

Le néo- humboldtianisme

Allemagne / Etats-Unis,
années 1920-1930

L'hypothèse Sapir-Whorf

Edward
SAPIR

1884-1939



Un ethno-linguiste, qui cherche d'abord à classer les langues des indiens d'Amérique du Nord en familles



1921

Dr. Whorf Takes Up Woman's I

Hartford Scholar, Expert in Study of Aztec Masters Difficult Language of Hopi Indians

Aided by Native, B. L. Whorf Compiles Dictionary and Grammar

By GEORGE W. BRADSHAW

BENJAMIN L. WHORF of Hartford, member of the noted Whorf family of talented brothers, is the first scholar to study the Hopi Indian language according to modern scientific principles.

The study has been carried on in Hartford, thousands of miles from Arizona, with the assistance of a Hopi Indian, Ernest Naqayoyama, now residing in New York.

When Whorf took up the study of Aztec 12 years ago he found books available to teach him the language, which he eventually mastered, finally reaching a point where he amazed world authorities with new contributions on Mexican research.

Spare Time Hobby

That was a spare time hobby of the young man who is employed as a special agent of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company.

But when he branched into Hopi studies he found no books in existence to help him was essential to learn the language from the lips of its people, and the youthful Indian was found for the purpose in New York.

Naqayoyama is a young native of Toceva, Ariz., a Hopi village, and his name means Plume Bearer. Acting as Whorf's informant, he made several visits to Hartford and the linguist's home in Wethersfield.

First Hopi Dictionary

Consequently the first Hopi grammar and dictionary of this scientifically important language are nearing completion. It ties in with Whorf's work on Aztec in which he visited little known portions of Mexico. It ties in with his research in the ancient writing of the Mayas, which is regarded in scientific circles as the most promising approach yet made toward deciphering and reading these baffling inscriptions.

He gave lectures at Yale recently on the Hopi language at invitation of the celebrated Dr. Edward Sapir, professor of anthropology and linguistics. He speaks twice last month before the Society of American Scientists.

Dr. Sapir, one of the country's most eminent philologists, and the leading world authority on American Indian languages turned his eyes over



—Photo By Buchanan
BENJAMIN L. WHORF

Continues Research Begun Many Years Ago by Yale Professor

and language which throw interesting new light on the mysteries of ancient "Middle America."

Middle America is the great vanished civilization of which the Aztecs, Toltecs and Mayas were parts.

Few Know Language

The languages of all these peoples, studied by the Hartford student, are as essential to unraveling the ancient American mystery as are Egyptian, Assyrian, Sanskrit and Greek essential in the archeology of the Orient. But unlike the Oriental languages they are almost unknown except to a handful of American linguists such as those in Prof. Sapir's famous "Language Laboratory" at Yale in which Mr. Whorf is an active collaborator. Mr. Whorf says:

"Hence the archaeologists in 'Middle America' diggers-out of ruined temples such as those which Col. Lindbergh, with Dr. Alfred V. Kidder and Dr. Oliver Dickenson, spotted from the air, have been largely digging in the dark. And the techniques of the linguistic laboratory is fast reaching the point where it will throw a surprising light on these ancient American ruins."

Indeed some of the new angles developed by Mr. Whorf are so startling that he insists on withholding them until they can be accompanied by proof so rigorous that it will bear the most exacting tests.

Study Accidental

His amazing career in language study began accidentally in 1924 when Mr. Whorf came across Aztec literature in the Watkinson Library which none had been able to decipher before. Four years later he was the only person known to be deciphering the language and classifying it for future students. In 1928 he started the International Congress of Americanists, meeting in New York with an original paper which the savants admitted had thrown illumination on one of the deepest mysteries of American lore. This was the disappearance of the Toltecs who developed a magnificent civilization before the more savage Aztecs put an end to their rule.

The Social Science Research Council of New York sent him to Mexico in 1930—his first visit to the native scene—and his trip was credited by Dr. Marshall Howard Saville of the Museum of the American Indian in New York City with having discovered a possible link between Maya and

ancient America and whose remnants are now scattered from Nicaragua to Utah.

Whorf is a brother of Richard Whorf, the promising young actor who is appearing as "Quilley" in the second most important male role in the Pulitzer prize winning play "John's Delight" on Broadway with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne.

A third brother, John Whorf, acknowledged as the leading American water color painter, whose works hang in the foremost museums of the country, has recently held his annual one-man exhibition at the Miki Gallery, New York.

