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# THE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT "LANGUAGE" IN THE FRENCH SCHOLARS' RESEARCHES OF THE 5TH PERIOD OF THE HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS

**Summary.** The scientific research is devoted to the issue of linguistic terminology from the point of view of its historical development.

The main aspects and personal understanding of the concept of "language" of the following French scholars of the 5th period of the history of linguistics (the 1930s to the present day) (Émile Benveniste, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, Jean-Claude Milner, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault) to identify and systematize the essence of the concept were analyzed and summarized in the article.

It was based on the detailed analysis and systematization, structural positions of the explanatory formula of notion content (EFNC) "language". It reveals its essence in the specified historical period.

In the process of studying the works of French scientists, connections were discovered and relations within the concept in a generalized form with significant, and basic meanings (basic groups) with a common element in the middle were identified, information-correlation analysis was conducted and a definition of the concept of "language" was synthesized.

According to the results of the analysis of scientific works, 7 main groups of meanings were identified, highlighted, and formed, and a generalized unambiguous definition was synthesized. The concept of "language" was understood as a phenomenon (material, historical, social, political); as a result of the processes of reflection and thinking of subjects; as an object (controlled and identified, "object of science"); as a system (of elements and variations); as a tool (for the perception and transmission of information, the formation of discourse, language coding, the globalization of society, adaptation and change of personality); a means (the formation of a cultural construct and subjectivity, social interaction, power, ideology and uncertainty) and a process (historical and social).

The proposed technology for forming EFNC can be successfully used to determine complete and unambiguous definitions of concepts in future scientific research.

**Key words:** language, concept, explanatory formula of notion content (EFNC), informationally-correlation analysis.

This study is devoted to identifying the content of the concept of "language" and the development of its essence in the historical aspect.

The statement of the problem. The article is a component of the research devoted to the concept of "language, dedicated to identifying the content and researching the development of the essence of the concept of "language" in the historical aspect. For these studies, a methodology based on the use of the explanatory formula of concept content is used.

The scientific need of this study is motivated by the scientific need for a thorough study of the substantive and structural relationships that arise in the process of constant cognitive development, and the need to synthesize an unambiguous definition of the essence of the concept of "language".

The research aims to synthesize the definition of the concept of "language" in the personal understanding of French researchers in the 5th period of linguistics (the 30s of the 20th century to the present day).

The main tasks of this research are to analyze, systematize, generalize information, and synthesize the definition of the essence of the concept of "language" from the position of comparison in the personal understanding of French researchers who studied the issue of the concept of "language", whose activities fall within the 5th period of linguistics.

**The object** of the research is the historicism of the development of the concept essence of "language" in communicative, mental, and other processes of activity to ensure the vital activity of a person and society.

*The subject* of the research is the study and analysis of the essence of the concept of "language" as understood by French researchers in the analyzed period: Émile Benveniste, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, Jean-Claude Milner, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault.

The scientific novelty consists of the analysis of the concept of language in the scientific works of French researchers, whose activities fall into the 5th period of linguistics according to the structure of the explanatory formula of concept content (EFCC) and the synthesis of a complete and unambiguous definition of the essence of the concept of "language".

Analysis of the latest research and publications on this topic showed that researchers are interested in the main problems of translating French proper nouns [1]; history, and dialects. French phonology [2]; testing of knowledge, skills, and abilities [3]; evolution of French nouns [4]; French language studies as a second language [5]; lexical structure of the language [6] etc.

However, in the analysis of the essence of "language," no research has been done in the scientific works of linguists.

The presentation of the main material.

The explanatory formula of concept content of "Language".

- I. Elements of the characteristic structure.
- 1. Description of the concept.
- 1.1. Description of the concept and category according to the results of the analysis of previous knowledge related to this concept.

1 period (V – IV BC – XVI BC):

- 1) Indian linguistic tradition in early antiquity [7];
- 2) the Greco-Latin linguistic tradition [8];
- 3) Classical Antiquity [9];
- 4) the Middle Ages [10].

#### 2 period (XVII – XVIII AD);

- 1) the Renaissance period [11];
- 2) the Enlightenment Period [12].
- 3 period (the end of the XVIII the first half of the XIX century) [13, 14].
- 4 period (the end of the XIX the first third of the XX century) [15, 16, 17, 18].

## 5th period of the history of linguistics (the 30s of the 20th century to the present day) [19, 20].

Based on the results of the analysis by French researchers during the analyzed period (Émile Benveniste, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, Jean-Claude Milner, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault), the following explanatory formula of concept content (EFCC) was constructed.

- 2. Foundations and principles of the existence of the concept of being at the analyzed period.
- 2.1. Detection of the existence of the concept, the phenomenon of its essence at the analyzed period.
- **2.1.1. System:**  $2.1.1.1 \cap 2.1.1.2$  (sign  $\cap$  means that there is a correlation of information in essence).

