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Vorwort


Dieser Band gibt einige Antworten von Gleichgesinnten auf die Herausforderungen der globalen Moderne. Die vorliegenden Beiträge geben eine Möglichkeit, die Logik der gegenwartigen soziokulturellen Situation in Russland zu verstehen und zu begreifen, wie zwei Jahrzehnte der posttotalitaren Entwicklung Schwerpunkte unserer linguistischen und fremdsprachdidaktischen Forschung geändert haben. Die Autorinnen und Autoren des Bandes vereinigen etwas, was zwanzig Jahre früher nur als Ausnahme möglich war - Forschungs- und Studienaufenthalte im westlichen Ausland. Ihre Sicht auf die Beziehungen von Sprache, Kultur, Person, dem Fremden und dem Eigenen ist durch standige Reflexionen über eine erfolgreiche sprachkulturelle Kompetenz geprägt.

Ecological Issues in Modern Linguistics: Novel Interpretations and Approaches

Svetlana lonova, Wolgograd

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit Entwicklungsrichtungen in der Okolinguistik als neuen Untersuchungsgegenstand in der modernen Sprachwissenschaft. Untersucht werden die Besonderheiten der Sprachforschungsan satze als Instrument der harmonischen Lebensgestaltung der Menschen sowie als wichtiges Mittel der sozialen Kontaktaufnahme in der russischen und internationalen Forschung.

The anthropocentric and eco-centric lines may be distinguished as competitive modes in the development of modern humanitarian sciences for the reason that they introduce different approaches to investigating processes and results of human activity. This article is written with the aim to state a key significance of eco-centric approach and to offer issues for designing new profiles in modern linguistics - an ecological branch of communicative linguistics which calls for stating new ethic values in evaluating both material and spiritual activity of people.

Anthropocentrism may be undoubtedly referred to a dominant paradigm of modern sciences. Its comprehensive methodology has been gaining power since the 1970s of the 20th cen. when Man and the value of existence or survival were offered to a merit of great significance in modern Europe. Owing to the „post-non-classical“ science paradigm a complex of interrelations that determines any item of human existence or activity - either in material or spiritual life of community - are put into the focus of attention thus aspiring the study and assessment of any objective criterion in its relation to Man and human environment (Эколингвистика, 2003, 270).

With regard to „eco-dimensional“ approach such phenomena as biosphere, noosphere and ecological systems are being introduced into scientific discourse on a large scale these days, stimulating the process of „ecologization“ in humanitarian sciences with the demand to examine facts of social and cultural life of peoples through the paradigm of human environment. Accordingly any activity of the person is considered to be a partly conscious «adjustment» to the biological laws of nature. The ecological roll has influenced minds of modern linguists and several schools plead for a change in the commonly accepted anthropocentric interpretation associated with philosophy and methodology of humanitarian sciences.

An eco-centric model of consciousness is based on the assertion that Man shouldn't be esteemed as a core element of universe but a part of natural environment, eco-centric consciousness is associated correspondingly with the issues of diversity and harmony of Man's coexistence in natural environment rather than of intellectual domination and global convenience. The term «ecology» is said to be coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1866 (wikipe dia.com) to designate a new sub-discipline of biology aimed at studying the relationship between living organisms and the environment. However, the content of the term has been significantly modified and got far beyond its biological science lately. For more than the centenary period of its existence the term «ecology» has been transformed time and again, so „ecology“ of today is an integrative study occupied with investigating a wide range of humanitarian issues.

The popularity of the eco-centric line and its implantation into some branches of modern linguistics may be explained undoubtedly by the global ecological changes in the 20th cen. thought to be caused mainly by human activity. Axiological aspect of natural environment preservation has contradicted the anthropocentric outlook, as a result the principles of ecological ethics are thought to be much more important for the issue of human survival than anthropocentric ideals of value. Many sociologists and linguistics are worried on the issue of cultural diversity and preservation, stating that under the pressures of global economics' demands lots of minor languages.

1 The article represents some initial findings of the studies that are held at Wolgograd State University (Institute of Philology and Cross-cultural Communication) in accordance with the Federal Special Program «2009-2013 Scientific and Academic Fellows for Innovative Universities of Russia» (financial support of state contract No. 02.740.11.0367).

2 Сковородников, 1996, 64
and cultures are at the level of extinction. Moreover, by them, it menaces literacy levels of modern generations in civilized world as it may lead to the death of the writer and reader⁴.