Benjamin Whorf's work on the Hopi language is in part a continuation of research begun by Professor Sapir in 1913, when the latter proved the close relation between the language of the Aztecs and of the Southern Paiute tribe in Utah.

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Benjamin WHORF

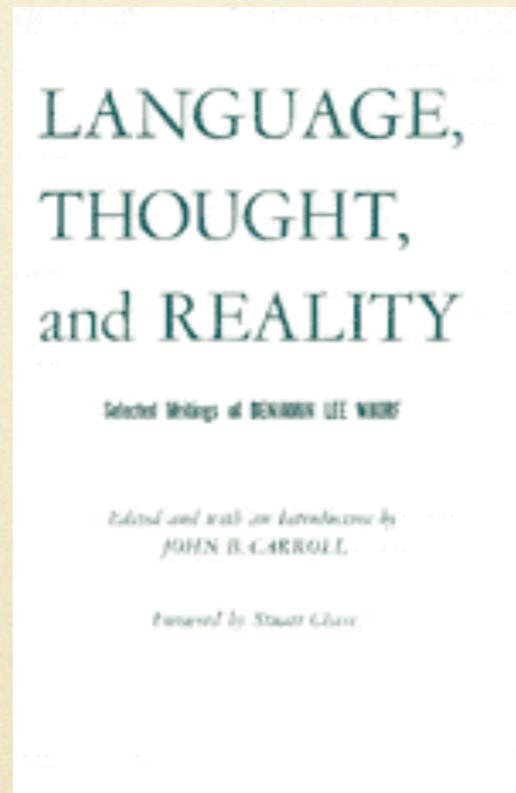
1897-1941

Le plus ardent partisan de la relativité linguistique

Chaque langue organise, ou filtre, la réalité objective à sa façon, subjective

OBJECTIVE FIELD	SPEAKER (SENDER)	HEARER (RECEIVER)	HANDLING OF TOPIC, RUNNING OF THIRD PERSON
SITUATION 1 a. 			ENGLISH... "HE IS RUNNING" HOPI... "WARI" (RUNNING, STATEMENT OF FACT)
SITUATION 1 b. OBJECTIVE FIELD BLANK DEVOID OF RUNNING			ENGLISH... "HE RAN" HOPI... "WARI" (RUNNING, STATEMENT OF FACT)
SITUATION 2 			ENGLISH... "HE IS RUNNING" HOPI... "WARI" (RUNNING, STATEMENT OF FACT)
SITUATION 3 OBJECTIVE FIELD BLANK			ENGLISH... "HE RAN" HOPI... "ERA WARI" (RUNNING, STATEMENT OF FACT FROM MEMORY)
SITUATION 4 OBJECTIVE FIELD BLANK			ENGLISH... "HE WILL RUN" HOPI... "WARIKNI" (RUNNING, STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION)
SITUATION 5 OBJECTIVE FIELD BLANK			ENGLISH... "HE RUNS" (E.G. ON THE TRACK TEAM) HOPI... "WARIKNGWE" (RUNNING, STATEMENT OF LAW)

L'œuvre la plus célèbre de B. Whorf :



L'hypothèse Sapir-Whorf (ou *ethnolinguistique*):
principe du *relativisme linguistique*

- chaque langue *détermine* la pensée de celui qui la parle;
- le monde existe objectivement, mais il n'est pas connaissable en tant que tel.

3 thèses de base :

- chaque langue est unique, mais il existe des «standards conceptuels» qui opposent en bloc le «standard européen moyen» (*Standard Average European*) aux langues des indiens d'Amérique du Nord
- le mode de pensée d'un «peuple» parlant une langue est déterminé par la langue qu'il parle
- → chaque mode de pensée est unique

sémantique lexicale : les langues analysent le monde chacune à sa façon, elles ne se contentent pas de le nommer

cf. Saussure : «la langue n'est pas une nomenclature»

MAIS

- hypothèse invérifiable
- que faire des bilingues?

