

in any grammatical description, we must analyze messages as linguistic behavior which is part of culture. [...] a valid description of a language by grammar demands description of the rules of use in speech situations that are structured by, and index, the variables of cultures. (Silverstein 1975:167)

The close relationship between anthropological linguistics and pragmatics is obvious. Especially recent developments within pragmatics and anthropological linguistics allow Bill Foley (1997: 29) to state that "[...] the boundary between pragmatics and anthropological linguistics or sociolinguistics is impossible to draw at present [...]". Thus, in linguistics there are good and well grounded hopes that anthropological linguistics - "[...] this somewhat neglected topic [...]" (Trudgill 1997: xiii) - finally gains its due importance.

The development of cognitive anthropology was certainly responsible for the fact that anthropological linguistics could not be ousted in anthropology. Agar (1994: 81) characterizes the approach of cognitive anthropologists as follows: "The cognitive anthropologists took Whorf's basic idea and developed a way to discover culture, a way to use the surface of language to get and document the culture that it expressed. They changed Whorf from a theory to a method".<sup>18</sup> Stephen Levinson (this volume) defines cognitive anthropology as "the comparative study of cognition in its full cultural and linguistic context [...]", as "the indepth understanding of conceptual domains, primarily through language, together with comparison across unrelated languages and cultures". For Levinson the aim to research the implications of linguistic diversity to thinking also goes back to Humboldt, Wundt, Boas, Sapir and Whorf; moreover, cognitive anthropology owes much to the "ethnography of speaking" paradigm and the "ethnoscience" approach of the 1950s. In 1991 the German Max-Planck-Society founded the "Cognitive Anthropology Research Group" with Stephen Levinson at its director. Since 1991 a group of linguists, anthropologists, and psychologists has been researching the interrelationship between language, culture and cognition in a number of semantic domains, like for example "Space". For the group, which was integrated into the Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics as the Department of "Language and Cognition" in 1996, the study of cultural and linguistic variation serves as the starting point for researching central epistemological questions. The group's research interests center on questions like the following: Are there differences between fundamental

18. This is, of course, somewhat of an exaggeration. One should not forget - as Robert E. Maclaury reminds us in his contribution on "Taxonomy" that ever since Boas we can observe an anthropological linguistic interest in categorization. Many anthropologists and linguists were and still are concerned with the crosscultural comparison of ways that lexically labelled categories are internally organized and related to each other within a domain. Especially cognitive anthropological research has been dealing for a long time with ethnobiological taxonomies, with componential analyses of kinship systems, with inventories of (basic) color terms and body part terms.

semantic parameters in specific domains of the lexicon of different languages? Are these differences dependent on cultural factors or can they be referred back to cultural phenomena? Can one infer on the basis of these lexical-semantic differences that there are also differences between various languages with respect to the cognitive conceptualizations of their speakers or, more generally, that there are differences in the realm of cognitive processes that are decisive for the speakers of these languages? Or to put it more bluntly: Does a specific language influence the ways its speakers' think? (see Senft 1994: 414).

Among the colleagues who closely cooperate with this group are Jürg Wassmann and Pierre Dasen, who have been working together as an interdisciplinary team for a long time. They have certainly contributed crucially to the cognitive turn not only within German anthropology (see e.g., Wassmann & Dasen 1993; 1998). In their cooperation, the psychologist and the anthropologist completely agree that linguistic research is inevitable for solving certain problems - although Wassmann (1993) showed that "actions speak louder than words" - at least sometimes.

In addition, we should not forget that much of the merit to understand language, culture and cognition again as interdependent domains of one interdisciplinary and to research its mutual dependencies is due to psycholinguists and representatives of the "cross-cultural psychology" subdiscipline who refer in their publications explicitly to pioneers like Herder, Humboldt, Wundt, Boas, Malinowski and Levi-Strauss (see Slobin 1967; Berry & Dasen 1974: 6; Lonner & Triandis 1980: 1; Berry 1980: 7; Klineberg 1980). The linguists and psycholinguists around Dan Slobin, Susan Ervin-Tripp and John Gumperz in Berkeley were especially interested in the "cross-linguistic study of the acquisition of communicative competence". The representatives of the "cross-cultural psychology" - especially followers of the psychology of Jean Piaget and Bärbel Inhelder's Geneva school like Pierre Dasen, scientists like Gustav Jahoda, and some of Jerome Bruner's associates at the Center of Cognitive Studies at Harvard University such as Patricia Greenfield, Michael Cole, Sylvia Scribner and their co-workers took the interdependence between language, culture and cognition for granted. They were convinced that psychological hypotheses - especially hypotheses in developmental psychology - proposed in researching populations within one culture and one language community could only claim to be general and universal if they were tested in intercultural research. Psycholinguists, linguists and anthropologists cooperated in this interdisciplinary that was understood as a subdiscipline of psychology.<sup>19</sup> With their interdisciplinary orientation they contributed fundamentally to questions of developmental psychology and to research on "learning, memory, verbal-logical problem

