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## ON LANGUAGE SHIFT AND LANGUAGE SWITCH IN ISOLATED LANGUAGES\*

The concept of language shift has been crystallizing in linguistics for a long time. All the relevant inquiries hitherto carried out can be divided into two groups clearly distinguishable from each other. These two groups reflect two different approaches to the concept of language shift and to a certain degree represent even two successive phases of the crystallization.

Within the first phase, the concept of shift referred to changes affecting the type of language within the phonetic sphere or to complexes of mutually interrelated changes of this kind. Here, in fact, the concept of language shift can be differentiated from the concept of language change only in that emphasis is laid on the motion of development representing the change in question. If a complex of several changes is concerned, then in all its components the motion of development is necessarily of a parallel one-way kind. That means, it is such as will permit a scholar, provided he has established one type affecting change, to predict the results of the other parallel language changes.

It was Grimm (1822, pp. VII, 583—595) who was the first linguist to use the concept of language shift. He based his approach on the comparativist ideas advanced in field of Germanic philology by Rask and probably also other linguists, revealing the main features of the structural development of the Germanic consonantal system. (Later on his data were supplemented, mainly by Verner.) Grimm designated the concept in question by the term *Lautverschiebung*, i.e., sound shift.

„In dem ersten buche, dessen druck fast vor zwei jahren angefangen wurde, möchte ich freilich wieder verschiedene stücke abändern und nach reiferer überlegung berichtigen, vor allem (schon nach der uralten alphabetischen reihe  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ ; b, c, d) die kehl- den zungenlauten vorordnen; damahls beachtete ich die folge der deutschen mediae: b, d, g. Die in der formenlehre durchgeführte, factisch nur theilweise vorhandene streng althochdeutsche lautreihe konnte im ersten buche, wo sie die untersuchung der buchstaben gestört hätte, nicht beobachtet werden; tritt sie selbst im zweiten zu hart vor, so fehlen uns gerade die mittel einer anschaulichen, lebendigen kenntnis dieser mundart, wodurch jene theorie etwa gemässigt worden wäre. Unentbehrlich schien mir scharfpositive abgrenzung für den satz der *lautverschiebung* (s. 584), dessen einfluss auf das etymologische studium vielleicht lat. und griech. philologen zur prüfung reizt...“ (P. VII.)

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The English word "shift" is, to my knowledge, attested as a linguistic expression (as part of the term "consonant shift") for the first time by Sweet (1888, pp. 87—88).

"The most prominent feature of the Gmc as compared with the Ar. consonant-system is the Gmc consonant shift (Grimm's Law, *lautverschiebung*), by which the Ar. breath stops (and breath aspirates) become open cons., while the voice stops are unvoiced, and the voiced aspirates become simple voice stops."

He (p. 300) states its Scandinavian origin: OE *skifta* (Scand.; *scyfte* Chron Laud 1046) through ME *shifftenn* (of Ormulum) into NE *shift*. Sweet's priority for introducing the naming unit "shift" into linguistics has been confirmed by the OED (1972, p. 615). It may be added that in addition to Sweet's denomination of the given PG or HG sound phenomenon using the naming unit consonant shift (as opposed to Grimm's narrower, more precise one), as stated in the OED, he also used here the shorter designation "shift". When discussing other sound changes than those of the PG and HG(erman) consonant shifts (and their component parts), Sweet uses mostly different forms of the same lexeme, predominantly the form "shifting", applying it especially to changes caused by specific stress conditions. In a great majority of cases, his employment of "shift", "shifting", etc., bears a distinctly appellative character. This observation is borne out by Sweet himself classing at least some of these cases also under the heading "Transposition": "The shiftings *birdas*, *pirda* = WS *bridd(as)*, *pridda* are 1North." (p. 137); "... *ācsian*, *āxian*... = older *āscian*..." (p. 139) // "Transposition, as in OE *axian* for *ascian*, MnE *bird* = OE *bridd*..." (p. 33). Sweet's copious use of the form "shifting" indicates a processual interpretation of this concept. Due to Sweet, the concept of language shift as well as the lexeme itself and its derivatives have become gradually domesticated in linguistics.

