

Metaphysics in education and linguistics

Метафизика в образовании и лингвистике

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Аннотация

Метафизические представления чрезвычайно важны для сохранения в общественной жизни представлений о таких этических нормах, как доброта, мужество, справедливость и истина. Данная статья посвящена важности метафизики в образовательном процессе, а также грамматическим категориям, служащим средством интерполяции метафизических идей в лингвистике.

Ключевые слова: образование, лингвистика, литургический язык, дуализм, философское богословие, воспитание личности учеников, метафизическая лексика, метафизическая грамматика, сверхъестественное, устойчивое развитие, филологические записки.

Abstract

Metaphysical representations are extremely important for the preservation, in public life, of notions about such ethical norms as kindness, courage, justice and truth. This article is devoted to the importance of metaphysics in the educational process, as well as to special grammatical categories which serve as a means of translating metaphysical ideas into linguistics.

Keywords: education, linguistics, liturgical language, dualis, philosophical theology, cultivating pupils' personalities, metaphysical vocabulary, metaphysical grammar, supernatural, sustainable development, Philological Notes.

Metaphysics is a term that has acquired various meanings over the history of its existence. As experience observing many discussions shows, in general, the majority of contradictions are connected with varying understandings of the discussion's key concepts and as such, their content. That is why the first necessity is agreeing on a common understanding of the key terms. So, first of all I would like to clarify what the term "metaphysics" will mean in this article.

Martin Heidegger in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* says that when one goes back to a word's basic meaning, one should not expect to acquire an unambiguous meaning. The original primary tale does not necessarily have to exhaust the full essence of the revealed-in-word. At the same time, etymology should not be left.

In the context of this article, I propose to understand by the term metaphysics its etymological significance: that of "beyond physics", related to "supernatural". This understanding of the term is characteristic of the pedagogical school I represent. And I represent the heritage of the scientific journal *Philological Notes* and its editor Alexey Khovansky. This was the oldest linguistic publication and the best one in the 19th century in Russia, because the *Philological Notes* long played the role of the official publication of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In addition to pedagogy and linguistics, the journal was significantly devoted to questions of psychology and the philosophy of linguistics. And the goal of the philosophy of

linguistics in the 19th century was the definition of the place of each language in the general system of languages, both national and professional. We can say that comparativistics as a method of scientific cognition largely owes its existence to linguistics. Comparison of the Russian language with other Slavic languages, as well as Church Slavonic, uncoverlinguistic's philosophical content.

It should be noted that literary Russian was formed on the basis of two linguistic traditions: from a South Slavic vocabulary and Church Slavonic grammar, and vocabulary of the East Slavic dialect.

In turn, Church Slavonic, both liturgical and class, was formed on the basis of the vocabulary of one of the South Slavic dialect, another heir of which is modern Macedonian. The vocabulary of the church language included only part of the lexicon of the South Slavic dialect, corresponding to the text of the Holy Scripture. I note by the way, that in addition to the Slavic vocabulary, the church language includes new metaphysical borrowings from Hebrew and Greek (for example: *cherubim* and *angels*, *toponims*, *hydronyms* etc). All this metaphysical heritage has passed into modern literary Russian, which now is used by philosophy.

The grammar of literary Russian was formed over a number of language reforms, and as a result, the modern language is categorically different from the old one. In Russia there are a number of good specialists on the history of Russian grammar, and therefore of Church Slavonic, however there are some difficulties with understanding the philosophical content of some grammatical categories. Disputes about grammar, which are known as *The language controversy in 16-17th centuries*, lasted more than a hundred years.

There was no common understanding of the meanings of special temporary grammatical categories. Some believed that the form for describing metaphysical phenomena is the *aphoristic aorist*, others preferred the *imperfect*. In the 17th century, Maxim the Greek (who was responsible for bringing the church texts to one sample) was cursed and exiled to a monastery for a small error in describing the Savior's deeds: he used the *perfect* instead of the *aorist*. Thus he insulted the eternal, supranaturalistic, metaphysical essence of the Savior. Such a temporary form could permit the reader to see Christ as mortal one.

