

MENTALITY AS A MEANS OF ENRICHING THE NATIONAL LINGUISTIC PICTURE OF THE WORLD

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Abstract: The relevance of this study is determined by the powerful development of linguoculturological methodology in the system of humanitarian knowledge, which explores the concept sphere of the national language as a symbolic and semantic space of the mental originality of the subject of culture, the being of the spirit of people. The linguoculturological paradigm allows not only to study the "linguistic personality", but also to carry out the reconstruction of the mental-cognitive picture of the world, typical for the collective subject of national culture. A feature of linguoculturological methodology is the pronounced anthropocentric orientation of the research method, which reflects the general paradigm reorientation of humanitarian knowledge, as well as a specific problem field that arises in the space of interaction between language and culture. The specificity of the linguoculturological methodology also lies in the approval of the cultural-creative possibilities of the concept sphere. The study of mentality by analyzing its semantic presentations in the concept sphere of a language requires an integrated approach, a synthesis of methods of conceptual and contextual analysis, cognitive modeling, and etymological and component approach to linguistic phenomena.

Keywords: Linguistic personality, Linguistic phenomena, Linguistic picture, Mentality, Socio-cultural behavior.

1 Introduction

Problems of linguistic mentality, various ways of linguistic representation of the world are among the most relevant and discussed issues of modern linguistics. Consideration of problems associated with semantic processes inevitably confronts language researchers with the eternal problem for theoretical linguistics of the relationship between language, thinking, and culture. What is the relationship between thought processes and language? To what extent do patterns of a semantic nature influence the evolution of thought? Are the facts of linguistic semantics representing resource of culture? The answers to these questions have always been and are of concern to language researchers today.

Language acts as a link between mental and socio-cultural life and at the same time as an instrument of their interaction. Problems of linguistic mentality, various ways of linguistic representation of the world are among the most topical and discussed issues between linguists, philosophers, culturologists, and psychologists.

The concept of mentality is widely applied in modern science; it has become the property of public consciousness, the subject of philosophical and sociocultural reflections. Meanwhile, both this concept and the term itself are among the indefinite ones, changing their subject relatedness depending on the understanding of the nature of thinking, consciousness and, especially, ways of representing the structures of thinking and consciousness. The researchers rightly note: "Apparently, the well-known vagueness of the concept is due to the very nature of the phenomenon: mentality is omnipresent, it permeates all human life, is present at all levels of consciousness and behavior of people, and, therefore, it is so difficult to define it, to introduce it into some kind of framework" [3].

The principles of modern linguistics, along with anthropocentrism, cognitivism, pragmatism, ethnocentrism, include mentalism [2, 8, 9, 27]. Research in psycholinguistics, the theory of speech activity, cognitive psychology, communication theory (including intercultural) made it possible to correlate the picture of the world as reality (material and ideal, real and imaginary) reflected in the human psyche and the linguistic picture of the world as a set of knowledge captured in units of language, in knowledge representation structures. The picture of the world, including cognitive, axiological, norm-setting components, is a common field of activity for ethnographers, psychologists, linguoculturologists.

At the same time, mentality is a way of seeing the world, the level of public consciousness, "a minimum of spiritual unity of people, without which the organization of any society is impossible." Mentality represents a deep structure of consciousness, depending on socio-cultural, linguistic, geographical, and other factors [1].

The key category that holistically fixes the entire set of national and cultural characteristics is mentality as an integrated characteristic of a subject of culture, fixing the type of thinking and mental order characteristic of a cultural community, a specific picture of the world and images of the national "Self". Mental matrices act as the foundation of a cultural system, fixing its stable value dominants, models and stereotypes of world perception, which underlie cultural differences, become a factor of intercultural misunderstanding and cause conflicts. The mentality reproduces deep psychocultural features, which, on the one hand, are fixed in the structure of the self-consciousness of the ethnocultural community and in the linguistic picture of the world, and, on the other hand, are found in the communication system, behavioral models, stereotypes and scenarios. Mentality is the most important identification resource of the nation, the destruction of which leads to a split in society, an existential vacuum and the loss of the meaning of human existence, accompanied by anomie (i.e., the absence of norms, the inability of culture to fulfill its value-normative functions) [13].

