

Language. A means of connection between Human Being and Spiritual World (An attempt of anthroposophic approach)

It is supposed to be a global project which aims to come up to outlining the Language of the Spiritual World, its structure, and trace its evolvement in layers / bodies of the Human being - I, astral, etheric, physical.

This vast domain requires studying the current state of the Language, trends in its transformation and looking for ways of using our human languages to help restore the link between our material language and the language of the Spiritual world.

The last but not the least related problem is future of the Language, its further transformations and role in the creative process and activities of the human beings.

So here I could trace 3 distinct directions which provide Top-Down and Bottom-Up interconnections and mutual influences between the Spiritual World and Human language:

1. Language as a spiritual phenomenon - Grammar of the Language of the Spiritual World

(possible top-down approach (the **MOST OBSCURE so far**) - gain spiritual practices - R. Steiner's exercised etc.)

(possible bottom-up approaches:

- looking at **bulk language phenomena** and their evolution: idioms in different languages, incorporation in polysynthetic and other languages, meta-meanings and abstractions from different perspective;

- with reference to **abstract meanings** - to study the notional fields that abstract words/concepts produce - how to make use of abstract sentences and empty phrases

- study **bilingualism** (use the available knowledge) - to explore in what form the ideas come, how the thinking process changes when we switch from one language to another (being with both at the bilingual level - level of native speaker)

- looking at **similar phrases** in different languages

Bottom-up goal:

- to make language more conscious-based, knowledge-based, rich, ethical, soulful (meaningful + ethical);

- to initiate / restore the thinking process - our path to penetrate the Spiritual world - have ideas, think them over consciously, think about their benefit, expand the Social I (for students and myself as a teacher))

2. Human language.

2.1. Trends in the structure and semantics - real word meaning, development of the meta-meanings, abstraction, and implications - for the language structure and communication - and ways to overcome negative implications

2.2. Creating free thinking environment with students through learning languages and expansive learning

3. Future of the Language as a means of creation

To research 2.1 and overcome negative implications can only be done subject to 2.2 and only in cooperation with students - the younger generation - who are **Janus headed**)). The same for 1 and 3))))) - this is what teachers should and can learn with and from students)).

Introduction

My interest has always been the origin of the Language, the essence of the Language. But as a matter of fact during all my life I've found only some hints of how to tackle this issue, and answers that I received only put more and more questions.

Though, I came here for more practical purposes.

The 1-st reason is connected directly with my job. I've been teaching students in the university, and for a decade may be more I've been observing a very distinct loss of interest to learning; a very passive approach to learning, lack of interest in gaining knowledge in general, in shaping the background, and interest only in direct focused skills, the approach which is highly developed in the society and recommended by the administration. The situation proceeds especially when the students start working to earn money for the studies, which brings them to studying just to get a certificate or a diploma, hoping to gain all the necessary (focused and narrow) skills at work

Moreover, the technologies do not help in learning, rather save time **from** learning, which has brought to less reading, reading lifeless and soulless summaries instead of works by writers, and we know that reading, literature is a big source of the language, its richness, which influences our soul life, develops imagination, awakens thinking and expands cognitive functions. This results in quite a primitive language and communication and it is getting really evident.

I don't say that it is 100% but the trend is really very evident.

The second problem is partly connected with teaching and partly it is common for everybody - the language is getting more and more abstract, means of expression - words and phrases gain more and more abstract meaning, therefore the spoken / written text loses its exactness, generating so-called meta-meanings - the hidden meanings. There are so many variants how to express something - sometimes we find out that we are speaking about one and the same things with absolutely different, even contradicting statements, which might initiate disagreements, arguing and even conflicts.

So, there is a huge context behind our speaking / use of language process. The language requires from us an ability of «reading between the lines», which therefore can be treated by different people differently - the language admits it. (Besides, the quality of understanding will depend on your culture, on the level of education, background knowledge, developed cognitive abilities - and talent). It might result in misunderstandings, offenses, manipulations, if you do it intentionally. Artificial Intelligence only contributes to the misunderstanding as it might generate low quality untruthful information (you will always need verification to be sure of the result of AI's work).

I wanted to find the roots of this process and find the ways how to return the interest to studying, to gaining knowledge, to thinking, find the turning point and turn the attention back to learning.

