

## Consciousness and intuition in the study of foreign languages

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**Abstract:** Language acquisition includes the sociocultural context of the development of person's consciousness. This is true that the attitude for both the mother tongue and the foreign language is the same, but the difference is that, mastering the mother tongue, the child means a preverbal picture of the world; while a foreign language is studied mainly by an individual who already has a picture of the world formed in the context of the mother tongue. There is no doubt that at each level of foreign language competence the maximum automation of the corresponding language structures is necessary, which creates the conditions for freedom of thought transformations and provides opportunities for the manifestation of linguistic intuition. It should be noted that the subconscious mind includes those manifestations of intuition that arise from previously accumulated experience. In our case, this is an intuitive use of grammar.

**Key words:** automatism, competence, foreign language, consciousness.

The study of foreign languages and the formation of the ability to think in a foreign language cannot be considered without taking into account unconscious mechanisms, which are not ongoing processes along with consciousness, but unconscious side of the processes of consciousness itself. Between consciousness and unconscious processes (unconscious), there is an active interaction and exchange of information, which indicates a complex dynamic relationship between consciousness and the unconscious. Thus, the unconscious is not an isolated psychic sphere, but a part of operational unity, a part of a single system "consciousness - unconscious".

When considering the role of unconscious mental processes in speech activity (including foreign language), one should pay attention to two main aspects of the manifestation of the unconscious: first, as a carrier of automated actions, and secondly, as a source of integration of new information.

It is obvious that the automation process covers both motor operations (for example, articulation or automatic writing), as well as speech (automatic speech), and intellectual operations. When setting a pronunciation, for example, kinesthetic (muscle) movements are automated, and if this technique is brought to maximum automation, we subsequently do not think about articulating individual sounds. Motor automatisms sometimes turn out to be more pronounced than a conscious action: in order to recall, for example, how a word is spelled, we often start to write it without looking, i.e. automatically.

The above examples indicate that automatisms can be executed faster than conscious actions. At the same time, their characteristic feature is that they are not reflexed. Thus, automatic actions save energy, release consciousness from unnecessary loads, allowing you to simultaneously solve other problems.

However, as P. Janet noted, the automatism of actions does not imply their complete unconsciousness. N.A. Bernstein emphasized the same, pointing out that the higher mental functions of a person are a continuum located between the poles of "consciousness (thought) - automatism". Indeed, in the subconscious, in which the operation of verbal representations proceeds, at the same time there is a connection of thoughts and feelings with word-symbols.

Moreover, with verbalization at the level of developed automatic speech, the connections between phenomena, their order and relationship, can be realized in a new way, the separation of the main from the secondary. Thus, automated speech is not only directly related to consciousness as a generator of abstract logical thinking, but also serves as a means of comprehending phenomena, especially when it comes to automated foreign language speech, which makes you look at the world from the standpoint of a different, different in many respects, language culture.

Automation of foreign-language means, as observations show, is much more intense when it is based on conscious operations. P.Ya. Halperin rightly insisted on

a detailed (and, therefore, conscious) method of forming automatisms when he showed that any process of automation during training should begin slowly, with the expanded implementation of all stages of the operation, which provides the fastest and most durable fixation of this operation in the form of automatism<sup>1</sup>. In the future, such an action, including another action, more complex in terms of operational composition, paves the way for the subsequent action and ceases to be carried out as a special purposeful process.

This pattern once again convinces us that the conscious formation of automatisms requires much less time than the trial and error method. However, imitation actions can also lead to the formation of automatisms, but this process is in practice much longer and less stable in its results.

A.A. Leontyev noted the same, emphasizing that for the formation of a skill it is necessary to first put the implementation of a certain operation under the control of consciousness and only then, including this operation in a more complex system, gradually transfer it to lower levels of awareness<sup>2</sup>. Thus, being formed as a holistic act of activity, where awareness is focused on the goal, the operation becomes fully automated, i.e. unconscious. In this case, we can always bring it back to the “bright field of consciousness”, in contrast to the other way in which the skill is formed by mechanical adaptation to the conditions of activity and does not come under the control of consciousness at all.

