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ROMAN STOPA

THE PREHISTORY OF LANGUAGE

(Some pre-Indo-European survivals in Polish)

First of all I should like to apologize to the historians of Polish that I ventured to enter their domain. However, I hope to be justified by three facts:

1) If I am not mistaken, no student of Polish, after Rozwadowski, was busy with treating some similar subject.

2) I am of the opinion that just the work *On the phenomena and evolution of language* by Rozwadowski excuses me for having undertaken such a difficult and ungrateful task. The work of my best teacher and leader in linguistics not only illustrates the problem of the origin of language from the standpoint of the general linguistics, but at the same time it contains a series of highly valuable remarks as to the rise of some linguistic structures in Polish.

3) A few years ago the eminent American structuralist Ch. Hockett had published in this respect a very important article (*The Origin of Speech*, „Scientific American" 1960) *, where we find the same evolutionary, let us say, Darwinian attitude as we have taken in our previous works, such as 1) *The Clicks, their Nature, Development and Origin*, Polish Academy of Learning, Kraków 1935 (in German), 2) *The Birth of Human Thought and Speech*, Kraków 1948 (in Polish), 3) *The Origin of Human Speech in the Light of Anthropology and Comparative Linguistics*, „Anthropological Review", v. XXII, Wrocław 1956

* See also *The Human Revolution* by Ch. Hockett and R. Ascher in „Current Anthropology", vol. 5. No. 3 June 1964.

(in Polish with a Summary in English and Russian), 4) *The Evolution of Click Sounds in Some African Languages*, Scientific Copybooks of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków 1960, and others.

The above mentioned attitude of Ch. Hockett cumulates in his general assertion that is worth quoting here: „Man is the only animal that can communicate by means of abstract symbols. Yet this ability shares many features with communication in other animals, and has arisen from these more primitive systems". Thus, we see that there exists a retraceable bridge between the communication systems of animals, especially those of human-like apes and the most primitive communication system of man.

We need not enter into details neither is it necessary to criticize the thirteen design-features of animal communication fixed by Ch. Hockett. His approach to the problem, as a pioneer outline of anatomical and biological premises of the origin of language seems to be reasonable and the only acceptable one, though, as any pioneer work, it requires some corrections and supplements. Thus, we cannot agree to the original „arbitrariness of the ties between „meaningful message-elements and their meanings", i.e. between „signa" and „designata", symbols and symbolized objects of experience. After all, we are informed by physiology of speech that with primitive man any sufficiently strong physiological process is accompanied by some determined symptoms, resp. by some strictly determined pattern (stereotype) of behaviour, the basic part of which is constituted by the respective gestures, voices and sounds. In this way in some instances we produce clicks quite unintentionally, all the more they are produced by some very primitive tribes, e.g. by Bushmen, and we are entitled to assume that they were produced by the man in Paleolithic, for they build some indispensable part of the call system of Primates.

If we call some special attention just to the phenomenon of clicking in man and ape, it is because so far there existed in the literature on the communication system of animals only some shy, inaccurate hints of its occurrence, however, the respective documentation, particularly that of phonetic order was missing. Now, similarly to the investigation of the origin of language that has

got so much importance by the articles of Ch. Hockett, some change of the attitude towards the problem of clicks is to be hoped on account of the research on call systems in Primates by R. J. Andrew. In the work *Evolutionary and Genetic Biology of Primates*, volume I. edited by John Buettner-Janusch, Academic Press-New York—London 1964, in Chapter 13 *The Displays of the Primates* by R. J. Andrew we find not only the physiological and biological description of the animals while clicking, but there are also given the meanings and the spectrograms of clicks. Although the phonetician would like to see some more detailed description and more exact pictures that would enable him to make comparisons with different kinds of clicks in man, nevertheless the research should be welcomed in linguistic circles heartily and the linguists who are busy with the investigation of the origin of speech will attribute much importance to it.

