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Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society (1980), pp. 1-19

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Murray B. Emeneau: Descriptive Linguist and Scholar.
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When it was suggested that this year's BLS meeting should be dedicated to Murray Emeneau, there was an immediate positive response. We discovered only later, when the issue of deciding upon a focus for the meeting came up, that people had admired Emeneau's work for several different reasons. The Indo-Europeanists were eagerly anticipating a conference dedicated to Murray Emeneau, the eminent Indo-Europeanist. Anthropological linguists were pleased that, at last, BLS was planning a conference focused on the work of an anthropological linguist. Students of American Indian languages were quick to point out that Emeneau was instrumental in the establishment of the Survey of California (and Other) Indian Languages. Southeast Asianists argued that Emeneau has made pioneering contributions to their area of study. If there had been a folklorist present he probably would have added that Emeneau has several notable publications in the field of Indian folklore. As for myself, (the lone Dravidianist present), I noted that Emeneau is also known for his work in Dravidian linguistics. Of course we were all aware of Emeneau's work on the linguistic area hypothesis.

It was only after much discussion that the group was able to reach a consensus on a focus for the Meeting. In the process we all discovered other areas of linguistics where Professor Emeneau has made significant contributions. "Language in Everyday Life," was chosen as the focus because it encompasses Emeneau's work in folklore and anthropological linguistics. By encouraging papers from other areas of interest to Emeneau, we hoped that the meeting would represent, at least in part, the career of Murray Emeneau.

We at Berkeley are fortunate to have access not just to Emeneau's work, but to Emeneau himself, since he has chosen to continue dwelling and working in Berkeley. Murray Emeneau came to Berkeley with his bride, Katharine, in 1940, as an Assistant Professor of Sanskrit and General Linguistics. The previous Professor of Sanskrit, Arthur Ryder, had died suddenly in 1938, and Emeneau was summoned from India by Franklin Edgerton who advised him to stop off in Berkeley and be interviewed for the job. In 1953, Emeneau was instrumental in the creation of the Department of Linguistics, and became its first chairman. He taught Sanskrit and various courses in linguistics until his retirement in 1971. Since then, he has continued to pursue his diverse interests in linguistics. This year alone, he has two books and several articles coming into publication. Although he is quite busy, Emeneau agreed to be interviewed for this article (all quotes are taken from these interviews, unless otherwise specified). While Emeneau's writings have been described elsewhere, e.g., in Bh. Krishnamurti's preface to the Professor

M.B. Emeneau Saṣṭipūrṭi Volume of Studies in Indian Linguistics(Poonā, 1968), this article will try to provide a more personal description of the life and the work of Murray Emeneau.

Emeneau spent his undergraduate years studying the classics, first at Dalhousie University in Halifax, and then as a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol College, Oxford University. While he had had some exposure to linguistics, even in high school, it was not until he went to Yale as a graduate student that his nascent interest in linguistics developed under the tutelage of E.H. Sturtevant and Edward Sapir.

At Yale he began his study of Sanskrit with Franklin Edgerton, and developed what would become a lifelong interest in folklore. He studied linguistics first with Sturtevant, who was in the classics department, and held classes in his basement office, and then with Sapir, who had recently come to Yale from Chicago. While he received his PhD at Yale in Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, he also attended Sapir's classes for five years. "I practically had a second PhD, as far as the coursework went." Emeneau first developed his field methods in these courses. "He [Sapir] used to bring informants to the Yale campus for practice in phonetics courses. You would sit down with an informant and practice on him. There was a Hopi Indian, who was a steel worker from New York. One winter he had a Wishram informant, named Philip. Several others and myself practiced on this Wishram informant;...I heard lots of Chinook [that winter]. Dell Hymes and Michael Silverstein have both used this informant who is quite old now."

Like most new Phds in the early Thirties, Emeneau did not find an academic position for several years. In 1935, with some support from Yale, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Council of Learned Societies, Murray Emeneau went to India. "They got together enough money to send me off to India, enough to keep me alive and happy. Once they got me there it was cheaper to keep me there than to bring me back; so I stayed for three years." He went to study the Todas, a tribal group in the Nilgiri Mountains of Southern India, on the advice of Sapir. "Sapir said, 'Why not study the Todas? The Todas are well known ethnologically, [yet] they are not well known linguistically, except that they speak a Dravidian language which is apparently very aberrant'."

