

SOME REGULARITIES IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND THE RECONSIDERATION OF THE TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

N.Solntseva, V.Solntsev

*Institute of Oriental Studies, Institute of Linguistics, Russia
sol@iling.msk.su*

Abstract: The paper is dedicated to the analysis of cyclic development of languages of the world. The authors show the change of morphological systems in different languages, the decay of old morphology and the rise of the new morphology. The language material allows to reconsider the traditional morphological three-fold classification of languages and to propose a new classification of languages. The main division of languages is the division into two mycotypes: isolating and non-isolating types, in the frames of which there can be agglutinative or inflectional languages.

Keywords: morphological typology, isolating languages, non-isolating languages, macrotypes of languages, agglutinative, flectional languages, cyclic development of languages

The reconstructions of Archaic Chinese have shown an existence in it of a morphology which already declined in old times leaving after itself only sporadic traces (for example such as the change of tones or the change of sounds in cognate words and the change of sounds to build causative forms from active verbs or to build verbs either from nouns or adjectives). The discovery of ancient morphology allowed B.Karlgren [1920] to write a work titled “Le proto-chinois, langue flexionnelle”.

Wang Li [1958] also made a supposition that in Archaic Chinese there existed a specifical declination of personal pronouns most probably of inflectional type, when each of these pronouns being used in different functions (as a subject, as an object of the sentence or as an attribute) were pronounced differently and written with different characters. He also supposed that some of these forms were used to express the meaning

of singularity or plurality and some were used honorifically. But Wang Li stressed that these suppositions as yet need to be analysed more precisely.

But the existence in Archaic Chinese of such morphology based on the change of tones is confirmed by the data of southern dialects of Chinese, which have preserved archaic features of Archaic Chinese. In 80-ies there were published several articles in Chinese linguistic periodicals about the change of tones used for expressing different morphological meanings.

The field-work sessions of the joint Russian-Vietnamese linguistic expedition during the period from 1979 to 1996 have shown that practically all the investigated languages of national minorities of Vietnam in different degrees have lost the old morphology which obviously had inflectional features. Some have lost this morphology almost completely, some - partly preserving forms of cases or forms of voices. It is interesting to mention that all the named above sporadic traces of morphological means reconstructed in Archaic Chinese are used quite productively nowadays in one of the investigated languages – the Lati (La Chi) language. This language is used by the Lati people living in the northern part of Vietnam and in the southern part of China.

We have reasons to believe that the decline of old morphology took place in hundreds of languages of East Asia (EA) and Southeast Asia (SEA), which form a huge language union (Sprachbund). As a result of this process was the formation of the so called isolating type of languages. In these languages the relations between the words in a sentence are not expressed by means of words themselves (morphologically) but by word order and auxiliary words.

The language facts show that a language having lost one morphology immediately starts to develop a new one. So the Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages of EA and SEA during the period of two last milleniums started to develop a morphology mostly of agglutinative character. This morphology is developing in the frames of isolating type of languages, since the elements (the formants) of this morphology do not serve as means of expressing grammatical relations between the words but convey purely morphological meanings (such as meanings of tense and aspect of verbs, intensity of quality of adjectives, number of nouns and personal pronouns and so on). The new morphology does not break the isolation, but develops within it's frames. The languages of EA and SEA which are developing after one and the same pattern and which are at different stages of this development allow us to see the processes of downfall of the old morphology and also the rise of the new one. The elements of a new morphology arise from fullmeaning words (this process is called grammaticalization).

The materials of these languages confirm the observations of many linguists that all the morphological elements (and morphemes in general) in all languages are former words. As it is well known during the last thousand years for different reasons the English language has lost though not completely it's Indo-european morphology. As a result the English language became close to the isolating languages though in it's core remains to be an inflectional language. It is interesting to point out that many English words of Latin origin (in English language there are about 50% of Latin origin words) are former roots in Latin. Here we can see how former roots (morphemes) after the fall of morphological elements become words.

As we have already mentioned above the process of loosing an Indo-european morphology in English language puts it closely to the isolating languages. It is well known that the syntactical relations in English only partly are expressed by the forms of words, but mainly by the word order and auxiliary words.