Due to the works by American linguist Einar Haugen the term „ecology” came into use in linguistics in the 70-90-s of the 20th century. The initial aim of Haugen's ecology of language was to determine a new status of language in general paradigm of humanitarian sciences⁵. In his report «The Ecology of language» the scientist pioneered a new paradigm of linguistic research that was focused not only on the social context in which language was embedded, but also on the ecological context in which societies were embedded. The goal of ecology of language was stated as studying correlation between cognitive and social aspects of language existence, language of an individual and of a society, as language is thought to exist only in the minds of people and have its material representation in communicative interactions between speakers⁶.

In the further works some linguists made a number of attempts to enlarge the terminology of the branch, in particular, the notion of language environment was singled out as language encirclement and a complex of social code factors⁷. In the works devoted to language social history several basic factors (“ecological fluents” as demographic, social, political, cultural, psychological, integrative, and linguistic ones) were singled out, they were thought to determine linguistic behavior of social groups and personalities⁸.

Alvin Fill’s works made a valuable contribution to scientific development of ecolinguistics into a new trend as the scientist introduced definitions of new fields in ecolinguistics: a) eco-linguistics, as a general term for all spheres of research that combine both ecology and linguistics; b) ecology of language (languages) that deals with interaction between languages and language diversity reservation; c) ecological linguistics with the applied methods and principles of ecology for studying language (for example, the notion of eco-

It should be mentioned that in the 1990-s the issues of ecology of language and linguistic ecology were dominating. Michael Halliday, the British linguist, raised the question about the widespread destruction of ecosystems, thus making linguistics relevant to the issues and concerns of a new time. He noted correlation between ecological context and consequences of language usage⁹. The notion of correlation was firstly interpreted in the context of mutual influence of language and environment, which could result in changes of both objects as their interconnection creates «ecological system». R. Harre, J. Brockmeier, P. Muhlhauser, et al were among the pioneers who introduced the methodological propositions of ecolinguistics with the following theses: language and language structures (metaphors) are considered to be not closed units but a system of isolated structures interacting with outward things; it is impossible to learn language apart from its natural and social surroundings¹⁰.

Since their initial comments were made the fields of ecolinguistics have developed considerably. A French ecolinguist L.-.J Calvet focused on the problem of language modeling and introduced a gravitational model of languages ('Linguistic galaxy'). According to this ecolinguistic theory natural languages of the world could be subdivided into hypercentral, super-central, central and peripheral. Supporting the idea of language diversity of inner, external, horizontal and vertical kinds, L.-.J. Calvet suggested his own ecological linguistic policy and language modeling that could be useful in solving language problems for state, society and international organizations¹¹.

Due to works by A. Subetto¹² the notions of ecological crisis and ecological catastrophe in the sphere of language were set for consideration. From his standpoint these phenomena are implemented in globally oriented world with the market and community unification, elimination of nation

⁴ Crystal, 2000; Harre at al, 1999; Kristeva, 1980, etc.
⁵ Haugen, 1972
⁶ Haugen, 2001, p. 57
⁷ Calvet, 1999
⁸ Fill, 2001
⁹ Halliday, 2001, p. 178
¹⁰ Harre at al, 1999,91-92
¹¹ Calvet, 1999, 75-99
¹² Субетто, 2006
states and ethnic diversity cultures unification under the „post-modern”
slogan, Americanization of „mass culture” patterns and unification of lan-
guages after all. These processes are considered to be indicators of coming
global spiritual, cultural, and anthropological catastrophe. It should be stated that regardless of the long prehistory lingua-ecological
ideas have not been united into a theory in modern Russian school of
linguistics. However, there appear more and more investigations that combine
linguistic and ecological issues, they are aimed at studying interaction
between language and its social environment, at describing links between
language personality and moral or ethical comfort of society. Language
operations and human environment are viewed as ecosystem, and the notion
of human environment enlarges the concept of language. Respectfully,
language is regarded as an essential component that links Man with nature and society.

Targeted at working out new priorities in human values modern researchers
stand for regulating various types of human activity from novel positions
developing eco-ideas and offering some other aspects for the development of
the ecological paradigm. Firstly, Russian linguists raise voices against
the,post-written era and warn against destructive power of new technologies
that threaten standards of language correction. To retain the language linguists
of Russia monitor standard of speech patterns in various types of discourse,
dwell on stylistic and rhetoric aspects of communication. In any case the
efforts of linguists, who are busy with monitoring the language-in-use
(collecting, analyzing, leveling language units from various types of discourse),
are aimed at preserving native language, eliminating negative social trends in its usage, preventing language regress that consists in
impoverishment of its literary and expressive means, leveling functional,
rhetoric, axiological imbalances.

