

Indoeuropean, Latin, Romance: Some Typological Remarks

0. Introduction

As its title indicates, this paper intends to offer some typological remarks on the Romance languages within the context of the Indoeuropean family. First, I discuss the approach to linguistic typology and the method followed. This does not mean that all other typologies and methods are rejected; but simply that, for the aims I have set myself here, the approach chosen seems to me more adequate.

There are, for example, quantitative theories which attempt to place the typology of diverse languages or of the diverse elements of a language on a sort of scale. Perhaps the most ambitious presentation of this theory is that by Altmann and Lehrfeldt (1973). Milewski (1970), among others, has attempted to apply the quantitative theory to phonology. Now, it is clear that the quantitative criterion is extremely important, but the practical problems which arise once it is put into practice should not be forgotten, as has, for example, been underlined by Winter (1970); neither should the serious theoretical problems stressed by Doerfer (1971) be disregarded. In fact, as Martinet (1971:95) states, 'nobody knows how to set up a hierarchy among the various data isolated by linguistic analysis'; and the solution to this problem is not to renounce the concept of hierarchy, as quantitative typology tends to do. Neither does the solution lie in choosing merely a few elements, even if these are implicationally related, as Greenberg (1960) postulated.

There is also only partial validity in the method that consists in taking as a criterion for typological classification a single element or a few elements (universal or quasi-universal) implicationally related. In fact, the use of one

element to classify languages, a practice started by Friedrich Schlegel and perfected by Adam Smith, F. Bopp, A.W. Schlegel, and A. Schleicher, has been widely criticised. This approach, which divided languages into three types: isolating, agglutinating, and inflectional, which were supposed to have succeeded each other historically, has been successively refined in the work of Finck, Sapir, and Skalička. Despite this advance, Skalička's (1966) new classification, which speaks of an internal and external inflexional type, an agglutinating type, a polysynthetic or an isolating one, offers a very limited picture of linguistic types.

Other proposals for creating a typology on limited bases also cut many paths, such as Milewski's, which sets up a few limited systems of syntactic relationships a priori. Within this other current of thought, which reduces the role of morphology, there is, above all, Greenberg's (1966) proposal, which sets up types by referring to the order of subject, verb and object and to the implications of the various orders, such as the use of prepositions and postpositions. I believe that this theory has its forerunner in the 'sequence progressive' discussed by Bally (1950:119ff) with regard to French. A recent in-depth treatment is Lehmann's (1978), who has come to consider this feature of word order a deep structural element that must be acknowledged even when interposed elements appear among fundamental ones in the surface structure.

It seems to me that one exaggerates if one makes too much depend on a certain feature by granting such an absolutely central typological value to it, even if this feature may be important. The very fact that word order is so essential to the English language may have blinded researchers. In the older Indoeuropean languages, word order is fundamentally free and not of the VO type, as Lehmann (1978:404) claims for Sanskrit (in which the implications associated with a word order type are not given, as neither are they in other languages).

Thus, Jakobson's (1958:19) statement that 'not inventory, but system' is

the basis of typology is still valid. Any attempt to create a complete inventory of features susceptible to typological study is bound to fail, however much useful material it may offer. It is also a mistake to suppose that all typological features of a language (let alone a group of languages) derive by implication from a few principles.

Meillet's statement that a language is a system 'où tout se tient' may have been a fine motto to wield against the Neo-grammarians, but it would be more accurate to say that a series of principles and their implications operate in a language, and that these principles and implications are to be found both in equilibrium and in conflict. On the other hand, one or the other may prevail in different levels of the language, with quantitative gradations. They are principles which seem to be synchronically contradictory, but which nevertheless coexist within one and the same language: sometimes one has derived historically from the other.

It may be clear by now that I am to discuss typological coincidences and differences between diverse Indoeuropean languages with different chronology and geographical situation. A language like Spanish will appear typologically similar, on account of diverse features, to some of the Romance languages or to all of them according to the case. And the Romance languages in turn display features that are either common or different to Latin or to diverse groups of Indoeuropean languages (or to Indoeuropean in general at a given stage of its evolution). All this leads to another problem: the relationship between typology and linguistic family, and, within the latter, between the synchronic and diachronic points of view. This starting point in typological studies is in accordance with the ideas of linguists such as Martinet (1971:93-137), Coseriu (1968), Yartseva (1978), and Dressler (1967), among others.

