

*Soldatova L. P.,**Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Senior Lecturer at Department of English Language,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University*

THE CONCEPT “LANGUAGE” EVOLUTION IN AMERICAN LINGUISTIC TRADITION

Summary. The article deals with the problems of linguistic terminology. This work is an integral part of the historicism of understanding the concept of “language” from the point of view of its essence in different time periods and different linguistic schools. Attention is focused on the identification of essential features, the main elements of the characteristic structure, the establishment of relationships and relationships within the concept.

Key words: language, system, concept, explanatory formula of notion content (EFNC).

Formulation of the problem. Language is the common phenomenon in our everyday life. It unites and divides people, gives the opportunity to think and to form information, allows storing information about the past and extrapolating the future. But we rarely think about its definition.

The urgency of the research is motivated by necessity of creating a coherent system of views on the concept “language” that could cover all general characteristics of each language, reflect the structure of the language.

The aim our research paper is to analyze the development of the concept “language” and changes of scientific paradigms, to establish some perspectives on general problems of language in American linguistic tradition according to the explanatory formula word’s meaning (EFWM) [6, p. 32-40].

The object of the research paper is the historicism of using the concept “language” in communicative relations in American linguistic tradition.

The research paper deals with the concept “language” definition in different historical periods and by different linguistic schools [7; 8; 9]. It provides information about the fundamental laws, the laws of cognition and the most truthful at the following stage of the general knowledge.

New requirements to the principles of scientific analysis are under the influence of developments in other areas of human knowledge.

Main materials. The study of scientific researches about the acoustico-graphic code (AGC) “language” as the concept and the phenomenon leads the author to analyze evolution of that concept in American linguistic tradition.

In the process of the concept development there some problems arise and attract attention of researchers. These problems became the center of attention, set the general direction and unite researchers in a common community.

One dominant paradigm could be changed by another because a new set of facts, new methods of researches, collections of new ideas can oust or even displace an old idea.

We do not determine the problem of the concept “language” definition synthesis. Science problem of the article is closely connected with identification of the common essence from existing

groups for definitions and correlation of the essence with definitions of the concept “language”.

According to the explanatory formula word’s meaning (EFWM) it is possible to distinguish the main ones:

1. The system as set of components (“modules”):

1.1. Multi-level system:

– phonological level;

– semantic level;

– grammar;

– lexical;

– morphology;

– syntax.

1.2. Acoustic system of symbols;

1.3. Functional system: man’s functional system formalized in the mental or spiritual constitution rather than purely conventional acoustic system of symbols [6];

1.4. Closed system (repository) while the language is a set of individual elements;

1.5. A complete system and at the same time the system of individual speech elements;

1.6. A system of signs and multi-level device of the system of language [15];

1.7. A system in which sign structures (realized in the human experience) are embodied in the form of phonological structures, realized in the form of sounds [14];

1.8. A high-built system (unordered set of elements) that responds the basic requirements of communication dictated by the structure of the speech act [16, p. 90];

1.9. A technique of expression. But we do not realize that the language is primarily the classification and regulation of the sensory experience flow; the result is an ordering of the world, which can easily be expressed with available ways of the symbolization in the language.

Language realizes something that science achieves, but makes it more coarsening, though with greater coverage and more flexible [24, p. 130].

2. Human activities:

2.1. A form of behavior (exclusively subordinated to the rules) and a man’s response:

– a special form of human’s behavior.

A language is the person’s reaction (material and spiritual). It is not always seen an aspect of human activity. Leonard Bloomfield (the founder of descriptivism) transferred the basic concepts of psychology from behaviorism;

– a form of behavior by which the individual adapts to the social environment. It is different (not the same) to the language as a means of expression of the so-called personal desires, hopes and expectations.

As a form of behavior language represents the biological, psychological and social conditions; as a means of expression it as-

sumes nonphysical forces or types of psychic energy, their existence was not demonstrated adequately yet [22, p. 52].

2.2. The human's essence.

Language is changed in time and space. It is related to other manifestations of the human's essence: thinking, the nature of the historical process, race, culture, and art [5].

