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On the CLASSIFICATION of LANGUAGES in conformity with ETHNOLOGY.—By GUSTAV OPPERT, Ph.D., Professor of Sanskrit in Madras.

THE science of language is a physical science, and its proper place is in the natural history of mankind. Articulate language is a gift which a benign Providence has vouchsafed specially to man. As articulate speech is a speciality of man, and men, though differing from one another in external appearance and internal attributes, are as a species *one*, and further, as speech is common to all human individuals, unless they are deprived of it by some cause or other, it follows that every person is able to speak, up to a certain degree, every language. The language of the individual is the product of various elements; of the family in which he is brought up—modified, moreover, by the natural influences of the locality and the climate in which he lives. As a separate individual, every man is, besides, endowed with an intellect of his own which will occasionally appear on the surface. We distinguish clearly two very different influential elements which produce and define the speech of the individual; the one, influencing the utterance of sound, is *physiological*; the other, representing the manner of thinking, is *psychological*.

As a rule, an original language springs up in the infancy of national life, expressing the peculiar mental disposition of the community who used it, and retaining the impression which constitutes its individuality. Everybody possesses the latent capacity of speaking, as has been said before, every language; the descent of the individual need not, therefore, necessarily coincide with, or become apparent from, the idiom he uses.

Yet it may be possible that linguists, well acquainted with the peculiarities and intricacies of the dialects they have particularly paid attention to, will discover in the expressions of those who use languages foreign to them by practice or descent, eccentricities which can only be sufficiently explained by their inborn individuality. In order not to be misled into wrong conclusions, one must, in questions of language and race, take into consideration, if possible, the original and not the adopted language; and that, too, in a form the least corrupted and mixed with modern and foreign elements.

We must, moreover, not lose sight of the fact that a person who learns a foreign language, and who does so voluntarily or compulsorily, either for temporary or for permanent use, submits himself to the rule of that language. He tries to speak it, to think in it according to its proper mode, *i.e.*, he assumes its pronunciation, grammar and syntax; he loses, indeed, to a certain

degree, his personal independence, while he accommodates himself to the whims and caprices of his new mistress. The real point at issue is, therefore, not whether the language one speaks indicates the race to which one belongs—as long as that race has been preserved in its purity—which it surely does not; but whether a language, if used by foreign individuals and nations, retains its original character. There is no doubt of it. A language preserves, as it were instinctively, its peculiar construction, and if it does not always coincide, either with the particular nation or person who speaks it, it certainly indicates the race of those who spoke it first, and this, in spite of all apparent change, and it retains the mode of thought of those among whom it first sprung up as their natural means of communication, though that race itself might exist no longer.

Languages exhibit, like the persons who speak them, the different phases of life, with its commencement and development, its decay and death.

The relationship of parentage and offspring among living creatures is also found among languages. A language can be many times propagated or regenerated, but it dies as soon as its daughter-languages establish themselves independently, or it ceases to supply a real want. In nature and construction similar, often even identical, yet a mother-language differs from its daughter-language as a mother from her daughter.

A language can adopt and create as many words as it pleases without changing its character, but it cannot alter its grammar, its syntax, without becoming another; for grammar represents the inmost mode of thought over which the individual person or nation has no real control.

This very fact proves that the original language of a people indicates its race, and *vice versa*. Comparative philology and ethnology, therefore, are allied sciences which supplement each other. No system of comparative philology is true unless it fulfils this condition; but no linguistic classification can be elaborated unless the expressions which define the family and social life are taken into account.

Ethnological research is deficient if it takes alone into account the outward appearance of men, as philological conclusions cannot only be based on external characteristics as has been done hitherto.

The object and aim of speech is communication, which certainly varies, in point of clearness and perfection, according to the physical and intellectual state of the individual. The ruder the speaker, the cruder the speech. Thus it is not only possible, but even highly probable, that the original enunciations of a language are interjections.

If interjections are, according to their nature, as a rule short and monosyllabic, the original roots of words should be also monosyllabic. "Interjections are," as Professor Max Müller observes, "only the outskirts of real language; language begins where interjections end." But these outskirts are already within the bounds of language, and form the lines of its natural frontier.

Interjections, or whatever name we may give to the main essence of words, precede the other forms of speech; nay, they are most likely the very nucleus from which the latter are formed. A word embodies, as it were, an idea, whether this refers to a concrete object or to an abstract thought. Originally the incoherently uttered word comprised within itself the different variations in meaning as represented later by the different forms of speech. This concentration of the various shapes which mental or material essences may assume in one unchangeable body, their crystallisation in one single form, is most strikingly exhibited in the so-called monosyllabic languages, where each word represents to some extent a mere atom.

Monosyllabism is thus considered by many to be original to all languages, though only a few retained it in their later development. The monosyllabic tendency which prevails in some languages is certainly a most interesting feature, productive, moreover, where consistently adhered to, of other strange peculiarities, *e.g.*, of a singular mode of pronunciation, intonation, and accentuation; but as the various monosyllabic dialects in different parts of the globe, in Asia, Africa, and America, though agreeing in their outward monosyllabic phenomenon, yet disagree in their internal construction by differently expressing thoughts and ideas, monosyllabism by itself cannot well be raised to a standard of classification, as it is peculiar to many idioms, which are dissimilar in other respects.

No doubt the assumption is widely spread, and possesses great semblance of truth, that the characteristic mark of the so-called Semitic languages lies in the dissyllabic formation of their roots; but whether this is really a fact remains to be proved. The majority of Semitic roots display a dissyllabic form, but many of the most important words in Semitic dialects are monosyllabic, and it is not beyond the range of possibility that the dissyllabic or trilateral and quadrilateral roots are based on and derived from monosyllabic roots.

Even when upholding the principle that every dialect has a monosyllabic beginning, one must not lose sight of the fact that this principle is affected as soon as single ideas are combined. However loosely thoughts are linked together, this juxtaposition must influence them. But this composite idea is still main-

tained in monosyllabic languages by separate and unmodified symbols.