The features that these linguists attribute to the typology of a language are extremely varied. They are features that appear at several levels and which

intersect diversely and to differing degrees. A language is mixed¹ by definition; various systems coexist within it, either at the same level or in more than one level; these allow for several typological classifications of any language. These 'types' are really abstractions, for they never occur in a pure state: in the Indoeuropean languages, including the Romance languages, there are inflectional elements whilst there are also agglutinating and isolating ones, to give just one of many possible examples.

Thus, the method to be used must be inductive and not deductive: at least as a first step we must attempt to create what Dressler has termed an 'induktive Subsystemtypologie'. It is no use carrying out a supposedly exhaustive inventory and inducing the totality of the type from it: neither can one arbitrarily take a feature and thence deduce the total. One must start impressionistically from features which are obvious and attempt to establish implicational relationships, and then add other features and other implications.

Having made this clear, I shall now move on to the discussion of basic problems. It is true that a given feature may be found in the most varied languages: thus, for example, glottalization appears in the most diverse families (Robins 1980:246) just as the different word orders or the accusative and ergative types (in their multiple variants) of simple sentences.² Though it is evident that the languages of the same linguistic family most often display a relatively uniform typology, it is no less evident, however, that there are distortions: typological features of the family which are lacking in a language or in a period, or which are common to other languages alien to the group (areal distribution), or which appear in a language but not in the others.

It is relatively simple in Indoeuropean to present the features which link up languages from different neighbor families: for example, the Balkanic languages, if one is dealing with Greek, Slavonic or Romance; or the languages of Northwest Europe, if one is dealing with French, English or Norse.³ However, as I have

already said, we also find parallel developments which neither genetic nor areal theory can justify. Indeed, one should be cautious about attempting to propose universals of linguistic change. There are certainly tendencies, but these are at times broken: they are rather probabilities which may be applied to parts of the languages.

Therefore, far from reducing typology to synchrony, as Greenberg (1974:57ff), for example, proposes, we should include it in a general theory of linguistic comparison, as Ellis has done. Better still, the typological comparison of ancient and modern Indoeuropean languages, which is our present subject, should be carried out from a panchronic point of view, if we wish to discover links and causes and thus develop an overall picture. This concept of panchrony has already been used by Deszö (1982), Francescato (1970), and Gujman (1978), and Makaev's (1969) explanations more or less coincide with it. We could also avail ourselves of the concept of diasystem. Naturally, the panchronic treatment is the basis for a study prior to the establishing of ideal types for synchronic stages of individual languages.

Here, we are once more faced with the problem of how far a language represents a specialized type within a wider typological group, whether this be in general terms or in relation to two languages, the first of which derives from the second. That is, is the romance type a specialization of the Indoeuropean type or of a certain Indoeuropean type? I believe that these questions can be answered affirmatively, albeit only to a certain extent, since there is also the interference of the other criteria mentioned above: the areal one and that of parallel developments.

As I stated above, broad typological classifications on the strength of a supposedly central feature and a few more implied ones (whether in reality or supposedly so), hardly allow one to work on the details of language typology. One must work down to more numerous features at lower levels. As Skalicka

(1966) points out, one should distinguish between macrotypology and microtypology. And one could put forward, at least as a hypothesis, the existence of typological systems subordinated to others: the typology of the different languages of one group would be like Russian dolls or Chinese boxes, each fitting inside another. This may be postulated either in the genealogical sense, as I have done (v. Adrados 1983) in a previous study of the typology of the Slavonic languages within Indoeuropean or in the 'areal' sense, as Birnbaum (1970) has suggested for the Balkanic 'Sprachbund'. This latter author believes it is a question of various stratifications in the deep structure, which are to be found beneath the typological structures of each language.

