15 Standard Average European

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1. Introduction

Until recently, 'Standard Average European' (or 'SAE') was not a standard term, more particularly, there was no awareness, let alone a consensus, about the hypothesis that Western Europe could be the home of a *Sprachbund*. It is fair to say that the 'Field of Linguistics' has changed because of the so-called 'EUROTYP' project. Section 3 describes the basic hypothesis as it was formulated within that project, after briefly recalling the origin of the term 'Standard Average European' and sketching a bit of history (section 2). Section 4 describes three lines of research, each of which was explored in the period after the completion of the EUROTYP project.

2. From Whorf to EUROTYP

The phrase 'Standard Average European' was coined by Benjamin Lee Whorf in 1939 in the following paragraph, quoted from a 1956 edition.

> Since, with respect to the traits compared, there is little difference between English, French, German, or other European languages with the POSSIBLE (but doubtful) exception of Balto-Slavic and non-Indo-European, I have lumped these languages into one group called SAE, or "Standard Average European". (Whorf 1956: 138)

The word 'lumped' is important: Whorf was really only interested in native American languages, and lumping languages of Europe together was part of the argument that native American languages are very different. Still, there is a suggestion that some of the languages of Europe are similar in a non-trivial way, essentially, more similar than would follow on genetic grounds. This idea, however implicit, was around before and although various later linguists entertained the Standard Average European idea, usually without the term and without reference to Whorf (e.g. Hock 1998, and see van der Auwera 1998b or Stolz 2006 for an overview), the idea and the term became prominent only with the project launched by the European Science Foundation (1990–1995) called 'EUROTYP'. This project had its direct output in a subseries within the *Empirical approaches to language typology* series (Mouton de Gruyter), but there is a large body of papers and books that bear a more indirect relationship. Two of the most recent as well as prominent books in this category are Heine and Kuteva (2006) and the so-called *WALS* or *World Atlas of Language Structures* (Haspelmath et al. 2005). Heine and Kuteva (2006) is a general discussion of the convergence of the grammars of the European languages, of the forces that led to this convergence, and of a few case studies. The *WALS* is not directly concerned with the areal

typology of Europe, but with that of the world, thus also including Europe, and it owes its existence at least in part to the interest in areal typology that the EUROTYP project generated. The EUROTYP project also spurred the interest in areal work around the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas (see Wälchli, this volume and Sansò, this volume), the results of which are often compared to those for Standard Average European.

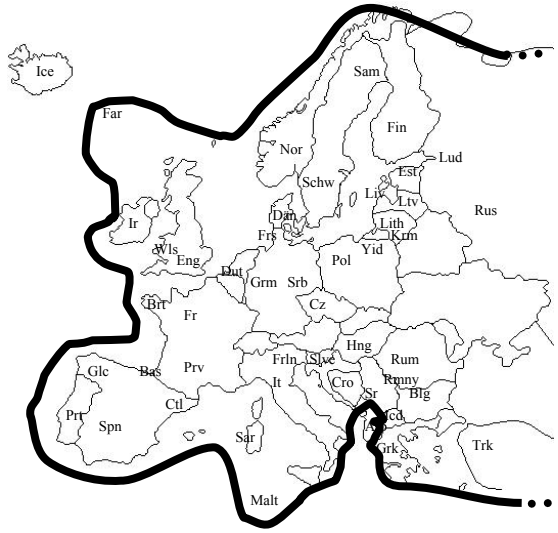
3. EUROTYP

In this section I illustrate the SAE convergence with a relatively simple linguistic phenomenon, I then mention some more phenomena and I discuss some of the properties of these convergence phenomena. The simple phenomenon is that of the adverbial expression of the phases of states, more particularly, the phases for which English uses *not yet, already, still,* and *no longer*. These adverbials are polysemous, but the only uses of concern here are their phasal ones, illustrated in (1).

