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**NATIONAL AND FUNDAMENTAL VALUES IN VERBAL
SPECTRUM OF URAL CITY**

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Abstract

The article describes the research group results revealing the fundamental values, which are anchored in the linguistic mindset of the Ural people and how it is represented in different activities of the average Ural cities from the point of a language aspect. The aim of the research is to conceptualize the present-day linguo-axiological reality and to describe the representatives of valued concepts, performing the consolidating function.

To achieve the aim, a sociolinguistic monitoring procedure was developed that allowed to unveil the value preferences of students. Based on the principle “to add”, the psycholinguistic experiment was conducted aimed at identifying nuclear and peripheral conceptual meanings anchored in the linguistic mindset. The results we achieved allowed us to make a conclusion: the core of fundamental values is a system of interconnected conceptual meanings that are organized within the tenet of a cognitive matrix.

In the course of linguistic analysis of municipal newspapers texts and within the methods of metalinguistic diagnostics, the value mentality aspects of provincial city inhabitants have been described: native speakers feel both Urals and Russians, who preserve primarily the national family traditions. The fundamental value of the urban provincial community is a small homeland - a key category of the Ural mentality. Mentally significant positions are still associated with public benefit.

Based on the corpus of text-conversations, which reflect the specificity of the Ural residents' verbal communication, value-thematic and communicative-axiological text fragments are separated, the algorithm for linguo-axiological commenting on the oral dialogue has been developed.

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Keywords: Axio-sphere, axiological reality, fundamental values, concept.



1. Introduction

The research team of the specialist in the Russian philology of the Ural Federal University conducted the experimental study that provided the linguo-axiological interpretation of the value preferences typical to people who live in middle Urals cities. It is well known that social and economic cataclysms caused “volatility in values, attitudes, social spirits, public and personal interests” (Toschenko, 2015) and some changes in the Russian language (Ratmayer, 2013). At the same time the axiological “obstinacy” is felt intuitively in provincial Russia. At the backdrop of it the following assumption has been stated and proven: the province due to its conservatism keeps the mentality specific behavioral models, the conventions of communicative interaction, traditional axiological values of the Russian culture and, unlike the capital, is beyond the Western realm.

The values, which we understand as common insight about what is right and a must, socially valued and personally willing to be achieved in the public and individual consciousness, exist as ideal concepts, mental patterns that are needed in external iconic objectivity (Kluckhohn, 1962; Leontiev, 2000). These values can not be directly observed, therefore a researcher has to apply the heuristic methods and techniques able to interpret those images of consciousness, which are linked with the values and preferences of a language individual.

