

About Systems of Classification of Languages of the World

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Abstract: The article highlights current issues of classification of the world's languages, and reviews the results of modern philological research on this issue. The classifications of domestic and foreign linguists have been studied. Definitions are given to the classifications of world languages and their comparative analysis is carried out.

Keywords: language, dialect, genealogical classification of languages, typological classification of languages, synthetic languages, analytical languages, history of language classification.

Introduction

The classification of languages existing on Earth presents significant difficulties. First of all, this is explained by their diversity.

The difficulty of classifying languages is also explained by the fact that many of them have not been sufficiently studied, as a result of which the boundary between languages and their branches - dialects - is often unclear, and at the same time it is not easy to decide what is the object of classification - a language or a dialect.

In addition, existing languages vary greatly in the number of their speakers. There are languages that are spoken by a small number of people. Thus, the number of speakers of the Iberian-Caucasian languages Udi and Karatinsky does not exceed 6 thousand people, and Archinsky - 1 thousand. On the other hand, there are languages, the number of speakers of which exceeds tens and even hundreds of millions: Chinese 1,4 billion people, English - 400 million people, Spanish - 460 million people, Russian - 154 million people, Hindi - 341 million people, Arabic - 315 million people, Portuguese - 221 million people, Japanese - about 128 million people, German - about 100 million people, French - about 95 million people.

Information about different languages is very uneven. The ancient Greek language, for example, is known thanks to written monuments that have survived to our time from the 10th century. BC e., and Assyro-Babylonian even from the 30th century. BC e., the history of Slavic languages has been known since the 10th century. BC, and the first monuments of the Albanian language date back to the 15th century n. e. Many languages of Africa, Australia and America became known only from the 17th-18th and even from the 19th - 20th centuries.

The main part

In linguistics, two classifications of languages have been developed:

- 1) genealogical (from the Greek genealogia - pedigree), based on the common origin of languages, and
- 2) typological (morphological), based on the commonality of the grammatical structure of the classified languages.

The genealogical classification of languages turned out to be possible because people since ancient times compared and contrasted the facts of different languages.

In the 4th century AD in ancient Rome, the Greek scholar Macrabi wrote a work entitled "On the Similarities and Differences of Greek and Latin Verbs". It compares the verb categories of Greek and Latin languages. This is the only work that has come down to us from ancient linguistics and is devoted to the comparative study of grammar.

As early as the 11th century, Mahmud Koshghari created a comparative grammar of Turkic languages, but European scientists did not get to know Mahmud Koshghari's scientific legacy until the first quarter of the 20th century.

During the 16th-18th centuries, great work was done on describing different languages and collecting language facts.

The acquaintance of Europeans with the Sanskrit language was of great importance in the creation of the comparative method. Everyone was moved by the similarity of the main European languages with the ancient language of distant India. Europeans received the first information about Sanskrit from the Italian traveler Filippo Sossetti, who lived in India in 1583-1588. When he got acquainted with the Indian language, he gave information about common, cognate words in Sanskrit and Italian.

Dutch linguist Joseph Justus Scaliger, in his 1599 book "Remarks on Europeans", divided European languages into 11 groups, including Slavic, Germanic, Romance and Greek.

L.V. Lomonosov showed the kinship of Russian, Latvian, Greek, Latin, and German languages from European languages. Also, Lomonosov put forward the idea that related languages arose as a result of the division of a common, ancient language.

A serious interest in the Sanskrit language is associated with the work of William Jones (1746-1794). William Jones, an English orientalist and jurist, served as the chief justice of Bengal in 1783-1794. He founded the Asiatic Society in 1784 in order to study the languages and cultures of Indian peoples.

In 1786, his famous lecture entitled "Asian Studies" was published. In it Jones lays down the basic rules of comparative grammar of Indo-European languages. Although he is not considered the founder of comparative linguistics because he did not prove these rules through the analysis of grammar and speech sounds, his ideas greatly influenced the increase of interest among scientists in the Sanskrit language, Indo-European language kinship, and their origin.

In 1808, Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), a German scientist, the leader and theoretical founder of the Jen linguistic group, published his famous work "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians". Schlegel showed the kinship of Sanskrit with Latin, Greek, Germanic, and Persian languages both in lexical and grammatical relations. He believed that Indo-European languages originated from Sanskrit. The term comparative grammar was used for the first time in Schlegel's work.

This interestingly written book, which describes various aspects of ancient Indian culture, philosophy, and literature, promoted the idea of comparative study of Indo-European languages in wide circles.

Through a series of Sanskrit grammars and dictionaries published at the beginning of the 19th century, European scholars became familiar not only with the phonetics and grammar of Sanskrit, but also with the ideas of the ancient Indian linguists who accurately and perfectly described their language.

