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DENOMINATION OF »OAK« IN EUROPEAN DIALECTS

In the past, linguistic atlases used to show areas of genetically related dialects. They represented various dialects of a language or dialects which appeared in a limited area. Less frequently they represented dialects of more than one related language, or a whole language group, e. g. Slavic. Exceptions were linguistic atlases which showed genetically unrelated (or distantly related) dialects of the minorities within individual countries.

The Linguistic Atlas of Europe (Atlas Linguarum Europe — ALE) is a linguistic atlas of a new type. The Linguistic Atlas of the Mediterranean and the Carpathian Linguistic Atlas are similar, although in the number of languages they show as well as in the number of linguistic features, they fall far behind ALE. Atlases of genetically related languages and dialects represent phonetic, grammatical and lexical features as variations of a former unity. Thus an atlas of a certain language shows dialectal differentiation, e.g. a Slavonic linguistic atlas shows everything that developed from Common Slavic following all the changes which occurred as the language passed from one generation to the next through one and a half millenia. It is evident that the Linguistic Atlas of Europe cannot serve this purpose.

For this reason some linguists were skeptical towards the very idea of a Linguistic Atlas of Europe. It was thought to be a mechanical summation of existing as well as future linguistic atlases and that the creation of such an atlas would really serve no purpose. However, this atlas has a completely different function although it will certainly also reveal some new data from the classical repertoire of linguistic atlases. As ALE represents genetically unrelated or only distantly related languages its main purpose cannot be the study of the substance of their phonetic, grammatical and lexical features. This is the function of classical linguistic atlases. On the other hand ALE reveals facts which remain hidden or have only a marginal role in a classical linguistic atlas. Let us consider an example from the lexical sphere which is most accessible to direct observation. If the ALE questionnaire asks for the names of various objects in European dialects, the acquisition of these names is not the primary aim of research but only its first phase. As in classical atlases we shall conduct the etymological and derivational analysis but such

identification is only the preparatory phase for the real task. Therefore it is sometimes possible to disregard some data from this phase in the final representation. This depends upon the character of the problem. This first phase of the analysis is onomasiological.

In the next phase we determine that some etymologically different denominations have the same semantic motivation although they are often recorded on very distant and unconnected points of the continent. The analysis of these problems reveals to an as yet unknown extent some general semantic and psycholinguistic laws which will contribute to the study of language universals. Moreover some unknown facts about the language aspects of the history of material and spiritual culture are revealed.

The first ALE questionnaire contains only lexical questions. In the second there are also questions which will give us information on the repertoire of grammatical categories and the models of phonetic and grammatical structures in certain dialects. This is an extremely interesting topic but in this communication I shall restrict myself only to lexical problems, i.e. the problems that are under consideration in ALE at the moment.

It is obvious from what has been stated so far that every lexical question in ALE has its onomasiological and motivational aspect. The relationship between these two aspects depends on the question itself and the answers obtained, as well as on the individual approach of researcher who constructs the map on the basis of the answer. Generally it is desirable that the semasiological aspect be represented in as much detail as possible. I would like to now present some problems which occurred during the analysis of the answers obtained to ALE Question 53 which sought the denomination of »oak«. I have worked on this map together with the Soviet turkologist E. R. Tenišev and the Dutch dialectologist I. Kruijsen.

Zoonyms and phytonyms (together called bionyms) are an especially interesting sphere of the dialectal lexicon. In the other spheres only some questions are particularly interesting while this is the case with almost all questions when dealing with bionyms. Probably no other lexical sphere shows as many interdisciplinary repercussions (biology, ethnology, psychology, economic history etc.). The semantic development sometimes shows very unusual and almost improbable motivational processes. One of the most impressive examples is recorded in the Introduction to the first ALE volume. Latin shows the development PECUS > PECUNIA while in English CATTLE developed from Latin CAPITALE(M). Identical cases occur in other languages, e.g. in some Slavonic languages the lexem BLAGO means »cattle« as well as »treasure«. Such semantic variations are specially frequent with some bionyms. I could illustrate this by some interesting and astonishing examples from my papers on the denomination of »salamander« in Serbo-Croatian dialects and the denomination of »thyme« and »tadpole« in Slavonic dialects. Especially interesting are examples from the material for the map for »tadpole« which has already been made for the Slavic Linguistic Atlas (in press) and which I have