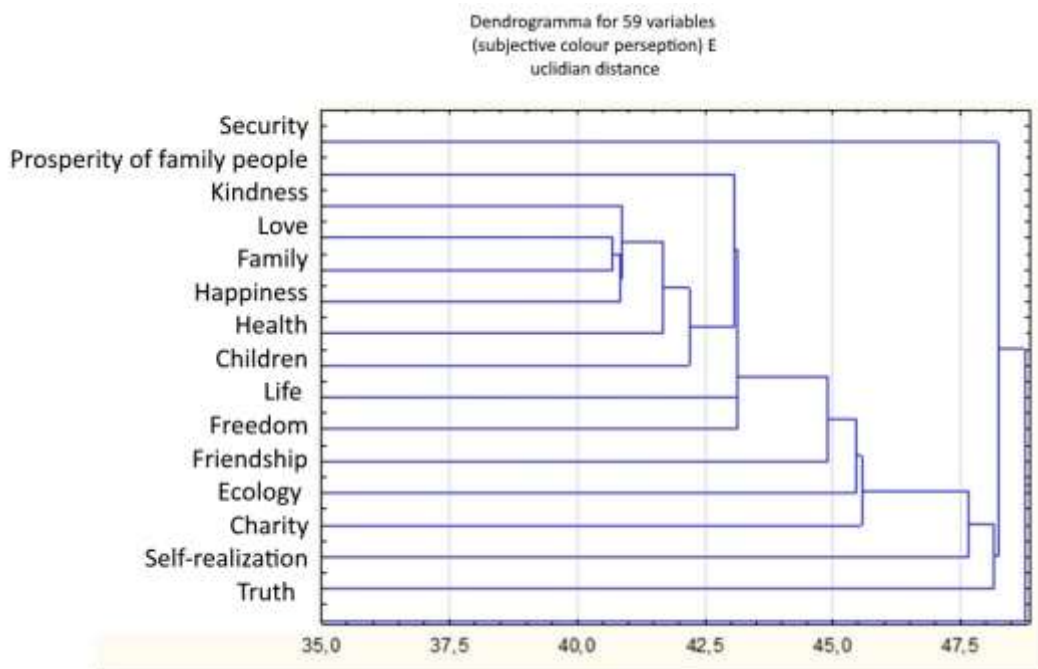


Figure 01. Emotive range of core concepts in a part common sampling

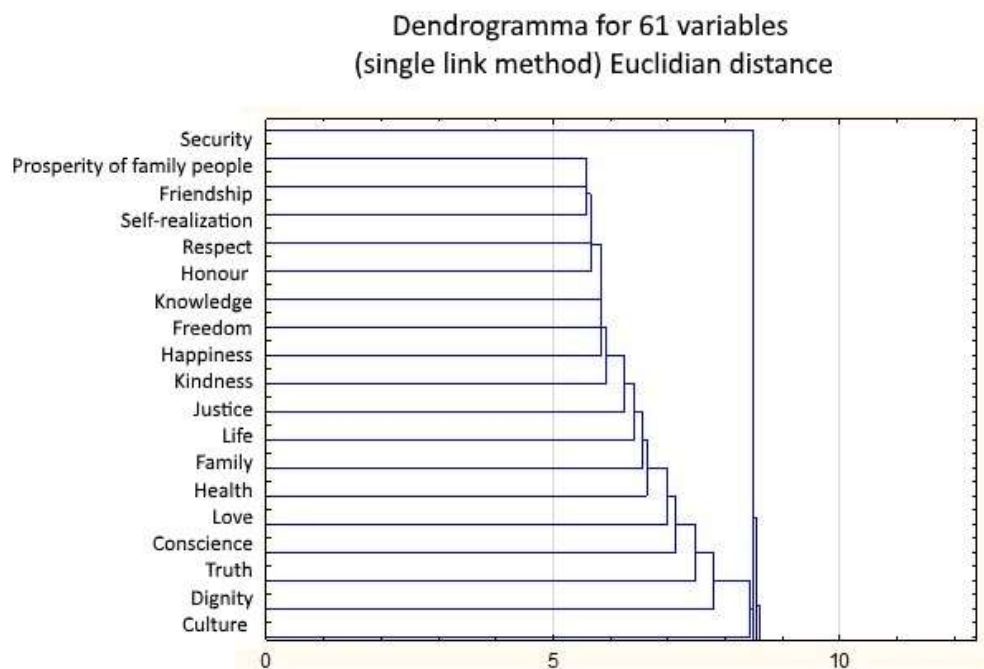


Figure 02. Rational range of core concepts in a part of common sampling

2. Problem Statement

The scientific issue of the research is to study communicative-language traditions that are typical to a Russian provincial city. The aim of it is to identify integrated potential of the fundamental values nominations and patterns, mental constants and important meanings of the present-day lexis. The research is geared at investigation of the language set specificity as linguo-cultural phenomenon applied in a provincial Ural city. The secondary aim is to identify integrems or verbal signs pertaining to the fundamental values, the relevant sense as well as the speech tolerance-based practices performing the consolidating function designed to preserve and in some cases to form the collective identity.

A specific task enabling to solve the stated issue is to define the fundamental values, stereotypes, speech tolerance-based practices, cultural scenarios reflecting socio-central features of linguo-culture; to reconsider of possibilities to paradigmatical introduction of the integrems; to identify the relevant meanings that disintegrate the cultural community. The task solution is based on the lively speech of people living in a place, on regional mass media texting, and other written-textual sources.

The scale of the specific task within the framework of the issue stated above is determined by the possibility to develop the fundamental categories of cultural linguistics based on some empirical material that reliably reflects the linguistic specificity of a provincial Ural city.

3. Research Questions

Based on the studies addressing the linguistic specificity of a provincial city as a linguo-cultural phenomenon, we propose a principally new description of the speech patterns used by some separated linguo-cultural communities. It will help us to identify the fundamental values, relevant meanings, communicative tolerance-based practices keeping the socio-cultural community identity. Also it will enable to define some vectors depicting the influence inputs coming from foreign cultures. The main subject under

the synchronous-descriptive and experimental research is lively speech of a provincial Ural city, how it is presented in written and oral forms, in the Internet and in the regional mass media. The relevance of the research concludes in revealing the regional specificity of the dynamic processes happening in “new Russia”, in studying the language traditions that work for preservation and strengthening the regional and the nationwide integrity as well.

The present-day interpretations of the category “province” can be introduced in the view of a scientific paradigm that will unify the different aspects of one complex phenomenon. It is reasonable to consider all possible definitions of “province”. When used lexical items in opposition as “capital - province” or “center - province” traditionally under “capital” is meant Moscow or Saint Petersburg; under “center” - a big city defining a) the way of living in it, b) the federal government, and c) city authorities. A province is a place removed from the center and the capital. In the frames of the example words as words with some kind of opposition, “a province” takes weak and dependent positions that causes a deteriorative meaning of it. Consequently, the traditional oppositions can be interpreted as the opposition to “new, progressive, modern – out-of-date, deteriorative, defective”.

