History of Comparative Linguistics

- the end of the 18th century up to the middle of the 19th century, which is called the beginning of comparative research;
- the end of the 19th century – the period of neogrammarian studies, when linguists started comparing living languages;
- the beginning of the 20th century up to the present – the period of structural and functional approaches to language.

CLAUDE LANCELOT, ANTOINE ARNAUD

"**Universal or Rational Grammar**"
(Pour Royal Monastery 1660),

was an attempt to create grammar on
"**common in all languages principles**".

Summary

1) The historical and comparative method was originally employed to **diachronically investigate genealogically related languages**, principally Indian, Germanic and Romanic.

2) At the same time **general observations in non-related languages** were being carried out. These observations helped to establish the languages' isomorphic and allomorphic features. Thus, together with the historical and comparative study, typological investigations were born.

Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835)
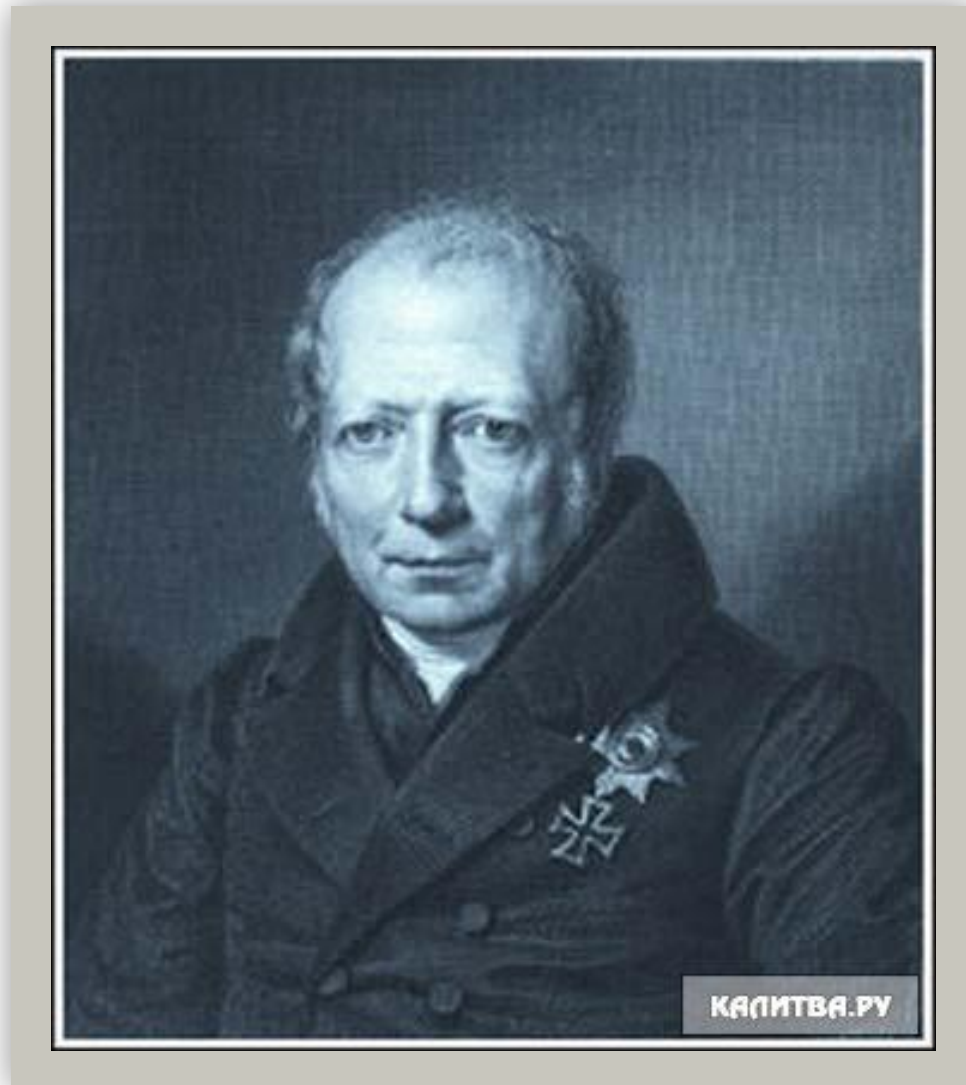
The father of typology

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT

- is considered to be **the father of typology**.
- **grouped all known to him languages** into the four classes.
- suggested **evolutionary theory.**
- explained the divergences found in languages with the help of existence of **ethnic psychology**.
- used the notion of **folk's spirit** represented in national language.

