NOW AND THEN: WHAT WE KNOW IN 2015 THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW IN 1998

Bernard Comrie

Retrospect

17 years! can't possibility be complete, therefore selective
incl. people named

WALS

initial presentation by Gil, Haspelmath; then Dryer, Bibiko
needed, cf. intuitive/anecdotal claims
we showed it can be done
wide use made of it (e.g. Ladd & Dediu)
my work on typicality
South America ("remote Amazonia")

Language contact:

LWT (Haspelmath, Tadmor)
establishment of Leipzig basic vocabulary list
some insights from fringes of project
e.g. Tadmor on Thai/Malay borrow only basic as is all know
unusual distributions, e.g. Bezhta from Avar
noun 23.1%, verbs 6.0%, adjectives 29.6%

APiCS (Haspelmath, Michaelis)
extreme instance of language contact
earlier claims often based on very limited samples
possibility of detailed comparison of PC and sub/superstrate (from WALS)
much of grammar from substrate
relevant to super-, substrate, universals hypotheses
e.g. relexification (Lefebvre)
but some properties, e.g. word order, from sub- & superstrate

Grammatical borrowing (esp. Seifart)
paradigm as strong evidence of genealogical affiliation
but borrowing of paradigm
Uchur Evenki hypothetical < Sakha (earlier work)
Seifart borrowing preferentially in paradigm

Genealogical: ASJP (Wichmann)
possibility of working with very limited word list (ca 40)
but validating results with comparative method
successes: Totozoquean (Totonacan + Mixe-Zoquean)
Chitimacha-Totozoquean (incl. 'corn' > Caddoan)
Typological studies of particular constructions

Coordination

Haspelmath edited volume provides basic framework
  incl. restrictions, e.g. no \( [co \, A] \, B \), rare \( A \, [B \, co] \)

Ditransitives (with Haspelmath, Malchukov)
  questionnaire setting out framework (cf. Nedjalkov)
  functional explanations for generalizations
  topicworthiness of \( R > T \) (indexing, passive)
  "suppletion" for person of \( R \)
  but e.g. Huichol shape of \( T \)

Valency classes (with Malchukov, Haspelmath, Hartmann)
  correlation formal and semantic classes?
  hardest project, Bezhta idiosyncratic
  also for printer

Rarissima and limits on variation

  root deletion in Akabea (with Zamponi)
  reciprocals and reflexives in Tsezic (with Forker, Khalilova)
    'ourselves/each other hit us'

Documentation of endangered languages

  emphasized by me from start
  still significant contributions, e.g. grammars of un-/little described languages
    most major parts of the world
    some areas thick coverage, e.g.
      Indonesia, incl. Manokwari
      South America, esp. grammars
        (also researchers from Australia, NL, Argentina)
      Tsezic, incl. dictionaries (Khalilov)
    some areas pioneering, e.g. Andamans (Abbi, Kumar)
  fortunate to have DoBeS, ELDP - latter to continue

Phonetics essential component of this work

  not my own forte, though some phonology
  still input, e.g. Tungusic ATR VH (Aralova) and Siberia as area
    (some Mongolic, Chukotian, Middle Korean)
  Great ape vocalization project (Grawunder)
Language necessities
   elaborations (tone, clicks, arbitrary inflectional morphology)
   development of complexity
   absolute necessities, e.g. distinguish core participants?
   Gil on Riau Indonesian

Hunter-gatherer languages
   work with Cysouw
      my hypothesis on numerals, not validated
      but: arm ≠ hand; hand = finger (cf. Brown)
           no adpositions; if so, postpositions
           generally head-final, incl. GN
           though pref no dom order clausal
           avoid SVO

   upcoming Khoesan workshop (Güldemann)

Child language acquisition: verb & noun (Stoll)
   English noun acquired before verb
   Mandarin verb acquired before noun
   Chintang high verb : noun ratio
      complex verb morphology
      to ca age 3 more nouns
      but more verbs once acquire complex verb morphology

Languages and genes
   starting point: geneticists and Greenberg; linguists & Boas
      Pääbo's work on Finnish
      Azerbaijan (Stoneking, Nasidze)
      Heggarty/Barbieri on Aymara and Uro around Lake Titicaca
      Pakendorf - much more complex, e.g. Sakha & Tungusic
      Anglo-Saxons & Celts ("British DNA", not our institute)
      until next paper!
      gender differentiation, not through massive migration
         virilocal bride exchange
         men as outside communicators

Acknowledgments
   all scientists at all levels from docs to professorial equivalents
      incl. guests (widened expertise)
   administrative and technical staff

Thanks and best wishes to successor Russell Gray
   incl. for personnel, databases, library continuity