And antichnom mire voprosy klassifikatsii yazykov, ix rodstva, skhodstva i razlichiya malo zanimali myy uchenyx, tak kak otsutstvoval interes k voprosu o mnogobrazii yazykov, chto, v svoyu ochered, ob'yalos prebrejitelnyim atnosheniem k "barbarian" yazykam; Greek and Latin are studied in detail.

In the Middle Ages, after the entry of peoples who were once considered barbaric into the international arena (including the Germans, Slavs, Romance and other peoples), the diversity of languages became obvious, and the need to study and compare them gradually arose.

The Renaissance era included an active search for principles for the classification description of languages. One of the first works devoted to the classification of languages and their kinship is the treatise of Guilelm Postellus "On the kinship of languages", published in 1538. Josephus Justus Scaliger was the first to establish groups of related European languages in the treatise "Discourse on European Languages", in which he names 11 language groups, and among them - Greek, Latin, Germanic, Slavic, Albanian, Irish, Cimbri (the languages of this group were spoken by Germanic tribes), as well as Tatar, Finnish, Hungarian and Basque. G.V. Leibniz gave a more extensive, but less precise classification. The first classification of Slavic languages based on their comparison was developed by Yuri Krizanich (c. 1618-1683), a Croatian writer who arrived in Moscow in 1659 and lived in Russia until 1676. Comparison and classification of Germanic languages for the first time carried out by Lambert Ten-Cate (1674-1731).

An extensive comparative study of many languages was carried out by Peter Pallas, who published a work in St. Petersburg entitled "Comparative dictionaries of all languages and dialects," containing translations of Russian words into 200 languages and dialects of Europe and Asia.

Issues of language classification began to be especially actively developed from the beginning of the 19th century. In the major work "Mithridates" I.K. Adelunga made one of the first attempts to classify languages not only by their genetic proximity, but also by typological similarity.

The 19th century in the history of linguistics is marked by the discovery and development of the comparative historical method, which made it possible to pose and solve many complex problems of the science of language: the problem of family ties of languages and their genealogical classification, periodization of the history of specific languages, the problem of general and particular, internal and external laws of language development.

The emergence of the comparative-historical method was facilitated by the presence of numerous experiments in comparing languages, the activities of scientists from different countries in the accumulation and classification of linguistic facts, especially the activities of lexicographers of the 17th – 18th centuries. on the compilation of multilingual dictionaries-thesauruses, which involuntarily prompted a comparison of different languages, as well as the scientific activity of scientists and thinkers of the Renaissance, who cultivated the idea of historicism.

An important role in the development of the comparative historical method was played by the introduction into the field of linguistic research of the ancient Indian language - Sanskrit and the establishment of the genetic similarity of Sanskrit with living and dead European and some eastern languages.

The first information about Sanskrit was brought to Europe by the Italian merchant Filippo Sassetti, who lived in India for five years, from 1583 to 1588, where he became acquainted with the ancient Indian language. He noted the similarity of some Sanskrit words with Italian words. In 1767, the French priest Curdu presented a report to the French Academy on the kinship of Indo-European languages, in which, based on a list of words and grammatical forms of Latin, Greek and Sanskrit, he suggested that they originated from the same source.

In 1786, the English orientalist and lawyer W. Jones, in a scientific report read to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, formulated his understanding of the place of Sanskrit in the comparative study of related Indo-European languages as follows: "The Sanskrit language has an amazing structure, which includes there is such a close similarity with the Greek and Latin languages both in verbal roots and in grammatical forms that it could not have arisen by chance; this relationship is so striking that not a single philologist who would like to study these languages can help but believe that they all arose from one common source, which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar, although not so convincing reason to believe that also the Gothic and Celtic languages,

although they are mixed with completely different dialects, originated from the same source; the Old Persian language could also be classified in the same family of languages."¹.

In 1808, the German philologist and critic, one of the founders of romanticism, F. Schlegel, published his work "On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians," in which he pointed out the kinship of Sanskrit with the Latin, Germanic and Persian languages not only in vocabulary, but and in grammar, and confirmed W. Jones's assumption about the commonality of their origin. In his book, F. Schlegel first used the terms "comparative grammar" and "Indo-Germanic languages" (the latter was later replaced by the synonym "Indo-European languages"). Written brightly and captivately, F. Schlegel's book contributed to the formation of ideas in comparative historical linguistics.