At the dawn of the 20th cent., a new content of the naming unit "language shift" has been supplied by Jespersen (1909, p. 231). Studying the historical development of English, he subjected to a thorough analysis a large complex of interrelated changes through which the ME system of long vowels had gone through, and designated it the great vowel-shift.

"The great vowel-shift consists in a general raising of all long vowels with the exception of the two high vowels (*i*) and (*u*), which could not be raised further..."

It might be regarded as a parallel to, and a certain counterpart of, the PG and HG consonant shifts; it might be also regarded as a parallel to the development of the vocalic system of German, the so-called German vowel-shift. But apart from the mentioned use of "shift" Jespersen confines the use of this lexeme and of its derivatives (especially that of "shifting") to questions of stress in the development of English.

"... I shall take first those words in which we have in English no shifting of the stress..." (p. 131); "Disyllabics from Latin (and Greek) which have no shifting of the stress in English..." (p. 134); "Next we come to those words in which the E stress is shifted on to the penultimate. This syllable had a short vowel in E before the stress was shifted..." (p. 135); "Other instances of rhythmic stress-shifting: Ch. B 948 *Som'tyme* west, and *'somyt* north and south, And *'somyt* est (sometimes

still has shifting stress)" (p. 157); "Rhythmic shifting of a secondary stress from the first to the second syllable of the last word of a compound..." (p. 159); "Rhythm accounts for the shifting of the French accent in a great many disyllabics..." (p. 160).

In his liking for the form "shifting" (also in its processual sense?), Jespersen appears as a follower of Sweet. Here it might be added that the OE Grammar by the Wrights (1914, p. 104) translated Grimm's term *Lautverschiebung*, employing the expression "first sound-shifting".

As for the numerous occurrences of the term "language shift" within the domain of stress in Sweet's and Jespersen's works, they are by no means accidental. The concept of language shift referring to a significant phenomenon of IE languages necessarily became applicable, e.g., even to phenomena characteristic of the development of Proto-Slavic and Proto-Baltic. Under certain circumstances the old PE stress had moved onto the neighbouring syllable in these languages. Let us recall that it was Fortunatov (1895) who established this phenomenon for the Slavic and Baltic languages, and de Saussure (1896) who did so for Lithuanian. E.g., OI *mádhya*, Gr *μέση* vs. R *mežá*. (Cf. H u j e r 1946, p. 36.) Mention should be made here also of a set of changes of stress in Proto-Slavic, the so-called "metatony" (the change of acute into new circumflex, and the change of circumflex into new acute), differentiating Slavic from Baltic. Bélič (1913) was the first to bring to notice Slavic metatony.

From what has been said it clearly follows that within the first developmental phase of the concept of language shift a typical change of the sound level of language is involved, or a mutually linked structure of a series of such changes. The scholars' interest is focussed on the given linguistic change, and through the designation of shift(ing) they present it as somewhat marked. This feature of markedness unites the individual shift(ing)s and raises them to individual typical realizations of a more general, in some respect remarkable, motion of development in a language. In other cases, scholars employ this expression appellatively: they designate through it only a change of development as a developmental motion in a language without attaching any exclusive character to the change designated in such a way. They do not inquire into the general linguistic character of language shift within this first developmental phase. It was only in the second phase that a detailed investigation was undertaken.

An essential turn in the study of language shift comes only with the boom of modern contact linguistics in the second third of our century. With the introduction of new aspects of the study of the natural language and its system, the need arises to revise the functioning of the terminological structure. In accordance with the requirements of present linguistic theory, this revision necessitated the introduction of new terms, or the redefinition of old ones. The efforts of linguists who were not satisfied with the existing conception of language shift(ing) must be seen in this light.

