Introduction To Semitic Comparative Linguistics | 15823c07fe1563ed2b69e35bd2391c8b


Research in Natural Language Processing (NLP) has rapidly advanced in recent years, resulting in exciting algorithms for sophisticated processing of text and speech in various languages. Much of this work focuses on English; in this book we address another group of interesting and challenging languages for NLP research: the Semitic languages. The Semitic group of languages includes Arabic (206 million native speakers), Amharic (27 million), Hebrew (7 million), Tigrinya (6.7 million), Syriac (1 million) and Maltese (419 thousand). Semitic languages exhibit unique morphological processes, challenging syntactic constructions and various other phenomena that are less prevalent in other natural languages. These challenges call for unique solutions, many of which are described in this book. The 13 chapters presented in this book bring together leading scientists from various universities and research institutes worldwide. While this book devotes some attention to cutting-edge algorithms and techniques, its primary purpose is a thorough exposition of best practices in the field. Furthermore, every chapter describes how the techniques discussed apply to Semitic languages. The book covers both modern and historical Semitic languages and includes numerous case studies of various approaches to NLP, with the hope that these will be of use to researchers in the field.

This volume deals with medieval comparative Semitic philology (Hebrew/Aramaic/Arabic) as practised by Hebrew philologists in the Arabic speaking lands, from Iraq to Spain, discussing its development through the generations. Its techniques and its theoretical basis. This research is based upon an analysis of over ten thousand occurrences of comparisons in linguistic works, biblical commentaries and the like, made by fourteen Hebrew scholars from the 10th-12th centuries CE, among them Sa adiah Gaon, Judah b. Quraysh, David b. Abraham Alfasi, Jonah b. Janah and Isaac b. Bar n. Several aspects of this comparisons are presented and studied here for the first time.

This groundbreaking study examines the historical development of the Semitic languages from the point of view of grammaticalization, the linguistic process whereby lexical items and constructions lose their lexical meaning and serve grammatical functions. The author first provides an introduction to this process, followed by a comprehensive overview—enriched with abundant examples from ancient and modern languages—of how it is exemplified in Semitic. Three successive chapters are devoted to in-depth studies of specific cases of grammaticalization: the definite article in Central Semitic, direct object markers across Semitic, and present tense prefixes in modern Arabic and Aramaic dialects. Drawing on evidence from many non-Semitic languages, from historical developments in the field of natural language processing, and from traditional comparative Semitics, this book represents a major contribution to the field of comparative Semitics.

This volume is the first of its kind to provide a detailed, comprehensive treatment of the genealogical subgrouping of Semitic. Starting with the traditional, morphologic approach and then shifting to the pertinent lexical evidence, it covers key topics in the Semitic subgrouping debate, including the East/West dichotomy, the Central Semitic hypothesis, the Canaanite affiliation of Ugartic, and the linguistic specificity of Modern South Arabia.

More than 80 years have passed since Bauer and Leander’s historical grammar of Biblical Hebrew was published, and many advances in comparative historical grammar have been made during the interim. Joshua Blau, who has for much of his life been associated with the Academy of the Hebrew Language in Jerusalem, has during the past half century studied, collected data, and written frequently on various aspects of the Hebrew language. Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew had its origins in an introduction to Biblical Hebrew first written some 40 years ago; it has now been translated from Modern Hebrew, thoroughly revised and updated, and it distills a lifetime of knowledge of the topic. The book begins with a 60-page introduction that locates Biblical Hebrew in the Semitic family of languages. It then discusses various approaches to categorization and classification, introduces and discusses various linguistic approaches and features that are necessary to the discussion, and provides a background to the way that linguists approach a language such as Biblical Hebrew—all of which will be useful to students who have taken first-year Hebrew as well those who have studied Biblical Hebrew extensively but have not been introduced to linguistic study of the topic. After a brief discussion of phonetics, the main portion of the book is devoted to phonology and to morphology. In the section on phonology, Blau provides complete coverage of the consonant and vowel systems of Biblical Hebrew and of the factors that have affected both systems. In the section on morphology, he discusses the parts of speech (pronouns, verbs, nouns, numerals) and includes brief comments on the prepositions and waw. The historical processes affecting each feature are explained as Blau progresses through the various sections. The book concludes with a complete set of paradigms and extensive indexes. Blau’s recognized preeminence as a Hebraist and Arabist as well as his understanding of language change have converged in the production of this volume to provide an invaluable tool for the comparative and historical study of Biblical Hebrew phonology and morphology.

