

UDC 81-11

**KHARKIV LINGUISTIC SCHOOL. HERITAGE.
 ALEXANDER POTEBNJA
 Ievgeniia V. Bondarenko (Kharkiv, Ukraine)**

I.V. Bondarenko. Kharkiv linguistic school. Heritage. Alexander Potebnja. The article focuses on the scientific heritage of Alexander Potebnja as one of the founders of Kharkiv linguistic school. Potebnja's seminal books and articles that among many other issues address language origin, human consciousness, and semantics of linguistic units are considered as milestones in the development of state-of-the-art humanities. The article reads his three tenets in terms of philosophy of language and cognitive linguistics. The first tenet concerns correlation between language and thought as a way of accounting for language origin and linguistic abilities of the human. The latter that uses language to communicate his world perceptive experience is ascribed a two-facet nature as both an individual and a nation. This tenet is viewed as one anticipating the underpinning principles of cognitive linguistics and theory of the national construal of the world. The second tenet concerns mental evolution of humanity. Potebnja sees it as a contiguity of image and meaning that diverge evolving in myth, poetry and prose. This tenet is considered as an anticipation of Popper's Evolutionary Epistemology and Westman's theory of the ontogenesis of the psyche. The third Potebnja's tenet focuses on the symbolism of linguistic units. The exclamation and the word are juxtaposed in terms of their internal and external forms. The word and the exclamation are analyzed as signs that render meaning by way of, correspondingly, either indicating to it or symbolizing it. These features suggest conceptual parallelism with Pierce's semiotic trichotomy of icon, index and symbol.

Key words: language origin, linguistic ability of the human, mental evolution of humanity, myth, poetry, prose, symbolism of linguistic units

Є.В. Бондаренко. Харківська лінгвістична школа. Спадщина. Олександр Потебня. Статтю присвячено науковій спадщині Олександра Опанасовича Потебні як одного із засновників харківської лінгвістичної школи. Його відомі книги та статті, які, серед багатьох інших питань, розглядали проблеми походження мови, свідомості людини та семантики мовних одиниць, презентовано як установчі у подальшому розвитку новітніх напрямів гуманітарної науки. Три постулати О.О. Потебні тлумачаться у статті в термінах філософії мови та когнітивної лінгвістики. Перший постулат стосується співвідношення між мовою та думкою, через яке пояснюється походження мови та мовних здібностей людини. Остання, що використовує мову для комунікації власного перцептивного досвіду світопізнання, на переконання вченого, має двоїсту природу та постає або як індивідуальність, або як нація. Цей постулат розглядається у світі сучасних базових принципів когнітивної лінгвістики та теорії національної картини світу. Другий постулат тлумачить процес ментальної еволюції людства. О.О. Потебня розуміє її у межах образу та значення, природа яких змінюється від спільної до абсолютно різної залежно від середовища їхнього існування, – міфу, поезії чи прози. Цей постулат О.О. Потебні аналізується як передбачення еволюційної епістемології К. Поппера та теорії онтогенезу людської психіки Г. Вестмана. Третю тезу О. Потебні зосереджено на символізмі лінгвістичних одиниць. Вигук та слово співставлено з точки зору взаємозв'язку їхніх зовнішньої та внутрішньої форм. Обидві одиниці постають як знаки, що передають значення, відповідно, або вказуючи на нього, або символізуючи. Ці риси дозволяють стверджувати про концептуальну суголосність теорій О.О. Потебні та семіотики Ч. Пірса з його трихотомією ікони, індексу та символу.

Ключові слова: ментальна еволюція людства, міф, мовна здатність людини, поезія, проза, походження мови, символізм мовних одиниць

Е.В. Бондаренко. Харьковская лингвистическая школа. Наследие. Александр Потебня.

