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ОЛЕНА МАЛІНКА

(Вінниця)

SOCIAL CONDITIONALITY OF LINGUISTIC CHANGES

У статті зосереджено увагу на питанні соціальної обумовленості мовних змін, мова розглядається як соціальне явище, як символ соціальної солідарності. Визначено особливості людської мови та обґрунтовано той факт, що мова є продуктом розвитку людського суспільства. Також розглядається природа мовних змін та визначаються функції мови як символу соціальної солідарності. У статті висвітлено механізми розвитку мови та визначено один з найважливіших соціальних факторів впливу на мову – свідоме корегування мовних процесів суспільством.

Ключові слова: соціальна обумовленість, мовні зміни, мовні засоби, соціальне явище, соціальна згуртованість, соціальна солідарність, соціальний символізм.

Problem setting. Social conditionality of language is expressed in different forms. Firstly it is represented by social differentiation of national languages, secondly it is traced in the preference which different social groups show to these or those expressive means of the language system (e.g. in the different use of variants by representatives of different age, professional, educational and other groups; in the fact that some linguistic means gain the functions of social symbols, thus, they act as markers of the speaker's belonging to this or that social environment).

It happens rather often that the lexicon of a language is widened by lexical borrowings which are one of the most important factors of the development of any language which pretends to a high cultural level, to the reflection of the state of the intellectual, cultural, economical and political development of the society.

It should be mentioned that the very fact of language changeableness is in fact little discussed. Problematic is the question about the nature of these changes and about the reasons of their appearance which is not so far evident.

Publications analysis. Social conditionality of linguistic changes has been a subject of scientific research of both domestic and foreign authors (scientific research results of V.Bondaletov, M.Kocherhan, Yu.Desheriev, W.Bright, A.Sommerfelt and others). The problem of language development has been studied in different aspects, main points of which may be brought to two theses: the supporters of the first one, sociolinguistic, keep to the fact that all linguistic changes are stipulated by outward, social reasons; the supporters of the second thesis suppose that linguistic changes are connected only with inner reasons. Nevertheless, the question of the nature of linguistic changes is still important and keeps attracting linguists' attention.

The article **aims at** the study of social factors which influence language, namely its lexical system. The aim presupposes the completion of a number of certain **tasks**, namely: 1) clarification of the human language peculiarities and proof of the fact that language is the product of the development of the human society, a social phenomenon; 2) determination of the functions of language as a symbol of social cohesion; 3) study of the nature of linguistic changes; 4) elucidation of the mechanisms of language development.

Basic materials. When we talk about language as a system of communication, we mean human language. The matter is that notwithstanding the fact that animals have communication systems and communicate in a variety of ways, these are in general primitive and instinctive and incapable of expressing a wide range of concepts.

Human language symbolizes thought with the help of sounds and groups of sounds, letters which are used to signify concepts with which the sounds and letters themselves have no immediate connection.

Besides, it is important to consider some physiological properties of the human species as prerequisites for the production of language. Physical aspects

of human larynx and other organs of speech are not shared by other creatures and may explain why only the human creature has the capacity for speech. However, the human is not the only creature which is capable of communicating. All creatures, from apes, bees to zebras, are capable of communicating with other members of their species. The range and complexity of animal communication systems are staggering and we could not hope even to summarize their diverse properties. What we can do, as part of an investigation of language, is concentrate on those properties which differentiate human language from all other forms of signaling and which make it a unique type of communication system (Stork & Widdowson, 2014).

The origins of language, like those of many other aspects of culture, are lost in antiquity, and the final answer to the question “How did language originate?” will probably never be known. However, there are many theories which suggest possible lines of development. Here are some of them:

1. Early theories such as Plato’s idea that there used to be an original perfect language which human beings are striving to rediscover.
2. The one in accordance with which the origin of the language is an act of God (Note: God invested Adam with the power to speak a fully-fledged language and the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel accounts for the multiplicity of languages) (Stork & Widdowson, 2014: 13).

Both these theories are believed to have long since been discredited.

3. Language is thought to be the product of man’s social evolution. As he evolved, his cultural horizons expanded and his language inevitably developed at the same time. Man’s primarily instinctive responses to certain physical and emotional stimuli have also been regarded as a possible basis for language development (Stork & Widdowson, 2014: 14).