The solution very probably lies in accepting the existence of these concentric structures as a partial, but not total explanation of typological relationships. In fact, we must resort to the facts and induce from them. In doing this, it is advisable to distinguish form and content, and different levels, for these sometimes play different roles in the establishment of common or differential typological features doubtless responding to different places within a hierarchy, although this hierarchy is not easy to define either in general terms or in those of the particular languages.

With respect to content, for instance, one may without doubt speak in general terms of the universals of aspect and case; but one must take great care not to attempt to give universal definitions of certain cases or certain aspects, as many authors have done. Slavonic, Greek, and English aspect, for example, are not the same. One must set a hierarchy here, too, and see if the highest degrees of abstraction should be attributed to a dominant type or if they are, on occasion, useless and even harmful.

On the basis of the preceding discussion, I would like to propose a number of hypotheses which incorporate the panchronic approach. These hypotheses may help to define and even explain typological data.

We must start with the definition of language as a system, or rather as an ensemble of compatible systems. Yet these are systems which display imbalances, either in their formal expression (which is ambiguous, redundant, deficient, etc.) or in their content (instances of neutralization, blanks or imbalances in the paradigms, the breakdown of the paradigms by formal data, etc.). These imbalances motivate certain developments. And these developments bring about implications which in turn bring about further implications. The creation of an absolutely homogeneous linguistic type is never attained. The same tendency may either make headway or stagnate: the inflectional type becomes isolating in the noun in French, English, and Bulgarian, but not so, or not to such a great extent, in the verb. And it may, in fact, be expressed in different forms: the demonstratives create articles in all the Romance languages, but sometimes those derived from ille prevail, and sometimes those from ipse; they either precede the noun or are welded to the end of it. Note that similar things occur in the Germanic languages, with postposed articles in the case of Norse. Another example is the creation of passive voices with changing resources throughout the whole of IE history.

Certain coincidences may be explained as a result of a common genetic process, while others pertain to those we have termed 'parallels': a state of common structural imbalance may produce parallel results. Diverse imbalances produce diverse evolutions. Among these evolutions and their implications, there are in turn highly diverse relationships within a wide range of possibilities. It thus turns out that in the new phases of a language (and of diverse languages derived from one), typological features of different origin are combined. They must certainly be made compatible if the language is to continue to function as such. This brings about tensions which are solved in different ways. Within related or geographically close languages, the solutions may be the same or different in every case.

Within a vast ensemble of languages of different ages and various ramifications such as Indoeuropean, one must therefore attempt to see what is common to the diverse chronological levels and diverse areas. But one must also perceive what is differential. One must attempt to explain all the data on the basis of structural and evolutive factors. A concept that linguists might be advised to accept is that the languages themselves have made the choice. Two or more options were given in the face of a certain problem, and for barely controllable reasons (perhaps quantitative, perhaps on account of the stress or emphasis of one of the solutions, etc.), the languages took decisions. The comparative was formed on the basis of plus or of magis, the object was expressed by word order or by preposition, two aspects were fused or one aspect was differentiated with the aid of two forms. Once the decision has been taken, this implies others, but the whole system in a state of flux perhaps collides with another system in a state of flux. Once more, it is difficult to decide why one or another prevailed in certain levels.

It is not even a case of any language being mixed as we said above: the concept of 'mixed language' presupposes that of pure language and a pure language not only does not exist but nobody knows what it might be. Any language is complex and unites diverse features in its diverse sectors, levels and structures, these features being differently combined. The job of typology is to study the synchronic and diachronic typological constants and their combination in the diverse complex systems of the various languages. This may be a utopian task today. Yet it is here that we must begin.

In a forthcoming article I suggest the idea that language is an open, dynamic system of the so-called cybernetic type. This means a capacity for feedback: the breakdown of the internal systems of the language brings about its re-creation within certain dimensions. This is a stochastic and non-deterministic model which predicts that absolute (or universal) laws put forward

to explain the evolution of language cannot be justified. Only possibilities are given both in the first results of an evolution and in the implications of this evolution on the evolution of other areas. The more elements involved, the more external possibilities of feeding the system and supplying it with models, the more difficult (or rather, impossible) it is to predict the final result.

