

## **Some Issues in Russian Psycholinguistics and their Roots in the Linguistics and Psychology of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries\***

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*Este trabajo esboza el desarrollo de varios temas importantes de la psicolingüística irisa actual de la generación y percepción de enunciados y de la relación entre el habla y el pensamiento en las obras de A. A. Potebnia, eslavista del Siglo XIX y del lingüista S. I. Bemstein, así como a través de las obras de psicólogos eminentes tales como Lurina, Vygotsky y Leontiev. La autora sugiere la relevancia que el desarrollo de estos temas puede tener para los investigadores de hoy.*

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*This article traces the development of the central issues of contemporary Russian psycholinguistics, the generation and perception of utterances and the relation between speech and thought from the works of the nineteenth century Slavist scholar, A. A. Potebnia and the linguist S. I. Bemstein and through the works of such eminent psychologists as Luria, Vygotsky, and Leontiev. The author shows how the development of these concepts are relevant to researchers and teachers today.*

\* We shall use the word "Russian" when referred to the period before or after the Soviet state was formed and existed. We prefer the word "Soviet", however, when speaking about the period of the existence of the Soviet Union (1917-1990).

What is Russian psycholinguistics today? What is its object of study? When and why did it appear?

Up to the 60's in Soviet linguistics the sentence was usually investigated as a formal grammatical construction. The aggregate of technical means, of forms of language, was connected purely externally to the social function of language as an instrument of thought and communication through the concept of "predicativity" which they claimed exhibited the "basic" or "one of the basic" features of the sentence in all grammatical constructions and to which different researchers assigned different meanings. As a result, the state of the problem of the sentence could be characterized, in S. I. Bernstein's words, spoken at the end of the 30's: "grammar... proceeds, not from the social function of language to its technical means, but proceeds from the technical means and, not having available the method for the construction of a system of linguistic expression of thought, is every now and then forced to shift from the *elements to the whole*, which could not possibly be composed by means a *mechanical summing of the parts*. If it is to remain consistent, formal grammar is not equipped to grasp the problem of the sentence"<sup>1</sup> (Italics mine).

At the same time there were numerous indications which confirmed that the sentence is not merely a grammatical combination of words, but is an integral production, reflecting a given situation as the speaker imagines it. Consequently, the concept of the sentence could be extended beyond the bounds of grammar into the sphere of speech activity. In this case the sentence may be viewed not as a finished product of human activity (in this case, speech activity) but in its very process of production, in the process of speaking. In this manner, the object of examination is a process, the initial moment the communicative intent and the concluding result - the sentence (the utterance). In this process predicability plays a basic role, but not in that narrowly linguistic sense which is characteristic of grammatical constructions.

At the beginning of the 60s Soviet psycholinguistics appeared. Its main objective is to study, experimentally and theoretically, the problems of generating and perceiving the utterance (the text), the problem of speech communication. It is also involved in investigating the issue of the relation between language and thought; that is, it tries to explain, in the form of theoretical postulates, the conditions of generating and understanding meaning.

The theoretical basis of Soviet psycholinguistics is Vygotsky's psychological concept of speech-thought activity which, in turn, has deep roots in the theories of the Russian linguists of the Nineteenth and the beginning of the Twentieth centu-

1 Bernstein S. I. Osnovnye poniatia grammatiki v osvveschenii A. M. Peshkovskogo. (Basic Concepts of Grammar in the Interpretation of A. M. Peshkovsky), Introductory article to the sixth edition of *Russkij sintaksis v nauchnom osvveschenii* (Scientific Interpretation of Russian Syntax) A. M. Peshkovsky, Moscow 1938, p. 40.

ries, mainly in the linguistic theory of one of Russia's most distinguished slavists - A. A. Potebnia (1835-1891).

Linguist, folklorist and literary theorist, Alexander Potebnia was a professor of philology at Kharkov University. Author of a major treatise on the Russian language, A. Potebnia placed central emphasis in his work on the role of the verbal in the processes of thinking and understanding.

