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ICONICITY IN CONSONANTAL LANGUAGES

The article discusses the semiotic approach to language typology and suggests that structural features are interdependent with imagic and diagrammatic iconicity of encoding. It is argued that certain linguistic characteristics tend to occur together with semiotic ones, that is the syllabic pattern complexity determines the productivity of mimetic reduplication, agglutination encourages the principle of semantic iconicity, while the type of word-changing paradigm appeals to the principle of constructive iconicity. It is hypothesized that the type of phonemic inventory may imply the presence of productive imagic iconicity, and languages relying on the high ratio of consonants to vowels tend to be better adjusted to mimetic (sound symbolic) encoding of a particular set of meanings. To support the hypothesis, the article tackles the cases of genetically unrelated Abkhaz and Zulu.

Key words: language typology, language with high ratio of consonants to vowels, iconicity, phonemic inventory, sound imitation.

Козлова Т. О. Іконічність мов консонантного типу. Статтю присвячено проблемам мовної типології. Висувається гіпотеза про зумовленість семіотичних можливостей лінгвальних систем їх типологічними властивостями. Висвітлено залежності між морфологічним типом мови та діаграматичними іконічними репрезентаціями, зокрема між складністю силабічної будови та продуктивністю такого способу словотворення як редуплікація; між аглютинацією та порядком компонентів морфологічної будови слова, яка віддзеркалює концептуальну дистанцію між кореневою та афіксальними морфемами (принцип семантичної іконічності). Розглянуто співвідношення між типом словозмінної системи та кодуванням ядерних концептів (принцип конструктивної іконічності). Основну увагу приділено фонологічній типології мов за параметром 'ступінь розробленості фонемного інвентарю' та способами реалізації образної іконічності. Мови з багатими системами консонантизму тяжіють до іконічної (звукообразальної) репрезентації тих чи тих позначуваних завдяки розвиненості конкретного розряду елементів позначення, які забезпечують умотивованість інкорпорованих структур та схожість позначуваних із позначуваними денотатами. Представлено тематичні дослідження звукообразальних властивостей салієнтних приголосних у генетично неспоріднених мовах – африкат та фрикативних в абхазській мові й кліксів у зулу.

З'ясовано, що фонетична система абхазької мови має у своєму розпорядженні більше засобів кодування тонких відтінків переривчастих шиплячих, свистячих, шиплячо-свистячих тощо типів звучання. Фонетичні засоби активно залучаються до створення іконічних слухових образів (шипіння рідини при нагріванні) та синестезичних аудіо-тактильних образів (конденсація/розрідження приголосних та метатеза для імітації консистенції речовини). Клікси в мові зулу виявилися високопродуктивними у формуванні імітативів, що співвідносяться як зі слуховою (відтінки тріщання, стукання тощо), так і неслуховою ониматопеєю (емоції). Звуконаслідування потрапляють до класу культурних реалій, відбивають самотні етносу та залучаються до внутрішньокультурного ядра лексику. Це розхитує донині стереотипні уявлення про звукообразальну лексику як маргінальний клас через її незначну кількість. Якісний склад фонем та їх аранжування впливає на вибір мовцями як засобів мовної репрезентації певних ознак денотатів, так і самих ознак, що кодуються.

Результати дослідження узгоджуються з концепцією співвіднесеності приголосних та голосних із "лексичністю" і "граматичністю" повнозначних слів та морфем, а також морфологічним типом мови, що опосередковано вказує на зумовленість формування системи консонантизму семантичним фактором. Якісний склад фонетичної системи мови впливає на її здатність кодувати ті чи ті значення, звуко-символічний потенціал, пріоритетність і ступінь деталізації окремих розрядів лексики, зокрема й звуконаслідувань. Проте недостатність фонемного інвентарю не позбавляє мову можливості позначати типові звукові й незвукові денотати за допомогою компенсаторних засобів або ж опосередковано.

Ключові слова: типологія мов, консонантна мова, іконічність, фонемний інвентар, звукообразальність.

