

The Stydying of the Notion of Language Economy in Linguistics

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Annotation: The article deals with the development of the concept of linguistic economy in linguistic literature. In connection with this concept, a corresponding terminology has arisen. It has changed since ancient times and was developed in the 19th-20th centuries on the basis of various languages. Thus, economy as one of the principles of the functioning and development of the language is studied at its different levels, where the means of expressing economy and the possibilities of its manifestation in the context of a general statement are established.

Key words and phrases: language economy; universal character; theory; principle; combination; clotting; language units; factors; means of expression.

Today, when information technologies are rapidly developing, the flow of information is growing and the pace of life is accelerating, it becomes impossible to avoid saving. We strive to be economical in everything by trying to get more work done in less time. We can observe the same thing in a language, since a distinctive feature of any language is its ability to react sensitively to the slightest changes in the social, cultural and everyday life of its speakers. Language development and functioning are regulated by various processes occurring in the language, but the degree of their distribution is different. Some of them are universal in nature - they appear in all or almost all languages, while others have a national character. One of the universal processes of this kind can be considered language economy.

The principle of language economy is the idea that human activity is purposeful and requires the achievement of a given goal with a minimum effort [3, p. 137]. The topic of language economy, whether it be compression, contraction, combination, elimination, reduction, elliptical sentences, folding, etc., has been the subject of study within various disciplines by many scientists [5, p. 121].

It cannot be said that the attitude and assessment of linguistic economy differed among different scientists and in different periods of time. Some considered it as one of the basic laws of language development, others as one of the driving forces of language development, and still others did not assign it an important role at all. There were also such researchers who denied the importance of this phenomenon for the historical development of the language [9, p. 200]. There is an opinion that the scientific study of linguistic economy in linguistics began in the 80s of the XIX century in the works of P. Passy, G. Suit, O. Jespersen, which is not entirely accurate. The phenomenon of linguistic economy was known in antiquity, although linguists did not use the term "economy" at that time. Aristotle, for example, wrote that if you want to speak concisely (i.e. economically), you need to use names instead of concepts, for example, "circle" instead of "a flat surface, all points of which are equally spaced from the center" [1, p. 180].

In connection with the discussion of projects for the creation of artificial languages in the 17th-18th centuries, the idea was widely spread that the linguistic structure should be determined by the "economical distribution" between its parts. Nevertheless, the systematic development of the problem of linguistic economy did not begin until the 19th century. It was a time of attempts to simplify natural languages for easier assimilation. Many believed that this kind of influence forced the natural process of simplification that occurs in the course of language development. The idea of G. Spencer, for

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example, is that in the process of development according to the “natural laws of evolution”, the language moves from simple to complex, long words become shorter, “wordy sentences become single-word sentences” [8, p. 171-172].

We tend to regard as controversial the idea of G. Spencer about the simplification of the structure of words and sentences in the process of language development, since the enrichment of the language is not only due to the appearance of simple, but derivative and compound words. Nor can it be said that the syntax of the language is being simplified. On the contrary, the structure and semantics of syntactic units become more complex, reflecting the progress of human thinking, due to the penetration of more complex phenomena into the structure. At the same time, it is impossible to deny the reduction in the length of language units due to the law of economy. From the foregoing, the conclusion suggests itself that the language is moving towards simpler and more efficient ways of expressing the same content, which we consider as economy. However, at the same time, its general structure is not simplified, otherwise this would lead to a decrease in the expressiveness of the language, hence its impoverishment, and, as a result, the transmission of information would suffer. The Russian scientist I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay studied the phenomenon of language economy. In one of his lectures, discussing the causes that cause the development of a language and influence its composition and structure, he wrote: “General causes, general factors that cause the development of a language and determine its structure and composition, it is very fair to call forces. We can challenge the idea that the transition from the concrete to the abstract facilitates the abstract movement of thought, since a concrete linguistic expression has more power than a vague abstract expression, and hence it seems more economical in terms of effort. On the other hand, de Courtenay very correctly notes the role of the phenomena that take place in the language and contribute to its development. The neogrammarists saw the problem somewhat differently. So, G. Paul in the book “Principles of the History of Language” considers the problem of economy in language as follows. In the chapter “Differentiation of meanings” it is pointed out that the very nature of language development determines the formation of a large number of equivalent words, forms, combinations, types. “Although the appearance of such an excess is inevitable, it cannot persist in the language for a long time” [6, p. 301].