2.3. Human thinking.

For example, Edward Sapir considered language as the outer edge of thinking on the highest and the most generalized level of symbolic expression. The essence of language is the conditional correlation specifically articulated sounds or their equivalents to the various elements of experience [5].

Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf updated the traditional problem of the relation of language and thinking in their studies: language and thinking are completely identical things.

3. An object that demands researching:

3.1. Language has to be studied in close connection with the culture, history and society:

– representatives of the Yale School (one of the 3 directions of the American descriptivism) believed that we have to take account of social, ethnic and cultural factors in linguistic analysis;

– each language is made as a special model, So it divides surrounding reality by its own way, the language is a “symbolic key to the culture” [21, p. 210], “primarily a product of culture or society, and as such it should be studied” [21, p. 214];

– universals as properties of human culture, language is a part of it [12].

Thereby people who speak different languages see the world differently, and perception of the world is unconsciously based on linguistic categories.

American descriptivism appeared because of the need to study the national languages of the indigenous peoples of the North America.

It is not possible to find two similar languages that represent the same social reality.

The worlds in which different societies live are different worlds:

– language as an external phenomenon for objective observation and analysis;

– language as the language changes. A systematic study of language changes is the key to solving many problems.

– understanding of language as a stable structure of lexical and grammatical skills is an illusion, because the language exists in constant development. That is why the nature of language could be known only by observing the changes.

Leonard Bloomfield laid the foundations of synchronous studying the language, any information from the field of history is not needed for describing the language [1, p. 33];

Language is not a reflection of the world. It is its individual and national interpretation. Language inevitably bears the mark of the cultural and historical development of the nation. These ideas were further developed in modern linguistics and have given rise to cultural linguistics. Its task is to describe the national and cultural components of languages;

– only vocabulary is associated with the culture of people, i.e. the vocabulary of the language. Language is a reflection of the thinking and culture of people.

Benjamin Lee Whorf attaches vital importance to the problem of the influence of language on the world view [2, p. 21]. He saw an inseparable link between the form of language and culture, thinking. Whorf came to the conclusion that there are close relations between linguistic structures and cultural norms and human's behavior;

– linguistic forms and historical processes of language development except their interesting internal features have a great educational value for the understanding some of the most complex problems of thinking psychology and marvelous, complex movements in the life of the human spirit. We call them “history” or “progress or evolution” [5].

3.2. Language should be studied by a single method of linguistic analysis.

Leonard Bloomfield said about necessity of creation a common language for all linguistic analysis methodology that could be applied to the study of English and other Indo-European, Turkic and Semitic languages. He raised the question about creation of an objective method of analysis and description of language. Linguist focused his attention on the description of the formal elements of language structure [17].

4. Social phenomenon

4.1. Form of human behavior:

– “linguistic relativity hypothesis Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” or Whorfianism. The language (being a social phenomenon) is related to the forms of human behavior, the culture of the society. The culture of a society could be defined as something that the society does and thinks [2].

– language is what society thinks [24].

4.2 form of the human experience:

– language is completely connected with the direct experience of people. Edward Sapir pointed out that the basis of magical spells (incantations) based on the physical identification of words with things, or their close match [5, p. 26-203].

– “Whorf attaches vital importance to the problem of the influence of language on the world view” [2, p. 21].

According to Benjamin Lee Whorf mental images of the same object are not the same for speakers of different languages. There is only one word for “snow” in English language but in Eskimo there is more than one. So a speaker has to distinguish what kind of snow it is: falling or lying on the ground.

4.3. Language is also a social and individual means. It reflects national character and personality of a speaker:

– each language imposes specific (only to the given language) semantic structure (the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of “linguistic relativity”);

– “... language determines thought, and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories, whereas the weak version says that linguistic categories and usage only influence thought and decisions” [19].

4.4. Language is a means of human adaptation to the world; in the mid-1970s the thesis of feedback was formulated [4, p.128-148].

5. “Mental world”. The theory of linguistic relativity has stimulated serious discussion regarding the relationship between language and thinking:

– “mental world” is the microcosm that every person carries in him and by which he is trying to measure and understand the macrocosm [10, p. 136-169];

– thinking depends on the nature of language, because it is important to understand the nature of the language, any spoken language includes certain linguistic models, the totality of which is called a microcosm. Benjamin Lee Whorf characterizes this microcosm as “mental world” [23, p. 125-133].