This complex picture does not, of course, please mathematical minds nor those of others who seek only universals with implications of the deterministic type, and would have a language be a system to be described with a few formulas and a few categories. I believe, however, that the complex picture is more realistic. On the basis of this theoretical background, I shall make some proposals concerning the typology of the Romance languages within the general framework of the Indoeuropean languages. I believe that an overall treatment, almost always far too neglected, could be stimulating and could offer the specialists a broad perspective of the whole problem. Nevertheless, it is obviously they who must complete the task.

1. Constants and typological evolution of Indoeuropean.

In a well known article, Trubetzkoy sketches the typological features of Indoeuropean: there are six features which, according to him, may be found in isolation in other languages; all six together, however, are only found in Indoeuropean. Any language which displays them is Indoeuropean; therefore, this linguistic family has its own linguistic type. These features are the following: lack of vocalic harmony, initial consonantism is no poorer than medially, a word does not necessarily begin with the root, there are vocalic modifications in the affixes, consonantic modifications interact with morphology, the subject of the transitive verb is treated in the same way as that of the intransitive one.

Benveniste (1966:108ff), pointed out that these typological features were

also found, for example, in an Amerindian language of Oregon, Takelma. This means that the typological definition put forward for Indoeuropean by Trubetzkoy is insufficient. I would like to add the following:

(i) to keep to inflectional Indoeuropean, which is the one habitually mentioned and also the one which concerned Trubetzkoy, many other typological and structural features should be added. For example, and limiting oneself merely to the level of units of meaning: the existence of a series of nominal - verbal roots and another series of pronominal-adverbial ones; gender, number and case inflection in the nominal categories; person, number, tense, mood, aspect and voice inflection in the verb; the lack of gender in some personal pronouns; the end inflection of words, together with internal or accentual inflection and, at times, initial inflection; the opposition of stems within the inflection; the accusative combined with the use of prepositions; systems of word derivation and formation; subjective verb (though objective in the middle voice), etc.

(ii) It is generally acknowledged that inflectional Indoeuropean is a derivative of a former pre-inflectional stage. It preserves remains from this stage for it possesses a series of non-inflectional elements. Naturally, there are several theories about this stage. I will discuss my own.

A point of view that I have upheld in several works,⁴ which is becoming more and more widely accepted, is that between pre-inflectional Indoeuropean (IE I) and commonly reconstructed inflectional (IE III) there is an intermediate stage (IE II) which is also inflectional. This is a phase which is above all preserved in Anatolian, but of which there are abundant remains in IE III. There is no opposition of stems of the same inflection in this intermediate stage, as is characteristic of IE III; hence, there are no degrees of comparison of the adjective nor opposition of verbal stems such as those of present, aorist and perfect. And the paradigms of categories and functions are simpler: there

is no future, subjunctive, dual. That is, other types existed before the Indoeuropean type familiar to us, namely quite different Indoeuropean types, the second of which is closer to the well-known type.

(iii) If instead of going back in time we move forward, within the more recent Indoeuropean languages we find traces which are typologically contrary to those of classical IE. These are sometimes well-known general tendencies, which prevail more or less widely according to the languages and the subsystems of each of them: thus, a tendency to the isolating type at the cost of the inflectional one, more in the noun than in the verb, more in English or modern Persian than in German or Russian. In other instances, there occur innovations in certain languages: SVO is very frequent although not general; French develops an initial inflection (the clitic pronoun) j'aime, tu aimes, il aime; Spanish, according to certain interpretations (Ruiho 1978) develops an objective conjugation which uses older agglutinated pronominal forms (of the type of se-lo-diré todo a tu madre, similar to that of Basque and other languages); although independently, sometimes one, sometimes two articles are created on comparable bases. Some of these tendencies certainly have their forerunners in older stages.

We could thus say that to speak of an Indoeuropean 'type' has certain justification, but not an absolute justification. At certain stages or in certain languages, we find typological features that are habitually absent in IE. The Indoeuropean 'type' and the Indoeuropean 'types' derived from it or subordinate to it are constructed with a certain number of variants and a different number of the features preserved.

In any case, as from IE II onwards, and above all from IE III, a certain common typological basis is to be found, a 'family likeness' between all the languages of the group. For example, I have spoken of the more or less marked breakdown of nominal and even verbal inflection, in some of the languages.