Статья посвящена научному наследию Александра Афанасьевича Потебни как одного из основателей харьковской лингвистической школы. Его известные книги и статьи, которые, среди многих других вопросов, освящали проблемы происхождения языка, сознания человека и семантики языковых единиц, представлены как основополагающие для развития новейших направлений гуманитарной науки. Три постулата А. А. Потебни трактуются в статье с точки зрения философии языка и когнитивной лингвистики. Первый постулат – о взаимосвязи языка и мысли, посредством которой объясняется происхождение языка и языковых способностей человека. Последний, используя язык для коммуникации собственного перцептивного опыта мировосприятия, по убеждению ученого, обладает двойственной природой как индивидуальность и как нация. Этот постулат рассматривается в свете базовых принципов когнитивной лингвистики и теории национальной картины мира. Второй постулат касается процесса ментальной эволюции человечества. А.А. Потебня объясняет её через корреляцию образа и значения, природа которых изменяется от подобной до принципиально различной в зависимости от среды, в которой они находятся, – мифа, поэзии или прозы. Этот постулат А.А. Потебни рассматривается как научное предвидение эволюционной эпистемологии К. Поппера и теории онтогенеза человеческой психики Х. Вестмана. Третий тезис А.А. Потебни касается символизма лингвистических единиц. Междометие и слово сопоставляются с точки зрения взаимосвязи их внешней и внутренней форм. Обе единицы анализируются как знаки, которые передают значение, соответственно, либо указывая на него, либо символизируя его. Эти свойства языковых знаков позволяют говорить о концептуальной подобности теорий А.А. Потебни и семиотики Ч. Пирса с его трихотомией иконы, индекса и символа.

Ключевые слова: ментальная эволюция человечества, миф, поэзия, проза, происхождение языка, символизм языковых единиц, языковые способности человека

1. Introduction

This article has been conceived as one commencing the series of dedications to the founders of Kharkiv linguistic school. These prominent linguists, whose seminal works often stemmed from their congenial surmise, since linguistics lacked appropriate means for supporting them, nonetheless, gave an impetus to the development of new theories and trends in modern linguistics. In the first review, I concentrate on the personality and scientific works of Alexander Potebnja. My ultimate aim is to identify his ideas that, on the one hand, revolutionized linguistic theory in his contemporary period, and, on the other, may be regarded as a milestone in forming new tendencies in modern linguistic science, cognitive linguistics in particular. Pursuing this aim, I address the following issues that nowadays nurture state-of-the-art linguistics. Firstly, it is Potebnja's conception of thought vs. language as a way of accounting for language origin. He develops it to identify the national diversity of languages, in particular, Ukrainian as the means of rendering and implementing national mentality, or spirit in his terms. In Potebnja's elaboration and criticizing Humboldtian theory of language origin, I see an underpinning of the theory of the national world construal (Hunnings 1988; Kornilov 2003; Popova & Sternin 2015; Taylor 1995; Wittgenstein 2003 (1958)). Secondly, I analyze Potebnja's tenet of mythological mentality implemented in language, which gave rise to the theory of mental evolution of humanity. It was elaborated as subsequent transformations from myth to poetry that is followed by prose (as language of science). In the article, I read one of the central principles of cognitive linguistics as a corollary of this hypothesis. This principle entails diachronic approach to language and cognition in their co-reference or, in modern terms, Evolutionary Epistemology (Munz 2007; Popper 2002 (1957)), Heinz Westman's theory of the ontogenesis of the psyche (Westman 1983). Finally, however, far from exhausting the list of Potebnja's theories that play pivotal role in modern linguistic science, it is his elucidation of the symbolism of language units. Later it was elaborated into the psycholinguistic theory of literature (Fizer 1986). I consider this Potebnja's theory as a parallelism of Pierce's linguistic semiotics (Liszka 1996).

2. Potebnja's tenet of language vs. thought and national spirit

In his main books, *Language and Thought* (1999 (1892)) and *Word and Myth* (1989), Potebnja considers Humboldt's idea that language is a device for creating thought (*Das bildende Organ des Gedankens*). Completely sharing it, Potebnja, however, acknowledges Humboldt's limitations in reading the origin of language as both a God's gift and a type of emanation of the national spirit. He argues that if, by Humboldt, language is immanently free, as this freedom is godly, language and spirit are supposed to be collateral as having common celestial descend. Potebnja's view of language diverges from that of Humboldt's. The former completely rejects Humboldtian metaphysics that, in his opinion, fails to solve the contradiction of the godly and the human in accounting for language origin. Moreover, for Potebnja, Humboldtian system looks inefficient as far as it stands that language and spirit are immanently interdependent and therefore, it is impossible to consider them as separate entities. Therefore Potebnja develops three capital counter arguments (*here and henceforth translation mine*):

*The condition of common celestial descend stays just a void condition, because the researcher himself, identifying differences in languages building, accounts for them by differences in national character, which contradicts his own theoretical statement. If language is nurtured by spirit then, firstly, it cannot be independent of spirit, **it is bound by spirit** rather than godly free; secondly, it does not need to be common with spirit, **language is different from spirit**; thirdly, **language descend from national spirit is exclusively human** (Potebnja 1999: 36; emphasis added).*

This discussion entails at least three principles that look vital for cognitive linguistics.

