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THE PROBLEMS OF CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN PRESENT DAY LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

Present Day linguistics is rich in tendencies and schools. Formation and development of the anthropological paradigm and its leading position promised much to explain the problems related to how languages change, why do the languages change, what are the main causes of language changes, what is the role of internal and extralinguistic factors in language change? Convergence and Divergence are two main mutually related terms denoting the process of language development from two different angles. The author states, that there are two aspects of convergence: a) glottogonic, dealing with the formation and development of the language; b) structural-diachronic aspect, dealing with diachronical aspect of linguistic structures. Glottogonic convergence is the formation and development of the common structural features in the genetically related or non-related languages as a result of the long-termed and intensive contacts. The author points out, that the linguists distinguish two types of convergence: a) contact-based convergence; b) substratum-based convergence. The closing part of the article deals with the lexical, morphological and phonological types of divergence and convergence as illustrated with the materials from the ancient Germanic languages and the corresponding forms in Gothic, Scandinavian, Latin and common Indo-European.

KEYWORD: *Convergence, Divergence, Convergent Features, Divergent Features, Integration, Differentiation, Linguo-Genetic Investigations, Structural Aspect, Diachronic Aspect, Substratum, Diphthongization, Assimilation, Glottochronology, Language Change, Language Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics of the latest decades is marked by the expansion of the new terms to linguistics which earlier belonged to different branches of science, like philosophy, physics, biology, psychology, etc.

Webster's Dictionary gave the following definitions to the terms under discussion:

“Divergence – 1. A receding from each other in moving from a common center, the opposite of *convergence*. 2. Disagreement, deviation, from a standard.” [WNED, p. 295]

“Convergence – 1. Act or state of converging; also, a degree or point of convergence. 2. Tendency to grow alike; development of similarities in form, habits.” [WNED, p. 222]

A. Ushakov's Dictionary of Modern Russian gives the following definition to the word “divergence”:

“Divergence [fr. divergence] – Deviation in features, becoming different. Differences observed in features or qualities are called divergence.” [Ushakov, Vol. I, p. 707]

“Convergent – becoming alike as a result of convergence.” [Ushakov, Vol. I, p. 1432]

“Convergence – [from Latin “convergeus” - corresponding] scientific term.

– Correspondence of the features of the objects which are not related to each other; becoming alike;

- similarity of some features of the objects not on the basis of their genetical relationship but as a result of some other factors (in biology)”;

- The process when the ace of eyelids comes near when a man looks at a very close object. [Ushakov, Vol. I, p. 1432]

In one of the encyclopaedic dictionaries we find the following definition to the word “convergence”.

1. Formation and development of similar features in genetically different organisms on the basis of the similarity of the place of living and mode of life. Convergence can explain similarity between the body of the shark (fish) and dolphin (mammal), as well as between American cactuses and Afrikan molochais.

2. The direction of the ace of eyelids to the object. [Encyclopaedic dictionary, p. 276]

And now let's analyse the definitions given in the latest editions of that dictionary.

“Convergent zones – the zones in the world oceans when the upper currents get together and the water descends. Usually convergent zones are formed when the warm and cold currents meet. The waters going down are enriched by the oxygen of the lower layers of the ocean. According

to their size Southern Sub Polar zone is distinguished from others and it forms a belt around the planet between the 50°-60° of the southern latitude.” [Encyclopaedic dictionary, p. 616]

The theory of Convergence is one of the concepts in European and American politology.

In the Penguin dictionary of Science [1978] we find the following definition to the term convergence.

“**Convergence** – Coming to a point...” [p. 89]

To the word “**divergent**” we find the definition – “Going away in different directions from a common path or point.” [p. 115]

Convergence – (from Latin Convergo – coming near to, becoming alike). This term is used in biology to denote the process of appearing and development of the similar features as a result of the common location and conditions of life. It is explained by common trends of natural-selection. [p. 616]

In Ethnography this term is used to denote the phenomena which earlier were not found in definite cultures but later appeared in them as a result of different causes. [ED, p. 616]

In linguistics **convergence** is used to denote the formation and development of different structural elements of languages and the languages proper in the process of their historical development. [ED, p. 616]

In geography we use the term “**divergence zones**”. In geography there is a term “**divergence**” which is used to denote the scalar field indicating the density of the Vector field $a(P)$. It is marked by the abbreviation $\text{div } a$. [ED, p. 616]

The term “divergence” was introduced to the science by Ch. Darwin to explain the differences in the features of the primary organisms which came from one origin as a result of evolution.

