the blank, one can predict, with a very high probability ($p > .90$), that the average response will be “money,” “valuable,” or some similar reference to what we call a “commodity.” Incompatibilities are manifest in surrealist poetry, the discourse of speakers judged to be mentally deficient, and some genres of humor (e.g., a visionary finally agrees to talk about God to a group of fellow U.S. Southern fundamentalists: “You won’t like that. She’s a Black”). These very low-probability associations will be rejected outright ($p = 0$) in some cultures but not in others (e.g., “God is a black woman” would be acceptable in a matrilineal African society). Incompatibilities are reduced, low association probabilities are revised, through the workings of the metaphoric process (for the theory underlying this approach, see Maranda 1972b, 1974a: chap. 5, 1974b, 1976, 1977a, 1978a; for results, see Maranda 1977a, 1978b).

Experiments in semantics to investigate the structure or the development of subdiscourses are being carried out in at least two different centres in North America (Québec and New York) and in at least one in France (Paris-Nanterre). In addition, other researchers (e.g., T. MacFeat, R. Sanjek) are engaged in related explorations. While our work in Québec is more concerned with static description of available structures, Sutton-Smith and his associates are mapping out the acquisition of the competence, among children, to internalize what these researchers call the “underbelly” of mythology (Sutton-Smith 1975, Abrams and Sutton-Smith 1977).

Our approach rests on a combination of word-association tests and plot-association tests (Maranda 1972a:book 10). I first used the method in a nonliterate Melanesian society (Lau, North Malaita, Solomon Islands) in 1966-68 and 1976, with a sample of 20 native speakers, to build a sketch of a probabilistic semantic encyclopaedia. I did a similar study in Vancouver in 1972 and 1974 (sample: 400 white Anglo-Saxon Protestants). In Québec, our team work started in 1977 (sample size: over 900). In this case, our main objectives are to compare the probabilistic semantic structures of four areas (quartiers) of the city. In all three cases, semantic range is measured by the number of concepts spontaneously connected in the “aimless” discourse of informants. This is mapped as idiothetic networks, which are then grouped along sociographic axes. Our samples comprise children (8-10 years old), young adults (20-30 years old), and senior citizens (65 years and over).

In Malaita, semantic range varies greatly with age, sex, and social status. Thus, the profile of idiographs for aristocrats is two to three times more complex than that for commoners. Women and commoners score close to each other, about twice as high as children, who rank lowest. Male and female conceptual universes do not overlap in some domains such as “blood” (menstrual tabus are strong in Malaita). The Malaitan subdiscourse—like lexical diversity—thus appears to be structured differentially in such a way that few probabilistic models will be required to describe it. Data analysis is being carried out with the assistance of the Canada Council, which also subsidized the 1976 data collection.

Similarly, a few dimensions structure the Vancouver and québec subdiscourses. Significant variations occur with age and area of residence. Those due to sex prevail only among children: they fade out among young adults except with respect to some elements of narrative structures. Children and senior citizens are closer to each other than to the young adults, who stand out very distinctly. A first comparison of the Vancouver and Quéec data reveals that, with respect to narrative structures, the children of the two cities are remarkably similar. Differences between the two samples are marked in the young adults and slightly less so in the senior citizens.

Compatabilities and incompatibilities, association coefficients, “trains of thought” carried out in people the culture that molds them as members of a society and at the same time depends on them for its existence. In this respect, semantic “stocks” are like a virus that perpetuates itself and invades/activates the population without which it would not subsist. Semantography is a set of tools (mostly computerized) to describe the idiographs (i.e., individual graphs) and the sociographs of a sample. It is formalized as a set of networks in which the nodes are categories, symbols, or concepts and the paths between the nodes relationships connecting them. Protocols are easy to use and generate an abundance of data. Semantography would probably be valid for defining cultural indicators and semantic structures and, especially, building probabilistic models of factors of inertia and dynamism in popular subdiscourses.

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Linguistics and the Study of Language Standardization

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Standardization refers to the historical process by which a speech community develops a special dialect for use as a medium of discourse in science, education, administration, and some types of literature. It is a normative process, for it engages many literate members of a speech community in the task of evaluating the social significance of linguistic variants, in selecting the most appropriate variants for standard use, and finally in codifying the selected variants in grammars and in other prescriptive works (Ray 1963, Taulli 1968).

The general character of language standardization is therefore clear. Nevertheless, sociolinguists generally acknowledge that its specific properties have not been exhaustively investigated and that as a consequence language standardization is poorly understood (Ferguson 1962:5 and 1968:32;
Fishman 1964:60; Rubin 1971:217; Weinreich 1953:103). It has been pointed out that understanding of standardization would be greatly enhanced if researchers applied to the analysis of the process as many theoretical linguistic concepts as the nature of the subject would allow (Byron 1976). In other words, the study of language standardization must be linguistized; although the process represents a phase of cultural development and thus has sociological and even political significance, its object is a language system which has been constructed out of the linguistic resources available to a particular speech community.