The first one concerns the nature of relations between language and spirit. Significantly, Potebnja objects to Humboldt's reading of the very sense of the notion of spirit that, in his opinion erroneously, encompasses all aspects of human spiritual life:

*Considering the word spirit that plays a pivotal role in Humboldtian system, in the most general and probably absolutely wrong sense of the human being's spiritual life taken by and large, we will question ourselves: to what extent this life and language are inseparable? To answer this question, one will have to eliminate the contiguity (but not interrelation) **with language of senses and will** that is rendered by word, as <much as> they comprise the content of our thought (Potebnja 1999: 41; emphasis added).*

Here, Potebnja evidently identifies the sphere of thoughts viewing the term *spirit* as modern equivalent of *the human cognitive mechanism*. Potebnja develops this thesis in an argument that thought itself may not involve language as its integral part but mainly exists prior to or beyond language:

*A child does not speak up to a certain age, but in a certain way thinks, that is perceives through senses, besides in a more perfect way than an animal, recollects his perception and even partly generalizes it. In the course of his development, when the human being already has a full command of language, immediate sensitive impressions either **exist prior** to their union with word or even never come to this union. <...> Artistic thought of a painter, sculpturer, musician is not rendered by word and is implemented beyond it, though presupposes an advanced level of development, which is nurtured exclusively by language. <...> Finally, in mathematics, the science that is most perfect in form, speaking human rejects word and makes the most sophisticated statements using conventional signs. All this is the evidence that **the realm of language lies far from coincidence with the realm of thought** (Potebnja 1999: 41; emphasis added).*

This argument manifests the second pivotal principle for cognitive linguistics: the primary role of cognition in forming linguistic ability of the human being. It completely agrees with one of the major hypotheses as “guiding the cognitive linguistic approach to language” (Croft, Cruse 2004: 1):

<...> language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty. The basic corollaries of this hypothesis are that the representation of linguistic knowledge is essentially the same as the representation of other conceptual structures, and that the processes in which that knowledge is used are not fundamentally different from cognitive abilities that human beings use outside the domain of language (Croft, Cruse 2004: 2).

At the same time, Potebnja following Humboldt endorses the role of language in the spiritual activity of the human being. Using Humboldt’s own arguments, Potebnja identifies the role of word as an indispensable element of human spiritual activity that makes it conscious:

*<...> to become conscious, spiritual activity needs word, it emerges as an additional element when all other conditions for transition to conscious activity are already available. Therefore, considering spirit as conscious intellectual activity that entails **notions, which may be formed exclusively by word**, we will see that spirit is impossible without language <...> (Potebnja 1999: 42; emphasis added).*

I see a great significance of this argument for cognitive linguistics. The *notion* here is a token of conscious activity of the human being, which is implemented in word, on the one hand, and modern reading of the concept by Langacker (1987), Stepanov (2004), Nikitin (2007), Evans (2009), on the other, converge in many respects. Words (their meanings) by Evans, are associated with lexical concepts implemented in words, whereas by Nikitin and Stepanov, the notion is a core element of the conceptual structure that is implemented in a word meaning. C.f.:

*<...> language serves as a mediator between the world of perceived objects and a perceiving person and in this sense combines objectivity and subjectivity. As for language subjectivity towards the perceived, it is even more obvious and empirically tested by the fact that word value (e.g. tree) is neither equal to even the most elementary notion of the object nor to the limitless features of the object itself. The explanation is the following. **Word is formed from subjective perception and is not an imprint of the object itself but that of its reflection in the soul** (Potebnja 1989: 41-42; emphasis added).*

Potebnja sees immediate correlation among notions in the process of cognition. He identifies the notion as “a feature that a word uses to express a thought” (Potebnja 1989: 444). He insists that the notions seemingly irrelevant to the situation render the way the human being coherently perceives the world. Potebnja distinguishes the root of such correlations in the etymology of words implementing them. In this process, the human being forms a number of notions significant for his existence. These notions are implemented in words and their (grammatical) relations, which in the long run comprise language.