In linguistics the term divergence is used to indicate the following phenomena:

- 1) The variants of a linguistic unit (generally the variants of a phoneme) become independent units as a result of the loss of the conditions determining the variation of the units.
- 2) A language unit, for example, a phoneme becomes different in its phonetic representation.
- 3) Variants or dialects of a language develop in the direction forming a new variety or a separate language. [LED, p. 136]

Convergence is an integration or correspondence of two or more essences. There are two aspects of convergence:

- **glottogonic** – dealing with the formation and development of the language;
- **structural-diachronic aspect** – dealing with the diachronical aspect of linguistic structures.

Glottogonic convergence is the formation and development of the common structural changes in the genetically related or non-related languages as a result of the long-termed and intensive contacts. This can happen with the languages which developed from common substratum. In this case scholars differ two types of convergence:

- 1) contact-based convergence

2) substratum-based convergence.

These two types of convergence may correspond or coincide. Convergence may include different levels of the language (for example lexical level, morphological level) as well as the entire language. The area where convergence is observed is called convergent zone.

The terms convergence and divergence may sometimes be replaced by other terms having close or similar meanings. For example, some linguists use the terms “Integration” for convergence and the term “differentiation” for the term divergence.¹

There are two tendencies in the process of a **language development**:

1) **Integration** (convergence). In integration dialects or develop towards obtaining common features in phonetic, grammatical structures and vocabulary.

2) **Differentiation** (or divergence). In differentiation dialects or languages develop towards obtaining different features in phonetic, grammatical structures and vocabulary to form new languages.

There are two types of factors of language change:

1) **Extra linguistic factors**. Extra linguistic factors of language change include a) Geographical factors, b) Social factors, c) Temporal factors.

2) **Intra linguistic factors**:

Intra linguistic factors of language change include:

- **Phonetic changes**. Phonetic changes include all kinds of changes taking place in the phonetic structure of a language like consonant and vowel changes.

- **Spelling changes**. Spelling changes include all changes taking place in the writing of words in different varieties of the language, like *honour – honor, colour – color, etc.*

- **Grammatical changes**. Grammatical changes include all changes taking place in the grammatical structure of the language; like using one form instead of another: *have got – have, in the street – on the street, etc.*

- **Lexical changes**. Lexical changes include all changes taking place in the vocabulary of the language. They are: *widening, narrowing, metaphorical use, connotative use, occasionalisms, etc.*

- **Stylistic changes**. Stylistic changes include all changes within the frames of stylistics that is the use of the word of one style can be used in the other style, thus becoming a stylistically marked form.

Convergence and Divergence are closely related to the process of language change. We can frankly say that they make the language change to be systematic. For example:

Any lexical change, can it be the word formation or borrowing may correspond to the general trend of the developments of the word-stock. Then, we observe Integration. If the borrowed word wouldn't correspond to the general trend of the development of the vocabulary it'll be a divergence. For example, the word “*paynet*” was borrowed from English into Uzbek and it has become an Uzbek word which Uzbek speakers pronounce as [pai'net]. In Uzbekistan even the

people who know English, and can use English for their general and specific purposes pronounce the word as [pai'net] not as ['pei'net]. And if a person pronounces the word correctly, that is as ['pei'net] the people look at him in queer way and correct him as if he is correcting an illiterate person. This kind of “modified”, “spelling based” pronunciation coincides with the Uzbek way of pronouncing words. In linguistics this process is called “**hypercorrection**” or correcting on the basis of a wrong variant.

Integration and Differentiation are also observed in the diachronic processes of inflectional Change, like leveling and the loss of inflections. For example: OIcel and ONorw “*steinn*” (stone) corresponds to Old Swed., Old Dan. “*stĕn*”, OIcel., ONorw “*-auga*” (eye) corresponds to OSwed. “*ogha*”; ODan. “*oghe*”, OIcel, ONorw “*lauss*” (untied) corresponds to OSwed, ODan “*lōs*”; OIcel “*eyrir*” (a name of a monet) ONorw “*øyrir*” – OSwed, ODan “*øre*”; OIcel. “*heyra*”, ONorw “*hoyra*” (to hear), OSwed “*hōra*”, ODan “*høre*”, etc.

