

Linguistic Change—

Refutes Evolution, Supports Genesis

FUNDAMENTALISTS and evolutionists sharply disagree over the method of man's beginning and his status throughout the centuries, but seldom are the basic concepts of these two groups evaluated in the light of *changes in language*.

Although observed facts in the area of linguistic change are limited, there are two solid principles with which we can work.

First, as far back as linguists can trace language, they have observed that several languages stem from one language in use hundreds of years before.¹ Trombetti, the twentieth-century Italian linguist, firmly asserts that all languages have a common origin.² Plato, in one of the earliest explanations of speech, insists that the "artisan of words" is "only he who keeps in view the name which belongs by nature to each particular thing." Robertson and Cassidy correctly interpret this Platonic passage as meaning there was one "original" language created by "the ruler of the universe."³ In *The Rise of Words and Their Meanings*, Samuel Reiss offers evidence to show that "all words of all languages have an underlying kinship." John Hughes of Columbia University concludes that it is "not impossible that all the languages of the world descend from a single language."⁴

The second principle of linguistic change about which we can be sure is this: as language grows older, it becomes simpler in structure. Thrall and Hibbard state that modern English is so very different from Old English because of "the operation of certain natural tendencies in language development, such as the progressive simplification of the grammar."⁵ For example, West Saxon was burdened with tense-forms, case-endings, grammatical gender, declensions, and conjugations almost equal in complexity to those of Latin. The word *stone* had six forms (singular: *stan, stanes, stane*; plural: *stanas, stana, stanum*) which represented five cases (instrumental, accusative, nominative, genitive, dative). Verbs as well as pronouns had involved inflectional systems.⁶ Of all languages, English is one that "most remarkably" illustrates change consisting in the loss of grammatical complexity.⁷ The article on language

in the *World Book Encyclopedia* affirms that it is a "law of language that a language becomes simpler as it grows older."

Such evolutionists as Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, applying their pet principle of development from simplicity to complexity,⁸ argue that language began by onomatopoeic or imitative means. According to such "pseudo-evolutionary foolishness" as the "bow-wow" theory, which is based on nothing but rampant imagination,⁹ language began among cave-men when a hunter was moved to express his happiness over having killed a wolf, and was stimulated to make an imitation of the wolf's call.

Hughes contends that the whole human race did not go through a cave-dwelling stage, and that to assume such is an "inadequately founded hypothesis."¹⁰ He continues by noting that "primitive grunts" are not the basis of language but, rather, are "merely fragments from a more elaborate . . . language."¹¹ In summing up a discussion of the onomatopoeic theory, Robertson and Cassidy conclude that it "claims too much."¹²

Although a scientifically observed principle of linguistic change is from complexity to simplicity, pseudo scientists would have us believe that they follow sound scientific principles when arriving at their evolutionary conclusions; then, however, boldly ignore this linguistic fact because it disagrees with their unfounded evolutionistic theory of development from simplicity to complexity.

Nor is this the only problem the evolutionist must consider. When the observed principle of linguistic change and the evolutionistic theory are carried to their logical ends, he is immediately faced with the problem of explaining how a "simple animal" could handle a complex language. Trying to harmonize such incompatible principles obviously would be preposterous.

The fundamentalist, on the other hand, finds his position sound when he compares the Biblical statements concerning the change of language with the two linguistic principles observed earlier.

According to the first and second chapters of
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Genesis, God created man a mature adult with the ability to speak and understand a language. Because Adam in the beginning was created fully developed, he, unlike Darwin's simple cell, had a mental capacity that allowed him to handle a complex language. This Biblical assertion perfectly fits the linguistic pattern of change from complexity to simplicity.

The *Bible* also states that before the tower of Babel there was *one* language¹²; this language, fully developed, was used by God, Adam, and Eve. At the tower of Babel the one language was confounded.¹³ This Biblical account supporting one original language is in complete agreement with the scientifically observed principle that several languages come from one parent language more complex in structure than themselves.

Such compatibility of the Bible and true scientific facts is not accidental; both have their origin in the same Source, Jesus Christ.

¹ John P. Hughes, *The Science of Language* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 32.

² Mario Pei, *The Story of Language* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1949), p. 19.

³ Stuart Robertson and Frederic G. Cassidy, *The Development of Modern English* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 5.

⁴ Hughes, *op. cit.*

⁵ W. Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, *A Handbook of Literature* (New York: The Odysseus Press, 1956), p. 151.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ W. D. Whitney, *The Life and Growth of Language* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1897), p. 105.

⁸ Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁹ Pei, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Robertson and Cassidy, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹³ Genesis 11:1.

¹⁴ Genesis 11:1-9.