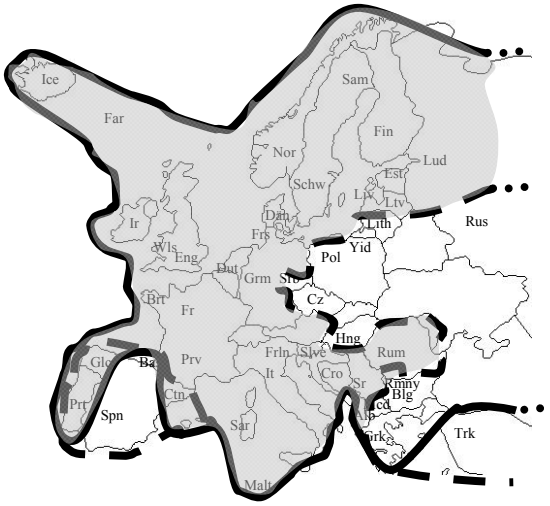
(1) a. Mary is *already* in London.
b. Mary is *still* in London.
c. Mary is *not* in London *yet*.
d. Mary is *no longer* in London.

In van der Auwera (1998a) I characterized the SAE system of phasal abverbials in terms of 12 features. I will illustrate just two of these. The first feature is very simple: in Standard Average European each of the meanings illustrated in (1) can be expressed by an adverbial expression. Map 1 shows the westernmost languages of Europe for which it was investigated whether or not the language has the four adverbials. All of these languages do indeed have four adverbials, except for Icelandic and Albanian (they lack 'already'). The conclusion I drew was that with respect to one of the properties of SAE phasal adverbials Icelandic and Albanian are less SAE than all the other languages shown on the map. The isogloss of Map 1 reflects this. Note that the isogloss is open on the eastern side, meaning that the area actually continues. The open-endedness is symbolized by the dotted line.

A second feature concerns the expression of the 'no longer' meaning. English chooses a strategy with a comparative and so does French (*ne plus* 'not more') or Dutch (*niet meer* 'no more). But Spanish uses a different strategy: it expresses 'no longer' with the adverb for 'already' (*ya*), which in combination with negation yields *ya no* 'no longer', literally 'already not'. In some languages both strategies are available: thus Yiddish has both *mer nit,* literally 'more not', and *shoyn nit* 'already not' and they can even combine (*shoyn mer nit*). Map 2 shows three options: (i) only a kind of comparative strategy, (ii) only an 'already' strategy, and (iii) both the comparative and the 'already' strategy.



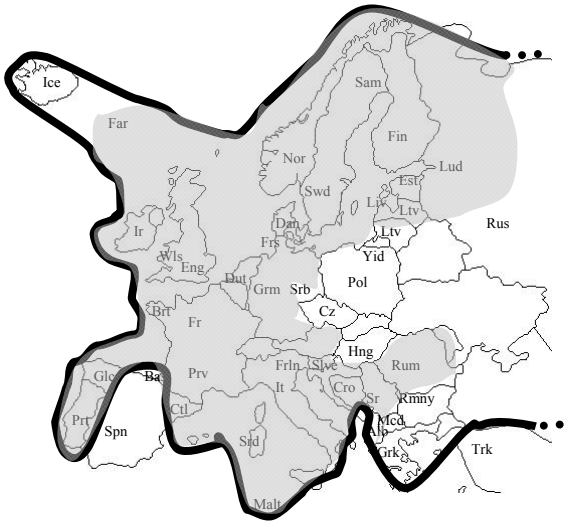
Map 1. Does the language have four phasal adverbials?



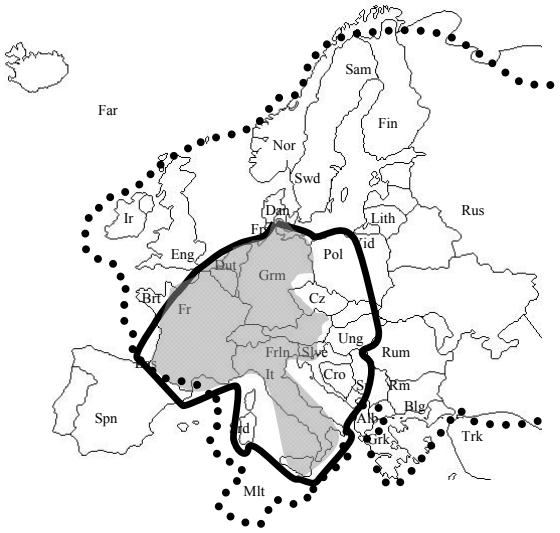
Map 2. Does the language construe 'no longer' with a comparative (▬), with 'already' (• • •) or only with a comparative (shading)?