According to the concept Benjamin Lee Whorf we perceive the world and the reality around us from the position of our language,

according to our linguistic customs. The world is a stream of sensations, the chaos of perceptions. This chaos is put in some kind of order due to our language.

Languages are differed from each other by its nature, character. The flow of sensations streamlining is carried out in different ways. As a result differences exist in the perception of the reality around us [2, p. 7].

5. The structure which needs to be studied:

5.1. Syntactic. Noam Chomsky has studied the syntactic structures [11].

5.2. Grammatical.

Benjamin Lee Whorf proved that grammatical categories (such as time or numbers) forced speakers to perceive the world in a certain way. In English, the verb “must” contains the index of time in any personal form [10].

6. Language as a phenomenon of the human’s mind.

The term “psycholinguistics” was proposed by American psychologist Nicholas Henry Pronko in 1946 [20]. The aim is to give a formal status of already existing scientific directions.

Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental aspects of language (as the phenomenon of the psyche) and speech. Psycholinguistics as linguistic science has a specific object of study and methods. This is a complex science which incorporates and operates information from linguistics and psychology. All features of display and their causes are studied in the chain “meaning – speaking – listening – sense” in psycholinguistics.

7. Phenomenon that requires systematic studies of language changes (dynamic movement). Leonard Bloomfield pointed out that the language was in incessant motion. That is why the nature of language could be known only by observing the changes [1].

8. Means:

– of communication. Communication is a biological act, like any other form of human adaptation to the environment and his responses to external stimulus;

– of expression, means of the thought materialization;

– of satisfying needs. It also helps in the social division of labor (according to Leonard Bloomfield [3];

– of originally designed for use at a lower level than the level of the conceptual framework. The thought arises as a refined interpretation of its contents [1, p. 35–36].

The main functions of the language are following:

1. Communicative function. Language is understood as a means of communication between people. This is the main function of language.

2. Thought formulates function. Language is used as a means of thinking in the form of AGCs.

3. Cognitive (gnoseological) function.

Language is a product of the activity of all people (not a single person). Language is a means of cognition of the world, accumulation and transfer of knowledge to other people and to future generations (in the form of oral traditions, written records, audio recordings).

Language (as a product of people) is ready for a person, but not his own, something alien for a man. Language is important but particular manifestations of human intelligence. The language belongs to the important but often frequent manifestations of human intelligence. But a person uses it creatively, creates a subjective existence for language.

Conclusion. American researchers of analyzed period for the first time directed their attention to the study of language at the interdisciplinary level. A separation from philosophy and linguistics

opened the way for scientific directions and new methods in language researches.

The results of their researches are important for interpreting the concept “language” at the present stage.

In the future it is necessary to make an analysis of historicism of the concept “language” understanding up to date.

Література:

