



EDWARD SAPIR AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE LINGUISTIC ETHNOGRAPHY.

Yuldasheva Dilshoda Musayevna

Researcher at

Samarkand state university

dilshoda.yu@mail.ru

Abstract:

This article discusses the issue of cognitive-orientative and communicative-orientative ethno linguistics. The ideas and views of the American scientist, linguist, anthropologist Edward Sapir on ethnographic linguistics are also discussed. Various examples of ethno cultures are given and compared with each other. Besides the article open up the epic perspective by considering the experiential, aesthetic, emotional, moral and ethical value people bring while communicating with each other.

Key words:

Cognitive, ethno linguistics, perspective, cognitive issues, reflection, studies, USA, Japan, tradition, relation, observed reality.

- Introduction

Ethno linguistics evolved as a separate field in the United States throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Within the framework of the so-called "cultural anthropology" (or, according to the American tradition, "anthropology" itself, from the Greek *ánthropos* 'man') - a complex science whose subject is the comprehensive study of culture using ethnographic, linguistic, archaeological, and other methods.

As a result, in works focusing on the American tradition, instead of the term "ethnolinguistics" (or in conjunction with it), the term "anthropological linguistics" is frequently used for studies primarily concerned with cognitive issues, or the term "linguistic anthropology" for studies primarily concerned with communicative issues.

The use of the term "anthropology" in the American scientific tradition should not be confused with the use of this term in Russia and many European countries, where anthropology is understood primarily as "physical anthropology" - the science of the origin and evolution of man, the study of variations in the physical structure of man using descriptive and measuring techniques. Most of the problems that, according to the American tradition, are dealt with by "cultural anthropology", the Russian and partly European traditions consider to be related to "ethnography".

- Material

Initially, cultural anthropology was focused on the study of the culture of peoples who differed sharply from European ones, primarily the American Indians. It was the languages of the American Indians, which do not have a written tradition, that for a long time were the main object of study of ethnolinguistics, and both the establishment of family ties between these languages and the description of their modern state were subordinated primarily to the task of a comprehensive description of the culture of these peoples and the reconstruction of their history, including the ways migration.

The recording and interpretation of texts, everyday and folklore, was an integral component of anthropological description. At the same time, it turned out that traditional principles and methods of linguistic description, convenient for European languages, turned



out to be unsuitable for “exotic” languages. Difficulties associated with the Eurocentricity of the initial linguistic attitudes of researchers arose when establishing the sound composition of Indian languages, and when compiling dictionaries, and when describing their grammar.

Therefore, from its very inception, ethnolinguistics focused on the search for principles and methods of linguistic description that would be based on the universal properties of human languages, would allow them to adequately reflect the similarities and differences of languages of different types, and present data from languages of different types in a comparable form. This explains the interest of ethnolinguistics in questions about the extent to which a person’s linguistic ability is innate and universal, and to what extent it is a reflection and embodiment of a specific cultural reality.

- *Discussion*

This is followed naturally by questions about the extent to which the perception of the surrounding world is universal for speakers of any languages and cultures, and to what extent it develops under the influence of the lexical and grammatical specifics of a particular language. The solution to these questions is directly related to the central concept of “linguistic relativity” for ethnolinguistics.

The idea of linguistic relativity was first expressed in the works of the founder of ethnolinguistics, the outstanding American anthropologist Franz (aka France) Boas (1858–1942) and his student Edward Sapir (1884–1939), but the most refined and polemically sharpened formulation of the relevant ideas was in the form of the principle of linguistic relativity (by direct and deliberate analogy with Albert Einstein’s principle of relativity) this concept received in the works of Sapir’s student, Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941).

According to the principle of linguistic relativity, the so-called “picture of the world” of the speaker (the way the speaker perceives the world around him) depends not only and not so much on the observed reality, but on the classification grid that a particular language with its grammar and vocabulary imposes on the speaker. Whorf’s famous example concerns the different functions of numerals in the American Indian language Hopi (the Uto-Aztecan branch of the Tano-Uto-Aztecan languages; spoken by several thousand people in northeastern Arizona), on the one hand, and in English, which belongs to the group, called by Whorf the languages of the “Central European standard”, on the other.

The concept of “Central European standard languages”, English. Standard Average European, SAE, has firmly entered into scientific use and is widely used in modern linguistics and outside of ethnolinguistics, in particular in linguistic typology. Russian is also one of the languages of the Central European standard.) In languages of the Central European standard, Whorf notes, cardinal numerals can be combined both with the names of physical, observable objects, and with abstract names denoting periods of time or cyclical, repeating events. In other words, using the same cardinal form, we can say both ten people and ten days (bell strikes, steps).