So we see that already the occurrence of clicks in the behaviour symptoms of Primates and in those of man speaks against the arbitrariness in the rise of linguistic symbols. Similarly, the kind of tone that accompanied originally any vowel was determined by the kind of emotion, in which the toned vowel participated as its indispensable symptom. Furthermore, there exist some strict correlations between the tone and colour of the vowel, between the tone and the kind of onglide (cf. the so-called „theory of Laryngals"). We know also about the role of epiglottis lowering the tone of pressed vowels, and the pressing or pharyngal roughening of the vowels represents a definite symptom in linguistic behaviour that is determined by the kind of emotion. Finally we know to what extent the kind of experience determines the use of gestures.

Among the supplements that seem necessary to complete the outline we should like to see that Hockett may have taken more into account the anatomical development of the speech organs, e.g. the indices of the tongue that are quite different in baboon, chimpanzee and man.

Then he does not consider the role of survivals, of gestures and clicks: In our languages of nowadays incomplete clicks play some marginal role similar to interjections, they are „survivals" of olden periods of language evolution, in the languages of Bushmen,

who themselves as to their physique and culture represent some remnants of the Upper Paleolithic, they play some basic role in the consonantal system of the respective languages; the role is even more important than that of the correlated labial and dental expiratory consonants that are still coming into existance just out of click-blocks, first as their allophones and then as quite independent phonemes. It is a striking fact, that in Bushman only the range of click-blocks and that of guttural (palatal, velar and laryngal) consonants is fully represented. Some similar situation is to be found in the sound inventory of chimpanzee, as it is roughly depicted in *Chimpanzee Intelligence and Its Vocal Expressions* by Yerkes and Learned, Baltimore 1925, however, with this difference that there are no click-blocks at all. (Some labiodental click, but not a click-block, is to be supposed in the „unique sound" of Chim, while looking through Panzee's fur, marked by Mrs. Blanche W. Learned in the form of *Vts* and described on p. 122 as „a curious liquid sound with ... lower lip against ... teeth *vts*, *vts*, *vts*"). Thus, the inference is justified (which was confirmed by the examination of some African languages like Zulu, Hottentot, Sandawe and Hausa) that the origin of the labial and dental consonants is due to the evolution of click sounds.

There is no place enough to describe the conditions and the mechanism of these sound shiftings; besides, our previous works contain much of the respective material. Therefore, after having considered in short some general linguistic premises for the acquisition of speech by man we shall give some basic assertions, the evidence of which is either superfluous or it is to be found in the respective anthropological, archeological or linguistic literature. These assertions will explain our method in approaching the problem of prehistory of any language and the way of interpreting the respective linguistic material in Polish. Here they are:

1) Africa is the cradle of mankind. It is the homeland of chimpanzee, gorilla and the Australopithecines (L. S. B. Leakey, C. Arambourg, H. L. Shapiro, Ch. Hockett). From this continent man spread, first to Asia and then to Europe and other continents. Therefore it is not anything strange in the fact that we look for the oldest remnants of culture and language just in Africa. In

the work *The Genetic Unity of African Languages* we tried to prove that African languages constitute one developmental sequence, Proto-Bushmanoid (comprising the ancient languages of Bushman, Boskop and Pygmy) being their common origin. In this way Bushman clicking phonological system became something like a common denominator for all the phonological systems in Africa and outside this continent.

2) The most primitive branch of mankind as to the anatomical and cultural make is represented nowadays by pygmoid peoples, who always were being pushed into the inhospitable territories and living in isolation, now mostly in the tropical zone from Cameroon to the Philippines (Coon, Garn, Birdsell) they have conserved relatively intact their culture and language. In this way they are something like „living survivals" of the Paleolithic (Sir Harry H. Johnston), living witnesses of life and speech of homo fossilis.

3) Leaving aside some account of primitive features in Bushman physique, culture and language, as we have done it elsewhere, let us try to reconstruct the prehistory of some Polish free and bound morphemes, vz. that of 1) *i* „and", 2) *do* „into", 3) *ku* „towards, o", 4) *na* „on", *krzyk, krzyczeć* „cry, to cry", 6) *kar-mić* „to feed", 7) *grzmi* „it thunders", 8) *-ek*, *-ak* nominal suffix for Diminutives, 9) *-a* the Genetive ending for Sg. masc., especially in Nouns with the old *-o* stem. We have chosen some uninflected twords (*i*, *do*, *ku*, *na*), then some inflected (*krzyk*, *karmić*, *grzmi* and finally two suffixes, the word forming suffix *-ek* (*-ak*) and the flexional ending *-a*. Their semantic basis is to be found in Bushman root-words depicting some concrete phenomena, their continuators in African and Indo-European point to some typical phenomena, while the respective bound morphemes in Polish denote the mere relation or reference. Here it is only space enough to give one example of the first group (*na*).

