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Epistolary echoes

Eugenio Coseriu's correspondence
and what we can learn from
digital letter collections



Digitalised Letters to Eugenio Coseriu

Epistolary echoes: Eugenio Coseriu's correspondence and what we can learn from digital letter collections

Book of abstracts

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Letters to Eugenio Coseriu: the example of Romanian linguists

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The DiLeCos project from the University of Zurich examines Eugenio Coseriu's relationships with linguists through preserved letters. During the 1940s in Italy, Coseriu's correspondents can be grouped into three categories: 1) colleagues from "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași (Ion Pasăre, Costică Mândru, Ștefan Ciocan, Costică Colea, etc.); 2) Romanians who left the country like him (Mircea Popescu, Pamfil Șeicaru, etc.), and 3) professors from Iași such as Gheorghe Ivănescu and Gheorghe Pașcu. In the 1950s, especially after the VIIIth Conference of Linguists in Oslo (1958), his connections deepen with linguists like Alexandru Rosetti, Iorgu Iordan, Marius Sala and Boris Cazacu, but he is also maintaining ties with Romanian diaspora linguists (Alphonse Juilland, Dimitrie Găzdaru, etc.). The 1960s witness a surge in correspondence from numerous Romanian linguists discussing book exchanges, research, conference invitations, tributes, etc. The pivotal year 1968, is noteworthy as Coseriu participates in the Romance conference from Bucharest, leading to a substantial increase in correspondence (Kabatek 2024).

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Letters to Eugenio Coseriu: the example of Portuguese and Brazilian linguists

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Eugenio Coseriu has left a lasting impact on linguistics, and his ideas have influenced scholars across borders and linguistic traditions, including the Lusophone world. It is known that Eugenio Coseriu had his initial interactions with scholars of the Lusophone linguist community during the 1950s, namely attending at least three conferences held in different Brazilian cities between 1956 and 1959 (Altman 2017: 98). At these conferences, Coseriu discusses different facets of the Portuguese verbal system, including aspects elaborated in an unpublished manuscript “Fiz e tenho feito” and in the publication “Sobre las llamadas ‘construcciones con verbos de movimiento’: un problema hispánico” (Coseriu 1960). These events also led to important connections with notable figures in the field of Romance Linguistics, one of them being Serafim da Silva Neto, the editor of the “Revista Brasileira de Filologia” (RBF), a journal that published several of Coseriu's works. These visits to Brazil also facilitated the establishment of a valuable academic relationship between Coseriu and José Gonçalo Herculano de Carvalho, a Portuguese Romanist. As a result of this relationship, Coseriu received an invitation to work in Coimbra as a visiting professor, thus affording him the opportunity of a prolonged stay in Europe. This experience proved to be a crucial moment in Coseriu's professional life and played a significant role in shaping the trajectory of his career (Kabatek and Murguía 1997).

The DiLeCos digital edition of Letters to Eugenio Coseriu, which will be launched at this symposium, contains several preserved letters between the aforementioned scholars and Eugenio Coseriu. These pieces of correspondence reveal the personal and professional relationship that Coseriu cultivated with Portuguese and Brazilian linguists. The correspondence also sheds light on a significant moment for Lusophone linguistics and the emergence of new perspectives and methodologies on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Big data - was nun
Ansprüche und Kontextualisierung eines großen Briefkorpus - das Hugo
Schuchardt Archiv

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Das Briefkorpus als Teil des *Hugo Schuchardt Archivs* (Universität Graz) umfasst mittlerweile ca. 11.000 digital edierte, kommentierte und beschlagwortete Schreiben von und - vor allem - an den Sprachwissenschaftler und Romanisten Hugo Schuchardt (1842-1927). Dieser war eine der nachhaltigsten Figuren des Faches seiner Zeit und stand mit über 2.000 Personen im brieflichen Austausch.

