

Problems Of Distinguishing Lingual Variance And Differentiation In Modern Linguistics

Alimardanova Shaxlo Ashurmamatovna

Senior Lecturer of the Department of General Linguistics, Uzbek State University of World Languages, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article examines the phenomenon of linguistic variation as a fundamental property of a living literary language and an object of various linguistic studies. The concept of linguistic variability is analyzed, and a distinction is made between variology (the study of the universal ability of language to vary) and variantology (the theory of lexical modifications of a word). Three types of variation are distinguished: formal, semantic and functional. The article pays special attention to the problem of distinguishing between variance and related linguistic phenomena – synonymy, linguistic differentiation, suppletion. It is argued that formal changes accompanied by stylistic or functional differences should be classified as linguistic differentiation. The main features of formal lexical variants are established: high reproducibility, identical structure, and the same meaning. It is noted that formal variability can be transformed into differentiation or synonymy.

Keywords: Variability, variantology, property, modern Russian language, variation, variant, invariant, linguistic differentiation, differential forms.

Introduction: Language represents a dynamic system in constant development and change. One of the most vivid manifestations of this dynamics is linguistic variation – the ability of language to express the same content by various means. Variation arises at all levels of the linguistic system and reflects both intralinguistic processes and socio-historical conditions of language functioning.

In modern linguistics, the problem of linguistic variation remains one of the most relevant and debatable. Despite a significant number of studies devoted to this phenomenon, many issues remain insufficiently studied. Of particular difficulty is the differentiation between variation proper and related phenomena, such as synonymy, linguistic differentiation, and suppletivism. The absence of clear criteria for differentiation leads to terminological uncertainty and complicates the systematic description of linguistic facts.

The aim of this article is to clarify the concept of linguistic variation, establish its boundaries, and identify the main features of formal lexical variants. Special attention is paid to differentiating between

variation and linguistic differentiation as fundamentally different phenomena of the linguistic system.

The relevance of the research is determined by the necessity of theoretical understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic variation and the development of unified criteria for identifying linguistic variants in synchronic and diachronic aspects.

METHOD

The concept of linguistic variation in linguistics is understood as «difference in reproduction, consisting in changes in the sound composition or meaning of a structural unit of language without loss of its identity» [3, 72]. Thus, linguistic variation implies specific changes that do not lead to the emergence of something completely new, but, as V.M. Solntsev writes, «presupposes both variability and constancy, acting as a unity of the variable and the constant» [7, 32]. Linguistic variants are «different manifestations of one and the same essence, for example, modifications of one and the same unit, which remains itself through all changes» [6, 80].

It should be noted that linguistic variation relates not only to individual levels of language, but also to

language as a whole. In this regard, separate linguistic disciplines have been formed, such as variology and variantology. Variology is broader than variantology. Variology considers the ability of language to vary as something universal, which ensures the dynamism of the system in the broad sense of the word. Variantology, on the other hand, is understood «as a component part of variology, namely: the theory of lexical modifications of the word» [5] and is concerned with studying the results of linguistic variation.

The terms *вариантность* and *вариативность* as the property of language to express a certain meaning by different means are synonyms in most linguistic research, particularly in V.M. Solntsev [8].

The opposition between variant and invariant in the linguistic system is based on the properties of the invariant to accumulate the properties of a multitude of variants, to exist as a certain abstract phenomenon rather than a separate object, to be a sign of complex structural organization and to relate only to those linguistic objects that possess common and essential properties for these objects. A variant presupposes the existence of an invariant and combines variability and at the same time stability (constancy), which are a necessary condition for its existence.

Linguistic variation can be formal, semantic, and functional. «Formal variation is variation in the plane of expression while the plane of content remains unchanged... Semantic variation is understood as variation in the plane of content while the plane of expression remains unchanged... Functional variation is defined by us as variation in function while the plane of content and the plane of expression remain unchanged» [10, 28].

It should be noted that it is necessary to differentiate some related concepts from the concept of variation, bearing in mind formal variation: variation – synonymy, variation – linguistic differentiation, variation – suppletivism, as well as variation – polysemy, variation – homonymy, etc.

For example, variants of the type *пергамен* // *пергамин* // *пергамент*, *фалбала* // *фалбара* // *фалбора*, *сагайдак* // *сайдак* // *саадак* and word-formation synonyms of the type *беретик* // *березняк*, *речонка* // *речушка* differ in word-formation structures and word-formation formants, which, as a rule, introduce a new shade of meaning or a new stylistic coloring to the word.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

No less important is the problem of differentiating between variation and linguistic differentiation. Differentiation fundamentally differs from variation: it

presupposes inequality and difference between two forms and includes phenomena related to the sphere of usage or stylistic coloring. For example: *волос* (neutral) // *влас* (high), *сквозь* // *скрозь* (outdated, regional), *дерево* // *древцо* (outdated).

In other words, it is expedient to introduce «the concept of linguistic differentiation, opposed to variation» [11, 69]. Based on this understanding of the concept of variation, the boundaries of this phenomenon become more distinct, and the number of words that can be classified as variants significantly decreases. That is, changes of a formal character, accompanied by stylistic differences, whether within the limits of the literary norm or beyond them, cannot be classified as a phenomenon of variation, but should be qualified as examples of linguistic differentiation.

In modern linguistics there exist quite clear provisions that allow classifying certain changes in a word as lexical forms of the word: the presence of a common root, the presence of internal differences in the presence of lexico-semantic commonality (when dealing with lexico-semantic variants), the coexistence of formal lexical variants at a synchronic cross-section of language, their functioning in a unified linguistic system.