Following W. v. Humboldt -"the great thinker", as he called him, A. Potebnia argued, as has Hmnboldt, that language is a human activity, a "constantly repeated effort (work, Arbeit) of the spirit to articulate the very expression of thought"<sup>2</sup>.

It was Hmnboldt, in Potebnia's opinion, whose definitions of language as human activity, work of spirit, the organ of thought which laid the foundation for treating language as a psychological phenomenon.

"Having understood... mind or spirit as conscious mental activity, assmning concepts, fonned only by words, we shall see that mind is impossible without language as it is fonned with the help of language. Language in spirit is the first event"<sup>3</sup>.

In all his work Potebnia constantly stressed that the main task of linguistics was to study the "mental content of words..., produced and reproduced together with the articulated sounds, the acoustical dress of the words"<sup>4</sup>.

Since a word in his conception was regarded not as a means of expressing thought but rather as a device, a mode of its creation and formation, the problem of the essence of the word became one of the cornerstones of his theory. This problem is closely connected with his understanding of the role of language in daily life, of man and society. Potebnia cites Hmnboldt: "Man surrounds himself by the world of objects"<sup>5</sup>; language ability becomes an essential characteristic of man. It is in this context -the context of man's creative activity- that his views on the "importance of words for the development of thought" finds its proper place.

Strictly speaking, an isolated word is neither the instrument of cognition, nor the instrument of communication. As Potebnia wrote, the "*real* life of a word is realized in speech... A word in speech corresponds, to one act of thought, but not to several of them, that is, each time it is pronounced or understood it has only one meaning"<sup>6</sup>.

2 Potebnia, A. A. Estetika i poetika. (Aesthetics and poetics) Moscow 1976, p. 56.

3 Ibid., p. 69.

4 Potebnia A. A. Iz zapisok po russkoi grammatike. (Notes on Russian Grammar). Vol. III. Moscow 1968, p. 5.

5 Potebnia A. A. Estetika i poetika. (Aesthetics and poetics), p. 60.

6 Potebnia A. A. Iz zapisok po russkoi grammatike. (Notes on Russian Grammar). Vol. I-II. Moscow 1958, p. 15.

The problem of the role of the word in the process of communication was examined through the issue of objectivation of the acts of human consciousness and the problem of understanding, closely connected with the former.

“Thought as internal and fully subjective activity is externalised and lent a certain objectivity in the word. It becomes an external object for itself<sup>7</sup>. This idea was expressed in Potebnia’s “Thought and Language”, “Lecture notes on the theory of literature”, “Lectures on the theory of literature” and other works (the two latter books were published by his students at Kharkov University after his death).

Potebnia poses the question: “What does Man need a word for?” - It is known that composers can write music without playing the piano or singing, there are chess players who play chess without looking at the chess-board and even simultaneously playing several games of chess... There are some domains of human thought which stand beyond language or above it, such as an artist’ or an artisan’s intention, plan, idea that may be expressed only by some definite compositions of forms, colours, sounds... Finally in mathematics -the science which is the most perfect in form- a human being does not need any words and expresses the most complex ideas through conventional signs. This shows that the domain of language is far from identical to the domain of thought<sup>8</sup>.

Then, what does man need a word for?

In a word (in speech activity) “man objectifies his thought. The sound [speech utterance] becomes the sign of thought. In this sense *the word objectifies thought*”<sup>9</sup>.

This does not mean that a word serves as “a means of expressing a ready-made finished thought, because if it were so, if the thought were already formed, what should we objectify it for? We would have been in the place of the chess-player who plays his game not looking at the chess-board. No, the word is a means of transforming impressions for producing a new thought...”.

There is no doubt, Potebnia’s idea is very close to Vygotsky’s view that the thought is not embodied in the word, it is performed, and formed in it. The thought does not merely find expression in speech: it finds its reality and form.