1) Polish *na* „on", Indo-European *ana* „up, on". In Bushman we have S_1 */na* „to give", i.e. originally „to put on the stretched out hand" (cp. Polish slangy expression *na*, *na-ści* = 'I give you, take it'). I even remember from my native village the expression, *ne wom cie* < *na wam* (*ma*)*cie* „I give to you, you may have it". In Ewe (Kwa- the group of West Sudan) *ná* means

„to give"; it is also the Dative particle: *ná-mi* „to-us", cf. Polish *nam* „to us". Besides, the I.-E. *da* „to give" is the regular continuation of Bushman */na > da*. Furthermore, E. *ana* „footbridge, bridge", i.e. „something that is on or over (the water)".

Alongside of S_1 */na* „to give" there exists a related word */na*: „to see, find, perceive, get", from which, respectively, from the accompanying gesture there was derived the function (meaning) of pointing at the perceived object, cf. S_1 *//na, tan* „there", S_{2b} *n,ŋ* „they", N_3 *n,ŋ* „this one, this is, here". So we have I.-E. *e-no, o-no*, Polish *o-n, te-n* „he, this"; in many West-Sudanese languages *na* (or *ni*) means „this". In Zulu this deictic or, as Doke says, demonstrative *na* has many applications, one of them is the enlarging of the form of Personal Pronoun, e.g. *mi-na* „I-here", *we-na* „you-here", while we have in Swahili *mimi* „I", *wewe* „you"; besides, in Swahili *na* indicates the Present Tense, i.e. what is going on here, now; cf. the role of the nasal infix in the Verbs like Lat. *tango* (*tetigi*).

The semantic basis here is the hand and tongue gesture of giving and pointing at, i.e. the tongue stretches forward horizontally like the hand (/), nasality expresses some emotional tint (*n*), and the vowel *a* (with high tone) alarms the hearer or stresses the vivid participation of the speaker in depicting the situation.

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COUPLETS AMHARIQUES EN L'HONNEUR DES PLANTES *ənsät* (ENSETE VENTRICOSUM) ET *koso* (BRAYERA ANTHELMINTICA)

On trouve dans le folklore de tous les peuples des poèmes (ou chansons) consacrés à des plantes utiles ou à celles qui jouent un rôle spécial dans la vie de la population donnée. Il n'en manque pas non plus en Éthiophie.

Lorsque je procédais en 1957/58 à une enquête sur les noms et l'emploi des plantes en Éthiopie, quelques uns de mes informateurs avaient inséré dans leurs notices sur les plantes des couplets qu'ils connaissaient. En voici deux consacrés à la plante *ənsät* et un troisième consacré à la plante *koso*.

Ənsät (ou *hənsät*) est le Ensete ventricosum (Welw.) Cheeseman (Musaceae), syn. *Ensete edule* Bruce, *Musa ensete* J. F. Gmel. C'est le „faux bananier", l'une des plantes les plus utiles, cultivées spécialement chez les populations du Sud-Ouest du pays: Wâlamo, Sidamo, Gämu, Kulo, Konta, Käfa, Gimira, Wâlläga, Gurage (Gouragué), Ǧanǧäro, Käfa Galla. C'est, avant tout, l'une des principales et des plus anciennes plantes alimentaires.

Toute la partie du tronc située au-dessous du niveau du sol ainsi que l'intérieur d'une grande partie du tronc au-dessus du sol sont employés pour la préparation du *qoč̣o*. On coupe ces parties en bandes et on les râcle avec un grattoir en bambou. Les bandes sont placées sur une planche en pente dont le bord inférieur est situé au-dessus d'un trou creusé dans le sol et tapissé de feuilles de bananier. C'est là qu'on collecte le *qoč̣o* gratté. On le presse ensuite pour en sortir le jus et on obient de cette façon