However, a decisive step in this direction was taken by the German linguist F. Bopp, who published in 1816 the work "On the conjugation system of Sanskrit in comparison with the conjugation of Greek, Latin, Persian and Germanic languages." Having examined the verbal inflection of the named languages in comparison, F. Bopp showed the similarity of the corresponding verbal forms and proved the commonality of their origin. Unlike his predecessors, F. Bopp also proved that in all Indo-European languages there are not only individual similar facts, but a whole system of correspondences, which allows us to talk about the unity of the grammatical system of related languages.

In 1811, the Danish linguist R. Rask published the work "Guide to the Icelandic Language," and in 1818 he published his main work, "Research in the Field of the Old Norse Language, or the Origin of the Icelandic Language," in which he revealed the closeness of Germanic languages with Greek, Latin and Balto-Slavic languages and stated that "not a single means of knowing the origin of peoples and their family ties in hoary antiquity, when history leaves us, is as important as language."

As a result of the study, R. Rask came to the conclusion that the Scandinavian and Germanic languages constitute two related groups of Indo-European languages.

An important role was played by the works of the Russian linguist A.Kh. Vostokov on Slavic comparative historical linguistics. In 1820, his work "Discourse on the Slavic language, serving as an introduction to the grammar of this language, compiled from its oldest written monuments" was published. In "Discourse" L.Kh. Vostokov determines the chronology of monuments of the Church Slavonic language, indicates its difference from Old Russian, and clarifies which sounds were transmitted by the letters and. In the same work, A.Kh. Vostokov pointed out the differences between the nominal and pronominal inflections of adjectives and participles in Old Slavic languages and thereby explained the reason for the formation of endings of adjectives, pointed out the absence of gerunds in the Church Slavonic language, resolved the question of the sound meaning of the letters ъ and ь, and established that the sounds [g], [k], [x] were hard in Old Slavonic and Old Russian, and the sound [ts] was soft. In his discussion A.Kh. Vostokov established the periodization of the Russian language, dividing its history into 3 periods: ancient (XI-XIII centuries), middle (XIV-XV centuries) and new (from the 16th century).

An important methodological point was the statement of A.Kh. Vostokov about the possibility of restoring, using the comparative historical method, the system of the Proto-Slavic language, by comparing the surviving Slavic dialects. The very proto-language of the ancient Slavs A.Kh. Vostokov presented them as a group of dialects very close to each other.

Among the founders of the comparative historical method, one should also name the famous German linguist Jacob Grimm. He owns the four-volume "German Grammar", in which the history of Germanic languages is studied using the comparative historical method.

In the middle and 2nd half of the 19th century. The comparative historical method was corrected and improved by many outstanding linguists. These include: German linguist August Schleicher

¹ См.: Лоя Я.В. История лингвистических учений. М., 1968. С. 38.

(1821-1868), Russian linguists I.A. Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929) and F.F. Fortunatov (1848-1914), Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), French linguist Antoine Meillet (1866-1936) and many others.

What are the principles of the comparative historical method, which made it possible to create a scientifically based genealogical classification of languages?

1. The relationship of languages is explained by the fact that these languages arose from one common source, called the proto-language, or the foundation language. A proto-language is an ancient language from whose dialects all related languages, called families of languages in the genealogical classification, originated. In the future, families of languages could be divided into groups and subgroups. The collapse of the proto-language is explained by the fragmentation of the language community.

2. Not any facts of related languages are subject to comparison, but only those that are most stable. These are the grammatical forms and sounds in the words of the main vocabulary, which can be said with more or less certainty that they go back to the same source. These include names of kinship (mother, brother, sister, daughter), numerals (up to ten, one hundred), some pronouns (I, you), words denoting parts of the human body, as well as the names of some animals, plants, tools, etc.

Borrowed words are completely excluded from the comparative analysis.

3. When comparing the roots of words, their meaning should be taken into account, but one must remember that words change meanings, so there may not be a complete match.

4. When comparing, phonetic alternations characteristic of each language should be taken into account.

5. Reconstruction of archetypes (ancient forms) is carried out as a result of: a) comparison of root and affix parts of words, b) comparison of data from written monuments with data from living languages.

6. When comparing, one should move from languages that are closely related (for example, compare the Russian language with Ukrainian and Belarusian) to compare language subgroups (for example, compare East Slavic languages with Western and South Slavic languages) and then - to compare groups related languages of the same family (for example, compare Slavic languages with Germanic, Romance, Indian, Iranian).

Conclusion

In this article we examined the main classification systems of the world's languages and their basic classification characteristics. However, there are other types of classifications of languages not mentioned in this article, for example, classification of languages by "vitality" (endangered, healthy, diseased, dead and revived), functional classification, sociolinguistic, areal and other classifications. The diversity of classification systems of the world's languages gives us the opportunity to identify the distinctive characteristics of differently structured languages and their comparative analysis.

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