Emeneau stationed himself at Ootacamund, a British hill station known for its salubrious climate, situated above seven-thousand feet in the Nilgiri mountains, and in the middle of the Toda homelands. Participant observation was ruled out in the study of the Todas, since the Todas were (and still are) very insular about their religious and familial activities. In fact, the Todas cannot invite a stranger into their homes without later having to ritually purify everything in the house. Yet, "many of the Toda ceremonies and rituals are conducted more or less publicly and out in the open." Also, the Todas were willing to go

to Ootacamund, and Emeneau was able to collect a large amount of data over many months. Working without the aid of a recording device (since none was available at that time), Emeneau collected songs, folktales, ethnographic information, lists of words, etc.. He also found the time to collect similar data for Kota (another tribal language). He travelled to Coorg to work on Kodagu, and to Madhya Pradesh, in Central India, to gather data on Kolami. The analysis of this mountain of often recalcitrant data has occupied a good amount of Murray Emeneau's time over the last forty years, and still only about two-thirds of the data has been analyzed and published.

Emeneau is a self-described empiricist. He is also an accomplished descriptive linguist and field worker. But, above all else, Emeneau is a scholar. For Emeneau, scholarship operates by the process of induction; moving from particulars, empirically observable data, to generalities, theories about the data. Scholarship begins with the data, which are carefully collected, analyzed and re-analyzed until any aberrances are isolated. Aberrances point to weak spots in the descriptive theory. The ad hoc analyses of aberrances, as they occur, slowly lead to more precise theories and methods of description, and finally to an explanation of the data in toto. But any improvement at the theoretical level is a direct response to difficulties encountered in the data.

Although Emeneau was a student of Sapir, he adopted Bloomfield's rigid delimitation of the scope of linguistic inquiry. "Bloomfield rigorously defined the scope of linguistics to include only what you can hear. You cannot pretend that you know what is going on inside the head, except insofar as you can hear the end result of it. Sapir did not talk that way at all. He talked in those terms which became old fashioned from Bloomfield until Chomsky. Chomsky pretends to know what goes on inside the head, I don't. I feel very Bloomfieldian about this in spite of the fact that I was a student of Sapir."

In his 1949 Presidential address at the 24th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, (published as "Language and Non-Linguistic Patterns," in Language 26, 1950.199-209), Emeneau describes his empiricist reasoning.

Important as are the non-linguistic stimulus-reaction features connected with an organized part of the environment, it is doubtful whether we can find any such pattern or subsystem apart from its linguistic identification by the community which reacts to it. To investigate the linguistic side of these patterns is our particular problem, and I shall shy away from the further vexed and vexing question whether it is philosophically valid to talk at all of the existence of a pattern apart from

its linguistic identification. In any case, for those of us who are Bloomfieldians in our linguistic discourse, the question need not be raised; we hold that epistemological matters are to be left to the epistemologists and that we can talk about language without raising these matters. This may sound uncompromisingly behavioralistic; yet it seems that we can profitably say something without trespassing further on the philosopher's territory (1950a, p.200).

Emeneau's empiricism is not so much dogmatic as it is pragmatic. It represents a pragmatic, first-things-first, attitude toward linguistic inquiry. With the belief that something can be done using only empirical data, the correct procedure is clear; the first task is to gather and analyze this data. Only after the mass of empirical data has been thoroughly analyzed, and only then if fundamental problems of analysis remain, should there be any recourse to non-empirically based theories. The hope is that an adequate explanation can be achieved from the analysis of empirical data. This, of course, requires that the structure of this data be empirically discoverable. Indeed, Bloomfieldians do posit that the structure of language can be discovered empirically, i.e., that techniques can be developed which will isolate the underlying structure of language.

Emeneau's Bloomfieldian mode of inquiry contrasts sharply with that of his teacher, Sapir. Yet, while Emeneau did not inherit Sapir's "mentalist" position on methodology, he was very much influenced by Sapir's emphasis on data collection and organization. Sapir stressed the need for descriptive studies in his students' training; "sending them out to do a language that was going to become extinct tomorrow and had to be done." Sapir's students went off to the field armed with the newly forged notion of the "phoneme", first to describe individual languages, and then to do comparative work. "That particular period saw a vast and profound concern with how each language actually worked within itself...which is something rather different from what happened after the Chomsky revolution."