To the morphological classification monosyllabism represents the first stage, the radical or isolating; the two remaining are the terminational or agglutinative, and the inflectional or amalgamating. There is no doubt that the system expounded in this morphological classification is equally feasible, and at first sight convincing. But, on the other hand, can we anywhere, in any dead or living language, point out such a gradual change? Or, in case that languages exist where such changes are still occurring, can such a classification be accepted as final? Or can it be regarded as a sufficient classification, when it contains under each division languages which are totally dissimilar? Every language must, in the course of its development, pass through certain phases of growth, but only within the sphere of its peculiar system does it get to maturity. Moreover, the peculiar principle which guides the external development of a language—whether it be monosyllabic, incorporative, euphonic, alliteral, agglutinative, or inflectional—is not a safe criterion by which to measure the mental capabilities of those who speak such dialects. The real test of a language consists in its being able to express lucidly, and to communicate distinctly, all the various modulations of ideas which occur to the speaker.

The capabilities of men lie within certain well-defined limits, beyond which there is no progress. This fact applies also to the languages they speak, and, however gradual this development from infancy to maturity may be, our present knowledge does not enable us to describe step by step the stages passed through. Individual capacity and incapacity are left to their own devices on their way onward, and though the duller man may progress slowly and halt midway towards the final aim reached by the more gifted competitor, both may not pursue the same direction, and where the former prefers a roundabout road, the latter may choose a short cut.

To observe and to mark the external peculiarities and diversities occurring in languages is no doubt of very considerable importance, because, without a minute knowledge of the details, a proper insight into the total cannot be obtained; but such a proceeding ought to be supplemented by an investigation into the causes which produced those peculiarities. The internal process of weaving thoughts influences the external form of speech, and if these two actions, which originate from different parts of the human brain, are well studied, the results derived from their investigation, when joined together, will constitute the true basis of a science of language. The external form of articulate speech is represented by sound, and we call it *vocal* ;

the internal we call *mental*. The investigation of the latter is very difficult, as we can only examine it by the sounds, to which it assigns meanings, but which sounds by themselves are meaningless.

It is in the home that language becomes an actual necessity. A man who lives by himself, apart from human beings, does not require speech. But when once the system of companionship of a family is introduced, circumstances are changed.

Judging from probabilities we may conclude that man and wife, especially in primeval times, belonged to one and the same race, though that race may possibly have been split up into numerous, generally even hostile clans. It does not matter for our purpose what sort of domestic life is prevailing, whether it is founded on polyandry, polygamy, monogamy; the difference in the forms of marriage does not affect the construction of the words denoting the nearest degrees of consanguinity. The first material change in a young household is the birth of a child, and those who were previously living together as man and wife become respectively father and mother. It is the child which confers on its parents the dignity of fatherhood and motherhood, and the words for father and mother are, in the great majority of languages, identical with the first sounds a child pronounces, and these sounds, if once permanently applied to signify father and mother, form afterwards the roots for words which convey the chief qualities supposed to be found in parents when regarded from a filial point of view. It is thus not surprising that, *e.g.*, the Sanskrit roots *pā* and *mā* convey the meaning of feeling or protecting, and of making or measuring, as they appropriately express the qualities expected to be found in a father (*pitri*) and a mother (*mātri*).

Comparing, as far as we are able to do, the words denoting kinship with each other, as they occur in the several languages, one most peculiar feature will immediately become apparent. The manner of naming is twofold. The one shows a tendency to observe a certain most prominent quality in a person or in an object, and to name its possessor accordingly; the other deals with the individual specimen as a concrete body, distinguishable from a similar one by a constitutional difference, such as sex &c., which discriminating mark is separately added or peculiarly expressed. This distinction, in order to be recognised as really existing, must show itself throughout the system, at all events in the nearest and most important degrees of affinity. The character possessed by parents must, to some extent, reappear in their children; the same peculiarity which guides the mind of parents when naming their children must manifest itself in their children when they address each other as brothers or sisters.

The languages in which parents call their children sons or daughters, and in which those sons and daughters call each other brothers and sisters, are different in thought—that is, in expression and construction—from those where the former are known by the name of male children and female children, and the latter by that of elder or younger brother and sister. The difference between those two modes of expression is that the one manifests a power of abstraction, which is wanting in the other, as it adheres to the concrete substance. The inclination towards abstractness and concreteness would not be so significant and deserving of notice if it did not show itself in other forms again and again in various expressions of a language, corroborating the tendency observed in the denomination of relations. The custom which prevails among many tribes of using terms of kinship instead of proper nouns as modes of address among relatives enhances the importance of such words. From this concrete mode of address, by means of the words of relationship, to the practice of using an abstract and now more common form of address, represented by the pronoun, is a wide step; but these terms of consanguinity and the pronouns retain a certain affinity and connection between each other, which manifests itself in the manner in which both ignore or express gender.

According to the mental propensity towards concreteness and abstractness possessed by the various human races, and exhibited by them in their languages, I propose to divide the latter into two classes—into concrete and abstract languages. Both divisions are in their turn re-arranged into groups. Into these groups are then classed the various languages, conformably to the differences they exhibit in their external or vocal appearance, whether it be incorporative as the American, alliteral as the African, monosyllabic, agglutinative, or inflectional.

As abstraction is the result of deduction from the concrete, it is, in consequence, posterior in time to it. It pre-supposes a deductive analytic faculty, which is not common to all. The capability of passing from concreteness to abstractness is the touchstone of languages, as it manifests the progress in the capacity of thinking, which goes on in the human brain.

While concrete dialects are thus originally without names for abstract qualities, abstract languages retain the ability to use concrete expressions, though perhaps in a lower degree. It may appear astonishing, but it is not the less true, that a language, unless it undergoes a radical change by which its nature is totally altered and a new dialect created, does not change the characteristic inclination which it manifests in the expression of the different degrees of consanguinity, though the terms themselves may be changed and modified repeatedly; for the terms

are represented only by sounds, which sounds *per se* are without any significance.

