

THEOLINGUISTICS AS A NEW BRANCH OF GENERAL LINGUISTICS

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The development of modern general linguistics is characterized by the growth of scholarly interest in the language study and its close connection with the human cognition and thinking process, the cultural and spiritual life of a person. Modern linguists (A. Wierzbicka, S. G. Vorkachyov, V. A. Maslova, N. B. Mechkovskaya, V. I. Postovalova, Yu. S. Stepanov) indicate the close relationship between language and religion, the need for studies of the religious worldview and the religious consciousness with the purpose of in-depth study of the culture and world's perception of a nation, which is especially important within the dominant anthropocentric paradigm of linguistics.

Material and methods. The methodological basis of the research is as follows: the works of local and foreign linguists on the problem of the relationship between language and religion: "Language and Religion" by N. B. Mechkovskaya, "Russian theolinguistics: history, main directions of research" by A. K. Gadomskiy; "Theolinguistics in modern human cognition: its origin, main ideas and trends" by V. I. Postovalova; "Language and Religion" by D. Crystal; "Theolinguistics" by J.-P. van Noppen; "Metaphor and Religion (Theolinguistics II)" by J.-P. van Noppen and others.

The descriptive research method and the method of organization of theoretical material have been used in this paper.

Results and discussion. According to N. B. Mechkovskaya, language and religion are the two forms of the world representation in the human cognition, the two elements of the human soul, the two deepest interrelated fundamentals of the human culture [1, p. 4]. The main source of human culture is rooted in religion and language; religion is an area of increased attention to the word, the language issues have always been of vital importance within the history of religions [ibid. p. 4-5].

The resolution of this complex and multidisciplinary problem of the relationship between language and religion has become possible within a mainstream of a new linguistic branch, known as *theolinguistics*.

In 1981, the Belgian linguist Jean-Pierre van Noppen defined *theolinguistics* as a discipline, that "seeks to describe how human discourse may be employed to refer to the divine, and beyond that, how language operates in 'religious' situations in manners which may not meet the narrow standards of direct, univocal reference, but which nevertheless operates with a logic which can be demarcated in terms of known linguistic processes (metaphor, speech acts, ...)" [2, p. 693].

Thanks to the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language edited by David Crystal, where it is defined as a discipline investigating biblical and theological language and the language of all who are involved in the theory and practice of religious belief [3, p. 438], *theolinguistics* gradually began to develop in German general linguistics. Various issues relating to religious language, such as *German religious vocabulary, speech acts* and etc., have been discussed in the articles of German scholars (H. Moser, W. Gossmann, I. Schermann, A. Shufte).

The formation and the development of *theolinguistics* as a new scientific branch was extended in the publications of J.-P. van Noppen (Belgium), D. Crystal (The UK), E. Kucharska-Dreiß (Poland), K. Koncharevich (Serbia), A. K. Gadomskiy (The Ukraine), V. I. Postovalova (Russia) and some other scholars.

Russian and foreign linguists (A. K. Gadomskii, V. I. Postovalova, K. Koncharevich) define *theolinguistics* (from the Greek. *theos* - God and lat. *lingua* - language) as a discipline emerged from the interaction and mutual influence of language and religion and that explores manifestations of religion, which have been fixed and reflected in the language itself [4, p. 63-69]. Moreover, V. I. Postovalova clarifies *theolinguistics* a special kind of a linguistic discipline, that "has been complicated by the addition of religious and theological aspects of the world- and reality- perception" [5]. Whereas the main purpose of *theolinguistics* is focused on the understanding of how the language functions in different "religious contexts" or "religious situations" (J.-P. van Noppen, D. Crystal, A. Wagner), as well as on the study of the so-called "religious language" (A. K. Gadomskii, E. Kucharska-Dreiß, K. Koncharevich), its subject is beyond the scope of pure linguistics: it requires the use of different types of knowledge (scientific and religious) and "the combination of two different forms of mentalities – scientific and theological – at the lead character of the first one" [ibid].

According to A. K. Gadomskiy, the term "theolinguistics" "consists of two components, that, on the one hand, imply the existence of two autonomous fields of knowledge (Religious Studies and Linguistics), and on the other hand, require their possible combination" [4, p. 68]. Thus, a theological component includes a range of sciences: Religious Studies, Theology, History of Religion, Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethnology, Geography of Religion, Ecology of Religion, Psychology of Religion, Phenomenology of Religion, etc. A linguistic component is represented by the following approaches: the language is considered as a system of signs (a semiotic approach); as a cultural code of a nation (a linguocultural approach); as a phenomenon, encompassing various spheres of human existence (a pragmatic approach); as an ontological, synergetic-pneumatological beginning and spiritual energy (a theoanthropocosmic approach).

Conclusion. In consideration of the foregoing premises, we consider that the subject of *theolinguistics* is not only the religious (sacred, liturgical, prayer) language, but also the religious discourse and the religious communication. Hence, from the linguistic point of view, the basic research material of *theolinguistics* may include linguistic units, filled with religious content: *hagiography, biblical expressions, biblical idioms, spiritual code, the canonical language, godparents' names, translations of the Bible, religious studies and Christian terminology, religious discourse, religious concepts, religious style, religious and theological vocabulary, the Old Church Slavonic language, theonyms* etc. Moreover, *theolinguistics* as a new branch of general linguistics may focus on: 1) textual analysis, translation, terminology problems in the religious orientated texts; 2) the study of interlayer verbalization of religiously marked linguistic phenomena: phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical, phraseological units; 3) the study of multi-level and multi-religious concepts; 4) the study of linguistic units with a religious meaning, which are characterized as the building blocks of the spiritual cultural code; 5) the promotion of the correct use of relevant vocabulary in the secular lexicon as well as in the ecclesiastic-religious sphere, 6) the study of the reflection of religious worldview in different linguistic cultures, etc.

In conclusion, it should be noted that religion, as a form of social consciousness, is the object of various scientific researches, among which may be named *geography and ecology of religion; history of religion; philosophy of religion; psychology of religion; teaching religion; ethnology of religion* some others. The trend of integration of a theological knowledge with the worldview and culture is increasingly manifesting itself in the modern world and is fixed in such new scientific branches as *biotheology, neurotheology, psychotheology, theophysics, ecotheology* etc. In our opinion, the consideration and resolution of various linguistic problems in the mainstream of *theolinguistics* is very progressive and relevant. In the light of new discoveries in various scientific fields, it allows us to take a fresh look at the language in which, according to P. A. Florensky, "laid the explanation of entity" [6, p. 143].

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SEMANTIC FIELD OF AN ETHNONYM *THE BELARUSIANS*: PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ASPECT

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A name *the Belarusians*, as well as our country's name *Belarus*, originated from the term *White Russia*, which in XII – XV centuries related to various East Slavic lands. After Belarus had joined the Russian Empire, a term *the Belarusians* became a main name of a Belarusian people, which reflected its ethnic distinctiveness. However, an ethnonym *the Belarusians* is known to have become widespread only after the formation of Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic (1919). During a long