“To our century belongs the discovery, -Potebnia wrote,- that languages signify thoughts only because they are means of transforming primary, non-verbal elements of thought and that is why they may be called means of producing thought”<sup>11</sup>. This idea was repeatedly emphasized in his books and achieved the

7 Potebnia A. A. Estetika i poetika. (Aesthetics and poetics), p. 57.

8 Potebnia A. A. Psikhologija poetičeskogo i prozaičeskogo tvorčestva. (psychology of poetic and prosaic thinking). In Voprosy teorii i psikhologii tvorčestva (Problems of theory and psychology of creativity). Vol. 2, N. 2. Saint-Peterburg 1910, p. 117.

9 Potebnia A. A. Estetika i poetika (Aesthetics and poetics), p. 306.

10 Potebnia A. A. Psikhologija poetičeskogo i prozaičeskogo tvorčestva. (Psychology of poetic and prosaic thinking), p. 117.

11 Potebnia A. A. Estetika i poetika. (Aesthetics and poetics), p.259.

character of an often-cited formula: "Language is not the means of expressing a ready-made thought, it is the way of producing it; it is not a reflection of an already formed outlook (Weltanschauung), it is the activity of forming it"<sup>12</sup>.

The fact that language may be regarded only as a means (or, more exactly, a system of means) for chaining productions of thought and that it cannot be understood as an expression of a ready-made thought (in such a case it could have meaning only for its producer) is further supported, in Potebnia's opinion, by an analysis of the process of understanding that reveals the central importance of the word for the development of thought".

The analysis of the process of understanding was paid much attention in Potebnia's writings and his insights into the problem are promising and relevant today.

"There is a widely held opinion", -he wrote (by the way, this "opinion" was rather common not only in the Nineteenth century, but is rather common even nowadays), - "that man needs a word in order to express his thoughts and to transmit it to another. But is it so, that the thought is transmitted? How can the thought be transmitted? The thought is something that is going on inside the thinking person. How is it possible to transfer something that is going on inside a person to another? Is it possible to take it from one's head and to put it into the other? How can something taking place in one person be transferred to the other and is it exactly this that is transferred?"<sup>13</sup>.

Of course, "understanding as transfer is impossible", but the answer to the problem of understanding, according to A. Potebnia, may be found in a famous saying of Humboldt's "Understanding is at the same time misunderstanding". He cites W. Humboldt: "People understand each other not in such a way that they really pass signs of objects to one another (like the objects used for conversation in the mute kingdom, attended by Gulliver) and not in such a way that they make each other produce one and the same concept, but in such a way that they touch the same link in the chain of perceptual (sensory) representations and concepts, touch the same key of their spiritual instrument, and thus create corresponding but not the identical in each of them"<sup>14</sup>.

The same "*opposition of objectivity and subjectivity*" which "appears at the very birth of the word" is connected, in Potebnia's opinion, with "the other opposition of speech and understanding inseparable from language"<sup>15</sup>. And just as "it is impossible to transfer one's thoughts to the other through words but only possibly wake his own thought, it is also impossible to transfer it through a work of art. That is why the content of the latter (when it is completed) develops not in the artist, but in un-

12 Ibid., p. 171.

13 Ibid., p. 537-538.

14 Ibid., p. 140.

15 Ibid., p. 57.

derstanders"<sup>16</sup>. "What do we transfer to a child who is learning to talk?" - Potebnia asks. And he answers: "Even in those cases when we show a child how to write with a pen we do not transfer anything; we only arouse, only give the other a chance to get an impression that manifests itself in action by inner, almost untraceable ways. The transfer of a word's meaning is even less possible. The meaning is not transferred, and any word repeated by a child does not have any sense for him until he himself connects certain images with it, explains it out of his own perceptions and constituting it as his personal, exclusive property. Moreover, any misunderstanding would be impossible if meanings were given from without, and not created by an understander"<sup>17</sup>.

