

Foreign Language Teaching in the Context of Anthropological Paradigm in Modern Linguistics

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In the beginning of the XXI-th century a new paradigm of human sciences has arisen, which has put the Person and all Human issues in the center of the scientific research. Within the framework of a new anthropological cognitive paradigm language forms are considered to be a display of structures of human consciousness. The interaction among reality, thinking (consciousness) and language results into the appearance of the so-called "national language world model", which could be defined as a reflection of the objective reality by certain type of mentality embodied in language forms. It means that every "world vision" gets its own verbal sign system of presentation, where its content is kept within this or that language.

According to W. Humboldt, any language creates a certain model of the world for those, who use it, as though outlining round them a "magic circle" of ethnically determined representations and images.

To exceed the bounds of this "circle" one might only by study of another language, "by entering into other circle", i.e. through penetration into the system of world outlook embodied by forms of other language.

In the framework of our approach the main attention in teaching advanced students foreign language should be focused on the following items: 1) pointing out culturally specific language forms belonging to different language levels (lexical, morphological, syntactic) and revealing their relation to ethnic character, temperament and mentality; 2) showing universal and peculiar features of two national (ethnic) language models (native for students and acquired one); 3) representing of the "cultural map" reflected by lexical level of the language through the following elements: a) nouns for denoting of specific, authentic for the acquired culture notions; b) nouns for denoting of closely connected notions though having different prototypes; c) culturally determined verbalized cultural concepts which bear information about spiritual constants of ethnic mentality; d) words with evaluative and axiological connotations; e) words for nomination of mythological objects; f) proverbs and sayings which verbalize some ethnically determined ideas and views.

Different cultures could be viewed as certain systems, which represent the same reality and human experience in quite contrasting and qualitatively different ways. These qualitatively different visions are reflected in the basic assumptions and beliefs about real world, human knowledge, values and nature of personality.

Being an important part of any culture, natural languages could be seen as an instrument to approach and understand culture from within. Cultural representations are embodied in language forms and meanings. Thus, listing and investigation of culturally relevant lexical units and grammar forms become very important and topical. Seen from the anthropocentric point of view any ethnic language could be defined as "a place where spirit dwells" [1]. In the words of a famous Russian scientist D. Likhachiev, "the language of a nation is in itself compressed or even algebraic expression of all culture of a nation" [2].

Such approach to understanding of the essence of natural language is not so very new in linguistics dating back to the ideas of W. Humboldt. In the course of the ideas of humboldtianism languages

appear to be different interpretations of the world by man. Humboldtianism is a totality of views on language and approaches to its study, which formed under the influence of linguistic conception of an outstanding German scientist of the 19th century W. Humboldt. The kernel of his theory might be characterized as anthropological approach to language, supposing its study in close connection and interaction with consciousness and thinking of the person, with human's cultural and spiritual life. Humboldt's ideas were revived in the 20th century within the framework of a linguistic trend called neohumboldtianism (E. Sapir, B. Whorf, L. Weisgerber).

Representing the indirect reflection of the world (mediated by human consciousness) different languages give different visions of the reality. Thus, distinctions among languages seem to be somewhat greater, than just language distinctions: various languages by their nature, by their influence on cognition and on feelings appear to be different outlooks [3].

Being captured by the language, a person handles the things in a way they are presented by language, behaves in society like this is prescribed by the language. So, the language turns out to be in the closest contact to spiritual activity of the person, with cultural life of the ethnic community, whose communicative needs it serves. The connection between language and culture is rather exactly formulated in such Sapir's statement: the culture is what this or that society makes and thinks, the language is how this society thinks. It means that the language (to be more exact, its content) gives keys to the understanding of ways of thinking of a nation, discloses the peculiar features of mentality of language bearers, gives a chance to look on the world by the eyes of other people, to comprehend how the bearers of another language and culture feel and think.

So what are these language forms which manifest the substratum of the national specific features of the language? Generally speaking, it is the language as a whole, to be more precise, "the form of the language", as W. Humboldt called it. Being unique for every language, conveying the spirituality of the nation, "the form of the language", after W. Humboldt, is the combination of separate language elements in an integral whole. The German scientist distinguished two kinds of language form: the internal and the external ones. The paramount importance is given to the internal form, because the content of this notion implies the inner structure of the whole language, the key principle of its generation. Alongside with the notion of "inner form of the language" W. Humboldt operates with the notion of "inner form of lexical unit" or "etymon", which could be defined as a semantic attribute fixed in the name of the designated subject or phenomenon. Etymon gives reasons for a phonic substance of a word, exposing the motive of expression of the given meaning just by the given combination of sounds. Sometimes the connection between the form and the meaning as though "lays on a surface" and could be easily realized (*trouble-maker, free-spoken, cliff-climber*) though much oftener the etymologists' work is needed for the restoration of words' etymons.