also prepared in collaboration with some colleagues for ALE. There are also some extremely interesting semasiological features in the denomination for »lady-bird, mole, bat« etc., but the denomination of »oak« is no less interesting than even the most attractive bionyms and in some respects it even exceeds all other words of this kind. Thus it is not surprising that in big monographs such as de Gubernatis' »La mythologie de plants ou les légends du règne végétal« (Paris 1882) or Fridrich's »Proto-Indo-European trees. The arboreal system of a prehistoric people« (Chicago 1970) the sections dedicated to oak surpass all others.


Among the answers to Question Fifty-three there are fifteen different motivations for the denomination of the oak. Further, eight of these fifteen motivations can associate with a lexeme meaning »tree«. So we have twenty-three simple or combined motivations for the European denominations of the oak. A selection follows:

- A) A lexeme with the meaning »acorn« means »oak« (I)
- B) The denomination of a species of the genus *Quercus* was generalized as the denomination of the oak (V).
- C) The name of some other tree (but not of the genus *Quercus*) was taken as the denomination of the oak (VII)
- D) A lexeme meaning »tree« (conceived as »trunk«, »bole«) was adopted as the denomination of the oak, understood as »tree par excellence« (IX).
- E) The word for »bush« acquired the meaning »oak« (XI).
- F) A lexeme meaning »dry twigs« (dry branches, dry leaves for setting fire) was adopted as the denomination of the oak (XII).
- G) A lexeme with the meaning »mountain covered with woods« plus a suffix became the denomination of the oak (XIII).
- H) A lexeme with the meaning »wood as timber« was adopted as the denomination of the oak (XIV).
- I) A lexeme with the meaning »heart« (i.e. »heart of a tree«) became the denomination of the oak (XVI).
- J) A lexeme with the meaning »wooden pole in the haystack« acquired the meaning »oak« (XVII).
- K) An adjective meaning »strong, mighty« became the denomination of the oak (XVIII).
- L) An adjective meaning »knotty, having knots« was adopted as the denomination of the oak (XX).
- M) A lexeme indicating a colour received the meaning »oak« (XXI).
- N) A lexeme meaning »mistletoe«, provided with a suffix, was adopted as the denomination of the oak.

* Finally, in many languages there are denominations of the oak without a definite etymology or with two equally probable etymologies. In such cases we do not know the motivation of the name of the oak, or can only guess between two possible solutions and maybe neither of

them is the real one. Of course, if we find eighteen different roots in these unetymologized denominations, it is clear that many of them hide new motivations not mentioned in the previous list of fourteen motivations from A to N. However, as no claim is certain, all these denominations must be treated cumulatively. So they are grouped in the fifteenth category (III) of unknown motivation. Many denominations of the oak are obtained by adding a word meaning »tree« to the basic motivational lexeme. So we have denominations after the model of »acorn-tree«, »timber-tree«, »mighty tree«, »black tree«. The arboreal motivations give such denominations too: so Hungarian *csere* means *Quercus cerrus*, »Turkish oak«, but in some dialects *cserefa*, that is »Turkish oak oak«, means either *Quercus* in general or the most common species of this genus. Similarly, in a Daghestanian language, Akhvakh, the oak is called [k²unts²i²bi ru²fa]. The second part of the denomination means »tree«, an iranism, but the primary meaning of the first part is »sallow, a species of willow«. Even the lexemes meaning »tree« can be associated with an other word of the same meaning, for instance some Celtic denominations in Breton and Irish mean really »tree tree« and so on. Naturally, the denominations with uncertain etymology are also very often associated with a lexeme meaning »tree«.