It is Haugen (1938b) who presents a brand-new understanding of language shift. Although he does not offer a precise definition of the term in question, he conceives this motion in language development as an inevitable accompaniment of a many-sided conformation of the immigrant's personality to his new living conditions and as an expression of his effort to achieve a new, culturally unified personality. Thus, he speaks of a social-linguistic shift in the immigrant. First of all, he investigates the changes in the immigrant's

vocabulary which is being constantly renewed at the one end and "atrophied" at the other. It should be added that sound shifting had already been studied by Haugen (1938a) in his paper on phonological shifting in American Norwegian. Haugen's new understanding of the language shift as a phenomenon concerning all language levels is even more distinctly expressed in his further work (1942) dedicated to linguistic research among Scandinavian immigrants in America. Apart from vocabulary shift, which Haugen considered one of the strongest features of immigrant language, and the associated development of phonetic, phonemic and morphological systems, the author emphasizes as being equally evident a "structural" shift in syntax and semantics among immigrants, giving examples. It is worth noticing that in his article on linguistic borrowing Haugen (1950) starts to use the expressions "switch", "to switch" as linguistic terms (for his older "turn", "to turn" consequently used in his cited work of 1938b): "Except in abnormal cases speakers have not been observed to draw freely from two languages at once. They may switch rapidly from one to the other, but at any given moment they are speaking only one, even when they resort to the other for assistance. The introduction of elements from one language into the other means merely an alternation of the second language, not a mixture of the two. Mixture implies the creation of an entirely new entity and the disappearance of both constituents; it also suggests a jumbling of a more or less haphazard nature. But speakers of e.g. AmN continue to speak a recognizably Norwegian language distinct from their English down to the time when they switch to the latter for good" (p. 80). Three years later (1953), he presents a definition: "...switch... is the term used here to designate a clean break between the use of one language and the other" (p. 121). Discussing the main factors of switching he — among other things — says: "Speakers will often be quite unaware that they are switching back and forth; they are accustomed to having bilingual speakers before them, and know that whichever language they use, they will be understood" (p. 122).

According to Weinreich (1953, p. 68), "A language shift may be defined as the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another". Differently from Haugen, Weinreich, when discussing language shift, does not confine his statements to an immigrant's language, but gives the definition a broader, general validity. This definition, however, has a certain imperfection, admitting ambiguity. This fact has even been attested by the varying interpretations and applications of the definition by the author himself. At the same time, this is not a question of complementary interpretations, but sometimes rather of mutually exclusive ones. Does the author have in mind the changing of language A in the direction of language B as a process which is being realized between these two poles, or does he understand by the shift the resulting stage of the process, i.e., the replacement of language A by language B?

Cf.: "A language shift may be defined as the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another. One may ask whether interference ever goes so far as to result in a language shift. In other words, can a bilingual's speech in language A become BY DEGREES so strongly influenced by language B as to be indistinguishable from B?" (p. 68) vs. "There is some reason to believe that a facility in switching languages even within a single sentence or phrase is characteristic of some bilinguals... It remains to be determined empiri-

cally whether habitual switching of this type represents a transitional stage in the shift from the regular use of one language to the regular use of the other. Of course, it is obvious that a shift does not necessarily have to pass through such a transitional stage" (pp. 68—69).

Weinreich's term "language shift" means a functional change of language B into language A, a change which is accompanied by a partial (or possibly, total) material transformation of language A into language B. From what has been said, it follows that after the functional change of language B into language A, there exists language A either strongly limited or it does not exist at all (surviving as a group of substratum phenomena). He leaves aside, however, cases in which after the completion of the functional change of language B into language A, there exists in speakers the full knowledge of both A and B languages. This functional replacement of language B for language A has taken place, because the speaker has not any possibility to communicate in language (supposing the inhabitants of his new setting do not know his language, i.e. the language A); cf. the lot of a Czech missionary in Africa or of Danish student married to a Japanese and living in Japan; and the like. Besides that there exist, of course, the cases of Weinreich's so-called partial shift: both A language and B language exist in the speaker, but they are functionally (diglossively) stratified (see p. 107). This is, for instance, a common case of an immigrant family of the first generation.