1. Introduction. Since the early 19th century, there have been numerous attempts to compare, contrast and group languages (W. von Humboldt, E. Sapir, A. Schlegel, A. Schleicher, to name but few). Such endeavor has resulted in several conceptually different approaches to language classification that rely on cultural or biological transmission, hybridity, and structural similarity. From numerous works in historical and comparative linguistics, it came out that genetically related

languages tend to develop structural similarities. However, establishing genetic ties is complicated by language contact influences, chronological depth of proto-languages, and subjectivity of reconstruction procedures. Moreover, similarity of structural features does not presuppose genetic relatedness of languages. Further, it is not clear which particular typological properties are significant for language groupings. As a result, no consensus is reached on language classification in contemporary studies.

Apart from genetic and/or typological criteria, are there any other features that may be taken into consideration when deciding about language types and groupings? Given that each language is a sign system and its particular linguistic forms are linked to particular meanings, semiotic aspect is to be accounted in classifying languages. Although, not surprisingly, there has been some discussion into the semiotic implications of typological properties [Fischer 2011; Kibrik 2003; Kruchkova 2000], it is necessary to broaden the research to systematic investigation of iconic effects of these and other structural features.

In light of these issues, **the purpose of the present study** is to investigate whether dominant components in phonemic inventories support iconic encoding of certain content. **The current study is based on the following hypothesis:** the type of phonemic inventory may imply the presence of productive imagic iconicity, and languages relying on the high ratio of consonants to vowels tend to be better adjusted to mimetic (sound symbolic) encoding of a particular set of meanings. To support the hypothesis, the article tackles two cases of genetically unrelated Abkhaz and Zulu.

The article is structured as follows. I will first deal with various approaches to classification of languages (section 2) and discuss why no general agreement on language grouping has been reached among historical linguists and typologists. Secondly, in section 3, I will look into some cooccurrences of typological features and iconically represented meanings. In section 4, I will consider two languages which are typologically similar in respect to consonant-to-vowel ratio, arguing that the prevalence of affricates and fricatives in Abkhaz as well as clicks in Zulu are necessitated by speakers' needs to give expression transparency to the certain range of meanings. Concluding remarks are provided in section 5.

2. Approaches to grouping languages. The first three approaches appeal to genetic ties among languages. One of them is grounded on the degree of diachronic linguistic relatedness [Greenberg 2002; Ruhlen 1994]. It groups languages into taxonomic units such as (macro)families, subfamilies/groups, and genera whose genetic relations are not biologically established, but based on cultural transmission from one generation of speakers to another. Hence, languages are recognized as genetically linked if they descend from a common ancestor (a proto-language) and show a shared stock of linguistic entities (cognates) due to their simultaneous and independent development, not language contacts.

The second approach [Croft 2000, p. 197] recognizes the possibility of genetic (biological) transmission of certain linguistic features from a mother language to its off-spring(s) in spite of historical changes. Although the entire literature lacks a unified approach, and genetic ties among languages are being constantly revised, “the traditional family tree model of diversification and genetic relationship remains the main reference point of comparative-historical linguistics owing to the fact that it is usually possible (except in relatively rare borderline cases) to distinguish mixed languages, whose origins are not genetic, from languages whose development has followed the much more common genetic line” [Thomason & Kaufman 1991, p. 3].

The third approach to language typology allows hybridity, i.e. language mixture, and argues that it is a methodological requirement to take contact-induced changes into consideration. Genealogical / genetic classification appears to be irrelevant for pidgins and creoles [Dryer 2013] as, according to S. Mufwene, “language transmission is not necessarily on the parent-to-offspring model” [Mufwene 2001, p. 12]. S. Mufwene's view of hybridity and feature recombination is consistent with other genetic creolists' position and sheds light on that “it [is] possible for features

originating in the lexifier and the substrate languages to mix into a new system” [Mufwene 2009, p. 373]. Indeed, it is unclear what taxonomic unit/s a particular mixed language fits.

Another typological classification was elaborated by the 18th and 19th centuries scholars and has been extended by modern typologists [Comrie 1989; Croft 2002; Greenberg 1974]. It builds on cross-linguistic comparisons and broadly describes languages on the basis of common structural features. Quite a number of criteria are in fact applied as amenable in current studies (see [Shibatani & Bynon 1999]): low vs high morpheme per word ratio (isolating and synthetic languages), type of morpheme combination (fusional, agglutinating, polysynthetic languages), grammatical marking of agreement (dependent-, head-, double-, and zero-marking languages), position of inflectional morphology (suffixing vs prefixing languages), word order (fixed vs free word order languages), the basic type of the syntactic constituents, and so forth. Having described the diversity for 257 language families to over 190 structural properties which have between 2 and 28 values, *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online (WALS)* [Dryer & Haspelmath 2013] proves that there is a wide variety of structural characteristics by which languages are grouped and distinguished. The question “Which typological properties should be given importance?” still remains unanswered. It is common knowledge that genetically related languages are likely to form structural similarities whereas typologically alike systems are not expected to show genetic ties.