But coming here and attending the seminars and lectures I found a connection of this practical issue to my real interest, and ideas came how to combine these two directions - **researching the origin of language and its spiritual roots and solving my teaching problems.**

Having been here I have had a more exact outline of the subject my interest - aiming to **try to outline the Grammar of the Language of Spiritual World** - as a global project, as this, in my opinion, is where our language begins. It is very important to master this language. For many many cultures and in many languages the words «language», «язык» means «connection», so it is Language - just what connects us to the SW. However, this connection is now broken, it's very difficult for a Human being now to master this language, very few people really being able to understand the messages of the SW, those initiated.

So, the question could be - what could our actions in this case be?

I thought that the problems which I - and not only I - all my colleagues - have been facing in the lecture room could help us make the first step to restore this connection with the Spiritual world through solving the problems with the Human language - to start with small practical actions. Because language is everywhere, in everything which outlines our lives - in economy, in politics, in negotiations and communication, and the more diverse and rich the language, the more understanding we can reach and the more beauty - in the tangible and intangible world (our relationships) we could create.

Even the trend to abstractness in the means of expressions and the capacity of the human language to produce meta-meanings might be a serious resource for approaching the language of the spiritual world, to understand on what levels of the human's being we understand each other, how the context - the background, the surrounding environment, the feelings can contribute to understanding or misunderstanding - sort of etheric level and astral level, how it is connected with the I etc.

Therefore, it is very important to teach students to love the language, to use it appropriately, to be attentive to the vocabulary and means of connection, i.e. the Grammar, to understand the real meaning of the words, their importance, their role in what we do, how we relate to each other, why we speak, what language we use.

So, while continuously attempting to work on our spiritual development we start with the **bottom up approach** - real steps and actions to be taken on the ground level - in the lecture rooms, in face-to-face communication. One of the global solutions and challenges here is to create **free-thinking environment** in communication at any level. No approach to studying any aspect of the spiritual world is possible on behalf of limited and restrained personalities, as it is just free thinking that initiates imagination, ideas, collaboration. Moreover, it's a cooperative business. One single person cannot gain the result (though can initiate the trend).

Therefore, we can say that **Social Aesthetics** is the Present and the Future of the Language and languages.

Creating free thinking environment with students through learning languages and expansive learning

The problems which we've been fixing in the University lecture rooms are interconnected and can be summarized as follows:

1. passive attitude to learning - unwillingness to think, generate ideas (in any language), which is partly due to lack of expansive learning, insufficient reading practice (not as a class task but as a developed habit), partly to fear of being judged - by peers or teachers, sticking to visuals i.e. readiness to receive information without further proceeding more than processing and generating, partly to using AI not only for doing their writing tasks, but even for getting ideas for presentations and projects
2. vague value of education - focus on gaining very narrow discrete professional skills rather than real learning, which results in collecting certificates on having these skills obtained from various courses, consultants etc. By the way, the word «skill» has lost its acute meaning, therefore, the skills to be gained have also become something very uncertain and abstract.
3. Formalization and bureaucratization of education (rigid electronic platforms providing rigid procedure of «earning» your diploma - every minor fact of contribution is transferred into points and has weight. In this case education is getting limited to gaining points to get a diploma, tasks are done for the reason of gaining additional points (that's why most tasks are done «with their left foot» - «левой пяткой»).

4. losing listening abilities and as a result - abilities to hold communication - partially it is connected with the passivity and also a trend of using AI for doing tasks. They might be very good at delivering presentations, giving individual answers but they are absolutely disinterested in contributions of others getting absolutely switched off.

Another reason is broken connection with the real meaning of the word / word partnership / phrase / text, which lead to language units getting more and more abstract while therefore gaining meta-meanings, i.e. not the real meaning but implied. This means that the meaning of the phrase will depend on the ability of the speaker to specify or hide the meaning, on the ability of the listener to extract it, on the situational context of the conversation, on the culture of the interlocutors etc. Then in the reality, the listener will mostly perceive not the real meaning of the phrase but his / her own expectations strongly connected with the environment.

Therefore, until we have developed sufficient attention to the situation of speaking, the participants of the conversation and the real meaning, we might turn up in quite a vulnerable situation.

This brings us to unwillingness to get involved in discussion - group discussion - tendency to do these tasks individually and deliver individual results, as discussion requires interest and attention to both the text, the participants and the situation of the conversation.

