

Abstract

In my Ph.D. thesis *Comparing Central European languages: beyond structural features and loanwords*, I focus on the evaluation and re-evaluation of the approach to the study of Central European languages. The aims of the thesis are (1) to provide an overview of research results concerning the comparison of Central European languages, (2) to suggest a new possible research direction, and (3) to contribute to this research conducting an empirical study. Chapter 2 is focused on areal linguistics as a discipline concerned with exploring similarity and convergence of geographically related languages, and mainly on its central concept: *language area* (*Sprachbund*). It describes the origin of the concept, its various definitions, and the criticism by contemporary linguists. Next part of the thesis (Chapter 3) summarizes the research on Central European languages: various definitions of the Central European (or Danubian) Sprachbund, similarities and mutual influences between and among lexicon and phraseology of these languages, and language contact situations in the area. The overview shows that the main domains of the comparison of these languages are structural features, loanwords and calques. Nevertheless, as it is presented in Chapter 4, recent approaches in linguistics use other language units as well in order to bridge the bipolar dichotomy between grammar and lexicon. Thus, it suggests itself that the comparative research on Central European languages could also focus on phenomena which can be subsumed under the notion of idiomaticity. The last part of the thesis (Chapter 5) is an example of such research: an empirical study on the construal of goal-oriented motion events that involve motion of an animate or inanimate entity towards an endpoint. Previous research including among others German, Czech, Slovak and Russian has shown that with respect to mentioning the endpoint, Czech is similar to German and it differs significantly from other Slavic languages addressed in the previous research. The present experiment aimed to compare Slovak and Hungarian in this respect. In accord with the contact/areal assumption, results of the experiment based on elicited descriptions of video-stimuli have not revealed any difference between the two languages.

Key words: Central European languages, Central European Sprachbund, areal linguistics, idiomaticity, goal-oriented motion events, Hungarian language, Slovak language