Evaluative Morphology from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective

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By

Lívia Körtvélyessy

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

This monograph has been written with the financial support from the VEGA grant project 1/0094/12.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7160-5
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7160-0

To my parents

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to all the informants who kindly supplied the necessary data for my research and answered my questions with endless patience. Without their support the research would never have come true. The informants are in alphabetical order by language:

Akan	Clement K. I. Appah
Amele	John R. Roberts
Aghul	Timur Maisak
Anejom̃	John Lynch
Archi	Marina Chumakina
Bafut	Pius N. Tamanji
Bahasa Indonesian	Franz Mueller
Bardi	Claire Bowern
Belarussian	Sviatlana Rudaya, Alena Rudenka
Breton	Greg Stump
Bulgarian	Boyan Nikolaev
Catalan	Max Wheeler
Cirecire (Khoekhoe)	Andy Chebanne
Croatian	Ivo Mihajlović
Czech	Marcela Grygerková
Danish	Laurie Bauer
Dargwa	Dmitrij Ganenkov
Datooga	Roland Kießling
Diola-Fogny	Kirsten Fudeman
Dutch	Jan Don
Embera	Charles A. Mortensen
Endo (Nandi)	Joost Zwarts
English	Rochelle Lieber
Estonian	Annika Kilgi
Faroese	Hjalmar Petersen
Finnish	Vesa Koivisto, Johanna Laakso
French	Eva Fričová
Gã	M.E. Kropp Dakubu
Gagauz	Astrid Menz
German	Roswitha Fischer, Mia Körtvélyessy

Greek	Marios Mavrogiorgos
Hausa	Paul Newman
Hungarian	Anna Fenyvesi
Ilocano	Carl Rubino
Inguish	Johanna Nichols
Irish	Paul Geraghty
Italian	Nicola Grandi
Itelmen	Jonathan Bobaljik
Japanese	Mark Volpe
Kabardian	John Colarusso
Karao	Sherri Brainard
Karelian	Pekka Zaikov
Karo Batak	Geoff Woollams
Kashubian	Hania Makuraté, Dusan-Vladislav Pazdjerski
Ket	Edward Vajda
Khwarshi	Zaira Khalilova
Kinubi/Luganda	Xavier Luffin
Konni	Michael Cahill
Krongo	Mechthild Reh
Kwaza	Hein van der Voort
Ladino	David Monson Bunis
Lakota	Regina Pustet
Latvian	Agnė Navickaitė-Klišauskienė
Lavukaleve	Angela Terrill
Lithuanian	Bonifacas Stundžia, William R. Schmalstieg
Lower Sorbian	Viktor Zakar
Luxembourgish	Peter Gilles
Macedonian	Viktor Zakar
Maltese	Martin R. Zammit
Maori	Winifred Bauer
Montana Salish	Sarah Thomason
Nêlêmwa	Isabelle Bril
Nenets	Beáta Wagner-Nagy
Nivkh	Ekaterina Gruzdeva
Norwegian	Eli Anne Eiesland
Occitan	Patric Sauzet
Ossetic	David Erschler
Polish	Gregorz A. Kleparski, Marcin Kudła
Portuguese	Bernhard Pöll

Provençal	Philippe Blanchet
Roman	Ilincan Vasile
Romansch	Barbla Etter
Russian	Ekaterina Barancheeva
Scottish Gaelic	William Lamb
Serbian	Stanimir Rakić
Siar-Lak	Friedel Martin Frowein
Siwi	Lameen Souag
Slavey	Keren Rice
Slovak	Miloslava Sokolová
Slovene	Andreja Žele
Spanish	Crisitina Suarez, Fernandez Rubiera
Swahili	Ellen Contini-Morava
Tabassaran	Dmitrij Ganenkov
Tatar	Ilmira Miftachova
Tibetan	Scott DeLancey
Turkic	Martine Robbeets
Turkish	Nihan Ketrez
Ubykh	John Colarusso
Udi	Dmitrij Ganenkov
Udmurt	Elena Rodionova
Ukrainian	Anatol Shevel
Upper Sorbian	Viktor Zakar
Vitu	Rene van den Berg
Votic	Tatiana Agranat
Welsh	Gwenllian Awbery
Xhosa	D.J. Lloyd
Yoruba	Erin Shay
Yurakaré	Rik van Gijn
Zazaki	Mesut Keskin

