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Linguistic Economy as an Inseparable Law of Language Evolution

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Annotation. The article analyzes historical sources of the formation of the learning about economy in language with the relation to language evolution (according to linguistic conceptions of Hermann Paul and Otto Jespersen).

Key words: tendency, conception, economy of speech, linguistic catechism, ellipsis, replenishment, expression, terminal of point, economy of mental effort, decrease in pronouncing effort, younger grammarians.

I. INTRODUCTION

Observation of languages shows that they have a stable tendency to the "convenience" of pronunciation, which can be considered as the cause of phonetic changes. At the same time, those sounds and syllables that are stable in their use (i.e. they are not compressed further) are perceived as carriers of certain meanings. In other words, the "convenience" of pronunciation is the dominant motivating force of sound change in language functioning under various circumstances. This phenomenon means that the language tends to simplify, moving in the process of its development from complex to simple. This can be observed first of all when converting long words into short ones. For example: we teller \rightarrow we tell ("we talk"). This process can be accelerated by involving a variety of language facts in the simplification system. Such a principle of economy is usually characterized not only quantitatively (only as an increase or decrease in pronouncing effort), but in very close connection with the economy of mental effort of a person.

II. THE FORMATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMY

Hermann Paul (1846-1921) was one of the first in the world linguistics to draw attention to the problems of the principle of economy of speech when dealing with the theoretical views of representatives of the younger grammarians (2019, p.372). It is noteworthy that in this "linguistic catechism" of the XIX century, there is even a special Chapter – "the Principle of Economy". In it, H. Paul, speaking about economy in language, points out that it is predetermined by the need for speech communication – "Sparsamkeitim Ausdruck" (Economy in expression) (1958, p.357). Moreover, the linguist points to another tendency of language – the redundancy of certain elements, noting: "The more or less economical use of language means for expressing thoughts depends on the needs. There is no denying, however, that very often language tools are used unnecessarily wastefully. In general, however, language activity is characterized by a certain tendency to thrift" (2019, p. 372).

For the first time in General linguistics, H. Paul considered the principle of economy at the syntactic level. Obviously, the economy of language resources is interpreted by them at this time still quite narrowly. The scientist has in mind only two specific syntactic phenomena with the



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implementation of the principle of economy – "ellipsis" and "replenishment". Other cases of language economy are not considered by the linguist.

Despite this restriction the notion of linguistic economy by the younger grammarians, the importance of this work cannot be overestimated. H. Paul and younger grammarians, putting the problem of language economy, determined its active research in General and applied linguistics of the XIX – first half of XX century, although younger grammarians have not developed solid linguistic theory of economy of speech. Moreover, this linguistic trend was still alien to such an interpretation of the principle of economy as a general language process.

The Danish linguist Otto Jespersen (1860-1943), one of the greatest linguists of the XIX – early XX century, made significant progress in solving the problem of language evolution and related issues of saving speech efforts.

Studying the development of language as a system, O. Jespersen (1958) states: the evolution of language manifests itself in the fact that some language norms and types of formation of forms die out and others appear, while there are stable trends in the language that order and regulate such a dynamic process.

O. Jespersen pays much attention to the causes of language changes. And the principle of economy that causes these changes is particularly important. The linguist considers its action on a morphological level. Thus, he writes about the predisposition of language to eliminate formal generic differences, about mergers of cases (noting that a firm word order is quite sufficient to characterize the role of a word in a sentence), about the loss of the dual number ("any elimination of previous superfluous differences is an indicator of language progress"), about the tendency to lose the special superlative form ("comparative and superlative degrees express the same idea"), etc. (1958, p. 290). Let us compare, for instance, one of the following examples of the interpretation of "economy of speech" in O. Jespersen: "Languages differ from each other in the sense of economy in the use of temporary forms as well as in other respects. Those languages in which sentences like I start tomorrow, employ only one marker (adverb) to express the future tense; others require the speaker to use two markers, for example: Crosio (I shall start tomorrow). A similar economy of expression is observed in the case of English word combination My old friend's father (father of my old friend) where there is only one marker of the genitive case (cf. Lat. pater veterismei amici), or in the case of ten trout (cf. Eng "ten men" and Lat. "decimvir")" (1958, p.309).