This conclusion is fully supported by neurophysiology data. As P.V.Simonov notes, the norms are fixed and generalized in the subconscious, as something repeating and stable, appropriate and harmonious, economically and systematically organized. Thus, it is thanks to the subconscious that everything that has been

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<sup>1</sup> Halperin P.Ya. New learning opportunities, in particular, foreign languages // Questions of methods of teaching foreign languages at non-linguistic faculties of universities. M.: Publishing House of Moscow State University, 1971.P. 6982.

<sup>2</sup> Leontiev A.N. Activity. Consciousness. Personality. M.: 1975.

individually acquired, becoming a habit, acquires the stability inherent in unconditioned reflexes.

There is no doubt that at each level of foreign language competence the maximum automation of the corresponding language structures is necessary, which creates the conditions for freedom of thought transformations and provides opportunities for the manifestation of linguistic intuition. It should be noted that the subconscious mind includes those manifestations of intuition that arise from previously accumulated experience. In our case, this is an intuitive use of grammatical structures, syntactic constructions, and other linguistic components in speech. Thus, the application of automated techniques to the solution of constantly changing conditions of verbal communication, a few months after the start of systematic mastery of a foreign language, begins to be accompanied by manifestations of linguistic intuition based on experience gained.

Everyone can be convinced of this by comparing their feelings from the initial experience of using any language structure in speech and after its repeated and varied repetition in constantly changing conditions of verbal communication. In the second case, for sure, a sense of language (or linguistic intuition) arising from the sphere of the subconscious, i.e. unconsciously-automatic. We will call linguistic intuition, which is formed through the formation in the subconscious of foreign-language speech automatisms, as linguistic intuition of the first order.

As for the manifestations of intuition that arise when solving (including in speech activity) creative tasks related to the generation of new information, they come from another sphere of the unconscious – super consciousness. The neurophysiological basis of super consciousness, as P.V.Simonov points out, is the transformation and recombination of traces (engrams) stored in the subject's memory, whereby new contents arise or are revealed. Thus, the manifestation of super consciousness is directly affected by the individual's previously accumulated experience, fixed in his consciousness and subconscious. Creative intuition does

not arise contrary to, but on the basis of subjective experience, which is sometimes preceded by lengthy preparatory work.

As a result of such work, which occurs both consciously and unconsciously (and often simultaneously), new meaningful syntheses are achieved that allow us to produce creative solutions. In this process, a subliminal perception of information, which makes it unconscious up to a certain stage, can play an important role. Due to this kind of information, as well as due to the unconscious reserves of the sensory organs, the range of information received, which directly affects the functions of consciousness and super consciousness, is expanding. It should be noted that the activity of the superconscious is not realized under any conditions, while the consciousness is able to capture and record the results of this activity.

Whatever kind of intuition, as a product of the unconscious in the framework of cognitive activity, we consider it is inextricably linked with the subjective consciousness of the individual. Therefore, as D.I. Dubrovsky, the cognitive process is carried out in a single conscious-unconscious-conscious circuit. Learning foreign languages is no exception.

Considering the role of the unconscious in the formation of linguistic intuition, we see that its source, as shown above, can be two structures of the unconscious: the subconscious and superconscious. In each of these structures, the formation of intuition occurs in different ways: in the subconscious - through the automation of conscious operations (first-order linguistic intuition), in the superconscious - through the implementation of creative tasks (second-order linguistic intuition). Manifesting primarily in speech activity, as a process of subjective self-expression, linguistic intuition, thus, is a direct expression of the unconscious, composed of speech automatisms in their creative refraction in speech.

