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SOME TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESTONIAN

The following is an attempt to single out some of the tendencies that have revealed themselves in the development of Estonian. This is done on the basis of an examination of earlier developments and of processes occurring in the language today. Such an attempt at generalization is needed for the more consistent study of the past and present development of the Estonian language and also in order to provide a theoretical point of departure (alongside others) for the work of language planning in the future. When clarifying the trends of language development, it must be borne in mind that the continuous and many-sided onward movement of language is often governed by internal as well as external social factors. Social factors determine the formation of different subvarieties of language and of their functions, but they may also have a noticeable influence on some parts of the language system. The development of the phonological and grammatical structures of language is affected by internal laws of development that make themselves felt for longer or shorter periods of time, and also by language contacts. Attention has been devoted lately to the investigation of typological regularities in the development of language. The same research direction manifested itself also at the V International Congress of Finno-Ugrists held recently at Turku, Finland.

Let us first take a look at recent changes in the subvarieties of Estonian and their functions which are due to social factors. It is general known that the increasingly rapid changes going on in the world involve corresponding changes in languages. Major social transformations as well as the requirements of developing science and technology have noticeably altered the spheres of usage and the social functions of different varieties of the Estonian language.

The rise of the level of education, the spread of printed matter, the lasting influence of the radio and television have placed the literary language in the position of the most important and widespread variety of the language. The literary language has become the general and common form of Estonian which has extensive functions to perform in the process of human communication. In view of the continuous broadening of the area of usage of literary Estonian in recent decades, it is now indeed possible to refer to a noteworthy democratization of literary Estonian, a tendency that has been noticed in the case of other literary languages as well. The central position of the literary language among the other varieties of language has made it possible for attention to be focussed increasingly on the conscious planning of language development. It is obvious, however, that the deliberate development of literary Estonian can be efficacious and expedient only if this work takes account of the general trends of development of Estonian and the requirements

set to the literary language by society, if in this work one relies upon firm theoretical standpoints elaborated with due consideration to the contemporary social position of the language and the tendencies of development that reveal themselves in the given language.

Owing to the fairly great mobility and urbanization of the population of our republic and as a result of the everyday influence of the literary language, the process of the assimilation of Estonian dialects has accelerated. The distinguishing features of the patois which came into being in the conditions of serfdom are disappearing. The peculiarities of the dialects and dialect groups have been better preserved, especially in South Estonia and on the islands, but even here the levelling under the literary language has been rather intensive. Little attention has been paid so far in Estonian dialectology to the processes of the assimilation of patois and dialects. The results of such research work, however, would provide interesting and at the same time necessary material for sociolinguistics and particularly for the regulation and teaching of literary Estonian. The dialect speaker of today can to a certain extent speak the literary language or at least understand the spoken language that is close to it. This has given rise, especially in the South-Estonian area, to the rather important parallel functioning of dialect and literary language, in the case of children also to the problems connected with switching from dialect to literary language and to the spoken language close to it, so-called bilingualism within one language.

There has been quite much talk lately about the development of the spoken language as a distinct variety of language alongside dialects and the literary language. What is meant is the general, mostly spoken language in current everyday use which is neither a dialect nor a semi-dialect. To avoid polysemy, this variety might also be called colloquial language (in Estonian: *argikeel*). The latter is developing now especially in the towns and cities, but our scanty data would suggest that the specific features of colloquial Estonian are not yet conspicuous. Colloquial Estonian stands quite near to the literary language and still contains numerous dialect features. It is too early to draw any parallels with spoken Finnish whose divergences from the literary language are much greater and immediately noticeable also to outside observers (Paunonen, Mielikäinen, Suojanen 1976; Mielikäinen 1980).