1. Блумфилд Л. Язык / Л. Блумфилд ; под ред. и с предисловием М. М. Гухман. – М. : Прогресс, 1968. – 607 с.
2. Брутян Г. А. Гипотеза Сэпира Уорфа / Г. А. Брутян – Ереван : Арбук, 1968. – 400 с.
3. Гулина М. А. Консультативная психология. Учебник для ВУЗов / М. А. Гулина, Ю. П. Зинченко. – СПб : ПИТЕР, 2014. – 336 с.
4. Демьянков В. З. Теория языка и динамика американской лингвистики на страницах журнала «LANGUAGE»: (К 65-летию основания журнала) / В. З. Демьянков // Вопросы языкознания. – 1989. – № 4. – С. 128-148.
5. Сепир Э. Избранные труды по языкознанию и культурологии / Э. Сепир. – М. : Прогресс, 1993. – 656 с.
6. Солдатова Л. П. Поняття «дискурс»: проблеми визначення / Л. П. Солдатова // Мовні і концептуальні картини світу: 36. наук. пр. Випуск 46, ч. 4. – К. : Київський університет, 2013. – С. 32-40 (429 с.).
7. Солдатова Л. П. Сутність та історизм поняття «мова» в індійській лінгвістичній традиції (часи ранньої античності VIII ст. до н.е. – II ст. н.е.) / Л. П. Солдатова // XX Міжнародна наукова конференція «ЯЗЫК И КУЛЬТУРА» ім. проф. Сергєя Бурґо (23-26.06.2014), Київ, Україна. [Електронний ресурс] – Режим доступу: www.burago.com.ua/.../vsya2014_progr_sayt.p.
8. Солдатова Л. П. Сутність та історизм поняття «мова» у період Середньовіччя (V ст. н.е. – XV ст. н.е.) / Л. П. Солдатова // Науковий вісник Міжнародного гуманітарного університету. Серія: «Філологія». № 14/2015. – Одеса. – С. 110-112 (142).
9. Солдатова Л. П. Сутність та історизм поняття «мова» в часи Відродження / Л. П. Солдатова // Науковий вісник Міжнародного гуманітарного університету. Серія: «Філологія». СЕРІЯ «ФІЛОЛОГІЯ» № 24/2016, м. Одеса. – С. 156-159.
10. Уорф Б. Л. Отношение норм поведения и мышления к языку / Б. Л. Уорф // Новое в лингвистике / под ред. В. А. Звягинцева. – М. : Иностран. лит., 1960. – Вып. 1. – С. 136-169.
11. Хомский Н. Язык и мышление / Н. Хомский. – М., 1972. – 123 с.
12. Aginsky B. The importance of language universals / B. Aginsky, E. Aginsky // Word. 1948. V. 4. – P. 168-172.
13. http://pubman.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:2282987/component/escidoc:2282986/Bloomfield_1926_Set_Postulates.pdf “A set of postulates for the science of language”
14. Chafe W. Language and symbolization / W. Chafe // Language. – 1967. – V. 43. – № 1. – P. 57-91.
15. Garvin P. Computer participation in linguistic research / P. Garvin // Language. – 1962. – V. 38. – № 4.
16. Heath J. Some functional relationships in grammar / J. Heath // Language. – 1975. – V. 51. – № 1. – P. 89-104.
17. http://pubman.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:2282987/component/escidoc:2282986/Bloomfield_1926_Set_Postulates.pdf “A set of postulates for the science of language”.
18. Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. – Cambridge : MIT Press, 1939. – P. 125–133.
19. Linguistic relativity https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_relativity
20. Pronko N. H. Language and Psycholinguistics / N. H. Pronko // Psychological Buletin. 43, May, 1946. – P. 189-239.
21. Sapir E. The status of linguistics as a science / E. Sapir // Language. – 1929. – V. 5. – № 4, (Dec., 1929). – P. 207-214.
22. Weiss A. P. Linguistics and philosophy / A. P. Weiss // Language. – 1925. – V. 1. – № 2. – P. 52.

23. Whorf B. L. Language, thought and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf / B. L. Whorf // Ed. John B. Carroll. – New York : Wiley, 1956. – P. 134-159.
24. Whorf B. L. The punctual and segmentative aspects of verbs in Hopi / B. L. Whorf // Language 1936. – V. 12. – № 11. – P. 130-148.

Солдатова Л. П. Еволюція поняття «мова» в американській лінгвістичній традиції

Анотація. У статті розглядаються проблеми лінгвістичної термінології. Дана робота є складовою частиною дослідження історизму розуміння поняття «мова» з точки зору його сутності у різні часові періоди та різними лінгвістичними школами. Увагу зосереджено на виділені суттєвих ознак, визначенні основних елементів характеристичної структури, на знаходження зв'язків та відношень всередині поняття.

Ключові слова: мова, система, поняття, тлумачна формула змісту поняття (ТФЗП).

Солдатова Л. П. Эволюция понятия «язык» в американской лингвистической традиции

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются проблемы лингвистической терминологии. Данная работа является составной частью исследования историзма понимания понятия «язык» с точки зрения его сущности в разные временные периоды и разными лингвистическими школами. Внимание сосредоточено на выделение существенных признаков, определении основных элементов характеристической структуры, на нахождение связей и отношений внутри понятия.

Ключевые слова: язык, система, понятие, толковательная формула содержания понятия (ТФСП).