The "Chomsky revolution," with its indictment of empiricism, and of empiricist "discovery techniques", broke with the descriptivist tradition. By its emphasis on English, on mental language acquisition devices, and formal universals, Chomsky's mode of linguistics (in its original form and subsequent "new-improved" models) attempted to overturn the tenets of Bloomfieldian linguistics. The last score of years, during which transformationalists gained control of the major linguistics departments and organizations, was a difficult time for Bloomfieldians. "I did not relish being cast into outer darkness by the M.I.T. people," Emeneau admits. Yet he is more disturbed

by the effect the "Chomsky revolution" has had on the process of scholarship, for the work of previous generations of descriptivists has often been uncritically pre-judged, or simply ignored, by many young linguists. "I find that it is possible to criticize the younger people on the ground that they know nothing of what their predecessors did, even about the same language; which seems to me to be a negation, an absolute negation, of how scholarship ought to be conducted, or how advances in knowledge can be obtained."

A major task of any descriptive work is to organize and publish data. As more data are gathered, the need to order them increases. Early attempts at comparative Dravidian were hindered by the lack of an ordered body of data for the various languages. It was obvious to Emeneau that, "anyone who was doing comparative Dravidian had to have a lot of etymologies." Emeneau had himself amassed a large amount of data from various non-literary Dravidian languages. He also knew that a British linguist, Thomas Burrow, was working on several literary Dravidian languages. Realizing the potential value of an etymological dictionary for comparative Dravidian, Emeneau travelled to Oxford in 1949, and convinced an initially reluctant Burrow to collaborate with him in this undertaking. The Dravidian Etymological Dictionary, (DED), by T. Burrow and M. B. Emeneau, was published by the Clarendon Press in 1961 (1961a). It is perhaps the most valuable work done in Indian linguistics since Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India. Together with its Supplement, the DED contains over five-thousand numbered entries, each consisting of items from two or more languages. It includes data from about twenty Dravidian languages and/or dialects and is thoroughly cross-referenced and indexed.

Those of us who have used the DED continue to realize its usefulness. Yet sometimes we also wonder about the tremendous effort which went into it. The following is Emeneau's description of how the DED came to be.

"I decided in 1949 to go to England in the summer to meet him [Burrow] and discuss it with him. He had spent an awful lot of time during the War as a curator of some of the British Museum collections, and especially the collection of Dravidian books, which had been moved out of London to the North of England. He spent the war reading Tamil texts and reading dictionaries: Tamil dictionaries, the Kannada dictionary by Kittel, and all the rest. He has a phenomenal memory. In those days, once he read a dictionary he knew the words in it. So he had a very extensive set of collectanea... for the literary languages. I had similar collectanea for the non-literary languages. [At first], he did not think it [the DED] could be done without much more work than we might want to put into it.

The first thing I did when I got back [to Berkeley] was to get an ad hoc research grant to have a stack of forms printed up -- thousands and thousands of forms with the languages on the margin and ruled lines. I sent Burrow half of them and we began

to fill them in from the data that we had available, and whatever other data there were in print, Gondi grammars, bad as they were, Bray's vocabulary [of Brahui], etc.. We filled in language by language; I took some of the languages, Burrow took some of the languages, and we filled in what we had. I sent my sheets to him, and he would fill my material into his. He sent his sheets to me, and I would fill his material into mine.

In 1952 he came here for one summer. We looked over what we had and we wrote up in full the first few sheets. The first one was the word for moonlight, "nilavu" in Tamil. I went over to spend the year 1956-57 at Oxford. Fortunately, he had light teaching duties that year, and was able to give me a half-day every weekday. He fitted up an office for us, with a heater because I was an American. We had a porter who would provide us with tea in the mornings, strong tea you could stand a spoon up in. My wife provided a set of nice china. We went through the whole file and filled in the gaps. I typed the final draft in the evenings, except for the indexes. I brought back the printer's copy [to Berkeley]. Catherine Callaghan, a graduate student at the time, was put to work on the indexes, a long and tedious process. When the indexes were finished, in 1958, I sent it off to the printer. The proofreading took over a year, and it came out in 1961. We continued to gather collectanea which went into the next volume, the Supplement. We have been accumulating more and more material, and are doing a revision now. Burrow came over last summer for two weeks and we surveyed the situation. I have about four-fifths of it put into proper shape....Now we have to re-number and cross-reference, and then the indexes need to be done again."

