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Igor ROMAN,
Chernivsti National University named
after by Yuri Fedkovych,
Chernivtsi (Ukraine),
i.roman@chnu.edu.ua
Lilia ROMAN,
Bukovinian State Medical University,
Chernivtsi (Ukraine)
liliya.roman@ukr.net

**RETHINKING
THE HERMENEUTIC CONTENTS
OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL
LINGUISTICS**

Ключові слова: антропологічна лінгвістика,
культурна антропологія, герменевтика, прагматика.

Ігор Роман, Лілія Роман. Переосмислення герменевтичного контенту антропологічної лінгвістики

В статті досліджується переосмислення еволюції герменевтичного контенту в антропологічній лінгвістиці. Автори представляють аналіз нових перспектив антропологічних та герменевтичних досліджень в сучасній лінгвістиці.

Languages are studied or taught in the modern university at all faculties and colleges regardless of their professional orientation or scientific specialization. Whereas the pragmatic aspect of language as means of communication is beyond discussion, questions arrive concerning language as a psychological habitat, as a means of formation and expression of person's world outlook, regulator of social motives and energies. As usual, scientists of non-philological disciplines take interest in language as a kind of universal instrument of coordination and organization of collective creative effort. Most often the attention of learners and teachers is focused on lexical and grammatical issues or rhetorical drills. Yet, the today's fever of language teaching technologies should not overshadow the educative and regulative potential of language in the personal and social life. Language is not a mere instrument of communication but also a powerful means of organization of intellectual and psychophysical energies both on individual and social level. Here we come to questions of studying language as an attribute of human nature. In this respect the practical and the theoretical field of anthropological linguistics may be essentially modified, taking into consideration the technical and theoretical progress of modern sciences such as medicine, psychology and sociology. The new technical and theoretical achievements have opened the door to new approaches in investigating the human body and psychology. The new technological level of investigation of the human body as well as the amount of information about socio-cultural environments of the human creatures provokes reconside-

ration of the traditional linguistic paradigms as a serious part of humanistic inquiry.

Definition of the search problem. Anthropological linguistics is traditionally considered as a field of anthropology. In the publications within the field, predominantly language was considered as an important means of investigations of social organization and mentality of the non European cultures and societies. Yet, most of the theoretical potential of anthropological approach in linguistics and other humanitarian disciplines has not been realized. On the present stage of development linguistics in general and the anthropological linguistics in particular it tends to be a science of facts rather than a science of regularities. According to the well known Hegel's dialectic law, the amount of field material and empirical facts sooner or later gives forth to quantitative leap but this qualitative increment is impossible without restructuring of the intentional structure and of the intellectual contexts of the anthropological discourse.

Within anthropological discourse the linguistic aspect of investigation is gaining a lot of advantages as compared to traditional philology. First of all, this is taking place because anthropology is gaining force as one of the most influential approaches to interdisciplinary research of human creatures in their social, biological and cultural surroundings. As soon as social and philosophical ideas of anthropology are intertwined with historical, psychological and sociological concepts, the linguistic research is getting more space and more dimensions for its prag-

matic functions as well as for methodological and ontological reflection of language and speech. At the same time, the new interdisciplinary integration demands adaptation of the intentional structure of scientific quest to the properties of the subject of investigation. According to tradition, tracing back to Franz Boas anthropological linguistics regarded language as an integral part of culture, it is presupposed that a good anthropologist needs to understand or speak the language of the culture one is studying. Yet, even those anthropologists who did not think of language or culture in evolutionary terms were far from using the whole heuristic potential of language as source of information about human intellectual and phenomenological experience. The reason for this is rooted in the intellectual context and intentional structure of anthropological investigation. Many anthropologists believed that there was no correlation nor between language and culture neither between language and race, thus the linguistic aspect of research had been constantly underestimated, or negatively influenced by many prejudices and expectations of anthropology, especially by those connected with biology and other natural sciences. Another aspect of the problem is heuristic evaluation of hermeneutics as an anthropologically minded approach to language.

The approaches worked out in hermeneutics and anthropological linguistics have much in common. First of all, both of them have to do with facts and symbols of other cultures or historical epochs, and what is more, both the hermeneutic and anthropological traditions presuppose not just how to understand texts or cultures but really how to engage with them.

The hermeneutic trends to be discussed can be traced back both in the pragmatic and semantic tradition of anthropology, linguistics, sociology, history and other humanitarian fields, such as cognitive linguistics, speech acts, discourse, critical discourse analysis, generative semantics, and other. In the field of sociology the hermeneutic trend would develop of Weberian interpretive, historical sociology on the European continent and around the axes of the Anglophone world, exemplified in the works of British structural functionalism or sociology in the United States.