The aim of this enterprise is to assemble together in one volume works on various syntactic aspects of Arabic and Hebrew, in the hope that it will spur further comparative work within the Semitic family at the level of richness achieved in other language families such as Germanic and Romance. Although a substantial amount of work on the syntax of Arabic and Hebrew already exists in various forms, volumes of the type we have attempted are still practically nonexistent. Moreover, apart from some notable exceptions, existing studies rarely take a systematic within-family comparative stance towards the phenomena they discuss, although cross-references between studies on Arabic and Hebrew are not uncommon. Obviously, we would ideally have preferred the volume to include papers on numerous other Semitic languages, including the languages of the Ethio Semitic branch as well as numerous spoken varieties of Arabic that have yet to be explored. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to circumstances beyond our control. We very much hope that the existence of this volume will make more inclusive volumes on the syntax of the Semitic languages only a matter of time.
This book provides a comprehensive overview of current research in African languages, drawing on insights from anthropological linguistics, typology, historical and comparative linguistics, and sociolinguistics. It covers a wide range of topics, from grammatical sketches of individual languages to sociocultural and extralinguistic issues.

Leading scholars examine the history of linguistics from ancient origins to the present. They consider every aspect of the field from language origins to neurolinguistics, explore the linguistic traditions in different parts of the world, examine how work in linguistics has influenced other fields, and look at how it has been practically applied.

The present work is conceived as a companion volume to the author's Semitic Languages. Outline of a Comparative Grammar. Its purpose is to show the birth and development of Semitic linguistics in broad lines, but also to pay a closer attention to languages which have played a minor role in the Comparative Grammar, while they are actively studied at present, viz. Middle Aramaic, Mandaic, Neo-Aramaic. Suggestions are also made for a renewed research on some conjugation forms in Old Aramaic, Classical Hebrew, Ugartic, Epigraphic Southern Arabian, also Beja, whose links with Semitic are stronger than often assumed. Attention is paid to the existence of a "continued" aspect beside the "perfected" one and the "not (yet) performed", also to the relations between Old Egyptian and Semitic, especially in the question of the correspondence of the consonants in earlier periods. Finally, the traces of an ergative grammatical system are underscored, not only in Semitic, but even more in Libyco-Berber, the Afro-Asiatic phylum which is nearest to Semitic, and closer attention is paid to research in the field of Proto-Semitic roots, apparently monosyllabic.

Although it is a discipline with a venerable heritage, comparative Semitic linguistics has long suffered from the difficulty of finding an introduction that does not already require a specialists' knowledge of the field. The primary languages Gray selected were Hebrew, the language most Semitic readers begin with, and Arabic, the most widely known Semitic language. The result is this user-friendly introduction.

In any course of historical and comparative linguistics there will be students of different language backgrounds, different levels of linguistic training, and different theoretical orientation. This textbook attempts to mitigate the problems raised by this heterogeneity in a number of ways. Since it is impossible to treat the language or language family of special interest to every student, the focus of this book is on English in particular and Indo-European languages in general, with Finnish and its closely related languages for contrast. The tenets of different schools of linguistics, and the controversies among them, are treated eclectically and objectively; the examination of language itself plays the leading role in our efforts to ascertain the comparative value of competing theories. This revised edition (1989) of a standard work for comparative linguists offers an added introduction dealing mainly with a semiotic basis of change, a final chapter on aspects of explanation, particularly in historical and human disciplines, and added sections on comparative syntax and on the semiotic status of the comparative method.

Being direct descendants of the Aramaic spoken by the Jews in antiquity, the still spoken Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialects of Kurdistan deserve special and vivid interest. Geoffrey Khan's A Grammar of Neo-Aramaic is a unique record of one of these dialects, now on the verge of extinction. The transcribed texts in this volume record folktales and accounts of customs, traditions and experiences of the Jews of Kurdistan.

This dictionary is a fundamental source of information on the extinct proto-language of the ancient Hamito-Semitites, the Proto-Hamito-Semitic language, and contains more than 2,500 reconstructed words.