On the basis of Maps 1 and 2 anyone's hypothesis on what could be the SAE phasal adverbial system should be this: (i) SAE has adverbials corresponding to the four adverbials illustrated for English, (ii) SAE construes the 'no longer' meaning with a comparative and there is no alternative strategy. This hypothesis implies that at least with respect to two features, both Icelandic and Spanish are less SAE than French, for instance, for Icelandic lacks an 'already' adverb and Spanish construes 'no longer' as 'already not'. Map 3 represents this: shading identifies languages with two out of two SAE features, the line identifies with languages with just one of two features. These notational devices of Map 3 are not isoglosses; the lines in this map show numbers of features, and I called them 'isopleths' (with *pleth* for *plethora*) and the resulting maps 'isopleth maps' – Haspelmath (2001: 154) calls them 'cluster maps'.

In van der Auwera (1998a) I added another 10 features and for each isoglosses were drawn yielding a hypothesis of what would be the SAE strategy. One version of the resulting isopleth map is Map 4. Note that the map contains fewer languages than Maps 1 to 3: the reason is that it was not possible to determine for each language whether it did or did not possess the 10 additional features.



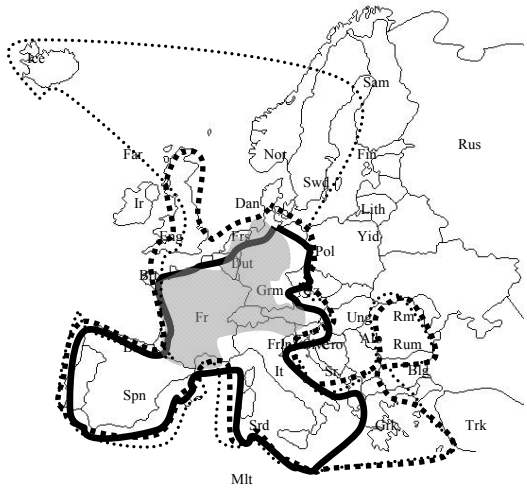
Map 3. Does the language has only 1 SAE feature (▬) or two (shading)?



Map 4. SAE phasal adverbials: ≥11 features (shading), ≥9 features (▬) or ≥ 7 features (▪▪▪)

Of course, phasal adverbials form just a minuscule atom of the fabric of any language, and the relevant properties of phasal adverbials are more lexical than grammatical. But for some morphosyntactic features, described in Haspelmath (1998, 2001; see also Stolz 2006 and Heine and Kuteva 2006: 23–27) a similar picture emerges. (2) lists the features and shows the isopleth map. (3) illustrates the less obvious e. to i. features.

(2) Major SAE features (Haspelmath (1998, 2001)
- a. definite and indefinite articles
- b. relative clauses with relative pronoun
- c. 'have'-perfects
- d. participial passives
- e. dative external possessors
- f. negative pronouns without verbal negation
- g. relative-based equative constructions
- h. non-pro-drop
- i. intensifier-reflexive differentiation



Map 5. SAE Map (Haspelmath 2001: 1505): 9 features (shading), 8 features (▬), 7 features (▪▪▪), 6 features (·····).

(3) e. A dative external possessor (*dem Kind*) in German

Die	Mutter	wäscht	*dem*	*Kind*	die	Haare.
the	mother	washes	the-DAT	child	the	hairs-

'The mother is washing the child's hair.'

f. A negative pronoun without the verbal negatior *not* in English:
I saw *nobody*.

g. A relative-based equative in Catalan (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 291)

La	meva	germana	és	tan	bonica	com	tú
the	my	sister	is	so	pretty	how	you.