Ein Korpus, wie jenes, das hier vorliegt, ist in einem ersten Moment nicht mehr als ein *Repositorium*, das digital frei zugänglich und sowohl über einen Thesaurus, wie über freie Beschlagwortung und über Volltextsuche benutzbar ist. Dazu kommen einige automatische Projektionen (z.B. GeoBrowser) oder räumlich-zeitliche Abbildungen. Letztlich bleibt die Situation aber insofern unbefriedigend, als die Menge an Information, die in einem so umfangreichen Korpus steckt, zwar irgendwo vorhanden, damit aber natürlich bei weitem nicht ausgeschöpft ist. Es muss darum gehen, den Stellenwert dieses Materials für die Genese von wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis und Wissen allgemein zu identifizieren, bzw. für die Forschung nutzbar zu machen. Genau diesem Anliegen wird sich ein geplantes Forschungsvorhaben unter dem Titel "*Genesis of Knowledge*" widmen und der Züricher Vortrag wird sich speziell mit den korrespondenzspezifischen Aspekten dieses Projekts beschäftigen. Gesichtspunkte, die in einer Analyse der vorgeschlagenen Art zu berücksichtigen sind, umfassen:

- Entstehung, Umfang, Struktur, Zeitdauer des Kontakts
- Gerichtetheit: aktive vs. reaktive Korrespondenzen
- Status, Ausbildung, Expertise des Korrespondenten
- Sprache der Korrespondenz, Dialogizität
- Materialität - Deskriptivität - Analytizität und Verhältnis zu weiteren Quellen
- Institutionalisierung des Diskurses, Wissensrelevanz, Sprachen
- Kontextualisierung: Präsenz im Manuskriptnachlass und Werkrelevanz.

Es war eine der Grundannahmen des Grazer "Network of Knowledge"-Projekts, dass mit den im Zuge der Industrialisierung sich verändernden medialen Strukturen über das nunmehr weltumspannende Postnetz Forschungs-, Datenbeschaffungs- und Austauschmöglichkeiten entstanden sind, die kaum jemand so produktiv nutzbar gemacht hat wie Hugo Schuchardt. Der Vortrag wird versuchen ein in diesem Prozess der Wissensgenese entstehendes Kontinuum zu skizzieren, das von der Entstehung und dem Beginn von Kontakten bis zu ausformulierter wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis reicht.

Big data - what now?

Potentials, aims, and contextualization of a large corpus of letters - the Hugo Schuchardt Archive

Hugo Schuchardt was one of the most enduring figures in the field of linguistics and Romance studies in the nineteenth century and was in correspondence with over 2,000 people. The corpus of letters in the Hugo Schuchardt Archive (University of Graz) now comprises around 11,000 edited, annotated and indexed letters from and - above all - to Schuchardt (1842-1927), available in open access at <http://schuchardt.uni-graz.at>.

This corpus is fundamentally and at its most basic level a repository that is freely accessible digitally and can be used via a thesaurus, keywords, and full-text search. It also allows for interactive computer-assisted visualizations (e.g. GeoBrowser) and spatio-temporal graphing. Ultimately, however, the situation remains unsatisfactory in that the amount of information contained in such an extensive corpus is available, but is of course far from fully exploited or exploitable.

The aim proposed here is to identify the significance of this material for the genesis of scientific insight and knowledge in general and to make it usable for research. A planned research project titled "Genesis of Knowledge" will address precisely this concern, and the talk presented here will deal specifically with the correspondence-specific aspects of this project. Aspects to be considered in the analysis proposed include:

- Origin, scope, structure, duration of contact
- Directionality: active vs. reactive correspondence
- Status, education, expertise of the correspondent
- Language of correspondence, dialogicity
- Materiality - descriptiveness - analyticity and relationship to other sources
- Institutionalization of the discourse, relevance of knowledge, languages
- Contextualization: presence in the manuscript legacy and relevance to the work.

