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**THE FINNO-UGRIAN PHILOLOGY AT THE BEGINNING  
OF THE III MILLENNIUM: WHAT DIRECTIONS  
OF THE FINNO-UGRISTICS ARE OF PRIORITY?**

In the «Finno-Ugrian Bulletin» (2, 2000) Marja Lappalainen in her article «What the world knows about the finno-ugrian peoples? Spreading and broadening of the information volume», when considering the ways of circulation of the information on the Finno-Ugrians in Russia and abroad, their languages and cultures, points out the necessity of increasing the volume of this information. One of the effective means of the expansion of the information field of all the Uralic (Finno-Ugrian and Samoyed) peoples, who live both in Russia and other countries, are Finno-Ugrian conferences that have regularly been every five years since 1960 (see an article of Anu Nurk in the abovementioned issue of the «Finno-Ugrian Bulletin»). The next (X) Congress of Finno-Ugrists takes place in 2005 in Mari El in Yoshkar-Ola.

The number of participants grew steadily from 100 persons at the I Budapest Congress (1960) to one thousand in Jyväskylä (1995). After the preliminary data of Anu Nurk, less participants took part at the work of the last IX Congress (Tartu, 2000), though the number applicants exceeded 1100 persons. Whether the popularity of the Finno-Ugrian fora and the possibility (first of all the economical) of participation at them will grow or decrease, it depends in many respects on the efforts of the host republic and the work of the organizing committee.

Thus, Mari El is vested with a honorable duty and a great responsibility of carrying out the next international forum of Finno-Ugrists who study languages, literature, history, the material and spiritual culture, anthropology of the Uralic peoples. Members of the organizing committee ought to work out a common strategy of the realization of the work of the congress by means of proposing the most actual theme that unites all spheres of studies. In their turn, linguists of particular and concrete Finno-Ugrian philologies must analyze the situation that has formed in the contemporary theoretical linguistics of the world level and try

to bridge the gap which exists between Finno-Ugristics and general theoretical linguistics. In other words, it is advisable for the Finno-Ugrists to concentrate - in the time that is left before the next congress - upon issues that require an urgent intervention of linguists.

At the Congress of 2000 I tried to re-orient the community to realize tasks that have created a new paradigm in the world linguistics but remain unattended by Finno-Ugrists. The typological study of the modern languages belongs to the tasks of this kind and many linguists and whole institutions actively deal with this in Europe and America. Typologists use in big amounts examples of the languages of the Indo-European, African, Caucasian, Polynesian peoples and even of those of the Indian of the Northern America. But regrettably, in the works of typologists examples from the Uralic languages can be found rather seldom. If Uralists turn to the themes of the typological studies, they will find themselves in an advantageous position:

1. Having taken as the initial point a category which is broadly represented in the languages of the world and is now described in a rather detailed way in the works of the typologists, Finno-Ugrists will study an analogous phenomena in the Finno-Ugrian languages against a background of numerous other languages that have already been studied from the same point of view. For example, it is possible to study the Mari language from the point of view of the typology of the word order, i.e. evaluate order of the words in Mari, comparing it with the main orders of words in the languages of the world and fixing the differences and analogies with the regularities found earlier.

2. It is reasonable to carry out the typological researches in the framework of one group of the related languages or one language family, in particular, the Uralic one. This will provide the possibility of getting a «group» or «family portrait» of the analyzed phenomenon. Such types of researches have now been made neither for a group nor a family of genetically related languages. Finno-Ugrists are capable of being pioneers at solving this task.

3. Uralists can turn to portraiting «language profiles», comparing the languages - that are distant to each other in their structural aspect - after one of the features (possessivity, quantitativity, temporality, negativity etc.) what is done by the linguists, who deal with typology. Similar works are occasionally to be found in the contemporary Finno-Ugrian philology, but comparison of separate Finno-Ugrian languages is mainly made with Russian or some Western Indoeuropean language (English, German) or more seldom - with a Turkic one, usually in the case when the compared languages are in contact.

Every of the proposed methods is applicable for the search of interdependencies. Studies in the Finno-Ugrian languages in the channel of priority ways of the contemporary theoretical linguistics, on one side, attract more attention

of linguists of many countries to the Uralic studies and, on the other hand, enrich the world linguistics with new data, thus furthering the development of the theoretical linguistics itself.

The fact of the presence of a net of relationship between the found structural parameters should be complemented by the search for the reasons of similarity and difference of the analyzed features (including those of non-linguistic character). Here appears the next main task for a Finno-Ugrist - the task of a complex approach to the languages and to its separate phenomena. This, in its turn, means that at solving many a linguistic problem the linguists should consider data of socio-linguistics, psycho-linguistics, folklore, history, ethnography, archeology, visual anthropology and other humanitarian sciences what is far from being done in many of the cases. The last of the abovementioned disciplines, which has only recently started developing in Russia and is broadly well known in the West, allows founding of similarities and differences in the non-verbal communication of different Finno-Ugrian peoples and register correlations between the oral speech and the gesture language - between the verbal and non-verbal communications. Studying the non-verbal language has a direct connection with the theory of communicative competence that embraces the field of semantics, norms of etiquette among different peoples, different forms of address, salutation, leave-making etc. The socio-linguistic researches, including study and description of bilingualism, switching between codes and mixing of the languages, interference at all levels of the language and also phenomena that are connected with language contacts of different types, are mainly carried out in the last time on the material of small Uralic peoples (this is connected with the fact that the decade of 1994-2004 is declared a decade of the indigenous peoples of the world by a resolution of the General Assembly of the UNO). Meanwhile, it is necessary to provide a description of the language situation for all Uralic languages and carry out this after a common plan, having improved questionnaires and made «socio-linguistic profiles». For this purpose, it is necessary to take into account the percentage of the native speakers, status of the language, its functions, describe the language situation etc. These questions are partially dealt with by sociologists, though, they pay the main attention to the working and social-political conditions of the life, culture, traditions and so on (see the edition «Образ жизни населения Марийской АССР по материалам сравнительных социологических исследований 1973 и 1985 гг.»). We should not pass over in silent the reasons which bring about the appearance of pigeons, diasporas, diglossia etc; it is important to search for similar language idioms in the map of the existence of the Uralic peoples.

«Now or never» - this must be a slogan of the beginning of a new millennium, for many languages of the small peoples of Russia are catastrophically

being forgotten by their native speakers and the languages which are not under the threat of getting extinct during a century are subjected to a strong Russification what is reflected in phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexical composition of the languages.

Naturally, this language situation at the places of residence of the Finno-Ugrian peoples wants the greatest possible attention for the fixation of the contemporary, synchronous state of the language: description of both the dialects and vernaculars which have not ever been studied; experimental research of phonetic systems and foundation of phono-libraries; studies in the colloquial literary languages and the low popular language, non-normative lexic, jargon etc. Creation of computer data bases (dictionaries and texts) that are capable of the preservation both the language of contemporaneity and materials of the passed centuries, will allow starting publication of archive materials and a step by step intensification of historical researches of the non-written languages and the languages whose written form has only recently been established. Of the same actuality is the creation of dictionaries of different types. There are many dozens of different types of dictionaries in the world linguistics, but in the Finno-Ugrian lexicography slightly more than a dozen of them have been realized and not for every language.

All the above mentioned tasks are rather urgent, facing the Uralic linguistics after the IX International Congress of the Finno-Ugrists. The linguists have their right to choose. It is then important not to make mistakes there.