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THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CONCEPT AS A UNIT OF WORLD MODELING: EXPLORING ETHNOSPECIFIC VALUES AND DOMINANTS

Abstract: The article focuses on examining national-specific or ethno-cultural concepts, which illuminate the cultural value priorities and exemplify the national character. The study investigates the conceptual spheres, linguistic patterns, and cultural dominants within Russian and English cultures.

Key words: linguoculture, concept, conceptosphere, character.

Language: English

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Introduction

Within the framework of linguistic and cultural modeling, the linguistic and cultural concept serves as a comprehensive multidimensional mental construct comprising perceptual, conceptual, and evaluative components [9, 100]. Each individual concept serves as an indicator of specific values within a given ethnic culture, while cultural concepts offer insights into the distinctive characteristics of the linguistic worldview. Furthermore, these concepts, which elucidate cultural value priorities, form interconnected systems known as linguistic and cultural dominants. For instance, it is indisputable that the enduring monarchy and aristocratic traditions have exerted a profound influence on the British national character. The values associated with aristocracy and gentlemanliness have essentially become ingrained within the collective values of the nation.

Particular interest lies in concepts that serve as codes or keys for comprehending cultural values, living conditions, and behavioral stereotypes. A comprehensive examination of the Soviet cultural concept of "queue" as a code is provided by E. M. Vereshchagin [6]. The author enumerates collective and individual speech tactics that characterize the queue as a cultural concept through the use of clichés such as "Don't let anyone pass!", "Stick to the norm!",

"Hurry up!", "No pushing!", "I heard about it while waiting in line," and others. This concept is rooted in the values associated with survival amidst scarcity. Consequently, various expressions such as "snatch," "grab," "catch on the fly," and "obtain" are used to describe the successful acquisition of scarce goods [9, 121-140].

Concepts play a pivotal role in facilitating mutual understanding and unification among individuals belonging to a particular linguistic culture. The collective conceptual space of linguistic personalities and the overarching linguistic culture is organized within a conceptual sphere. As stated by [12, 111], the concept can be examined from two perspectives: an "outside" view, which entails analyzing the conceptual sphere as a holistic representation of national and cultural specificities, and an "inside" view, which involves delving into the inner world of individuals from diverse social groups through multidimensional conceptual entities.

According to O. A. Leontovich, the most effective approach to elucidating national-specific concepts from languages is through interlanguage comparison [12, 111]. The ethnocultural specificity of concepts can be revealed by mapping corresponding lexical and phraseological groups, and by comparing value judgments derived from behavioral stereotypes

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embedded in word meanings, fixed expressions, and precedent texts [8, 14].

In his analysis of national cultural concepts, V. P. Neroznak highlights the significance of non-equivalent vocabulary, often referred to as "untranslatable in translation," in compiling lists of fundamental national cultural concepts [13, 85]. This approach provides an interesting and original perspective on concept studies, aiming to achieve maximum objectivity.

When comparing ethnospecific concepts, one can observe the asymmetry in the representation of units across different cultures. The most extreme form of asymmetry is lacunarity, which denotes a significant absence of specific features and units in one system compared to another. As described by [4], lacunary concepts, as "unfilled cells," can be categorized into several varieties: 1) conceptualizations of objects that are absent in the compared cultures, illogisms that are not borne out of human needs but can be imagined or created, such as "stone eater," "rat breeder," or "heffalump"; 2) the lack of comprehension in one culture of realities inherent in another culture, including subjects, anthroponyms, toponyms, and historical and cultural references like "kokoshnik," "shilling," "Kremlin," or "Komsomol meeting"; 3) qualities or combinations of qualities that are irrelevant in one culture but possess names in cultures where they are relevant, for example, "fair play" (playing by the rules in English linguoculture), "savoir vivre" (the ability to live with pleasure in French language consciousness), or "generosity" (a specific quality of the Russian national character) [9, 8].

In the work by G. N. Snitko [15], the mechanisms of thinking within Western and Eastern cultures are conceptualized as Cognition and Understanding. It is important to note that Western culture refers to European culture, while Eastern culture encompasses Asian cultures such as India, China, and Japan. These mechanisms are not viewed merely as psychological phenomena but rather as spiritual and cultural phenomena.

I. E. Anichkov [1] suggests that everything within language is idiomatic, and any mental formation from another culture can be considered ethnospecific. In light of this, V. M. Savitsky's concept of a linguistic continuum is noteworthy. It proposes varying degrees of idiomaticity within language units and degrees of linguistic and cultural specificity associated with concepts [14].