Weltbild

Le néo-humboldtianisme en Allemagne dans
les années 1920-1930

Leo
Weisgerber

1899-1985

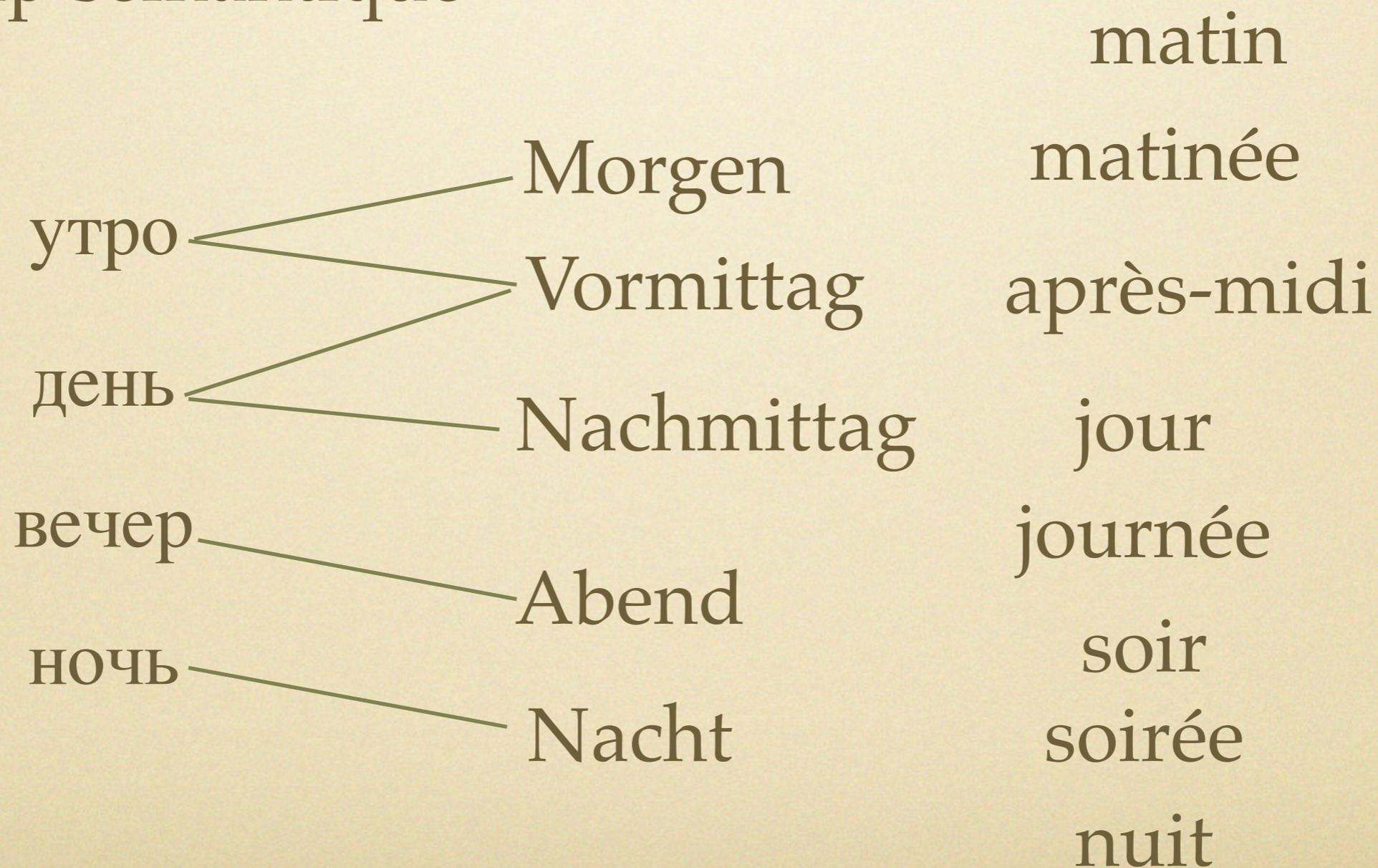


1925. *Die Sprache als gesellschaftliche Erkenntnisform.*
Eine Untersuchung über das Wesen der Sprache als
Einleitung zu einer Theorie des Sprachwandels.

Années 60 : Von den Kräften der deutsche Sprache

Théorie des champs sémantiques (*Sinnfeld*):

La signification d'un mot ne peut pas être décrite sans faire références aux autres mots du même champ sémantique