5. attention deficit syndrome - and it turns up more and more - their attention can be drawn for only about 5 min - which somehow results from lack of reading and thinking practices, with being exposed to AI or preferable consumption of visuals - videos to reading, and is, in its turn, connected with the lost practice of thinking, sharing and communicating
6. Abstract character of the language brings out another consequence - don't care attitude, loss of responsibility for the spoken «word», which entails lack of reliability on what is said or written. Nowadays students fail distinguishing the text written by AI and a human being - they don't care. The man does not identify what **he** says with **his** knowledge and does not care about it, as the connection with the Spiritual world is broken. Without it the text is soulless, dead. Whatever rationalistic and logical the text / thought could be, if it is soulless, it is empty. The text which is pronounced consciously, with full understanding of the real meaning of every word and quality of the sources relied on has more chances to be heard. Students feel that, lose trust in the spoken or written word and stop listening.

The process can be outlined as follows: Students feel that and stop listening —> stop processing —> stop thinking —> become passive —> brain stop working —> deficit of attention - they need more movement, more etheric qualities, less mental qualities, less I.

These problems may be attempted to be solved **through creating free-thinking environment to make it the basis for establishing Social Aesthetics** - a universal environment for cooperative ethical relationships between its participants. Aesthetics is about Beauty. Beauty implies Ethics, Professionalism and Knowledge. Social aesthetics is about Beauty in the global and local society, the global society being our Planet Earth, and the local one - our community, in particular, university environment, more particular, student-to-student and student-to-teacher relationships within the framework of a group, a course, a university as a whole etc.

The work involves 3 layers / constituents:

1. Teacher's layer - what should I as a teacher do myself (constant learning, inner development, inner transformation, valuing students' mindset, fostering free thinking, learning to learn from them and with them, understanding their motivations)

2. Student's layer - activities that I as a teacher design for students for them to develop free thinking and ethical thinking

3. Social aesthetics - relations between students and teachers and students based on

- Trust
- Confidence

- Empathy
- Ethics

Which implies beauty in human relationships, society based on beauty - beautiful language, beautiful environment, ethical attitude.

Principles to base our work on:

- 1) Every contribution is valued
- 2) Every contribution implies development (of both teachers and students)
 - linguistic
 - informational
 - thinking
- 3) Every contribution gains appreciation of the audience
- 4) Every contribution generates wish and will to look for and share further (wish generates will - expansion constituent)
- 5) Feeling valued by others for their contribution, personality, interest, help, involvement, thinking
- 6) Students are «cleverer» than teachers - for teachers: looking for aspects in students' answers and behavior to be taught with and be proud of.
- 7) Implementing kaizen principle - that of continuous improvement - arranging a «box» of proposals (e.g. a channel in Telegram or a tangible box - for students to share their likes and dislikes, offers for the lesson to be improved or changed, or added to, e.g. how the material could be presented, or with reference not only to the current lesson but to the whole process - to be acknowledged and discussed afterwards in the case of discrepancy with the teacher's opinion). This drive is very important for students not only to be consumers (mostly passive) - as occurs nowadays - but contribute ideas, as according to R. Steiner, students (the youth) are Janus-headed - looking at the previous generation for the precious knowledge and building ideas for the future, feeling better their own nature and the nature of the future.
This could help create a culture of empathy, reciprocity, mutual respect and trust (p. 228 - Penguin and Leviathan)
- 8) Student-to-teacher and student-to-student cooperation is welcomed, being a key to a smooth process (of education and teaching)
- 9) Studying is not a game (not only a game) - nobody turns down beneficial **ordinary exercises**.
- 10) Pre-task activities: before starting, consider the audience - their goals, fears, age, etc.

What do we contribute in:

- 1) development of interest in
 - the material
 - thinking
 - learning
 - creating
- 2) removing fear of being judged (which encourages free thinking)
- 3) development of imagination to be able to generate ideas without being afraid of articulating them
- 4) expansion of the knowledge, which will subsequently result in increasing interest, generating ideas and thinking
- 5) building cooperative strategies
 - to arrange the thinking process
 - to unite the efforts of the group
 - to direct potential of strong students to contributing the development of the skills and opening the potential of weaker or passive ones

- 6) drawing students away from using AI, providing less addiction to it and encouraging more creativity and freedom of thinking
- 7) gaining balance between the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation
- 8) combining all the above with the **language learning**
 - building vocabulary,
 - learning grammar,
 - looking for relevant means of expression,
 - gaining fluency
 - discourse building
- 9) developing attention and empathy through listening and speaking
- 10) building the whole environment of **Social Aesthetics**

This approach is relevant for absolutely any audience and subject. The above-mentioned language constituent can be applied both to any level of **foreign language learning** and to developing and maintaining the **Mother tongue**, and development of speaking practices and generating ideas, thinking them over and substantiating them in the Native language.