Regarding Russian grammar, A. Vezhbitskaya [5] supports the notion that dominant behaviors in Russian culture, such as the relative uncontrollability of feelings, the uncontrollability of fate, and categorical moral judgments, are deeply embedded in the grammar and shape the worldview of native speakers. However, it would be an oversimplification to reduce the uniqueness of a culture to a few

concepts, even if they are multidimensional and essential, such as "soul," "fate," "longing," and "will" in Russian culture, or "Ordnung" (order), "Befehl" (command), and "Angst" (fear) in German culture, or "Freedom," "Privacy," and "Enterprise" in English culture.

Various linguistic markers indicate the ethnocultural identity of a people. For instance, in Great Britain, words denoting the unique natural and geographical features of the land reflect its national identity. Examples include "heath" (overgrown with heather), "dale" (valley), "fen country" (marshland in the east of England), "loch" (Scottish term for a lake), "white cliffs" (chalk cliffs), and more. Additionally, certain animal and plant names widely present in the region evoke stereotypical associations ingrained in the collective knowledge of the language community, thus becoming symbolic names. Examples include "Rose," "Lion," and "Unicorn," which serve as emblems of England.

Undoubtedly, the researcher finds concepts that lack equivalents in other linguistic cultures to be of great interest. Within the Russian language, concepts unfamiliar to the British, such as "integrity," "tenderness," "cunning," "revelry," "squabble," and others, stand out. V. Nabokov provides a detailed description of the Russian concept of "vulgarity" in his biography of N. V. Gogol, specifically intended for American readers. Nabokov observes that the corresponding English words like "cheap," "sham," "common," "smutty," "pink-and-blue," "in bad taste," "inferior," "trashy," "scurvy," "tawdry," and "gimcrack" reflect a particular period's value classification, whereas the Russian concept of "vulgarity" transcends time and possesses a timeless beauty [19, 9].

The divergence of concepts, which mirrors the spirit of different peoples, their specific ways of thinking, and their nature of perceiving reality, can lead to attempts to understand another culture through one's own conceptual sphere, thereby giving rise to situations of misunderstanding. According to Yu.S. Stepanov, "each cultural concept has its own syntax: each seems to be surrounded by its own distinct syntactic rules" [16, 325]. As a consequence of English-specific articulation and synthesis of semantic content, certain short yet meaningful English phrases are challenging to translate into Russian without significant syntactic distortion. Examples include "to project into the future," "to center on life experiences," "to encourage someone to do something," "to make love," "to date back to," "mainstream culture," and "a helpful person."

Due to varying conceptualizations of reality and the level of agency in shaping the world, the verbalization of folk experiences also differs, manifesting in expressions of agentiveness/non-agentiveness, unfoldment/convolution of utterance, dissection/non-separation into components, and

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differing subject-object relationships. During translation, there is a redistribution of meanings among words involving processes like concentration, transformation, synthesis, and more. For instance, "I am thirsty" becomes "I'm thirsty," "I am sorry" is rendered as "I'm sorry," "I am hungry" is transformed to "I'm hungry," and "to witness" takes the form of "to be a witness."

The English language is characterized by precision and conciseness in expressing thoughts, as seen in phrases like "What's the message?" and "What message do you want to get through?" On the other hand, the Russian language stands out for its rich emotional nuance of meanings. For instance, it is impossible to convey the phrase "And the soldier was tormented by longing" accurately in English.

The analysis of Russian vocabulary reveals recurring motifs that consistently appear in the meanings of numerous Russian lexical and phraseological units. A.D. Shmelev argues that the differences in the representation of certain concepts across languages are primarily expressed not in the presence or absence of specific features, but rather in the frequency of these features and their specific combinations. The Russian worldview and culture possess their own distinct characteristics [18, 17].

A. Zaliznyak, I. Levontina, and A. Shmelev identify several key ideas or overarching motifs that shape the Russian linguistic worldview, including:

The notion of the world's unpredictability (expressed through phrases like "and suddenly," "just in case," "if anything," "maybe," "I'm going to try," "I managed," "to get," "happiness").

The belief that the main focus should be on gathering oneself (in order to accomplish something, individuals need to mobilize their internal resources, which is challenging) (e.g., "to get together at the same time").