So the DED, which Burrow and Emeneau began in 1949, still occupies a good part of their time, and Dravidianists can look forward to an even larger and more useful Dravidian Etymological Dictionary in the near future.

If the DED can be considered Emeneau's greatest substantive contribution to linguistics (not forgetting his various full-scale grammars), his greatest theoretical contribution has been in the development of the "linguistic area hypothesis". Emeneau, however, denies any claim to being a theoretician, and insists that it was the data which forced him to support the hypothesis that morphological features can diffuse across genetic boundaries.

There seems to be a lot of evidence of such diffusion between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages in India. Emeneau quickly points out that it was Jules Bloch who first noted several areal features for Indian languages in Bloch's book, "L'indo-aryen du Véda aux temps modernes"(1934). But it was Emeneau who substantiated these features, and more features which he found, presenting empirical data to support his claims. Since his original 1956 paper, "India as a Linguistic Area", Emeneau has continued to search for areal traits. "There are many more traits

to be identified. I have spent much of my time over the last twenty years to identify them, and at the same time, write in general enough terms to be of interest to non-Indologists."

Emeneau's work on linguistic areas demonstrates the potential value that any language family might have for linguistic theory. Evidence for morphological diffusion is not readily apparent in Indo-European, yet such evidence is quite abundant in Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. Once the possibility of morphological diffusion is admitted for one language area, it cannot be absolutely discounted elsewhere. As a result, all comparative studies must allow for the possibility of such diffusion. This means that Emeneau's work on the Indian Sprachbund should have wide ranging effects on the theories and methods of comparative linguistics.

It is Sapir's mode of comparative linguistic inquiry which is adversely affected by Emeneau's work on linguistic areas. "For theoretical reasons of his own, Sapir had to say flatly that it [the diffusion of morphological features across genetic boundaries] is an impossibility. After all, Sapir was much more interested in tracing genetic relationships. Sapir wished to say that, if languages have a trait in common, it is for genetic reasons. If you can prove in any instance that that is not so, that there has been diffusion, then Sapir's method has a hole in it....In fact, one finds that traits do diffuse over an area, no matter what the languages or dialects involved. ...You find it, there it is, you cannot say it is an impossibility or a monstrosity, because there it is."

While there is much more that can be said about Murray Emeneau's life and work, fifty years of prodigious effort and prolific writings cannot be covered in the space of one article. Emeneau's works stand on their own merits. They are the products of careful, thorough scholarship. Rooted in the data they describe, they will endure long after the theoretical fancies of many of today's linguists are forgotten. Bh. Krishnamurti aptly praises Murray Emeneau with the following: "There is hardly a student of Emeneau, whether Indian or American, who has failed to be impressed with the kindness, modesty, thoroughness, and clarity in thought and writing of the man and the scholar. He has always inspired his pupils to work hard by his very example which symbolizes a rare devotion to scholarship of a very high order" (op cit).

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Abbreviations

<u>AA</u>	American Anthropologist
<u>AUDLP</u>	Annamalai University, Department of Linguistics Publications
<u>BSOAS</u>	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London
<u>DLEF</u>	Dravidian linguistics, ethnology and folktales: collected papers by M. B. Emeneau (1967a)
<u>IJ</u>	Indo-Iranian Journal
<u>IL</u>	Indian Linguistics
<u>JAF</u>	Journal of American Folklore
<u>JAOS</u>	Journal of the American Oriental Society
<u>JAS</u>	Journal of Asian Studies
<u>LEW</u>	Literature East and West
<u>Lg</u>	Language
<u>PAPS</u>	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
<u>UCPCP</u>	University of California Publications in Classical Philology
<u>UCPL</u>	University of California Publications in Linguistics

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