The publication in Finland of a rather bulky dictionary of slang (Karttunen 1979) has led to greater interest being taken also in Estonian argots or slang. On the basis of the material of a wordcollecting competition organized by the Mother Tongue Society and of student term papers, it may be concluded that although the peculiarities of our argots are increasing. We do not at present have any slang with such a distinct vocabulary and which is so widely used by young people as there is in Finland. Argots are of course quite natural varieties of language used by groups of people engaged in some joint activity or otherwise bound together socially, to stress their identity and to facilitate communication. There is a rather great difference between Estonian argots and dialects: in dialects the whole structure from phonetics to vocabulary is specific to them, whereas argots differ from the general language only in a part of the vocabulary and phraseology, the phonology and grammatical systems being in the main those of the spoken language.

A peculiarity of the development of literary Estonian at the present time is the rise and growth of the sublanguages of various sciences and spheres of production. In the conditions of the rapid growth of science and technology this phenomenon is quite natural and inevitable and will continue intensively.

In comparison with Russian and Swedish the stylistic differences in Estonian are not yet particularly great. The separate styles of the literary language are, however, becoming more distinct. This can be seen from the current discussions of officialese and the debates about the use of excessively florid style. In addition to lexical and syntactic peculiarities even some morphological features are beginning to emerge. In view of this, it seems to be wrong to reject offhand those morphological forms which are felt to be unsuitable from the standpoint of neutral linguistic usage. Thus, e. g. the 1st person plural imperative form ending in *-gem/-kem* (*mingem, hakakem*) is undoubtedly of a different stylistic value than the colloquial *me*-forms (*lähme, hakkame*). In elevated style the forms of the *mingem* type are quite appropriate. Certain forms of the *i*-plural also evidently have a stylistic value differing from the neutral.

Changes in the life of society are reflected the most immediately in the vocabulary. The rapid growth of the vocabulary of literary Estonian during the last decades has been noticed even by ordinary users of the language and has aroused occasional surprise and disapproval. Dictionaries of new words have been and are being compiled. The Mother Tongue Society has held a competition to produce new words. Such a deliberate acquisition of new words is apparently going to continue and it is, first and foremost, terminology and the everyday vocabulary that will grow. In comparison with the first decades of this century the position is somewhat different today. At that time large numbers of synonyms were borrowed from the dialects and from Finnish, and abstract words were coined for the literary language, especially the language of belles-lettres. At the present time, the growth of the number of abstract words and synonyms has slowed down. The role of belles-lettres in introducing new words into the literary language has likewise decreased. It is the press and science that are the most important sources of new words. The rise in the level of education and the growing influence of the mass media have notably increased the flow of terminology into the general language. However, the latter process involves a contradiction between the mass use of neologisms and the vague or even erroneous understanding of their meanings. Attention has been drawn to this recently from several quarters. It is obvious that the contradiction must be overcome somehow although no universal way of achieving this has been found as yet. The growth of the vocabulary of the literary language takes place nowadays largely on account of word-composition, the borrowing of international words, and derivation. Other means are of relatively lesser importance.

From the viewpoint of the trend of development, it is the international vocabulary that merits particular attention although it has often been overlooked in our conditions as a foreign component in the language. The number of international words in Estonian has grown steadily and, what is even more important, their use has continued to spread. This tendency manifests itself not only in Estonian, but is characteristic of many European languages. The ever wider use of international words is evidence of the internationalization of literary languages. Already today there are considerably more foreign stems in literary Estonian than there are native stems and old loan stems. But it is not only a matter of quantity. This extensive and ever more frequently used international word-stock formed largely from Greek and Latin stems is beginning to exert an influence on the structure of Estonian. Let us mention some of the more significant features of this process.