The idea that for a person to feel good internally, they require a vast external space (captured by concepts like prowess, will, expanse, scope, breadth, breadth of the soul, to fuss, restless, to get).

Attention to the nuances of human relationships (communication, relationships, reproach, resentment, native, separation, getting bored).

The concept of justice (justice, truth, resentment).

The juxtaposition of "high" and "low" (being-being, truth-truth, duty-duty, good-good, joy-pleasure, happiness).

The belief that it is desirable for others to be aware of an individual's emotions (sincere, laughing, soul wide open).

The notion that it is unfavorable when someone acts based on practical benefits (calculating, petty, daring, scope).

The Russian Mentality Lexicon, edited by Andrzej Lazari, attempts to elucidate the philosophical, social, religious, and political ideas that

contribute to the specificity of the Russian mentality. According to Lazari, many phenomena and concepts in Russia lack precise counterparts in other countries and languages, or, in some cases, possess apparent but inadequate correspondences [22].

In the English language, a range of evaluative characteristics is attributed to criminals, which indicates the significance of the law in English-speaking culture. Conversely, the Russian language does not exhibit such fractional differentiation of criminals, but places strong emphasis on the ethical aspect, condemning audacious and shameless behavior towards others that lacks a sense of conscience, thereby highlighting the requirement for societal respect. E. V. Babayeva associates the concepts of "law," "truth," "justice," "duty," and "truth" in Russian linguoculture with the category of social norms, denoting guiding principles that shape individuals' conduct [2, 93].

Regarding specific cultural concepts, distinct value relations between English and Russian cultures are observed. In English culture, success is primarily attributed to an individual's efforts, with the focus placed on achieving results in work. Noble behavior is expected from heroes, while miracles elicit astonishment. Wise conduct is encouraged, fools are subject to ridicule, and pranks warrant punishment. Individuals pursuing imaginary goals, exposing themselves, are deemed worthy of condemnation. In contrast, in Russian culture, success is perceived as a combination of personal abilities and luck, and the willingness to work is considered paramount in one's endeavors. Self-sacrifice is admired in heroes, miracles evoke delight, and beauty in behavior is valued. Fools are met with sympathy, pranks are viewed as reprehensible, and individuals chasing illusory objectives are regarded with regret [9, 172].

L. D. Gudkov describes the national characteristics of Russians and Englishmen. Russian respondents, reflecting on the most typical qualities of Russians (hospitality, openness, reliability, loyalty, peacefulness, laziness, patience, impracticality, irresponsibility, willingness to help), and of the British (energy, rationalism, secrecy, good manners, avarice, self-esteem) in 1989 and 1994 [11, 22-49].

To analyze national stereotypes, the "comparing character traits of the British and Russians" method was employed. Russian informants identified generosity, willingness to help, laziness, irresponsibility, peacefulness, reliability, loyalty, openness, religiosity, love of freedom, patience, hard work, and energy as the most characteristic qualities of Russians, with specific variations observed among different age groups and genders. The informants noted irresponsibility, love of power, laziness among 20-year-old girls, and irresponsibility, love of power, envy, good manners, and laziness among 15-year-olds. In terms of exostereotypes, the most typical characteristics attributed to the British were good

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breeding, peacefulness, imposing customs on others, respect for elders, rationalism, self-esteem, secrecy, avarice, diligence, and energy. According to 15-year-old girls, the English were characterized by love of power, envy, hypocrisy, love of freedom, patience, and selfishness.

S. G. Ter-Minasova provides interesting insights into the stereotypes of cultural representations held by contemporary inhabitants of Russia [17, 43-45]. On a cultural map of Europe created by students from Moscow State University's Faculty of Foreign Languages, the United Kingdom and Russia are depicted as follows:

Great Britain is associated with cultural symbols such as fog, Shakespeare, tea time, monarchy, dry sense of humor, special tea, Robin Hood, Oxbridge (referring to Oxford and Cambridge), rain, gentlemen, good manners, 5 o'clock tea, unfamiliar cuisine, Baker Street, green lawns, castles, ghosts, and football.

Russia, on the other hand, is associated with cultural representations like Motherland, Russians, openness, generosity, vastness and unpredictability, the Russian language, snow, brotherhood, longing for the sun, winter, birch trees, romance, matryoshka dolls, bears, fairy tales, vodka, caviar, viburnum, hockey, ballet, amber, and Andrey Rublev.

