

DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE MENTALITY

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Abstract - This article gives a historical review of the language mentality problem. Consideration of problems related to semantic processes is inevitably connected with the problem of the relation of language, thought, and culture. Language links our psychic and socio-cultural life and at the same time it is the instrument of their interaction. Problems of linguistic mentality, different ways of linguistic representation of the world are among the most important and discussed issues in linguistics and in this article.

The theoretical background of the language mentality problem considered in this article is based on the examples of W. Humboldt's work and L. Weisberger's hypothesis of linguistic relativity. W. Humboldt as a founder of a theory of language has given the direction of linguistic research to new generations of scientists. L. Weisberger as well as W. Humboldt believes that is the picture of the world, world perception of the people. The author considers the main positions of Sapir-Worth hypothesis as a theoretical basis for the differentiation of the ways of the language perception of the world.

The results of the research are the examples of differences in language picture of the world (and in language mentality accordingly) in English, Russian and other languages. Material for research are examples of the etymology dictionary and electronic dictionary ABBY Lingvo.

Keywords - Sapir-Worth hypothesis, language perception of the world, language picture of the world, language thought, language mentality, national character of the language picture of the world

I. Introduction

The differences of language mentality, different ways of linguistic representation of the world are among the most important and discussed issues in modern linguistics.

Consideration of problems related to semantic processes is inevitably connected with the problem of the relation of language, thought, and culture. What is the relationship between thought processes and language? To what extent patterns of semantic nature affect the evolution of thought? What is the relationship between the facts of the language semantics and culture? All these questions are really vital and interesting for language research [10].

Language links our psychic and socio-cultural life and at the same time it is the instrument of their interaction. Problems of linguistic mentality, different ways of linguistic representation of the world are among the most important and discussed issues among linguists, philosophers, culture experts, psychologists[2], [17], [7], [8], [12], [16].

II. Theoretical background

The question of differences in language mentality is quite relevant for many researchers and it has deep theoretical background (see Sapir-Worth's hypothesis[3], W. Humboldt, L. Weisberger, and Potebnya's works).

The idea that the world is seen through the prism of his language, of course, is not new. The idea of the determining the role of language in human thinking, the connection of language with the mental and spiritual life of the people, their culture belongs to W. Humboldt[5], who considered language the Creator of reality, that forms public consciousness. According to W. Humboldt, everything in language is the incarnation and reflection of the national spirit.

W. Humboldt[6] was the founder of the theory of language which can be considered as the product of human spiritual force (that is constantly developing) and as a phenomenon of human society. Thus he has given the direction of linguistic research to new generations of scientists; the direction, designed to penetrate into the complex mechanisms of language, intellectual, spiritual and cultural activities of the people.

The ideas of W. Humboldt created a ground for the emergence of diverse concepts, which are based on the idea that language elements express some certain thought contents. The differences between languages are considered as a manifestation of the speakers' way of thinking and they also embody specific ethnic culture.

The desire to interpret all the features of each specific language as features of thinking of its speakers found the most complete design in the concept of L. Weisberger and in the hypothesis of linguistic relativity, known in history as Sapir- Worth hypothesis[4].

L. Weisberger[15], as well as W. Humboldt believes that language is the mind's "intermediate world", resulting from the interaction between the world of things and the world of consciousness. After such engagement, the language itself creates the world around us. Language is the picture of the world, world perception of the people. The difference of languages is a manifestation of the differences of views on the world,

and for people who speak different languages, the world looks different.

Let's consider Sapir-Worth hypothesis[13], [14], without which the arguments on the relationship between language, thought, reality and culture wouldn't be comprehensive.

The main positions of Sapir- Worth hypothesis can be considered as follows:

1. Language determines the nature of thought and its logical operation. The formation of thoughts, according to B. Worth is not an independent process, it is strictly rational; it is the part of the grammar of a language which varies in different nations in some cases slightly, in others quite substantially.

2. The nature of cognition depends on the languages you think.

3. Human knowledge has no objective, universally valid character. Only similarity or, at least, interrelation of language systems can create a similar picture of the universe.

Thus, according to Worth, language is a weapon, a means of thinking, it "sculpts" the human mind, and therefore thinking of each particular nation has purely national features, which are fully predetermined by the immanent development of the national language. As a result, the native speaker explores not only objective reality, but the language which he speaks. Here we should also mention the question of the language picture of the world, which, according to E. Sapir and B. Worth, defines thinking, shapes it and is of a purely national character. It is one of the most interesting questions. Therefore, raising the issue of differences in language mentality, it is worth mentioning the question of different language pictures of the world.