In the anthropological dimension, the deformation of the mental basis becomes the main cause of the global identity crisis, which, in turn, is accompanied by a surge of various kinds of deviations and the expansion of the social base of deviant behavior. In this context, the problem of understanding and taking into account the specifics of the national-cultural mentality acquires special significance. The cultural processes of the last decades show that the deformation of the foundations of the national-cultural mentality entails the intensification of crisis-catastrophic phenomena in society (and in extreme cases leads to the failure of the entire civilizational program) [10]. In the situation of reforms in society worldwide, the problem is exacerbated by the aggressive expansion of the ideology of total consumerism, which contradicts the basic values of the national cultural ethos. Namely this worldview paradigm of a "bright future" has played a key role in today's "anthropological crisis", which is "ideologically rooted in total economism, consumerism and utilitarianism (the cult of wealth, power, prestige, careerism, physical strength, etc.)" [18].

Understanding mental characteristics can be the key to a successful exit from the spiritual crisis of society: it can help to recognize and accept one's own historical and cultural uniqueness, to see the "zones" of divergence of deep mentality traits and to correct the model of economic and political transformations. Characterization of the mental matrices of national culture and understanding of the mental foundations of the world will allow: a) to predict the nature of interaction with carriers of a particular mentality within the framework of intercultural communication; b) to design optimal models of the cultural future and carry out transformations taking into account the deep and historically stable factors of people's life; c) predict zones of intercultural (interlingual) discrepancies and develop conditions for their minimization in a situation of dialogue of cultures.

2 Materials and Methods

Phraseological conceptualization of the mental foundations of culture is carried out with the help of stable units of language linguoconcepts as linguized mental "units of consciousness" containing significant sociocultural meanings and concentrating a multi-level structure stored in the collective consciousness and objectified in various linguistic forms of multidimensional culturally significant sociopsychological formations. The concepts that form the basis of mentality participate in the

formation of the value “picture of the world”, acting as a kind of semantic and value “cells of culture” that exist in the forms of the national language in the form of concepts, associations, stereotypes, attitudes, experiences (according to the researcher D. S. Likhachev) [17]. The verbal symbolism of the national language culturally marks “us” and “them”, establishes communication standards within “our” and “alien” cultural space. The basic concepts of various national and cultural mentalities, revealing a common space of meanings, have their own specific content, which is found in the linguistic picture of the world. In this regard, the study of the specifics of the semantic content of the basic concepts of mentality in various cultural and linguistic environments is of particular relevance.

The theoretical and methodological basis for the study of the concept sphere of national-cultural mentality has the following features [3, 4, 14]:

- a) It is based on the understanding of the culture of a self-developing system of human supranatural activity, the “psychophysical” carrier of which is the mental sphere of the human individual, and the structural unit is the meaning it produces; moreover, it is based on the theory of language as “ergon” and “energy” (W. von Humboldt, L. Weisgerber, E. Sapir and B. Whorf), on the interpretation of the cultural-creative functions of the national concept sphere (D. S. Likhachev, Yu. S. Stepanov), on the concept of “linguistic worldview” and the linguistic picture of the world, a significant element of which is phraseology (N. F. Alefirenko, Yu. D. Apresyan, Yu. N. Karaulov, O. A. Kornilov, E. S. Kubryakova, V. I. Postovalova, B. A. Serebrennikov, E. S. Yakovleva);
- b) It is built on the basis of ideological universals of culture, accumulating historical social experience, with the help of which a person evaluates, comprehends, and experiences the world; fixing and defining the most general ideas of the subject about the main components and aspects of human life: about the place of a person in the world, social relations, spiritual life and values;
- c) It takes into account the results of linguistic and cultural studies of the role of language in the formation of the national picture of the world (W. von Humboldt, L. Weisgerber, L. Wittgenstein, E. Sapir, B. Whorf, E. Cassirer, Yu. M. Lotman, M. M. Bakhtin, V. N. Toporov)
- d) It organically includes the principles of the unity of the mental and linguistic and cultural space as the basic representatives of culture, ideas and principles of structural and cognitive linguistics.