With reference to **foreign language learning**, we adapt the use-of-language to the group level - for example, by just restricting or expanding the language material

- e.g. in groups of beginners we can start with using key words, idiomatic expressions of politeness, asking for information, reacting to information, understanding the gist through key expressions, making suggestions, expressing qualities (using attributes etc.), distinguishing the grammar base (subject - predicate complex etc.).
- in more advanced groups - more discussion, individual reasoning or group cooperation, mediation and expansion of the knowledge to related and adjacent domains.

Practical part. Tasks and activities

1. Work with the vocabulary / discourse constituents

1.1. Focus on the real meaning of the word

- is the meaning different in different languages
- how exactly the meaning changed / has changed:
 - narrowing the meaning
 - broadening the meaning
 - changing completely
 - getting into abstraction

1.2. Focusing on the meta meanings - how do words / expressions behave in different situations:

- cultural
- contextual

Examples:

- advertising / advertise / advertisement - XVth century - from: to draw attention to smth, turn to smth, notify on smth.
- In Russian - «реклама» / «рекламировать» - from: lat. «reclamare» - to scream / to hail; call back a hawk; other extensions - connected with emotional drawing attention —> reclaim - cry out against, protest ...
- In ancient Russia - «зазывалы» (from: «звать») - sellers cried out loudly advantages of the product

Expansion constituent: origin of the words in different languages plus the **historic aspect**, which, with reference to the above-mentioned example may include describing the situations from the ancient times to nowadays in different regions of our planet - how it happened, what they used to attract the consumers, how it changed historically

Other examples (in the domain of economics): economy, brand, quality, manager, competition etc.

Goals: work with the dictionaries - monolingual, multilingual, etymology, synonyms; creation of the concept field, expanding it to the whole subject of study - to see how the conception of the subject of study may change - expand or focus, or change the meaning, gaining broader expansive knowledge.

2. Activities: reading / listening / speaking

1) Emphatic listening (students' reaction to peers' presentations / answers)

a) to find what really touches you / what you loved in / about someone's talk. The aim is to get from criticizing and judging to give recommendations on how «to improve» the performance and therefore focusing on disadvantages (catching fleas) - to valuing and appreciating the other person's contribution.

On the way we collect appropriate vocabulary looking for ideas how to express your excitement with reference to:

- inspiration, e.g. inspirational, encouraging, motivating, cheerful, energetic
- topic, e.g. instructive, serious, educational, topical, relevant, burning
- delivery, e.g. involved, inspirational, related, deep, thoughtful, emotional
- language, e.g. simple and clear or sophisticated but clear etc.

As a result we have a bank of encouraging expressions of value. To practice speaking, one can unfold his choice (for those more advanced).

2) Empathetic speaking (while speaking, thinking of listeners, how to make the material clear and interesting, trying to explain language difficulties and looking for alternative expressions, watching one's speech pace, avoiding reading - which makes the speech monotonous, and sticking to the subject of one's interest)

3) Vocabulary building through imagination.

Making presentations only with pictures. In small groups discuss expectations on what is going to be presented - on the slide, in the whole presentation (to generate interest and speech, to involve and motivate those who are passive or are confused about their knowledge). Ideas about the topic, facts about this topic, language means - attributes, qualities, verbs to denote actions; building speaking skill through making suggestions and conclusions.

4) Building knowledge on a topic.

While starting a topic, ask group members - individually or in groups - to find interesting facts about this topic, something from history or what can characterize the topic from different sides. In this case everyone will go on with some piece of new information (expansion of knowledge). This can be done at any moment of the topic study.

5) Loud reading (concentrating and building vocabulary through immediate reaction, while developing imagination) - upon reading a small paragraph - make up a list of key words, a one-sentence summary - or a picture (in groups or individually).

6) Expansive reading (for teacher as well) - recommending additional literature and sharing with other group members.

7) Developing cooperative strategies - focus on fruitfulness of cooperative strategies through tasks focused on cooperative communication **between the students and students and the teacher**, and use of language

- to understand that group benefits may multiply their individual benefits in professional domain;
- to change passive passtime to active involvement;
- to learn the language through communication;
- to switch from monologues to polylogues;
- to learn how to listen and be a group member

Example: three - four groups of students (3-4 people) are studying their piece of information (every group is working on non-related information), but this information is insufficient, and you know that there are some people in other groups who might know some missing aspects.