'My sister is as pretty as you.'

h. Non-pro-drop (independent subject pronoun necessary) in French

Je	vous	voie.
I	you	see

'I see you.'

i. Intensifier-reflexive differentation in Dutch

Hij	*zelf*	wou	*zich*	niet	wassen.
he	himself	would	himself	not	wash

'He himself would not wash himself.'

As is expected, the exact membership of the various isogloss and isopleth areas differs a bit for each phenomenon. This is very clear for the intermediate and low degrees of membership. If one compares isopleth maps 4 and 5 one can see for example that the North Germanic languages are more similar to the core SAE languages than Iberian Romance on Map 4 and that it is the opposite on Map 5, or that Irish is included in the similarity clustering on Map 4 but not on Map 5. The core areas are more alike, but again not quite identical. Thus the shaded core of Map 4 has Italian, but that of Map 5 does not have it. However, each core has at least French and German, and other continental Romance (Italian, Friulian, …) as well as Germanic (Dutch, Frisian, …) are often in the core as well, or at least very close, and typically closer than e.g. Spanish or English. For this reason I gave the core of SAE a label of its own, viz. 'Charlemagne Sprachbund' (van der Auwera 1998b: 824–825), thereby suggesting that at least one factor that is responsible for the convergence is the contact during and after the 'Barbarian Invasions' and the cultural unity achieved by Charlemagne and consolidated later, in which French and German played a major role (see also Haspelmath 1998: 285, 2001: 1506–1507).

However, there is no claim that there is only one process through which SAE and its Charlemagne core came into existence, especially not for the languages that are more peripheral. To illustrate the point with phasal adverbials: the fact that Basque, Faroese, Maltese and Romanian now all have an 'already' adverb is due to different borrowing processes: Basque borrowed from Spanish, Faroese from Danish, Maltese from Italian, and Rumanian from French (van der Auwera 1998a: 68). And the fact that Yiddish can express 'no longer' as 'already not' (*shoyn nit*) means that we are dealing with a calque from Slavic (van der Auwera 1998a: 59) and the Upper Sorbian comparative strategy with *wjace* 'more' is probably a calque from German (Faßke 1980: 778). Or, as a final example, the Albanian 'still' word *akoma* comes from Greek, the Finnish one, *vielä*, from Baltic, and the Romany one, *inke*, from Rumanian (van der Auwera 1998a: 68). These illustrations clearly show that there is no one 'prime mover', not one language – nor even a small set of languages – that was a model for all the others. Also, there is no claim that the relevant changes all happened in the early Middle Ages. There is even no claim that whenever a convergence can be assumed in the more central SAE languages, this set has to include French and German. Thus although with the adverbial expression of phases French patterns very much like German, these two languages are very different when it comes to adverbials of scalar addition. For the 'even' type uses German has three strategies, viz. *sogar*, (*nicht) einmal* (lit.) '(not) once', and *auch nur* (lit.) 'also only' and European languages are indeed typically complex, though often in different ways. French, however, is untypically simple here, in that it only uses *même* (Gast and van der Auwera 2009). To reflect the overall complexity of the SAE language situation, it has been suggested (Stolz 2006: 293) that one should not use the terms 'Sprachbund' or 'linguistic area', but 'Contact Superposition zone'

instead (term due to Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Wälchli 2001, proposed for the Baltic area). The point is well taken, though it remains to be seen whether in that case more of the alleged *Sprachbünde* or linguistic areas (even the Balkan one) will not end up as Contact Superposition zones as well. Of course, a lot depends on one's definition of the terms 'Sprachbund' and 'linguistic area'. If these terms are only supposed to refer to areas where languages are geographically close as well as similar on account of their geographical closeness, then SAE can remain a Sprachbund or linguistic area.