The purpose of this report is to present results of research in which certain kinds of linguistic analysis were used in explaining the standardization of Albanian. My expectation has been that the exploration of a particular case would test the fruitfulness of a linguistic approach to the study of standard-language problems.1

The Albanian language developed a standard norm after Albania entered the Communist world in 1945. The traditional interpretation of this norm was expressed very simply: the Albanian language has two principal dialects, northern and southern; Standard Albanian is based upon the southern dialect. In the period after World War II, this dialect was acknowledged to owe its predominance to the fact that the majority of the men who led the Communist Revolution in Albania came from southern Albania and that Party literature had been written mainly in the southern dialect; when this southern leadership came to power, its dialect was established as the basis of Standard Albanian (Skendi 1956:102, 301–302; Stefi 1961:57). A departure from this interpretation occurs in the important theoretical work of the Albanian linguist A. Kostallari (see, e.g., 1966, 1969, 1970). Kostallari’s purpose has been, in part, to minimize the political role of the southern leadership in the development of Standard Albanian. Such a purpose serves the social goal of mollifying the northern Albanians, many of whom resent the comparatively insignificant representation of their own northern dialect in the standard language. Kostallari has therefore attempted, wherever possible, to stress the contribution to Standard Albanian of those linguistic properties which have the least dialectal significance. For example, he indicates, and quite correctly, that most of the properties of Standard Albanian are not dialectally marked, i.e., they are neither southern nor northern in character. It is common knowledge in linguistics, however, that dialects by definition tend to be more similar than different; that is why dialectology must take as its basis of study the distinctions which separate the speech forms of individuals. Moreover, it is precisely the distinctions, rather than the similarities, to which speakers are sensitive and to which they attach the greatest social significance.

The development of Standard Albanian cannot be understood either by overvaluing or by undervaluing its political context, but if linguistic purposes are to be served, political realities must be subjected to linguistic examination to whatever extent this is possible. While it is true that the original Communist leaders of Albania originated in the south, a linguistic glance at this leadership reveals that they came from different dialectal regions of the south. Southern Albanian (like northern Albanian) is dialectally heterogeneous. For example, some spoken varieties of southern Albanian make a phonemic distinction between long and short vowels, while other varieties lack this distinction. On the other hand, Standard Albanian is homogeneous; that is, the basic patterns of its phonology, morphology, and grammar are noncontradictory and uniform. Standard Albanian, for example, has no phonemic distinction between long and short vowels; in other words, one southern dialectal property has been incorporated into Standard Albanian over its competing dialectal form. Several other properties of Standard Albanian manifest a similar selection among alternatives.

It could not have been, nor was it, the case that a group of leaders speaking different forms of southern Albanian effected, through the acquisition of political power, the creation of a standard language which does not agree in its entirety with the speech of any member of the group. In the case of the long-short opposition in vowels, it is primarily historical drift that accounts for the existence of only phonemic short vowels in Standard Albanian. Historical analysis of Albanian shows, as most Albanologists are aware, that at one time all Albanian speech varieties distinguished phonemically between short and long vowels, but over the years one speech variety after another has lost this distinction. This loss has led to simplification of the Albanian vowel system in the most innovative varieties of the dialects. The absence of phonemic length in Standard Albanian phonology provides evidence of the role of historical pressure upon the standard; prescriptive grammarians, whose task it is to codify the rules of the standard, have simply sanctioned usage which lies in the vanguard of historical change. Since historical change occurs not in vacuo, but in speech, it seems probable that the spoken models of the early leadership, varied as those models were, exhibited evidence of the historical shift towards simplification of length. (Such evidence commonly presents itself not only in regional variation, but also in vacillation between one set of norms and another among speakers whose language is in a state of transition.)

Examination of additional features of Standard Albanian reveals the pressure of typological forces upon the development of the standard language. For example, the influence of surrounding Balkan languages is evidenced in the desiderative form of the Albanian future tense. Albanian grammarians have simply codified a form which agrees in type with that of languages of the same kind. It is thus clear that although language standardization represents a prescriptive phase in the history of language, a phase in which conscious linguistic choices are made by intelligent members of a speech community, the available options themselves are variable. And while it is true that the selection by grammarians of certain forms to be codified to the exclusion of others represents a conscious, prescriptive act, the linguistic nature and sociolinguistic value of the selected forms are as important as the act of selection itself. Only careful descriptive and historical analysis of the dialectal options can bring to light the number and kinds of alternatives from which prescriptive choices are made.

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The Basis of Friendship and Personal Relationships

by Steven W. Duck

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A three-year research project on the nature and basis of friendship and personal relationships in several different contexts, particularly the cognitive and intellectual or personality factors which influence friendship choice, has contributed to the development of a theoretical explanation of relationship growth.

The earliest studies in the project were concerned with background features of relationships, but there was one study on adolescent friendship that illustrates the principles just outlined (Duck 1975). Three groups of adolescents (12 years, 14 years, 16 years) were tested, and it was found that pairs of friends were more similar in personality than other pairs of group members. There were, however, age-related differences in the aspects of personality on which similarity was most significant. Similarity of factual description of others predicted choice in early adolescence but failed to do so later, where similarity of descriptions about physical and psychological attributes was a relevant factor. (Note that it is not claimed that the subjects were actually similar in factual matters or physique, but that they were similar in the ways they thought about these things.)

Studies in the second year concentrated on deep study of components of developing acquaintance and the kind of content where similarity of descriptions about physical and psychological attributes was a relevant factor. (Note that it is not claimed that the subjects were actually similar in factual matters or physique, but that they were similar in the ways they thought about these things.)

In November 1976, I was able to make a brief comparison of changing agrarian relations in the Kaveri delta of Thanjavur with those in the Red River delta while on a visit to North Vietnam. Both areas have experienced land reform and the ‘green revolution,’ but in North Vietnam the introduction of cooperatives in 1959 has permitted overall planning of irrigation and production and has produced a more rapid increase in crop yields and livestock production, full employment, and near equality in agricultural incomes (Gough 1977d).

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