The task is: to discuss in your group what information is missing (each group participant may possess their own piece of information, so in the group the students make up a puzzle, which will enable every participant to deliver their piece and express themselves) and try to find out people in other groups who might know it. Each group discusses absolutely different subjects, so there won't be competition about who is better or faster.

At the end each group shares their knowledge on their subject - and the common benefit is common knowledge of the three pieces of information.

Example 2 (for foreign language learning) - doing exercises in groups. Each group has different exercises devoted to one and the same / maybe different grammar topic, which they - after checking up - swap. This can help remove fear of doing incorrectly by an individual, as it will be the group result, and potential highfliers may try to help those lagging behind (was quite efficient in the groups of Russian for foreign students, even in multilingual groups, where Russian was the only «connecting» language).

The necessary language vocabulary and grammar can be discussed beforehand or set by the teacher.

Benefits of working in groups:

- it does not restrict active students but can encourage passive and humbled ones, or those with less intensive language skills.
- it does not annihilate the individual achievement constituent. We just remove this achievement into a different plane - the achievement will be harmony in the group knowledge and atmosphere, the ability to invest in the overall comprehension of the members of your group, contribution in other person's gaining knowledge. This is double benefit - your correct doing an exercise (a matter of your self-interest) plus a bonus - the ability to contribute in other people's gaining knowledge and confidence in the language use.

8) Group projects:

- Presenting expanding information related to the themes of the study - e.g. in the form of a class project or an individual project
- Designing a lesson - class project - taking teacher's role, trying to do the teacher's job - aimed at:
 - 1) presenting your ideas of how to hold a lesson and what the lesson should be about (in groups try teaching different aspects of the lesson: vocabulary, grammar, informative - textual and expanding (each group being responsible for an aspect)
 - 2) understanding the teacher's role being in the teacher's shoes

Why is it important for students to try and practice the «the teaching skills»? - it can help them not only properly and appropriately explain something to others, but also teach themselves, as one of the main goals of the University is to **teach yourself learning**. In this case students can also be of help for the teachers to improve their methods, material and presentation thereof.

(Preparatory work is necessary to provide basic guidance principles for the lesson structure, goal setting and teaching procedure).

LITERATURE

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2. R. Steiner «The genius of language. The evolution of language from organic point of view» (GA 299)
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Class Activity. Considering Russian Idioms

Idioms are maybe the most evident serious means of generating meta-meanings

Task: The pictures reflect the word-per-word translation of a number of idioms. Find the correct explanation to each idiom from the list.



КАК КУРИЦА ЛАПОЙ
AS IF A HEN WITH ITS PAW

Explanation: to have an awful handwriting

List of explanations:

to get very depressed (for example, as a result of failing an exam)

to do something carelessly, be negligent in doing something (e.g. project, studies etc.)

to say lots of empty phrases, to speak much without saying anything substantial

to be present at the lesson without understanding anything, maybe not even trying to do it

to be a very attentive and interested in any subject, to study a lot

to deceive someone

to know lots of information, to be very intellectual and know lots of facts

to trust completely to what is being said

to think something over very carefully

Answers:

Повесил нос - to get very depressed (for example, as a result of failing an exam)

Делает левой пяткой - to do something carelessly, be negligent in doing something (e.g. project, studies etc.)

Льет воду - to say lots of empty phrases, to speak much without saying anything substantial

Сидит, как бревно - to be present at the lesson without understanding anything, maybe not even trying to do it

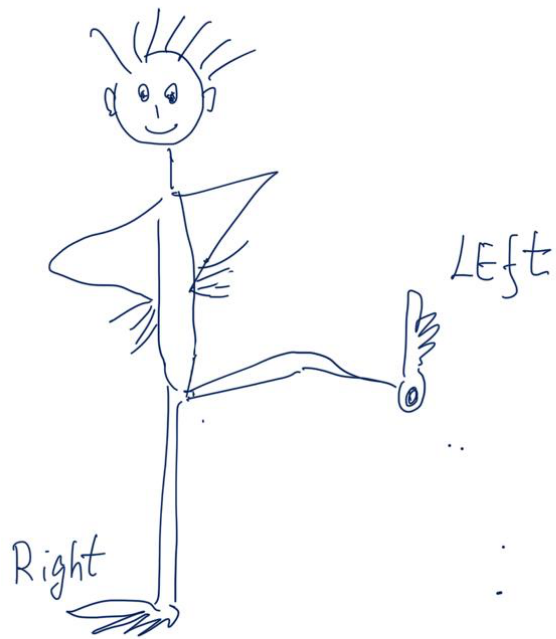
Ботаник - to be a very attentive and interested in any subject, to study a lot