The terms *duhitri* and *bhrātri*, daughter and brother, were not, we may be sure, the words first used to denote the relationship of daughter and brother among the people whose language developed itself into Sanskrit; but they are at all events the representatives of previous abstract terms. Abstract languages are able to form, and form indeed at times, concrete terms; but the presence of original abstract expressions decides the question.

In all abstract and in nearly all concrete languages the words signifying father and mother can be traced to the simple and unconscious exclamations of children, whatever they may be. The words distinguishing between father and mother once settled, the child learns, gradually, whether it has to call its father or mother *pa* or *ma*, *ata* or *ana*, &c., &c. But this is not the only mode of naming. A child, especially if it has been brought into closer contact with one of its parents (this will be, as a rule, its mother), regards this parent as *the* parent, and gives to that parent a peculiar name. When it has afterwards become aware of the existence of two parents it preserves the original term, which loses its primitive application to a certain individual, and being taught to affix to it the words denoting male or female, distinguishes between the male parent, or father, and the female parent, or mother. This nomenclature prevails, *e.g.*, among the Nancowry Islanders, as well as among the Hawaiians and other kindred tribes.

Through modulation of voice, which effects a change in the sound of the letter, a word may assume a different meaning. Thus altered in pronunciation and sense it becomes in course of time a separate term, and the former identity of the two words is forgotten.

The division of letters into hard and soft, or into close and open, and the application of this principle to speech, is the foundation of the euphonic system met with among such distant tribes as the Tungusians of Asia, the Negroes of Africa, and the Redskins of America. It is among Asiatic and American dialects that the diversity of sound is often employed to express the difference between male and female sex, instead of describing it by using the adjectives "male" or "female." The softer voice being peculiar to women, the softer sound, or what was considered to be so, was chosen to denote the female sex, and the harder tone was applied to designate male individuals, *e.g.*, in the Mandchu language *Chacha* signifies "man," *Cheche* "woman," *Ama* "father," *Eme* "mother," *Ahun* "elder brother," *Eiun* "elder sister."

The most important difference existing between children is

offered undoubtedly by sex. Concrete languages do systematically exclude gender; they do not—a very few instances excepted—possess equivalent terms for such abstract words as “boy” or “son,” “girl” or “daughter,” but preferring as their starting-point the genderless or neutral expression “child,” join to it the sexual determinatives “male” or “female.” Occasionally even the word “child” is omitted, and the terms “male” or “female” are deemed sufficient to denote son or daughter; *e.g.*, in the Yoruba, Hawaiian, Karen, and Telugu languages, “child” is respectively expressed by *Oma*, *Kaiki*, *Pho*, and *Bidda*; “male” by *kuri*, *kana*, *khwa*, and *moga*; and “female” by *bere*, *vahina*, *mu*, and *ada*. A boy is, therefore, respectively called *Oma kuri*, *Kaiki kana*, *Pho khwa*, and *Moga bidda*; and a girl *Oma bere*, *Kaiki vahina*, *Pho mu*, and *Ada bidda*.

When contrasting this mode of expression with that adopted by abstract dialects, we directly perceive that the words chosen for “boy” and “son,” “girl” and “daughter,” indicate certain qualities usually ascribed to children. We may remark here, that we do not contend that concrete expressions of relationship were never used in abstract languages; but we say that if they were used they were dropped at a very early stage, so that hardly any traces of them can now be found in any abstract language. In the Semitic languages we meet with words signifying “son” and “daughter,” but no *bonâ-fide* equivalent for “child.” From this fact we can infer that a third or neuter gender does not exist in the Semitic group of languages. Its presence among the Aryan branch is evidence of the existence of a neuter term for “child.”

The word “child” is a strictly concrete expression, designating the young, the offspring of man, and must not be regarded as indicating a child *in abstracto*, for all human children belong to the same species of man. It must not be classed in the same category as, *e.g.*, the word “animal,” which can be taken as an abstract formation; and there exist, indeed, tribes who have bestowed a name on all the animals they know, but who have never thought to use a word for animal.

While parentage and filiation admit only two essential component parts, kinship and sex, the relationship between brothers and sisters includes, besides a third element, that of age.

The non-existence of words equivalent to brother and sister in a language must be, to those who converse in abstract tongues, and who are accustomed to them from their earliest childhood, a very striking phenomenon; but an examination into this subject will soon disclose the fact that the absence of such terms is the rule, and their presence the exception. All concrete

languages can possess a general expression of consanguinity irrespective of sex and age; *e.g.*, in the Khasi dialect *Para* denotes consanguinity pure and simple, but to distinguish between brother and sister, the words for “male” and “female,” *shinrang* and *kynthai*, must be added, and *Para shinrang* stands for “brother,” *Para kynthai* for “sister.”

Children who live together under their parents’ protection differ from each other principally in sex and age. The distinction of sex is the more important of the two. It separates the children into two classes. Subdivisions are then effected by age. The distinction between seniors and juniors is acknowledged. The eldest, or senior, is the head of the family. The senior has only juniors beneath himself, and the youngest junior only seniors above him. The senior brother and sister being considered the more important and influential members of the family, and of society at large, the terms which express seniority are preserved more carefully than those which are assigned to juniors. The amalgamation of age with the expressions of consanguinity is fatal to the adoption of abstract terms equivalent to brother and sister. The irresistible influence which time exercises on everything prejudices the application of terms which include age in their definition.

Even the genderless terms of consanguinity just mentioned cannot be considered to express fully the abstract sense of consanguinity. For a stricter examination will disclose the fact that they do not describe the affinity of brother and sister in the sense in which it is generally used, as children of the same father and mother, but that they are only applicable to children of the same mother. The Mandengo, Turkish, and Dravidian terms prove this distinctly; they denote a male or female who is born from the same mother—expressions synonymous with the Sanskrit *Sahodara* (Sodara) and *Sagarbha*.