19. For further representatives of this interdisciplinary see the contributions to the six volumes of the "Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology" edited by Triandis and others. See also Senft (2003).

solving, and logical inference" especially in the 1980s; however, their findings are still of high relevance for psychologists, (psycho-) linguists and (cognitive) anthropologists. The "cross-cultural studies on the acquisition of communicative competence" initiated by Slobin and others developed into the "crosslinguistic study of language acquisition". This is a field extremely important for psycholinguistic language acquisition research, but also for general and comparative linguistics, for language typology and for the cognitive sciences generally.<sup>20</sup> The crosslinguistic study of language acquisition clearly shows how much a discipline - here linguistics and psycholinguistics - can gain approaching certain questions and problems in an interdisciplinary way.

Another subdiscipline that developed out of the "cross-cultural studies on the acquisition of communicative competence" is "developmental pragmatics" which was founded by Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin (1979). Ochs and Schieffelin took up the plea for interdisciplinary research. Influenced by Clifford Geertz's (1973: 6) "thick descriptions" they developed independent methods for data collection and for the anthropological linguistic transcription of data on the verbal socialization of children in different cultures (see B. Schieffelin 1979; Ochs 1988). On the basis of the careful, subtle and sophisticated processing of the data they can minutely and in great detail analyse the complex processes of verbal socialization. Both scientists do not only cooperate with each other after their field research, they also cooperated in their field sites with anthropologists: On Samoa, Elinor Ochs worked together with Alessandro Duranti, and Bambi Schieffelin researched the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea together with Steven Feld and Edward Schieffelin. The publications of both research teams document all advantages of interdisciplinary cooperation between linguists and anthropologists (see e.g., Feld 1982; Feld & B. Schieffelin 1982; E. Schieffelin 1976; B. Schieffelin & Feld 1998; Duranti 1981; Duranti & Ochs 1996).

This is also true for the research of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. Their theory with respect to the universality of politeness phenomena (Brown & Levinson 1978) caused many case studies and comparative research on this topic - especially within linguistic pragmatics, but also in anthropology and ethnology. The contributions to this handbook on "Honorifics" by Judith Irvine and on "Aisatsu" by Risako Ide present excellent overviews of specific domains within this research domain.

One of the highly ambitious interdisciplinary projects, in which anthropologists and linguists cooperated for 8 years (1993-2001) not only with each other but also with demographers, historians, geologists, botanists and archeologists was the Dutch project "The Irian Jaya Studies", a priority programme financed by the "Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek)"

20. See the 5 volumes edited between 1985 and 1997 by Dan Slobin and published under the title "The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition" by Erlbaum, Hillsdale.

and supervised by Wim Stokhof and Jelle Miedema in Leiden. In this comprehensive interdisciplinary project many researchers from various universities in the Netherlands and in Indonesia collaborate with each other. Moreover, they had also close links to scientists in Australia, in the USA and in Germany. The research results presented so far are absolutely spectacular (see, Miedema et al. 1999; Miedema & Reesink 2004). This project is exemplary for the tremendous benefits research programmes can derive from interdisciplinary cooperation.

In 1997 the linguist William Foley published his monograph "Anthropological Linguistics - An introduction" and in the same year the anthropologist Alessandro Duranti published his monograph "Linguistic Anthropology". Although the titles already signal the two different starting points from which the authors approach the interdiscipline, their understanding of anthropological linguistics and/or linguistic anthropology is strikingly similar. On the one hand, Foley (1997: 3) defines anthropological linguistics as

[...] that sub-field of linguistics which is concerned with the place of language in its wider social and cultural context, its role in forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures [...]. Anthropological linguistics views language through the prism of the core anthropological concept, culture, and, as such, seeks to uncover the meaning behind the use, misuse or non-use of language, its different forms, registers and styles. It is an interpretative discipline, peeling away at language to find cultural understandings.

He understands this discipline as "the study of how humans make meanings together in social interaction through conventional transgenerational cultural and linguistic practices" (Foley 1997: 81). Duranti, on the other hand, writes:

Whether or not they see themselves as doing linguistic anthropology, the researchers from whose work I extensively draw are all concerned with the study of language as a cultural resource and with speaking as a cultural practice [and] rely on ethnography as an essential element of their analyses [...]. What unites them is the emphasis on communicative practices as constitutive of the culture of everyday life and a view of language as a powerful tool rather than a mirror of social realities established elsewhere [...] (Duranti 1997: xv)

[...] linguistic anthropology [is] presented as the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice [...]. [...] it examines language through the lenses of anthropological concerns [...] (Duranti 1997: 2, 4)

If anthropological linguists and linguistic anthropologists agree again in their general definition of their interdisciplinary domain, then this old and periodically rediscovered discipline will finally gain its due importance for both linguists and anthropologists again.

