

CULTURAL STUDIES

MENTAL IDENTITY IN THE FOCUS OF LINGUISTIC-CULTURAL STUDIES

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The anthropocentric paradigm focusing on language studies based on human factors, made *Homo loquens* the corner stone of the research, while the symphony of language and culture – its key phenomenon, in which mentality of ethnic groups of its native speakers is objectified. As the anthropocentric paradigm in humanitaristics became stronger, the focus of the linguistic research is shifted according to allegoric metaphor, from the lyre of Orpheus to his individuality.

This epistemological turn is also called «anthropocentric shift» or «anthropological turn». Yet in 1975 the scientist Y. Stepanov emphasized that «no serious linguist of the last decade ... has passed the question of anthropocentrism in language» [8, p. 49]. With this shift of accents, vast creative energy of language as a factor generating cultural space is released, causing an introduction of a separate integrational branch of semasiological background, cultural linguistics that synthesized the results of research in numerous humanitarian sciences.

The eminent French linguist E. Benvenist also predicted the emergence of the so-called «new linguistics», that is, modern linguistic-cultural studies on the basis of the «triad of terms – language, culture, human personality» [2, p. 45]. He offered to look at the spiritual and material existence of the ethnic groups from the position of this triad.

As per needs of *Homo loquens* the reality is not becoming objectively actual in culture of language, rather it is anthropocentrically marked, moreover, it is marked ethno-specifically. That is, being a creator of culture of language, an individuality is the only subject of conceptualization of reality in semantics and semiotics of sign, while language and culture are starting to be researched in the existential dimension through a prism of the mental field. Cultural of language is a self-reflection of *Homo loquens*; it forms an ethno-specific axiogenic discourse field, whose semiosphere is as if adjusted to the requests and priorities of its native speakers. According to the metaphorical

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comparison of the book on the linguistic mentality by T. Radbil, «language acts as a kind of operating system for our thinking (if it is appropriate to use an analogy from the world of computer technology). In other words, language tells us (and sometimes tyrannically) impels us in the interpretation of reality; it is a guide in the human assimilation of the world» [7, p. 20].

In a primary nomination of objects and facts during imprinting, an individual receives meaningful information mainly through their language channel. A retranslator of reality, the language forms a unique «operating system» [7, p. 20] of cognitive apparatus of *Homo literatus*, herewith laying the foundation for subjective ethno-specific verbal and cogitative activity of a new linguistic individuality.

Already the fact of human involvement in the traditions of the linguistic field of a particular ethno-community gives its mentality the keys to decoding its linguistic and cultural codes. Therefore, mental representations in the picture of the world of each nation are largely subconsciously based on the material of cultural and linguistic norms inherent in the dominant ethnic group. By the ethnic group, we understand a generalized collective subject of anthropocentric conceptualization of reality in a sign, mental image, concept, archetype, eidos and other axiogenic mental contexts. A complex, multivectoral yet definitely ethno-marked dialectics of the process is an insurance of further self-replication and improvement of an ethnic group in a competitive environment of multicultural world.

The existence of a direct influence of language on the thinking and mentality of the ethnic groups V. Humboldt vividly illustrated in his metaphor of the epistemological circle: «A person lives with objects in the way their language presents them ... Each language describes around the people, to whom it belongs, the circle, from where the person can go away only to the extent that it enters to the circle of another language» [4, p. 349].

A special highlight is made on linguistic-cultural factors objectification in mental identity of ethnic language groups. In accordance with cultural scope of our study, mentality is a subjective, implicit and often, non-reflected background assumption of a personality determined by linguistic-cultural canvas having more often than not a spontaneous characteristic, in particular, due to stereotype estimations as well as behavioral models, latent impulses, stereotypes and so on. The term «identity» was first involved by the psychologist E. Erikson [3]. Later it was developed in the studies of many scientists of different branches [1; 5; 6] and others.

Mental identity is formed by means of self-identification with that of another ethnic group. It is defined as a totality of ethno-specific mental features which, using a method of establishing identity, single out and mark representatives of a certain ethnic group among others. Its design and

determinateness are achieved by combining conscious or subconscious collective creative efforts of many generations during centuries-long historic-cultural development under a direct influence of linguistic-cultural factors of a corresponding ethnic group. It is highlighted that ethnic identity is inherited by a human individual, while national identity is acquired with ethnic identity staying more durable to changes than national, however, it is still subject to free choice. Yet, the most durable is mental identity – an individual cannot get rid of its intrinsic mental characteristics even in case of their conscious withdrawal of national and ethnic identities. Ethno-specific mental features, behavioral patterns and authentic cultural scenarios of various ethnic groups encoded in traditional art of communicative etiquette. A necessity of preservation of local cultures of language as an insurance of forming fully-fledged and spiritually rich mental identities of nations in the end can have a positive influence onto the global community.

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