Five or six centuries ago as a result of sound changes that followed

upon changes in stressing Estonian became a phonetically centralized language, i. e. a language in which the greatest phonetic variety is concentrated in the syllable bearing the main stress. A part of the sounds (the vowels *o*, *õ*, *ä*, *ö*, *ü*) and sound clusters can occur only in a stressed first syllable, and it is here, too, that grade alternation may be the most extensive. At first loanwords in Estonian were adapted to this peculiarity of the phonetic structure. The international words that have entered literary Estonian in ever greater numbers since the second half of the 19th century have undergone much less adaptation to the phonetic system of Estonian. As a consequence, a peripheral phonetic system has come into being alongside the native phonetic system. In this peripheral system there is no centralization: the stress may stand in the middle or at the end of a word, the vowels *o*, *ä*, *ö*, *ü* occur in a non-first syllable, and the variety of sound clusters is greater in this system. It is highly probable that these two systems—the native phonetic system and that of international words, are beginning to influence each other. The present-day speaker of Estonian no longer perceives any striking foreignness in such words as *partei*, *traktor*, *kolhoos*, *auto*, *kino*, *raadio*, *televiisor*, although they are listed as foreign words in school grammar. The existence of two phonological systems is in turn exerting an influence on the morphological system and word formation in Estonian.

International words often enter Estonian already as derivatives with foreign affixes. The more familiar such words become and the more obvious the system underlying their structure becomes, that much more does the speaker begin to perceive the boundary between the affix and the stem as well as the meaning of the affix itself. In this way, alongside the native derivational system of Estonian, a as yet somewhat vague and not very productive derivational system of foreign words is taking shape and is already combining to a certain extent with the native derivational system. Compare, for instance, the set of words *psühholoogia*, *psühholoog*, *psühhologism* — *psühholoogiline*, *psühholoogitsema*; *psühhotehnika* — *psühhotehniline*. In present-day Estonian there is a clear boundary between these systems as foreign affixes are not used to produce new words from native stems, but the existence of two derivational systems is already a fact. Of course it is not always necessary to prefer international words since it is much harder for the speaker to acquire a foreign word which does not fit into the existing language system and is formally inseparable than it is to acquire a compound word or a derivative with a clear inner form. A vague and meagre comprehension of their meaning has been observed lately above all in the case of foreign words whose inner forms are indistinct. Hence it remains a task of language planning to separate the grain from the chaff and to normalize the use of international words in literary Estonian.

It deserves to be pointed out, too, that during the last few decades there has been a shift in the languages mediating new international words. Russian has moved from second place to first instead of German and the latter has been pushed into third place by English. The same shift has occurred in the ranking of the source languages providing translation loans. The Russian language has had an especially noticeable influence on the Estonian vocabulary recently both as a mediator of international words and as a source of translation loans.

Changes in social life and the economy have notably altered the composition of the Estonian vocabulary, the productivity of and the extent of familiarity with its different areas. The vocabulary of agriculture is being transformed; less known, particularly among the younger generation, are religious terms and the terminology of some handicrafts.

On the other hand, many technical words have come into general and everyday use. The transformation of the active vocabulary of speakers of Estonian seems to be continuing. That is why the compilation for schools of a new type of dictionary of little-known words has been seriously considered recently by the Commission for Educational Literature in the Mother Tongue.

In the preceding pages those changes in Estonian, first and foremost in the literary language, were discussed which are the result directly or indirectly of changes in production, the structure of society, and of advance in knowledge. We shall now deal with some tendencies in the development of the grammatical system of Estonian which are due to the operation of laws of development inherent in the language.

During the last couple of decades the trends of the long-term development of languages have come to be studied by a branch of linguistics known as language typology. Let us examine the course of development of Estonian in the light of two hypotheses that seek to reduce the general development of languages to types. Of them the G. von Gabelentz-T. Vennemann hypothesis of the cyclical development of languages is based on O. Jespersen's linear morphological typology and has been extended somewhat by J. Greenberg to include phonological and syntactic relations. The other hypothesis, that of contensive typology developed in the 1970s by G. Klimov (Климов 1976; 1977), seeks, proceeding from general lexical characteristics, to separate the main features of syntax and morphology into five basic language types, recognizing certain regularities in the chronological sequence of these types. In the following pages we shall try to apply the features singled out by both hypotheses in order to obtain a broader view of the trends of development of Estonian.