The external form of the language, manifesting and incarnating the internal form, embodies it on all levels of language structure in phonetic, semantic and grammatical language substance. Thus, W. Humboldt's idea of "the form of the language" is rather like the modern linguistic notion of "the language world model".

Thus, the notion of "language world model" now becomes the main concept of linguistic and cultural analysis. This notion has been founding different interpretations in the works of W. Humboldt, L. Weisgerber, B. Whorf, E. Coseriu, J. Trir and other scientists. Having generalized all available approaches to the definition of the given concept, it seems possible to accept as "a working definition" the following one: "Language world model is the certain sight on the reality conveyed by the means of the certain language. It is a verbalized interpretation of the environment by the language community".

The national and cultural peculiarity finds its expression not only on semantic, but also on morphological and syntactic levels of the language structure, that was excellently shown in the works of Anna Wierzbicka. In her work of 1991, she argues with the adepts of traditional understanding of

language meaning coming up with new approaches to interpretation and investigation of language meaning: "Language is an integrated system, where everything 'conspires' to convey meaning: words, grammatical constructions and various 'illocutionary' devices (including intonation). Accordingly, one might argue that linguistics falls naturally into three parts, which could be called lexical semantics, grammatical semantics, and illocutionary semantics. Ch. Morris's division of the study of signs into three aspects: semantics, syntax, and pragmatics may make good sense with respect to some artificial sign systems, but it makes no sense with respect to natural languages, whose syntactic and morphological devices (as well as illocutionary devices) are themselves carriers of meaning. In natural language, meaning consists in human interpretation of the world. It is subjective, it is anthropocentric, it reflects predominant cultural concerns and culture-specific modes of social interaction as much as any objective features of the world 'as such'" [4].

However, the vocabulary (lexical staff) of that or other language doubtlessly remains the leading substance for the expression of the mental-language peculiarity of certain peoples. It is just lexical level, which shows the unevenness of the semantic mapping of the world by different languages; lexical items containing connotations (emotional associations of positive or negative character able to express all sensual, emotional, behavioral, volitional elements of human consciousness) also function on lexical language level and are doubtlessly culturally orientated in their overwhelming part. Furthermore, words, denoting mythical objects created by the collective consciousness of different peoples and embodied in national myths, legends and epic pieces also belong to the language level of words-lexemes. Besides above mentioned lexical staff special teacher's attention should be given to the so called "cultural concepts". There are two main understandings of the term "concept": 1) general concept about something (a traditional one); 2) complex of culturally orientated notions about an object (in the spirit of A. Wierzbicka). We understand concepts as culturally determined notions (cultural concepts), which have a sublogical basis embodying the intuitive collective knowledge of certain ethnic community about some entities deprived of materialistic ontology. On the language level these notions are represented in the form of abstract nouns, which display their inner nature through the set of most frequently used contexts. Cultural concepts are related to the world of ethnic personality, reflecting specific features of national character, way certain peoples perceive the outer world, feel, think, communicate and behave in the society.

Thus, representing by this or that language of the "cultural map" reflected by lexical level of the language takes place with the help of the following elements: 1) nomens for denoting of specific, authentic for the acquired culture notions – culturally bound words, which find no equivalent in student's native language; 2) nomens for denoting of closely connected notions though having different prototypes; 3) culturally determined verbalized cultural concepts which bear information about spiritual constants of ethnic mentality; 4) words with evaluative and axiological connotations; 5) words for nomination of mythological objects; 6) proverbs and sayings which verbalize some ethnically determined ideas and views.