Another point is that some of the convergence may be accidental, in which case one must assume that when two languages converged the motivation will be language-internal. Phasal adverbials can again illustrate this point. Van der Auwera (1998a) has argued that there are semantic reasons for speakers organizing the semantic space of phases in terms of either three concepts ('not yet', 'still', 'no longer') or in terms of four ('not yet', 'already', 'still', 'no longer'). From this point of view one understands that when a language misses one of the four adverbials it is invariably (at least in Europe) the one for 'already' and that the switch from a three-term system to a four-term system or vice versa, invariably happens through the acquisition or loss of the 'already' adverbial. In Europe most languages clearly opt for the four-term system and some of them will have developed it on language-internal grounds. For other languages contact influence will have triggered the four-term system, as when Maltese borrowed *diġà* from Italian. And equally importantly, the change could be prompted internally as well as externally. In the past linguists have admitted the latter kind of situation only grudgingly, but thanks to Heine and Kuteva's introduction of the notion of 'contact-induced grammaticalization' (2005) there is much more readiness to accept internal and external factors as working in sync. In any case, to be able to hypothesize the language internal origin or the external one or the combination, ultimately only historical work will provide evidence or at least plausibility grounds.

A point related to the one about the relevance of language-internal factors is whether or not a feature that is frequent elsewhere may be considered an SAE feature. In Haspelmath's account (2001: 1493), this is not allowed: "[…] what needs to be shown in order to demonstrate that a structural feature is a Europeanism [= an SAE feature] is […] (iv) that this feature is not found in the majority of the world's languages."

But one can take issue here. Fundamentally, there could very well be features that characterize the core of SAE and, possibly to a lower degree, also the periphery, and that also occur in, say, 51 % of the world's languages. Take the expression of 'no longer' again. Given the spread of the comparative as the only strategy for expressing this meaning, shown on Map 2, given also that both the Iberian peninsula and Eastern Europe are different, that Latin was different too and that the change in non-Iberian Romance has therefore taken place in historical times, the SAE status of the feature is rather plausible, and it does not seem threatened by whether or not 51 % of the world's languages would be similar. A less hypothetical example concerns definite articles. In his WALS work on articles Dryer (2005a, 2005b) shows that 337 of 586 languages have definite articles and 204 of 473 languages have indefinite articles. Since his work also shows an areal European concentration of articles, both definite and indefinite, it is hard to see why their occurrence in other areas or families should be relevant for a decision on their SAE-status.

There are two further points, methodological in nature. First, of course, certainly the argumentative task for the SAE status of a feature is easier if the relevant feature is not a majority feature or better still if it is an exotic feature. Secondly, as Haspelmath (2001: 1493) admits, very often we simply do not know how widely a feature occurs in the world's languages. On this point, however, this millennium has seen some progress.

4. After EUROTYP

In the post-EUROTYP era one can discern at least two and possibly three major trends in the further study of SAE convergence. First, one addresses more seriously how SAE might be different from the rest of the world, not so much by further studying Europe on its own, but by studying both Europe and the rest of the world. I call this the 'macro-orientation'. My illustration will involve modality. The other trend can be called the 'micro-orientation'. Here it is again the European languages that are themselves in focus, but not really the standard languages that were the prima focus of the EUROTYP work, but the dialects or at least substandard versions. I will illustrate the micro-orientation with the issue of negation. The third trend takes us out of Europe again, but with European languages, for these are by no means confined to Europe any more. If one can study the influence of Spanish on Basque and say that some of the influence testifies to Basque becoming more SAE, then there is no reason why one shouldn't consider this scenario also in Latin America, for example. I call this the 'extra-territorial orientation'.

