

Preface

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Actualization. Papers from a workshop held at the 14th International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Vancouver, B.C., 14 August 1999 : Linguistic Change in Progress

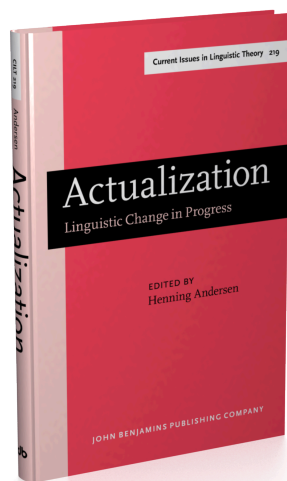
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PREFACE

In his opening address to the Thirteenth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, held at the Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf in 1997, the conference director, Dieter Stein, called for greater attention to the actual progression of language changes through time and encouraged the formation of what he called a 'chronological linguistics', which would investigate historically documented changes, past and present, with the aim of establishing the determinants of their gradual, orderly progression.

As it happened, one of the plenary lectures at the 1997 Düsseldorf conference provided support for Stein's call for a chronological linguistics by presenting a theory that makes explicit what appear to be the central notions in Sapir's understanding of drift. The paper, which is printed below (21–57), was well received, and several members of the audience suggested that its claims be evaluated against data from a variety of languages.

Accordingly a workshop on "Patterns of Actualization in Linguistic Change" was organized for the Fourteenth ICHL in Vancouver, B.C. in 1999, where contributions were presented by Kristin Bakken, Alexander Bergs and Dieter Stein, Vit Bubenik, Ulrich Busse, Susan Herring, Marianne Mithun, Piet van Reenen and Lene Schøsler, John Charles Smith, Alan Timberlake, and myself. Most of these contributions are contained in this volume in revised form. Also included is a written version of comments made at the time of the Workshop by Michael Shapiro.

I am grateful to the participants in the workshop for their enthusiastic support in planning the workshop and preparing this volume, to Lars Heltoft, Brit Mælum, and Michael Shapiro who served as discussants in the workshop, to the series editor, Konrad Koerner for his continued collegial support, and to my assistant Ji-Soo Kim, who helped prepare the volume for publication.

Los Angeles, California, May 2001

Henning Andersen