A strangely intricate system of nomenclature arises in many concrete languages from the separation of children according to sex. The relationship existing between brothers and brothers on the one, and sisters and sisters on the other side, is the same. An elder brother is exactly in the same manner related to his younger brother as an elder sister is to her younger sister, and *vice versa*. The identical genderless terms of consanguinity apply, therefore, to elder brothers and sisters, as well as to younger brothers and sisters. The expression becomes complete when the several determinatives, male or female, have been added. In some languages, as we have already observed, the sound of the word is modulated, in order to convey the necessary distinction. In the Yoruba language “elder consanguinity” is expressed by *egmo*, and “younger consanguinity” by *aburo*; “male” is *okuri*,

and "female" *obiri*; *egmo okuri* is therefore "elder brother," *egmo obiri* "elder sister," *aburo okiri* "younger brother," and *aburo obiri* "younger sister."

So long as persons of the same sex address each other no difficulty arises, but immediately an individual oversteps this sexual barrier, *e.g.*, a brother speaks to his sister, the case is altered. The principle followed in this proceeding shows that persons of the same sex, when addressing each other, use identical expressions, but that heterogeneous persons use, in this case, dissimilar words. A Hawaiian man, *e.g.*, calls his elder brother *Kai kua ana*, his elder sister *Kai ku vahina*, his younger brother *Kai kaina*, and his younger sister *Kai kai vahina*; but a Hawaiian woman calls the same persons respectively *Kai ku na na*, *Kai ku a ana*, *Kai ku nānā*, and *Kai kai na*.

This difference in the speech of men and women, however significant, is by natural causes limited within a narrow compass. If men and women really spoke different languages, the very aim for which speech exists, clear communication of ideas, would be frustrated. The circumstance that in Sanskrit dramas men speak Sanskrit, and women Prākṛit, is not to the point. The so-called language of the Kaffir women, which is known as the *Uku Hlonipa*, has a totally different origin, and supplies a special want, but it is altogether at variance with the above-mentioned expressions used in certain languages by men or women, when speaking to each other. The *Uku Hlonipa* arises from the repugnance which Kaffir women have to mention the name of their fathers or fathers-in-law, or any word which resembles such names. In its tendency it reminds one of the custom of *tabu*, prevalent among the South Sea Islanders, though the anxious avoidance of the names of the king and of members of the reigning family, and of all words resembling them, is not confined to one sex, but shared by men and women alike.

The terms of kinship hitherto considered excluded sex, but there exist some concrete languages which include it. These latter formations indicate undoubtedly a progress. If sex alone, besides relationship, were expressed, such words would have assumed an abstract appearance. The circumstance of their still retaining age proclaims their concrete nature.

Rank and position are closely connected with, and inseparable from, seniority. The eldest brother is, in the absence of another elder member of the family, *eo ipso* its head. The eldest sister enjoys a similar distinguished position, especially where the laws of inheritance favour the female line. The precedence granted to seniors lowers the position of juniors. Even language does not treat both with the same regard. While distinct terms are

conceded to the elders, the juniors of both sexes have either only one name in common, or when they enjoy the privilege of having special terms assigned to them, these terms themselves bear often the impression of a later origin. Thus, the Tamil word for "younger brother," *Tambi*, is composed of the possessive pronoun *tam*, and the adjective *pin*, "after," and stands for *pin pirandavan*, "he that is born afterwards." Separate terms for "elder brother" and "elder sister," together with common ones for "younger brother" and "younger sister," occur in many Asiatic, American, and Australian dialects.

Four distinct terms for these four classes of kinship, *i.e.*, one special for each, are found in the languages of the Chinese, Turks, Dravidians, Hungarians, &c.; *e.g.*, in Chinese "elder brother" is *heung*; "elder sister," *tsze*; "younger brother," *te*; "younger sister," *mei*. In Chagatai the same are *Aga*, *bary*, *iny*, and *singil*; in Telugu, *anna*, *akka*, *tammudu*, and *cellelu*; and in Hungarian, *ba* (*bacy*), *nene*, *ocs*, and *hug*.

To express in such a language the relationship of "brother" and "sister," both terms must be joined; *e.g.*, in Chinese, "brother" is *heung-te*, and "sister" *tsze-mei*; and in Telugu, *anna-tammudu* is "brother," and *akka-cellelu* "sister."

We therefore distinguish between two different kinds of concrete languages. The first contains special words used in case persons of different sex address each other; the second does not possess such peculiar terms, and males and females use, when conversing with each other, the same words as if they were speaking with persons belonging to their own sex. We call the first division *heterologous*, because heterogeneous persons use different words, or speech; and the second *homologous*, because they use, in this case, the same words or speech.

Each division is again subdivided into three classes, as follows:—(1) the first class marks the difference existing between elder and younger consanguinity by adopting special terms for each, and the difference of sex by adding either the words "male" and "female," or by modulation of sound; (2) the second possesses special terms for elder brother and elder sister, but one in common for younger brother and younger sister; (3) the third has four distinct terms for each of these varieties of kinship.

These are the principal varieties in which concrete languages express the relationship between brothers and sisters. They represent approximately the different stages of development of thought which can be observed in the growth of the respective languages. The principle of concretion remains everywhere intact and distinct, but it appears in various phases of refinement, corresponding to the mental capabilities of men. How

this progress originates, how it grows, and where and why it stops, are questions difficult or impossible to be answered.

Having thus laid stress upon the important position which terms of kinship occupy in a language, it must be further proved that their construction is a manifestation of the general character of a dialect, and that the innate inclination re-appears again in different forms of speech.

