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MODUS OBLIQUUS IN THE BALTIC LANGUAGE UNION (A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE IN THE FIELD)

The author of the paper presumes that the participants of the conference, as well as the readers of the printed version, are familiar with the subject, i.e. the phenomenon of *modus obliquus* or *modus relativus*. There is no room for a more detailed introduction to the subject, yet we can refer to the excellent studies in the field, such as AMBRAZAS, 1970, on the Indo-European aspect, and IKOLA, 1953, on the Finno-Ugric aspect of the issue. We shall try to summarise the results of the earlier works and to discuss the issue of the Baltic language union. Since the *modus obliquus* (MO) exists only in Estonian and Livonian, but no other Baltic Finnic language, and, on the other hand, since the MO is more developed in Latvian than in Lithuanian, it seems to be logical to say that the MO is a result of areal contacts, and that the MO is a very special characteristic of the Baltic language union.

However, the existence of the Baltic language union is a questionable subject. We are not going to argue with the opponents of language unions. Due to the development of the areal linguistics over the period of the last 50 years, it is already impossible to disagree with areal models. So we do not attempt to raise a question whether a Baltic language union (BLU) exists or not. Our question is: which languages belong to the Baltic language union and where are the boundaries of the said union? Most references of the areal linguistics state that Roman Jakobson established a large BLU from Norway around the Baltic Sea down to South Lithuanian and North Kashubian regions. (JAKOBSON, 1931b=JAKOBSON, 1971, 144-201). After half a century, Gyula Décsy classified the languages of Europe and the languages of the large Jakobson model as belonging to three language unions: the Viking group, the Peipus group and the Rokitno group (DÉCSY, 1973). Even though his classification was severely criticised by HAARMANN, 1976, and others, the areal classifications are becoming more and more precise, as the authors take into account not only phonological, but also morphosyntactical isoglosses. Different classifications may be easily regarded as "personal" models of the author. JAKOBSON, 1931 a, b and TROUBETZKOY, 1928, based the modern school of phonology, that was why they established their areal models on the basis of phonological phenomena. Lately, the analysis of morphosyntactical common characteristics generated monographs on the subject, such as STOLZ, 1991, that pay more attention to the morphological isoglosses than to the phonological ones.

It is worth mentioning that ARUMAA, 1935, analysed common morphosyntactical characteristics of Estonian, Livonian and Lithuanian already in Jakobson's times, and his conclusion was almost identical with the closing words of AMBRAZAS, 1970 and 1990. Cf.: "Ei ole vist kahtlust, et neis Eesti piirile lähedais murdeis voime tuleviku vormi puudumist seletada eesti murrete hilisema mojuga. Uhtlasi toendab see juhtum aga, et *modus relativus*'e arengus lati ja eesti-liivi keele vahel ka vanemal ajajargul uhised kokkupuuted olid taisei voimalukud." (ARUMAA, 1935, 136).

The forms of the MO were described already in Ferdinand Johann Wiedemann's Grammar of Estonian as *modus relativus* (WIEDEMANN, 1835, 473-481). The first who compared the MO in Baltic Finnic languages, as well as the MO in literary forms and dialects, was AIRILA, M. 1933, but his work was subjected to criticism because of inaccurate translation of Estonian examples to Finnish. MAGISTE, 1934, criticised AIRILA also for ignoring reviews of contemporary grammars, such as, e.g., Kettunen's work. Negligent translation doesn't seem to be such a grave mistake, when we take into consideration the fact of AIRILA paying attention to dialects. As indicated in the preface, most of grammars of that time considered the MO only in the literary language. There are grammars at the present time, too, that consider only the literary forms of the MO, such as PUSZTAY, 1995. On the

other hand, Puszta's grammar is a very precise work. The German influence should be regarded not only on the literary MO, but on the dialectal MO versions, too. The above quoted IKOLA, 1953, gives a more correct analysis of the MO in dialects than AIRILA, 1933. But the research of phonological contacts is far more developed than the studies of common features on the morphological and syntactical level. (VABA, 1997). We are fortunate to have a recent publication of PAJUSALU, 1996, which is on the level of the modern general linguistics and dialectology. The MO is given a short but correct analysis there as well.

As for the references to the Latvian MO, attention should be paid to DRĀVINŠ - RUKĒ, 1958, in the dialectological aspect, and a remarkable statistical analysis of EICHE, 1983. However, the statistics of a few literary texts does not give an absolutely correct picture of the MO in dialects. It is a fact that language interference between Livonian and Latvian were a good basis for developing the MO, but on the other hand, the MO is a result of language interference between the common Baltic and common Baltic-Finnic languages. It should not be forgotten that the MO was absent in Old Prussian. So interference could have appeared only at the later stage of the contacts between the Indo-European and Finnish languages.

The next question is the analysis of the MO in the typological aspect. The language typology has been developing fast over the last years. It is already impossible to agree with Christian STANG'S opinion expressed in his book "*Baltic and Slavic Verb*" that the MO is not a "real" verb modus because it does not have a morphological paradigm. This point of view is very old and should not be applied in the contemporary language typology. In the Papua or partly the Bantu languages we shall find verb systems absolutely different from Classical European, Latin and Greek forms. However, in Lithuanian, a very ancient Indo-European language, there is a special verb mode, i.e. the MO in Lithuania is expressed by analytical, but not synthetic morphological tools. So the time has come to apply the results of the contemporary language typology for discussing special features of the Baltic Language Area. The subject of the special Baltic verb forms from the point of view of language typology will be addressed by the author in his next paper to be presented in the 9th congress of Finno-Ugristics in Tartu next year.

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