

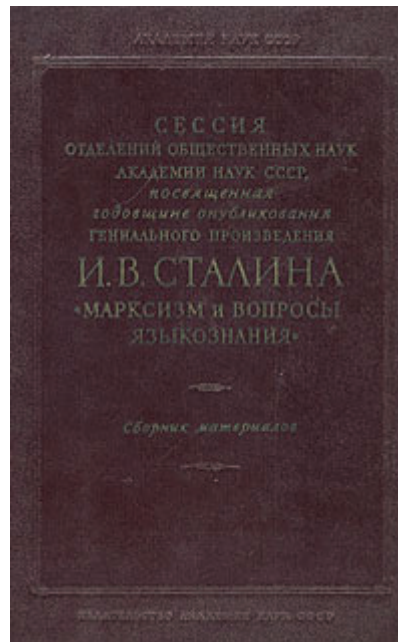
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**Two Debates in Soviet Linguistics
in the early 1950s
("On Linguistics" and "On the Phoneme")***

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Marxism and Problems of Linguistics

- 9 May 1950 – “Debate” on Marr’s “New Teaching” in *Pravda*
- 20 June – Stalin’s *Reply to the Young Comrades*
- 4 July – Stalin’s *Reply to Krasheninnikova*
- 2 August – Stalin’s *Reply to Sanzheyev, Kholopov, and Belkin and Furer*



In summation

- Question:
Was it the right thing to do that
The Pravda opened a free discussion
on linguistics?
- Stalin:
Yes, it was.

Transactions of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Literature and Language Division. Vol. 9. 1950. Issues 1 – 4. 508 pp.

- **Transactions of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Literature and Language Division. Vol. 9. 1950. Issues 1 – 4. 508 pp.**
- **Issue I.**
- I.V. Stalin. *Marxism and the problems of linguistics.*
- I.V. Stalin. *On some problems of linguistics. Reply to Comrade Krasheninnikova*
- Stalin I.V. *On some problems of linguistics. Reply to Comrades Sanzheyev, Belkin and Furer*
- V.V. Vinogradov. *Stalin's works on linguistics and new ways of the development of the Soviet science of language*
- G.F. Alexandrov. *The historical significance of Stalin's "Marxism and Problems of Linguistics" for the development of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.*
- I.I. Tolstoy. *The sobering voice of reason.*
- S.G. Barkhudarov. *New era in linguistics.*
- A.N. Gvozdev. *On the flourishing of Soviet linguistics.*
- **Issue II.**
- A.S. Chikobaba. *The state and goals of the Soviet science of language in the light of I.V. Stalin's instructions.*
- L.A. Bulakhovsky. *Some of the problems and goals of comparative and historical studies of the Slavic languages.*
- S.B. Bernstein. *On periodization of the history of Bulgarian.*
- **Issue III.**
- R.I. Avanesov. *I.V. Stalin on the development of languages and dialects.*
- V.V. Senkevich-Gudkova. *D.V. Bubrikh as a student of Fenno-Ugric languages.*
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- **Issue IV.**
- A.S. Chikobaba. *The Stalin period in the history of Soviet linguistics.*
- V.I. Borkovsky. *Impersonal sentences in Old Russian fourteenth- and fifteenth century 'gramotas'.*
 - etc.

- It is well-known that no science can develop and thrive without struggle of opinions and freedom of criticism. But this universally recognized rule was flouted in most off-handedly. A closed circle of inerrant individuals formed, which, having secured itself from criticism, became self-willedly rampant.
- One of the examples is the so-called *Baku Lectures* by Marr, that the author himself rejected and prohibited its republishing. Nonetheless, the 'cast' of leaders who call themselves Marr's disciples republished the book and included it in the list of students' manuals. This means that students were deceived getting a rejected book instead of a full-fledged textbook. *Were I not convinced in honesty of comrade Meshchaninov and other linguists, I would say that their conduct is equal to sabotage.*

Agnia Denitskaya. 'Comparative and historical method in the study of the history of language'. Transactions of the Academy of Sciences. Division of literature and language. 1951. Vol. 10. Issue. 4. (July-August). 1951.