According to the distinctive features of contensive typology, Estonian like the other Finno-Ugric languages and the majority of the Indo-European languages, belongs to the group of nominative languages. In the latter substantives are not divided into classes depending on their content. Verbs are classified into transitive and intransitive. The relation between the subject and the object plays a decisive part in sentence structure. The nominative sentence construction prevails in which the agent of a transitive and an intransitive action (the subject of the action) is expressed in the same way (*Tüdruk jookseb. Tüdruk kirjutab kirja*), but the object of a transitive action is expressed otherwise (*Ma õpetan tüdrukut*) than is the doer of an intransitive action (the subject of the action). In nominative sentences the grammatical subject is always in an unmarked case (the nominative), whereas the grammatical object always stands in a marked case (the accusative, in Estonian grammar the genitive or the partitive). Languages of the nominative type have the category of voice: the active voice is contrasted to the passive voice. The finite verb-forms include personal endings that indicate the person of the subject.

I have elsewhere (Rätsep, to appear in 1981) dealt in detail with the 24 basic types of simple sentence in Estonian ascertained on the basis of these main features. The nine most frequently occurring types (e. g. in the sentences *Ma seisan. Ma avan ukse. Ma armastan poega. Ma olen õpetaja*, etc.) are nominative sentences. The rest are partly relicts of some earlier, probably active language type (e. g. part of the sentences in which the object stands in an unmarked case (nominative): *Te avage ukse! Avage ukse!*) or the quite old possessive sentence types in which the word denoting the possessor is in a marked case (adessive), but the word designating what is owned stands in an unmarked case (*Mul on raamat. Mul oled sina.*) or also in a marked case

(partitive) (*Mul ei ole raamatut. Mul ei ole sind.*), Possessive sentence types occur widely in other languages as well (e. g. in Russian, the Baltic languages).

Relevant to the topic of the present article, however, are the deviations of more recent origin from the nominative sentence pattern. Three changes might be mentioned in this connection. First, in the course of time sentences have come into existence in Estonian where the subject is expressed by a marked case, the partitive (*Aias kasvab puid. Oues jookseb poisse. Laest tilgub vett.*). The same type of sentence is met with also in the other Baltic-Finnic and the Baltic languages. Sentences with a partitive subject have lately attracted the attention of linguists. At the recent International Congress of Finno-Ugrists in Turku a separate symposium was held to shed light on the peculiarities of the structure of these existential sentences.

A specific feature of the typology of Estonian sentences is due to the development of the passive with a subject into the impersonal where the agent of an action is expressed not by a nominative subject, but it is the object that stands in the nominative, i. e. an unmarked case (*Uks avatakse. Laps viidi tuppa.*). Such a presentation of the relationship between the subject and the object no longer fits into the nominative sentence type and is like a topsy-turvy ergative type of sentence.

An even later essential change in the typology of Estonian sentences is the non-use or omission of the ending that indicates the person of the subject in certain finite forms of the verb. This tendency began with negative sentences when the conjugated negative verb was replaced probably in the 14th-15th centuries in many Estonian dialects by an unchangeable word of negation and since when there have been no personal endings indicating the subject in negative verb-forms (*Ma ei kirjuta kirja. Sa ei kirjuta kirja. Ta ei kirjuta kirja* etc.). The tendency was extended by a new mood, the Indirect Mood (if one keeps to the traditional viewpoint) which came into existence a little later and which has had no personal endings from the very outset (*Ma kirjutavat kirja. Sa kirjutavat kirja. Ta kirjutavat kirja* etc.). Quite recently the absence of personal endings on the model of the foregoing has begun to spread also to the Conditional Mood (*Ma kirjutaksin kirja. = Ma kirjutaks kirja. Sa kirjutaksid kirja. = Sa kirjutaks kirja. Ta kirjutaks kirja.* etc.). A decision adopted in 1980 by the Republican Commission for Orthology permits this usage alongside the personal endings also in literary Estonian.

In contensive language typology the nominative structure of language seems to be the provisional terminal point of several lines of development. It has not usually been indicated in which direction the nominative language type may continue to develop. The deviations manifesting themselves in the sentence structure of Estonian may point to one possible direction of future development.