If we look at the work of the anthropological linguists and linguistic and cognitive anthropologists and see what insights were gained in these interdisciplinary research

projects, how many innovations have been emanating from them, and how this interdisciplinary research reacts upon the specific disciplines involved, and if we look at the contributions to this handbook then we cannot but conclude that anthropological linguistics which researches interdisciplinarily the interrelationship between language, language use, culture and cognition is the field "where the action is". And if someone wants to be there, or was there once, or is there simply has to agree with Hockett (1973: 675): "Linguistics without anthropology is sterile; anthropology without linguistics is blind".

## References

- Agar, M. (1994). *Language shock - understanding the culture of conversation*. William Morrow and Co.
- Bartsch, R. & T. Vennemann (Eds) (1975). *Linguistics and neighboring disciplines*. North-Holland Publishing Co.
- Berry, J.W. (1980). Introduction to methodology. In H.C. Triandis & J.W. Berry (Eds): 1-28.
- Berry, J.W. & P.R. Dasen (Eds) (1974) *Culture and cognition: Readings in cross-cultural psychology*. Methuen.
- Bickerton, D. (1971). Inherent variability and variable rules. *Foundations of Language* 7:457-492.
- Bloomfield, L. (1935). *Language*. Allen & Unwin (2nd revised edition).
- Brown, P. & S.C. Levinson (1978). Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena. In E.N. Goody (Ed.): 56-289.
- Cap, P. (Ed.) (2005). *Pragmatics today*. Peter Lang.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. MIT Press.
- Deutsch, W., T. Herrmann & G. Rickheit (Eds) (2003). *Psycholinguistik - Ein internationales Handbuch Psycholinguistics - an international handbook*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Dunbar, R. (1996). *Grooming, gossip and the evolution of language*. Faber and Faber.
- Duranti, A. (1981). *The Samoanfono: A sociolinguistic study*. Pacific Linguistics.
- (1997). *Linguistic anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Duranti, A. & E. Ochs (1996). Use and acquisition of genitive constructions in Samoan. In Dan. I. Slobin, Julie Gerhardt, Amy Kyratzis, Jiansheng Gua (Eds): 175-189.
- Feld, S. (1982). *Sound and sentiment. Birds, weeping, poetics and song in Kaluli expression*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Feld, S. & B. Schieffelin (1982). Hard words: A functional basis for Kaluli Discourse. In D. Tannen (Ed.): 350-370.
- Flader, D. (Ed.) (1991). *Verbale Interaktion. Studien zur Empirie und Methodologie der Pragmatik*. J.B. Metzler.
- Foley, W.A. (1997). *Anthropological linguistics*. An Introduction. Blackwell.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.
- Goody, E.N. (Ed.) (1978). *Questions and politeness: strategies in social interaction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Heeschen, V. (1972). *Die Sprachphilosophie Wilhelm von Humboldts*. Unveröffentlichte Dissertation: Ruhr-Universität Bochum.
- Herder, J.G. (1770). Über den Ursprung der Sprache. In: *Herders Werke in fünf Bänden*. Band 2, 91-200. Aufbau Verlag (=1978).
- Hockett, C.F. (1973). *Man's Place in Nature*. McGraw Hill.