In the Hopi language, cardinal numbers are combined only with physical objects, i.e. such, the number of which can be simultaneously observed by the speaker; abstract names, denoting periods of time or repeating events, can only be combined with ordinal numbers: ten people, but the tenth day (strike of a bell, step). According to Whorf, this means that in the European picture of the world, each individual period of time or recurring event appears as individual instances that exist in reality independently of each other, but can be combined into a group, like many simultaneously observed objects. It is assumed that these kinds of



differences in pictures of the world are imposed on the speaker by language - in this case, for example, by strict rules for the use of numerals.

Despite the deliberate polemical formulations, both Whorf and his predecessors Boas and Sapir did not absolutize linguistic and cultural relativism. Rather, they considered it a priority for ethnolinguistics to study the differences, rather than the similarities, between pictures of the world in different languages and cultures - of course, recognizing the common biological and psychological foundations of human linguistic and mental capabilities.

Sapir's work "Language," the most popular of his works, is not entirely indicative of the later evolution of the views of the American linguist. In this book, Sapir also argued that "since there is no evidence to suggest the existence of noticeable racial differences in the structure of human thought, the infinite variety of linguistic form, the other side of the infinite variety of the actual process of thought, cannot be an indicator of these racial differences."

It is not without interest to note that specifically the linguistic part of Sapir's system and his method of structural analysis, which is revealed specifically in chapters III, IV, V and partly VI of the work "Language," had a much lesser influence on American linguistics than Bloomfield's method of analysis. It is significant in this regard that the authors of the popular pamphlet "Essay on Linguistic Analysis" B. Block and G. Trager, despite the fact that they call Sapir "one of the greatest of all linguists", their examples of linguistic analysis is still built according to the principles of Bloomfield, and not Sapir.

Of course, American phonology owes a lot to the latter, but still, basically, modern American descriptive linguistics developed under the influence of Bloomfield, and not Sapir. Sapir's "legacy" found its implementation in the direction we conventionally call "ethnographic linguistics" (ethnolinguistics), where his most reactionary ideas, expressed by him in the monograph "Language" and especially in his later works, were used. These ideas of Sapir found support in the views of the notorious "creators" of English Ogden and Richards, and in the linguistic constructions of the racist ethnographer B. Malinovsky.

An example of research in the universalist direction in ethnolinguistics is the classic works of A. Vejbitskoy, devoted to the principles of describing linguistic meanings. The goal of many years of research by Vejbitskoy and her followers is to establish a set of so-called "semantic primitives," universal elementary concepts, by combining which each language can create an infinite number of configurations specific to a given language and culture. Semantic primitives are lexical universals, in other words, these are elementary concepts for which in any language there is a word denoting them.

The most significant results in communicatively oriented ethnolinguistics are associated with the direction called "ethnography of speech" or "ethnography of communication" (D. Himes, J. Gumperz, etc.). Within the framework of this direction, models of speech behavior accepted in a particular culture, in a particular ethnic or social group are studied.

So, for example, in the culture of the "Central European standard", an informal conversation between several people assumes, according to the rules of good manners accepted in this community, that the participants will not interrupt each other, everyone is given the opportunity to speak in turn, and the person who wants to speak usually signals this (for example, with words, let notice, let me ask, etc.), someone who wants to leave the conversation announces his intention (unfortunately, I have to go, I have to leave for a while), and so on. However, European norms of speech etiquette are by no means universal.

Along with the study of codified, normative speech behavior, a favorite topic in the ethnography of communication is the linguistic expression of the relative social status of interlocutors: the rules of addressing the interlocutor, including the use of titles, addresses by name, surname, first name and patronymic (in those languages where such address is available), professional addresses (for example, “doctor” or military ranks), the appropriateness of addresses “in your name” and “in your name,” etc. Particular attention is paid to languages in which the relationship between the social position of the speaker and the listener is fixed not only in vocabulary, but also in grammar.

An example is the Japanese language, where the choice of the grammatical form of the verb depends on whether the listener is higher than the speaker in the social hierarchy or below, and also on whether the speaker and listener belong to the same social unit (one collective) or not (i.e. whether the listener is a “friend” or a “stranger” for the speaker). In addition, not only the relationship between the speaker and the listener is taken into account, but also the relationship between the speaker and the person being spoken about.

- **Conclusion**

In addition, not only the relationship between the speaker and the listener is taken into account, but also the relationship between the speaker and the person being spoken about. As a result of the complex effect of these restrictions, the same person uses different forms of the verb when addressing a subordinate and when addressing a superior, when addressing a co-worker and when addressing a stranger, when addressing his wife and his neighbor’s wife, etc.

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