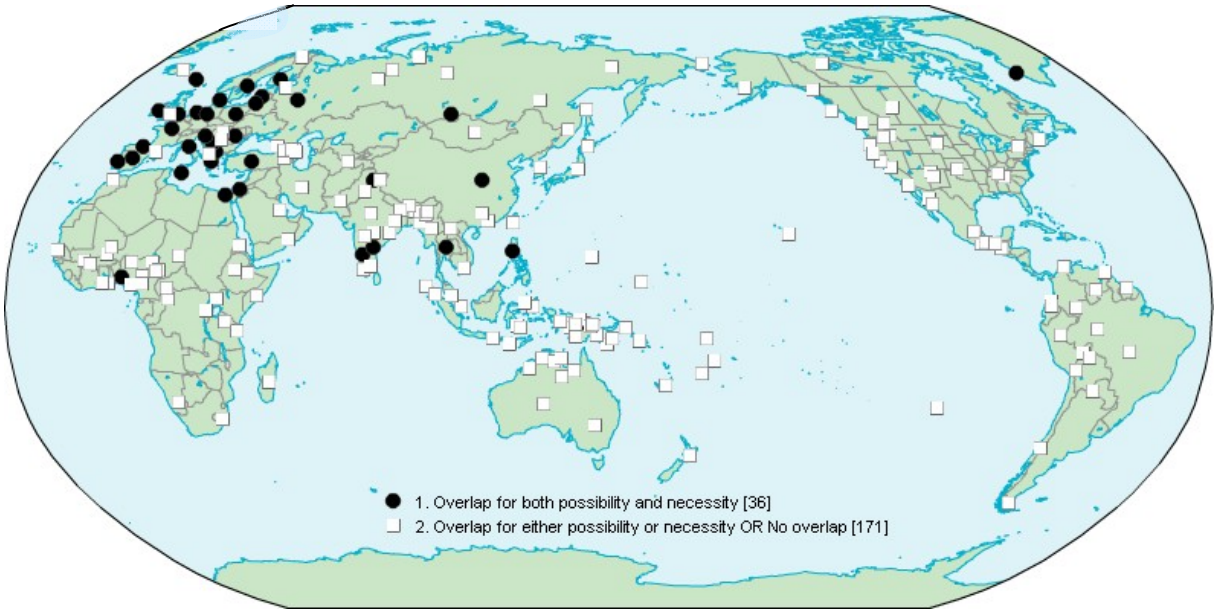
4.1. The macro-orientation

A major parameter in the study of modality is the distinction between epistemic and non-epistemic meanings (uses). (4) and (5) illustrate this distinction with the English auxiliaries *must* and *may*. I paraphrase non-epistemic readings in (a) and epistemic ones in (b).

(4) a. John *must* stay home tonight.
Non-epistemic: 'I order John to stay home tonight'
b. John *must* be staying home tonight.
Epistemic: 'It is highly probable that John will be staying home tonight'

(5) a. John *may* stay home tonight.
Non-epistemic: 'I allow John to stay home tonight'
b. John *may* be staying home tonight.
Epistemic: 'It is uncertain that John will be staying home tonight'

Since *must* and *may* can both have these uses, the auxiliaries may be considered polyfunctional (vague or even ambiguous). But the situation in English may not be very typical for the world at large. To answer this kind of question and more than a hundred similar ones we now have the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (Haspelmath et al. 2005). In one of its chapters (but see also van der Auwera and Ammann 2005) the issue of the modal polyfunctionality was studied and found to be typical for the languages of Europe and possibly no other area. Map 6 is a version of the relevant *WALS* map.



Map 6. Modal polyfunctionality for possibility and necessity

On Map 6 the set of polyfunctional languages includes French and German, as one would expect if one thinks in SAE terms. The German case is particularly interesting. That German was itself a source language for coterritorial or neighboring languages with respect to modality was known already. As early as in 1968 Porák drew attention to the fact that German *müssen* is widely borrowed in West and East Slavic languages and also that these languages exhibit a geographical cline as to the personal vs. impersonal expression of modality, with the westernmost languages having more personal strategies. Meanwhile, the success story of *müssen* has attracted a detailed study by Hansen (1990), and the point about the geographical dimension of the personal vs. impersonal expression types has been followed up by van der Auwera, Schalley and Nuyts (2005), a pilot study of the expression of epistemic possibility in a Slavic corpus of *Harry Potter* translations.

The general conclusion is that macro-variationist work such as reflected on Map 6 is a most useful strategy of finding out about Europe. The more specific conclusion pertaining to modality is that some aspects of modality such as we know it in German is probably a feature of SAE, and that German may have spread some of them to its neighbor languages.

