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Interaction of Language and Culture in the Process of International Education

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Abstract

Transition to the new anthropological paradigm that took place in science at the turn of the 21st century encouraged the formation and development of a number of humanitarian disciplines in one way or another combining the two systems - language and culture. The article describes the types of language and culture interaction within sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic and cultural studies, cultural linguistics. In order to describe the language and culture interaction as a complex problem, there was allocated a special unit that combines both phenomena - language and culture. The article deals with the interrelation of concept and word, concept and meaning, concept and notion, as well as the question of the approaches to the expression of concept in language.

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1. Introduction

Language as an exclusively human phenomenon cannot be studied in isolation from culture. Many aspects of it become clear only in a particular cultural and worldview context. In full, this provision applies to international

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education and training of foreign students. The idea that language is the main exponent of the national culture has been developing in the humanities since the time of von Humboldt (1973), who believed that every language is the carrier of culture and identity of the people who speak this language. An important methodological position, which discloses the unity of language and culture, was grounded by E. Sepir (1949): culture can be defined as what community does and thinks. Language is how people think. Awareness of the importance of language and culture interaction encouraged formation and development of a number of humanitarian disciplines: sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic and cultural studies, cultural linguistics, in one way or another combining the two systems – language and culture. Description of interaction of language and culture as a complex problem requires the allocation of a special unit that would have combined the two phenomena - language and culture.

2. Disciplines Studying Interaction of Language and Culture

Among the disciplines studying the interaction of language and culture are sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic and cultural studies, cultural linguistics. Cultural linguistics is a philological discipline that describes the correspondence of language and culture in their synchronous interaction. The term "cultural linguistics" clearly indicates the interrelation between two fields - linguistics and cultural studies. It is also a branch of cognitive linguistics and cultural studies, studying the expression of the people's culture that has been captured and entrenched in the language. While cognitive linguistics aims at answering the question of how in general the human mind is organized, how a person explores the world and what information about the world becomes knowledge, cultural linguistics focuses primarily on a human being in his culture and his language. Cultural linguistics studies and describes the means and methods of interaction of language and culture; it is aimed at the study of how the forms of existence of culture of various ethnic groups are reflected and fixed in language. How does a person see the world? – That is the principal question to be answered by cultural linguistics, which studies language as a cultural phenomenon. This is a certain vision of the world through the prism of the national language while the language is the exponent of a particular mentality (Maslova, 2001). The main object of cultural linguistics is the relationship and interaction of culture and language in the course of its functioning and the study of the interpretation of this interaction, as a single system integrity. The most important task of cultural linguistics and its characteristic feature is the systematic representation of the culture of the people in their language, in their dialectical interaction and development.

Cultural linguistics is closely related to the other cognitive area – ethnolinguistics. The fundamental difference in these two areas, scientists see in the object of study. In the center of ethnolinguistics are only those elements of the lexical system of language, which correlated with certain material or cultural and historical complexes. It should be noted that ethnolinguistics is much "older" than cultural linguistics and is rooted in Western science to von Humboldt, E. Sapir, B. Whorf, and in Russian science – to the research of A.A. Shakhmatov, A.A. Potebnya and others. Cultural linguistics and ethnolinguistics unite on the basis of common objectives: to study the interaction of two different codes – language and culture. Ethnolinguistics, as well as cultural linguistics, is a complex science, but ethnolinguistics studies the interaction of linguistic, ethno-cultural and ethno-psychological factors in the functioning and development of the language. Widely developed in the American linguistic environment in connection with the study of native peoples of America, in the center of attention of ethnolinguistics there are such issues as the study of genetic relationship of the peoples, language contact, multilingualism and the problems of reconstruction of the spiritual and material culture on the basis of linguistic data. Russian theory of ethnolinguistics belongs to N. I. Tolstoy and his followers; in the development of methodological apparatus they were guided by the possibilities of both disciplines – ethnology and linguistics. For example, the method of retrospection, which involves sequential tracing of the origins of the basic elements of archaeological cultures is related by N.I. Tolstoy to glottogonic research in linguistics. According to Tolstoy (1989), the language and the "ethnic unit" attributed to it often play a crucial role in the archaeological ethno-genetic constructs. Sociolinguistics is also an adjacent to the cultural studies area of research that studies the principles and results of interaction between society and language: how language influences society and how society affects language. If we consider culture as a mandatory component of society, then it should be acknowledged that the interaction of language and culture indirectly comes within the competence of sociolinguistics, but compared to cultural linguistics, the cultural phenomenon is somewhat upstaged here.

Issues of language and culture interaction are also within the interest of such branch as linguistic and cultural studies. In our opinion, this is the section of methods of foreign language teaching, which focuses on the joint studying of national culture of the people speaking the target language. Thus, the area of linguistic and cultural studies is closely connected to language teaching.

3. The unit of language and culture interaction

Description of interaction of language and culture as a complex problem requires the allocation of a special unit that would combine the two phenomena – language and culture. In recent decades, in the scientific literature for the designation of the unit of language and culture interaction was entrenched the term "concept". The term was borrowed by Russian linguistics from English literature. One of the first definitions of the concept belongs to A. Wierzbicka: 'concept is an object of the world *ideal*, having a name and reflecting certain culturally specified representation about the world *reality*' (Frumkina, 1992). Most cited today is the definition of the concept by Yu.S. Stepanov, (2001) who describes it as a clot of culture in the human mind, something, in the form of what culture is included in his mental world, ... a bunch of ideas, notions, knowledge, associations, which accompanies the word ... a cultural-mental-language unit . The concept is also understood as a discrete unit of the collective consciousness, which is stored in the national memory of the speakers in the verbally indicated form (Babushkin, 2001).