The characterization of the semantic fields of the concept sphere of national mentality, represented at the phraseological level, was carried out based on: patterns of influence of the language picture of the world on cultural dynamics, mechanisms of the relationship between cognitive and linguistic structures.

3 Results and Discussion

The category of mentality was introduced into scientific use in the French-speaking school of Annales (F. Aries, M. Blok, J. Duby, J. Lefebvre, L. Febvre). General theoretical aspects of the study of stereotypes and national character traits that form the basis of mentality are presented in the works of a number of philosophers and psychologists: E. Durkheim, G. Lebon, M. Heidegger, C. G. Jung, Z. Freud, E. Fromm, L. Febvre, as well as in works that deeply analyze the mythological component of culture (R. Bart, A. A. Potebnya, A. F. Losev, N. I. Tolstoy, V. N. Toporov, O. M. Freidenberg, C. G. Jung). The methodology of studying mental matrices was the basis for anthropological studies of primitive cultures (L. Levy-Bruhl). The study of mentality in the context of ethnic identity and national and cultural specificity was undertaken in the fundamental works of foreign culturologists and anthropologists C. Levi-Strauss, J. Duby, F. Graus, J. Lakoff, P. Dinzelsbecher, A. Dupron, R. Reinhardt, 8 G. Tellenbach, as well as in the works of humanity researchers: A. Ya. Gurevich, S. V. Grineva, I. G. Dubov, S. V. Valtsev, V. P. Vizgin, G. D. Gachev, T. S. Korneeva, L. N.

Pushkareva, E. Ya. Tarshis, N. S. Yuzhalina. A significant layer of research is associated with the interpretation of language as a form of cultural existence, a way of preserving national characteristics and a means of presenting cultural and ethnic dominants that determine mental matrices, national stereotypes and worldview models (works by L. Weisgerber, W. von Humboldt, E. Sapir; studies of Slavic linguists A. N. Afanasiev, F. I. Buslaev, A. A. Potebnya).

An analysis of the literature of a philosophical, cultural, and linguistic orientation testifies to the fundamental study of the problems associated with the study of linguistic pictures of the world as the worldview foundations of national cultures, the characteristics of the specifics of individual mentality traits. Significant material has been accumulated on a comparative analysis of the semantic fields of concepts that are key ones to understanding the specifics of culture. At the same time, there are no linguoculturological studies of the national-cultural mentality as an integral phenomenon represented in the figurative-symbolic system of national phraseology.

The idea that the world is seen by a person through the prism of his language, of course, is not new. The ideas about the decisive role of language in human thinking, about the connection of language with the mental and spiritual life of the people, its culture belongs to Humboldt, who considered language to be the creator of reality, forming social consciousness. According to Humboldt, everything in the language is the reincarnation and reflection of the national spirit.

Humboldt laid the foundations for the theory of language as a product of developing human spiritual power and as a phenomenon of human society, thus indicating to future generations of scientists a promising direction of linguistic research aimed at penetrating the complex mechanisms of the linguistic, intellectual, spiritual, cultural and historical activities of the people. The ideas of Humboldt created a fertile ground for the emergence of various concepts, which are based on the idea that the elements of a language express a certain mental content and differences between languages are considered as a manifestation of the peculiarities of the thinking of the speakers of these languages or as the embodiment of a special ethnic culture.