So, let's explain what is understood under the term language mentality and how it is interrelated with language thought and language picture of the world. In this paper language mentality is understood as a way of linguistic representation of the world and a reflection of the relationship between world and language. As Sapir wrote about the link of language and thought, "we may assume that language arose pre-rationally – just how and on what precise level mental activity we do not know... We must rather imagine that thought processes set in, as a kind of psychic overflow..."[3] Language thought reflects the level of knowledge about the world as a representative of a society, which suggests that linguistic thinking reflects in part the level of knowledge about the world of the society. The world reflected in the human mind, carries a multidimensional, complex system of concepts that make up that make up a certain picture of the perceived reality – language picture of the world. Thus, the language picture of the world is a part of the cognitive picture of the world, which is associated with language and refracted through linguistic forms.

III. Practice and results

At first we illustrate the problem of differences in language mentality in the historical perspective on the example of changing the meaning of English words. A decisive influence on the processes of thinking and their reflection in language provides extra-linguistic reality. The conceptual world reflects prevailing of ideological ideals in society. For example, the worldview of a medieval man was antagonistic to the idea of any progress. In the public consciousness the religious view on the vicious nature of man was dominated. Perhaps the belief in human progress has entered the public consciousness only in the XVII – XVIII century thanks to the efforts of philosophers. The history of the semantic development of the word progress reflects the dialectics of the concept (the original meaning of the word is "the physical movement in space; a journey committed by royalty", while "development for the better, the process of improvement" the word only got in the XVII century).

On the language level it reflected in the fact that in the medieval period there were some cases of change of the pejorative meaning of the word, accompanied by complete oblivion of the primary neutral meaning of the word.

The word *knave* in old English *cnapa*, *cnafa* was used with the meaning "boy, young man." In the translation of the New Testament the word means Christ. The change of the meaning went in the direction of "young man" > and "disadvantaged" > "young servant." The change of the meaning of the word servant was subjected to a deterioration. So, the word *knave* has developed such additional meanings as "a liar, a knave, a scoundrel" and it eventually became dominant in the semantic structure of the word.

In Shakespeare's time, however, this word obtained a positive connotation: Gentle *knave*, good night, but this does not mean that in Early Modern English there was the improvement of the meaning of the word. We can illustrate these semantic changes in the tables[9]:

TABLE I POSITIVE CONNOTATION DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORD KNAVE

word	Old English meaning	Middle English meaning	Early Modern English meaning	Development of the meaning
cnapa, cnafa	boy	Rich person	Young servant	+

TABLE II NEGATIVE CONNOTATION DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORD KNAVE

word	Old English meaning	Middle English meaning	Early Modern English meaning	Development of the meaning
cnapa, cnafa	boy	liar	rascal	-

Socio-psychological stereotypes, which are based on the world views are crucial to linguistic processes. Socio-cultural, religious, philosophical, political factors influenced the nature of the semantic changes in the meaning of words denoting people of different social, professional and ethnic groups. As Sapir wrote, "Language is a guide to 'social reality'.... Human beings do not live in the objective world alone..."[4]. Deep social contradictions of feudal society in the medieval era led to changes in pejorative words designating people of low social status. Smoothing of social contradictions in modern society is reflected in the character of the prototype semantic changes in the meanings of words in the twentieth century. The decisive influence of socio-psychological factors can be traced in the development of semantics of words denoting various national groups of women.

In Middle Ages and in earlier times a woman was understood as something sinful. It is reflected in the language of those times. See the examples from the table[9]:

TABLE III NEGATIVE CONNOTATION DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORDS COURTESAN AND VIGARO

word	Middle English meaning	Late Middle English meaning	Development of the meaning
courtesan	A woman attached to a royal court	A court mistress a prostitute	-
vigaro	Manlike, heroic woman	A termagant, a scold	-

Not only socio-cultural changes are predetermined by extra-linguistic factors. Aesthetic changes, evidenced by metaphorical images, also depend on external reasons. The prevalence in modern English of the subject of metaphors for the category of person is especially obvious when compared with metaphoric images of Middle English and Early Modern English, and it reflects the general direction of the movement of humanity from a holistic poetic perception of the world to the naturalistic, trivial, utilitarian attitude

to reality, from belief to unbelief, skepticism. This trend reflects the overall philosophy in relation to the universe: the universe presented in the previous era, becomes something fluid, changeable. Language in the form of the prototype semantic changes and metaphors reinforces social, ethical, and aesthetic values of society. One of the main epistemic fractures in the modern history of the English society was the secularization and as a consequence the increasing of materialistic and individualistic tendencies, the decline of morality, the loss of faith in ideals. Despite the preservation of traditions of worship, the English society of the XX century abandoned many of the values of Christian morality.