I also wish to thank all those who helped me with data for the experiment in phonetic iconicity. Without them, I could not have completed this project. The experimentors are ordered in alphabetical order by language:

German	Joachim Grzega, Maria Magee, Marja Meinl, Klaus Schneider, Pawel Sickinger, Verena Schneeweis
Hungarian	Dóra Pődör
Spanish	Jesús Fernández-Domínguez, Nieves Pascaul Soler

This manuscript would not have been possible without the unfailing support of my family and colleagues.

ABBREVIATIONS

3	Third person
33	Third person non-singular
3p	Third person plural inclusive
A:DCL	Affirmative declarative (sentence type)
ABS	Absolutive
ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
AG	Agent
AGT	Agentive case
AI	Animate intransitive verb stem
AMP	Amplification
AN	Animate
ART	Article
ATT	Attenuation
AUG	Augmentative
C	Consonant
CF	Circumfix
CL	Classifier
CNV_1	Converb type 1
DEC	Declarative mood clitic
DEF	Definitive noun gender suffix
DEM	Demonstrative
DIM	Diminutive
EM	Evaluative Morphology
EMP	Emphatic
EMS	Evaluative Morphology Saturation
ERG	Ergative
EXCLM	Exclamation
F	Feminine
FREQ	Frequentative
HAB	Habitual
IE	Indo-European
IPF	Imperfective aspect
INT	Intensive
LNK	Linking element

LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
MEA	Measure
N	Neuter
NOM	Nominative
NRL	Non-relational prefix
P	Possessive
PAT	Predictive Areality Theory
PFV	Perfective
PJR	Pejorative
PL	Plural
PN	Personal name
PRS	Present
PTCL	Particle
R	Realis
RDP	Reduplication
REF	Reflexive/reciprocal
REP	Reported speech particle, i.e. hearsay evidential
RL	Relational prefix
RP/P	Realis past/present
SAE	Standard Average European
SE (Asia + Oceania)	South-east Asia and Oceania
SEQ	Sequential Converb
SG	Singular
SP	Speed form, indicating action undertaken before departing
POSS	Possessive
TOP	Topic particle
V	Vowel
VSC	Semantic category value
VWC	Word class value
VWF	Word-formation value
WALS	World Atlas of Language Structures
WFR	Word-Formation Rule

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this book results from the intersection of evaluative morphology (EM) and areal typology. First, it deals with the field of evaluative morphology, in particular, with the morphologically expressed concepts of diminutiveness and augmentativeness at the level of the system of language. By implication, it does not take into consideration analytically expressed 'evaluatives' (discussed, for instance, by Haas 1972) common in English (*little boy*), Chinese (小犬 *xiǎo quǎn* 'doggy'), Turkish (*yavru kopek* 'doggy') and other (predominantly) isolating languages. For the same reason, it disregards context-dependent examination of evaluativeness (cf., for example, Seuren 1978, Bierwisch 1989, Neeleman et al. 2004, Rett 2008). It should be noted, however, that the difference between the langue and the parole is not necessarily clear. Supriyanto (pers. com.) demonstrates both the relativity of these notions as well as that of diminutiveness and augmentativeness with an example from Javanese where a diminutive adjective may also be interpreted as augmentative. Thus, *gedhi* 'big' is not really big, but may be big for a mouse, whereas a mouse as big as a calf would be *guedhé* 'big by all standards'. This relative nature of diminutiveness and augmentativeness will be stressed on several occasions in this book.