Obviously, this is a feature which stresses the isolating element of the languages at the cost of the inflectional one; and it is concomitant with a more important role for word order. Yet, there has always been a certain mixture of isolating and agglutinating elements in Indoeuropean, as likewise a certain importance of context to make up for insufficient inflection. The analytical forms of the verb have become frequent in Romance, Germanic, Slavonic, etc., right from a remote date.

It is at times quite clear that there exist evolutionary tendencies, albeit subject to different rules and degrees of speed of diffusion in the various languages. I shall return to this point later.

2. The new panorama of the Romance languages.

From the preceding discussion, one might conclude that it is impossible to trace clear schemas of the typology of Spanish as a Romance language. I will try to do it, however, by examining a number of points.

2.1 Are there intermediate typological models?

A schematic concept demands that there be a common Romance type and a common Ibero-Romance type before postulating the Spanish or Castilian one. These intermediate types, on the other hand, cannot exactly be conceived of as historical stages in the evolution of the language; their common features may also come from a secondary diffusion.

(1) IE IIIb, which covers Slavonic, Baltic, Germanic, Italic and Celtic and which, among other features, constructs verbal inflection on two stems, preserves semi-thematic inflection, creates compound preterites, etc.

- (ii) Latin
- (iii) Romance
- (iv) Ibero-Romance
- (v) Castilian or Spanish.

As I said before, there is a series of constants which connect these five stages to each other and even to former ones. Suffice it to say, to give an example, that, following Alarcos's (1970:88ff) classification of the correlations of the Spanish verb, these are in my opinion to a great extent Latin, although in a different form. Yet, they go back even further: some to IE III (modal, temporal, aspectual correlations), others to IE II (indicative/imperative correlations, personal/nominal forms, those of number and person). On the other hand, certain 'new' features were prepared at former stages and others which were lost were once again reconstructed with greater or lesser approximation and with the aid of apparently new forms.

To the extent that we might wish to postulate intermediate typological models, these seem to display a small number of characteristic features, some of which, on the other hand, also exist elsewhere, and they criss-cross with models which we might call areal ones.

2.2 **The new typological systems as the culmination of other former ones.**

One of the factors which contribute to the 'family likeness' of typological systems is their subordination to former ones. Phonology clearly illustrates what we mean. A tendency that was important in the Indoeuropean languages as from approximately the year 1,000 B.C. was the palatalization of gutturals before e, i, and the elimination of labiovelars. The first tendency stopped in the face of western Indoeuropean, including Latin: the second left in it a few remains, as in Mycenaean, Latin, Gaelic, Celtic. However, in both cases, the Romance group carried out the evolution which Latin did not manage to complete. As it completed the reduction of the diphthongs, which was general in Indoeuropean and also in Latin, it left certain exceptions in the latter one (au, ae, oe).

It is easy to find parallel examples in morphosyntax, some of which we have already mentioned. The substitution of the case system by the prepositional

system began from a remote date in IE, and the Romance group did no more than take it to its ultimate consequences; therefore, what these languages do (at various speeds, French being the slowest) finds a parallel in English and Bulgarian, among others. Another example is the breakdown of the subjunctive, which began at a remote date and which likewise encounters parallels in English, Greek, Sanskrit, etc.

2.3 The new typological systems as the re-creation of lost systems.

The Romance languages (and other recent Indoeuropean languages) often re-create formerly existing categories in IE with new means, categories that either due to formal or systematic reasons had been lost. Certainly, the loss (and consequent recreation) may have occurred in one part of the Romance group only.

The best known case is that of the creation of new Romance future forms of analytic origin, which substitute for the Latin future. The parallel to what happens in the Germanic languages is remarkable, though in these a future form had not been previously eliminated: the Germanic languages continued on an older stage of IE which did not have a future. Other examples are: internal inflection (of the type of Sp. muevo); the substantivization of adjectives with the aid of the article; adjectival transformation; analytic tenses of the preterite; the passive voice (by means of periphrastic forms, among others); the infectum /perfectum opposition (with periphrastic forms); the pluperfect (also periphrastic); the marking of the direct object with prepositions derived from ad (and in Spanish, Sardinian, etc., marking of the indirect object also).