This idea is the best proof of the changing attitudes to the concept of "mortal sin". In Christian dogma there are seven deadly sins, but in modern Western society with its consumerism and mass culture, these sins are no longer sins. How can *gluttony* and *lust* be sins, if advertising and mass culture explicitly or implicitly call for carnal pleasures: it is not considered shameful to eat much, constantly and publicly discuss the intimate relationship (the concept of "good sex life" became an attribute of a prosperous life). The words *pride*, *anger*, *envy* also lost its negative connotation: *pride* is the basis of Western individualism, it is believed that thanks to it, the man is aware of himself as a free person; *anger* is rehabilitated in many blockbusters like a reaction and protection against violence and injustice, where the super-hero deals with enemies; *envy* is the main driving force of consumer society, where every consumer doesn't want to be a looser in the race for new products. *Sloth* cannot be considered a mortal sin, if we take into consideration the scale and success of Western hospitality and entertainment industries. Finally, avarice is identified with such positive qualities as thrift, prudence, and does not give in the mind of a Western man any negative associations.

Speaking about values in the Western consciousness of the individual, we mean mass-normative aesthetics, which defines the limits of cultural homogeneity in society.

Such philosophical changes that are caused by the development of industrial and postindustrial society are naturally reflected in lexical semantics. In the modern English language dominates the gastronomic metaphor of a prototype product - an attractive woman (*biscuit*, *crumpet*, *sugar cookie*, *peach*, *cherry*). Of course, the whole spirit of Western advertising, mass culture, dictating to a human being values of consumption, contributed to the active implementation of this prototype model. In commercials, a woman always is

represented as something delicious, seductive, pleasant to taste and smell.

Now we illustrate the problem of differences of language mentality through the concept of language picture of the world. It is quite obvious that different languages impose their own specific picture of the world, a significant component of which is originality and imaginative resources, primarily of a metaphoric character. This unique and imaginative character of different world pictures for different languages is the way to further development of the creative spirituality of the person, as W. Humboldt and A. A. Potebnja wrote[11].

Imaginative frameworks of the native language reflect frameworks of the world, influencing the mentality in general. The person is internally tied to his native language, its semantic system, perceiving it through the prism of surrounding world.

A person is close in spirit to semantic processes, in particular semantic reinterpretation, based on the national wealth of cultural and historical heritage. Using images of their native language people unconsciously absorb national forms of material and spiritual culture.

Due to a common perception of linguistic phenomena, people have a sense of unity, as through the language the identity is fixed and it distinguishes one community from another. Whatever the social and educational status of the speaker of the Russian language is, the word *swallow* for him is emotionally estimated: with this word he can apply to the nearest woman or a child, while for native speakers of English the word *swallow* is only a bird, flying very fast and forecasting spring (see the English proverb containing the image of swallow: *One swallow does not make spring*) (British National Corpus). A Russian native speaker may not know the variety of associations connected with the word *ласточка* in Russian national culture (in Russian we have many proverbs and sayings connected with this word), but through a figurative use of this word in a specific national way his mind has been imbued since his childhood with this image.

Each language has some views of the world and ideas of what is "water" and what is "fast" and what is "understanding". That reflects the general views of all speakers – ideas about the world in general. And these representations are only one of the possible "pictures of the world" and these pictures will be different in different languages. The degree of difference will depend on the fact what is in common in customs, traditions and culture of the nations.