A Linguistic History of Arabic presents a reconstruction of proto-Arabic by the methods of historical-comparative linguistics. It challenges the traditional conceptualization of an old, Classical language evolving into the contemporary Neo-Arabic dialects. Professor Owens combines established comparative linguistic methodology with a careful reading of the classical Arabic sources, such as the grammatical and exegetical traditions. He arrives at a richer and more complex picture of early Arabic language history than is current today and in doing so establishes the basis for a comprehensive, linguistically-based understanding of the history of Arabic. The arguments are set out in a concise, case by case basis, making it accessible to students and scholars of Arabic and Islam culture, as well as to those studying Arabic and historical linguists.

This is the first complete study of Semitic internal noun patterns since that of Jacob Barth, over a century ago. Drawing on the earlier work of Semitists and linguists, this work presents a comprehensive new synthesis.

The handbook The Semitic Languages offers a comprehensive reference tool for Semitic Linguistics in its broad sense. It is not restricted to comparative Grammar, although it covers also comparative aspects, including classification. By comprising a chapter on typology and sections with sociolinguistic focus and language contact, the conception of the book aims at a rather complete, unbiased description of the state of the art in Semitics. Articles on individual languages and dialects give basic facts as location, numbers of speakers, scripts, numbers of extant texts and their nature, attestation where appropriate, and salient features of the grammar and lexicon of the respective variety. The handbook is the most comprehensive treatment of the Semitic language family since many decades.

A dictionary of the Safaitic inscriptions, containing more than 1400lemmata.

Respected linguist John Huehnergard brings his vast knowledge in comparative Semitic linguistics to this introductory Ugaritic grammar. Ugaritic represents better than any other the antecedents of the language and literature of ancient Israel. The Ugaritic letters and texts present a vivid picture of life in a large Levantine city in the period just before the beginning of the kingdom of Israel.

What could Greek poets or Roman historians say in their own language that would be lost in translation? After all, different languages have different personalities, and this is especially clear with languages of the ancient and medieval world. This volume celebrates six such languages - Ancient Greek, Latin, Old English, Sanskrit, Old Irish, and Biblical Hebrew - by first introducing readers to their most distinctive features, then showing how these linguistic traits play out in short excerpts from actual ancient texts. It explores, for instance, how Homer’s Greek shows signs of oral composition, how Horace achieves striking poetic effects through interlaced word order in his Latin, and how the poet of Beowulf attains remarkable intensity of expression through the resources of Old English. And these are languages that have shared connections as well. Readers will see how the Sanskrit of the Rig Veda uses words that come from roots found also in English, how turns of phrase characteristic of the Hebrew Bible found their way into English, and that even as unusual a language as Old Irish still builds on common Indo-European linguistic patterns. Very few people have the opportunity to learn these languages, and they can often seem mysterious and inaccessible: drawing on a lucid and engaging writing style and with the aid of clear English translations throughout, this book aims to give all
This unique treatment systematically interprets a spectrum of importance measures to provide a comprehensive overview of their applications in the areas of reliability, network, risk, mathematical programming, and optimization. Investigating the precise relationships among various importance measures, it describes how they are modeled and combined with other design tools to allow users to solve readily many real-world, large-scale decision-making problems. Presenting the state-of-the-art in network analysis, multistate systems, and application in modern systems, this book offers acrue and complete introduction to the topic. Through describing the reliability importance and the fundamentals, it covers advanced topics such as signature of coherent systems, multi-functional, and new interpretation of the mathematical programming problems. Key highlights: Generalizes the concepts behind importance measures (such as sensitivity and perturbation analysis, uncertainty analysis, mathematical programming, network designs), enabling readers to address large-scale problems within various fields effectively. Covers a large range of importance measures, including those binary coherent systems, binary monotone systems, multistate systems, continuum systems, repairable systems, as well as importance measures of pairs and groups of components. Demonstrates numerical and practical applications of importance measures and the related methodologies, including risk analysis in nuclear power plants, cloud computing, software reliability, and more. Provides thorough comparisons, examples, and case studies on relations of different methods used in the last century. With conclusive results based on the authors' own research, Describes reliability design such as redundancy allocation, system upgrading, and component assignment. This book will benefit researchers and practitioners interested in systems design, reliability, risk and optimization, statistics, maintenance, prognostics, and operations. Readers can develop feasible approaches to solving various open-ended problems in their research and practical work. Software developers, IT analysts, and reliability and safety engineers in nuclear, telecommunications, offshore and civil industries will also find the book useful.