One of the underpinnings of the Graz "Network of Knowledge" project was the concept that changing media structures in the course of industrialization created opportunities for research, data procurement and exchange via the now-global postal network; there are few researchers who used this

network as productively as Hugo Schuchardt did. The talk will attempt to outline a continuum that emerged in this process of knowledge genesis, covering the whole process, from initiating contact with informants to the formulation of scientific knowledge.

DiLeCos – Digitalised Letters to Coseriu

Presentation of an online platform

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After several years of planning, editing letters and developing an online platform, the DiLeCos team will finally publish their new webspace. The letter corpus which will contain approx. 4000 letters to Eugenio Coseriu, is presented in an application built with TEI-Publisher. It enables its users to explore Coseriu's correspondence both with a detailed metadata search and with different metadata registers. While we present the platform, we will explore its different functionalities and, furthermore, briefly dive into the (technical) components of our edition project: the transcription software Transkribus and its exports, tools used to convert the letters to TEI and handle the metadata, as well as our own TEI-Publisher instance.

The Tübingen Coseriu Archives and its contribution to future research on Coseriu

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Tübingen was Eugenio Coseriu's longstanding working place, where he taught even beyond his retirement and where he did research until his death. Thanks to generous donations and support from the University of Tübingen, his disciple and successor Johannes Kabatek was able to bring his complete oeuvre, consisting of manuscripts, letters and audio recordings as well as his extensive private library, to the University of Tübingen. In recent years, digital resources have been created at the Romance Department in Tübingen, which are being made available to research on Coseriu: the manuscript archive with partial digitization of important manuscripts, as well as the creation of a digital catalog of his extensive private library. Both resources will be presented in this talk.

How do digital editions become FAIR? Challenges and best practice examples from the perspective of the Center for Digital Editions at UZH

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Compared to print editions, digital scholarly editions open up completely new possibilities for the use, linking and reuse of edited source collections. However, the great potential of digital editions as a future basis for research has not yet been fully exploited. The question of how digitally edited sources should be made accessible to researchers - also in the long term - is therefore highly topical. As the recent "Open Up Digital Editions" conference at UZH showed, there is a lively debate in the digital edition community about what FAIR editions could and should look like. The lecture outlines current issues in the implementation of the FAIR principles in digital scholarly editions from the perspective of the Center for Digital Editions & Edition Analytics" at UZH.

E. Coseriu's correspondence: The Japanese connection.

Glimpses into the destiny of linguistic ideas and their (human) context

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The present contribution takes as a starting point the letters received by Eugenio Coseriu from Japanese scholars between 1974 and 1995, a period which includes the years when the most active dissemination of Coseriu's theoretical outlook can be attested in Japan, as evidenced by extensive translation projects, reviews, presentations and exegeses, as well as invited lectures held by Coseriu at several Japanese universities. The analysis focuses on material found in the correspondence with the linguists Takashi Kamei, Katsuhiko Tanaka, Toyoo Miyasaka, Isamu Taniguchi, Kennosuke Ezawa, Kiyooki Sato, Isao Suwa, and with president Kanji Maeda and editor Yoshiko Kishi of Sanshūsha Publishing House, while also taking into account, for subsidiary points, the letters from the linguists Tadao Shimomiya, Shirō Hattori, Itsuhiko Noiri, Michiyoshi Hayashi and Nobuya Ōtomo. The information gleaned from these sources revolves around three types of events.

First, the complicated process that led to the publication, in 1981, of the first Japanese translation of *Sincronía, diacronía e historia. El problema del cambio lingüístico* by Takashi Kamei and Katsuhiko Tanaka. The original Montevideo edition was sent by Coseriu himself to Kamei, who records having received it on July 22, 1958. After a series of failed translation attempts, an important step forward is effected in 1974, after which another series of delays reflects the two linguists' painstaking labor towards the fully accomplished version which finally appeared in 1981. The story of this crucial Coserian text continues, through its long-lasting influence on Kamei and Tanaka's own researches – the latter also materialized into a new translation (2014), extensive use of other Coserian sources and insightful arguments on the importance of Coseriu's linguistic contribution, up to the present day.