And now we'll cite the words on the problem of understanding of one of our contemporaries: "A linguistic sign as physical substance does not have any meaning, and a trivial utterance in linguistics 'the transfer of message' is no more than a metaphor leading to delusion. This metaphor connects two different phenomena that ought to be separate. The new information, what is extracted from a speech message, is extracted from a combination of linguistic signs. In their turn, linguistic signs are composed of images and representations, and this content is not transferred, but is activated in a speaker's or listener's mind in the process of perceiving the physical substance of linguistic signs"<sup>18</sup>. Tarasov adds: "The very fact that understanding is not the extraction of some information out of speech but, on the contrary, the encapsulation of information into it - is proved by many cases of ambiguous understanding of speech messages"<sup>19</sup>.

Concluding his insights into the problem of understanding in his "Lectures on the theory of literature" A. Potebnia wrote: "A word produces in the listener a process of producing thought, analogous to the process that had previously taken place in the speaker. In other words, we understand only because the listeners themselves, out of their mental material are capable of doing something that was done by ourselves while speaking. To speak means not to transmit our thought to the other, but to activate - in the other - his own thoughts... Understanding as transfer is impossible"<sup>20</sup>.

Thus, Potebnia placed special emphasis on this aspect of understanding and repeatedly stressed: "Understanding is not the transfer of content from one head to

16 Ibid., p. 181. It is worth noting that this feature of a reader's perception is intuitively felt by an artist. Cf. A. Tarkovsky's words about this process: "Fiction depends on the perceptual experience of a reader. 'War and peace' read and seen by a thousand of readers is a thousand of different books". - Literary Gazette, 26 April, 1989.

17 Potebnia A. A. *Estetika y poetika*. (Aesthetics and poetics), p. 212.

18 Tarasov E. F. *O teorii rechevoi kommunikatsii*. (On the theory of speech communication). In *Theoretical and applied problems of speech communication*. Moscow 1979, p. 36.

19 Ibid.

20 Potebnia A. A. *Estetika y poetika*. (Aesthetics and poetics), pp.540-541.

the other. Owing to a similar composition of human thought, some sign, of a word, or a picture, or a musical sound serves as the means of transforming the other original and independent content in the thoughts of an understander<sup>21</sup>.

Of course, his initial statement of the problem of understanding, that is, W. Humboldt's saying "Understanding is at the same time misunderstanding" - shows the polemic tone characteristic of all his writings. Understanding, according to him, is "a specific act of the emergence of a thought in us stimulated by of the thought of another"<sup>22</sup>. And yet it is precisely this thesis that helps him to understand artist's lament about the inexpressibility of thought ("How shall the heart express itself? How shall another understand?... A thought once uttered is a he" - F. Tjutchev), on the one hand, and explain cases of perfect understanding, on the other.

Both the process of understanding and the process of conversing in A. Potebnia's conception are first of all creative (productive) processes. Misunderstanding is not so much the act of deviation from the speaker's thought, or its distortion as understanding in one's own way - a creative process of "introducing" some personal, subjective experience of one's world view into the perceived word (utterance, text), it is the transfiguration of meaning into sense structures.

It is no coincidence that later, V. N. Voloshinov (M. Bakhtin) stresses: "Every *true understanding is active*"<sup>23</sup>

One pole of the continuum of understanding is perfect understanding between people who live in close psychological contact. In this case the role of speech is reduced to a minimum, and nevertheless understanding takes place without mistakes. The most striking example of this kind was later analyzed by L. Jakubinsky in his article "On the dialogue" (1923) and then by L. Vygotsky in "Thinking and speech" (1934). This example is the declaration of love between Kitty and Levin (heroes of L. Tolstoy's novel "Anna Karenina") by means of initial letters:

"I have long wished to ask you something".

"Please do".

"This", he said, and wrote the initial letters: W y a : i c n b , d y m t o n . These letters meant: "When you answered: it can not be, did you mean then or never?" It seemed impossible that she would be able to understand the complicated sentence.

"I understand", she said, blushing.

"What word is that?" he asked, pointing to the n which stood for "never".