Weinreich's definition of language shift has been taken over, among other scholars, also by Fishman. In his — partially collective — work devoted to problems of language maintenance and language shift in the USA, he (1966) distinctly understands language shift processually: "In general, language maintenance and language shift have proceeded along quite similar lines in the three high prestige colonial languages (French, Spanish, German) and the three low prestige immigrant languages (Yiddish, Hungarian, Ukrainian). Although differing widely with respect to period of settlement, numerical size, balance between low-culture and high-culture language retentivism, religious protection of the vernacular, and social mobility of their speakers, the drift has been consistently toward Anglification and has become accelerated in recent years. Differences between the six language groups seem to be great only in connection with the rate of change toward Anglification" (pp. 394—395). However, some of his formulations may not be so unambiguous, expressing rather the result of the process of changing, the replacement: "Where literacy has been attained prior to interaction with an "other tongue", reading or writing in the mother tongue may resist shift longer than speaking" p. 427).

Thus, it is clearly a pity, that the author in his (predominantly) work, devoted besides language maintenance, chiefly to language shift, in minority languages in the USA, nowhere states where, in his opinion, this shift or here rather replacement, displacement begins. The value of his work is reduced also by the fact that his figures (at least those concerning the Czech minority) are not correct (namely, they are too low).

According to Fishman, basic instruments required for the establishment of degree and direction of language maintenance and language shift are still not available (p. 454). He emphasizes the necessity of a many-branch approach. As for language switch (and interference), he observes them as categories

upon which linguists' interest has mostly been focussed within their analyses of bilingualism and their inquiring into the degree of bilingualism. This, in turn, has been bound with the linguists' understanding of the quantitative aspect of habitual language use during their study of language shift (and language maintenance; p. 425). In his view, the study of language maintenance and language shift as categories expressing the double opposing result of the contact of the two linguistically distinguishable populations should not lead the scholar primarily to an understanding of interference phenomena per se. Their main concern should be rather to discover "degrees of maintenance or displacement in conjunction with several sources and domains of variance in language behavior" (p. 425).

Still another conceptual content "of language shift" has been advocated since the mid-60s by Lehmann (1966). Even then, he does not comprehend this term as a phenomenon of contact linguistics, but first of all as one of phonetics: "By shift we mean any modifications in sounds, whether or not they lead to changes in the phonological system" (p. 153). For its total character, his conception belongs rather among the above-mentioned works of the first developmental phase. When discussing the development of semantic structure, he speaks also of frequent shifts caused by the alternation of context. Beside that, he uses the word "shift" in reference to a naming unit "loan-shift" as a content equivalent of a "loan translation" or "calque".

As for myself, I understand language shift as an externally motivated and oriented systemic language change. In regard to an isolated language (a language existing in territorial separation from its base language), this term represents for me a relatively steady change of the system of an isolated language, a change caused directly and primarily by the acculturating process affecting speakers (immigrants), a change further differentiating the isolated language in question from the norm of its original base language and bringing it closer to the contact domestic language, under plurilingual circumstances bringing it closer to the contact language communicatively dominating it. It is a phenomenon of langue, belonging to the level of linguistic competence. Consequently, in a concrete discourse realized in such an isolated language the language shift appears as a penetration/an interference of an item or items of a contact linguistic form. (By the term *linguistic interference*, I understand "the penetration of competitive foreign language element into the contacted language form", Vašek 1982.) Language shift takes place within all levels of language structure. This statement obviously follows from the tentative results of my extensive inquiry into the linguistic situation in places with old Czech settlement in Rumania and in the USA (cf. Vašek 1976). In principle, I can therefore only confirm here the fact already known to scholars working in other territorial domains. My specialized field work, which has concentrated on the language shift in individual immigrant and biological generations, suggests a gradual intensification of the shift taking place in the course of time, but never a completed transformation by degrees of an isolated language ("A") into an assimilating contact language ("B"). I have not met this phenomenon either in U.S. Czech—American bilingualism, or in Rumanian Czech—Rumanian—Hungarian—German—Serbo-Croatian pentalingualism, or when inquiring into

Czech—Slovak language contacts. In consequence, I can only corroborate the correctness of an older statement by Haugen (1950, p. 80) in his cited article on linguistic borrowing. This problem is one of the key questions of contact linguistics and the theory of isolated languages and it will surely be a long-term subject of empirical and theoretical study of scholars. This is not in contradiction with the fact that in stable bilingual communities an inevitable tendency to monoculturalization of speakers asserts itself with a consequent assimilation of semantic-lexical level of their co-existing languages, that there is also a certain tendency in mutually corresponding sentences to concept-for-concept translatability. This does not, however, mean total, i.e., also grammatical homogenization of the given languages. Essentially, I do not want to exclude a possibility of the above-mentioned gradual material transformation of language A into language B, but my own field work as well as some theoretical linguistic finding resulting from it have made me rather skeptical about it.