The desire to interpret all the features of each particular language as features of the thinking of its speakers found the most complete form in the concept of Weisgerber and in the hypothesis of linguistic relativity, which went down in history as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Weisgerber, like Humboldt, considers language to be a mental “intermediate world”, which is the result of the interaction of the world of things and the world of consciousness. After such interaction, the language itself creates the surrounding world. Language is an image, a picture of the world, a worldview of the people. The difference in languages is a manifestation of the difference in views of the world, and for people who speak different languages, the world looks different [7].

Let us now turn to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, without taking into account which reasoning on the topic of the relationship between language, thinking, reality and culture would obviously not be complete. The main provisions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis can be reduced to the following: language determines the nature of thinking, its logical structure. The formation of thoughts, according to B. Whorf, is “not an independent process, strictly rational in the old sense of the word, but part of the grammar of a particular language and differs among different peoples in some cases slightly, in others very significantly, just like grammatical the system of the respective peoples” [15].

The nature of cognition of reality depends on the languages in which the cognizing subjects think. “We dissect nature in the direction suggested by our native language. We single out certain categories and types in the world of phenomena not at all because they are self-evident. On the contrary, the world appears before us as a kaleidoscopic stream of impressions, which must be organized by our consciousness, and this means, as a rule, by

the language system stored in our consciousness. We dismember the world, organize it into concepts, and distribute meanings in this way and not otherwise, mainly because we are parties to the agreement that prescribes such systematization. This agreement is valid for a certain language community and is fixed in the system of models of our language" [21].

Human knowledge does not have an objective, universally valid character. Only the similarity, or at least the correlation of language systems, can create a similar picture of the universe. This is the principle of relativity.

Thus, according to Whorf, language is a tool, a means of thinking, it "sculpts" human consciousness, and, therefore, the thinking of every nation has purely national features, entirely predetermined by the immanent development of the national language. As a result, a native speaker does not know objective reality, but only the language of which he is a native speaker. These ideas have also been developed in neo-positivist philosophy, which believes that people who speak different languages have different cognitive abilities.

A decisive influence on the processes of thinking and their reflection in the language is made by extralinguistic reality. The conceptual world reflects the ideological ideals prevailing in society. For example, the very idea of any progress was alien to the worldview of medieval man. The public consciousness was dominated by religious views on the vicious nature of man, deprived of God's mercy as a result of his fall. Probably, faith in human progress entered the public consciousness only in the 17th - 18th centuries thanks to the efforts of philosophers who proclaimed the future kingdom of reason. The history of the semantic development of the word 'progress' reflects the dialectic of this concept (the original meaning of the word is "physical movement in space; a journey made by a royal person", and the word gets the meaning "development for the better, the process of improvement" only in the 17th century).

The interpretation of mentality in the linguoculturological context as an integrated characteristic of the subject of culture determines: a) the existential matrices of the cultural system, which find their expression in the semantic fields of the basic concepts corresponding to cultural universals; b) criteria and grounds for national and cultural identity; c) models of self-determination of the community "we" and the nature of the images of "they"; d) behavioral scenarios and life strategies specific to the subject of culture. Mental matrices are the basis of worldview and world picture, they largely determine the cultural ethos of the people, act as the basis of national and cultural identity. The epistemological dominants of mentality, fixing the type of thinking characteristic of a cultural community, underlie the formation of a specific picture of the world. They determine the formulas of national consciousness, the commonality of states, experiences, views, assessments and judgments of the collective subject of culture, his ideas about the basic existential values concerning freedom, justice, the meaning of life, happiness, etc. Mentality carries out its linguistic objectification in the phraseological field of culture. Therefore, the characterization of the content and specifics of mental matrices involves the study of national phraseology, which reflects the structure and hierarchy of the value dominants of national culture and captures the originality of the axiological dominants of mentality.