Man has a unique ability to transmit ideas through language and this distinguishes him both from other animals and machines which he himself has created. He is a social being and uses language to communicate in such a way that it is essential to the maintenance of his culture. Language is indispensable

to human society; it reflects every facet of people's attitudes and behaviour (Stork & Widdowson, 2014: 15).

Being a social phenomenon, language is considered a symbol of social concord the notion of which is, in its turn, used to denote social cohesion (these two terms can be considered synonyms). It was first used by the French philosopher and sociologist O.Kont. It was also thoroughly studied by the founder of the French sociological school E.Durkheim. Social concord was one of the central notions in his conception, and actually all his scientific activity was devoted to it. For him social concord was equal to the social status and its absence – to the social pathology (Кочерган, 2003).

Social symbolism is one of the displays of the correlation between the social structure of the society and its culture; it regulates social relations with the help of cultural means. There are two types of social symbolism: verbal and nonverbal. One of the examples of the nonverbal symbolism may be clothes (military or school uniform, clothes of priests etc.). The verbal symbolism is a wordy symbolism. Some certain words, phrases, peculiarities of pronunciation may be symbols which show the speaker's belonging to the certain social group. It is connected with one of the motives by which the speaker is guided in his intra-group activity: using his language he wants to show that he belongs to this group, that he is "quite at home" in it. American sociologist W.Labov proved that those people who did not manage to "master" the symbols which show the belonging to a certain group can not be its members and become outcasts (Кочерган, 2010).

The question of social symbolism in the language activity is a part of the problem of control of human behaviour. Generally language as means of conscious regulation of people's behaviour carries out two functions – instrumental and symbolic. According to the first function human behaviour is controlled by the help of linguistic signs which may be combined into instructions, orders, laws etc. According to the second one linguistic signs have no direct instructions, they are conceived symbolically. Social symbolism of

language is traced in speech performance of various small and large social groups, from family to ethnic unity. Though social differentiation has already for a long time been studied, practically it is treated quite superficially: it is reduced only to the difference of expressive “manners” (mixed languages etc.); similar varieties of language are interpreted as intermediate, unsteady states, as some exotic displays of its social existence. In reality the problem is much more serious. Stratification of languages is a universal phenomenon which deals with the very bases of economical system, culture, way of life and even history. The main difference between economically dissimilar social groups is reflected in the system of the social language varieties because language stratification reflects rather systems of social values than systems of social existence. This factor should not be belittled and social stratification of languages should not be interpreted only as a result of human striving (partly social, partly psychological) for self-laudation. Moreover, this phenomenon can’t be considered as fashion. It is social and psychological stratification of language (Кочерган, 2010).

Socio-symbolic nature is more peculiar to the language of social groups united according to their professional, cultural features than to the language of family. These groups are striving to create their own language because they want to invent some extra identifying feature which would be a social symbol and on the basis of which there would be possible to divide people into those who can speak the slang and into those whose language is quite different from it. Often this reason is connected with the other one – psychology of protest (with the desire to break off connections with traditions and in this way to express one’s different world outlook using linguistic means).

In general the use of linguistic means in their socio-symbolic function is reduced to:

- 1) the use of different lexical and semantic innovations; every social group is eager to form its new use of the word which would be a social symbol;

- 2) the selection of stylistic synonyms;
- 3) the use of words belonging to another language;
- 4) the use of rude words (Кочерган, 2010: 311).

As it has already been mentioned, the problem of language development is studied in different aspects, main points of which may be brought to two theses: the supporters of the first one, sociolinguistic, keep to the fact that all linguistic changes are stipulated by outward, social reasons; the supporters of the second thesis suppose that linguistic changes are connected only with inner reasons.

Nowadays the two mentioned polar conceptions form the basis of the common theory linguistic changes according to which the latter can not only spontaneously appear but to be a result of the creative activity of the society, a total of its purposeful interference into linguistic processes.

Linguistic changes are of two natures, because language shows a double dependence of its evolution – on the environment in which it exists on the one hand and on its inner mechanism and structure on the other hand (Серебрянников & Кубрякова, 1988: 198]. At the same time, conformably to the concrete linguistic facts it does not account for the distinct differentiation of the changes which appeared immanently from the ones which were artificially brought into language by people; it does not account for the correct estimation of their origin.