The case of modality documents a situation in which it is the macro-work itself that has led us to hypothesize the SAE status of a certain feature. Of course, macro-work can also be used to check earlier hypotheses, for example the nine hypotheses listed in (2). For most of these, WALS has confirmed these hypotheses, very clearly so, e.g. for the claims on 'have' perfects, relative clauses using relative pronouns, and the co-occurrence of negative pronouns with negative verbs, less clearly so for the non-identity of intensifiers and reflexives (with e.g. König and Gast [2005] preferring a genetic rather than an areal account). However, as demonstrated already, if a feature can be SAE only if it is not found in the majority of the languages, then the WALS evidence on articles will force one to remove articles from the list of SAE indicators (in (2)). But then I argued that this condition is probably too severe.

4.2. The micro-orientation

The EUROTYP work did not pay attention to dialectal variation. Such variation was not excluded in principle, but in practice dialects were rarely discussed. Consistently drawing in

dialect data would have made the work vastly more challenging, in part also because for many phenomena there simply were no dialect data. Meanwhile, in the post-EUROTYP era Europe has seen a variety of dialect grammar projects, sometimes explicitly geared to complement or even correct the EUROTYP work. This is documented in detail in Murelli and Kortmann (this volume), but I will briefly illustrate the SAE relevance of dialects here too.

The illustration concerns negation. The issue of negation, it is worth noting at the start, may well been crucial in rekindling the interest in Whorf's SAE, as negation in the languages of Europe and particularly also its areal typology occupied the EUROTYP protagonists Giuliano Bernini and Paolo Ramat (1992/1996), and they furthermore found at least some negation facts to be in support of the SAE hypothesis: "[…] it appears that on the typological level the various geographical distributions […] confirm the existence of a central Romance-Germanic 'core area', already well-known in historical linguistics."

But they also already show that it is necessary to look at non-standard varieties. When they study the fate of the co-called 'Jespersen's cycle' in the languages of Europe, they point out that the main clause postverbal negative marker as the sole exponent of negation is typical for German, standard as well as non-standard, but for French, we only find it in non-standard varieties (Bernini and Ramat 1996: 20). Standard French has a double, discontinuous negation, at least as the default option, and in Jespersen's cycle this strategy is a transition stage between an earlier preverbal *ne* and a later postverbal *pas*. The latter is found in substandard French: the *ne* has become optional.

(6) a. *Je ne viens pas.* [Standard French]
b. *Je* (*ne*) *viens pas.* [Non-standard French]
c. *Ich komme nicht.* [German]
I NEG come NEG
'I don't come.'

The non-homogeneity of French is actually found in other Romance languages too, viz. in Italian, Catalan and Occitan. If at least some negation facts are indeed supportive of positing SAE, one should study these Romance data in detail, also historically. Of course one should also check the homogeneity of Germanic and then one soon finds out that present-day Germanic does indeed show variation, again on the substandard level. Though it is correct that nearly all of Germanic has developed the main clause postverbal negation out of an earlier discontinuous negation. there is one dialect area which keeps the discontinuous negation, even to this day, viz. the Dutch dialects of the Belgian provinces of West and East Flanders and of the bordering French area of French Flanders. (7) pairs the facts of German and French with those of Dutch.

(7) a. *Ik kom niet.* [Standard Dutch]
b. *Ik* (*en*) *kom niet*. [Substandard East, West and French Flemish]
I NEG come NEG
'I don't come.'

It is furthermore of interest that the one small corner of the Germanic area in which the original discontinuous negation survives, at least as an option, is contiguous to French, a language which also has the (NEG) V NEG strategy, and perhaps the contiguous dialects too. So contact interference is not to be ruled out off-hand.

What this very brief illustration shows about the question of the status of the Jespersen cycle as a characteristic of SAE is that the answer is different for the standard and the non-standard varieties: (i) the strategy of using a postverbal negation – and no preverbal negation – is the only option in standard German, standard Dutch, and it is one of two options in some Flemish dialects of Dutch, and in non-standard French, (ii) these Flemish dialects and non-

standard French also allow the discontinuous negation, (iii) in standard French the discontinuous negation is the default strategy. Detailed accounts along these lines will not necessarily lead us to discard the Jespersen facts as diagnostic for SAE, though it is correct that the isogloss of the postverbal negation only will not treat standard French and standard German in the same way, which is untypical for SAE.