As has been said, some of these re-creations concern features which are not of IE altogether, but of Latin and sometimes of other languages. The Romance languages, or certain Romance languages, are thus inserted in one or several of the intermediate 'types' we mentioned above. It is remarkable that some of the most characteristic features of Spanish, such as the wide use of substantivization and the creation of a neutre with lo,⁵ should be 're-

creations' of this type: in this case Spanish has rediscovered what languages with articles such as Greek and German had created in parallel form. Likewise, Portuguese, more than any other Romance language, has personalized the infinitive, as diverse Indoeuropean languages did, especially Greek.⁶

Naturally, phenomena such as these may be interpreted very diversely from the genetic point of view. In any case, there should be no doubt that they contribute to reinforcing a typological uniformity which is otherwise merely relative, and which at times must be characterized as 'Indoeuropean,' and at times concerns one or several of the intermediate stages.

2.4 Parallel and areal phenomena.

It would be fitting here to stress the fact that the difference between parallel and areal phenomena and between these and the genetic ones is not as large as might be thought. It is simply that one system or several systems close to one another are open to an innovation that they in some way demand. This need is satisfied either jointly by two languages throughout a common evolution, or by the influence of one (which has advanced faster) over the other, either independently or with differential overtones in content or form. I refer to such cases as the different analytic forms of comparison, of the future, the passive voice, modal forms, and aspectual forms in the different Romance languages, keeping in mind that the details may vary, as does the use of the article in substantivizations.

Yet, I would like to stress again that genetic reasons are not enough to explain the complicated interlacings of data which make up the typological structures of a language. Furthermore, it is necessary to be aware of the fact that one and the same genetic tendency is at times carried out by choices which on a long-term basis produce a marked typological differentiation.

2.5 Typological innovations

Naturally, the result of these processes may also be simply the creation of innovations, either common to a group of languages or pertaining to one single language. They doubtless derive from possibilities left open in pre-existing systems. Moreover, they may concern either content or form. Some examples of typological innovations are: grammaticalizations such as the development of a partitive in French and Italian from the preposition de; the creation of impersonal forms in French and Spanish from homo and se; the opposition in several languages of an indefinite article from unu to the definite one; the creation of a complex system of subjunctive in Spanish, etc. Also included here could be implicational consequences of a fixed word order in various languages and the grammaticalization of ad to mark certain cases in others.

Innovations in either content, form, or in the lexical field may often be explained as simple facts of choice from existing possibilities in order to solve a problem posed by the system of the language. For example, the choice of either plus or magis for the comparative. It is quite clear that both words originally existed throughout the whole of Romania and that either one or the other was chosen, to create the new analytic comparative which in general substituted for the synthetic one. Further examples are the choice of different verbs in the different verbal periphrases; the diverse solutions to homophony which arose as a result of pirus and pirum becoming reduced to piru;⁷ and the different solutions given by French and Spanish to the existence of 'formal' pronominal forms, which new social conventions make somewhat awkward: Spanish tends to generalize tú, French vous. These phenomena have their forerunner in English, the reduction to only you in this language may be considered a parallel development.

I believe that I am not too far from the truth if I say that the typological innovations of the Romance languages, at least as far as the content

of grammatical units is concerned, are very modest. Rather it seems to be a question of the absence or presence in a given language of certain elements, or of a different frequency of use, or of different shades of meaning and distribution (Wandruszka 1976).

2.6 Typology and formal problems.

The last point I want to discuss refers to the relationship between content and form. To begin with, it must be said that there may be categories whose content is maintained although their form may decline, doubtless a sign of a possible disappearance, if the same circumstances are maintained. Thus, all the Romance languages clearly preserve the singular/plural opposition, but this latter is very deficiently expressed in modern French. In fact, it is well-known that, phonetically, number in French is often only expressed by the determiners (in turn, this has brought about certain restrictions in the use of determiners). In a case such as this, it may be said that the plural exists typologically in the content and in a very limited way in the expression.