When comparing the conceptospheres (conceptual systems) of English and Russian languages, it becomes evident that Russian concepts related to the spiritual and emotional aspects of life often lack direct equivalents in English. Conversely, English concepts that remain untranslated into Russian predominantly reflect the individualistic and rationalistic nature of English culture. A prominent characteristic of the British is their individualism, which stands in contrast to the collectivism or "sobornost" found in Russian culture. Russian culture has traditionally been considered collectivist and conciliatory. Scholars like U. G. Stefan and M. Abalkina-Paap argue that Russians can be seen as antithetical to Protestant ethics, with less emphasis on personal achievements, a tendency to express impulses rather than suppress them, a high value placed on personal relationships, and an orientation towards group values as opposed to individualism. Strong family ties are also valued in Russian culture [21, 376]. Observers from the United States have also noted the conciliarity and egalitarianism present in the Russian Orthodox Church [20, 28].

The Russian people have long displayed a preference for collective living, seeking a sense of unity with the earth and a connection with the motherland. Throughout history, the individual has often been overshadowed by the immense size of the state, imposing overwhelming demands on personal identity [3, 13-14]. It is important to note that Russia has traditionally held a negative view of individualism, perceiving Western self-reliance and a tendency to rely solely on oneself as indifference,

selfishness, and detachment. Interestingly, even Russian verbs of thinking reflect the idea of the opposition between the collective and the individual: "to think" emphasizes collective and dialogical thinking (hence the term "State Duma"), while "to think" conveys individual and monological thinking [10, 29]. Expressing one's own perspective in Russian communicative behavior often leads to critical evaluation, reflected in the saying, "I am the last letter in the alphabet."

V. Karasik points out that a notable indicator of new interpersonal relations in modern Russia is the phrase "And who is it easy now?", which can be interpreted in several ways: 1) one should not complain about life; 2) because everyone is experiencing difficulties; 3) it is shameful to showcase one's weaknesses; 4) a mocking refusal to sympathize; 5) an expression of unwillingness to provide help. The overall implication is that one must overcome their own challenges, aligning with the norms of individualistic behavior [9, 35-36]. Similarly, the frequently used phrase "These are not my problems" aligns with these individualistic norms.

The Russian word "soul" is far more prevalent in the Russian language than its English equivalent, and it holds great significance in the spiritual life of the Russian people. In Russian, words such as "soul," "spirit," and "spiritual" share the same root, while in English, they are distinct words: "soul," "spirit," and "spiritual." For the Russian people, who prioritize spirituality in their system of values, the concept of "soul" prevails over reason, logic, and common sense. In contrast, the English-speaking world places a greater emphasis on common sense as the foundation of its existence. Common sense is often regarded as one of the key characteristics of Western mentality, standing in contrast to the impractical and fantastical attitudes associated with people in the East.

Russian language exhibits a significant number of phraseological units with the word "soul," while the English language lacks equivalent expressions. For example, phrases like "my soul!" (to dear), "to live soul to soul" (to live in perfect harmony), "to be the soul of something" (to be the life and soul of something), "in the depths of the soul" (in one's heart of hearts), and others. The Western understanding of the soul is more rationalized, ordered, and shaped by the civilization's intellect, compared to the Russian soul, which retains an irrational, disorganized, and unordered element. Russians exhibit a greater inclination and capacity for communication compared to individuals from Western civilizations [3, 235-236].

Russian and English cultures also differ in their norms of family relationships: in English culture, the focus is primarily on the spouse, followed by children and the elderly, whereas in Russian culture, the emphasis is on children, parents, and then the spouse. These observations provide insights into ethnospecific

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concepts and highlight significant differences between Russian and English conceptual spheres.

The most effective method for identifying national-specific concepts within linguistic cultures is through comparative analysis between languages. By examining lexical and phraseological groups and comparing value judgments, researchers can uncover the ethno-cultural specificity of these concepts.

There are various indicators that reveal the ethno-cultural identity of a particular group of people. Of particular interest to researchers are concepts that have no direct equivalents in other linguistic cultures.

These unique concepts often provide insights into cognitive and evaluative approaches to the material world, the ways in which reality is perceived and morally assessed, and the peculiarities of a particular mentality. Understanding ethno-cultural differences allows us to perceive interconnected semantic lines within another culture and, in turn, gain a deeper understanding of such lines within our own culture. Exploring the values associated with ethno-specific linguistic and cultural concepts helps us grasp the highest guiding principles of behavior inherent in a particular culture.

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