That great grammatical dispute did not clarify the grammar's philosophical content. What is most important for us in this dispute, is that there was no unity in understanding of grammatical forms, especially concerning special temporal grammatical categories.*

The correlation of time and eternity remains one of the key philosophical questions. In the Platonic sense, eternity is metaphysical, relevant to the supranatural idem, whereas space and time are initial and finite. In the new *Oxford Handbook to Philosophical Theology*, William Lane Craig examines options for understanding eternity as infinite and without origin, or even timelessness (Craig624). Metaphysical subjects that *go beyond* the material-time continuum, have the characteristic of eternal existence. Therefore, to describe the activities of the Eternal Subject, it is logical to assume somewhat different grammatical forms, different from the categories describing perishable and temporary objects.

In the Russian tradition, grammar's theological content was erected to *patristic theological wisdom*. In the 12th century, Climent Smolyatich talked about the ancient school's influence on the content of grammatical forms.**This was about correlating the grammatical categories that denote the

*As we know, it was grammar and dialectic (with rhetoric) that entered the trivium of the *seven liberal arts*. Grammar even before dialectics, although the primary, of course, is a philosophical question...

**Obviously, Climent of Smolensk received his monastic name from Climent of Ohrid, who in the Orthodox tradition is considered as "the first bishop of the Slavonic language", more accurately the church language. In Russia, Climent Smolyatich was the second Russian bishop and the first philosopher "which had not yet been in the Russian lands". In general, for the tradition of giving the names of saints in Christian ordinances (baptism and ordination into monasticism), the idea of "reproduction of the sociality" is especially characteristic. This means that along with the name, the new owner receives a special virtuous script with instructions on how to build a righteous life and how to preserve the eternal life of metaphysical ideas in the life of the church community. In this respect, the connection between Climent of Smolensk and Climent of Ohrid is very symbolic, because the

deeds of the Eternal Subject with categories describing the temporal, initial and final. He was offensively called a "philosopher" and was reproached with the elevation of pagan thought, with references to Homer, Aristotle and Plato instead of *revered scripture*.***

As we can see, by the 12th century in Russia the tradition of philosophical comprehension of church grammar had already been damaged, and there was no unanimity on the philosophical content of the temporal categories in the Russian tradition. Modern linguists have not received a clear idea of this, and it is not an urgent task for them. In the 20th century, during the reign of Marxist materialism, Russian metaphysical thought suffered greatly. However, this also applies to Western European thought. In modern Russian education, the philosophy of grammar is not the subject of active research. In turn, grammatical problems are not a subject of research attention of modern philosophers. As a result, there are very few people dedicated to such details of the grammatical tradition. The circle of this sort of sages is very narrow. In principle, a fairly insignificant portion of the population is interested in metaphysics. And the theme of metaphysics in grammar is the lot of rare individuals.

As far as I know, at numerous philosophical conferences with the titles "The Philosophy of Language and the Language of Philosophy", the problems, described in my report, are rarely discussed. Perhaps the most famous analyst of this issue is Peter Strawson (Ross371-390). Philosophical-linguistic thought is under the considerable influence of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which, in my opinion, cannot be removed from dialectical criticism. Under the auspices of our Foundation, a couple of articles were written on this topic. One of them, *Grammatica sub specie philosophia* is specifically devoted to this problem. At present, it cannot be said that the content of these articles is very popular or even known among philosophers and grammars. Of course, the theses of these articles can also be subject to criticism. But, in my opinion, it cannot be otherwise, because philosophy is not only logical discourse, but also dialectic. I mean that philosophy initially has a dialectical character. So, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* should also be considered within the framework of dialectical critic. The development of this thought fully corresponds to the goal of teaching *critical thinking*, which is close to the nature of philosophy or dialectic in general.

