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## The review

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### What Psycholinguistics do Psychologists Need?

*A review on the book: Belyanin V.P. Psycholinguistics. Textbook. 6th ed., corrected and amended. Moscow, Flinta, MPSI, 2009. 416 pp.- ISBN 5-89349-371-06 ISBN 5-89502-421-1.*

This age is considered to be the era of informational technologies. We witness it everywhere: in widening of the Internet web, in connection of people through intensive phone communication, in real time broadcasting, in availability of information from any part of the world. For psychologists it means that a contemporary human being should be studied as a subject of intensive communication and verbal interaction, or as Homo Loquens, and also Homo Audiens, Homo Scribens and Homo Legens.

At the same time the curriculum for psychologists devotes very little attention to the analysis of speech and – what is more essential – to the subject of verbal activity. Students are familiarized with types and functions of speech in the course of “General Psychology”, they are told about speech development in the course of “Developmental Psychology” and about malfunctions of speech in the course of “Psychopathology”. Speaking Person with their peculiarities and problems is never the object of consideration during all the period of the instruction. The course “Psycholinguistics” is not obligatory for the students of psychological specialities, it is delivered only in those Universities, that have specialists in this area. Unfortunately there are not too many such institutes of higher education in this country. This made psychologists think that studying verbal behaviour of a human being is a prerogative of linguists, who share this opinion gladly, taking upon themselves also the study of psychological aspects of verbal interaction.

The problem of teaching students psycholinguistics became more complicated because not all the programs designed by linguists suit the purposes of training of psychologists. In the last decade, several textbooks on psycholinguistics were published by such authors as A.A. Leontjev, A.A. Zalevskaja, V.P. Belyanin, V.P. Glukhov, I.N. Gorelov and K.F. Sedov, T.N. Ushakova, R.M. Frumkina. The textbooks have essential distinctions in structure and topics, and above all in making emphases. Being on the border between psychology and linguistics, psycholinguistics may accentuate either the problem of a personality, who is generating and perceiving speech, or on the phenomena of language and speech itself. It goes without saying that psychologists need programs on psycholinguistics which would be personality-centered, and thus helpful for the students in their future job.



In this connection, the textbooks and programs on psycholinguistics besides obligatory topics should contain chapters dedicated to current issues of modern psychology. They are as such.

Analysis of connection of speech and perception of the world by personality, which presupposes besides pure theoretical analysis consideration of speech genres, slang, invectives, dialecticisms, neologisms, obsolete words and other attributes as determinants of language picture of the world of a person.

- Study of the structure of communication act and its constituents, and also speech strategies and communication errors.
- Study of correlation between written and oral speech of a person, on one side, and his social and demographic characteristics, on the other. This material may be applied by psychologists for the diagnostics of personality traits on the basis of verbal production.
- Consideration of the very same problem for the applied areas of psychology (author identification expertise, forensic psycholinguistics, political psychology, analysis of mass media and advertising texts).
- Analysis of manifestation of emotions in oral and written speech, and also the possibility of correction of emotional self-manifestation in psychotherapy.
- Examination of psychological aspects of intercultural speech barriers which become apparent in using native and foreign languages.

This list is not full, but even it reveals how urgent for psychologists is the study of psycholinguistics, especially if it is aimed at the study of *Homo Loquens*.

In the context of these necessities I consider it important to analyse the new textbook on psycholinguistics published by “Flita” editorial board, which is the sixth edition written by doctor of philology and candidate of psychology Valery Pavlovich Belyanin. Since this edition has been substantially enlarged and complemented, it is necessary to mention in the first place the changes made in comparison with the previous editions. The size of the textbook doubled, and the author widened the content of the existing chapters and parts.

Like in previous editions the textbook starts with a short excursus in the history of emerging of psycholinguistics in Russia and abroad, then it goes to child speech. Next go the problems of speech generation and perception which are rather complex for understanding by students. V.P. Belyanin manages to use clear and precise language, without abusing linguistic phraseology in describing theoretical conceptions regarding these processes. The discourse is entertaining, the language is literary and all this make the textbook attractive for the students.

A great advantage of this textbook is that it includes examination of applied aspects (this is done in two chapters: “Forensic psycholinguistics”, and “Applied Aspects of Psycholinguistics”), which take a quarter of the textbook. Since V.P. Belyanin has a large experience in psychological-and-linguistic expertise, he manages to narrate about the application of psycholinguistic knowledge in the area of juridical practise, when analyzing the texts of all-embracing religious cults, political texts, commercials



and for the purposes of identification of personality by speech. This material may be a stimulus for a lot of students to chose this approach in their scholarly and practical work.

Talking about the structure of the textbook, it is necessary to emphasize that it mainly follows the pattern of American textbooks: every chapter starts with keywords, the chapters are divided into fragments, and each of them has a subtitle. This allows the students to find any part easily, and also prevents monotonia while reading. The textbook is full of examples (they are numbered and italicized) which interpret theoretical postulates. Most of the examples are in two languages – in Russian and English. At the end of every chapter there are questions, proposals for course and diploma papers, which makes the text somewhat dialogical.

At the end of the textbook there is a short biographical data of the scholars, who endowed in psycholinguistics. This broadens the erudition of students. The textbook ends with samples of tests with multiply choice and the synopsis of the whole textbook on six pages.

The textbook deals upon many problems which are very important for the training of psychologists, especially in the chapters devoted to ethnopsycholinguistics and patopsycholinguistics, and also in applied chapters. At the same time, some of the issues stayed behind the scenes. In particular, pragmalinguistics is not under consideration, though the analysis of the structure of communicative act, speech strategies and mistakes is extremely valuable for psychologists. Also the textbook does not deal too much with the types of texts thorough their genres, styles, content (though the foundations of author's conception of psychostylistics are submitted), not too much attention is devoted to the specificity of monologue and dialogue speech.

Appraising the textbook on psycholinguistics in general, it is possible to say that it is mainly centered on the personality of a speaking individual. This became possible, in my opinion, due to the scholarly interests of V.P. Belyanin, who is famous for his multiple works dealing with the problems of correlation between personality and text, created by him/her. The publication of such a textbook is a good stimulus for promoting of interest in this science, and gives an opportunity to create on its basis programs of the course of "Psycholinguistics" for psychologists.