It might be thought that the differences between the Romance languages (and often between these and other languages of the Indoeuropean group) are more of form than of content. Yet form has been traditionally considered important to typology and, for example, it is typologically important that the article should be postponed in Rumanian and preposed (as an independent word) in other Romance languages; likewise the initial 'inflection' of French verbs mentioned above, however much it may be at the service of common categories such as person and number.

On the other hand, it is clear that this is not always the case: form often corresponds to new or different categories. When the case system disappeared, it was substituted, as is well known, either by the use of prepositions or by a systematization of word order. To a certain extent, these new resources are at the service of the older functions of direct and even

indirect object, which were formerly expressed by means of accusative and dative case, respectively. Yet to conclude from this the existence of an accusative and a dative (and the other cases, a fortiori) in the Romance languages, as did the authors of the first grammars of these languages, can as we well know be extremely dangerous.

3. Conclusions

In general, it may be said that all the Indoeuropean languages, at least from the time of polythematic inflectional Indoeuropean or IE III, possess typological features that are to a great extent common. There are, however, certain differences which require that the typological definition of a language, whatever its chronological or classificational level, be determined by the combination of a series of features, partly implied among each other, partly in a typological relationship that is not quite clear to us. Within these features, there is a nucleus which is to some extent constant, but which is not easy to define.

There are no absolutely categorical and specifiable evolutionary universals. There are indeed certain tendencies, which are at times circular. Some modern Indoeuropean languages, including the Romance ones, have reverted to pre-inflectional stages, at least in a sector of their linguistic systems, especially that of the noun. If it seems clear that in pre-inflectional Indoeuropean word order was important to establish the relationship between words (there are traces of this in the inflectional stage), it is no less clear that the decline in morphology is accompanied by a rebirth of the grammatical importance of word order. Analogously, the decline of verbal inflection has consequently brought about, again in certain languages, a reinforcement of the compulsory use of the subject. Once a certain language feature breaks down, it carries in its wake the crumbling of several others and the languages may revert to the previous type. Changes do not take place at the same speed in all

languages nor in all sectors of the language. For instance, it seems clear that the decline of nominal inflection precedes that of verbal inflection. However, in French the decline of nominal inflection has been slower while that of verbal inflection has on the contrary been faster. On the other hand, in the Germanic and Slavonic languages, the disappearance of nominal inflection has been followed only at a distance by that of verbal inflection.

I have already said that there are partial re-creations in a given sector of certain languages of the agglutinating and analytical type. In turn, these analytical types become synthetic, to be once more substituted by other analytical types. Thus, in Spanish, amabo has given way to amare habeo, this latter to amaré and this in turn gives way to voy a amar. This circular movement is also highly characteristic of aspect in the past tenses. It is well known that Latin offers two innovations: (a) the creation of a new imperfect, which substituted for the Indoeuropean one and which was first analytic and later became synthetic (amabam); (b) the fusion of the old aorist and the old perfect in the preterite. We thus have two aspects in the Latin preterite: the durative of the imperfect and the perfective of the preterite. This was the starting point for the Romance group. However, the Romance languages developed an analytical perfect preterite, with which they re-created a ternary aspectual opposition: imperfect/indefinite/perfect,⁸ yet this ternary opposition in turn became binary once more with the practical elimination of the indefinite in colloquial French, in northern Italian, in almost all varieties of Rumanian, and partly in Rhaeto-Romanic (Jordan and Manoliu 1972:325).

Synchronically, the circular movement I have referred to appears to mean that the Romance languages are locked within an inventory of implied possibilities among which they make their choices. Of course, the circle is not absolutely accurate, neither are the new categories —such as those of aspect or of the periphrastic forms of the present— identical to the older ones, nor are

they circumscribed to the same limits.

What we have are lists of possibilities, and lists of changes. But we cannot explain why they were accepted in one place or language and not in another, or why, when several choices were left open, they were carried out in different ways. Neither can we determine whether there is transfer or borrowing from a neighbor language, which would in any case involve justifying the facts a posteriori.

With respect to the synchronic point of view, the total description of the typology of a language as a bundle of features that are more or less organized into systems, which in turn are in relation to other systems, has not been done yet.