"The word is 'never", she said, "but that is not true". He quickly erased what he had written, handed her the chalk, and rose. She wrote: I c n a o t .

21 Ibid., p. 344.

22 Ibid., p. 558.

23 Voloshinov V. N. Marksizm i filozofia jazyka. (Marxism and philosophy of language). Leningrad 1929, p. 104.

His face brightened suddenly: he had understood. It meant: "I could not answer otherwise then".

She wrote the initial letters: s t y m f a f w h . This meant: "So that you might forget and forgive what happened".

He seized the chalk with tense, trembling fingers, broke it, and wrote the initial letters of the following: "I have nothing to forget and forgive. I never ceased loving you".

"I understand", she whispered. He sat down and wrote a long sentence. She understood it all and, without asking him whether she was right, took the chalk and answered at once. For a long time he could not make out what she had written, and kept looking up into her eyes. His mind was dazed with happiness. He was quite unable to fill in the words she had meant; but in her lovely, radiantly happy eyes he read all that he needed to know. And he wrote down three letters. Before he had finished writing, she was already reading under his hand, and she finished the sentence herself and wrote the answer, "yes". Every tiling had been said in their conversation: that she loved him. and would tell her father and mother that he would call in the morning (Anna Karenina, ch. 13).

This example shows clearly that people in close contact comprehend one another's complicated meanings in laconic but clear communication in even the fewest words. It had an extraordinary psychological interest for both L. Jacubinsky and L. Vygotsky because, like the whole episode between Kitty and Levin, it was taken by L. Tolstoy from his own life. L. Tolstoy also pointed out elsewhere that between people who live in close psychological contact, such communication by means of abbreviated speech is the rule rather than the exception.

"Now Levin was used to expressing his thought fully without troubling to put it into exact words: He knew that his wife , in such moments filled with love, as this one, would understand what he wanted to say from a mere hint, and she did" (Anna Karenina, ch.3).

L. Vygotsky shows that a simplified syntax, and a greatly reduced number of words characterize external speech when the partners know what is going on. In complete contrast to this kind of understanding are the comical mix-ups resulting from people's thoughts going in different directions. The confusion to which this may lead is well rendered in the little poem:

Before the judge who's deaf two deaf men bow.

One deaf man cries: "He led away my cow".

"Beg pardon", says the other in reply.

"That meadow was my father's land in days gone by".

The judge decides: "For you to fight each other is a shame.

Nor one nor the other, but the girl's to blame".

Kitty's conversation with Levin and the trial of three deaf are extreme cases, the two poles, in fact, of external speech. One exemplifies the mutual understanding that can be achieved through utterly abbreviated speech when the subject is the sa-



me in two minds; the other -the total misunderstanding, even with full speech, when people's thoughts wander in different directions. It is not only the deaf who cannot understand one another but any two people who give a different meaning to the same word or who hold divergent views. As Tolstoy noted, those who are accustomed to solitary, independent thinking do not easily grasp another's thought, but people in close contact comprehend one another's complicated meanings by "laconic and clear" communication in the fewest words"<sup>24</sup>.

Having examined abbreviation and elipsis in external speech, Vygotsky compares its character in oral, inner, and written speech.

Communication in writing relies on the formal meanings of words and requires a much greater number of words than oral speech to convey the same idea. It is addressed to an absent person who rarely has in mind the same subject as the writer. Therefore it must be fully developed; syntactic differentiation is at a maximum; and expressions are used that would seem unnatural in conversation. In written speech, as tone of voice and knowledge of subject are excluded, we are obliged to use more words, and to use them more exactly. "Written speech is the most elaborated form of speech"<sup>25</sup>.

The most important issue for future psycholinguists was L. Vygotsky's description of inner speech.

First of all Vygotsky points out that "predication is the natural form of inner speech; psychologically, it consists of predicates only. It is a much a Law of inner speech to omit subjects as it is a law of written speech to contain both subjects and predicates"<sup>26</sup>. When we converse with ourselves, we need even fewer words than Kitty and Levin did. Thus, "inner speech is speech almost without words"<sup>27</sup>.