According to O. Jespersen, the whole principle of economy is expressed in artificial languages. For example, Esperanto and Idol appear to be ideal in this respect, because they "combine maximum expressiveness with ease of use of language means".

B. A. Sere brennikov gave a high appreciation to O. Jespersen's linguistic concept: "Comparing the old Indo-European languages with the new ones, O. Jespersen found a number of advantages in the grammatical structure of the latter. Forms have become shorter, requiring less muscular direction and time for their pronunciation, they are fewer, memory is not overloaded with them, their formation has become more regular, the syntactic use of forms reveals less anomalies, the more analytical and abstract nature of forms facilitates their expression, allowing for the possibility of numerous combinations and constructions that were previously impossible, cumbersome repetition, known as agreement, has disappeared, solid word order provides clarity and unambiguity of understanding."

III. DISCUSSION

However, the whole process of constructing the concept of O. Jespersen, unfortunately, is clearly focused on the search for facts and confirmation of the superiority of analytical languages over all

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others. Moreover, this position is supported by a number of linguists. Let's compare the following statement of R. A. Budge (1965, p. 9): "At the time, the famous Danish linguist O. Jespersen sought to revive the old typological scheme of language development. In the interpretation of O. Jespersen, the "higher languages" were the languages of the analytical structure. And although Jespersen's book "Progress in Language" (1884), where this hypothesis was first presented, observed many subtle private observations, his concept in principle did not differ from the three-step doctrine of A. Schleicher. Only the "terminal point" of the movement has changed: instead of inflectional languages, analytical languages have been replaced."

As for the principle of economy in the understanding of O. Jespersen, the following is obvious: this principle is necessary for the linguist not so much to explain the reasons for the actual language changes, but mainly to show the superiority of analytical languages (primarily English and Danish) over other languages of the world. It seems that this is where the vulnerabilities of the concept of language evolution, which O. Jespersen developed all his life, are revealed.

In order to further characterize the evolutionary theory of O. Jespersen, it is also necessary to note the following: agglutinative languages, which are characterized by a very significant predisposition to economy and a large potential for analyticity, have been missed out of the linguist's field of view. For example, they do not have a category of gender, they express the same form (for example, affixes) of the same meaning, etc., which is also sought by analytical languages, which O. Jespersen considers exemplary. Moreover, to date, linguistics has accumulated so many facts that indicate the well-known conditionality of such concepts as analyticity and synthetism. Indeed, "historically, the types of language change. As a result, there is a mix of grammatical features. Thus, Latin and old Bulgarian were synthetic (inflectional) languages, while French and modern Bulgarian already show analytical features. Or another example: modern German has more synthetism than English, but more analyticism than Russian" (A. Bushuy, 2005, p. 23).

CONCLUSION

So, where O. Jespersen firmly relies on a variety of carefully selected language facts, he acts as a subtle interpreter of the principle of economy in speech, but in the first principles of the theoretical construction of his general evolutionary theory, obviously, false philosophical interpretations of the pragmatic sense are negatively affected.

Nevertheless, all these considerations do not detract the higher significance of O. Jespersen's general linguistic theory. Thus, in his "Philosophy of Grammar", he also points out the continuity of the ideas expressed by him with the ideas of H. Paul. However, in contrast to him, who demonstrated the effect of the principle of economy on two concepts only ("ellipsis" and "replenishment"), O. Jespersen's principle of economy can be traced on a huge factual material of such levels as lexical, morphological and syntactic. In other words, in this respect, the work of Jespersen is an obvious step forward in comparison with the research of H. Paul.

In addition, Otto Jespersen's unquestionable merits include the fact that he was one of the first in linguistic science to point out the deep connection between economy and redundancy.

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