Secondly, an interlingual aspect of ecotonguistics may be singled out. It studies language in connection with its ethnic environment and investi-
gates reasons of language extinction. To this field we would refer works on
language history which accurately record every language, highlighting its
social and cultural value for the history of humanity. Accordingly, the
evidence of Prof. Yartseva the interlingual aspect of language ecology is
associated with an issue of language historical changes, deterioration and
death, the phenomena that are closely connected with natural history of the
peoples, political, socio-economic and ecological catastrophes that are caused
by military capture or sharp reduction of natural habitat.

Moreover, Russian linguists are developing a translational aspect of the
ecolinguistics in the context of language and culture interactions. It is aimed
at studying processes of one language transformation under the influence of
another, in other words, linguistic transposition of language units under the
influence of another national (cultural) environment. Language is considered
to be a means of culture translation within one society or among multilingual
societies in intergenerational, diachronic and simultaneous perspectives. The
scientists concentrate their efforts on the forms of language integration,
linguistic form coexistence, language tolerance, besides the principles of
intercultural communication are noted.

The eco-centric line has brought another novel aspect into the focus of
attention. In the works of Prof. Shakhovsky (Russia) an eco-communicative
theory is introduced, it offers to study emotions and the ways people influence each other while communicating in situations of formal and informal
types. Mental and speech acts, that represent full range of human activities with regard to such constituents as motivation (intention), aim, strategic and
tactic, ways and means of aim achievement, results (spoken message) and
emotional impact, are claimed to be included into the ecological paradigm of
humanity survival. Accordingly, numerous speech acts that can hurt or insult humans (as hooliganism, humiliation with speech acts, lies, abuse, speech theft, fraud, etc.) are considered an excess of power and authority, they are announced to be equated to the types of criminal acts.
Finally, a group of researchers from Volgograd State University (Russia) has offered one more direction that unites the study of communication and text interpretation with some aspects of human environment (life security and survival), which is considered to be studying communicative environment of text formation activity. Language power and speech creativity are viewed in ecocentric light. The art of text production is closely tied to such non-linguistic phenomena as author’s intention, motives of speech activity, cognitive procedures of speech formation, and emotional effects of speech product on linguistic personality, small or large social groups. This new branch of linguistics has deep connections with intra-psychic states of Man or social and cultural aspects of social well-being and survival of civilization, its residential values and cultural senses without which no state or nation can exist and develop. Therefore, it has been defined that human consciousness is a “textualized” entity. Under „textualization” we mean the ability to create and interpret speech that is presented mainly in written form. It is typical of Russian school of linguistics to think about the body of the text as space with some discrete components that are associated with the conceptual world, its lexical and grammatical representation, compositional models, etc. Textual space as one of the types of ecological environment is considered to be a range of verbal texts. Surrounded by their social context it may be viewed from the point of view of their ties and relations and „contemplation space” (perceptions and ideas of the „external” emotional experience) which is a category of consciousness, some content that functions as „equivalent of the real space in non-spatial consciousness and is closely connected with both text comprehension and interpretation”. For a long time similar approached to research used to be carried out separately within the framework of psycholinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and language sociology. In ecocentrism they get a common methodological basis and practical purpose. Ecology of communication seems to be a promising paradigm of linguistics, a vital part of the theory of speech that studies the ways personal communicative intentions are enforced during communication without weakening the opponent's communicative position or humiliating him by inappropriate speech acts. The detection of the mechanisms of text influence on the addressee, methods of verbal representation (relevant or not) of the referential situation image in textual forms seems to be prospective both in theoretical and practical values. The findings by this approach will allow to balance several issues of human environment instability and extend the procedures of speech formation, and emotional effects of speech product on linguistic personality, small or large social groups. This new branch of linguistic analysis and giving them status of universal instruments for linguistic phenomena as author’s intention, motives of speech activity, cognitive balance several issues of human environment instability and extend the procedures of speech formation, and emotional effects of speech product on linguistic personality, small or large social groups. This new branch of linguistic analysis and giving them status of universal instruments for ecological Issues in Modern Linguistics:...


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