- Humboldt, W. von (1820). Über das vergleichende Sprachstudium in Beziehung auf die verschiedenen Epochen der Sprachentwicklung. In: *Wilhelm von Humboldt. Werke in fünf Bänden*. Herausgegeben von A. Flitner & K. Giel. 1963. Band III. Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie. 1-25. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- (1830-1835). Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluß auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts. Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften. In: *Wilhelm von Humboldt. Werke in fünf Bänden*. Herausgegeben von A. Flitner & K. Giel. 1963. Band III. Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie. 144-367. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Klein, W. (1979). *Untersuchungen zum Spracherwerb ausländischer Arbeiter. Tätigkeitsbereich für die Gesamtdauer des Projekts*. 1.04.1974-30.06.1979. DFG-Az.: Kl 337/1, 3, 5. Nijmegen: Mimeo.
- Klineberg, O. (1980). Historical perspectives: Cross-cultural psychology before 1960. In H.C. Triandis, W.W. Lambert (Eds): 31-67.
- Lee, P. (1996). *The Whorf theory complex: a critical reconstruction*. John Benjamins.
- Lonner, W.J. & H.C. Triandis (1980). Introduction to basic processes. In H.C. Triandis & W. Lonner, (Eds): 1-20.
- Maccoby, E., T.M. Newcomb & E.L. Hartley (Eds) (1958). *Readings in social psychology*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Malinowski, B. (1920). Classificatory particles in the language of Kiriwina. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London institution, Vol. I, part IV: 33-78.
- (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (1923). The problem of meaning in primitive languages. In C.K. Ogden & I.A. Richards: Supplement I. 296-336.
- Miedema, J., C. Ode & R.A.C. Dam (Eds) (1999). *Perspectives on the Bird's Head of Irian Jaya, Indonesia*. Proceedings of the conference, Leiden 13-17 October 1997. Rodopi.
- Miedema, J. & G. Reesink (2004). *One head, many faces. New perspectives on the Bird's Head Peninsula of New Guinea*. KITLV Press.
- Ochs, E. (1988). *Culture and language development. Language acquisition and language socialization in a Samoan village*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ochs, E. & B.B. Schieffelin (Eds) (1979). *Developmental pragmatics*. Academic Press.
- Ogden, C.K. & I.A. Richards. *The meaning of meaning. A study of the influence of language upon thought and of the science of symbolism*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner. (Fourth edition revised 1936).
- Ruoff, A. 1972. *Grundlagen und Methoden der Untersuchung gesprochener Sprache*. Niemeyer.
- Schieffelin, B.B. (1979). *The give and take of everyday life - Language socialization of Kaluli children*. Cambridge University Press.
- Schieffelin, B.B. & S. FELD (1998). *Bosavi - English - Tok Pisin dictionary (Papua New Guinea)*. Pacific Linguistics.
- Schieffelin, E.L. (1976). *The Sorrow of the lonely and the burning of the dancers*. St. Martins Press.
- Senft, G. (1982). *Sprachliche Varietät und Variation im Sprachverhalten Kaiserslauterer Metallarbeiter*. Peter Lang.
- (1991). Mahnreden auf den Trobriand Inseln. Eine Fallstudie. In D. Flader (Ed.): 27-49.
- (1994). Ein Vorschlag, wie man standardisiert Daten zum Thema "Sprache, Kognition und Konzepte des Raumes" in verschiedenen Kulturen erheben kann. *Linguistische Berichte* 154: 413-429.
- (2003). Ethnographic methods. In W. Deutsch, T. Hermann & G. Rickheit (Eds): 106-114.
- (2005). Bronislaw Malinowski and Linguistic Pragmatics. In P. Cap, (Ed.): 139-155.
- (2006a). Völkerkunde und Linguistik - Ein Plädoyer für interdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit. *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* 34: 87-104.

- (2006b). Review article: A biography in the strict sense of the term - Michael Young, 'Malinowski: Odyssee of an anthropologist 1884-1920, Volume 1'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38:610-637.
- Silverstein, M. 1975. Linguistics and anthropology. In R. Bartsch & T. Vennemann (Eds): 157-170.
- Slobin, D.I. (Ed.) (1967). *Afield manual for cross-cultural study of the acquisition of communicative competence* (Second draft, July 1967). Berkeley: University of California, ASUC Bookstore.
- Slobin, D.I., J. Gerhardt, A. Kyratzis & J. Gua (Eds) (1996). *Essays in honor of Susan Ervin-Tripp*. Erlbaum.
- Trabant, J. (1986). *Apeliotes oder Der Sinn der Sprache. Wilhelm von Humboldts Sprach-Bild*. Wilhelm Fink.
- Tannen, D. (Ed.) (1982). *Analyzing discourse: Text and talk*. Georgetown University round table on language and linguistics 1981. Georgetown University Press.
- Triandis, H.C. & J.W. Berry (Eds) (1980). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology*. Volume 2: Methodology. Allyn and Bacon.
- Triandis, H.C. & W.W. Lambert (Eds) (1980). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology*. Volume 1: Perspectives. Allyn and Bacon.
- Triandis, H.C. & W. Lonner (Eds) (1980). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology*. Volume 3: Basic Processes. Allyn and Bacon.
- Trudgill, P. (1997). Series editors preface. In William Foley, *Anthropological linguistics*. An Introduction. p. xiii. Blackwell.
- Wassmann, J. (1993). When actions speak louder than words: The classification of food among the Yupno of Papua New Guinea. *Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition* 15: 30-40.
- Wassmann, J. & P. Dasen (Eds) (1993). *Alltagwissen. Der kognitive Ansatz im interdisziplinären Dialog*. Universitätsverlag Freiburg (Schweiz).
- (1998). Balinese spatial orientation: Some empirical evidence of moderate linguistic relativity. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Incorporating Man)* 4. 689-711.
- Whorf, B.L. (1958). Science and linguistics. In E. Maccoby, T.M. Newcomb & E.L. Hartley (Eds): 1-9.
- Wirrer, J. (1996). Stereotypen über europäische Völker in Herders 'Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit'. *Germanoslavica* III (VIII): 107-131.
- Young, M. 2004. *Malinowski: Odyssee of an anthropologist 1884 - 1920*. Yale University Press.