



Comparative-Historical Linguistics: Traditions and Innovations

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Annotation: Comparative-historical linguistics considers the history of the expression of specific meanings and the evolution of language in connection with its history. It complements the typology of languages. The typology of languages explores the linguistic form to express meanings. Comparative-historical linguistics studies the history of specific meanings (lexical and grammatical) in connection with the evolution of their expression in linguistic form.

Keywords: Comparative-historical linguistics, the relationship of languages, hypothesis, typological similarity, comparative historical studies.

Comparative-historical linguistics begins its analysis by borrowing typological data and delineating the circle of languages that can return to a common source, i.e., a range of supposedly related languages. However, typological similarity does not prove the relationship between languages. For example, the Russian and Mongolian languages have a noticeable typological similarity but belong to different families.

Nevertheless, before proving the relationship of languages, a hypothesis is formed about the probable relationship of a certain group of languages based on the similarity of their typological features. This hypothesis is verified, accepted or rejected in the course of comparative historical research. Many language families are currently outlined hypothetically according to typological data, but have not been verified by comparative historical linguistics or have not been fully verified. For example, according to typological data, Caucasian languages seem to form one family, but this hypothesis has been verified only for groups of Caucasian languages. Therefore, according to the data of comparative historical studies, it is possible to speak so far of only three language families of typologically close Caucasian languages. Semitic and Hamitic languages, despite their typological similarity, were considered different language families until their origin from a common base language was proved.

The main research methods of the comparative historical method used in comparative historical linguistics are 1) external (comparative) reconstruction (comparative historical method in the narrow sense) - the search for genetically equivalent, similar words and morphemes in related languages. and determining the results of successive sound changes in the ancestral language in related languages; create a hypothetical model of the ancestral language, and then create rules for the restoration of specific morphemes of descendant languages derived from it; determine the system of correspondences between the compared languages (by phonetics, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, phraseology) and, on this basis, determine the relationship of languages, etc.; 2) internal reconstruction - the identification of events and interactions that clearly indicate the existence of certain elements in the early stages of the history of this language in some acquired language system; comparison of the oldest forms with the latest in some languages; 3) extracting data from the analysis of words that have been assimilated (that have been assimilated into reconstructed



languages or assimilated into languages other than these languages); 4) extracting information from toponymic materials, etc.

The reconstructions carried out cover all aspects of the language system: phonology, morphonology, morphology, vocabulary and partly syntax.

Typological features, combined with the similarity of the vocabulary, make it possible to confidently outline the hypothesis of the relationship of languages. For example, the Malayo-Polynesian languages share notable typological similarities among themselves and show similarities in vocabulary. This allows us to express the idea of their relationship and hypothetically assume that these languages form a single family. However, this is only a hypothesis until it is verified (by phonetic laws, morphological correspondences). Hypotheses of this kind may turn out to be generally correct, but very inaccurate in details. Thus, English and Latin languages have a noticeable common vocabulary and great typological similarity, but, as it turned out, they belong to different groups of the same language family. Sometimes such hypotheses can turn out to be completely wrong. For example, there was an assumption about the relationship of the Vietnamese language with Chinese. It was based on a striking typological similarity and commonality of a significant part of the dictionary. But studies have shown that these languages belong to different language families - Sino-Tibetan and Mon-Khmer, and the common vocabulary is a consequence of cultural influence.

Nevertheless, the construction of hypotheses about the relationship of languages is necessary: this allows you to establish the range of languages to be studied. The hypothesis limits the composition of the compared languages since the selection of any arbitrarily chosen languages would lead to a waste of time and effort.

After the basis of comparison is formed with the help of the hypothesis about the relationship of languages, they proceed to the verification of the hypothesis, which is the essence of comparative historical research. The basis of the comparative historical method is complete induction. The conclusion is made on the basis of the totality of linguistic facts. Incomplete induction is applied only when the whole set of facts is for some reason inaccessible. Since the entire set of linguistic facts cannot be obtained and surveyed at once, new facts are constantly included in the comparison procedure, and this often changes the conclusions.

In addition to the selection of languages, it is important to develop a comparison language. These are terms that characterize the word and its parts, and terms that characterize sounds.

From the characteristics of a word and its parts, one can deduce the concept of word boundaries. This concept is defined in relation to the concept of the morphemic composition of the word: root, stem, affixes and positional classes of affixes (prefixes, suffixes, and endings), transitional phenomena between affixes and individual sounds, such as internal inflexion, thematic sounds, infixes, especially represented by individual sounds and types of stress.

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