For the formation of first-order linguistic intuition, as mentioned above, automation of linguistic means is necessary, and this should be such automation that would not be subject to the reverse process - deautomatization, arising due to insufficient exercise of foreign-language means or interference of the native language. In its most general form, automation, i.e. the formation of skills that have a direct impact on the manifestation of linguistic intuition (first order) should occur subject to a number of conditions.

Firstly, it is advisable to carry out automation in a systematic sequence that provides an understanding of the relationships between automated phenomena, secondly, automation should be carried out with the understanding of the considered language facts by using them in speech to express subjective experience, thirdly, automated structures or units should be included into more and more complex speech actions (speech skills).

As a result of observance of the indicated conditions for the formation of automatisms, in a speech mastering a foreign language there is the appearance of an “automatic run” (a period of consistent and accurate use of language tools to express thoughts) and an increasing increase in its duration as a result of a priori synthesis, well familiar to us from the example of owning a native tongue. At the same time, combinatorial opportunities and flexibility in the use of lexical and grammatical paradigms in speech speak of the stability of automatisms and the progressive manifestation of linguistic intuition in a communicative act.

Thus, we owe to the manifestations of first-order linguistic intuition the ability to faultlessly and accelerate the pace of foreign language speech (spontaneous speech), the readiness for probabilistic forecasting when it is perceived, and the adequacy of speech reactions. The sense of language that arises under the described conditions, based on the stability of the subconscious, indicates the degree of knowledge of a foreign language that is considered an indicator of its quality.

The formation of a second-order linguistic intuition associated with super consciousness and the unconscious creative-cognitive intention characteristic of this structure is more familiar to us from the manifestations that are characteristic of the native language. Such manifestations come from the figuratively intuitive component of knowledge; their basis, according to Einstein, is sensory impressions, "the consistency of which with the mental system can be understood only by intuition." Consequently, the manifestation of second-order intuition can be considered an expression in thinking and speech (regardless of the language in which it is produced) of an individual unconscious sensory experience.

It should be noted that sensory impressions and associated iconic images are non-verbal and unstructured cognitive formations that have a holistic (holistic) character. Such integrity also determines the nature of the intuitive thinking that arises on their basis, which is both emotionally-figurative, panoramic and aimed (since it lacks spatial and temporal connections).

Modern research by scientists shows that J. Lacan, a follower of Z. Freud, was not so wrong, who believed that the unconscious is not the receptacle of chaotic instinctual drives, but "... that part of the concrete speech in its transindividual quality that the subject lacks, to restore the integrity of his conscious (discrete) speech."

Timeless and non-spatial intuitive-figurative (metaphorical) thinking is generated, as you know, by the right hemisphere, relying on the emotional-sensory experience of the individual. Such thinking, despite the absence of a logical deployment in it in the analytical-synthetic understanding, allows one to perceive and create integral images in speech, intuitively guess their meaning, and also control the adequacy of statements in general.

That is why when mastering a foreign language, the factor of the right hemisphere psyche, which determines the possibility of figurative thinking and manifestations of creative intuition when generating and perceiving speech, cannot



be ignored. As L.R. Zenkov points out], the awareness of verbal processes is normal when there is a continuous selection of images of the right hemisphere in accordance with the meaning of the verbal symbols of the left. Moreover, as noted by the well-known American psychotherapist M. Erickson, communication, on the whole, is of a right-hemisphere type, with a consequent tendency towards imagery and emotionality.

All of the above considerations give the right to attribute the characteristics of metaphorical right hemisphere thinking to a factor that directly affects the formation of creative linguistic intuition, i.e. second-order linguistic intuition. Metaphorical thinking, as it is known, being iconic, creates integral emotional and sensual images expressed in the language through semantic changes, consisting in the transfer of commonly used meanings of words to sometimes paradoxically converging or contrasting combinations. Thus, images are transformed into linguistic metaphors that allow allegorically to convey deep meanings and perceive concepts in a new semantic meaning.