Typological investigations of the 20th century discovered that some logically unconnected structural features cooccur. According to J. Greenberg, they are “a large proportion” [Greenberg 2002, p. 40]. Not only do such cooccurrences call for an explanation, they stimulate to investigate correspondences between structural and semiotic features of languages. In what follows, I will discuss how typological features are linked to iconic representation of content.

3. Typological and iconic features that occur together. In cognitive terms, iconicity in language is interpreted as either imagic or diagrammatic representation of our thoughts [Haiman 1985; Langendonck 1985]. It appears that languages with particular typological characteristics are better adjusted to the embodiment of cognitive structures they pertain to. Typological and iconic features that cooccur include reduplication and diagrammatic iconicity of quantity, agglutination and diagrammatic (semantic) iconicity of distance, inflecting paradigm and constructive iconicity, among others.

Highly productive reduplication is found in agglutinating and isolating languages [Fischer 2011; Kruchkova 2000] due to the transparency of word forms. Even though agglutination contrasts with isolation in terms of morpheme per word ratio, both types of languages extensively employ iconic repetitions of stems.

In agglutinative languages, words consist of many morphemes that are combined in certain order without any formal or semantic changes. Clear-cut morpheme seams welcome full or partial repetitions of stems to imitate a range of concepts. Form enlargement becomes an efficient means of content enlargement. The following instances from Kiembu, the Bantu language spoken by the Embu people in Kenya, illustrate that: intensification / augmentation – *nae* “bad” > *naenae* “extremely bad”, *ndoro* “sour” > *ndorondoro* “very sour”, continuity, that is ‘do something for a while before it stops’ – *rera* “cry” > *rerarera* “cry for a while, i.e. cry for a while before it stops”, comparison, that is ‘something is more different’ – *nini* “small” > *ninanini* “smaller”, process of doing something – *oreri* “crying” > *orerareri* “act of crying”, repetitiveness – *kuma* “to go out” > *kumauma* “to go out several times”, etc. [Wanja 2014, p. 51-53, 55-57].

Agglutination is a synthetic feature allowing one-to-one correspondence between morphemes and meanings they express when incorporated into a single word structure. Therefore, agglutination contrasts to analytical nature of isolating languages that convey separate meanings by separate words. In classical Chinese, Vietnamese and other Austro-Asiatic languages, distinct word forms typically consist of single morphemes. Doubled stems imitations are exemplified by Vietnamese, the isolating language with commonly used reduplication of words: prolonged action - *nói* “to talk”

> *nóinói* “to keep talk”, intensified attenuation – *khít* “tight, close” > *khin khít* “somewhat tight, somewhat close”, *khít khít* “very tight, very close” [Barnes 2014, p. 149-150].

Another fact of dominant structural and iconic features cooccurrence is instanced by the order of morphemes agglutinated in a word structure [Bybee 1985]. The cognitive distance surfaces as a distinct sequential hierarchy of grammatical morphemes in a word-form. Consider the following example from Kyrgyz, the Turkic language spoken in Kyrgyzstan and other regions: *ata-lar-imie-da* “at our fathers”, where the ROOT morpheme *ata-* “father” is immediately followed by the NUMBER MARKER *-lar-* “plural”, then by the POSSESSIVE MARKER *-imie-* “our” and the CASE MARKER *-da* “locative” [Kozlova 2015, p. 88]. The case marker is the most distant from the root morpheme because it is the plural form modifier, while the number marker characterizing the lexical meaning of the root is in contact position to it. Thus, the established conceptual distance is mirrored in the word-form structure arrangement.