With syntax and sound reduced to a minimum in inner speech, meaning is more than ever in the forefront, and the syntax of meanings in inner speech is no less original than its grammatical syntax. Vygotsky's research established three main peculiarities of inner speech.

The first and basic one is the predominance of the sense of a word over its referential meaning. The sense in this context "is the sum of all the psychological events aroused in our consciousness by the word. It is a dynamic, fluid, complex whole, which has several zones of unequal stability. Meaning is only one of the zones of sense, the most stable and precise zone. A word acquires its sense from the context in which it appears; in different contexts, it changes its sense. Meaning remains stable throughout the changes of sense. The dictionary meaning of a word is no mo-

24 Vygotsky L. S. *Myshlenie i rech.* (Thinking and speech). Moscow 1934, pp. 294-296. See: Vygotsky L. *Thought and word.* In *Thinking.* Selected readings. Penguin Books, 1972, pp. 180-214.

25 Vygotsky L. S. *Myshlenie i rech.* (Thinking and speech), p. 299.

26 *Ibid.*, pp.300-301.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

re than a stone in the edifice of sense, no more than a potentiality that finds diversified realization in speech”<sup>28</sup>.

This enrichment of words by the sense they gain from the context, according to Vygotsky, is the fundamental law of the dynamics of word meanings. A word in a context means both more and less than the same word in isolation: more, because it acquires new content; less, because its meaning is limited and narrowed by the context. A word derives its sense from the sentence, which in turn gets its sense from the paragraph, the paragraph from the book, the book from all the works of the author<sup>27</sup>.

Thus, in inner speech the predominance of sense over meaning, of sentence over word, and of context over sentence is the rule.

This led Vygotsky to pointing out the two other semantic peculiarities of inner speech. Both concern word combination. “One of them is rather like agglutination -a way of combining words fairly frequent in some languages and comparatively rare in others. Gennan often fonnns one noun out of several words or phrases. In some primitive languages, such adhesion of words is a general rule. When several words are merged into one word, the new word not only expresses a rather complex idea but designates all the separate elements contained in that idea...”<sup>30</sup>.

The third basic semantic peculiarity of inner speech is the way in which senses of words combine and unite -"a process governed by different laws from those governing combinations of meanings... We called it “influx of sense”. The senses of different words flow into one another -literary “influence” one another- so that the earlier ones are contained in, and modify, the later ones. Thus, a word that keeps recurring in a book or a poem sometimes absorbs all the variety of sense contained in it and becomes, in a way, equivalent to the work itself<sup>31</sup>. In inner speech this phenomenon reaches its peak.

So, inner speech in L. Vygotsky’s conception is an autonomus speech function. It is regarded as a distinct plane of verbal thought. It becomes evident that the transition from inner to external speech is not a simple translation from one language to another. It cannot be achieved by merely vocalizing silent speech. It is a complex, dynamic process involving the transformation of the predicative, idiomatic structure of inner speech into syntactically articulated speech intelligible to others.

The problem of the generation of an utterance (in oral or written form) was posed by Vygotsky in his book “Thinking and Speech”; it later became one of the main concerns of Soviet psycholinguistics.

28 Ibid., p. 305.

29 Ibid., p. 307. This idea is very close to A. Polcchia’s reasoning.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., pp. 307-308.

The process of speech generation is complex structure. As one of the aspects of intellectual activity, human speech activity in general (in this case - the processes of the construction of an utterance) may be defined as the organized solution of problems<sup>32</sup>. The problem is understood as a certain situation in which something is presented and something is to be received. The solution of the problem consists in the transfer of that which is presented to that which is to be received and in the construction of an answer; i. e., the problem is defined by a certain goal, given in definite conditions: The process of generation of an utterance (text) begins with an identification of these conditions, contains an analysis of the conditions, a choice of the essential acts and a comparison of them with each other. This preliminary work on the conditions of the problem (which also composes the tentative basis of the intellectual act) lies at the base of the transition from “the perception of the problem through the construction of the meaning to unfolding of the thought itself”<sup>33</sup>

The structuring of the phases of the act of speech was definitively illustrated in the work of A. A. Leontiev and T. V. Pjabova, and also in the joint article of these authors<sup>34</sup> where two stages of the speech act (pre-vocal in the strict sense) are analyzed.