Second, the most ambitious translation project ever attempted worldwide, which yielded the four volumes of *Selected Linguistic Works* published by Sanshūsha under the general title *Ningen no gaku toshite no gengogaku* [Linguistics as a Science of Man] (Coseriu 1981-1983). Initiated and organized by Kennosuke Ezawa, this project was carried out between 1976 and 1983, and included in-depth discussion sessions that brought together author, editors and translators, in the autumn of 1979 in Tokyo. The volumes comprise 30 Coserian studies written between 1952 and 1978, in Japanese versions created by a team of 15 translators with diverse scholarly backgrounds, working from originals in German, Spanish, French and Italian.

Third, the correspondence relates to organizing or acknowledging Coseriu's participation in various scientific events in Japan or connected with Japanese linguistics, such as *the 13th International Congress of Linguists* (Tokyo 1982) with the plenary lecture "Pour et contre l'analyse sémique", public debates and guest lectures (with Katsuhiko Tanaka in Tokyo in 1983 and at Hitotsubashi University in

1990, at Aichi Prefectural University, Osaka City University etc.), or the “East-West Colloquia” with Japanese linguists, held alternately in Japan and Germany. It is one of these events, namely the “Fourth Ost-West Kolloquium für Sprachforschung und Sprachdidaktik” held in Kobe on 26-27 March 2002, that occasioned Coseriu’s last visit to Japan, not long before his death. His contribution and the interactions that took place at that time epitomize the way in which Coseriu the man and Coseriu the scholar impacted the Japanese academic sphere. I propose to trace this picture of light and shadow by drawing on information directly received from one of the principal Japanese organizers, Yoshihiko Ikegami.

It is my contention that the epistolary evidence preserved and systematized in the framework of the project DiLeCos offers a wealth of hints and clues – bits and pieces of a puzzle which fall into place once corroborated with more structured accounts, such as contemporary and subsequent testimonies published by the Japanese scholars involved with Coserian themes and projects. In addition, supplementary information gained from personal communications with some of these scholars can help to flesh out the emerging portrayal of Coseriu’s influence on the Japanese linguistic scene from the 1970s onwards. The fragmentary pieces thus coalesce into a sketch of the web of human connections underlying the dissemination, acceptance and development of Coseriu’s linguistic ideas in Japan, as well as, conversely, the instances of involuntary or deliberate partialization, disregard, or self-serving rejection.

The intervention will conclude with some personal reflections on the significance of preserving epistolary evidence from the 20th century in the current age of all-encompassing digitalization, which radically changed the way interactions between scholars are shaped – and ideas transmitted – on a global scale.

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“Kräftige Hammerschläge am Neubau der Sprachwissenschaft”
On the relevance of the correspondence archive for understanding the
background of Coseriu’s theory of language

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The archived correspondence in the Coseriu Archive is of considerable historiographical interest for the study of various aspects of Eugenio Coseriu’s scholarly work. In this talk I will address the following two issues:

- 1) Who are the scholars that have left one or more traces in the correspondence archive (period 1941–1969) and what kinds of exchange do we find between Coseriu and other scholars?
- 2) What can we learn from the archive with respect to the development of Coseriu’s own thought: what light does the correspondence shed on sources, parallelisms, convergences and divergences regarding concepts, argumentations and theoretical positions?

After briefly discussing a few types of exchange, and in what sense they can be illuminating, I will turn my attention to the close reading of a handful of letters by various scholars. Both accolades and rebukes prove to be interesting for a deeper understanding of the historical background of Coseriu’s scholarly work, including his theory of language. If time permits, I will close my talk with a succinct inspection of the “Danish connection”, given Coseriu’s strong initial interest in the scholarly work of Louis Hjelmslev.