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Edited by
Brian D. Joseph

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OSU

The Ohio State University
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

The Ohio State University

Working Papers in Linguistics # 34

Studies on Language Change

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INTRODUCTION

This volume brings together 11 papers written over the past few years by faculty and students and others connected in some way and at some time with OSU. Some of the papers, in particular those by Miller, Johnson, Kupec, Stollenwerk, Välimaa-Blum, and Lee, were originally written for graduate-level lecture courses and seminars, while the others represent independently motivated work.

The common thread holding these papers together is that they all touch on issues relevant to historical linguistics and to the description and explanation of language change. They effectively reflect current work being done in historical linguistics in general and moreover are representative of those aspects of historical linguistics that are considered especially important in the OSU Linguistics Department. Thus, there is a definite sociolinguistic thrust to this collection, with several papers--those by Clark & Joseph, Kupec, Stollenwerk, Välimaa-Blum, and Lee--focusing on different aspects of dialect borrowing in language change (though each with its own special perspective, e.g. Clark & Joseph's on using a particular dialect borrowing explanation in etymologizing, Lee's on the relevant evidence for the interpretation of the extent and direction of change from earlier stages of Indic, etc.) and on the relevance of social factors in the spread of linguistic innovations.

At the same time, though, the more formal side of language change, along with other--especially internal--types of motivation for change is attended to in other papers, most notably those by Nevis, Miller, and Joseph, and in the Janda & Joseph collaborative effort, a general theory of morphological change is advanced which is tested and elaborated upon in Johnson's paper.

It should be noted as well that change in virtually all levels of language is covered, including phonetic change (Stollenwerk), phonological change (Janda & Joseph, Johnson), morphological change (Nevis, and, again, Janda & Joseph, Johnson), morphosyntactic change (Miller), syntactic change (Joseph, and, again, Nevis), lexical change (Kupec, Välimaa-Blum, Clark & Joseph), and to a limited extent, semantic change as well (in Kupec's paper).

Finally, the variety of languages covered is noteworthy: Sanskrit, Middle Indic, Greek, Arabic, Old English, Modern English, Finnish, Saame, and Estonian each form the major focal points of one or more of the papers, reflecting our belief that to understand the general phenomenon, language change, one must investigate a wide range of natural languages.

I would like to thank Sung-Ae Kim, Marlene Payha, and Hideo Tomita for their assistance in the production of this volume.

BDJ 10/20/86

Table of Contents

Studies on Language Change

Edited by Brian D. Joseph

	Page
Joel A. Nevis, "Decliticization and Deaffixation in Saame: Abessive <u>taga</u> "	1
Joel A. Nevis, "Decliticization in Old Estonian"	10
Brian D. Joseph, "On Automatic and Simultaneous Syntactic Changes"	28
Ann M. Miller, "Loss of Nominal Case Endings in the Modern Arabic Sedentary Dialects"	56
Richard D. Janda and Brian D. Joseph, "One Rule or Many? Sanskrit Reduplication as Fragmented Affixation"	84
Keith Johnson, "Fragmentation of Strong Verb Ablaut in Old English"	108
Mary E. Clark and Brian D. Joseph, "The Etymology of <u>bum</u> : Mere Child's Play"	123
Christopher Kupec, "Small Group Lexical Innovation: Some Examples"	127
Debra A. Stollenwerk, "Word Frequency and Dialect Borrowing"	133
Riitta Välimaa-Blum, "Introspection into a Stable Case of Variation in Finnish"	142
Gina M. Lee, "Diglossis in Ancient India"	151