COMPARAZIONE E CLASSIFICAZIONE DELLE LINGUE NELL'OPERA DI AUGUST SCHLEICHER (∗)

Abstract

The Stammbaumtheorie is one of the best-known parts of Schleicher's work, which has become a landmark for later linguistic studies. Schleicher himself placed this theory in the foreground of his research, considering it as a rigorous model, generally valid, and capable of conferring scientific quality to scholarly discussions on languages.
This paper deals with a less known but equally important part of Schleicher's work: the typological classification of languages. Schleicher takes up linguistic genealogy and linguistic typology from researches made by previous linguists; however, thanks to his aim to achieve a systematic language classification, he never operates a contamination between these two aspects, as previous linguists did. In fact, Schleicher keeps the historical comparison of languages separate from the systemic and descriptive comparison. In this paper I will argue that it is precisely Schleicher's approach that will influence the later distinction between genealogy and typology.