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT`S classification

1) **isolating** languages, which are devoid of the form-building morphemes (like Chinese);

2) **agglutinative** languages (like those of the Turkic group);

3) **flexional** languages (like the Indo-European and Semitic languages);

4) **incorporating** languages of American Indians, which are characterized by the possibility of words to combine and form specific word-sentences.

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT`S
evolutionary theory

The isolating languages

⬇

the agglutinative languages

⬇

the inflexional languages

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT`S
evolutionary theory

The isolating languages were considered by him to be archaic,

the agglutinative – to be at the intermediary stage of development and

the inflexional ones as those representing the highest degree in language evolution.

SUMMARY:

- IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY TYPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS WERE BASED ON THE **MORPHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE**.

- different structural types of languages were shown as the stages of one process of the development of languages in general as **the movement from less perfect to more perfect**.

19th century

1. All through the second half of the 19th century the only object of typological investigation was a ***word / word-form***.

2. It was investigated **with an accent on its common and divergent features** with the aim to establish a universal morphological classification.

3. Nevertheless, in some researches the object of investigation **has moved from morphology to syntax.**

20th C. TYPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS:

- **MULTILATERAL OR GRADED TYPOLOGY**

- **CHARACTEREOLOGICAL TYPOLOGY**

- **QUANTITATIVE TYPOLOGY**

Edward Sapir

MULTILATERAL OR GRADED TYPOLOGY

MULTILATERAL OR GRADED TYPOLOGY

the American linguist **Edward Sapir**.
suggested TWO PARAMETERS:
a) the degree of cohesion between the root and the affixal morphemes in a word:
1) isolating (no formal elements),
2) agglutinative (affixal morphemes don't cause the changes in root morpheme),
3) fusional (when it is difficult to find the boundary between the root and the affixal morphemes),
4) symbolic (root morphemes change because of the shift of the stress , the change of intonation etc);

b) the degree of synthesis:
1) analytical,
2) synthetic
3) polysynthetic languages.

Summary

1. Of special attention in the 20th century were questions concerning the ways of contrasting **the microsystems of related and non-related languages with the aim of investigating morphological and functional features**.

2. At the same time **syntactic relations** (***C.Bazell, I.I.Meshchaninov***) and phonological features (***N.Trubetskoy, Ch.Hockett, O. Isachenko***) were taken into account.

TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

1. Morphological

2. Phonological

3. Syntactic

MORPHOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION
(after W. Humboldt)

MORPHOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

1. **THE ISOLATING languages**

2. **THE AGGLUTINATIVE languages**

3. **THE FLEXIONAL languages**

4. **THE INCORPORATING / POLYSYNTHETIC languages**
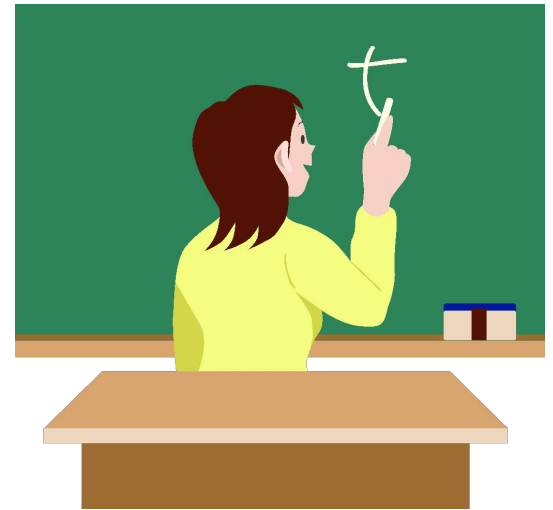
<u>the isolating</u> languages

✔   are devoid of the form-building morphemes, they are also called **amorphous** or formless.

✔   **Grammatical relations** in these L. are expressed by word order.