Such structural and semiotic relevance is qualified as “the principle of semantic iconicity” and distinguished from the manifestations of “the principle of constructive iconicity” [Kibrik 2003, p. 262]. A. Kibrik [ibid.] follows M. Wheeler [Wheeler 1993, p. 109] who argues that constructive iconicity is favoured by languages with word-changing paradigms encoding unmarked categories as the least feature-bearing, and appealing to marked categories as the most feature-bearing.

Findings about dominant typological features and iconicity conformity have stimulated an approach to other structural parameters.

4. Imagic iconicity in consonantal languages: Abkhaz and Zulu. There are languages with rich phonemic inventories and a high ratio of particular type of consonants to vowels. It is a reasonable assumption that such properties are not accidental and occur because they assist communication as transparent (iconic) means of encoding due to the symbolic nature of frequent consonants. The support to this statement can be found in Abkhaz and Zulu.

Abkhaz is a northwest (Abkhazo-Adyghian) Caucasian language with 68 consonants combined with minimal amount (1 / 2) of vowel(s) (/a/ : /ə/). Its phonemic inventory is varied by 15 affricates and 24 fricatives. Also rich in phonemic inventory, Zulu, or isiZulu, one of the Southern Bantu languages, demonstrates 5 vowels and 51 consonants including three articulatory types of clicks (15). Clicks are a distinctive feature in Zulu and very rare in other languages. Abkhaz whistling and hissing sounds as well as Zulu clicks are important for communication in mountainous and deserted areas where the transmittance of voice either meets barriers or gets dissipated in the open space.

Affricates and fricatives in Abkhaz have strong imitative value and represent subtle variations of hissing (front articulation), hushing (back articulation), whistling, and prolonged buzzing noises: **háká*, Tap. *hak'á-rá* “to puff, pant”, Bz. *c'ə'rə'* “to shout, squeak”, *ś'əś'ə* “to whistle” [Chirikba 1996, p. 68-69, 107]. Other means of iconic encoding are employed to mimic more complex sets of denotata features: consonantal condensation in Abkh. *akhshtsa* (lit. ‘milk (which is) hot’) appears in the name of a drink traditionally cooked by pouring milk onto the heated stone which causes a hissing sound; condensation of spirants in the phonetic structure is used in the names for hardened, viscous liquids (CAbkh. **ǰə-šá* > SAbx. *á- ǰšá*, Tap. *ǰšá* “butter”, SAbkh. “melted fat” (< CAbkh. ~**ǰ* “butter”, **šá* “fat” [Chirikba 1996, c. 104]) and, conversely, sparse fricatives and affricates are to mimic soft, crumbly substance (CAbkh. **ǰ-masár/ja* > Bz. *ǰ-masár/j* “specially prepared cheese from sheep milk” < CAbkh. ~**ǰə* “milk” [Chirikba 1996, p. 101-102]); metathesis in the names of dairy food imitates the change of substance state (LIQUID as in CAbh.-Tap. **ǰə-šə* “milk” vs THICK LIQUID as in CAbx.-Kab. **ǰə-xə* > Kab. *šxə*, **ǰxəwə* > Ad. *šxəwə* “sour milk” [Starostin 1998-2013]).

Zulu speakers pronounce clicks by sucking air. It enables them to be sophisticated imitators of clicking and clucking nuances, as well as helps encode categories of the perceived sounds and their sources or causes (movements, physical entities, emotions): SOUNDS (*ce-nce* “small fine sound”, *qi* “the high sound of breaking, springing”, *xa-nxa* “noise made in mixing food with a fluid or

beating it up”); MOVEMENTS AND ACTIONS ACCOMPANIED BY SOUNDS (*u-caca* “to touch slightly the skin, as in cutting a boil”, *qandisela* “to beat hard upon, to make cracking noise upon, as beating or hammering upon a stone”, *uku-xapa-xapa* “to make a frequent crackling noise with the feet; referring to a peculiar way of dancing by which individuals try to make a crackling noise by bending their ankles”); OBJECTS PRODUCING SOUNDS (*i-cwincwe* “the sugar-bird, so called from its voice”, *qandeka* “an object that cracked”); EMOTIONS (*uku-casuka* “to be upset; to be in a bad humour or temper; not yielding; to be perverse or angry”). The significance of articulatory features is obvious in imitations created by various form-meaning conformities. Cf.: [{dental, i.e. forward place of articulation} + {‘small, flat, sharp’}] as in *uku-coboza* “to make a squashing or crushing sound, as by treading upon soft objects, as shells, eggs, fruits, etc.”, and [{palatal, i.e. backward place of articulation} + {‘big, fragile and breakable’}], as in *uku-qoboza* “1) to break, tear into small pieces, as birds of prey tear or rip up their victims; 2) to crush or beat into pieces, as glass or earthenware; 3) to make a hole in a calabash” [Döhne 1857, p. 44-374].