Volume III, Part 2 of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament-Project!

"Articles show how the large standard languages and their varieties have converged with members of other large language families. Some authors analyse contact situations between Iranian and Turkic varieties spoken in Iran, Turkey and Central Asia and the influence of Standard Arabic on the languages of the area. Others present new data on, for example, contact induced changes in Arabic dialects spoken in contact with dominating Turkic varieties in Southern Anatolia and Central Asia and on convergence between dialects of the same language family."--BOOK JACKET.

During his life, Michael Klein played an important role in establishing the modern study of the Targums. This collection brings together some of his writings on the Cairo Geniza Targum fragments, targumic translation technique, and Targum Neofiti.

The book presents an introduction to Akkadian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopic, Amharic, Tigré, Mehri, and Arabic with analysis and parallel texts.

In 1929, the first cuneiform tablet, inscribed with previously unknown signs, was found during archaeological excavations at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit) in northern Syria. Since then a special discipline, sometimes called Ugaritology, has arisen. The impact of the Ugaritic language and of the many texts written in it has been felt in the study of Semitic languages and literatures, in the history of the ancient Near East, and especially in research devoted to the Hebrew Bible. In fact, knowledge of Ugaritic has become a standard prerequisite for the scientific study of the Old Testament. The Ugaritic texts, written in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C., represent the oldest complex of connected texts in any West Semitic language now available (1984). Their language is of critical importance for comparative Semitic linguistics and is uniquely important to the critical study of Biblical Hebrew. Ugaritic, which was spoken in a northwestern corner of the larger Canaanite linguistic area, cannot be considered a direct ancestor of Biblical Hebrew, but its conservative character can help in the reconstruction of the older stages of Biblical phonology, word formation, and inflection. These systems were later that is, during the period in which the biblical texts were actually written-complicated by phonological and other changes. The Ugaritic texts are remarkable, however, for more than just their antiquity and their linguistic witness. They possess a remarkably vigorous and mature literature, containing both epic cycles and shorter poems. The poetic structure of Ugaritic is noteworthy, among other reasons, for its use of the "parallelism of members" that also characterizes such ancient and archaizing poems in the Hebrew Bible as the Song of Deborah (in Judges 5), the Song of the Sea (in Exodus 15), Psalms 29, 68, and 82, and Habakkuk 3. Textual sources and their rendering The basic source for the study of Ugaritic is a corpus of texts written in an alphabetic cuneiform script unknown before 1929; this script represents consonants fully and exactly but gives only limited and equivocal indication of vowels. Our knowledge of the Ugaritic language is supple-mented by evidence from Akkadian texts found at Ugarit and containing many Ugaritic words, especially names written in the syllabic cuneiform script. Scholars reconstructing the lost language of Ugarit finally, on a wide variety of comparative linguistic data, evidence from texts not found at Ugarit, as well as from living languages. Evidence from Phoenican, Hebrew, Amorite, Aramaic, Arabic, Akkadian, Ethiopic, and recently also Ebalitic, can be applied to good effect. For the student, as well as for the research scholar, it is important that the various sources of Ugaritic be distinguished in modern transference or transcription. Since many of the texts found at Ugarit are fragmentary or physically damaged, it is well for students to be clear about what portion of a text that they are reading actually survives and what portion is a modern attempt to fill in the blanks. While the selected texts in section 6 reflect the state of preservation in detail, in the other sections of the grammar the standardized forms are presented, based on all available evidence.

As the title indicates, this unique resource is a manual on comparative linguistics, the texts taken exclusively from Semitic languages. It is an innovative volume that recalls the earlier tradition of textbooks of comparative philology, which, however, exclusively treated Indo-European languages. It is suited for students with at least a year of a Semitic language. By far the largest component of the book are the nine wordlists that provide the data to be manipulated by the student. Says reviewer Peter Daniels, the wordlists "constitute a unique resource for all of comparative linguistics--a considerable quantity of uniform data from a host of related languages. They would be useful for any class in comparative linguistics, not just for those interested specifically in Semitic." Scattered throughout the text are 25 exercises based on the wordlists that provide a good introduction to the methods of comparatists. Also included are paradigms of the phonological systems of ten Semitic languages as well as Coptic and a form of Berber. A bibliography that guides the student into further reading in Semitic linguistics completes the volume.