Вешать лапшу на уши - to deceive someone

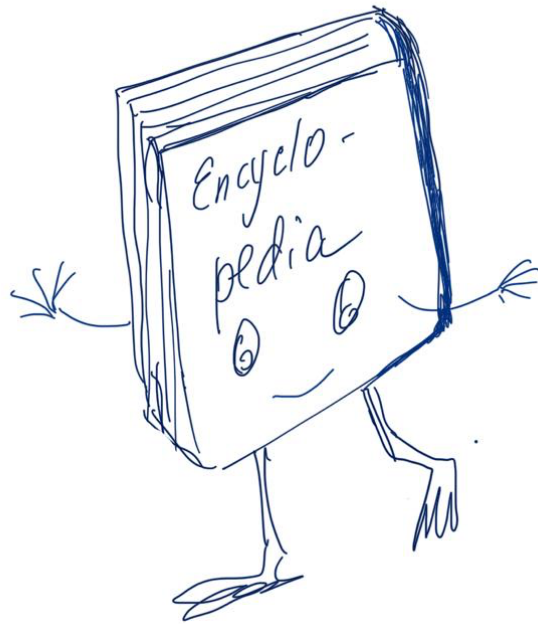
Ходячая энциклопедия - to know lots of information, to be very intellectual and know lots of facts

Уши развесил - to trust completely to what is being said

Раскинуть мозгами - to think something over very carefully



ДЕЛАЕТ ЛЕВОЙ ПЯТКОЙ
He's doing this with
his left heel.



ХОДЯЧАЯ ЭНЦИКЛОПЕДИЯ
A WALKING ENCYCLOPEDIA



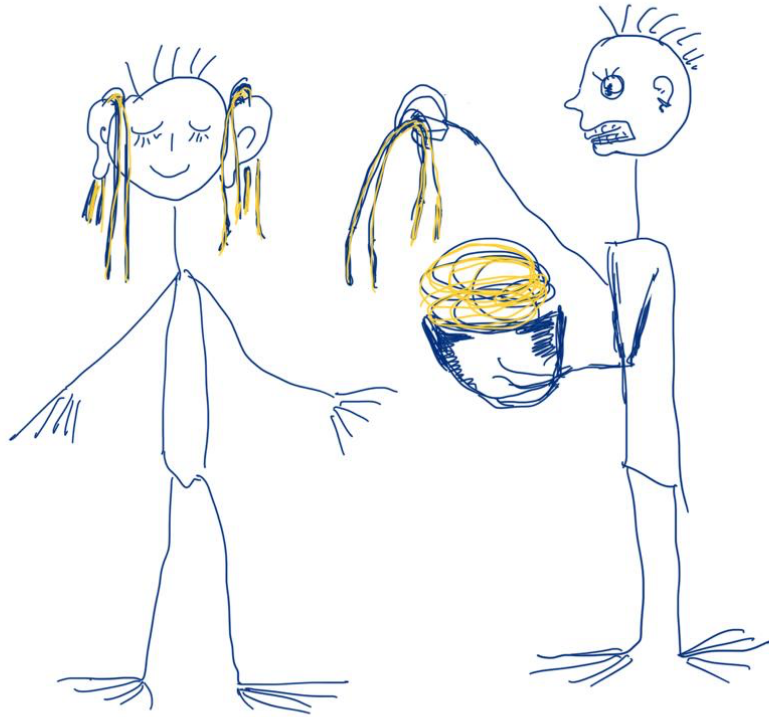
БОТА́НИК
A BOTANIST



ПОВÉСИЛ НОС
HE'S hung his nose



СИДИТ, КАК БРЕВНО
He's sitting like a log.