The existence of different definitions of the concept in modern linguistics is due primarily to the fact that it belongs to many sciences: philosophy, logic, semiotics, psychology and linguistics. The belonging of the concept to many disciplines leads to terminological synonymy. Some researchers understand the concept as a fundamentally new phenomenon; others are trying to replace the term by such terms as "word", "notion", "sense", "meaning", etc.

3.1. Concept and notion

In contrast to many researchers Yu.S. Stepanov (2001) considers concept and notion as different entities. Unlike notions, concepts are not only conceived, they are experienced. They are the subject of emotions, likes and dislikes, and sometimes clashes. 'Concept and notion are the terms of different sciences; the latter is used mainly in logic and philosophy, whereas the former, i.e. *concept,* is the term of mathematical logic, and recently has established itself as well in the science studying culture – cultural studies' (Stepanov, 2001). Concept is a mental formation, which in the process of thinking replaces an indefinite number of items of the same sort. Some concepts can be considered as schematic representations. Notion is primarily a point of view on this or that plurality of representations, and then readiness for their mental processing from this point of view and it is a point of view where the commonness of notions is centered, as it may be extended for an indefinite number of specificities of this kind (Askol'dov, 1997).

3.2. Concept and meaning

The terms "concept" and "meaning" are distinguished on the basis that concept is a unit of conceptual sphere, the information base of a man, while meaning is a unit of semantic space of language. Concept is defined as a phenomenon of the same order as the meaning of the word, but viewed in a somewhat different system of connections; meaning – in the language system, concept – in the system of logical relations and forms, studied both in linguistics and logic. The meanings of the items of language transfer only a part of the concept, as evidenced by the existence of numerous synonyms, different definitions and textual descriptions of one and the same concept. The meaning of the word is only an attempt to give a general idea about the content of the concept expressed, to define its scope. The main part of our knowledge of the world is kept in our mind as mental structures – concepts of varying degrees of complexity and abstraction, language meanings are capable of transmitting only a part of this knowledge. In addition, the content of the concept can continuously involve new features that will require new forms of verbalization (Boldyrev, 2001).

3.3. Concept and word

In light of the anthropocentric paradigm, the meaning of the word is not only represented by the dictionary definition, but the word itself is related to the concept. Concept does not directly arise from the word. It is the result of a collision of the vocabulary word meaning with the personal and national experience. It seems that concept extends the meaning of the word, leaving room for conjectures.

There can be defined several significant differences between word and concept: 1. In contrast to the word, concept is subjective. Probably, we should distinguish individual concept and invariant concept, operating in a particular society or culture (Zalevskaya, 2001). It is subjectivity that makes concept more variable as opposed to the word; 2. Concept differs from the word by the so-called "semiotic density". While the inner content of the word is the total of the semes and its lexical and semantic variants, concept is presented by a number of linguistic synonyms (words and phrases), theme lines and fields, proverbs, sayings, folklore and literary scenes, rituals, behaviour patterns, etc. (Vorkachev, 2005). In comparison to the word concept can be antonymous.

4. Verbalization of the concept

One of the important issues of the theory of concepts is the question of whether concepts always have linguistic expression. We should note possible, but not necessary, expression of concept in the language system. Concepts can be verbalized and not verbalized. Linguistic expression of concept depends on the communication needs of society. Language expresses only communicatively relevant results of thinking; therefore, depending on the semantic structure of the word used, its semantic features, type and amount of information to be transmitted, and primarily on the communication needs, one and the same word can transmit various features of the concept or different concepts.

The absence of linguistic expression for a particular concept is not yet the evidence of the absence of the concept in the conceptual sphere of the people; because of a number of reasons, concepts may remain unexpressed. In such cases, there is communicative irrelevance or lack of demand for this concept for the ethnic group, hence, it is possible to talk about concept lacunae or zero lexemes, corresponding to the appropriate non-verbalized sememe. Concept lacunae are considered as national-specific (non-matching, divisive) elements in the lexical systems of the compared languages and cultures. The total of lacunae, representing a latent part of contceptosphere, significantly complements the language picture of the world and allows to make clear for the modern recipient and save for future generations diverse concepts expressed by lacunae. These objects and processes, of course, exist in the consciousness of a particular ethnic group, but are not represented in the language system, as they are not essential, important for this culture. In such cases, we are talking about the so-called unmotivated lacunae.

4.1. Ways of expressing concepts in language

An equally important issue is the question of how to express concept in language. As a kind of intermediary between words and extralinguistic reality, concepts are expressed differently in different languages depending on the actual linguistic, pragmatic and cultural factors. Concept can be expressed in language not only by the lexical item but also by the phrase, the whole sentence, statement, context and text, legend and myth. Among the non-verbal means of representation of the concept are the so-called cultural artifacts, such as art, mythology and folklore, rituals and ritual actions and paralinguistic means such as gestures. Non-verbal representations of concepts are also images, pictures, diagrams. Language probably cannot qualify for the full reflection of the concept.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the process of international education and training of foreign students involves different disciplines, reflecting in one way or another relationship of language and culture: sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, language and cultural studies, cultural linguistics. The role of each of these disciplines in international education requires a separate, detailed consideration. The unit of interaction of language and culture is the concept. Concepts are reflected in language only partially; so the task of the linguist is to explore that part of the concept which is

verbalized in language, while considering language as a medium of representation of meanings. Concept is the meaning embodied in the word by the subject of this word based on the existing in-culture ideas about the ways of implementation of that sense. The correspondence of concept with meaning, notion and sense has a complex logical-philosophical, conceptual and semantic, ontological, existential and cognitive dependence.

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