This book presents the most comprehensive coverage of the field of Indo-European Linguistics in a century, focusing on the entire Indo-European family and treating each major branch and most minor languages. The collaborative work of 120 scholars from 22 countries, Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics combines the exhaustive coverage of an encyclopedia with the in-depth treatment of individual monographic studies. The long and complex history of reception and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament through the ages, described in the HBOT Project, focuses in this concluding volume III, Part 2 on the multifarious history and the different methods used in the last century. Even this volume is written by Christian and Jewish scholars and takes its wider cultural and philosophical context into consideration. The perspective is worldwide and ecumenical. Its references to modern biblical scholarship, on which it is based, are extensive and updated. The indexes (names, topics, references to biblical sources and a broad body of literature beyond) are the key to the wealth of information provided. Contributors are J. Barton, H.L. Bosman, A.F. Campbell, SJ, D.M. Carr, D.J.A. Clines, W. Dietrich, S.L. Fassberg, D. Føllesdal, A.C. Hagedorn, K.M. Hein, J. Hagenhaven, B. Janowski, D.A. Knight, C. Kürtig, A. Laato, P. Machinist, M.A.O'Brien, M. Oeming, D. Olson, E. Otto, M. Sæbø, J. Schaper, S. Sekine, J.L. Ska, SJ, M.A. Sweeney, and J. de Waard.
The first comparative grammar of the Semitic languages, by H. Zimmern, was published a hundred years ago and the last original work of this kind was issued in Russian in 1972 by B.M. Grande. The present grammar, designed to come out in the centenary of the completion of Zimmern's work, fills thus a gap. Besides, it is based on both classical and modern Semitic languages, it takes new material of these last decades into account, and situates the Semitic languages in the wider context of Afro-Asiatic. The introduction briefly presents the languages in question. The main parts of the work are devoted to phonology, morphology, and syntax, with elaborate charts and diagrams. Then follows a discussion of fundamental questions related to lexicographical analysis. The study is supplemented by a glossary of linguistic terms used in Semitics, by a selective bibliography, by a general index, and by an index of words and forms. The book is the result of twenty-five years of research and teaching in comparative Semitic grammar.

In Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah, Aaron Hornkohl attempts to date this biblical work, both as a whole and according to the constituent layers of which it is apparently composed, on the basis of diachronic linguistic typology.

The Semitic Languages presents a comprehensive survey of the individual languages and language clusters within this language family, from their origins in antiquity to their present-day forms. This second edition has been fully revised, with new chapters and a wealth of additional material. New features include the following: • new introductory chapters on Proto-Semitic grammar and Semitic linguistic typology • an additional chapter on the place of Semitic as a subgroup of Afro-Asiatic, and several chapters on modern forms of Arabic, Aramaic and Ethiopian Semitic • text samples of each individual language, transcribed into the International Phonetic Alphabet, with standard linguistic word-by-word glossing as well as translation • new maps and tables present information visually for easy reference. This unique resource is the ideal reference for advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students of linguistics and language. It will be of interest to researchers and anyone with an interest in historical linguistics, linguistic typology, linguistic anthropology and language development.

The range and breadth of Thomas O. Lambdin's interests in Semitic linguistics are reflected in this collection of essays in his honor. Professor at Harvard University since 1969, Lambdin has vigorously scrutinized, analyzed, and written on many of the individual Semitic languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopic, Coptic—plus the comparative and historical grammar of the family as a whole. But Lambdin's reputation derives primarily from his teaching, for his most widely used books (Introduction to Biblical Hebrew and Introduction to Classical Ethiopic) originated in the classroom. By training his students not only in the related languages but also in historical grammar and comparative semitics, he has enabled them to use comparative material with first-hand knowledge and critical awareness. The title of this volume reflects Lambdin's awareness that the linguist is frequently working in a field that has no previously established guidelines; the ramifications of this realization are then explored in various linguistic fields by former students and colleagues of Lambdin.

This book offers a thorough, authoritative account of the branches of Semitic, among them Akkadian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Ethiopic. It describes their history from ancient times to the present, geographical distribution, writing systems, classification, linguistic features, distinctive characteristics, and typological significance.

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