The nominative sentence type appears to comprise two consecutive types — the agglutinative and inflectional types — of the typology of cyclical development.

The majority of the Finno-Ugric languages have been regarded as belonging to the agglutinative language type which is characterized, first and foremost, by agglutination, i. e. the production of morphological forms and of words by the addition to more-or-less invariable stems of loosely attachable affixes, a definite affix corresponding to each grammatical function and a definite grammatical function corresponding to

each affix. Such a method of producing morphological forms and of word-formation is represented, for instance, by the Estonian word-form *õpetajatetagi* (*õpe-ta-ja-te-ta-gi*).

It has been maintained (Korhonen 1980 : 97) that Estonian (together with Livonian and Lappish) has lost its agglutinative nature and has already passed completely into the next type of the cycle, the inflectional language type. The inflectional type, which is characteristic also of many Indo-European languages, is distinguished primarily by inflection, i. e. the production of word-forms by the paradigmatic alternation of certain sounds in stems and by affixes that fuse more closely with stems, it being possible for one affix to have several grammatical functions and for one function to have several affixes. Such a way of producing forms and words is exemplified, for instance, in Estonian by the paradigm *jõgi* : *jõe* : *jõge* : *jõkke*, where different cases (nominative, genitive, partitive and illative) are expressed in the given word by changes in the stem.

It would appear somewhat premature to regard Estonian as belonging completely to the inflectional type because the language has far from lost all its agglutinative features, having in fact preserved quite many of them and having even revived others. In the first half of this millennium there was indeed a development from the agglutinative type in the direction of the inflectional type. But in the second half of the millennium several changes restoring agglutinativity have taken place, especially in North Estonia. As a result literary Estonian is sooner a language of a mixed type in which there exist side by side agglutinative as well as inflectional features, and also some traits of a third, isolative type. Up to the present, a number of features characteristic of agglutinative languages have survived in Estonian.

1. A part of the noun and verb forms are produced as before by means of clearly distinguishable affixes, e. g. the case forms beginning with the inessive, the 1st and 2nd persons of the verb, the *de*-plural forms beginning with the illative, etc. Agglutination has remained especially important in Estonian word derivation. The thousands of derivatives which have enriched the vocabulary of literary Estonian during the past century have been obtained by means of usual agglutinative word-formation.

2. The agglutinative language type is characterized by the use of postpositions. In Estonian there is now an extensive system of postpositions and, bearing in mind various intermediate word combinations, their number is apparently continuing to grow.

3. The number of cases is large in agglutinative languages. New cases develop from postpositions and suffixal combinations (Korhonen 1979).

Estonian has retained its rich case system. The latest new case, the comitative with the ending *-ga*, came into being from the postposition *kaas* as recently as the 16th—17th centuries. There is no sign that the number of cases is decreasing. On the contrary, one more case seems to be developing: the short illative or aditive (Viitso 1976 : 152—153), e. g. *tuba*, *jalg*: illative (*mis puutub*) *toasse*, *jalasse*; aditive (*poiss jooksis*) *tuppa*, (*valu löi*) *jalga*. It is true, of course, that this still developing case form is produced inflectionally, i. e. it lacks a case ending.

4. The word order secondary part of sentence + head-word regarded as characteristic of agglutinative languages has survived in Estonian in the combination of an attribute and its head-word, e. g. *uus raamat*, *venna raamat*.

Thorough changes, mostly of a reductional kind occurred in the sound system of Estonian in the 13th—16th centuries. The disappa-

rance or modification of weak stops (or spirants) gave rise to consonant mutation, e. g. *sōda* : *sōja*; *jalg* : *jala*; *randa* : *ranna*; *kubu* : *koo*. In certain conditions, a vowel disappeared at the end or in the middle of a word (**konna* > *konn*, **majassa* > *majas*, **kattanut* > *katnud*). The consonants *-k*, *-h*, and *-n* disappeared in a word-final position (**laulak* > *laula*, **paisgk* > *paise*, **pereh* > *pere*, **majan* > *maja*, *asegn* > *ase*). Long vowels and diphthongs in non-first syllables were shortened. Some of these changes gave rise to the distinction on the boundary of stressed and unstressed syllables of the second and third degrees of length, i. e. to quantitative grade alternation.