In this statement, I see the underpinning of the third principle of cognitive psychology and linguistics that perception of the world entails construal (Taylor 1995). In his attempt to identify language origin and the nature of linguistic meaning (word value in his terms), Potebnja rejects Humboldtian metaphysics. He suggests psychology as an ultimate realm of developing the theory of language origin and evolution:

<...> the godly nature of language may be set aside, and the issue of its origin becomes the issue of the spiritual life phenomena that precede language, the issue of the laws of its

*formation and evolution, as well as that of its influencing the following spiritual activity, that is an exclusively **psychological** issue* (Potebnja 1999: 43; emphasis in original).

Potebnja develops this thesis considering language as a product of nation. Here, he delineates the objects of ethno-psychology as well as that of the theory of the national construal of the world (Kornilov 2003; Popova & Sternin 2015):

*<...> developed by linguistics, the laws of language as the product of nation will be augmented by **currently forming trend in psychology** that will focus on the coordination of personal and national evolution* (Potebnja 1999: 53; emphasis added).

Significantly, Potebnja delegates to ethno-psychology, psychology of nations in his terms, a special mission in science. This is to provide a tool for identifying differences in features and structures of languages, which he considers natural:

*<...> psychology of nations should demonstrate the possibility of **differentiation among natures and structures of languages, this differentiation being the consequence of the common laws of the life of nations**. Therefore, what seems optimal to us is **the branch of science that would articulate the respect to nations as a natural and justifiable phenomenon** rather than consider them as an anomaly, like logical grammar offers* (Potebnja 1999: 54; emphasis added).

It is worth noting that Potebnja put great emphasis on the idea of the respect to nations and their right to use their language. In Russian Empire, for him, Ukrainian born and bred, his native tongue was the Malorussian language (from Malorussia or Little Russia, the derogative name of Ukraine at that period of time). He addressed various issues of the Ukrainian language in his numerous papers and articles. In his letter to the Czech linguist Patera in 1886, he identifies the role of Ukrainian in his scientific career the following way:

The circumstances of my life conditioned the fact that in my scientific activity my point of departure, which was evident or sometimes not really evident for others, was the Malorussian language and Malorussian folk culture. If I had not been endowed by this departing point and my feeling associated with it, I believe, I would never practice science (Potebnja 1962: 93).

In his works, he more than once emphasized that hostility to a national language and attempts to suppress its development to appease the dominating culture is fruitless:

One may not wish life to a certain language if one is persuaded of its inefficiency for human existence. Such considerations make us exterminate pests to give way to good plants. <...> One may be hostile to a language because one acknowledges its powers and loathes its competition with another language that one defends. However, both the neglect and the fear of folk tongues on behalf of the advocates of the unconditional reign of one literary language equally lack sense (Potebnja 1962: 76-77).

Therefore, Potebnja's ideas concerning language origin and its relevance to the processes of individual and national world perception were far ahead of his time and in many respects anticipated the basic postulates of cognitive linguistics and ethno-psychology. They are the following. Firstly, it is the pivotal role of cognition as an impetus to language emergence and evolution. Secondly, it is the role of cognitive mechanisms of the human being in developing his language abilities. Thirdly, it is the nature of the human perception of the world as a construal that entails individual and national

features. The latter may be considered as an underpinning of the theory of the national construal of the world specifically implemented in language. This thesis provides an argument in favor of independent existence and development of the national linguistic culture and literary arts.

3. Potebnja's tenet of mythological mentality implemented in language

In his book *Word and Myth*, Potebnja considers, in terms of modern linguistics, the evolution of the types of world perception implemented in language or rather different artistic genres. The initial type, as he sees it, is mythological. Potebnja identifies myth as a formula that is further implemented in word developed in the work of art. Mythological thinking stems from the most primitive and naïve world perception that the early or uneducated human being possessed. It is significant that these means, i.e. word or work or art, though they make this perception objective, are irrelevant to the notion of truth or real state of things. This type of perception lacks the internal feeling that assists in identifying the real state of things. To illustrate this type of perception, Potebnja uses his own recollections of the market performance when the audience attacked actors taking them for real villains (1989: 246). However, he does not exclude the possibility of some elements of mythological mentality in the consciousness of a well-educated person.

