

Towards an other kind of linguistics

(Theoretical-methodological issues of 20th century Hungarian linguistics)

Hungarian works in linguistics usually either present a phenomenon or aim at solving a special problem of linguistic description. However, there are no papers posing questions about the theoretical-methodological background of schools which influence modern Hungarian linguistics.

This approach however may easily become the hindrance to the development of linguistics: if we handle the currently characteristic basic principles of linguistics without scepticism and as self-evident axioms, the most important (i. e. conceptual) problems of linguistics will stay hidden. We can clarify minor issues taking the classical theoretical-methodological framework as the basis, but it does not provide us with the possibility to recognise and solve comprehensive interpretational difficulties or radically formulate new linguistic thought.

I was led by similar considerations when I started to review the theses characteristic of the modern Hungarian linguistics. Studying the principles usually considered unquestionable, I had to realise my doubts were not without foundation. In the theoretical and methodological background of currently canonised schools lie difficulties of such language philosophical origin, which — due to their conceptual feature — cannot be solved within the given descriptive frame, it is necessary therefore to rethink the basic principles themselves and to develop an approach based on different tenets.

In my dissertation I wish to present the stages of this line of thought. Firstly, I analysed the descriptive difficulties of classical linguistics and, secondly, based on experience gained from the above analysis, I make an attempt to outline a linguistic approach, which could mark the path towards a more successful, more adequate concept of language.

Since I aim to reveal the theoretical-methodological paradoxes of canonised linguistics while also designing the dimensions of solution by a consequent analysis of the issues, through the two-level model elaborated on in the last two chapters of the dissertation — at least to my intentions — I have managed to outline a coherent language concept rethought in its foundations. Both in its social and individual aspect, I outline a holistic concept of a phonotactically determined, dynamic network, which — due to its socially-cognitively embedded nature — requires that future linguistic researches should not be isolated from other sciences, but rather develop jointly with human ethnological, evolutionary and cognitive psychological as well as neurobiological studies.