As to anthropological linguistics the “hermeneutic turn” in it correlates with various theoretical and pragmatic quests engaged in the social critique of language in religion, education, economics, justice, medicine, and other kinds of controlling social instances. Hermeneutic ideas can be traced in the works of Franz Boas, Sapir, Benjamin Whorf, Roman Jakobson, Dell Hymes, and John Gumperz, J.R. Firth, Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, Stuart Hall, Emile Benveniste, Roland Barthes,

Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Marx, Weber, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Jurgen Habermas, Antonio Gramsci, Mikhail Bakhtin, Duranti and other authors.

One of the interesting problems of the evolution of hermeneutic content in social anthropology is the fact that anthropologists had their own way to the approaches akin to hermeneutic and phenomenologic ones. Among them, first of all, there should be mentioned the anthropological surveys of Edward Sapir. Although many of the theoretical ideas or hypothesis of Sapir later on were rejected, the hermeneutic content of his retrieval was preserved and developed by Sapir’s students Stanley Newman and Mary Haas who passed the hermeneutic ideas to the next generation of anthropologists, whose representatives included John Gumperz and Dell Hymes.

The hermeneutic content of the linguistic anthropology of the last decades of the XX-th century along with Sapir’s ideas integrated the semiotic approach by Franz Boas, Charles Sanders Peirce and Roman Jakobson. Although the term “hermeneutics” could hardly be found within the texts of North American linguistic anthropologists, the titles of their publications as well as the key concepts were very close in their meaning to the hermeneutical ones. This was especially characteristic of theories of communication, like “ethnography of speaking” or for the interpretive, contextual, or (neo-)pragmatic turn in the social sciences. The hermeneutic trends in anthropological linguistics showed themselves by locating language squarely at the intersection of history, ideology, and practice. The anthropologists, as usually, were focusing on the historic, ideological, and pragmatic aspects of language, however along with positivist traditional approaches included not only grammar, but also contextualization, language change and variation. While analyzing cultural ideologies and practices (such as modernization, linguistic nationalism and imperialism, language purism, standardization, feminism and gender, etc) the anthropologists tended to consider their problems through the prism of sociocultural context, trying to interpret the local sociocultural meanings in a wider ontological context. By the end of the XX-th century both North American and British schools of anthropology were inclined to study language as personal and social identity, and language as a space for meaning production, daily face to face uses of language from the point of view akin to the methodological concepts “ERLEBNIS”, “ZUSAMMENHANG”, “LEBENSÄUSSERUNGEN”, “NACHERLE-

BEN”, “*HINEINVERSETZEN*” worked out in the hermeneutic philosophy of V. Dilthey.

In terms of modern anthropological linguistics the Dilthean concepts first of all correlate with the analytical notion of presence. One of the main points in anthropological linguistics relevant to Dilthey’s hermeneutic approach is the recognition of the fact that to be a speaker of a language means to be a member of a speech community. To be a competent speaker of a language means then to be able to do things with that language as part of larger social activities which are culturally organized and must be culturally interpreted. The notions of communicative event, speech event, and speech activity are some of the notions relevant to hermeneutic experience, described in Dilthey’s aesthetic investigations. The mentioned above Dilthey’s concepts point to the spheres of communication where speaking is seen above all as a social activity involving always more than linguistic expressions.

G. Gadamer, who mentioned in his “Truth and Method” Dilthey more than 330 times, finds the concept “*ERLEBNIS*” to be a crucial one in Dilthey’s hermeneutics. According to Gadamer, Dilthey’s concept of *Erlebnis* clearly contains two elements, the pantheistic and the positivist, the experience (*Erlebnis*) and still more its result (*Erlebnis*). This is not an accident, but a result of Dilthey’s intermediate position between speculation and empiricism. Since he is concerned to legitimate the work of the human sciences epistemologically, he is dominated throughout by the question of what is truly given. Thus his concepts are motivated by this epistemological purpose or rather by the needs of epistemology itself—needs reflected in the linguistic process analyzed above.