If we neglect regular phonetic correspondences in the cognate European dialects and languages recorded in ALE, we find a hundred and forty-one denominations differentiated etymologically or at least derivationally. Consequently, we should need a hundred and forty-one symbols for representation on the map. Some isolated denominations of the same motivation, however, are united under a common symbol if they are distributed in areas distant from one another, so that a hundred and thirty-two symbols are used in the legend of the map.

For representation on the map a hierarchic system of symbolization was elaborated. Basic shapes are reserved for the fifteen motivations, for instance »acorn« is symbolized by circular, (round or oval) figures. Individual forms of a basic shape most often represent different roots within a motivation, for instance  for denominations based on the motivation »acorn«. Finally, individual symbols modified by shading or filling most often represent different lexemes possessing the same root.

Denominations derived by suffixation, denominations formed by adding the word »tree«, borrowed words and corrupted words, (phonetically irregular forms), have no independent symbol. They are noted by existing symbols with special markers (○ represents every symbol):

- suffixal derivation
- borrowed word
- basic motivation plus »tree«
- irregular phonetics.

As an example of the applied system we can present the Sinti (German Gipsy) denomination for the oak, which acumulates three such

markers. In this Gypsy dialect the oak is named [ˈaixtiko ruk]. As the first form originates from German *Eiche*, the denomination is represented by the basic symbol Π which designates all denominations formed from this Germanic root. As a borrowed word, the symbol receives the marker \uparrow , and as a form with the Romany suffix *-ko*, the appropriate marker is added too: $\Pi\uparrow$. Finally, because [ruk], an Arian word, means »tree«, a third marker is added: $\hat{\Pi}$. So the complete symbol looks like $\hat{\Pi}\uparrow$ giving maximal information.

In choosing the symbols some principles were followed. The object was the readability of the map and the mnemotechnic and systematic character of the symbols. Where possible, the darker symbols, shaded or filled, were used for scarcer denominations, while avoiding a concentration of such conspicuous symbols in the same areas. The introduction of basic shapes reduced the number of forms which have to be remembered — only fifteen basic shapes were used, each representing one motivation. The eight further motivations containing a word meaning »tree« are pointed merely with a top marker. Such markers have also a mnemotechnical function: everybody can identify and memorize which one of the three markers, \circ \odot $\hat{\circ}$, symbolizes a borrowed word, suffixation or the presence of a word meaning »tree«. The basic shapes themselves obtained a mnemotechnic function whenever possible. Thus the acorn is represented by circular shapes, the motivation »heart« by a heartlike symbol, the motivation »knotty, having knots« by a paragraph symbol (§), the motivation »pole in the haystack« by a vertical pointed figure, and so on. There is also some mnemotechnic value in the fact that semantically determined motivations are symbolized with closed figures, i.e. \square \triangle \heartsuit \clubsuit \spadesuit , but etymologically uncertain denominations are open bottomed, as »lacking roots«, i.e. Π Γ Π Ψ Δ .

In this way, the same symbols simultaneously offer a variety of different information on the map. The basic shapes of the symbols demonstrate the distribution of the motivation. The individual forms of a basic shape demonstrate different roots within an identical motivation and reveal possible genetical implications in bigger areas with concentrated denominations based on the same motivation.

Modifications of individual symbols demonstrate the degree of lexical differentiation. The markers demonstrate the ways of borrowing which also reflect some historical and economical connections, the zones where suffixal derivation prevails, or where denominations with the word meaning »tree« added, are concentrated, and so on.

What are the results of the elaboration of the answers and their representation on the map? The data fall into three categories:

1) Some data are predictable with bionyms, especially with those having a cultural and economical importance: the vacillation between genus and species, between plant and commercial product, the repercussions of climate and geophysical conditions, and the like. The existence of such data is predictable, but the real forms manifested are not.

