

carried out than in culture; this means that there are, on the whole, fewer cautions to observe in the application of such chronological criteria as can be formulated. Secondly, linguistic changes proceed more slowly and, what is more important, at a generally more even rate than cultural ones. This means that, particularly where there is abundant comparative linguistic material available, we are enabled to penetrate farther back into the past and to obtain a more reliable feeling of relative durations of such linguistic time sequences as are available. Thirdly, and most important of all, a language is, of all historical products, at the same time the most perfectly self-contained and the least often apt to enter as such into the central field of consciousness. Its resourcefulness in meeting with, in other words adequately reflecting, new conditions is extreme, so that violent cultural changes are often accompanied by only moderate linguistic adjustments.¹ From all this it follows that a language, under normal circumstances, is relatively little affected by influences from without. Whereas in culture curiously little remains when the manifold streams of foreign influence have been eliminated, the elimination from a language of such linguistic features, whether as regards form or content, as are due to outside influences, nearly always leaves all but the whole of the formal framework and by far the greater part of its content standing intact as of native growth. That this greatly simplifies the chronologic problem is obvious. Moreover, where there has been foreign influence, it is very much easier to recognize it as such and see it in proper relief against the native ground-work than in the case of culture. Indeed, this very sharpness of contrast between the native and the foreign elements, a sharpness which naturally tends to become obliterated with age, is frequently helpful in the making of chronological inferences. However, we must be clear that the methodological advantages enjoyed by linguistics in inferred chronology are of direct benefit only to linguistics itself; they become of use also to culture only indirectly, that is, insofar as such advantages affect linguistic features that are closely associated with cultural considerations.

¹ Thus, it is amazing how little such languages as Iroquois or Chinese have been affected in their essentials by sweeping cultural changes in modern times. And yet they succeed perfectly in giving expression to all new needs in terms of traditional form and subject matter.