The most significant thesis in this respect is that considering mythological thinking is indispensable for the diachronic view of the intellectual evolution of humanity and the theory of literature as its immanent product. Potebnja focuses on myth as a most popular object of systematic research in his time. He accounts for this in philosophical sense, as far as, in his opinion, the human being's ontological interest to its own nature has transformed:

This is because the main question of self-cognition "What am I?" for modern human being transforms into "How did I come by my current qualities?" The urge to self-cognition entails one's understanding of the relevance of one's self to the present and past of the humanity, of dependence between culture and its absence. All this gave an impetus to the research of objective implementations of human thought, language and literature among them (Potebnja 1989: 249; emphasis in original)

In *Word and Myth*, Potebnja focuses on myth as an implementation of, in modern terms, a special type of cognition. Comparing myth with poetry, he maintains that on linguistic level they are almost coterminous. He believes that the clue to their distinction should be looked in the realm of consciousness, whose 'watchful eye', in his own words, is capable of distinguishing myth from poetry:

Myth is different from poetry in its narrow sense concerning poetic works, which emerged later. All the difference between myth and this later poetry stems from the attitude of consciousness to the elements of each. Ignoring this watchful eye, i.e. considering them exclusively as verbal phenomena, one would not distinguish them (Potebnja 1989: 259; emphasis added).

Potebnja develops this idea comparing myth and poetry as specific ways of world perception opposed to science. In this argumentation, the key terms are *image* and *meaning* and the nature of correlation between them. Potebnja's theory stands that myth represents the act of early consciousness. The relevance between image and meaning is imminent for both myth and later poetry. However, in myth, the figurative meaning of image is axiomatic and unintended:

(i) Myth belongs to the realm of poetry in the wide meaning of this word. Like any poetic work, <...> it consists of image and meaning, whose relevance is not to be tested as science requires, but is immediately persuasive or taken for granted <...> In myth, one who creates

the figurative value of image is not aware of it, image is completely extrapolated in meaning. In other words, myth is a verbal rendering of perception when the explaining image with exclusively subjective meaning is tagged as objective, i.e. as real in the realm of the explained (Potebnja 1989: 259; emphasis in original).

In poetry, image is viewed as a temporary device of creating meaning. By Potebnja, as soon as the figurative meaning has been distinguished as such, the unity of image and meaning disintegrates:

*In a later poetic work, image is no more than a device for creating (perception of) meaning, a device that disintegrates into elements, loses its integrity as a whole every time when it has fulfilled its purpose, in other words, in poetry, image has exclusively figurative meaning. <...> **Therefore, in mythological thinking, two halves of the statement (in particular, image and meaning) are more similar than in poetic one. The transformation of the relevance between image and meaning leads from myth to poetry, and further, from poetry to prose and science** (Potebnja 1989: 259; emphasis added).*

In science, which Potebnja immediately relates to prose, image is a tool of implementing more sophisticated (in comparison with myth and poetry) structures of thought. These structures arise from the specific way of world perception that Potebnja identifies as modern human's ability to perform analysis and practice critical thinking. These immanent features of scientific perception are continuously utilized to challenge the relevance of image and meaning:

*Modern person uses a poetic image as a means for construing and re-construing a new thought. To a certain extent, this process stems from his ability of scientific thinking, i.e. his ability to analyze and criticize. Analysis is disintegration of concrete (complex) perceptions and construal (creations of thoughts, in Potebnja's terms) into mutually exclusive realms to put them together again but in a way more convenient for thought. In its advance, this analysis is accompanied by building up an ability to question the truthfulness of this construal. **Every new construal (combination of thought) serves both an underpinning for testing previous construals and an impetus to the search of new perceptions, comparing and agreeing them with the previous ones** (Potebnja 1989: 244; emphasis added).*

Most significantly, Potebnja concludes that such observation of the nature of the human thought evolution provides a wide historical perspective. In its terms, he maintains that the human thought continuously creates a specific construal of the world (the human world, in Potebnja's terms) that is exclusively subjective. However, this subjectivity changes nature every time the obsolete view of the world transforms into the state-of-the-art one:

*Consolidating and generalizing the results of such work of human thought serves an underpinning for history. It stems from an idea that the human world is always currently subjective; **that this world is a string of changing worldviews whose truthfulness is nurtured by their topicality**; that we can compare our present view as a true one with a previous view as a false one; that we presently lack means for testing our view (Potebnja 1989: 244; emphasis added).*

I see this statement as an anticipation of Karl Popper's Evolutionary Epistemology. The latter contends that "selection is the generator and maintainer of the reliability of our senses and cognitive mechanisms, as well as **the "fit" between those mechanisms and the world**" (SEP; emphasis added). One of the key terms of Popper's theory is *the growth of human knowledge* (c.f. Potebnja's *string of changing worldviews*):

The course of human history is strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge (Popper 2002 (1957): xii).