The process of loosing the morphology can be seen in other Indo-european languages as well. For instance, in German language many inflectional elements which marked indirect noun cases have disappeared and the role of expressing different case meanings is now played mainly by the articles, which preserve their forms of declination. Here are some examples of declination of some nouns of feminine gender in singular and plural

combined with a definite article and an adjective: *die Stadt* (nominative) – *der Stadt* (genitive) – *der Stadt* (dative) – *die Stadt* (accusative); *die roten Fahnen* (nominative) – *der roten Fahnen* (genitive) – *der roten Fahnen* (dative) – *die roten Fahnen* (accusative).

The number of examples might be increased. We can not explain the background of this process. It might be predicted by some phonetical reasons. But anyhow we can observe this process and state that the morphological system of languages with highly developed morphology is not quite stable and is undergoing serious changes.

In other Indo-european languages the morphology is almost completely preserved. For instance, in Russian or in Lithuanian languages. And even here we can find in Russian only remnants of the so called vocative case form and the Lithuanian still preserves this case form. The Russian language may be under the influence of English acquired some new syntactical structures which were not characteristic of Russian, for example: Gloria Bank or Olympiada-80.

In the history of language development we see in one case how the words become morphemes, in other cases – how the morphemes become words. And we also see how during their development languages create a morphology and then liquidate it and later again create a new one.

There is a cyclic regularity in the language development: the presence of one morphology – it's fall – and then the rise of a new one. Such cyclic regularity does not allow to say which type of a language is the more ancient and primitive one or which is not or more developed.

An inflectional non-isolating language can become an isolating language. In the frames of the isolating language there may appear inflectional and agglutinative forms and also analytical forms.

The cyclic character of language development - as one can judge by materials of EA and SEA languages - can also be found in the syllabic structure of words and morphemes. Most of the modern languages of EA and SEA mainly possess monosyllabic morphemes and simple words. In ancient times morphemes and simple words were mostly polysyllabic (disyllabic).

Such languages as Chinese and Vietnamese already in ancient times have undergone the process of monosyllabification of morphemes and simple words. Now the processes of monosyllabification can be seen in some languages of SEA, for example, in the Ruc language - one of the Vietic languages.

The need in a great number of new words creates the process of polysyllabification, because monosyllabic words remaining monosyllabic make a poor base for creating a great number of new words. The monosyllabic character of morphemes and simple words is not an evidence of an early stage of language development. The monosyllabism is the result of a reduction of polysyllabic words and morphemes.

The fact that agglutination and inflection can develop in the frames of isolation (it depends on the presence or absence of the so called syntactic and non-syntactic morphological categories according to A.M. Peshkovsky [1934]) shows that isolation should not be considered as a trait placed in the same row with agglutination and inflection.

The existence of agglutination and inflection in the frames of isolation allows to approach the traditional three-fold typological classification in a different way. All the languages should be distributed into two main macrotypes - isolating and non-isolating languages. In the frame of each mycotype there can be agglutinative and inflectional languages.

We call isolating languages <formoisolating> languages since their morphological forms do not express the grammatical relations of words in the sentences. Non-isolating languages we call <formoconnecting> languages because their morphological forms are mostly used to connect words with each other in a sentence.

Formoconnecting languages always have a more complicated morphology since besides the morphological elements with purely morphological meaning (non-syntactic morphological markers) they have special morphological markers which serve to connect words in speech (the so called syntactic morphological markers, such as case markers).

The typological classification which we propose is as follows:

Formoconnecting (non-isolating) languages	Formoisolating (isolating) languages
agglutinative languages	inflectional languages
	agglutinative languages

The division into two macrotypes is a main division of languages, though in a language of each type one can find features characteristic of other types.

REFERENCES

Karlgren, B. (1920). *Le proto-chinois, langue flexionnelle*. *Journal asiatique avril–juin*.

Peshkovsky, A.M. (1934). *Русский синтаксис в научном овещении*. Государственное учебно-педагогическое издательство. Москва.

Wang Li (1958). *Hanyu shi gao vol II*, Peking.