2) Some data are predictable because of our knowledge about the object. For instance, it was predictable that some mythological implications will arise in the tripartite relation »oak/thunder/god«. The map gives us some analogies in geographically discrete areas and some bases for further investigations; however, the scope of ALE is too broad to reveal more important new facts in detail.

3) Some data are revealed by the ALE »oak« denomination map itself. We can see that the etymologically uncertain denominations and substrate words are concentrated in the Mediterranean area. A surprisingly high number of borrowed words is found in Northern and Southern European zone, excluding the Romany dialects (all Gypsy denominations are loans or half loans). The Caucasus area gave us a great many instructive facts which were not in scientific circulation before ALE. The very frequent exchange of loan-words among languages belonging to different language families and groups surely has further implications (Nagho-Dagestanian, Abkhazo-Adygei, Iranian, Turkish, as well as Khartvelian which area is not represented in ALE). The general view of the Caucasian data suggests that this area was particularly important for the genus *Quercus* and its various species. This is in harmony with botanical opinions. The Caucasian data very strongly imply Ossetic and Dagestanian etymologies of two Hungarian denominations for the oak. This connection was previously treated with great skepticism.

The limited length of this presentation keeps me from giving more examples of interesting problems; it has been very difficult to limit my selection. The map itself, however, and its commentary in one of the upcoming fascicles of ALE will provide us with a great many new facts obtained from the answers gathered for ALE, and should raise a number of new questions as well.

S a ž e t a k

O NAZIVIMA »HRASTA« U EVROPSKIM DIJALEKTIMA

Lingvistički atlas Evrope (ALE) razlikuje se veoma bitno od dosadanih lingvističkih atlasa, koji su obrađivali ili dijalekte jednoga jezika, ili samo jedan njihov dio na određenom području, ili skupinu genetski srodnih jezika (npr. slavenske), ili i dijalekte nesrodnih jezika na stanovitom državnom ili administrativnom teritoriju, ili samo specifične jezične pojave vezane uz kakvu heteroglotsku geofizičku zonu (kao što su Sredozemlje ili područje Karpatâ). ALE je nova pojava i po dimenzijama i po fizionomiji, no prije svega po svojim zadacima. U njegovim rasponima i pri njegovoj mnogobrojnosti i krajnjoj raznorodnosti i raznovrsnosti zahvaćenih idioma genetskolingvistički ciljevi moraju gotovo potpuno ustupiti mjesto strukturno-tipološkima i arealnim u glasovnoj i gramatičkoj problematici. To isto vrijedi i za leksička pitanja, s time da, iz istih razloga, onomaziološki aspekt mora biti podređen motivacijskomu. Motivi za denominaciju grupiraju lekseme najrazličitijih često veoma udaljenih idioma, otkrivaju s jedne strane nove psiholingvističke činjenice, s druge strane nepoznate stare civilizacijske, ekonomske, po-

litičke, religijske, migracijske i druge veze. Kolosalan broj raznojezičnih dijalekatskih leksema za isti pojam zahtijeva specifičnu tehnologiju u izradbi legendi za pojedine karte u ALE. Preglednost karata bila bi posve izgubljena bez drastične redukcije broja posebnih znakova u legendama. To se može postići strogim sistematiziranjem i hijerarhiziranjem prikazivanih pojava (s time da sve budu podređene motivacijskim) i upotrebljivanih znakova (osnovni lik, nijansiranje površina, modifikacije osnovnog lika, dodatni »markeri« i sl.). Kako su bionimi (zoonimi i fitonimi) svakako jedna od najzanimljivijih semantičkih skupina u leksičkom korpusu svih jezika, izabrano je pitanje br. 53 u kvestionaru ALE, tj. »hrast«, za ilustraciju i lingvogeografske problematike i kartografske tehnologije.