Problems of linguistic teleology and interpretation of the reasons and directions of linguistic changes which are of immanent nature keep attracting the attention of linguists. Looking at language as a pure structure of correlations many researchers try to remove the outward, social factor. They suppose that outward factors should not be involved into any linguistic researches, because only the inner causality of linguistic changes is to be the subject of the linguistic interest. One of the most notable facts is that originally the problem of immanent linguistic changes and searches for their reasons were being solved in accordance with the facts of phonetics and phonology. Perhaps, these

circumstances gave cause to some researchers for doubting the success in finding the initial causes of inner structural phonetic changes. These searches turned out to be much more successful when studying the changes which appeared at different levels of language under the influence of outward factors, especially under the circumstances of conscious interference of the society into the language structure.

The problem of social controllability of language which personifies the creative aspect of the society, has for a long time been ignored from the practical point of view. Linguists have fixed their attention only on the clearing up the reasons and specificity of the linguistic changes which appear immanently. It continued up to the moment when sociolinguistics came close to the study of the problem of linguistic changes from its own positions (Вахтин & Головкин, 2004).

A.Meillet is considered to be one of the first representatives of the sociological direction in linguistics. He connects changes in language with the social conditions of native speakers' existence, because language itself exists only in the society. A.Sommerfelt studying further this idea insists that all linguistic changes are of social origin (Sommerfelt, 1962). Later on appeared the whole generation of linguists-sociologists who discovered on the basis of linguistic changes not only inner structural, immanent factors but also outward, social ones.

With the development of sociolinguistics inner and outward reasons of linguistic changes were distinctly differentiated. Thus the idea of two types of linguistic changes became in the final analysis the main one. According to it the types of linguistic changes are those which appeared under the influence of the outward factors and those which appeared on the basis of some inner impulses, spontaneously.

The most detailed characteristic of the factors of outward influence was given by Yu.Desheriev. According to his definition social factor is a systematically organized social action of a different structure in the society.

Social factor may be presented as an idea or an integral conception which influences language in general, determines its present and future (Дешериев, 1988).

Sociolinguistic research defines also the degree of the concrete influence of social factors on the phenomena and elements of all levels of language structure (lexico-semantic, phonological, morphological, syntactical and stylistic). Yu.Desheriev singles out the factors of maximum and minimum meaning. To the first ones belong: the linguistic policy, the social-economical formation etc. (Дешериев, 1988: 10).

The nature of social factors of the influence on linguistic processes may be not only conscious and purposeful, embodying the creative aspect of the society but also spontaneous. The latter one depends on the specificity of the historically formed circumstances under which languages and native speakers exist; it is peculiar to the early stages of the mankind development.

One of the most important social factors of the influence on language is the conscious correction of linguistic processes by the society. The main task of this socially adjusted influence on language is the change of its functional status either in the direction of expansion or, on the contrary, – contraction, what is finally determined by the linguistic policy (Бондалетов, 1987).

So, the immanent self-development, that is the change of separate links of the system which may be explained by the striving for liquidation of structural-semantic contradictions hidden in its entrails, is peculiar to language the main purpose of which is to pass information, its contents in the most understandable form. The sense of language existence is in this statement. If something goes wrong in any linguistic segment and the level of information is totally distorted, the mechanism of the removing of semantic blockages is “switched on” and the information is again given without mistakes. This is the main reason of immanent linguistic changes. All other reasons are derivative. Language has to keep the communicative suitability in the most perfect way and it is constantly striving to this unattainable ideal.

Language is composed of material-ideal meaningful units. It is an objective order of real or imaginary things which is perceived by language consciousness and reproduced in this or that unity of ethnolinguistic signs. That is why language itself is a system which is dependant on its own order. It means that the objective order of things of the environment through the mediation of consciousness in this or that way objectifies also the order of language units. Like a living organism language operates with them in time and space, that's why their imaginary non-systemization in synchronism shows systemization in diachronism and vice-versa (Sommerfelt, 1962).