While the concept of evaluative morphology has attracted the attention of morphologists as a result of Scalise's thought-provoking idea of the existence of a third morphology (1984), various aspects of morphological diminutives and augmentatives were examined both before and after Scalise. These aspects include the place of evaluative morphology (Stump 1993, Bauer 2004, Carstairs-McCarthy 1992); evaluative morphology in individual languages (Stankiewicz 1968 – Russian; Zelinkova 1993, Böhmerová 2011 – Slovak; Bolozky 1994 – Hebrew; Schneider 2003 – English; Grandi 2005 – Sardinian; Mattes 2006 – Bikol; Watson 2006 – Arabic); evaluative morphology as an inflectional category (Brown and Dryer, ms., Derzhanski 2005); semantics of evaluative morphology (Wierzbicka 1984, Jurafsky 1993, 1996, Grandi and Scalise 2000); etymology of evaluative affixes (Matisoff 1991); evaluative morphology acquisition (Richard et al. 1996, Savickiené and Dressler 2007); evaluative morphology and pragmatics (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994, 2001); morphonology (Gregová 2011), etc.

This book examines evaluative morphology from the perspective of areal typology. The main focus is on the use of diminutives and augmentatives in *Standard Average European* (SAE). While Whorf's idea of a European linguistic territory sharing a number of substantial features (1956) does not seem to have caught much attention in the decades following its birth, nearly falling into oblivion, the late 20th and early 21st centuries witnessed the resurrection of this idea, especially thanks to van der Auwera and Baoill (1998), Décsy (2000), Ramat (2000), Haspelmath (2001), Heine and Kuteva (2006) and others. Numerous important publications were engendered within an extensive EU-supported project called EUROTYP (typology of languages in Europe). As noted by Heine and Kuteva (2006), the rich research activity within the EUROTYP project has revealed that "there are multiple networks of typological similarities both uniting and dividing the languages of Europe" (2006, 36). Furthermore, they stress that "(i) there are clusterings of linguistic properties in Europe that are unlikely to occur in other parts of the world; (ii) at least some of these clusterings are unlikely to be due to genetic relationship or coincidence" (2006, 35). Despite the effort invested in research on SAE, there are certain fundamental problems with the concept of SAE itself. First, the (eastern) borders of the SAE territory are vague and remain undefined so far. For this reason, different authors specify varying numbers of SAE languages. Second, the number of linguistic parameters that have been examined is limited. The twelve SAE features identified by Haspelmath (2001, 1494-1501) are exclusively syntactic and inflectional categories. Phonological, derivational, lexical-semantic and a number of other features are almost completely ignored (with few exceptions like van der Auwera's (1998b) discussion of lexical and phraseological similarities and Ramat's (2000) analysis of selected word-formation issues). Consequently, SAE identification and specification are far from being complete. Evaluative morphology is an area that has not been studied in relation to Standard Average European, and therefore, it is still an untilled area.

In accordance with Haspelmath's requirement that SAE features only be defined against the situation in the "rest" of the world, my research aims to identify the status of diminutives and augmentatives on the SAE territory by comparing two samples of languages, the SAE sample and the world sample. This objective predetermines the cross-linguistic and typological character of this book, and the method of research, including language sampling and data collection and evaluation.

Finally, as its second major objective, the present book examines phonetic iconicity as a theoretically challenging area of evaluative

morphology. Its challenging nature was long connected to the putative language universal (Universal #1926) in the Konstanz Archive (Plank and Filimonova). Thomas Payne (1997, 110)[1] formulated the idea of the universal nature of phonetic iconicity, suggesting that the concept of diminutiveness tends to be represented by front high vowels and the concept of augmentativeness by high back vowels. This vowel-based iconicity was later extended and completed by a consonant-based iconicity, postulating palatalized consonants as iconic symbols of diminutiveness (Ultan 1978, Nieuwenhuis 1985, Bauer 1996).

Strangely enough, some twenty years before Payne it was observed by Ultan and Nieuwenhuis that this kind of symbolism is geographically restricted (Ultan 1978, 553-554, Nieuwenhuis 1985, 107-110). The postulated phonetic symbolism has, therefore, been called into question by a number of linguists. Bauer (1996, 201), for illustration, analysed a sample of 50 languages which enabled him to draw a conclusion that "[t]here does not appear to be any universal principle of sound symbolism operating in markers of the diminutive and augmentative such that palatal articulation correlates with diminutives and not with augmentatives". Furthermore, Gregová, Körtvélyessy and Zimmermann (2010), based on a sample of 60 languages, give additional support to the above-mentioned view of the areal nature of phonetic iconicity. It is for this reason that the present contrastive research avoids verifyng the validity of the aforementioned Universal #1926. Instead, the primary objective consists in the examination of the interrelation between phonetic iconicity and the sociolinguistic factor of age in the field of diminutives and augmentatives in three different languages.