Next to the words of relationship, the pronouns, as the substitutes of nouns, have preserved most distinctly the original germs of a dialect. In some languages the terms of kinship are retained in conversation, where others would use in their stead pronouns. The fact is one of the many indications which show that both nouns and pronouns are constituted alike in many respects. The connection existing between both manifests itself in various ways. The words for "father" and "mother" differ in the Zulu language according to the pronoun with which they are associated. West Australian languages combine also in a peculiar manner pronouns with terms of kinship and of relationship. In the American languages the terms of relationship, the names of the various members and organs of the body, and other objects which have a personal bearing, are always connected with pronouns.

The employment of real abstract pronouns testifies to a high development, and their existence must be considered as marking an essential progress in the mental life of a language.

The pronouns of the first and second persons have as their starting-point a firm concrete basis; it is either the *I* who speaks, or the *thou* who is addressed. Words which express the respective position of the two first pronouns are therefore used in preference to others. Reverential terms towards superiors equal terms towards equals, and condescending terms towards inferiors, are the natural outcome of such a system. The Javanese dialect possesses thus twenty pronouns of the first and twelve of the second person.

The pronoun of the third person is a truer reflection of the character of a dialect, than either that of the first or the second person. The pronoun of the third person is an artificial *alter ego*. It originates from an inmost tendency towards abstractness. Where such an inclination is wanting it does not exist as in the Javanese.

As in concrete languages there do not exist any abstract terms for brother and sister, so also do they not possess an abstract term for the pronoun *we*, which is found in the abstract languages. The concrete languages acknowledge the differences in the pronoun *we*, by special expressions. Strictly speaking there are two separate kinds of "we." It either includes the

speaker and the party addressed, or excludes the party addressed and includes that spoken of. "We two" is either "Thou and I" or "He and I"; the plural "we" signifies in the same manner "You and I" and "They and I." Every language which contains such inclusive and exclusive terms of "we" indicates by their presence its concrete tendency. The Hottentot idioms are rich in such distinctions; this fact is a sure sign of the Hottentot dialects belonging to the concrete and not to the abstract class, which includes Egyptian and Hebrew. These peculiar pronominal expressions are found to this day in Asia in the Mandchu, Bahing, Gujarati, and the Dravidian languages; in Africa in the Hottentot dialect, and in the neighbouring Madagassy; it occurs in the Malayan and Polynesian tongues, and is a well-known expression in the American languages.

The concrete character of a language can be recognised in many expressions of daily life. The natural properties displayed by individual persons or objects, the characteristic discrepancies apparent in similar actions or conditions, are keenly grasped and appreciated by the unsophisticated child of nature; but the common bond which links together the kindred members to the parent body is, if not overlooked, at all events not appreciated. The individual overshadows the species. Each single object impresses the mind of the beholder at first with its individuality. If this impression becomes overpowerful the mind can no more distinguish between the kindred and the kind, and this difference is in consequence not expressed in speech. There exist tribes, as has been quoted before, who, while giving a separate name to all the animals they know, do not possess a term for animal; others describe the tails of all animals by special words, yet do not know how to express "tail"; others point out each separate plant or tree by an appropriate name, and are unable to speak in general of a plant or a tree; or they will distinctly define each bird, fish, leaf, or stone, or any other existing thing, but as their abstracting powers are deficient, do not understand how to name a bird or a fish, a leaf or a stone.

The Bisaya dialect does not exhibit any verbs which correspond to the abstract sense of the English "to go," "to open," "to gather," and "to buy," but it produces 33, 27, 42, and 13 special terms, all expressing a particular going, opening, gathering, or buying. In the Tagala language, "to go" is expressed in seventy-five different ways, and "food" is boiled in eleven, while it is eaten in the Bisaya dialect in forty different ways. Like the Burmese, so the American Cherokee delights in manifold modes of washing; while the Mohican and the Burmese descant

on the varieties of cutting. Languages so different as Hawaiian and the Dravidian dialects are at a loss how to express the verb "to break."

Such combinations as *to-sav* ("much-little"), as equivalent to quantity, and *chung-king* ("heavy-light"), as equivalent to weight, in Chinese, prove that the formation of *tcze-mei* ("elder and younger sister") for "sister," does not stand alone in Chinese. Many more examples from various languages could be produced if the proof contained in these will admit of any doubt respecting the innate concrete tendency of the individual reappearing in his speech.

The ideas which language expresses are defined by gender, number, space, time, and other qualifying attributes. These attributes are found everywhere, and are everywhere the same. They existed previously to that period when man could testify to their presence by alluding to them in speech. For the individual man belongs himself to a sex; he is one of his species, and lives at a certain place during a limited time. These categories never change; but how does language deal with them? This is the question now before us; our intention, therefore, must be directed to observe how a language deals with gender, how it expresses number, denotes space and time, and all the other modalities connected with the ever-changing variations of mind and matter.

The most striking feature which is impressed on our mind, when we look about and regard the various objects around us, is no doubt the fact that they are either endowed with life or not. We all know that imperfect knowledge may falsely ascribe life to inanimate matter, or ignore life in animate creation; but these mistakes only prove ignorance, while they manifest the inclination to constitute vitality as the principal criterion. It affects our senses with all the strength of a concrete substance: for as such appears life. If the existence of life is once admitted as the characteristic mark of distinction, a further subdivision is attempted by separating animate beings, who are credited with possessing the faculty of reasoning, from those who are supposed to be deprived of it. Man, as the representative of mankind, even to the detriment of woman, generally takes upon himself the arrangement of this vexed question. Where knowledge forsakes him conceit helps him. The complete classification into animates and inanimates, and of the former into rationals and irrationals, is occasionally lost sight of, and its place is taken by distributions which acknowledge either only rationals, irrationals, and inanimates, or which, ignoring any difference between the latter two, distinguish simply between rational and irrational beings.

A closer observation devoted to the creatures around us soon discovers the diversity of sex which pervades the whole creation. The existence of sex is no less a reality than is the presence of life; but if the former is accepted as the starting-point of a methodical system, wherein to arrange living beings, inanimate objects, and abstract ideas, it is soon obliged to have recourse to imagination.