Émile Benveniste (1902 – 1976) (a French linguist in the general theory of language, typology, lexical and grammatical semantics) wrote in the book "Problems in General Linguistics" that there was nothing singular, or separate, and each fact was an element of the system in language: "language is a system" [21, p. 71] and "analogues systems" [22, p. 292] from the point of view of Michel Foucault (1926–1984) (a French historian and philosopher).

#### 2.1.1.1. A system consisting of elements.

Émile Benveniste wrote that "...language is a system in which nothing is significant in and of itself, but in which everything is significant as an element of pattern..." [21, p. 21].

Jean-Claude Milner (1941) (a French philosopher, linguist, poet, and psychoanalyst) supports this point of view and adds: "Language is the system measured against which lalangue is found wanting, lacking" [23, p. 76] and separates Language (le langage) (a sound as a sounding continuum), language (la langue) (sound as segment or phoneme or signifier), lalangue (a result of the imagination; creation of images of irreal states), le langage (a sound as a sounding continuum: a set of a variety of elements related to each other), la langue (a segment or a phoneme: an element of spoken speech, a meaning-distinguishing unit of language) [23, p. 62-83].

#### 2.1.1.2. A system of variations.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle (1946) (a Professor of English at the University of Paris at Nanterre studies philosophy of language and literary theory) thinks that language is no longer understood "as a stock of words" (a set of acoustic-graphic codes (AGCs) that a person owns (like *langua* in Saussure); conscious or intuitive knowledge of the system, the rules of language (as Chomsky's competence) and emphasizes language's ability to develop in different historical periods as "... a system of variations, which changes with the change in historical conjunctures" [24, p. 141].

### **2.1.2.** An instrument. $2.1.2.1 \cap 2.1.2.2 \cap 2.1.2.3 \cap 2.1.2.4 \cap 2.1.2.5 \cap 2.1.2.6$ .

According to Émile Benveniste's point of view "... the fact that it has *content*, are in themselves enough to render suspect this

comparison of language to an instrument, which tends to dissociate the property of language from man" [21, p. 224].

## 2.1.2.1. An instrument of influence in subject-subject communication processes.

Language contains the ideas of influencing on the subject: "... a reified subject – speaker – who possesses her language and uses it like an instrument" [24, p. 144].

# 2.1.2.2. An instrument for the targeted work with information: creating and transforming (coding and decoding) information arrays created by the human brain in the process of thinking.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle writes: "But to attack the history-culture nexus, the cultural past that is inscribed in the English language, out of which the English language is made, presupposes a conception of language as a tool and *lingua franca*, a simple instrument for the transmission of information and knowledge, without depth or past" [24, p. 3-4].

In Émile Benveniste's understanding, "... thought is not the 'raw material' of language and language is not the technical means for its transformation into words" [24, p. 159].

#### 2.1.2.3. An instrument of adaptation.

Émile Benveniste held the point of view that "Language is the instrument by which the world and society are adjusted" [21, p. 71].

#### 2.1.2.4. An instrument of a complete individual's change.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle adheres to the point of view that "Language is ... the site and instrument of the transformation of individuals into subjects" [24, p. 198].

**2.1.2.5. An instrument of globalisation,** like any other natural-historical process, is irreversible. Global trends of merging, consolidation, participation, and involvement in various spheres have become an objective reality. These processes are natural and law-governed.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle's special attention is paid to the process of globalization of languages: "However, it is clear that English has become the global language and the language of globalisation ... English, the language of globalisation, is an instrument of imperialism" [24, p. 7].

#### 2.1.2.6. A material instrument.

Émile Benveniste wrote that the comparison of a language with a material instrument "...must fill us with mistrust, as should every simplistic notion about language" [21, p. 223].

**2.1.3. Means.** 2.1.3.1  $\cap$  2.1.3.2  $\cap$  2.1.3.3  $\cap$  2.1.3.4  $\cap$  2.1.3.5  $\cap$  2.1.3.6  $\cap$  2.1.3.7.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle deeply analyzes and systematizes different means of language. He identified 6 means of language in his book "philosophy-of-language" [24].

- **2.1.3.1. Means of social interaction:** "... language is the medium and motor of social interaction" [24, p. 168].
- **2.1.3.2. Means of imperialism:** "A standard language the historic-social construct is at once the vehicle of linguistic imperialism [24, p. 194].
- 2.1.3.3. Means of power used for the development, stabilization, and management of subjects' lives and society as a whole: "... the centralized national language a vector of power" [24, p. 144].

Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) (poststructuralist French philosopher) wrote that language was made not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience [25].