The mechanism of right-hemispheric metaphorical thinking is aimed at comprehending unstructured sensory images of the unconscious in structured linguistic meanings, correlating in speech-cognitive processes with easier to understand means of logical expression. This is how metaphors arise in which, according to I. Richards, the “ubiquitous principle of language” is manifested, since they transmit information about the world, allowing us to represent unstructured unity with the help of a more obvious system of language experience. It is a metaphor, as noted by the French philosopher P. Ricoeur, that connects penetration into foreign reality with the empirical, subjective-psychological side of our existence. Therefore, the metaphor, as a combination of verbal and non-verbal, was considered by him on the border between the semantic theory and the psychological theory of imagination and sensation. Before dwelling directly on the methods of forming second-order linguistic intuition, it is necessary to think about



the existence of numerous metaphors that manifest themselves directly and everywhere in our everyday speech. There are many such metaphorical means of interpreting reality, and they, as V. von Humboldt pointed out, serve as a source of normative knowledge, acting as carriers of orientational and world-opening functions. Some of these background metaphors even in the language systems of different groups coincide in semantics and method of use, while others, when they are perceived by speakers of a different language and culture, seem nonsense.

The presence in systems of different languages of a significant amount of this kind of metaphors is explained by the reflection in the cognitive processes of the specifics of right-brain thinking, which historically accompanied the verbalization of images on the path to world development in its external and internal manifestations. In this regard, we can correlate the presence of similar metaphors, including in different language groups, to the development of the collective unconscious, as one of the sources for the formation of universal metaphorical concepts.

However, one cannot ignore the fact that the new metaphorical formations in the course of the historical development of the nation, as a certain cultural and historical community, appeared on the basis of concepts that had already come into use that arose as a result of the empirical experience of native speakers. This explains the presence of a significant number of background metaphors that exclusively belong to individual language systems in the context of their cultural and historical development. Being automated in the process of speech practice, metaphors of this kind are further automatically reproduced in the discourse, since they are generated by the subconscious, according to the above-described features of the manifestation of first-order linguistic intuition.

D. Davidson notes, there are no instructions, there are no directories to determine what they “mean” or “what are reported”. Such metaphors are dynamic, such as life and language, they are holistic and emotional, they are reflective (not

logically, but emotionally), and are directly related to the individual picture of the world. And, therefore, they are intuitively conscious and perceived.

H.Ortega-i-Gasset figuratively defined the types of metaphors considered by us as a metaphor for the “imprint” and a metaphor for the “contents of the vessel”. The ability to create and perceive a living metaphor, i.e. the metaphor of the “contents of the vessel,” thus directly depends on the manifestation of creative activity, on the ability to intuitively capture the similarities and differences, on the ability to establish connections between emerging images (or sensations) and meaning.

This ability is associated not only with unconscious recombination of memory traces, as we discussed above, but also with creative recombination of language elements, as a result of which new semantic formations arise. Consequently, the manifestation of imaginative thinking in speech is accompanied by the recombination of previously automated linguistic means and turns of speech, in order to achieve maximum imagery and emotional richness of the text of the statement. This process, which V.N. Telya described as “overcoming automatism in the choice of language means from among the ready-made ones,” requires, of course, the presence of a linguistic instinct (or sense of language) both in the production and in the perception of the utterance. Therefore, in this case, we can talk about the manifestation of second-order linguistic intuition, developing as a derivative of figurative thinking and linguistic competence.

Thus, we see that second-order linguistic intuition is manifested under two conditions: creative thinking and the presence of automated linguistic means in the subconscious, which creates the possibility of free, creative recombination of lexical and grammatical units. We can also assume that creative thinking is associated with superconsciousness, the activity of which determines the translation of intuitive figurative non-verbal information, which is primarily contained and processed in the right hemisphere, into the left hemisphere

expression system that defines and regulates new combinations of elements necessary for its verbalization. Consciousness in this process, as P.V.Simonov pointed out, remains the function of selecting hypotheses by means of their logical analysis and using the criterion of practice in the broad sense of the word.

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