Evidently, in his theory, Popper mainly focuses on scientific knowledge, however, the idea of an evolutionary approach to human's world perception and its results rendered in language look conceptually analogous (also see Peter Munz [2007]). The elaboration of this idea can also be traced in Heinz Westman's theory of the ontogenesis of the psyche (1983). This theory stands that the evolution of human's world perception is featured in mythological world view of the Bible.

To conclude this part, Potebnja's tenet of the evolution of mentality accounts for the ways of human world perception as a correlation of image and meaning implemented in language. This correlation is of paramount importance, since it is considered in terms of correspondence to real state of things. In mythological view, image and meaning converge, this extrapolation being axiomatically true. In poetic rendering of world perception, image is a tool of figurative language. Poetic type of viewing the world departs from the temporary or purely practical correlation of image and meaning. In science that Potebnja immediately associates with prose, the correlation of image and meaning is continuously tested, as this type of knowledge is only relatively true for a certain stage of human thought evolution. This Potebnja's idea, as I see it, conceptually anticipates Karl Popper's theory of Evolutionary Epistemology and Heinz Westman's theory of the ontogenesis of the psyche.

4. Potebnja's tenet of the symbolism of language units

One of the most popular Potebnja's tenets in the realm of poetics and aesthetics is immediately associated with his scientific heritage. It accounts for the semantic isomorphism of sounds (exclamations), and words in terms of the immanent correlation between the historically evolving human perception and language, which implements its results. Elaborating this theory, Potebnja departs from the supposition that the need to communicate perceptive experience of the primeval human was an impact to using primitive sounds or exclamations. This leads him to the argument that has stayed pivotal for semantic research within the last two centuries. In terms of modern cognitive science, it stands that construing the internal form of a linguistic unit, or its meaning, is subject to the uniform regularities rooted in human psyche.

Potebnja obviously distinguishes the internal form of the sound from that of the word. He considers the sound or the exclamation as a milestone in the evolution of human perception rendered in language. For him, the sound is a means of communication on an *onomatopoetic* stage of language history. He insists on this term since the sound used by the humans rendering certain experience differs from that produced by nature or animals in as much as the former is immanently symbolic:

*The indefinite nature of the exclamation lies in the fact that it does not have meaning of the kind the word does. But for language obstacles, we wouldn't be able to state that an exclamation caused by fear means fear, that is the thought about it implemented in the word fear, similarly, we wouldn't maintain that a blush on one's face means confusion. As an apex of an hour and minute clock hands on the mark 12 does not mean 12 o'clock but only indicates at this time, as shiver and fever, as well as high or low pulse rate do not mean disease but only serve symptoms for doctors, to the observer, **exclamations present senseless in themselves features of one's soul states**, whereas in the word he deals with a readymade thought* (Potebnja 1999: 84; emphasis added).

Potebnja's *features of one's soul states* comparable with modern term *perceptive experience* is a point in his argument for language symbolism. This term is immediately associated with Pierce's semiotic system and its trichotomy of *icon*, *index* and *symbol*. Following Potebnja's logics, exclamations demonstrate contiguity between external form as a primitive sound and internal form

as a main means of rendering human's perceptive experience. This feature is known as inherent in indices in terms of Pierce's system:

If the presentative characteristics of the sign are contiguous with the object and it thereby establishes its correlation with that object primarily by that means, then the sign is called an index (Lizska 1996: 117).

The internal form of the word, on Potebnja's definition, is a much more complex structure that demonstrates at least three features. The first is, opposite to sound, the meaning that deals with a more or less completely formed idea of the object rendered by word:

Internal form of word is the correlation of the thought content to consciousness; it demonstrates how a person sees his own thought (Potebnja 1999: 98).

On the other hand, whereas one and the same sound may tag any possible perceptive experience, the word has a stable correlation of external and internal form:

A thought once referred to a word, is triggered in one's consciousness by the sounds of this word (Potebnja 1999: 82).

Potebnja develops this idea and arrives at the conclusion that in every utterance word may have a different sense; however, the core of its meaning stays immutable as it refers its user to the same notion:

*In conversation, everyone understands the word in his own way, but **its external form suggests an objective thought that does not depend on the way one understands it.** <...> Word recurrence is just the other facet of its ability to have objective meaning for one and the same person (Potebnja 1999: 82; emphasis added).*

This argument suggests the second feature of the word's internal structure as its ability to render the notion. Potebnja argues that the word is a device of implementing the notion as a kind of construal, in modern terms. In the word, the notion is clearly structured and systematic, referred to the other notions or attributes, etc.:

Clarity (differentiation of features) inherent in the notion, the relevance of the substance to its attribute, the necessity of their correlation, the systematic approach to the notion – all this is primarily registered in the word and transformed by the word similarly to the human hand that transforms different mechanisms (Potebnja 1999: 145).