- **2.1.3.4. Means of ideology:** "... ideology is language and language is ideology" [24, p. 172].
- **2.1.3.5. Means of teaching:** "... the vehicle of whatever teaching is possible" [24, p. 130].
- **2.1.3.6.** Means for production of uncertainty (different perceptions, ideas, interpretations, and understandings): "What one language is among others, then, is nothing more than a singular way of producing equivocation" [24, p. 62].

#### 2.1.3.7. Means of subjectivity.

Émile Benveniste wrote about means of personal impressions, feelings, and opinions: "It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a subject because language alone establishes the concept of "ego" in reality, in its reality which is that of the being" [21, p. 224].

### **2.1.4.** Cultural constructs determined by culture, customs, and traditions: $2.1.4 \cap 2.1.4$ .

Jean-Jacques Lecercle believes that each language carries its characteristics: "Language is the construct person processes (filters) information, being able to reinterpret the world around him". He qualifies language as the most important component: "A natural language is 'in reality a cultural construct' ... This is the way a person processes (filters) information and is able to rethink the world around him" [24, p. 4].

#### **2.1.5.** Instances of discourse: $2.1.5 \cap 2.1.5$ .

Emile Benveniste expressed his point of view in the book "Problems in General Linguistics" that "...language is turned into instances of discourse" [21, p. 220].

## 2.1.6. Language as a finished result of human activity and the processes of reflection and thinking of subjects that constitute its interactions: $2.1.6 \cap 2.1.6$ .

Michel Foucault wrote about language as "... a product of will and energy, rather than of the memory that duplicates representation" [22, p. 290].

Jean-Jacques Lecercle holds a similar point of view and wrote that "... the ideal product of the functioning of our brain" [24, p. 176].

**2.1.7.** Language as a part:  $2.1.7.1 \cap 2.1.7.2 \cap 2.1.7.3 \cap 2.1.7.4$ .

#### 2.1.7.1. Language as an inner, a central part.

Jean-Claude Milner qualifies language as a central part and proposes: "Let us agree then to call "language" this kernel which, in each one of the various languages supports its uniqueness and its distinctness" [23, p. 59].

#### 2.1.7.2. Language as a part of life.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle also considers language as a part but as the most important part of the life of a person and society: "... it forms part of the fabric of everyday life" [24, p. 193].

#### 2.1.7.3. Language as a basis and concept.

From the point of view of Jean-Claude Milner "Language, as a concept, and language, as the underpinning of a real" [23, p. 121].

#### 2.1.7.4. Language as an element.

Jean-Claude Milner viewed a human language as the significant or essential element: "Language" is obtained, nothing more in itself than a point starting from which the various languages can be grouped together into a whole, but a point on which extension is conferred in ascribing expressible properties to it [23, p. 57].

#### **2.1.8.** Language as an object: $2.1.8.1 \cap 2.1.8.2 \cap 2.1.8.3$ .

#### 2.1.8.1. Language as a managed object.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle wrote that language is "... object of manipulation and contemplation on the part of the linguist" [24, p. 144].

#### 2.1.8.2. Language as a recognized or identified object.

Jean-Claude Milner drew attention that language "... claims to be always distinguishable from what is not a language, always distinguishable from another language, always identical to itself, always inscribable in the sphere of univocableness" [23, p. 61].

**2.1.8.3. Language as "an object of science"** was understood by Michel Foucault [26, p. 297].

#### **2.1.9.** Language as a substance: $2.1.9 \cap 2.1.9$ .

Jean-Claude Milner, after analyzing the concept of "language", wrote that "Languages do not form a consistent class, being incommensurable;

- a language is not identical to itself;
- a language is a substance;
- a language can cease to be stratified;
- a language is not an isotope [23, p. 61].

The scientist came to the conclusion that "It becomes substance as well, the possible material for phantasies, the inconsistent set of sites for desire" [23, p. 62].

#### **2.1.10.** Language as a distinctive feature: $2.1.10 \cap 2.1.10$ .

From Jean-Claude Milner's point of view, language influences for "... human race, whose essential attribute is Language" [23, p. 62].

#### **2.1.11.** Language as a form: $2.1.11 \cap 2.1.11$ .

This understanding is shown in the scientific works of Jean-Claude Milner and Michel Foucault:

- 1) Jean-Claude Milner's point of view: "... a language is a particular form of it, a dialect of a language, a specific reorganisation of a particular partitioning. But this simplicity is deceptive" [23, p. 66].
- 2) Michel Foucault's point of view: "... language was a form of knowing and knowing was automatically discourse" [26, p. 295].

#### **2.1.12.** Language as a process: $2.1.12.1 \cap 2.1.12.2$ .

Jean-Jacques Lecercle qualifies language as the most important process in human and social life: "... considering language from the standpoint of process" [24, p. 140].