As it was already shown in my monograph "Ethnic Peculiarities of Language World Models" (Kyiv, 2002, 2004) [5], Russian personhood could be explored through the concepts of *душа* (soul), *тоска* (anguish, depression), *воля* (freedom) and *судьба* (fate). As to the Chinese cultural concepts related to the characteristics of Chinese personhood, I dare state, that the representations of typically Chinese ways of thinking, feeling and behaving might be clearly seen with the help of the following concepts: *xin* – heart, *qi* – internal vitality and energy, *mian* – face, *ming* – fate and fortune, *xiao* – filial piety; *guan xi* – interpersonal dynamics and relations. American modern culture could be explored on the language level through the concepts of *self*, *control*, *action and competition*. We assume, that the list of key words of different cultures is open and any word could be added to it under the condition the scholar would be able to say something essential or original about the investigated culture through the analysis of the chosen word.

Language forms not only reflect the environment and culture of the certain ethnic community: they also form the personality of the bearer of language. And, as a rule, ethnic personality remains unconscious about the great creative role of native language in structuring of his character, behaviour, attitude to life, way he/she interacts with other people, of how he/she realizes his/her role and place in the society. Even language grammar forms could be very helpful while investigating the influence of language on the formation of national character and mentality. Some of them just lie on the surface. Let's compare English and Russian pronouns. It is a common knowledge, that English pronoun of the first person singular is written from the capital letter – **I** ("**me – first**"). In Russian and Ukrainian languages in case we want to express the respectful attitude to another person we say not the pronoun of the second person singular – rus. **ты**; ukr. **ти**, but we use the pronoun of the second person plural and in writing the first letter is capitalized – **Вы**. In the Chinese language it's impossible to find forms, which have relation to extolling of oneself: instead, in Chinese there exist a special polite form to address **another** person – **nin**.

Opposition between West and East could be interpreted in the terms of Individualism as a distinctive feature of Western-European and American way of thinking and Collectivism as Eastern-European approach to understanding human life and human relations. Speaking about Russia which is considered to be the half-oriental country we can state, that Russian "communal" way of thinking was determined both historically and geographically: centuries of constant danger of enemy invasion, severe climate, vast territories, – all these factors formed what is called now Russian character [6]. Ideology of Soviet Russia was focused on the communist concepts of collectivism and community, it absolutely ignored the personality with all its needs, desires and potential. But the ethical socialist and communist ideas of unselfishness, selflessness and respect for the interests of collective worked well in Russia, because they found a good response in Russian mentality, in the sphere of archetypes of collective subconscious. Let's see how these fundamental characteristics of Russian way of thinking are reflected in Russian proverbs: *Одна пчела немного мёду натаскает* – One bee would bring a little honey; *Один в поле не воин* – You can't fight, if you are just single; *Одной рукой и узла не завяжешь* – With one hand you can't tie a knot; *Две головни и в поле дымятся (курятся), а одна и в печи гаснет* – Two charred logs smoke in the field, and one goes out in the stove; *Веника не переломишь, а по пруту весь веник переломаешь* – Besom is not so easy to fracture, but it is easy to do twig by twig; *В согласном стаде волк не страшен* – A good herd should not be afraid of a wolf; *Братчина, так и складчина (всё пополам)* – Where there is brotherhood, everything is shared; *Семеро одного не ждут* – Seven men don't wait for one [7].

In sharp contrast with these ideas appear views represented by English proverbs, in which concepts of **self** and **privacy** (components of individualism) form totally different ethnic believes and ways of behavior, emphasizing the importance of protecting one's own interests: *When everyone takes care of himself, care is taken of all*; *Look after number one* ["Number one" refers to oneself]; *Number one is the first house in the row*; *Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost*; *Every man for himself, and God for us all*; *He that is ill to himself will be good to nobody*; *He helps little that helps not himself*; *God helps them that help themselves*; *Mind other men, but most yourself*; *Self-preservation is the first law of nature*; *Every man is nearest himself*; *The parson always christens his own child first*; *The tod never sped better than when he went his own errand* [8].

There are lots of common in how different nations think, feel and behave, otherwise human cross-cultural communication would be impossible. The real world is unique, so are general laws of human thinking and behavior. Processes of internationalization and globalization (very active at the present time) with the help of world wide web create a new type of humankind: world wide society, where peculiarities of ethnic consciousness and ideology become less and less visible. Nevertheless, cultural differences still exist and will continue to exist giving an interesting material for study in theoretical and practical vien basing on the language forms. An outstanding Russian linguist of the XXth century L.V. Sherba (1880-1944) stated: "Methodics is an applied linguistics". Modern contrastive anthropological

studies have already prepared a rich fundament for indocrination of the theory into the practice of foreign language learning.

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