Such intensive shifts in the Estonian sound system, in that of North Estonia in particular, led to changes in morphology as well. Estonian acquired some of the features of an inflectional language.

1. Alongside agglutinative form-building and word-formation there developed a new form-building of the inflectional type where word-forms differ from one another in the phonetic composition of the stem (e. g. *anda* (*da*-infinitive) — *anna* (2nd p. sing. imper.); *uus* (nominative) — *uue* (genitive) — *uut* (partitive) — *uude* (illative). Such pure inflection, however, was restricted only to some word types and even there only to three or four cases or a few verb-forms. In other word-forms stem alternation could be only an attendant feature, e. g. *leivale* — *leibadele*; *annan* — *andsin*. At the present time there is no evidence that the tendency to inflectional change is spreading. Actually during the past centuries a contrary tendency can be observed: the preservation of stem invariability or its restoration in certain word types, which has steadied the faltering morphological system. Such a duality is noticeable here and there also in the present-day language. In the work of regulating usage the parallel forms are being discussed of some word types with or without grade alternation.

2. The development of inflectional change was accompanied in some word-forms by the blurring of the boundary between stem and suffix (**jaloissa* > *jalus*, **jalkaδen* > *jaloe*). But already in the 16th—17th centuries, especially in North Estonia, a contrary trend appeared which involved the widening of the spheres of use of new, analogical but clearly distinguishable affixes. Instead of and alongside the *i*-plural there began to spread a *de*-plural from the *de*-ending genitive plural (*jalgade* : *jalgadesse*, *jalgades*, *jalgadest*, etc.). The *i*-imperfect was in many paradigms replaced by the more expressive *si*-imperfect (*kirjutasin*, *andsin*, *valasin*) which developed from the *hakkasin* type of verb-forms. Alongside the short partitive plural which had lost the partitive ending, there appeared a *sid*-partitive from other word types (*pesasid*, *majasid*, *ridasid*). Thus the morphological system which had meanwhile become unstable consolidated itself again and the agglutinativity of the Estonian language began to increase once again. The same trend is exemplified in the present-day language by the extension of the sphere of use of the partitive plural ending in *-id* in words containing the affixes *-ne* and *-s* (*kinnisi*, *põhjusti*, *töölisi* alongside *kinniseid*, *põhjusteid*, *tööliseid*). This extension was recognized in the literary language also by a decision of the Republican Commission for Orthology adopted in 1980.

3. In an inflectional language system the principle no longer holds that one grammatical function corresponds to one morpheme and vice versa. The homonymy and synonymy of grammatical elements spreads. These phenomena have undoubtedly gained ground in Estonian in the course of time.

4. In the inflectional language type prepositions are used instead of postpositions. Due to the influence of the Germanic language some post-

positions have come to function as prepositions (*läbi metsa; mööda teed — teed mööda; pärast lõunat — minu pärast; piki teed*). Likewise some prefix-like elements have become established in the language (*eba-, umb-, ala-*).

5. The word order characteristic of the inflectional languages is subject — finite verb — object. Such a pattern of word order is usual also in Estonian (*Ma kirjutan kirja*). It has replaced in all the Baltic-Finnic languages and in Lappish the word order characteristic of agglutinative languages subject — object — verb (**Ma kirja kirjutan*). This feature as well as the appearance of the copula in the earlier nominal sentence and concord between the adjectival attribute and its head-word, has come into use owing to the influence of neighbouring languages and is evidently not the result of the inner development of the language.