The structure of the book is as follows:

Chapter 1 deals with evaluative morphology from a cross-linguistic perspective, relying on data from 203 languages (72 SAE languages and 131 world languages). Since one of the central questions is the relevance of evaluative morphology to Standard Average European (SAE), section 1.2 emphasizes the fundamental problems associated with Standard Average European, including the very notion of SAE, the languages belonging in SAE, the delineation of its borders and, consequently, the languages that fall within the SAE territory, the internal structure of SAE (the core languages and periphery), and the catalogue of the defining SAE features. These issues establish the background that makes it possible to compare two samples of data: a SAE sample and a world sample. No

[1] The beginnings of research into phonetic iconicity within evaluative morphology date back to the early 20th century (e.g., Jespersen 1922 and Sapir 1929).

cross-linguistic research is feasible without defining the basic terms. Section 1.3 deals with the second major topic, i.e., evaluative morphology. The central issues that determine any cross-linguistic research in this field include the place of evaluative morphology within the overall system of morphology as well as the semantic, formal and word-formation aspects of evaluative morphology. A new cognitive model projected onto a new radial model of evaluative morphology is proposed. The model is founded on the idea of evaluative morphology as a continuum in which prototypical cases express the meaning of quantity under or above the default value. The relation between augmentatives and diminutives is viewed as that of a scale. The evaluation process is implemented within four basic cognitive categories (SUBSTANCE, ACTION, QUALITY and CIRCUMSTANCE). The theoretical considerations are supported with numerous examples.

With the scene being prepared for empirical research, Chapter 2 then outlines the objectives and method of research and presents and discusses the results of data analysis, first by the individual criteria, including the semantic, word-formation, and word-class criteria, then by comparing the data obtained for the SAE and world samples. The world sample is analysed and commented on with regard to five geographical territories. The samples are evaluated in terms of a newly introduced parameter of *Evaluative Morphology Saturation*. Since the main purpose of this chapter is to determine the relevance of evaluative morphology as a feature of SAE, the two samples are compared and typical features of evaluative morphology within the SAE are identified in the form of a proposal of EM-related Euroversals. The analysis of SAE languages by means of the Evaluative Morphology Saturation criterion results in the identification of the SAE borders and the internal classification of the SAE languages in terms of the core and periphery. This classification is represented on a SAE map.

Chapter 3 deals with phonetic iconicity in evaluative morphology, with the primary objective being verification of the validity of Universal #1926. Section 2.2 clarifies the terms *phonetic iconicity* and *sound symbolism* with regard to three great figures in the field of semiotics, de Saussure, Peirce and Sapir. Section 2.3 concentrates on phonetic iconicity in its diverse manifestations and various features and former research in this area. Section 2.4 presents the outcomes of my psycholinguistically-oriented experimental research. The research covers three typologically different languages, in particular, Hungarian, German and Spanish. After introducing the experiment, the analysis of the data obtained is organized by the individual languages and, within each of them, by age group and task. Finally, the data are compared with the aim of identifying meaningful correlations and drawing relevant conclusions.