In this aspect, the internal form of the word and the notion look contagious. On the other hand, Potebnja emphasizes that the word may implement both the image (perceptive experience) and the notion. The role of the word here is paramount since the word is a means to elaborate the thought from the image into the notion; however, the word is considered as the void indicator of the latter:

*The basic feature of the image implemented in the word does not render any meaning; rather, **it serves as a sign or symbol of the known value;** if during the formation of the notion the internal form of the word fades the way it happens with the majority of our root words, then **the word become a void indicator of the thought, whereas no obvious relevance is observed between its sound form and meaning** (Potebnja 1999: 147; emphasis added).*

This argument is significant since it points to the feature of Pierce's symbol: "a sign may represent its object by means of some conventional, habitual, dispositional, or lawlike relation, in which case it is called a symbol" (Lizska 1996: 39). Besides that, as Potebnja maintains, the internal form of the word does not implement the thought completely, but rather one of its features:

<...> the word does not render the whole idea but rather its one feature. <...> By the word window (Rus. okno) we usually understand some opening fitted with glass in a frame, whereas judging by its similarity with the word eye (Rus. oko), it stands for an opening where they look or where the light comes, however it does not suggest either frames etc. or the very notion of an opening (Potebnja 1999: 90).

This statement suggests the third feature of the internal form of the word. In modern terms, the diachronic process of nomination entails prominence (Langacker) in construing the semantic value of the word. According to Potebnja, the prominent feature(s) tend to concentrate in the word's etymological prototype.

Almost a century later, Potebnja's idea of word symbolism has been further elaborated as psycholinguistic theory of literature (Fizer 1986).

To conclude, Potebnja's tenet of the symbolism of language units departs from the nature of correlation between their internal and external form. Potebnja considers the comparative semantic value of the exclamation and the word by way of estimating their role in implementing the human thought or perceptive experience. He maintains that the exclamation is an onomatopoeic unit, since it serves an indicator contiguous with certain perceptive experience. This nature of the exclamation is convergent with Pierce's definition of index. According to Potebnja's theory, word's internal form manifests three features that look significant for modern cognitive science. They are the following: firstly, word's internal form deals with a more or less completely formed idea of the object; secondly, it is viewed as a vehicle of the notion, and thirdly, viewed diachronically, it entails prominence in construing. The second feature indicates at the word as symbol in terms of Pierce's trichotomy.

5. Conclusions

Alexander Potebnja's scientific heritage encompasses ideas that nowadays underpin the whole array of state-of-the-art linguistic areas. In this article, I addressed three of his tenets that conceptually anticipated the basic postulates of evolutionary epistemology, cognitive and psycholinguistics, linguistic cultural studies and cognitive poetics. The first one, concerns language, thought and national spirit. In its terms, Potebnja, critically elaborated the ideas of his scientific mentor Humboldt and provided a comprehensive (for his time) account for language origin relevant to human cognition. Potebnja postulated that it plays a pivotal role in language evolution and human linguistic abilities. Besides, he considered language as a means of implementing perceptive experience of the human being viewed both in individual and national aspects. I consider these postulates as milestones in cognitive linguistics and the theory of the national construal of the world. The second Potebnja's tenet focuses on the evolution of mentality in terms of different types of world comprehension. He considers it as the correlation of image and meaning that evolve in myth, poetry and prose. In myth, as Potebnja maintains, image and meaning are axiomatically extrapolated, immanently for a naïve world perception. In poetry, image and meaning are contiguous but consciously distinguished. In prose, the relevance of these two elements is continuously challenged and is considered as only currently true. In this article, I read this tenet as one that conceptually anticipates Karl Popper's theory of Evolutionary Epistemology and Heinz Westman's theory of the ontogenesis of the psyche. The third Potebnja's tenet concerns the symbolism of language units. Accounting for the comparative semantic value of the exclamation and the word, he concentrates on the correlation of their external and internal forms. On his definition, the exclamation is an indicator of a perceptive experience, whereas the word is a vehicle

of the notion. These features suggest the contiguity of the exclamation and the word with Pierce's index and symbol, correspondingly.

