Short Communication

Inertia and asymmetries

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The laws of classical mechanics act in Linguistics and languages to develop their systems according to these laws just like the other animate and inanimate bodies. The force of inertia can explain a lot of linguistic factors. The parallel development of language structures in reintegrated languages could be exposed as an obvious case. The matter of analogy and creation of symmetry in language structures are also facts of linguistic inertia in opposition with the law of linguistic asymmetries, which creates exclusions and out of system units.

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The laws of classical mechanics act in Language systems and this seems to be very natural as any language is just as a living organism with an abstract level body and it follows the Universal systemic regulations of physics having its non-stop evolution. The first law of Newton, which became a fundamental base for mechanical physics sounds as the following: “An object at rest tends to stay at rest and an object in motion tends to stay in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted upon by an unbalanced force” (1- 450). This is the law of inertia and it was discovered in 1687. The Law of Inertia works in languages as well. It acts on the each level of language hierarchy highly attracting the processes of language development. In our opinion the best samples for the law of inertia in linguistics could be phonetic changes of foreign words and linguistic analogies. The host language tries to re-sound the foreign words turning them to the native articulation base. According to this law the host language also tries to tie the familiar semantics to some new words, which are coming from other languages.

The language as a high material of course follows to the world-wide proper regulations and the law of inertia is the only one, which could explain the similar type of morphological, semantic and syntactical changes among the re-integrated languages and their parallel developments: for example, in case of Basque-Georgian relationship (2- 439-500) the law of inertia could explain the following unusual fact: from the one hand, Basque has the double-exposing ergative like Svan and from another hand, the referents of Basque ergative shares the morphological phonology of Zan, while there is no doubt that the formation of ergativity is a later event even in the Kartvelian languages (2 -38).

Some more examples of the law of inertia from Georgian: It creates the symmetric system of verbal person markers; according to this law the verbs with the -av and -am thematical markers have -ia ending in the rows of so called the I Turmeobiti (just following the model of “damits’eria” type of verbs); The law of inertia creates split ergativity in re-integrated Kartvelian languages giving the priority to the human class category animated the subject for ergative; As a result of this law in the second series we have the ergative construction in Zanian intransitive verbs and in the second series of Georgian medio-actives as well, etc.

The law of inertia as a law of inner development during language evolution can easily explain any kind of analogies in languages. This law could also be a reason for the systemic changes. Factually, the law of inertia creates the symmetric constructions in languages in opposition with the law of linguistic asymmetries (2-25).

The filed of acting of the law of inertia is bipolar - with another opposite law, which is the law of asymmetries towards the language system. Assymetries are anomalies and exclusions. The law of asymmetries creates the out of system units at the different levels of language hierarchy. I would compare this with biological organisms: (although I do remember that the idea of considering a language as living organism is not in favor today.) Every living organism has its own system to protect itself. Even plants have such systems, for example some of them have a poisoning smell. Any language as an organism behaves like other living beings. Besides, languages also have other systems for hiding the different items inside one language such as “taboo”, for example.
The language systems follow the directions of their inner structure developments. Even then, when the language goes out of the literary forms (creating the dialectic forms or some social expressions) it keeps its inertial productivity in any case at a different hierarchical level.

The processes of learning new languages and children’s speech also could be really good samples of the law of inertia in linguistics. While studying the foreign languages new forms are created on the base of a native language. It’s quite clear, that such forms are not acceptable for communication, but they are very interesting for methodology, as very often these are the typical systemic mistakes.

In our opinion the offered law of inertia in linguistics can have a very important Significance for temporary linguistic sciences (namely for sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics and e-learning linguistics). The law of inertia can be a key to many unexplained things in the analysis of dynamic processes of linguistic thinking among the diverse type of social groups.

The law of inertia has always been acting in languages and it acts now as well, just as the law of inertia was always active in nature - even before Newton’s famous discovery.

REFERENCES