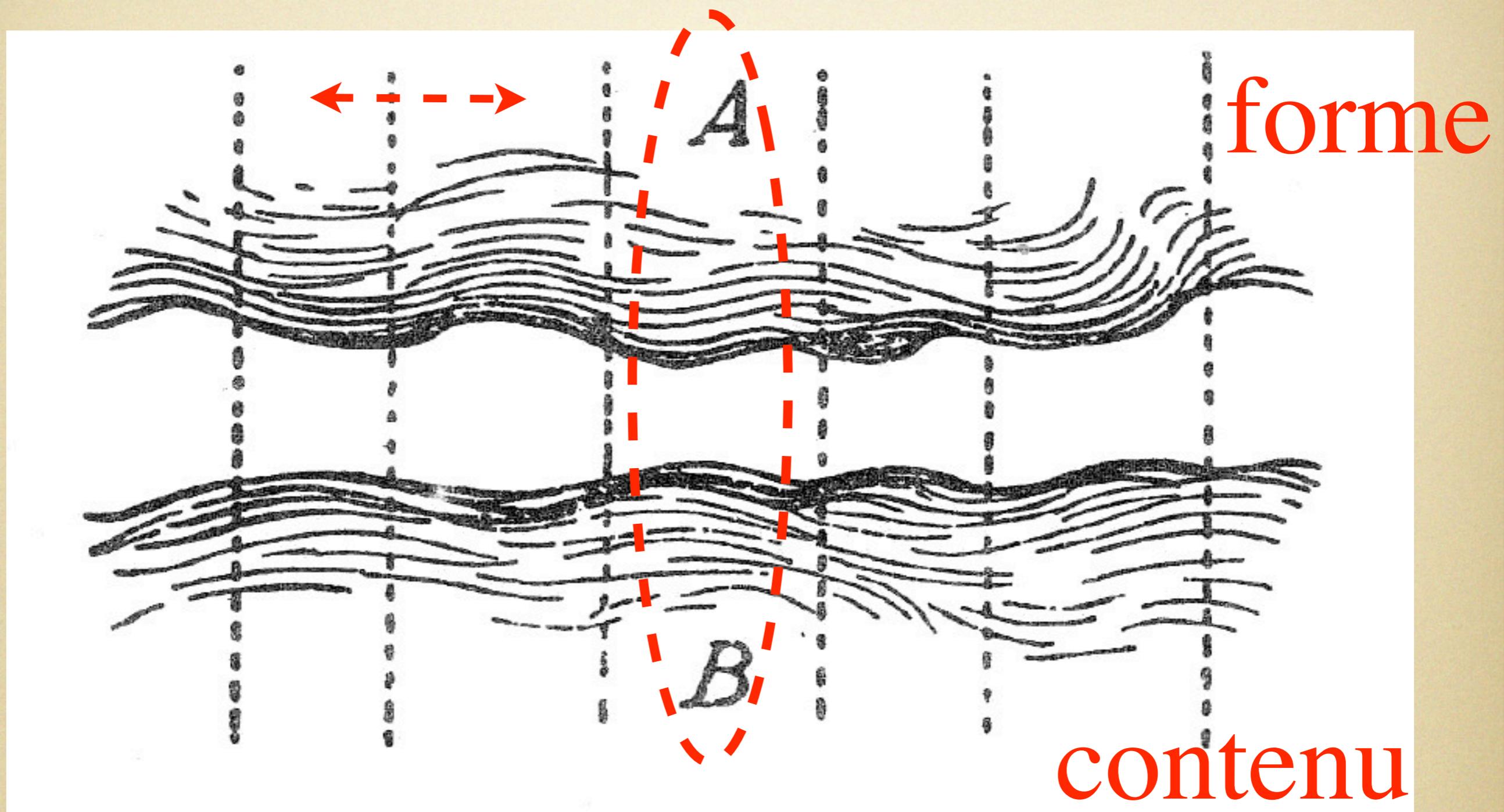
impossibilité de toute traduction :

das Volk \neq le peuple



La notion de valeur





Peut-on faire une lecture humboldtienne de ce schéma?

L. Weisgerber : une ethno-linguistique

rapport essentiel langue / peuple

Sprachgemeinschaft

ЯЗЫКОВАЯ ОБЩНОСТЬ

= *Zugang* (accès) au domaine
de l'esprit et de la culture

relation langue / culture :

- action de la langue sur la culture
- influence de la communauté et de la culture sur la langue
- parallèles entre la langue et les autres phénomènes de la culture

langue comme forme de connaissance

langue comme forme de communauté

langue et culture matérielle

langue = *Zwischenwelt*:

l'individu n'a pas accès *directement* au monde

sprachliche Weltbild

языковая картина мира

inhaltbezogene Sprachwissenschaft

контенсивная (типология)

Sprachinhaltforschung

языковое содержание

Muttersprache

родной язык

FINN