

Sociolinguistics and linguistic typology: towards an integrated approach to the study of linguistic variation

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Content of the workshop

The aim of the workshop is to explore the relationship between language internal and cross-linguistic variation. The study of linguistic variation has traditionally been the main concern of at least two branches of linguistics: variationist sociolinguistics and linguistic typology. In spite of their similar research agenda, the two approaches have only rarely converged in the description and interpretation of variation. This is surprising also in light of the fact that variation, both within and across languages, is in all respect the same phenomenon.

Over the last decades, a number of scholars have discussed in a more principled way the possible mutual benefits between typology and sociolinguistics (see e.g. Kortmann 2004 and Trudgill 2011). Traditional studies in linguistic typology are often based on grammatical descriptions of individual languages. For this reason, the intrinsic variability of linguistic systems is often disregarded, as for reasons of cross-linguistic comparison, only one variety (often the standard one), is taken into account. What typologists may learn from sociolinguistics is the opportunity to take into account (also) non-standard varieties, from which a more complex picture often emerges as compared to the standard codified in grammatical descriptions. As a matter of fact, comparison between non-standard (oral) varieties may reveal the existence of common features even across typologically distant languages (cf. e.g. Auer 1990 and Auer & Maschler 2013 on Modern Hebrew and German and Ballarè & Inglese 2019 on locative relatives). In this respect, it is important to mention the increasing interest in typology for empirical data (Bossong 1985, Murelli & Kortmann 2011 and Seiler 2019). A key role has been played by the ever-increasing documentation of languages without a written tradition, which can offer evidence of grammatical structures that go beyond the normative treatment of traditional grammatical descriptions (on the interplay of documentation and typology see Epps 2010). Moreover, in recent years the availability of rich annotated corpora from typologically diverse languages has allowed the realization of large-scale typological studies based on real data extracted from corpora (e.g. Levshina 2017).

On the other hand, sociolinguistics (and more generally the study of language-internal variation in individual languages) has witnessed a fruitful opening to typological considerations, which may contribute to the study of variation with *tertia comparationis* which are independent from the description of individual languages or language families. Already Bossong (1991: 143) observed that

“broad typological comparison of data from many genetically and structurally different languages is necessary in order to be able to describe phenomena of single languages as what they really are”. In this respect, notable are works by Chambers (2004, 2009) on vernacular universals and the *Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English 2.0* edited by Kortmann and Lunkenheimer (2013), which is a database of the morphosyntactic features of spoken varieties of English and shares the structure of the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (Dryer & Haspelmath 2013).

Concerning Italian, since the ‘80s the tools of typology have also been adopted to account for phenomena of language internal variation. Individual constructions have been analyzed within a typological framework (e.g. Berretta 1989 on the prepositional accusative and Bernini 1992 on non-canonical negation), and even more traditional sociolinguistic studies have focused their attention on the relevance of the data for cross-linguistic variation (e.g. Berruto 1983, 1990 on substandard varieties and linguistic simplification). More recently, a similar approach has been pursued in the study of relative clauses (Cerruti 2017). Moreover, the comparison with more general models of language change based typological evidence enables the assessment of the degree of grammaticalization of several constructions in one variety (e.g. Cerruti 2007 on aspectual periphrasis in regional Italian spoken in Piedmont) or of the same construction in different varieties (e.g. Moretti 2004 on *avere* ‘have’ and Ballarè forthc. on *mica* in varieties from Basilicata and Lombardy). Finally, elaborating upon the existing analogies between the notion of *linguistic type* and *sociolinguistic variety*, Grandi (2018, 2019) has discussed the progressive inclusion of neo-standard traits in relation to frequent typological patterns.

In spite of the numerous benefits that may stem from a more intense contact between typology and sociolinguistics, a principled discussion on how the two disciplines may interact has not yet been carried out in a programmatic way. The goal of this workshop is to further stimulate such a debate, and aims at gathering either papers dealing with the opportunity to apply the tools and notions of linguistic typology to language-internal variation or papers that show how the study of a given linguistic phenomenon in a typological perspective may benefit the evidence from different varieties of the same language.

Topics to be addressed in the workshop include (but are not limited to):

- The nature of variation and the relationship between language internal and cross-linguistic variation;
- Methods and tools for the study of variation;
- Analysis of language internal variation phenomena in light of typological insights;
- Typological study that take into account empirical data, with a focus on spoken and written corpora.

Submission of abstracts:

We welcome papers in Italian and English. Abstracts should be up to **500 words** (references and examples excluded) and should be sent in .doc/.docx format to Silvia Ballarè (silvia.ballare@unito.it) e Guglielmo Inglese (guglielmo.inglese01@ateneo.pv) by **20 February 2020**. Please indicate in the text of the email the name and surname of the authors, their affiliation, and the email address of the corresponding author(s).

Abstracts will be evaluated by the workshop's scientific committee. Acceptance to the workshop will be notified by 31 March 2020. In order to take part in the workshop, presenters must also be members of SLI.

For further information and for the Italian version of the Call for Papers please refer to https://www.societadilinguisticaitaliana.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/bollettino_3_2019_def.pdf

Keynote speakers: Massimo Cerruti (Università di Torino) e Nicola Grandi (Università di Bologna).

Scientific committee: Marco Angster (Università di Zara), Giorgio F. Arcodia (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia), Silvia Ballarè (Università di Torino), Gaetano Berruto (Università di Torino), Sonia Cristofaro (Università di Pavia), Silvia Dal Negro (Libera Università di Bolzano), Guglielmo Inglese (Università di Pavia / KU Leuven), Silvia Luraghi (Università di Pavia), Caterina Mauri (Università di Bologna), Emanuele Miola (Università di Bologna) e Davide Ricca (Università di Torino).

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