With respect to the philosophical content of grammatical forms, it is very interesting to compare the merits of church grammar with a class scientific language, such as Quenya in the Legends of Middle-earth, composed by Oxford professor John Tolkien. If we consider the grammar of Quenya in comparison with Church Slavonic, they are very similar in reserve grammatical categories. For example, use of the aphoristic aorist, denoting Eternal metaphysical truths. In Middle-earth, the language of Quenya was also the preserve of a narrow circle of sages, of whose knowledge the uninitiated could only guess. Both the Grammar of Quenya and the grammar of the Church Slavonic imply the existence of a special temporal grammatical form correlated with the idea of the Eternal Subject. The presence of this form, along with the form of the dual number, in the philosophical context that Wilhelm von Humboldt described in the article *Über den Dualis*, can be considered the signifier of a sacral or spiritual text. Thus, the grammatical category preserved the metaphysical idea in grammar. Another part common to both Church Slavonic and Quenya is their class character.

The Church Slavonic, which was created on the basis of the Greek philosophical and grammatical tradition, received an official, class and liturgical character. In the Middle Ages, Latin was also a class language. But there was no aorist in Latin, nor was there the dualis.

It is obvious that the philosophical idea of the eternal supranatural being must find its expression in a grammatical form. But in the Russian grammar school the philosophical aspect of the tradition was not taught specifically. Preference was given to the patristic theological aspect,

perception of the name of the departed saint was very important. Now the meaning of this tradition is almost lost in secular life and only a few know about it. Clearly, this is also connected with Clement of Alexandria's argument that biblical monotheism must be understood from the point of view of classical ancient philosophy.

***All this took place against the backdrop of a political struggle between Kiev and Novgorod princes, who, by the way, were relatives.

which did not add to understanding, but probably somehow affected the quality of faith. It is difficult to say whether this influence was positive or negative. From the point of view of *rationalization*, it was rather negative, because the biblical faith should be based on *healthy comprehension*.

As the practice of Russian philosophical and theological school shows, grammar's metaphysical content was, if not completely lost, then for a long time beyond the focus of research attention. Already in 19th century, the outstanding Slavic linguist Baudouin de Courtenay noted that in his time language was largely going to the service of natural science. Along with the disappearance of supranaturalism and metaphysics of this kind, the need for corresponding grammatical categories also began to disappear.

Incidentally, in the modern European languages spoken by philosophers, there are no such forms, which greatly complicates the interpretation of the existence of metaphysical concepts. To discuss metaphysics, we have to resort to additional complex explanations, which tend more to cloud the meaning rather than clarify it. Literary Russian's loss of these categories adversely affected cognitive potency. Metaphysical thought has lost effective tools for understanding metaphysics in general, as well as in education and pedagogy.

Metaphysics, in general, is the doctrine of an intelligible and invariant (eternal) part of the universe, of a constant part in a changing world, of what is accessible only to speculation, that is, to thought. By contrast the "metaphysics of pedagogy" is a teaching not just about the existence of pedagogy, but, firstly what is constant (invariant) in pedagogy and, secondly, what is accessible to theoretical development (Хазиев 287).

Reflecting on the essence of pedagogy, on its invariant part, one can be convinced that only the fact of knowledge, information and experience transfer, with its goals, can be invariant in pedagogy. If we somehow change this content, it will mean that the concept has a new meaning, it means it has become something different from pedagogy. This fact seems to be the only worthy title of the invariant part, because everything else in education is absolutely variable. This concerns techniques, methodologies etc.

If the history of linguistics preserves metaphysics in a quasi-dead language, then for metaphysics to exist in education, it is necessary to preserve abstract concepts such as *justice*, *kindness*, *honesty* – those qualities that distinguish people aspiring to the Highest sacred knowledge. As Alvin Plantinga believed, for a full and adequate perception of these concepts, one must have a special feeling – *senususdivinatis* (Plantinga 173). The Finnish philosopher, Tapio Puolimatka, spoke at the recent conference devoted to the work of Plantinga: "such knowledge can be taught without violating the standards of rationality. It can be argued, on the contrary, that teaching is in doctrinative if it completely bypasses religious and worldview issues and thereby hides the worldview connections of knowledge. Such teaching does not develop the central dimensions of the students' personalities and fails to open their minds for personal encounters with ultimate reality".