The admission of gender, the grammatical representative of sex, as a standard of classification, is evidence of an imaginative turn of thought. It requires the personification of inanimate beings. Imagination endows them with artificial life, assigning to them a gender, as if they were living creatures.

A language marks the varieties of gender when the words, more especially the nouns, contain in themselves the distinction of sex without expressing it by peculiar terminations, additions, or modifications of sound; *e.g.*, in English “man” and “bull” are masculine, and “woman” and “cow” are feminine, but the external form does not betray their respective gender. Of course every language can express the difference of sex, as sex is a natural fact, and a language is nothing if not descriptive; but if a dialect must have recourse to the expedient of adding such terms as “male” and “female,” or others which convey the same meaning, it is clear that such a language has not what has been defined as gender. Though *man* is a male, and *woman* a female by sex, grammatically they may be neither masculine nor feminine; *e.g.*, according to Telugu grammar neither *magadu* (“man”) nor *eddu* (“ox”) is masculine, nor *ālu* (“wife”) and *āvu* (“cow”) feminine.

The addition of terms like “male” or “female” does not affect the gender of any particular word. It only qualifies the noun, as do all adjectives. The gender of the word “child” remains the same whether it is connected with male or female, small or big, white or black, &c.

All classifications, however well they are conceived, and however logically they are applied, encounter obstacles, when they are consistently practised. This is a natural defect of all systems. In the first division, which constitutes life and reasoning power, as the salient points, these two (life and reasoning power) are not always easily discovered, and the unbiassed recognition of gender, in creatures, objects, and thought, is in the second division also occasionally impeded by flights of imagination, or by want of knowledge. But the most important distinction between the two systems must be considered to be the fact, that the first mentioned is adopted by concrete, the second by abstract languages. This choice is retrospectively a sufficient indication of the prevalent tendency in each classification.

The great majority of languages being concrete, the abstract minority only expresses gender.

The well-known African linguist, the lamented Dr. W. H. T. Bleek, is, so far as my knowledge goes, the first among modern philologists who became aware of the important position which gender occupies in language, and who pointed it out in his excellent essays. Dr. Bleek, being struck with the very interesting but puzzling system of concords occurring in South African languages, says that, "when we inquire into the probable etymologies of the Hottentot derivative suffixes of nouns, not one of them seems to have originally any meaning implying sex."

If we now return to the classification from which we started, we shall see that the South African, the great bulk of the American, and some Asiatic languages acknowledge a classification founded on the difference between animate and inanimate creatures; while some other concrete tongues, as Hungarian and the Dravidian dialects, prefer a division between rationals and irrationals. In the Telugu and Tamil grammars the latter go by the name of majors, or high-caste words, and of minor, or low-caste words.

The great difference which exists between gender-denoting and gender-ignoring languages becomes manifest from the manner in which gender is recognised. In gender-denoting languages gender need not be always distinctly expressed, and yet its presence is felt and pervades the whole grammatical system. Gender-ignoring dialects may, on the contrary, apparently possess special forms expressive of sex and be quite devoid of appreciating gender in a grammatical sense, a possibility to which we have alluded previously.

We distinguish in nature especially two sexes, a male and a female; but as there are objects which cannot be properly ascribed either to the one or to the other class, the existence of a neuter class is sometimes deemed emergent. Abstract languages recognise, consequently, either two or three grammatical genders. The introduction of gender into a language is accompanied both by peculiar advantages and disadvantages. Its superiority lies in its requiring a higher mental discernment, in its appealing to imagination; its defect arises from the difficulties which beset the faculty of judgment. Whether a language admits two, or whether it admits three genders, the difficulty is how to dispose of inanimate objects and abstract thoughts. In the digeneous system they must be enrolled either in the masculine or the feminine class; in the trigeneous system the freaks of imagination interfere with a strictly logical arrangement.

The pronoun of the third person is the most positive evidence

for the character of a language, so far as it concerns the question whether a dialect ignores or denotes gender. In the former case the pronoun does not express gender; in the latter two or three forms are required, according as the idiom recognises two or three distinct genders. The third personal pronoun is *de facto* the abstract representative of the various persons and objects; it describes their principal qualities by imparting to them in gender-denoting languages a certain sex. The superiority of the trigeneous system over the digeneous is not only one in theory but also one in practice.

The mode in which languages express plurality, though not so important a feature as gender in the development of a dialect, still attracts a great deal of interest.

I have discoursed on this subject to a great extent in another place,¹ and though the evidence is interesting, and corroborates the conclusions already obtained, I need not enter now into any further details.

The classification of languages which I propose will be as follows:—According to psychological or mental characteristics all languages are arranged in two great divisions—a concrete and an abstract; both divisions are to be subdivided into two classes—the concrete division into the heterologous and homologous; the abstract into the digeneous and trigeneous. Both the heterologous and homologous classes contain three sub-classes, according to the different modes of expressing consanguinity.

If we represent concrete and abstract languages by *C* and *A* respectively, their classes by α and β , and the groups by 1, 2, and 3, we obtain the following symbols:— Ca^1 , Ca^2 , Ca^3 ; $C\beta^1$, $C\beta^2$, $C\beta^3$; $A\alpha$ and $A\beta$.

To Ca^1 belong (*a*) such American languages as the Dakota, Salith, and Eskimo dialects; (*b*) the Polynesian languages, as Hawaiian, Tahitian, Tongan, Fijian, Maori, Malagasy, &c.; (*c*) many Australian; and (*d*) the Basque languages.

Ca^2 includes some American and Basque languages.

$C\beta^1$ contains the Malayan, many African and Asiatic languages.

$C\beta^2$ is represented by the Mongolian and Tungusian languages.

$C\beta^3$ includes Chinese, Japanese, the Finnish, Turkish, Dravidian, and other languages.