The sound changes and analogy formations that have taken place in Estonian over the centuries have sometimes produced forms which are characteristic more of the third type of the Gabelentz-Vennemann cycle, viz. the isolative language type. This has led some scholars (Skalička 1968 : 498; Korhonen 1980 : 101) to see in them the beginnings of a future language type. In the isolative language type, as is well known, word-stems have no inflections or markers, and grammatical functions are expressed by means of auxiliary words, word order, intonation.

As a result of the phonetic changes mentioned above there arose in Estonian in certain conditions also such grammatical forms which were invariable stems as to their phonetic shape and grammatical homonyms as to their morphology (e. g. *see pesa, selle pesa, seda pesa*). Such word-forms acquire a definite grammatical function only in a certain position within the sentence and in the neighbourhood of words in a given form.

Of an isolative character are the verb-forms without personal endings occurring in negative speech and in the indirect and conditional moods that were mentioned earlier on. This group also includes the substitution of the genitive forms of personal pronouns for possessive suffixes (finn. *pesäni est. ~ minu pesa*).

It is doubtful at present whether these changes indicate a change of language type in the future. Grammatical homonyms appear to be a by-product of inflection which the dialects and colloquial speech are seeking to replace with forms based on analogy (e. g. the nominative *mõru*, genitive *mõru*, partitive *mõru* are being replaced in colloquial Estonian by *mõru — mõruda — mõrudat* on analogy with *pime — pimedat; seda pesa* (partitive) by *seda pesat*). Some of the forms of an isolative nature have come into being due to the influence of neighbouring languages.

The idea of the cyclical development of languages remains at the present time only a hypothesis containing a great deal that is uncertain. As the changes have occurred very slowly over many millennia, contemporary linguistics lacks any evidence of the whole cycle ever having taken place and even less evidence of its recurrence. Doubts have been raised also by the view that development has proceeded in a circle, the language types being regarded as unchangeable. Both a direct and an indirect influence is exerted on the development of languages by the intensification of contacts between peoples and languages, by social progress, the rise to a central position of literary languages that are deliberately regulated. Therefore it would be more natural to assume a long-term spiral development and a variation of language types. As is borne out by the Estonian language, it is possible in certain conditions, a considerable role being played by the influence of neighbouring lan-

guages, for new mixed types to come into existence which are not at all mere temporary transitional forms. And finally, the selection of the features distinguishing language types and their interdependence are as yet quite provisional so that more profound research in this area will in all probability change the typology of languages.

Returning to the Estonian language, it should nevertheless be pointed out that on the regulation of Estonian different linguists seem to have subconsciously preferred one or another morphological language type. In his work on language regulation, and word-formation in particular, Academician J. V. Veski frequently promoted the development and preservation of agglutinative Finno-Ugric features. J. Aavik, on the other hand, in his striving to bring about a thorough renewal of Estonian, favoured an increase in the number of inflectional features (the propagation of the *i*-plural, short partitive and illative).

To sum up the preceding, it may be stated that present-day literary Estonian and the spoken language closely associated with it are undergoing improvement and developing into a means of communication involving the entire nation. It is likewise possible to observe the influence on the vocabulary of the profound transformation of society and growing language contacts. In the internal development of the language a mixed agglutinative-inflectional type is gaining ground in morphology, a process attended by contrary levelling tendencies. In the structure of the sentence there is some movement away from purely nominative sentence structure as several basic non-nominative types have come into use.

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ХУНО РЯТСЕП (Тарту)

ТЕНДЕНЦИИ В РАЗВИТИИ ЭСТОНСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

В статье рассматриваются характерные направления и тенденции развития современного эстонского языка. Отмечаются сдвиги в социальных функциях разных форм его: центральное положение литературного языка, ассимиляция территориальных диалектов, возникновение особого разговорного языка, влияние средств массовой коммуникации и т. д. Анализируются изменения в словарном составе литературного языка и пути его обогащения. В строе языка наблюдается укоренение агглютинативно-флективного смешанного типа вместе с обусловленными этим противоположными сдвигами уравновешивания в морфологии. В синтаксисе выявляется некоторое удаление от чисто номинативного строя, употребление разных неноминативных типов предложения.