REFERENCES

- Croft, W., Cruse, A.D. (2004). *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, V. (2009) *How Words Mean: Lexical Concepts, Cognitive Models, and Meaning Construction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Evolutionary Epistemology. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP)*. Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-evolutionary/>
- Fizer, J. (1986). *Alexander A. Potebnja's Psycholinguistic Theory of Literature: A Metacritical Inquiry*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Available at: [http://www.inmo.org.ua/assets/files/potebniana/Fizer.%20Alexander%20Potebnjas%20Psycholinguistic%20Theory%20of%20Literature%20\(1986\).pdf](http://www.inmo.org.ua/assets/files/potebniana/Fizer.%20Alexander%20Potebnjas%20Psycholinguistic%20Theory%20of%20Literature%20(1986).pdf)
- Hunnings, G. (1988). *The world and language in Wittgenstein's Philosophy*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kornilov, O.A. (2003). *Jazykovye kartiny mira kak proizvodnye nacional'nyh mentalitetov* [Language construals of the world as the derivatives of national mentalities]. Izdanie 2-e, ispravlennoe i dopolnennoe. Moscow: CheRo (in Russian).
- Liszka, J.J. (1996). *A General Introduction to the Semeiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Munz, P. (2007). The Phenomenon of Consciousness from a Popperian Perspective. In: *Consciousness Transitions Phylogenetic, Ontogenetic, and Physiological Aspects*. Ed. by Hans Liljenström and Peter Århem. B.V. Elsevier. pp. 307–326.
- Nikitin, M.V. (2007). *Kurs lingvisticheskoj semantiki* [The Course in Linguistic Semantics]. Uchebnoe posobie. 2-e izdanie, dopolnennoe i ispravlennoe. SPb.: Izd-vo RGPU im. A.I.Gercena (in Russian).
- Popova, Z.D., Sternin, I.A. (2015). *Jazyk i nacional'nye kartiny mira* [Language and national construals of the world]. Izd-nie 4-e stereotipnoe, Moskva-Berlin: Direct-Media (in Russian).
- Popper, K. (1957/2002). *The poverty of Historism*. London and New York: Routledge Classics.
- Potebnja, A.A. (1962). Obshhij literaturnyj jazyk i mestnye narechija [Common literary language and local dialects]. In: *Oleksandr Opanasovich Potebnja*. Kyiv. pp. 72–80 (in Ukrainian).
- Potebnja, A.A. (1962). Lyst do A.O. Patery [A Letter to A. O. Patera]. In: *Oleksandr Opanasovich Potebnja*. Kyiv. pp. 93–95 (in Ukrainian).
- Potebnja, A.A. (1989). Slovo i mif [Word and myth]. Moscow: Pravda (in Russian).
- Potebnja, A.A. (1999/1892). *Sobranie trudov. Mysl' i jazyk* [Collected Works. Thought and Language]. Moscow: Labirint (in Russian).
- Stepanov, Y.S. (2004). Koncept [Concept]. In: *Konstanty: Slovar' russkoj kul'tury*. 3rd edition. Moscow: Akademicheskij proekt (in Russian).
- Taylor, J.R. (1995). Introduction: On construing the world. In: *Language and the Cognitive Construal of the World*. Ed. by Taylor, John R. / MacLaury, Robert E. De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 1–22.
- Westman, H. (1983). *Structure of Biblical Myths: The Ontogenesis of the Psyche*. Spring Publications.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2003 /1958). *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigation'*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ievgeniia V. Bondarenko – Professor, Professor of the Department of English Philology, Vasyl Karazin Kharkiv National University, 4, Maidan Svobody, room 7-78, Kharkiv, email:

y.v.bondarenko@karazin.ua/ ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-1791>, Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&authuser=2&user=IPdzaq4AAAAJ>

Євгенія Валеріївна Бондаренко – доктор філологічних наук, професор, професор кафедри англійської філології ХНУ імени В.Н. Каразіна. Майдан Свободи, 4, к. 7-78. м. Харків. Ел. адреса: y.v.bondarenko@karazin.ua/ ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-1791>, Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&authuser=2&user=IPdzaq4AAAAJ>

Евгения Валериевна Бондаренко – доктор филологических наук, профессор, профессор кафедры английской филологии ХНУ имени В.Н. Каразина. Площадь Свободы, 4, к. 7-78, Харьков. Эл. адрес: y.v.bondarenko@karazin.ua/ ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-1791>, Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&authuser=2&user=IPdzaq4AAAAJ>