$A\alpha$ is represented by Old Egyptian, Coptic, the Berber, and the Semitic languages.

$A\beta$ contains the Aryan languages.

¹ A second edition of my work, "On the Classification of Languages," is in preparation.

SCHEME OF THE SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION.

Physiological (<i>vocal</i>) Characteristics.	Psychological (<i>mental</i>) Characteristics.							
	Concrete (<i>c</i>).						Abstract (<i>a</i>).	
	Heterologous (<i>α</i>).			Homologous (<i>β</i>).			Digeneous (<i>α</i>).	Trigeneous (<i>β</i>).
	1.	2.	3.	1.	2.	3.		
I. (Monosyllabic)	<i>a.</i> Korean. <i>b.</i> Transgangetic. <i>c.</i> Kiranti. <i>d.</i> Tibetan.	..	Chinese? ..	Old Egyptian.	..
II. (Incorporative) ..	<i>a.</i> Many American languages. <i>b.</i> Basque languages.	Algonquin	..	..	..	..	..	..
III. (Euphonic)	Mandengo, Yoruba, &c.	..	..	..	..
IV. (Euphonic inflectional).	Hausa	..
V. (Alliteral)..	Congo, Angola (Kaffir) &c.	..	..	..	..
VI. (Agglutinative) ..	<i>a.</i> Polynesian. <i>b.</i> Australian languages.	Narrinyeri	..	Malayan languages.	Tungusian, Mongolian languages.	Japanese, Finnish, Turkish, Ancient Gaudian, Dravidian, &c.	..	..
VII. (Agglutinative inflectional).	Hindustani, Bengali, Singhalese.
VIII. (Dissyllabic inflectional).	Semitic languages.	..
IX. (Inflectional synthetic).	Sanskrit, Zend, Old Greek, Latin, &c.
X. (Inflectional analytical).	Italian, Modern German, English, &c.

Explanation— Ca^1 II. is the symbol for many American as well as for the Basque languages.
 Ca^1 VI. is the symbol for Polynesian and many Australian languages.
 Ca^2 II. is the symbol for the American Algonquin, &c.
 Ca^2 VI. " " " " Australian Narrinyeri, &c.
 $C\beta^1$ I. " " " " Korean, Transgangetic, Tibetan.
 $C\beta^1$ III. " " " " Mandengo, Yoruba, &c.
 $C\beta^1$ V. " " " " Congo, Angola, &c.
 $C\beta^1$ VI. " " " " Malayan.
 $C\beta^2$ VI. " " " " Tungusian, Mongolian, &c.

Explanation— $C\beta^3$ I. is the symbol for the Chinese.
 $C\beta^3$ VI. " " " " Japanese, Finnish, Turkish, Dravidian.
 $A\alpha$ I. " " " " Old Egyptian.
 $A\alpha$ IV. " " " " Hausa.
 $A\alpha$ VIII. " " " " Semitic languages.
 $A\beta$ VII. " " " " Hindustani, Bengali, Singhalese.
 $A\beta$ IX. " " " " Sanskrit, Zend, Ancient Greek, Latin, &c.
 $A\beta$ X. " " " " Italian, Modern German, English, &c.

This psychological classification, which is based on the peculiar action of that part of the brain where the thoughts are woven together, must be supplemented by the physiological classification which originates in that part of the brain which produces the sound and which employs the vocal peculiarities as a criterion of arrangement.

I believe it is necessary to enlarge the system of the vocal or external classification. More certain information is required to decide the question of the external development of languages. I restrict myself in mentioning a few prominent, well-known characteristics, in order to illustrate the system proposed here, representing the terms indicative of the psychological construction by Roman figures: thus, monosyllabic languages will be represented by I; incorporative by II; euphonic (North African Negro) by III; euphonic inflectional by IV; alliteral (South African) by V; agglutinative by VI; agglutinative inflectional by VII; dissyllabic inflectional by VIII; inflectional synthetical by IX; inflectional analytical by X.

This scheme is only provisional, as it is by no means complete. Many languages have not been described, but it will be possible, after sufficient information, to assign a proper place to each language. I have collated more than one thousand languages, none of which exhibited any signs contrary to the classification proposed. It is, besides, a memorable fact that though this classification was originally derived from a strictly philological base, it coincides totally with ethnology.

The result at which I hope to have arrived may be briefly summed up as follows:—

In order to assign to a language its proper place in the realm of speech, both its psychological or *mental* and its physiological or *vocal* characteristics must be well studied, combined, and if possible described in a scientific formula.

All languages must, according as the psychological propensity towards specialising and generalising prevails, be divided into two classes, which we have called concrete and abstract. Difference in mental disposition determines difference of origin. We know of no concrete language which can be regarded as related to a primitive abstract language, or to have developed into an abstract idiom, unless through the introduction of a foreign abstract element, which introduction produces an entire change. A transition from concrete to abstract, though possible according to the laws of nature, cannot be actually pointed out, and the distinction may therefore be considered to be a fixed one to all intents and purposes. This assertion does not exclude the fact that one language may be in one subdivision, and another in another subdivision of the same class, and yet both may be

originally related to each other. In like manner there exist different varieties in the same species, and varieties which seem to be a connecting link between two species in the several kingdoms of nature.

The concrete class ignores totally the distinctions founded on gender, while gender is the keystone to the abstract system.

Both classes admit of subdivisions, and in the concrete, as well as in the abstract classes, the peculiar formation of the terms of kinship is provisionally chosen as the principal criterion.