CHAPTER ONE

A THEORY OF EVALUATIVE MORPHOLOGY

1.1 General

The first chapter concentrates on two central topics whose intersection underlies both experimental and empirical research presented in chapter 2. In particular, the concept of Standard Average European is discussed from the perspective of evaluative morphology. More specifically, the book is aimed at a comparison of the categorical nature, structural features, evaluative-formation strategies, semantics and productivity of evaluative morphology in the Standard Average European languages and the languages of the world. It should be noted that evaluative morphology is discussed throughout this book from the system level without reflecting its pragmatic facet. Interestingly, while research into theoretical foundations of evaluative morphology has yielded a few models (cf. Jurafsky 1993, 1996; Grandi 2005; Mutz forthcoming; Prieto forthcoming) and a relatively vivid discussion of the place of evaluative morphology in the system of morphology, little has been done in the description of the evaluative morphology systems of individual languages,[1] and even less written on the pragmatic aspects of this subpart of morphology. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994, 2001) and Schneider (2003) rather represent an exception to this fact. The pragmatic aspects of evaluative morphology is a topic which, for obvious reasons, requires its specific research methods, pursues its specific research objectives and, by implication, lies beyond the scope of this book. The same is true of research into analytic forms and/or morphologically simple words (monemes) used to express evaluation. The complexity of the problems raised during decades of discussion on evaluative morphology makes it, similar to derivational and inflectional morphology, a research field of its own, including its specific topics, problems and research methods. It is for this reason that the title of this book is *Evaluative Morphology from a cross-linguistic perspective*

[1] An important step forward in this respect is Grandi and Körtvélyessy (forthcoming), a volume mapping the state-of-the-art in the field and providing description of evaluative morphology in 50 languages of the world.

and that inclusion of any of the above-mentioned issues would go far beyond the scope of this research.

A comparison of an SAE sample with a world sample of languages will give support to my hypothesis that evaluative morphology in SAE languages carries certain features that make it distinct from the rest of the world. Therefore, it should be included in the list of the features characteristic of the SAE linguistic area.

Furthermore, this chapter deals with the distribution of evaluative morphology on the SAE territory by introducing the parameter of *Evaluative Morphology Saturation* (EMS). This parameter specifies the capacity of evaluative morphology in individual languages and makes it possible to identify the core and periphery of SAE and the differences between SAE and the rest of the world with reference to evaluative morphology.

Theoretical questions of Standard Average European are discussed in section 1.2, and those of evaluative morphology in section 1.3.

1.2 Standard Average European

1.2.1 The notion of Standard Average European

Whorf (1956) proposed the term *Standard Average European* when studying American Indian languages. To facilitate their comprehension Whorf contrasted them with familiar languages and came to the conclusion that there are substantial differences in the grammatical system of Hopi on one hand, and European languages on the other. In his view, these differences reflect the differences between the Hopi culture and their comprehension of the world and the European (western) culture and "European" comprehension of the world (including different comprehensions of the concepts of time, space and substance): "Since with respect to the traits compared there is littler difference between English, French, German, or other European languages with the *possible* (but doubtful) exception of Balto-Slavic and non-Indo-European, I have lumped these languages into one group called SAE, or 'Standard Average European'" (ibid., 138).

The label *Standard Average European* did not catch much attention and may have fallen into oblivion were it not rediscovered in recent decades, presumably in connection with the idea of a united Europe. While various projects were implemented, the most significant, extensive and prolific has been the EUROTYP project. Its main objective was to prove that besides numerous common genetic features, European languages bear

resemblance to each other thanks to certain shared features resulting from language contact. While its achievements are remarkable, the EUROTYP project has indicated many problems that can be summarized in the following three questions:

1) What should be analysed – languages or dialects?
2) What are the borders of Standard Average European? What languages are at its nucleus and which languages are on its periphery?
3) What should be the catalogue of Standard Average European features?