✔   The best **specimen** of an I.L. is <u>Chinese</u>, which is monosyllabic and invariable.
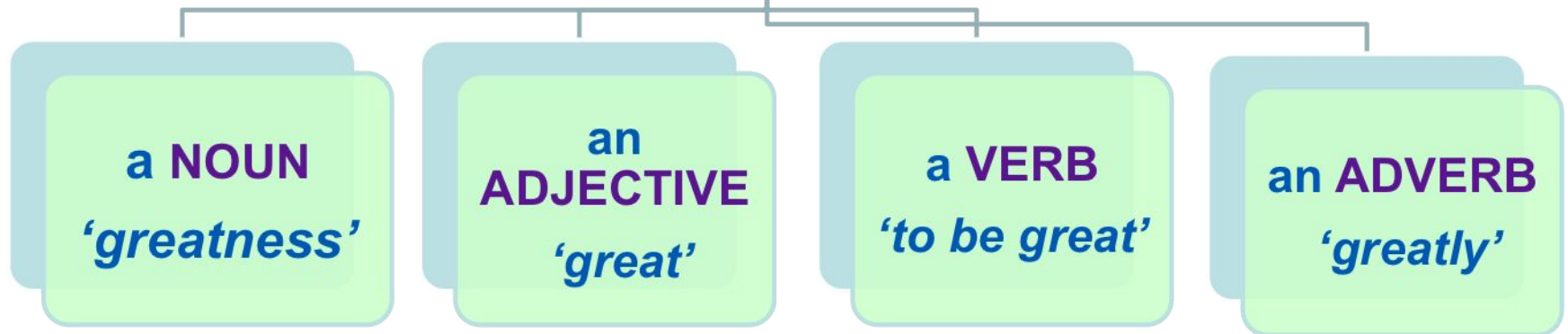
Chinese

A TONAL L.

and the meanings of words

of the same structure

are distinguished by

1. **tones** and

2. **position** of the word in the sentence.

A Chinese "da"

- a NOUN 'greatness'
- an ADJECTIVE 'great'
- a VERB 'to be great'
- an ADVERB 'greatly'

The exact meaning is made clear by tones and positions in the sentence.

the agglutinative languages

1) *monosemantic and standard suffixes, so called "stickers",*

2) *a strictly prescribed order of suffixes etc.*

   (okul "школа",

   okullar "школи",

   okullarimiz "наші школи",

   okullarimizda "в наших школах")

These features are permanent for Turkic languages, so it is possible to contrast them to another group of languages.

<u>the flexional</u> languages

 The form of a word changes to show a change in meaning or grammatical function.

 Often there is **no clear boundary** between the root and the part which shows the grammatical meaning: *mice (mouse + plural)*

Indo-European as Greek, Latin, English, Russian, Ukrainian etc. and Semitic languages

the incorporating / polysynthetic languages

of American Indians

with no word / sentence distinction

which are characterized

by the possibility of words

to combine and form

specific sentence structures.

American Indian

I came to give it to her (English) = inialudam (Am.Indian)

i - n - i - a - l - u - d - a - m

i-past time

n-personal pronoun "I"

i-personal pronoun "it"

a-possessive pronoun "her"

L-preposition of direction "to"

u-indicates movement away from the speaker

d=give

am-modifies the verbal content in a local sense

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PHONOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

PHONOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION
(after O. Isachenko)

- **CONSONENTAL**
- **VOCALIC**

CONSONENTAL languages

dominates

the system of consonants

which is characterized by the variety of consonantal phonemes and the small number of vocalic phonemes –

Ukrainian, Russian, Polish

VOCALIC languages

dominates

the system of vocalic phonemes

with the limited number of consonants,

and the number of vowels

exceeds the average number

of vocalic phonemes –

English, German, Slovenian, Serbian-Croat

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syntactic classifications

according to the type OF grammaTICAL word-formation:

❑ **SYNTHETIC** languages, in which the grammatical relations between words are expressed **by forms of the words** themselves.

❑ **ANALYTICAL** languages, in which the grammatical relations are expressed **by means of prepositions**. They are also characterized by the use of auxiliary words and a fixed word order (**S-V-O**).