The physiological disposition, as manifested in the external or vocal formation, combined with the material mode of thinking manifested by a language, betrays fully the peculiar character of an idiom, as is exemplified in the scheme of the system of classification.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. KEANE commented on the many difficulties presented by Professor Oppert's scheme. The primary aim of all classifications, he conceived, was to group together all individuals assumed to be genetically connected. But according to this plan, languages such as Latin, Italian, and French, known to be so connected, would have to be divorced from each other, and placed in separate groups. Italian and French had recast the Latin gender system, fusing the neuter in the masculine, just as English had altogether revolutionised the original gender principle of the Aryan family. This might reasonably be urged as a strong argument against any classification based on considerations of grammatical gender. It could certainly be no reason for separating English, French, or Italian from the Aryan family, to which they undoubtedly belonged. A method requiring such a severance at once exposed itself to this fatal objection, and instead of order, seemed to introduce nothing but confusion and chaos. It was admitted that grammatical gender was the exclusive prerogative of three linguistic groups, the Aryan, Semitic, and Hamitic, which may have sprung from a common centre, but which, notwithstanding this common principle, had not yet been shown to flow from one primeval stock. How much more hopeless must be the task to class all other languages in one category on the negative ground of the absence of grammatical gender. Abstract and concrete, gender and no gender, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, inclusive and exclusive pronouns, analysis and synthesis, and the like, could no more afford any solid basis of linguistic classification, than the hunting, pastoral or agricultural states, common anthropomorphic ideas, similarity of stone implements, and the like could afford any solid basis of ethnical classification. All these points of resemblance might fairly be adduced in support of monogenistic views, but could not be relied upon to determine the mutual relations of subsequently evolved

physical and linguistic varieties. The attempt to show any necessary connection between physical and linguistic groups must also be abandoned once for all. Long lists might be drawn up both of peoples who, like the Bulgarians, Hazarahs, Aimaks, Sakalavas, Betsimisaracas, are known to have changed their original speech, and of others who, like the Magyars, Osmanli, Karelian, and other Finns, have through intermixture changed their original type while preserving their original speech. It is also evident that within the same anthropological group, as within the Caucasic, two or more radically distinct linguistic groups have often been developed. It follows, as Professor Sayce has already pointed out, that "philology and ethnology are not convertible terms."¹ In the ethnological Appendix to his "Asia" (p. 695), Mr. Keane had dealt with this problem of specific diversity of speech within the same physical branch of mankind. But it was surprising to find how little attention had hitherto been paid to the subject, a right understanding of which lay nevertheless at the root of so many ethnological difficulties and seeming contradictions. When we once came to see that physical and linguistic evolution proceeded on different, and often on divergent lines, we should cease to wonder at these discrepancies, which, from the very nature of the case, were in fact inevitable. Meantime, in all attempts at linguistic classification Mr. Keane considered that nothing was to be gained by departing from the old lines as laid down by W. Von Humboldt, who had classed all languages in four great orders based upon morphological considerations. But the mistake made by Dr. Oppert, in common with some other recent innovators, seemed to be that he supposed these orders—the isolating, agglutinating, polysynthetic, and inflecting—to be so many family groups, as it were, and of course from this point of view nothing could be easier than to upset the arrangement. No sane philologist, however, for a moment supposed that because two idioms belonged, say, to the agglutinating or to the inflecting order, they must therefore be mutually related. These orders were like the great divisions of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, within each of which were contained many genera and species, not otherwise necessarily related to each other. They were so many phases of upward development, through which all speech tended to pass, just as in zoology we pass in natural stages from the fishes through the reptilia to the avifauna on the one hand, and to the mammalia on the other. But as the linguistic is much more rapid than biological evolution, cases might occur in which languages had passed through two if not more of these orders, even within the historic period. Thus we find that several neo-Teutonic languages, notably English, and most neo-Latin languages, such as Italian and French, have broken away from the inflecting or synthetic state, and have reverted almost to the earlier isolating or analytical condition of speech. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that they have reached a purely analytical state, for the Romance verb, for

¹ "Science and Language," vol. ii, p. 317.

instance, is still largely synthetical—in some cases more so even than Latin itself. Compare, for example, the Italian *parlai, parlasti, parlò*, with the Latin *loquutus sum, loquutus es, loquutus est*, and *amatevi* with *amamini*, that is, *amamini estis*, a purely participial and analytical form. But even had they made greater strides towards analysis, these languages could not on that ground be separated from the older and more synthetic Italic and Teutonic prototypes, from which they are historically known to have undoubtedly descended. All this merely goes to show that even the morphology of speech is far less persistent than that of biological species. Hence, within the four morphological orders, which in any case merge imperceptibly one into the other, there may be comprised groups or genera in which the agglutinating, inflecting, and other stages are found overlapping each other at various points. Still the historic evidence of genetic descent can never be set aside, and the Holderness dialect of Yorkshire, for instance, which has scarcely retained half-a-dozen grammatical inflections, is as certainly a member of the Aryan linguistic family as are Sanskrit, Greek, or any other highly inflecting Indo-European tongues. A system of classification which tends to disturb these recognised relations cannot be regarded as satisfactory, and, as already remarked, can ultimately lead to nothing but chaos.

Mr. A. TYLOR expressed his admiration of the singularly clear manner in which the author had elucidated a most difficult question. He was especially struck with the remarkable exposition of the mode in which concrete and abstract expressions had arisen. It was most difficult to explain such matters to students, but on Dr. Oppert's plan it became an easy matter. Mr. Tylor was also pleased to find the author using the term *homologous* more in the strict sense of proportion, which it had borne for two thousand years, than was often the case with anatomists.

Dr. OPPERT, in reply, remarked that Mr. Keane did not seem to grasp the drift of his classification, even ignoring that he still retained, though in a limited application, such external differences as monosyllabic, agglutinative, inflectional, &c. To his (Dr. Oppert's) surprise Mr. Keane contended that such differences were never used in classifications, the contrary being too well known a fact to need remark. That Mr. Keane did not admit that there existed a difference between mother and daughter languages did not affect the real matter of fact. The objections propounded by Mr. Keane needed no reply, as they did not touch the foundation of his (Dr. Oppert's) classification, though, on the other hand, the author said he should be only too happy to listen to criticisms of his system, which was, he was well aware, as yet, far from perfect.