In diphthongization of “*ē*” we observe divergence of phonemes in North Germanic languages.

OIcel, ONorw “*ek*” (I) – OSwed, O Dan “*iak*”; OIcel, ONorw “*stela*” (to steal) – OSwed “*stiaē'la*”, ODan “*stiaē'le*”.

In west Scandinavian languages a special type of breaking can be named as a source for divergence, where diphthongization of “*y*” to “*iu*” (y>iu) before **ngw**, **nkw**, **ggw** become different in neighbouring languages.

For example: OIcel “*syngva*” (to sing) – OSwed “*siunga*”; ODan “*siunge*”; OIcel “*syug*”, OSwed, ODan “*siung*”; OIcel “*søkkva*” (to lower) OSwed: “*siunka*”; ODan: “*sinke*”; OIcel “*tyggva*” (to chew), O Swed: “*tiugga*”; ODan: “*tiugge*”, etc.

A case of divergence we observe when East Scandinavian languages preserved the phoneme “**v**” before “**re**” which was lost in West Scandinavian languages. For example, OIcel “*reiðr*” (angry) – OSwed: “*vredner*”, OIcel “*reka*” (drive) – OSwed “*vræka*”, OIcel “*riða*” (turn) – OSwed. “*vriþa*”.

As we see languages are rich in such processes. Let's analyse some other phonemes of IE origin and see how they developed in Germanic languages:

IE e > Germ i: Lat. *fēro* > Goth *bairau*, *baira*, *bairip*; OE: *beran*; OHG: *biru*, *birrit* (to bear).

IE o > Germ. a: Lat. *oĕcto* > Goth. *ahtau*; OScan: *ātta*; OE: *eahta*; OFriz: *achto*; OHG: *ahto* (eight).

IE ə > Germ. a: Lat.: *pater* > Goth.: *fadar*; OScan: *faper*; OE *fæder*; OHG: *fater*.

a > e: Goth. “*harj*” is “army” – OFris.: *here*.

ā > ē: OE *dāed* (dead) – OFris.: *dēd*.

ō > ē: Goth. *dōmjan* (to judge) – OFris. *dēma*.

u > y > e: OHG: *kuri* (choice) – OFris. – *kere*.

au > e: Goth. *hausjau* (to hear) – OFris.: *hēra*.

ē > a: Goth. *tēkan* (to take) – OScand: *taka*.

Goth. *lētan* (to let) – OE *lētan*.

ā > ǣ: Lat. *scabō* (to make) > Goth. *skapiau*.

The exact determination of the time of these and other changes depends on many factors, such as, for example, differences in the judgements of contacts, differences in the material selected from within a family, etc.

Thus the divergence times revealed by the glottochronological method are not at all accepted, since the use of this method has not been generally recognized. Beyond this, we may consider comparable those divergence times in which we have a good deal of confidence, and our degree of confidence must depend upon the circumstances. We can be more confident in divergence times that are confirmed by evidence from other sources.

As we see linguists of the present time, as well as the linguists of the XIX-XX centuries could not explain the causes of the first and second Consonant Shift in Germanic languages, also the Change of the Stress system, Assimilation in the sphere of vowels, Rhotacism, Ablaut, etc. using traditional methods and procedures of the Historical-Comparative method, founded by B. Delbrücke, H. Paul, K. Brugmann, K. Osthoff, F. Kluge, A. Meillet, H. Hirt, R. Prokosh, H. Krahe, W. Streitberg, A. Noreen, E. Benveniste, Y. Kurilovica and many others as well as we can mention the theories put forward and developed by the great Russian comparativists, like V.M. Jirmunsky, E.A. Makayev, M.M. Guchman, G.S. Schur, V.M. Serebrennikov, S.D. Katznelson, G.S. Klychkov and others who lived in the XX th century.

We think that those problems, related to divergence and convergence mentioned above can be solved successfully if we apply the principles, theory and procedures of analysis of the linguistic data, as well as the cause and the results of convergence and divergence in Germanic languages.

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List of the abbreviations used

GL – Germanic languages

OE – Old English

ODan. – Old Danish

OG – Old Germanic

OHG – Old High German

OSw/OSwed. – Old Swedish

OIcel. - Old Icelandic

ONorw. – Old Norwegian

LED - Dictionary of linguistic terms