1.2.2 What should be analysed – languages or dialects?

The question is rather tricky when one realizes how difficult it is to put a clear borderline between standard language and dialect. Interestingly, while Haspelmath (1998, 2001) and van der Auwera (1998a, 1998b), in principle, base their studies on standard languages, Haspelmath (1998) also includes in the SAE nucleus some northern Italian dialects. Heine and Kuteva (2006) stress the importance of, *inter alia*, dialect variation as a way to account for "the dynamics underlying grammatical categorization in European languages" (ibid. 33). Both language-centred and dialect-centred approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. The number of dialects is greater than the number of languages, and they are more open to influences than the standardized variety of a language. For illustration, the Šariš dialect spoken in the eastern part of Slovakia shares a part of its vocabulary with the Hungarian language as a result of long and extensive language contact throughout their common history in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. For example, *kalap* 'hat' exists both in the Šariš dialect and the genetically unrelated Hungarian, but not in Slovak where the equivalent word is *klobúk*. To take one more example, this time from the more resistant category of grammar, the analytic future tense construction of the Zemplín dialect, combining future form of the auxiliary and the past tense of the finite verb such as *nebudzem chodzela*, 'I will not go.PAST.F.' (literally, 'I will not went'), does not exist in the standard Slovak but does in the neighbouring standard Polish. Thus, a large number of dialects can change the search for common features into an unfeasible enterprise: in the small territory of Slovakia there are no less than 29 dialects (Palkovič 1981). At the same time, the data on standard languages spoken in Europe is easily accessible because these languages have been studied for centuries. This can hardly be said of dialects. To collect dialectal data of

the same quality and extent is a large project in itself and is well beyond the scope of the current research. Comparing dialects instead of languages could bring new and interesting results, but is currently an unattainable goal. In my research I will rely on languages that usually appear on maps of European languages.

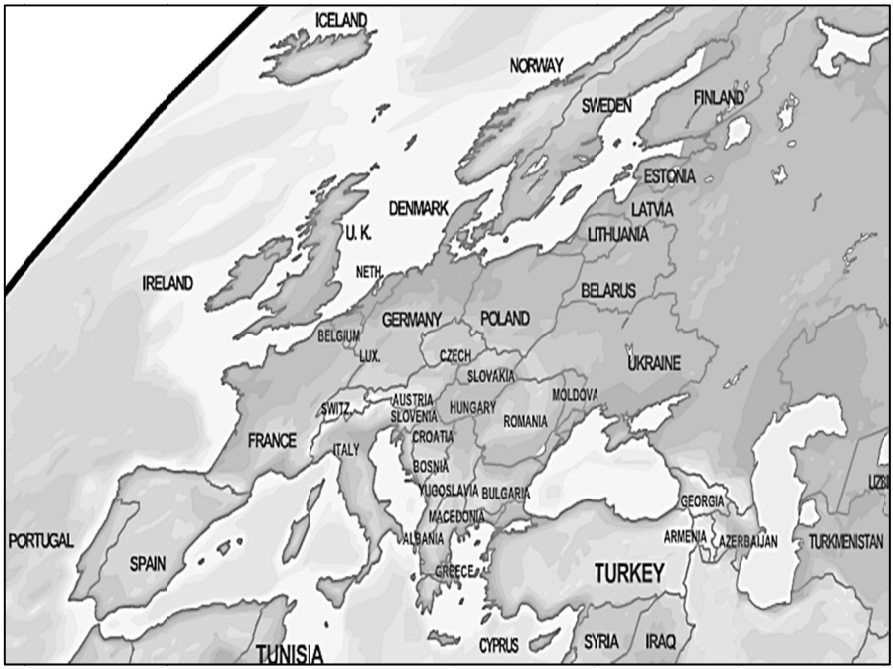
1.2.3 The borders of Standard Average European

To begin, there is no agreement concerning the delineation of SAE borders. Heine and Kuteva (2006, 27) even ask if it is "really possible to argue that there is a European Sprachbund or linguistic area with clearly defined boundaries?" As the following discussion shows this question is fully justified.

The first problem concerns the criteria for the delineation of the SAE borders. What one can take for granted is, logically, the fact that SAE languages are spoken in Europe. But what is the linguistic Europe? What criteria should be chosen for its delineation? There are several possibilities – linguistic, geographical, political, cultural, historical, and religious – each providing slightly different results. Décsy (2000), for example, starts his book with geographical delimitation of Europe. His picture of Europe is different from that found in Whorf (1956), who applies the criterion of culture. Others like Kortmann (1998a, 1998b), van der Auwera (1998b), Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998) and Haspelmath (1998, 2001) rely on morphosyntactic criteria. For the purpose of my research I use Price's (1998) delimitation of Europe that primarily (not exclusively, though) relies on geography:

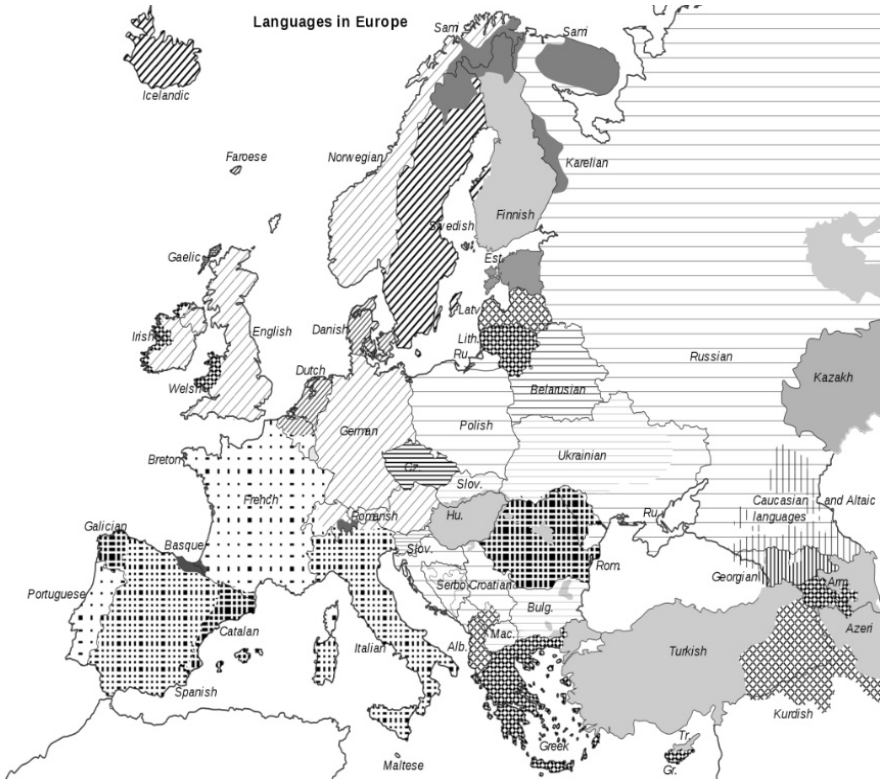
- Iceland in the north is included.
- While from the geographical point of view inclusion of some western islands belonging to Portugal is questionable (Portuguese Atlantic islands, e.g. Madeira), the only language spoken in their territory is Portuguese.
- Malta is considered a European country because from the geographical point of view it is closer to Sicily than to the North African coast (Price 1998, xi).
- While from the geographical point of view Cyprus ought to be considered part of Asia, from the linguistic point of view it is the same case as that of Malta – the languages spoken on Cyprus are Greek and Turkish, both of which are European languages.

Map 1-1 Map of Europe



- In the south-east the obvious dividing line between Europe and Asia is the Caucasus.
- Mountains, which leave Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan geographically outside Europe. As Price points out (1998: xii), these countries wish to be considered European countries and their languages should be included in Europe. Consequently, this means including about 40 other languages of the Caucasian language families. The same approach was adopted by van der Auwera (2011).The eastern border of Europe is established by the Ural Mountains. In the questionable area between the southern end of the Urals and the Caspian Sea, it is hard to identify a natural border; Price opts for the political criterion – the border is created by the frontier of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- This geographical delimitation corresponds with the following map of languages spoken in Europe:

Map 1-2 Languages spoken in Europe



The following list comprises 145 languages. This list is built on the basis of the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (WALS), in particular the region section. The minimal and maximal latitude and longitude values of Europe were entered in the WALS geographical section, generating the language families listed below. The list was compared to that of van der Auwera (1998a). Languages that displayed discrepancies were checked in WALS again, this time in the language section. The area of their usage was verified. If the area fell within the geographical delimitation of Europe, it remained on the list. The number of Romani and Yiddish varieties seems high: WALS lists 8 Romani and 4 Yiddish languages. In contrast to other languages of Europe, neither Romani nor Yiddish have a fixed territory of usage. Due to the strong influence of the languages with which they live, they are often divided into regional varieties, e.g. Yiddish