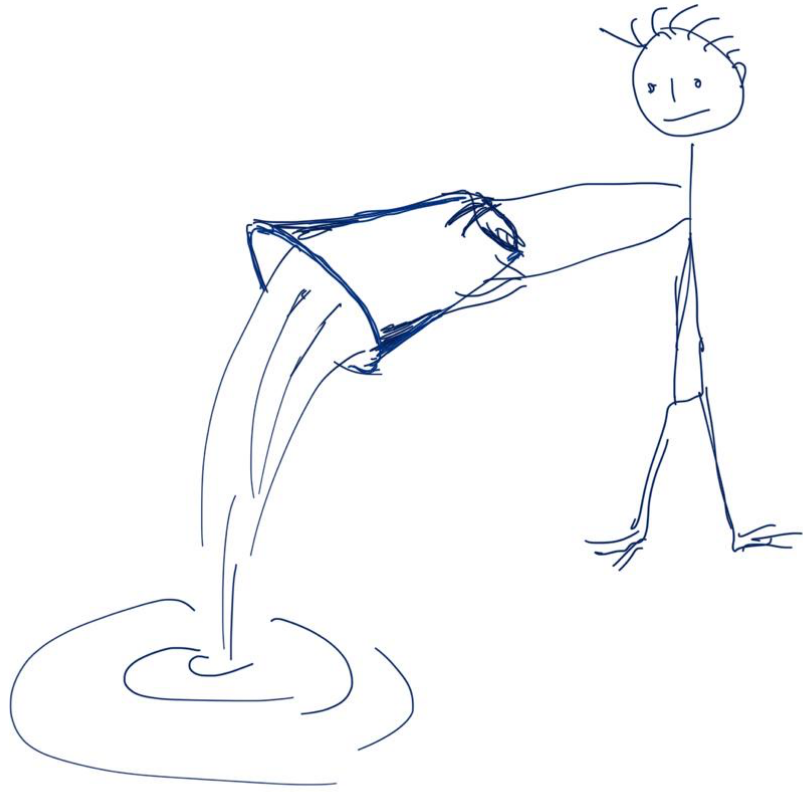


ВѢШАТЬ ЛАПШУ НА УШИ

Hanging noodles on
one's ears

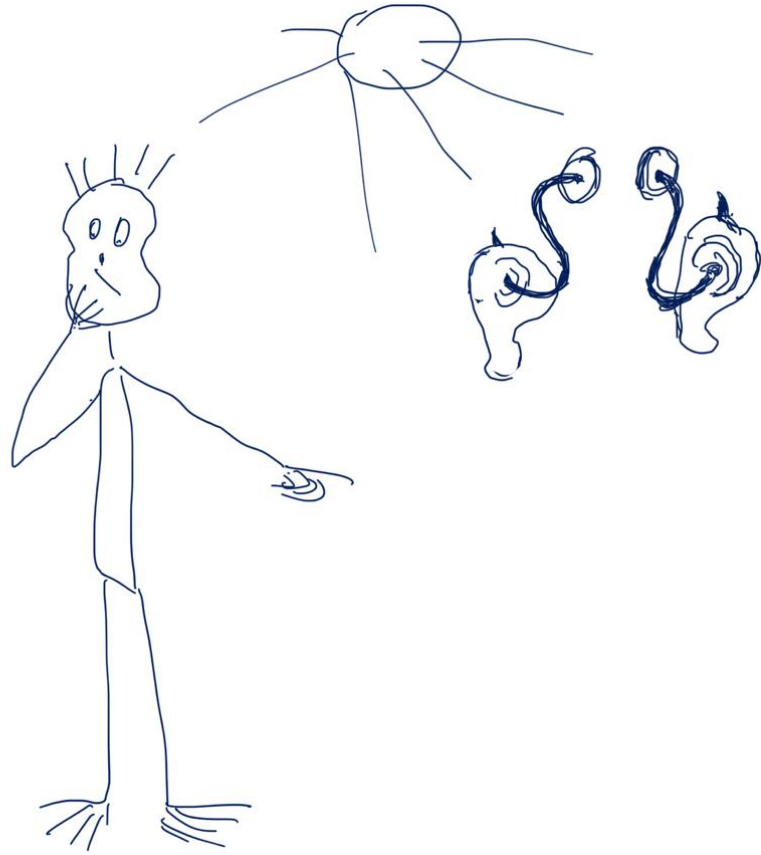


РАСКИНУТЬ МОЗГАМИ
He's been throwing out his
brain.



ЛБЕТ ВОДУ

He's pouring water



УШИ РАЗВÉСИЛ.
He's hung his ears out