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### The Tendencies of the Balto-Finnic Word-Formation

The problem which was recently set by a number of linguists is that if there are some language features of the language shift. In other words are there not only socio-linguistic but linguistic proper features of the moment than the young generation ceases to learn the ethnic language as a mother tongue? Perhaps we can find in the language system some indications of the language shift, for example, disappearance of morphological models or syntactic constructions.

I think that it is interesting to study the word formation in the Balto-Finnic languages from this point of view. Thereto I will examine the derivation in each of the Balto-Finnic languages.

My own field data of the Votic language show that in the noun formation unproductive suffixes disappear and productive ones replace them, so it is the agglutinative tendency: one affix expresses only one meaning and one meaning is expressed with only one affix. As of verb formation the suffixes which were productive in the beginning of the XX c. cease to be used at all. Only causative suffix remain productive.

E. Väveri found the same situation in the Livonian word formation: the disappearance of all the verb affixes excluding causative markers, which remain productive and increase of the agglutinative tendency in the noun formation; the number of noun suffixes in Livonian is now the same, that in Votic. E. Väveri supposed that the decrease of Livonian word formation models number depends of the socio-linguistic status of the language.

The derivation in the Karelian language was examined in details by D.Bubrih and L.Markianova. The verb formation as well as the noun formation in Karelian are just opposite than Votic and Livonian.

The Vepsian verb formation was studying by N.Zajtseva. There are in Vepsian many models of verb formation like in Karelian. The noun formation was studied by several authors, they found that the Vepsian language not only remains its suffixes but also increases their number.

R.Kasik compares the Estonian and Finnish derivational systems. The author comes to the conclusion that the number of verb derivatives is considerably smaller in Estonian than in Finnish. In Estonian the same meaning is often expressed by other syntactic or lexical means.

The word-formation in Ingrian till now was not a subject of a special research, but my field data show that the Ingrian language saves well its derivational models.

As we can see, the hypothesis that the language shift can be cause of the decrease of word-formative models was not confirmed. But we can conclude that the north subgroup of the Balto-Finnic (Finnish, Karelian, Vepsian and Ingrian) saves old derivational models much better than the south one (Estonian, Votic and Livonian). It clarifies for the first time that the productivity of word-formative models is the isogloss which divides the Balto-Finnic languages into two groups: north and south. This finding is interesting of itself because the division of Balto-Finnic languages into north and south ones is in many respects conventional.

It is possible to draw a preliminary conclusion that the word formation in principle remains stable in areas of language contact.