In recent years in Russia, teachers have talked a lot about the place of cultivating pupils' personalities during the educational process. How should this be? As we understand our tradition, at the heart of cultivating pupils' personalities are such humanitarian values and abstract concepts as *justice*, *kindness*, *mercy*, etc. These concepts are deeply metaphysical in nature. To describe and easily understand the existence of these abstract concepts, there is a need for special grammatical categories. If not in a spoken language, then perhaps in the language of philosophy, or even in the language of fiction.

In Russia, Church Slavonic was the language of one of the two noble classes. In the Middle Ages, the norms of this language extended to the literary language of another noble class. Centuries later, the language of the "third estate", which, from the point of view of the priestly class, was vile and profane, has received the status of a language of literature. In modern history, this language serves as the language of philosophy, of science in general. However, there is a question: how far is the language of the "third estate" suitable for philosophy? Along with the development of atheism and scientism, metaphysics' share in the philosophical consciousness

has significantly decreased. As practice shows, the norms of traditional ethics have also been subjected to a critical eye. This logic of the development of society does not provide for the preservation of these norms in language and mass consciousness, and only theologians and a very small part of secular scientists have interest in it.

In recent years, Heidegger's phrase "Language is the house of being" is one of the most popular when it comes to the relationship of philology and philosophy. The presence of grammatical categories which serve to describe the essence of abstract concepts, characterizes this *house of being*. Thanks to these categories one can understand the existence of metaphysics in such a house.

The question of the language of philosophy must not concern solely philosophy, but also linguistics, namely its sections – grammar and vocabulary, and even phonetics. As early as the 19th century, our journal examined the philosophical aspects of the physiology of sound: Vowel sounds represent metaphysics, and consonants represent physiology. As for metaphysical vocabulary, a monograph, devoted to metaphysical vocabulary in V. Soloviev's works, is of interest in this connection (Антропова 6). Incidentally, it would be nice to make the creation of a metaphysical dictionary of the Old Slavonic language one of the directions of the Macedonian philosophical society.

Currently, the role of philosophy in education is seen in the preservation of the best traditions and in the development of new and worthy discoveries, i.e. *sustainable development* which philosophical roots come from one of the ten Pythagorean pair *space and movement*, which Aristotle described in his tractate *Metaphysics* (Ростошинский 176).

As we believe, to make social development sustainable, it is necessary to preserve the fundamental social principles, such abstract concepts as *justice, mercy, beauty*. These divine virtues are not essential to common people. The barbarians, who are not familiar with the divine virtues, cannot claim inherent dignity. Beauty is order – the Cosmos, and the Cosmos is materialized justice. Justice is even higher than the gods (the Greek gods), because they betray it. The stars are always fair, because they are amenable to mathematical calculation and do not violate order. I think this was what Immanuel Kant had in mind when he spoke *of the starry sky above us and the moral law within us*.

Plato called justice the *Idea of Ideas*, an absolute good, which can only be seen as a revelation. The sage can see justice, but cannot bring it to the little man, because the people are busy with their own affairs. Therefore, the people need help. But there is no longer any such help to be found in grammar. Therefore, metaphysics must be preserved in philosophy. Philosophers should keep in touch with these ideas. If this connection were lost, then the folk would disappear. European civilization is now dying demographically, and metaphysicians are ever fewer and further between. Soon they will need to be protected from the barbarians with the support of UNESCO.

With the current state of affairs in secular education, the emergence of special grammatical forms for describing *eternal metaphysical concepts* seems unlikely. But this must be taught. We need the best tools to explain the metaphysical nature of Justice.

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