In the above case, one can argue that the dialects show an SAE feature to be somewhat different and more complex than at the level of the standard languages. There are two other possibilities. First, the dialects and the standard languages data are in full accord. This may be the case for phasal adverbs, for instance, or put more carefully, I am not aware of any significant difference with respect to 'already', 'still', etc. between a standard language and its dialects. Second, the dialects and the standard languages differ very strongly. This is something we do find and I can again use Dutch negation facts. It is a supposed to be a feature of SAE and one that is even supported by the macro-perspective that the negative pronoun does not occur with the negative verb. Standard Dutch illustrates this.

(8) a. *Ik heb niemand gezien.*
b. **Ik heb niemand niet gezien.*
I have nobody not seen
'I have seen nobody.'

However, in Belgian Dutch, (8b) is fine in the central area, and in the western area, the negative pronoun may co-occur with the predecessor of *not*, the particle *en*, discussed already, and there is also an overlap area in which *niemand* may co-occur with both *niet* and *en* (van der Auwera and Neuckermans 2004).

(8) c. *Ik heb niemand niet gezien.*
d. *Ik en heb niemand niet gezien.*
I not have nobody not seen
'I have seen nobody.'

For this case – as well as that of the relative pronouns – Haspelmath (2001: 1507) argues that Latin could have played a significant role in shaping the SAE standard languages.

4.3. The extraterritorial perspective

Basque is a language that is on the SAE periphery. On the phasal adverbials Map 4 it scores below 7 features and on the Haspelmath Map 5 it scores below 6 features. Yet that by no means implies that Basque has not acquired any SAE features. Heine and Kuteva (2006: 246–252) follow Haase (1992: 158) and list the following features, relative to the Basque spoken in southwestern France (note the micro-perspective again).

(9) Some SAE features acquired by Basque:
do as a causative marker, comitative as instrumental, rise of passive, rise of third person pronoun, status of modal auxiliaries, complex postpositions, rise of indefinite article, TAM system, interrogative subordination

Let us follow Heine and Kuteva (2006: 257–263), themselves guided by Campbell (1995), to El Salvador and its Aztecan language Pipil. The Pipil language, like many other indigenous languages of Latin America, has been influenced by Spanish, and it has therefore acquired the following SAE-features:

(10) Some SAE-features acquired by Pipil:
definite and indefinite articles, prepositions, past participles as adjectives, 'be' progressive, 'go' future, rise of coordination, relative complementizer, purposive complementizer

If one is ready to say that Basque is a peripheral SAE language, then there is at least no linguistic reason to disqualify Pipil. And if Pipil is marginally SAE, then there are many more peripheral SAE languages. Of course, the locus of contact inference is not Europe and the (post)colonial social dynamics are different. Basically, the study of the SAE features of Pipil no longer concerns the areal typology of Europe, but it still concerns the areal typology of European languages. This field existed before the upsurge of interest in SAE and thrives independently (see e.g. the burgeoning subdiscipline of 'World Englishes'), but it is good that Heine and Kuteva (2006: 244–283) have made us aware of the link.

5. Conclusion

The main advantage of the fact that the term 'Standard Average European' was picked up in the nineties was that it sparked off a wealth of areal typological work on the languages of Europe, both to research the possible Standard Average European Sprachbund itself, radiating from continental Romance and Germanic, and areas to the North and the South. In the history of the discipline it sparked off areal typological word on the world at large (WALS), on the dialects of the European languages and it made us realize SAE effects outside of Europe. None of the strands of research have been explored to their full potential, but we now understand better to what extent SAE languages are indeed standard or average for human language and to what extent they are exotic, and how European languages influenced other languages, both European and non-European.

See also the following chapters in this volume: 16 by Tomić, 17 by Wälchli, 18 by Sansò, 28 by Murelli and Kortmann and 38 by Ramat.

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