We shall pause for more detail on this phase, or on this stage of generation of the utterance. It may be called the stage of the internal program of the speech act, the stage of inner programming, or the stage of the origin of the general schema (strategy) of the solution, inasmuch as it is precisely at this stage that predication, in the psychological sense, plays a basic role in the construction of the statement as a whole.

The question of psychological predication was first posed, as it was shown earlier in this article, by Vygotsky, for whom predication was “the basic and only form of inner speech”<sup>35</sup>

Following the works of Luria and Rjabova on aphasia and Leontiev’s elaboration of this problem on a theoretical plane we may speak with certainty of the fact that psychological predication is a distillation of the essential characteristics of a given image, as a means of structuring of cognitive content, is a basic function of internal programming. In our view, it is at this stage that the kernel, so to speak, of

32 First mention of this approach to man’s speech activity was made in L. N. Landa’s article: Nekotorye problemy algoritimizatsii i programmirovania v obuchenii inostrannym jazykam. (Some problems of algorithmization and programming in the teaching of foreign languages). In: Inostrannye jazyki v shkole (Foreign languages in the school), 1968, no. 1.

33 Iz neopublikovannykh materialov L. S. Vygot’skogo. (From unpublished materials of L. S. Vygotsky). Psikhologija grammatiki (Psychology of grammar). Moscow 1969, p. 190.

34 Leontiev A. A., Pjabova T. V. Fazovaja struktura rechevogo akta i priroda planov. (Phase structure of the speech act and the nature of plans). In Plany i modeli budushego v rechi (Plans and models of the future in speech). Tbilisi 1970.

35 Vygotsky L. S. Myshlenie i rech. (Thinking and speech), p. 364.

that wholeness which the future product of that complex, many-phased process, the utterance, is formed. Consequently, the stage of the origin of the general plan of the solution plays a decisive role in the achievement of an adequate result. This was convincingly proven in the work of Luria and Tsvetkova, in which the authors showed that when the frontal lobes of the brain are injured, patients (even when instructed to compose a corresponding plan) proved unable to do so and proceeded directly to attempts to complete this or that act not relying upon any general scheme of problem solving and not answering to any clearly formulated plan. Operations, originating with these patients in the process of the solution of a problem, easily splinter off from the given condition of the problem, fall under the influence of peripheral factors, and quickly lose their selective ability. The authors have shown that for another group of patients (the majority with injuries to the parietal-occipital sections of brain), the construction of a general scheme of solution does not present significant difficulties; these patients' basic problems are connected with the subsequent realization of this program, which is impossible as a result of errors in the completion of separate operations and the retention of all elements of the problem<sup>36</sup>.

At present there remains the question of the discovery of the internal structure of the program (plan) and in particular, the question of the "special ordering, independent of the real sentences, and the appearance of their components" of the future utterance. It is apparently possible to suggest that at this stage of generation, the internal structure of the program (more correctly the order of succession of semantic components) is the same among speakers of different languages and that only at the following stage of generation (which, as we noted above, is destroyed in patients with parietal-occipital brain injuries), at the stage of grammatical structuring, the formulation of the utterance begins in accordance with the rules of the given language. In connection with this the question of the necessity of carrying out psycholinguistic experiments on the generation of the utterance with materials of various languages acquires an especially important significance, inasmuch as the concrete means of the realization of the intent to speak in different languages are practically uninvestigated.