It is well known that language codes are often temporarily abruptly altered by the speaker within the span of one discourse, i.e., a so-called language switch has been realized under the conditions of active collective bilingualism/plurilingualism. See above, Haugen (1950, p. 80, 1953, pp. 121—122), Weinreich (1953, pp. 68—69). There are several types of language switch(ing): intentional/conscious vs. unintentional/unconscious, voluntary vs. compulsory. Of course, the situation is different with languages close to each other and quite intelligible to both speakers, where the switch is rare, and with languages genetically and typologically removed, where the switch is quite common. In the latter case the abandonment of switching according to my experience with the investigation of the Czech minorities in the USA and Rumania, does not lead to some "intermediate systems" (Haugen 1972, p. 336), i.e., a system intermediate between languages A and B, but to increasingly frequent replacement of A by B. In any case, one can meet the language switch as a common phenomenon at a certain stage of the descending development of the minority isolated language when it is often motivated by the speakers' effort to achieve an easier or more adequate expression. Language switching within a single utterance is a problem *sui generis*; even when discussed, it, unfortunately, often remains unattested by a good example. (I do not consider it a suitable evidence of such a case when the quotation consists of merely one single sentence, and no broader context has been adduced. Cf. Weinreich (1953, pp. 68—69). As has been indicated above, a case of switching for good would be more adequately termed "language replacement". Such a replacement is also the final target of a regular development of a minority isolated language and the regular proof of the speaker's (immigrant's) cultural transformation into a personality fully adequate to the new living conditions. Even if the achievement of this aim has been strongly inhibited through language maintenance — and also through language switch — yet the language shift (in accordance with the set of factors of language development operating with different intensity) gradually manifests itself as the conqueror.

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## K JAZYKOVÉMU POSOUVÁNÍ A KE STRÍDÁNÍ JAZYKOVÉHO KÓDU

Práce je věnována otázkám jazykového posouvání a dočasného, v rámci promluvy realizovaného měnění jazykového kódu v izolovaném jazyce. Termín jazykové posouvání nabyl za dobu své existence řady významů. Ve starším údobí jej odborníci pojímali jako označení jevu zvukového plánu jazyka, později — zhruba od sklonku třicátých let našeho století — jej pak začínají chápat jako označení jevu týkajícího se potenciálně celého jazykového systému. Autor jím zde rozumí relativně stálou, trvalou změnu systému izolovaného jazyka, způsobenou přímo a prvořadě akulturačním procesem imigrantů jako jeho nositelů a odlišující daný izolovaný jazyk od normy jeho výchozího, bazového jazyka. V konkrétní promluvě realizované v tomto izolovaném jazyce se toto posouvání jeví jako proniknutí/interference prvku nebo prvků kontaktového jazykového útvaru. Jazykový „shift“ se postupně rozrůstá a/nebo modifikuje, avšak úplnou postupnou materiálovou proměnu izolovaného jazyka A v asimilující jazyk B autor ze své výzkumné praxe nezná. Jazykový kód je často v rámci jedné promluvy náhle dočasně změněn, je-li realizován v podmínkách aktivního kolektivního bilingvismu/plurilingvismu; dochází zde k jevu v kontaktové lingvistice často označovanému „switch“ („přepnutí“), rusky překlučeníje. Autor uvádí různé typy této změny, např. záměrná × bezděčná, a připomíná, že jde mj. o běžný, obvyklý jev sestupného vývoje minoritního izolovaného jazyka, daný snahou po snadnějším nebo akvátnějším vyjádření. Závěrem se autor zabývá souvztažností obou pojmů — jazykového posouvání a střídání jazykového kódu — a jejich podílem na formování celkového vývoje minoritního izolovaného jazyka.