One should also note the characterization of national phraseology as a linguocultural phenomenon that reflects and forms the mental matrix of culture. The figurative and symbolic component of phraseology, being objectified in the mental manifestations of the subject of culture, ensures the reproducibility and stability of mental matrices, therefore, the analysis of phraseological material makes it possible to identify the national and cultural specificity of mental concepts that concentrate the results of the cultural experience of the people and the meanings typical of culture that form the picture of the world of native speakers. Associative-figurative and semantic fields of phraseological units are a key source of national character formation, a value-oriented bank of humanitarian

culture, which performs the most important functions of understanding, interpreting, and evaluating a person and the world. Phraseology not only reflects cultural specifics, but also reproduces the mental originality of the subject of culture, fixing the vector of activity from text to reality.

The phraseological fund makes up the deep semantic fields of concepts due to its national orientation, the ability to store value orientations and models of perception of the world that are specific to the subject of culture. In the language space of national phraseology, mentality is presented as a set of concepts that are significant for the subject of culture, associated in the text of culture and national self-consciousness. Concepts of mentality deeply characterize the collective subject of culture and act as a source of formation of the repertoire of phraseological meanings. The basic characteristics of mentality are manifested in the figurative and symbolic composition of metaphors, conceptualized in the "scenarios" of interpersonal relationships and communications, in the sensory-emotional coloring of life strategies. Identification of the semantic layers of phraseological units frequently nominated by the phraseological fund of the language makes it possible to understand the value dominants of the culture of the people, to clarify the worldview and moral and ethical principles that form the basis of national mental matrices.

At the same time, the conceptual sphere of mentality is made up of basic macroconcepts belonging to the group of "cultural universals": freedom, justice, happiness, love, friendship, which concentrate the results of the cultural experience of the people and form a specific picture of the world of native speakers, fix the ethos of national culture, typical models of meaning and life strategies of its subject. The national-cultural mentality is formed by the natural habitat of the ethno-cultural community, religion, humanitarian culture, history, events significant for the national life, forming the historical memory and the "spiritual gene pool" of the nation. However, the mentality not only reflects, but also creates the cultural reality, reproduces the value-normative model of culture, represents its source and cause, forming and preserving the "anthropological model" typical of the national culture in a large historical time [8].

Mentality is also considered as an explanatory model. The conceptual system of an ethnic group is inseparable from the conceptual system of the language in which this ethnic group speaks; it reflects the mentality of the people, the past state of the language, its history [18]. Namely through the semantic content of concepts, the national-cultural mentality acts as an anthropological expression of cultural specificity. Mentality carries out its linguistic objectification in the phraseological field of culture, therefore, the characterization of the content and specifics of mental matrices involves the study of national phraseology, which reflects the structure and hierarchy of the value dominants of national culture and captures the originality of the axiological dominants of mentality.

There are different approaches to understanding the content and specifics of the concept sphere of national-cultural mentality. The most productive one is the linguoculturological methodology, which is based on the anthropocentric paradigm of understanding language and culture, considering it the key principle not only of linguistics, but also of all other human sciences [9].

Linguoculturology is interdisciplinary in nature, initially arising at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies, but its main task is to "comprehend culture through language", which is considered as the most important factor in the preservation and manifestation of national-cultural mentality [20]. The language preserves and fixes the deep anthropological matrices of culture, determines its axiological basis, as well as the specifics of the worldview of its bearer, namely: the image of the national "Self", including ways of self-consciousness of oneself as a representative of the nation, culture, foundations and models of national and cultural identity, possible behavioral projections of the image of "Self", fixed in the language; a system of basic values specific to a given culture, fixed by semantic oppositions

of the concepts “social-individual”, “material-ideal”, “good-evil”, “present-past-future”; “models” and the specifics of the meaning of life, formed by the semantic fields of the concepts of happiness, love, death, eternity, fate; the nature of the “us-they” opposition.