The change of placement of the elements
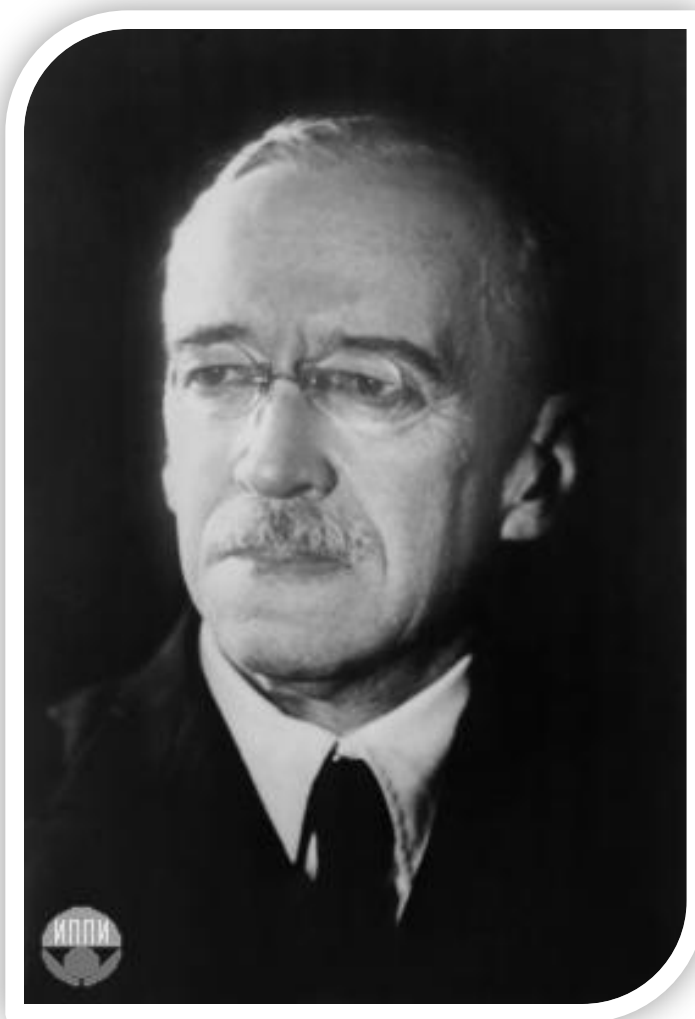
is possible in synthetic L. only.

Compare:

e.g. *The hunter killed the bear & The bear killed the hunter*,

e.g. *Мисливець убив ведмедя = Ведмедя убив мисливець.*

Ivan I. Meshchaninov
(1883 Ufa – 1967 Leningrad)

According to the way of expressing subject-predicate relations
(after I.I.Meshchaninov)

- **NOMINATIVE**
- **ERGATIVE**
- **PASSIVE**

NOMINATIVE languages

the **subject** stands

for the doer of the action

and is expressed **in the Nominative Case**
(Indo-European and Semitic L.).

subject in the Nom. Case=doer of the action

ERGATIVE languages

1) **There is no positional difference between the subject and the object.**
2) **The subject is <u>in the Ergative Case</u>.**

e.g. Such a structure can be illustrated by the sentence:

<u>Його</u> убило блискавкою (Caucasian L.).

PASSIVE languages

Neither **the subject** nor **the object** have special grammatical forming up within the syntactic unit. They **merge with the verb-predicate into a single unit**, in which the predicate is a leading component (incorporative L.).

N.S.Trubetskoy

studied
phonological systems
of many languages
("The grounds of
Phonology").

F.F.Fortunatov

added
to Humboldt's
classification
flexional-agglutinative
type of language.

I. I.Meshchaninov

classified languages according to the positions of the *subject and the predicate in the sentence*.

G.P.Melnikov

proposed *the theory of determinants* (on the basis of the dominant features).

R.Yakobson

studied *language universals*.

Yu. O.Zhluktenko – studied *English and Ukrainian languages* and their interrelations in the North-American countries.

 O.Isachenko – investigated Slavonic languages. He divided languages into *vocalic and consonantal* on the principle of their quantitative representation.

M.A.Kalinovich – *morphological divergencies* in European and South-Asian languages.

R. P. Zorivchak – studied *English and Ukrainian correspondencies in nominating different things and objects of the surrounding world with an accent on their national peculiarities.*