#### 2.1.12.1. Language as a historical process.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle sees language and history in close connection with each other, and even in their mutual transition: "... language not only has a history, it is history" [24, p. 158].

He points out the ability of language to develop historically: "... language as a historical process, has its own dynamic and is obvious of the stratifications imposed by science" [24, p. 144] and he of the opinion that "... a language is also a history, a culture, a conception of the word – not merely a dictionary and grammar" [24, p. 4].

#### 2.1.12.2. Language as a process of social practice.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle emphasizes the public nature of "language": "For language is no more situated in the individual speaker" [24, p. 142] and "... a language that is always-already collective" [24, p. 143], "... it is a social practice, a set of processes and not of system" [24, p. 156].

#### **2.1.13.** Language as a religious worship: $2.1.13.1 \cap 2.1.13.1$ .

In Jean-Jacques Lecercle's understanding "... language is the source of fetishism" [24, p. 210].

## **2.1.14.** Language as a phenomenon: $2.1.14.1 \cap 2.1.14.2 \cap 2.1.14.3 \cap 2.1.14.4$ .

Jean-Jacques Lecercle concluded that "language" is a phenomenon and divided into 5 types:

2.1.14.1. Language as a material phenomenon.

- 2.1.14.2. A historical phenomenon.
- 2.1.14.3. A social phenomenon.
- 2.1.14.4. A political phenomenon. [24, p. 139].
- 2.1.14. Language as a phenomenon.

According to the research results of the foundations and principles of the existence of the concept of being in the analyzed period with the use of comparative values of the concept of "language" from the position of comparison, the main meanings were highlighted, delimited and 7 core meanings of the concept of "language" were formed in a generalized form with a common element inside, connections and relations within the concept were presented and a definition of the essence of the concept of "language" was synthesized.

The French scholars' of the 5th period of the history of linguistics (the 30s of the 20th century to the present day) point of view the concept of "language" is a phenomenon (material, historical, social, political); as a result of the processes of reflection and thinking of subjects; as an object (controlled and identified, "object of science"); as a system (of elements and variations); as a tool (for the perception and transmission of information, the formation of discourse, language coding, the globalization of society, adaptation and change of personality); a means (the formation of a cultural construct and subjectivity, social interaction, power, ideology and uncertainty), and a process (historical and social).

Perspectives and future research opportunities are the study of the process of development of the functional essence of this concept of "language" in the French scholars' point of view of the 5th period of the history of linguistics (the 30s of the 20th century to the present day), taking into account historicism to predict further development of the concept in the life of a person and societies.

This technology of the Explanatory formula of concept content (EFCC) formation could be successfully used in future scientific research of scientists from different countries studies to determine the essence and functional essence in the life of a person and society, to determine the full and mono semantic definitions of the concept "language" and predict further development.

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## Солдатова Л. Сутність поняття «мова» в дослідженнях французьких вчених V періоду історії лінгвістики

**Анотація.** Наукове дослідження присвячене питанню лінгвістичної термінології з точки зору її історичного розвитку.

У статті було проаналізовано та узагальнено основні аспекти та особистісне розуміння поняття «мова» французьких вчених 5-го періоду історії мовознавства (30-ті роки XX ст. до наших днів) (Еміль Бенвеніст, Жан-Жак Лесеркль, Жан-Клод Мільнер, Жиль Делез і Мішель Фуко) з метою виявлення та систематизації сутності поняття.

За основу аналізу та систематизації були взяті структурні позиції тлумачної формули змісту поняття ( $T\Phi 3\Pi$ ) «мова».

За структурою ТФЗП було проведено детальний аналіз поняття «мова», який виявляє його сутність у зазначений історичний період.

У процесі дослідження праць французьких вчених були виявлені зв'язки та відношення в середині поняття в узагальній формі із значимими та основними значеннями (основні групи) з спільним елементом у середині, проведено інформаційно-кореляційний аналіз та синтезована дефініція поняття «мова».

Було виявлено, виділено та сформовано 7 основних груп значень та синтезовано узагальнену однозначну дефініцію. Поняття «мова» розумілося як явище (матеріальне, історичне, соціальне, політичне); як результат процесів відображення і мислення суб'єктів; як об'єкт (контрольований та ідентифікований, «об'єкт науки»); як система (елементів і варіацій); як інструмент (для сприйняття та передачі інформації, формування дискурсу); для глобалізації суспільства, адаптації та зміни особистості; засіб (формування культурного конструкту та суб'єктності, соціальної взаємодії, влади, ідеології та невизначеності) та процес (історичний та соціальний).

Пропонована технологія формування ТФЗП може бути успішно використана для визначення повних і однозначних дефініцій понять в майбутніх наукових дослідженнях.

**Ключові слова:** мова, поняття, тлумачна формула змісту поняття (ТФЗП), інформаційно-кореляційний аналіз.