Similar elements disappear over time, or their meanings are differentiated and fixed in the language, expanding its expressive possibilities. Both of these processes are manifestations of language economy. Savings are not carried out by reducing language resources, but, on the contrary, together with other factors, it leads to an increase in language resources by eliminating excesses. This is the essence of economy, according to the young grammarians.

When explaining the reasons for the disappearance of linguistic excesses in the language, G. Paul points out: “One already useless memory overload serves as a sufficient basis for eliminating these excesses” [Ibid., p. 302]. In the chapter “Economy of language means”, he writes that “a certain tendency towards frugality is characteristic of linguistic activity”, and, proceeding from this, “in the language for all cases, ways of expression are developed that contain exactly as much as is necessary for understanding” [There same, s. 372]. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that G. Paul considers linguistic economy in a quantitative sense and does not deviate from this idea. It cannot be said that not all researchers assigned a special role to the language economy of effort. Some linguists expressed skepticism about the role of this factor. So, F. de Saussure, speaking about the law of least effort, believes that this law requires research, to reveal the cause of the phenomenon or to determine the ways of its description, it is possible only to some extent [7, p. 140-141]. The beginning of a systematic study of language economy as a factor in the development of language can be associated with the names of such scientists as V. Whitney, G. Sweet, O. Jespersen. According to W. Whitney, the main reason for many phenomena that lead to a change in the form of a word is “a predisposition, or at least a willingness to cut off such parts of words that can be lost without compromising the meaning and, thus, to develop such forms which will be more adapted to the needs of users, which will be more in line with their habits and preferences” [11, p. 50]. V. Whitney expresses the idea that, despite the presence of certain oppositely directed phenomena, some of which may be predominant at a particular moment, linguists and linguistics as a whole have not been able to discover another more fundamental law than the law of linguistic economy. “This law is another manifestation of the same



tendency that makes people use abbreviations in writing, take the shortest path, instead of beating around the bush and other things that do not harm" [Ibidem, p. 147]. V. Whitney believes that the tendency to save is a natural reason for the reduction of words, while, in his opinion, it has the greatest manifestation precisely in the reduction of words. "Obviously, nothing more is needed to explain the gradual reduction of form that occurs in the units that make up each of the languages" [Ibidem, p. 49]. W. Whitney's idea about the modification of speech sounds and the process of mastering speech seems interesting. He believes that in the process of mastering a higher level of mastery of "the art of expression in words" (the art of utterance), human organs can create and use more clearly distinguishable and more subtle shades of meaning. He attributes this to the fact that adult speakers reach a higher level in a particular language, and the form that they inherit becomes the norm, to which language learners aspire to the best of their ability.

Proceeding from this, the successful acquisition of a language is, in fact, the economical use of its resources and the use of the necessary units depending on the situation and taking into account the specifics of a particular addressee. In parallel with V. Whitney, G. Sweet was engaged in the study of language economy. The results of his research and the conclusions of V. Whitney are similar. G. Sweet reproduced the evolution of many sounds, and not only in English, through the study of the causes of phonetic changes. At the same time, he noticed that, for example, final consonants are often weakened or completely omitted, but this does not prevent listeners from understanding speech, which, in his opinion, is due to logic. And logical necessity can meet organic and acoustic laws [10, p. 49].

After a short review of the theories that study the economy of language as one of the trends or phenomena, we would like to conclude that it is necessary to see the economy and its manifestations not only where it "shrinks", but also where the language "expands". We would also like to clarify that the use of somewhat different terminology, namely: the tendency to economy, language economy, linguistic economy, the principle of language economy - is due to the fact that various scientists interpreted and called the phenomenon of economy in different ways, revealing its different importance and role. In this work, we do not distinguish between these terms, which, in our opinion, are only different names for the same phenomenon. We regard the very concept of economy in relation to language as a synthesis of manifestations of economy in all spheres, and also as the result of a full account of "abbreviations" and "extensions" in different parts of the language system. From this it follows that economy as one of the principles of the functioning and development of the language is based on the facts of its manifestation in all spheres of its system. Here we are faced with the concepts of redundancy in language and text, with different ways of eliminating it, which leads to a more thorough study of the principle of economy on the material of various languages.

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