F. de Saussure pointed out that language has no notions, no sounds which would exist independently from language system. As far as vocabulary is concerned, it means that every word of language is directly or indirectly connected with its other words. Every word is simultaneously a lexico-semantic and lexico-grammatical substance. That's why its formation and linear "movement" may be indicated like this: thing (out of linguistic reality) – notion (in linguistic reality of people) – word (lexemic unit) – word (lexico-semantic unit) – word (lexico-grammatical unit). Of course, words are not only language signs of real things and imprints of notions of these real things, but also the embodiment of complex system of correlations between real things which turns into not less complex system of correlations between notions which is more or less adequate reflection of the first one. Language as a system and word as an element of this system are parts of reality and have their prototypes-notions in our consciousness. That's why when we specify the notion of a word, give definition to it and study its connections with other linguistic realities – phoneme, morpheme, sentence, text – we enlarge our knowledge not only about language as a social phenomenon, as a system of signs, but also about the reality itself (Кочерган, 2010).

Vocabulary of language is a joint product of the system of motive mechanisms of language development. One of the most important of them is the mechanism of language nomination as a steady intra-lingual process of reaction

to new realities. This mechanism is directed at the active development of vocabulary as unity of independent linguistic means of reflection of the environment. It functions within the limits of lexical subsystems, first of all, terminological – as more or less reserved, especially subsystems of social-political and social-economical vocabulary. The latter one is notable for processes of borrowing from other language and of abbreviation caused by the fact that this subsystem is open for numerous compound nominations. The process of appearance of a new nomination is notable for its two naturally determined levels – subjectification of a new nomination in the language consciousness of the collective, and then the objectification of it in the vocabulary. As a result, that what is fixed by the linguistic consciousness, is also fixed by the linguistic memory, becoming then a language tradition. The content of language is being enlarged, that is its vocabulary; the form of language is being improved. It only at first may seem that words “flow into” language disorderly, spontaneously. Language as an immanent organism constantly needs replenishments and the system accepts new units giving them strictly determined places. It may need a word, a sign of new notion; or it is necessary to replenish this or that semantic field by some new or renewed functional unit; or maybe new sense of some old notion demands a new form, and thus, a new word (Bright, 2017).

Besides this principal mechanism of language development there are many subordinate ones: 1) the mechanism of development of meanings as a motive power of lexical polysemy and omonymy; 2) the mechanism of use of words as a constant process of appearance of new shades of word meaning; 3) the mechanism of semantic fields as a naturally determined movement of meaningful signs in space and time; 4) the mechanism of lexical subsystems which influences “the life” of semantic fields; 5) the mechanism of lexico-stylistic means of language as a functional realizer of linguistic idiosyncrasy; 6) the mechanism of word-formation which provides the dynamics of the development of language lexicon (Bright, 2017).

Conclusions. One of the most important points in the study of social conditionality of the use of linguistic means is the fact that this conditionality is evident not only in the whole system of language, but also in separate parts of the system. This statement may be considered as a periphrasis of the famous assertion according to which not all levels of language structure are to the equal degree pervious for the social influence: the most pervious are vocabulary and phraseology, the least ones are considered those of morphology and phonology. Nonetheless it must be mentioned that at every linguistic level only certain parts, these or those groups of units or even some separate units are socially influenced, while other groups of units remain relevantly uninfluenced.

Language is a product of the society which creates it and in its turn language forms the society. Being the most important means of communicating it serves people in all spheres of their activity. Language that stops serving the society in full is sure to decline and disappear. So it deserves to be defined as a social phenomenon much more than all other realities associated with interaction with social life.

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The article concentrates on the language as a social phenomenon, as a symbol of social cohesion. It also deals with social conditionality of linguistic means as it is important to study and record the tendencies and sources of linguistic changes. The human language peculiarities are clarified and the fact that language is the product of the development of the human society, a social phenomenon, is proved. Also there are determined the functions of language as a symbol of social cohesion and the nature of linguistic changes is studied. According to the first function human behaviour is controlled by the help of linguistic signs which may be combined into instructions, orders, laws etc. According to the second one linguistic signs have no direct instructions, they are conceived symbolically. The mechanisms of language development are elucidated in the article. One of the most important social factors of the influence on language – conscious correction of linguistic processes by the society – is defined. It is also substantiated that the main task of this socially adjusted influence on language is the change of its functional status either in the direction of expansion or, on the contrary, – contraction, what is finally determined by the linguistic policy. The article is of interest to those who are interested in language as a social phenomenon, in the nature of linguistic changes, their social conditionality.

Key words: social conditionality, linguistic changes, linguistic means, social phenomenon, social concord, social cohesion, social symbolism.

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