5. Concluding remarks. Comparative and cognitive approaches to iconicity have stimulated a considerable shift from the description to explanation of iconic effects, establishing relevance between language typology and iconic encoding. The investigation of transparent and opaque iconicity of reduplication in different spoken languages allowed to discover the common cognitive ground forming iconic signs and the restriction against reduplication due to the complexity of polysyllabic words. These findings agree with typological conclusions about difference in types and productivity of reduplication in agglutinative and fusional languages, two extremes of morphological typology. Cross-linguistic generalizations concerning the order and distance between roots, derivational and inflexional affixes concur with the proximity/distance principle of iconicity.

Iconicity is also related to quantitative and qualitative features of phonetic inventories. Languages vary in the degree of iconicity and meanings that manifest in mimetic encoding. Phonetic iconicity is universal as it is found in languages irrespectively of their genetic ties, typology, or geographical distribution. Nevertheless, iconicity is higher in consonantal systems, obviously, owing to semantic values of articulatory and acoustic features of consonants and their ability to encode less abstract, non-relational meanings.

Consonant inventories may be elaborated by means of certain feature enlargement, such as affricates and sibilants in Abkhaz, clicks in Zulu, and appear to be more efficient in expressing particular and salient concepts by means of sound symbolism. It is difficult to make generalizations about the causes of such iconicity. However, it can be assumed that complicated consonant systems appear due to ecological adaptation of speakers to the environmental challenges (mountainous or deserted areas), the strive to overcome natural barriers and elaborate efficient means of information transfer. Another possible explanation of developing efficient sound symbolic repertoire is areal contact and the necessity to create simple means of transparent encoding. These and other issues of typological and iconic conformity call for further investigations.

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КОНЦЕПТ MENSCH В СКАЗКАХ БРАТЬЕВ ГРИММ

Стаття присвячена концепту MENSCH на прикладі текстів казок братів Грімм. У статті досліджуються вербалізатори цього концепту. Аналізується взаємодія казкових та реальних персонажів, що дозволяє говорити про досить широку палітру його репрезентантів.

Ключові слова: народна казка, літературна казка, концептосистема, концепт, фольклорний жанр.

Kurokhtina A. M. The concept MENSCH in the Grimm brothers' fairy tales. The article deals with considering the concept MENSCH on the example of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales. The given work presents the investigation of possibility of this concept verbalization as well as the analysis of fairy-tale and real characters' interaction. Hence, one can speak about the wide range of representants. The studies of many linguists are devoted to fairy tales. According to numerous researches two peculiarities of fairy tales are traditionally distinguished: the genre of any fairy tale is a narrative and any fairy tale is certain to be the flight of imagination. Fairy tales are often divided into two large groups: folklore and literary. The creation of a literary tale is based on some repetition of a folk tale but they differ from each other. Literary tale has a written variant which reflects some specific features of the author's style. Speaking about the Grimm brothers' tales one can mention the original symbiosis of author's and folklore tales. The representation of the concept MENSCH in the Grimm brothers' fairy tales is quite varied. The main characters are mostly kings, princes, princesses. Sometimes the attention is focused on the representatives of different specialities: shepherds, woodcutters, foresters, peasants. It is connected with the description of all aspects of human life in fairy tales. It is interesting that in many tales the representatives of older generation are mainly positive characters: they are clever, kind, honest while younger people often have negative features. The text analysis shows that the concept MENSCH is represented by such nouns as Mann, Frau, Kind, Mädchen. The usage of these nouns is conditioned by their neutral connotation that makes generalization possible. The analysis also reveals the binary nature of a human through the distinctive opposition of positive and negative characters, kindness and evil. The cognitive analysis allows us to claim that all ages, gender peculiarities, family and social relationships are included in fairy tales texts.