Gadamer writes: “The spiritual creations of the past, art and history, no longer belong self-evidently to the present; rather, they are given up to research, they are data or givens (*Gegebenheiten*) from which a past can be made present. Thus the concept of the given is also important in Dilthey’s formulation of the concept of *Erlebnis*.”¹

In this point the anthropological principle of presence is very close to Dilthey’s interpretation of the concept of “experience” is the special nature of the given in the human sciences. Following Descartes’ formulation of the *res cogitans*, he defines the concept of experience by reflexivity, by inferiority, and on the basis of this special mode of being given he tries to construct an epistemological justification for knowledge of the historical world. As Gadamer notes: “The primary data, to which the interpretation of historical objects goes back, are not data of experiment and measurement but unities of meaning.”² That is what the concept of experience

states: the structures of meaning we meet in the human sciences, however strange and incomprehensible they may seem to us, can be traced back to ultimate units of what is given in consciousness, unities which themselves no longer contain anything alien, objective, or in need of interpretation. These units of experience are themselves units of meaning. Thus the hermeneutic experience of a scientist is something that proves to be important in quite pragmatic situations of sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics. A vivid example of pragmatic use of the mentioned hermeneutic experience is given in the book by Charles Briggs “Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research” where he wrote: “I committed in research with Mexicanos ... I simply assumed that a knowledge of Standard Spanish, a research project that proved acceptable to the couple and their community, and the development of a friendship would enable me to begin interviewing. I similarly believed that interviews would provide the best means of gaining social-cultural and sociolinguistic competence ... Because I was ignorant of the community’s oral traditions and lacked command of any of the requisite pragmatic skills, the elders had no choice but to regain control of the interaction by breaking the interview frame”.³

As it appears the common questions of interest of hermeneutics and linguistic anthropology are not only within the lexicology and syntaxes but also in the extralinguistic spheres of socio-cultural contexts. Since life objectifies itself in structures of meaning, all understanding of meaning consists in translating the objectifications of life back into the spiritual life from which they emerged. Thus the concept of experience is the epistemological basis for all knowledge of the objective. As it was noticed in the above mentioned quotation of Briggs, investigations in the field of anthropological linguistics in many cases approved the hermeneutic methods: they circumscribed the ideal of constructing knowledge of language from atoms of sensation represented in the traditional vocabularies. Thus, both in the hermeneutic epistemology of the human sciences and in anthropological linguistics we find a concept of life that restricts the mechanistic model. These hermeneutic aspects of anthropological linguistics have been analyzed in the works by J. J. Gumperz and D. Hymes. As to the difference between academic linguistic knowledge of language and the “*ERLEBNIS*” type of linguo-cultural

knowledge of here is a quotation from Hymes's "Sociolinguistics":

"We have ... to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct".⁴

The important constitutive concepts, structures and meanings revealed by hermeneutics and anthropological linguistics within the communicative process exceed the frames of traditional linguistic stuff. As a result, on the one hand, the aspects of communication in the focus of hermeneutic and anthropological linguistics do not belong to linguistics in its traditional meaning. And on the other hand, it would not be quite correct to define these communicative processes as extra linguistic. In hermeneutic tradition these structures are traditionally associated with G.Gadamer's concept of "prejudice", or M.Heidegger's "fore-structure of understanding", Dilthey's concept of the structural quality of the life of spirit, Husserl's theory of the intentionality of consciousness or intentional structure and significance.

Alessandro Duranti derives the above mentioned tendencies of anthropological linguistics from poststructuralist interpretation of culture in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Among the basic intentions of this movement the author mentions rethinking some basic assumptions of the structuralist paradigm, including the idea that there is a one-to-one correspondence between a meaning and its expression, interest in multiculturalism and transnational communities. According to A.Duranti it is not by accident that poststructuralism originates in France, especially in the writings of scholars like Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida. Postwar French intellectuals had been strongly influenced by Martin Heidegger's philosophy and this philosophy can be seen as at the heart of the poststructuralist agenda, regardless of its different versions and beyond its criticism of Heideggerian thought.⁵

At the same time linguo-philosophical ideas of M.Heidegger, G.Gadamer, P.Ricoeur, and other prominent representatives of hermeneutic thought were not so often mentioned in the publications of anthropologists of the XX century. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that hermeneutics was too

often engaged in ideological, philosophical and theological discourses, while anthropology was focused on fieldwork. Boas, Sapir, and Whorf on the one hand and Bloomfield, Kroeber, and Voegelin on the other stressed upon the pragmatic and experimental side of sociolinguistic or linguo-cultural investigations. Their methodological intention to avoid metaphysical and teleological statements is an additional evidence of the objective presence of hermeneutic content in anthropological linguistics, as many of the specialists on this field arrived to conclusions very similar with Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology. In the course of their field investigations of language and communicative habituses of the societies, anthropologists realized that human relationships with the world cannot easily be represented with the analytical tools used by social scientists who are experts at isolating elements from their contexts, existential where objects are encountered as pragmatically useful, situations are experienced in the context of particular attitudes or "moods," and people are beings to be-with. In this regard the pragmatic bias of anthropological linguistics has a resonance in M.Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, especially in his later works, like "Being and Time". While reasoning about Heidegger's linguo-philosophy Hubert L. Dreyfus⁶ insists that in Being and Time Heidegger seeks to undermine the Cartesian tradition of the priority of knowledge over practice. Indeed, at first it looks as though Heidegger seeks simply to invert this tradition by arguing that detached contemplation is parasitical on everyday involvement. By Dreyfus's idea Heidegger seems to be saying that the detached, meaning-giving, knowing subject, still at the center of Husserlian phenomenology, must be replaced by an involved, meaning-giving, doing subject. Hence the traditional for the philosophy of Modernity rational thinking Subject - identified by Descartes, Kant, and Husserl - is not the exclusive or privileged source of our understanding of the world. Not only Gadamer and Ricoeur but also many of the leading specialists of linguistically oriented social disciplines were inclined to extend Heidegger's reasoning to contemporary social science and came to realize that binary oppositions and propositional knowledge are not enough to explain the anthropological mechanisms of socio-cultural experience of the world.