One of the possible approaches to this problem may be the comparative-typological approach. In this case, I have in mind not a "typology of systems" or a "typology of texts" or even a "typology of speech", but a typology of methods of concrete realization of linguistic systems for communicative purposes and the laws and variants of this realization. A typology thus understood is a typology of speech acts, and the area of its investigation is the comparison of methods of linguistic embodiment of the very same communicative intents. The problem of the construction of

36 Luria A. R., Tsvetkova L. S. *Neiropsikhotogicheskii analiz reshenia problem. (Neuropsychological analysis of the solution of problems)*, Moscow 1966.

an utterance, or at the first stage the investigation of the dominant devices, different in principle, of the construction of an utterance, must occupy a fundamental place in this typology, for it is precisely at this stage of grammatical structuring that the linguistic formulation of a thought according to the rules of a given language begins.

For the Russian language the morpho-syntactic method is dominant: in order to achieve a fully adequate utterance, it is necessary to construct it in accordance with the rules of formal syntax and syntactic morphology. On the other hand, the lexical-syntactic principle, i. e., the method of linear combination of lexical items, which acts only in those cases in which the morpho-syntactic method is for some reason not applicable, is subordinate to this dominant principle. But for languages of the Chinese or Vietnamese type it is precisely this lexical-syntactic method which is dominant. There are languages in which a third method is dominant -the positional method for which the lexical class of combinable words plays a much smaller role. Even a fourth method is possible- the affixing method in which indices of different types are affixed to names and words of other grammatical classes with the aim of designating the syntactic function of the word. None of these methods is the only method of the construction of utterances available to any language; it is almost always possible to point to the dominance of one of them. Naturally, the linguistic concept of predicativity, worked out with materials of one language (in this case, Russian), does not “work” all at for other languages, inasmuch as variance in the mode of construction of utterances extends far beyond the bounds of formal grammatical divergence.

In connection with this, we must consider the questions of the “word in its natural habitat, the utterance” (A. A. Potebnia), of the discovery of the realization of the particular meanings of a linguistic entity with more than one meaning, and of the clarification of the very principles of “cementing” of an utterance. This line of thought, noted in the words of Potebnia, receives its clearest expression in the general grammatical model, suggested by S.I. Bernstein<sup>37</sup> in which he clearly showed that essential syntactic variation between languages is observed precisely in the feature of the relation of a word to the sentence; that a word in different languages has a different specific weight in the sentence. Due to the fact that different languages have different methods of organization of an utterance, the concept of the parts of the sentence, as syntactic categories, has a completely different meaning in different languages.

The problem of parts of speech is also closely connected with this. Traditionally grammar proceeds from presupposition that all words of a given language from the very start are without exception distributed according to grammatical classes (cf. the traditional “association” in Russian linguistics of logical predicativity with ver-

37 Bernstein S. I. Sintaksis(Syntax), Chleny predlozhenia (Parts of the Sentence). Chasti rechi (Parts of Speech), In Bolshaiia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedija (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia), second edition.

bality or with grammatical predicativity) which is not applicable to other languages. But it is not possible to distribute words according to parts of speech - the very concept of "parts of speech" has in other languages another content (cf. for example, the Chinese and Vietnamese languages, in which a division of words into non-intersecting classes is impossible).

A departure beyond the bounds of a strictly linguistic examination of the facts of one language shows that concepts worked out with materials of only one given language (for example the concept of predicativity, the concept of parts of speech, etc.) are often completely inapplicable to other languages and that these concepts must be re-examined from the point of view of the theory of speech activity based on material from a variety of languages. When the process of man's use of language in the generation of a verbal utterance is examined, problems arise which bear witness to the fact that the study of the sentence may not be simply reduced to the analysis of its formal grammatical structure. In this article I have shown some of the issues of Soviet psycholinguistics - the problem which were posed in the works of one of the greatest Russian linguists of the XIX-the century A. Potebnia and the works of the eminent Russian psychologist L. Vygotsky.

These problems are relevant both for the theory of speech activity and language teaching. Every teacher of language should at least have a notion of the problem of language functioning in a human being.