So language is some kind of a mirror that stands between us and the world: it does not reflect all peculiarities of the world, but only those that seemed to our ancestors most important. Of course, the mirror is, so to speak, transparent. The mirror is not a stone wall. We can learn another language and see the world through the eyes of other people. Even when you are "inside" your own language, you can easily change your ideas

Linguists think that every language reflects its own "world picture"[14]. It does not prevent people to understand each other, but creates very interesting linguistic differences. For example, how different people perceive time? For people speaking the Russian language it is an outflow of something that can move at different speeds (time flows and runs, though sometimes it even flies, but sometimes barely goes up), In Russian, time is something like assets, coins or treasures, no wonder how it is spent (often wasted). It can be saved and it is possible for someone to take, it is useful to count on. It can be considered even as a living thing, almost an enemy, necessary to be killed (is it possible, for example, to kill the money?), and so on. All these are possible images of time in the Russian language.

For the Europeans, whose culture is close to Russian, time appears in a very similar form (although there are some small differences). People from other countries understand time quite differently. For example, it appears that the time may not flow from nowhere to nowhere, and to move on a circle, each time going back to the beginning, as the seasons are changing; and then it will be like a stream, but rather on a circle or on a circle. And even if it flows, not from front to back, but back to front, and future in these languages will be something that is "behind" us. Time may be a living being, an inanimate object, but it is not necessarily presented as something valuable – and, therefore, in such languages it cannot be stolen or spent, may be only cut off.

There are many other examples of such shocking mismatch in different pictures of the world. These are usually cases how one word is used with other ones in different meanings. And at the same time there are quite opposite examples. If the word "back" is derived from the words "spine" and the word "top" or "above" from the word "head", it is clear that this language directs the space around the person and according to the model of the human body. But it is not surprising that in two completely different parts of the world – in the West African Wolof language (spoken in Senegal) and in the Persian language of Iran – expression, sounding literally as "the face of the house," has the meaning "space in front of the house" (by the way, in the same language Wolof word "face" means "the future")[1].

Another interesting case is how different languages represent the term understanding. The verb "know" in different languages of the world is usually simple: it is not formed from any other word, as knowledge is one of the basic concepts of human activity. But understanding (that is, the acquisition of knowledge with the help of some efforts) is described in different languages almost as colorful as time, but even more diverse.

In the Russian language the verb *to understand* almost lost its connection with other words, but still, if you think about it, you can guess of his relationship with the verb *брать* (the ancient «имати»): compare such verbs as *принимать, вынимать, отнимать*. The same idea in a much more vivid form is presented in the Russian word *схватывать*. Generally, in the Russian language understanding is very close to *удерживать, хватывать* something «неподдающееся» and it is very close to associations in other languages (there are the verbs of this kind in German, and in Latin). Another way of understanding is associated with the idea of "sorting", "unfolding on the shelves", for example, Latin *intelligere* (the origin of the words intelligence, smart, intelligent), and Russian to understand. All these methods to indicate understanding are typical mostly to European languages, but there is one very distinctive way that is used in European languages very rarely, but extremely common in the languages of Africa and America [11]: it is a sign of equality between "understand" and "hear". "I heard you," says the Indian, and it means: "I understand you". In many languages of Africa the verb "to understand" doesn't exist: it is successfully replaced by the verb "to hear". "This man does not hear our language" – people say it in Africa to each other, but not to a foreigner. The only European language that comes to mind in connection with the idea of "listening comprehension", is French, where the verb entendre "hear" often means "to understand" or "mean". If a Frenchman asks you what you understand under this scientific term, the question will sound like this: "What do you hear in this term?"

VI. Conclusion

It is possible to speak about different language mentalities. The language mentality of English people in Middle ages was quite different from the language mentality of people in the XX and XXI centuries. Extra-linguistic reality influenced the language they used and we use now through the words, their meanings, metaphors.

Different nations have different language mentalities. Every nation has it's own language picture

of the world; they have different socio-economic circumstances, different images reflecting reality and we can observe it in their languages through the usage of words, metaphors and other linguistic phenomena.

Coming from W. Humboldt's ideas about differences of language mentalities need to be further developed. These ideas should sound in full voice now, when the modern world is under the danger of loss of national identity.

The idea of Sapir-Worth hypothesis about the difference of language mentality is very important and relevant to modern linguistic modeling of the world and gives a wide field for further modern scientific research. For the linguists it gives much food for thoughts in such areas as semantic changes of the meaning of words in different historical periods, research of metaphors, studying of the concept of the language picture of different nations and the world in general.

The problem of differences in language mentality is deeply interdisciplinary in nature and can be considered by the representatives of different fields of science, not only for those who study languages, but for cultural scientists, philosophers and psychologists as well.

VI. Acknowledgements

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