THE METALANGUAGE OF PHONOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The metalanguage of phonology unites a strictly determined number of notions, forming an hierarchy—phoneme, feature, category, system, connected by law governed relations and necessary for a non-contradictory, comprehensive and economic, both synchronic and diachronic, as well as typologic description of languages.

Metalanguage is a notion of mathematical logics, opposed to a language as an object. We interpret these notions in the spirit of J. Baudouin de Courtenay, who anticipated them to a certain degree distinguishing between "linguistic categories", i.e. the metalanguage, and "language-category", i.e. a language-object. The first ones are "pure abstractions", while the second ones are something "living in a language" /3/.

Phoneme. The first notion of phonology metalanguage, the phoneme, was introduced by J. Baudouin de Courtenay, who defined it in his last works as "the psychical equivalent of a sound" /3/. This phoneme definition can be evaluated in the light of materialistic dialectics, taking into account that a speech sound is something material, moving air particles, while a phoneme is something ideal, i.e. a peculiar reflection of the material in the consciousness of a language speaker. As K. Marx wrote, the ideal is "nothing else than the material, transplanted into a human head and transformed there" /1/.

Elaborating his phoneme theory, N. S. Trubetzkoy underlined, that phonemes realized themselves in speech sounds, that phonemes and sounds "lie in different planes", that is why a phoneme could not be considered as a family or a group of sounds, that we could not "begin with the sound" in defining a phoneme /4/. However, this true principle did not prevent him from criticizing the above-mentioned definition of the phoneme by J. Baudouin de Courtenay. Baudouin's phoneme is sensually concrete, it is the starting point in phonological cognition. The process of ascent from concrete to abstract cognition is ascending from a Baudouin's phoneme to a feature, from a feature to a category of features, from the latter to a system. A further ascent from abstract to mentally concrete, the deepest and the most content-bound cognition, consists in the definition of the phoneme as a totality of abstractions /5/, /6/.

A feature is a class (split into property and set) of phonemes. N. S. Trubetzkoy considered the feature either as a class of phonemes, when he determined the series as set of phonemes, characterized by the same feature (in logic it is a determination of set via property), or as an element of the phoneme, when he said, that "a phoneme is easily split into its phonological features" /6/, /5/.

In the last case he hypothesized the feature, i.e. he transformed it from a class into an element.

Category. N. S. Trubetzkoy has introduced the notion of "coordinate" (category of features). He was right as he noted, that "every feature certainly belongs to a coordinate", but he also noted, that "a feature enters a phoneme composition" (1) /4/. Neither his followers nor like-minded people paid any attention to his coordinate. L. Hjelmslev and later E. Benveniste reduced all phonological system to two notions, the first one—to taxeme and glosseme /7/, /8/, the second one—to phoneme and merias /9/. A complex integral system, i.e. the phonological one was turned by them into a simple, summative system, based not on subordination but on coordination /5/, /10/, /11/. Meanwhile a category of features (a coordinate for N. S. Trubetzkoy) is a cardinal notion of phonology, that can be defined as a class of non-crossing features.

System. The most general notion of the phonology metalanguage is the system, that is a class of feature categories. It is in the system that every feature of one category intersects with every feature of its other categories. It is further, the feature intersection points that form the phonemes. Every phoneme is determined by the same feature number (one belonging to every category of a given system). According to N. S. Trubetzkoy, phonemes of
The content of the document appears to be a mix of languages, including Russian and Ukrainian. The text seems to be discussing phonological and linguistic concepts, possibly related to the development of sounds in languages. Without a clearer context or more legible text, it's challenging to provide a coherent summary or answer specific questions. The document might be discussing the relationship between sounds and their written representations, as well as the impact of language on identity and culture. It's important to note that the text is fragmented and requires careful reading to understand its full implications.

27. Евдошевко А.П. Елементе де фонологие диахронике. "Курс де граматике историка в димней молдованешъ". Кишинев, 1965.

28. Евдошевко А.П. Типологические основы русской грамматики для нерусских. - "Вопросы языкознания". 1987, № 2.