- In his genius work *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*, Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin mentioned the positive role of comparative and historical linguistics. In spite of its serious drawbacks, the method pushes us towards work, a study of language,
- It should be noted specially that some of the linguists tried to reconcile their work in the realm of comparative and historical linguistics with the principles of the New Teaching about Language. Nowadays it is clear to all of us that those attempts, by their very nature, could not lead to any positive results, because of comparative and historical method, based on the study of historically attested facts, is directly opposed to the anti-scientific fantastic 'four-elements analysis', which, according to Nikolay Marr himself, developed as an antithesis of the old comparativism
- Such compromise attempts resulted from their authors' dissatisfaction with some of aspects of comparativism. They mistook Marr's declarations for genuine criticism of the old scholarship, and in search of new methodology, they adopted a number of the erroneous principles of the 'New Teaching' trying to use them for a revision of the comparative grammar from the point of view of the "new methodological principles".
- Among those linguists was he present author.

Mirra Gukhman. “Against idealism and reaction in modern American linguistics. (Bloomfield and “descriptive” linguistics). 1952.

- American linguistics is being aligned with reactionary ideas in philosophy, psychology and anthropology. The ‘philosophy’ of imperialistic reaction often appears in the form of language analysis.
- Bloomfield takes part in the publication of the so-called *International Encyclopedia*, together with such war-mongers, reactionaries and obscurants as Russell, Carnap and Morris.
- Bloomfield is connected with pragmatism and logical positivism, the philosophy of imperialist reaction.
- Descriptivism and European structuralism are characterized by anti-historic approach and cosmopolitan neglect of language national specificity

A. V. Desnitskaya “Against formalism in the teaching about speech-sounds”. *Transactions of the Academy of Sciences*. 1949

- The conception of structuralism is based on Saussure’s idealistic and anti-historic theory.
- The primary task of Soviet linguists working in the realm of phonetics and developing creatively Marr’s theory of phoneme, is breaking, once and for all, with structural phonology.
- Theoretical and logistic organization of linguistic structuralism is inseparable from those who renounced the motherland, typically bourgeois cosmopolitan scholars, Roman Jakobson and Prince Trubetzkoy.
- The view of phoneme Avanesov, Sidorov and Kuznetsov. , as has been established, coincide with the views of Trubetzkoy, Jakobson and other structuralists.

Debate on phonology in the *Transactions of the USSR Academy of Sciences*. Division of Language and Literature. Vol. 11. Issues 4 – 5.
Vol. 12. Issues 1, 4.

- S.K. Shaumyan. The problem of the phoneme.
- R. I. Avanesov. On the problem of the phoneme.
- A.A. Reformatsky. On the problem of the phoneme and phonology.
- A.G. Spirkin. The problem of the phoneme and Lenin's reflection theory.
- S. Bernstein. Against idealism in phonetics.
- V.I. Lytkin. What is the language unit phonetics requires.
- A.N. Gvozdev. On the phonology of "mixed phonemes"
- L.R. Zinder and M.I. Matusevich. On the history of the theory of the phoneme.
- G.G. Alberkli. The problem of the phoneme in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory of cognition
- S.K. Shaumyan. On some problems of phonology.

N.S. Trubetzkoy (1891, Moscow – 1938, Vienna; after Gestapo search)

E.D. Polivanov (1891, Smolensk –1938, executed near Moscow)

Moscow School

- V.N. Sidorov, born 1903; in 1938, 35
- R.I. Avanesov, born 1902; in 1938, 36
- P.S. Kuznetsov, born 1899; in 1938, 39
- A.A. Reformatzky, born 1900; in 1938, 38

Leningrad / St. Petersburg School

- L.V. Shcherba, born 1880; in 1938, 58
- M.I. Matusевич, born 1896; in 1938, 42
- L.R. Zinder, born 1903; in 1938, 35

Sixteen years of Soviet linguistics

1968

- Bloomfield strove to present a synchronic analysis of the speech segment as a linear succession of minimal units taken statically. The methodology he suggested is the first attempt to apply this principle consistently. This allows one to regard Bloomfield as one of the father-founders of the modern science of language.
- Editor's *Introduction*. In: Leonard Bloomfield. *Jazyk* ['language']. Moscow: Progress, 1968. Ed. by M.M. Gukhman

1952

- “The leading trends of American linguistics are characterized by debility, degradation and squalor. They are merciless witnesses of the complete crash of idealistic science that appears as a slave of imperialist reaction”
- *Against idealism and reaction in modern American linguistics. (Bloomfield and “descriptive” linguistics).*

CONCLUSION

Playing with the devil is a waste of time

Merci de votre attention