Based on this, the main features of formal lexical variants can be formulated. They have a sufficiently high degree of reproducibility in oral and written speech; they function both in the literary language (*равендук* // *равентук*), and in dialectal speech (*церковь* // *церква* (dialectal)); have the same word-formation and morphological structure, the same grammatical and lexical meaning.

Formal lexical variants are considered as linguistic facts at a synchronic level of language, that is, they coexist at a specific point in time, while simultaneously reflecting a particular evolutionary stage in the development of the language system. If one of the forms of the proposed variants is archaic, such as, *болото* // *блато* (outdated), *вопить* // *вопитья* (outdated), *берер* // *бер* (outdated), we should talk about synonymy or linguistic differentiation.

Linguistic differentiation is allowed on the basis of the characteristics of «colloquial» (*какао* // *какава*, *хотят* – *хочут*, *печешь* – *пекешь*, *без пальто* // *без пальта*), «диалектное» (*ковать* // *кувать*, *клубника* // *глубника* // *колубника* // *голубника* // *клубница* // *кулубница*) [4], «outdated» (*город* // *град*).

The phenomenon of variation is also examined from a sociolinguistic point of view. The choice of one or another variant form by a language speaker depends on differences of a social character (age, gender, education, place of birth), as well as on the peculiarities

of speech communication conditions (official/unofficial situation).

Formal lexical variants are facts of general language usage, not individual speech of each separate person. Their formal and semantic identity (in the presence of cases of habit or individual taste) is generally comprehensible to all native speakers. As A.G. Sheremetyeva notes, «in this respect, a similarity is revealed between formal lexical variation and interpretational-semantic variation of the word in context. A contextually realized word is an object that unites one of the elements of the 'general' signified with a concrete variant from the set of signifiers» [11, 84].

Formal lexical variation represents such a property of the linguistic system as redundancy, which presupposes the presence of repeated (multiple) transmission of the same information, carried out explicitly or implicitly.

There also exists the concept of diachronic variation, which is characterized by extremely close positioning of variants on the temporal axis. «At the same time, synchronic variants seem to 'layer' upon each other, creating a zone of 'redundant' formal variation. After a certain time, the impulse of diachronic variation 'fades' and the period of coexistence of variants ends with the stabilization of one of the forms: зал // зала // зало > зал, кофе // кофей // кофий > кофе, принцип // прынцип // принцип > принцип, although reactivation of the variant impulse is also possible, even in the same form: кофе (he) // кофе (it)» [11, 86].

Formal lexical variants possess a high degree of reproducibility in oral and written speech; «possess identical word-formation and morphological structure, the same grammatical and lexical meaning; are considered as linguistic facts at a synchronic cross-section of language, reflecting a particular evolutionary stage of development of the linguistic system; are equivalent also in terms of the speaker's / writer's preference for one or another form; demonstrate such a property of the linguistic system as redundancy» [2, 33].

R.R. Ataeva classifies formal lexical variants «into phonematic variants (бриллиант // брильянт), accent variants (Аир // айр), lexical and morphological variants (рельс // рельса)» [2, 33].

The main criterion for distinguishing between linguistic variants, on the one hand, and synonyms, linguistic differentiation, and suppletivism, on the other, is the criterion of preserving the identity of a linguistic object ("self-identity") [2, 33].

As we noted earlier, «In the context of word formation,

differential forms are words formed from the same derivational word, but differing in meaning or stylistic coloring due to the use of different word formation models. These forms are often synonymous, but introduce semantic or expressive nuances» [1, 16].

Based on the material from A.N. Tikhonov's Word-Formation Dictionary [9] of the Russian Language, we have identified the following differential forms:

- marked «outdated»: ватруха, вервь, вран, врата, лис, нумер, пламень, ресторация, фарса, хмурный etc.;

- marked «dialectal»: мать, оболочь, обужа, слухать, снет, черево, ячный etc.;

- marked «colloquial»: лепёха, мужлан, оскома, племяш, ужасть, нету etc.;

- marked «professional»: мелос, скал, ячея etc.

It should be noted that the identified examples should be attributed to the phenomenon of linguistic differentiation, since they are characterized by an additional meaning that reflects the chronological characteristics, as well as the social and territorial differentiation of the language.

CONCLUSION

Based on all of the above, a number of important conclusions can be made regarding the nature of linguistic variation and its place in the language system.

Firstly, linguistic variation represents an inherent property of a living literary language, ensuring its dynamism and capacity for development. However, for an adequate understanding of this phenomenon, a clear differentiation between variation proper and related concepts is necessary.

Secondly, it has been established that changes of a formal character, entailing stylistic differences, whether within or beyond the limits of the literary norm, should be qualified as examples of linguistic differentiation, not variation. This differentiation is fundamentally important for the correct interpretation of linguistic facts.

Thirdly, the existence of variants in the language system is not a permanent and unchanging state. Transformations are possible, as a result of which formal variation transitions into differentiation or synonymy, which reflects natural processes of linguistic evolution.

The main features of formal lexical variants – a high degree of reproducibility, identical word-formation and morphological structure, the same grammatical and lexical meaning, functioning in a unified linguistic system – make it possible to clearly distinguish this phenomenon from other types of formal variation.

Thus, the clarification of the concept of linguistic variation and the establishment of its boundaries contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of functioning and development of the linguistic system, opening perspectives for further research in the field of variology and variantology.

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