In his "Basic problems of Phenomenology" M.Heidegger wrote: "All practical-technical commerce with beings is also a comportment toward beings. ... In all comportment toward

beings – whether it is specifically cognitive, which is most frequently called theoretical, or whether it is practical-technical – an understanding of being is already involved. For a being can be encountered by us as a being only in the light of the understanding of being... Self and world belong together in the single entity, Dasein. Self and world are not two entities, like subject and object ... but self and world are the basic determination of Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world.”⁷

Many of the linguistically minded anthropologists of the second half of XX century fell under the influence of Heidegger's intuitions about the existential roots of human knowledge and human understanding of the life-world, his interpretation of the inextricable relationship between knowledge and action-in-the-world, past and present conditions. Among the ideas inspired by Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology is the approach in which objects of knowledge are constructed (not passively reflected or imprinted) within a system of dispositions constituted and always oriented towards practical functions.

The important perspective of hermeneutic trends in anthropological linguistics is based on an approach that considers language not as an autonomous system – but as a system that is actively defined by sociopolitical and aesthetic processes, including not only development of literature but also juridical and educational discourses. One of the attractive features of hermeneutic discourse in anthropology is that language in hermeneutics is never treated without taking into consideration the social conditions that allow its existence. A language here is interpreted a set of practices that imply not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also an often “forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating, with particular systems of classification, address and reference forms, specialized lexicons, and metaphors (for politics, medicine, ethics)... Words carry in them a myriad possibilities for connecting us to other human beings, other situations, events, acts, beliefs, feelings.”⁸

Hence the mentioned above facts and ideas show the evolution of hermeneutic content within the history of anthropology in general and anthropological linguistics in particular. Yet the influence of both paradigms is reciprocal. The drawbacks and prejudices of hermeneutic interpretation of language and culture could be cured to a great extent in case of hermeneutic collaboration with anthropological linguistics. The pragmatic approach worked out in cultural anthropology makes it possible to measure words with deeds and align emotions with symbolic and behavioral performances — judge the idea by its consequences. Many anthropologists

noticed, hermeneutics is underestimating the role of body in the mind-body language triangle. In this respect we cannot but support the position of sociologist Dmitri N. Shalin who suggests that: “interpretation in the pragmatist key pursues the reverse distancing which realigns the linguistic forms with the somatic-affective and behavioral-agentive signs. What phenomenological hermeneutics dismisses as “noise” obscuring “universal meaning,” pragmatists treat as a sign of indeterminacy and a signal of repressed affectivity occluded by the dominant textual practices”.⁹

Analysis of positive influence of anthropological linguistics upon hermeneutics is a matter of a separate publication. Yet in short terms it should be said that the pragmatic bias of anthropological linguistics stimulates to consider the linguistic content in a wider ontological dimension. In the anthropological dimensions while interpreting words with deeds, deeds with moods, moods with discursive outputs, and so the reflexion of interpreters own prejudices (affective, somatic, agentive, discursive) is stimulated.

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Roman I., Roman L. REPENSE DE CONTENU HERMENEUTIQUES DE LA LINGUISTIQUE ANTHROPOLOGIQUE

L'article retrace l'évolution du contenu herméneutique en linguistique anthropologique. Les auteurs présente l'analyse des nouvelles perspectives d'approche anthropologique et herméneutique dans la linguistique moderne.

Mots clés: *la linguistique anthropologique, l'anthropologie culturelle, l'herméneutique, pragmatique.*

Роман И., Роман Л. ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЕНИЕ ГЕРМЕНЕВТИЧЕСКОГО КОНТЕНТА АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИНГВИСТИКИ

В статье исследуется переосмысление эволюции герменевтического контента в антропологической лингвистике. Авторы представляют анализ новых перспектив антропологических и герменевтических исследований в современной лингвистике.

Ключевые слова: *антропологическая лингвистика, культурная антропология, герменевтика, прагматика.*