Within the framework of linguoculturological methodology, the essential connection between the language (the semantic fields of its concept sphere, grammatical forms and features of functioning) and the sociocultural experience of its speakers is noted. Mentality, being a natural form of perception of the world, is based on the categories and forms of the native language. The basic unit of mentality in the language is the concept: “the mental genotype, the prototype of the essence, given in the content of the concept through the verbal sign” [4]. The objectification of the mentality occurs in the language based on the context of cultural traditions. Each separate individual has his own picture of the world, in which mentality is manifested [15]. Language, as one of the most important factors in the formation of national mentality, has an impact on acts of consciousness, stereotypes of thinking, and the level of the unconscious. At the same time, the language takes into account not only the verbal way of transmitting information, but also the very quality of this information.

In cognitive linguistics, mentality appears as a specific way of perceiving and understanding reality, determined by a set of cognitive stereotypes of consciousness that are characteristic of a particular individual, social or ethnic group of people. Linguistic and cultural studies, analyzing the relationship between language and culture, consider as a priority the identification of national and cultural specificity in the concept sphere of language, which makes it possible to look at the national linguoculture in its integrity, consistency and originality, as well as to analyze individual fragments of the language picture of the world from such positions. Through the analysis of cultural connotations and the symbolic reading of the figurative basis of language units, the linguoculturological approach makes it possible to justify the choice of language images, to discover in language units both specific features of the mentality of a particular people, and universal meanings due to human nature. Linguistic and cultural methodology affirms the relationship of language, thinking, and culture, reveals the nature and mechanisms of their mutual influence.

Culture is a product of human social activity, and language, in turn, is a component of culture, its tool. In the very matter of language, in the essential features of its structure, the biological nature of man is reflected. Language as an integral system of means reproduces the complex world of human consciousness spiritual culture is fixed in linguistic forms, including the entire set of ideas, beliefs, customs, traditions, and habits. Therefore, the analysis of the peculiarities of the mentality of different peoples is necessary for understanding and interpreting the problems of intercultural communication.

Representatives of different linguistic cultures perceive the world differently, through the prism of their own picture of the world. At the same time, it cannot be said that the picture of the world is its mirror image. Language explains the content of this conceptual picture of the world, creates certain linguistic images. In ontogenesis, the interaction of mentality and language shows that each new member of society and each new generation, entering into life, assimilates knowledge about the world through the prism of their native language. In the conditions of modern globalization, transformational processes in national languages are accelerating; in such a situation, the mentality performs a cultural and protective function.

The linguoculturological approach implies that the linguistic picture of the world covers the entire linguosphere and its core the conceptsphere [1]. “The gene memory of the people”, as Kolesov calls the mentality, has been developing for centuries, being thoroughly fixed in the language and word [12]. The verbal sign “serves” native speakers in accordance with their level of intelligence: for children, it finds its manifestation through fairy tales, for the unintelligent in the proverbial fund

of the language, it can store information in separate words, but this is only for people who are sensitive to understanding the language [17].

4 Conclusion

Linguoculturological methodology synthesizes the existing directions for the study of linguistic pictures of the world, considering the linguocultural concepts unique for a particular language, which are “key” for a given culture from the point of view of understanding its features and characteristics of mental matrices, as the subject of its analysis. A feature of linguoculturological analysis is the pronounced anthropocentric orientation of the research method, as well as the analysis of various kinds of phenomena that arise in the space of interaction between language and culture.

In this regard, linguocultural and cognitive conceptology are becoming significant areas of humanitarian research, the central subject of study of which is the linguocultural concept “a complex mental unit that fixes the uniqueness of culture and is objectified in verbal units necessary to meet the communicative needs of members of society. It is obvious that further research in this area can contribute to the comparative study of national mentalities, allow outlining promising areas of linguoculturological research aimed at studying the features of national mentality explicated in the language picture. Comparative studies of phraseological units of different languages, based on the generalization of numerous studies of national language pictures of the world, help to expand the understanding of the historically established and rooted patterns of behavior of carriers of national mentalities, thereby contributing to intercultural understanding and dialogue.

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