I would at this point like to show that the similarities between the modern Romance languages, both among themselves and in relation to older stages of Indoeuropean, obviously Latin, are greater in the field of grammatical categories and functions than in other levels:

3.1 Phonology. The common phonological features of the Romance languages are very general, and these features are quite often frequent outside the group as well. For example: the lack of distinction between long and short vowels, the presence of series of fricatives and affricates, the absence of aspirated stops and labiovelars. But the fact is that these features are just the opposite of those of Indoeuropean, which presents other features alien to the Romance group. On the other hand, the differences among Indoeuropean linguistic families is sometimes great: the phenomena of palatalization in Slavonic are elsewhere missing (although other comparable ones existed at one time), as well as the particular phenomena of lenition in Celtic (which, however, probably influenced the phonetic evolution of French), and other features.

3.2 Grammar: content. This area has been the main concern of the preceding discussion. It only remains to be said that it is the most conservative, both in the case of the Romance languages and in that of all Indoeuropean. One needs to go to the aspects of Slavonic or the deverbatives of Indian and Tocharian or the more complex case systems in Indian, Baltic, and Slavonic, to encounter truly differential evolutions in other Indoeuropean branches, evolutions which, on the other hand, are not without certain parallels, at least germinal ones, in the Romance group.

3.3 Grammar: form. It is here that marked differences are to be found. Slightly exaggerating, the different Romance languages could be described, metaphorically, as the same language in different attire. The types of resources used by them for their formal definition are roughly the same, but they have been used in very different ways and, as we have seen, they have produced marked typological deviations. Sometimes, form anticipates the breakdown of certain existing categories; other forms contribute to defining them better; there are also cases in which form is confusing and insufficient, as in the case of Sp. se, or Sp. possessive forms.

3.4 The lexicon. Quite probably, it is in the lexicon that the differences between the diverse languages are the greatest. When I speak of the lexicon, I do not mean so much its form as the systems in which it is organized. However, in view of the dispersion of the lexicon and the open nature of its structures, it is difficult to come to any simple formulations. On the other hand, an important fact should be added: all the Romance languages, as likewise the rest of the languages in the world, have been recently secondarily invaded by an international vocabulary of a cultured type and Graeco-Latin root, usually through English.

3.5 Sentence syntax. Inherited structures have intermingled and resulted in variations from language to language, as for example in word order. There is a unifying element, however, the influence of Latin syntax from a certain moment onwards, though there are particularizing habits created by national literary traditions (witness the marked differences between French and Spanish written prose).

These five levels of language are merely schematic. It is quite clear that within grammar, for example, there are very different levels and that, on the other hand, apart from the elements present or absent in a language at a certain level the facts or frequency must be taken into consideration for they display nuances that are not always easy to specify. Being the result of highly complex processes, the 'types' of the different Romance languages are constructs formed by a more or less lax structuring of highly complex elements from diverse levels. They possess a more or less common nucleus which may or may not coincide with that of the ideal 'types' of Latin and the preceding phases of Indoeuropean: it is partly an abstraction obtained from data of different chronology, not a historical reconstruction. The common nucleus which synchronically cuts across the Romance languages and that which cuts across them diachronically back through to Indoeuropean (or to a certain type of Indoeuropean), display sufficient coincidences to insert the Romance type within the Indoeuropean one. I have said that this is mostly evident in the use of the grammatical categories and functions and of certain formal resources. These nuclei are partly the same and partly different from those of other Indoeuropean linguistic branches.

NOTES

- 1 Cf., for instance, Robins's (1980:250ff) discussion of English as a mixed type.
- 2 In this respect, see Villar 1983.
- 3 Benveniste (1966: 103ff) has presented a general list of such features. See also Birnbaum 1978, Comrie 1982, Ellis 1966, and Sandfeld 1930, among others, in this respect.
- 4 See Adrados 1975, 1981, 1982.
- 5 See Criado de Val (1954:116ff), and Lorenzo (1980:15ff) for an elaboration of this point.
- 6 Cf. Lausberg (1966: 263ff, 309ff).
- 7 Cf. Lausberg, pp. 34ff.
- 8 See Alarcos for an in-depth discussion of these forms.

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