At the turn of the centuries Russia sharply changed by the influence of the Western World. The capital is subjected to this influence more because it is the first who absorbs the western mentality, takes foreign images and simulates stylish models of speech behavior. The province, in its turn, be more conservative, keeps mentality specific behavior models, conventions of communicative interaction and the traditional axiological focuses. In the frames of the lexical opposition as “capital - province” a contradiction: new (foreign, not mine) – old (own, traditional, habitual, original). A good example where this contradiction is vivid is the regional mass media. Thus, the municipal and regional newspapers keep permanent set of ideologemes, lexical preferences that are oriented to traditional cultural values preservation. Also, in the newspapers we find examples of basic speech discourse practices creating a mentality image of some local communities belonging to industrial Ural cities.

In Russia some radical changes identifying the social levels have happened. These levels have been considered as the basis towards the multifaceted processes of personality identification. Nowadays, the particular ideology-based social categories have disappeared, whereas, the significant importance is given to group identification as ethnical and regional. While, the national identity can not be strengthened if unsystematic artificial rebirth of ideologemes of the Soviet time takes place. The pragmatism of the spiritual constants causes communicative conflicts. This provokes the necessity to search for linguo-cultural reasons to build a new ideology. In view of this issue to systemize the fundamental values, relevant lexical meanings and speech practices helping to preserve the socio-centrism of the Russian culture is reasonable.

The world globalization and socio-political processes in Russia causes the changes in communicative practices that have been historically established in different spheres of human life. The specialist in the Russian philology speak about foreign lexis intervention to the Russian language and penetration of the western (primarily American) cultural standards. All this leads to transformation and sometimes to erosion of the national cultural norms, including the language ones, that implies the changes happening in the Russian rhetorical ideal and a shift of communicative interaction to the zone of intolerance and to conflict-induced situations. Communicative and language competencies among representatives of the Russian linguo-cultural society is in the period of its turbulence due to the tendencies of reduction

towards the national cultural component of the language consciousness and communicative behavior. The raised factors and processes require the response from the part of specialists – scientifically proven linguo-cultural research on the life of the Russian language in the present-day social context..

4. Purpose of the Study

The goal of the research is to analyze a specificity of the communicative patterns typical to a provincial Ural city as a linguo-cultural phenomenon; to define the representatives of the fundamental values, which serve as a consolidating function aimed at preserving the Russian culture.

5. Research Methods

The methodology of the research: interdisciplinary approach to the object; polyparagigmality; references to the Russian philosophical concepts; dynamic synchronousness used when interpreting the object; references to empirical data; consideration on the diversity of communicative activities. The selection of methods and approaches are motivated with the project objectives: application of own system-structural methods is combined with application of discipline-based methods, which deals with cultural, social, physiological components of the language in changing socio-economic environment. The special attention is given to experimental and quantitative methods: math statistics, cluster analysis, single connection methods, Luscher colour diagnostic method, Spearman method. One of the approaches towards the object to be studied is socio-cultural monitoring that is able to reveal a set of the fundamental values and techniques of the tolerant communication. While monitoring the following methods are used: a survey model design, survey questions helping to identify and evaluate the values' preferences among urban residents. Socio-linguistic monitoring is aimed at collecting mass data on the socio-centricity of the linguistic culture of the Russian province and regional parameters of identity.

The method of socio-linguistic monitoring is combined with a group of methods for synchronous-descriptive analysis of language means that mark the socio-centricity of the provincial linguistic community with the psycholinguistic, linguistic-cultural, linguo-ideological interpretation of texts: lively conversational speech, regional, including network, media and advertising, the plays of Urals dramatists, as well as school essays and texts of other functional varieties of the Russian language.

6. Findings

Conducting two large-scale polls – socio-linguistic and psycholinguistic (the number of respondents, respectively, 633; 650) - allowed us to get a picture of the value preferences of today's students - the future intellectual elite of the country (Vepreva, Itskovich, Kupina, & Shalina, 2016).

On the experimental base taking into account the original procedure applied to identify the key concepts of the Russian mentality (Kolesov, Kolesova & Kharitonov 2014; Stepanov, 2001), a list of 59 national basic values was constructed. Evaluation of concepts took place in terms of cognitive significance and emotive attitude towards them (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Each concept was proposed to be assessed in two ways: by rational expression of one's own opinion (yes / no / difficult to answer) and by emotional evaluation in accordance with the choice of colour. While processing the experimental data, a quantitative

analysis of the points gained by each concept was carried out; medians of colour preferences were detected in accordance with the Luscher test.

With the purpose of statistical ranking in concept groups distribution, the cluster analysis of the total sampling was applied (n = 633). The method of a single connection was used (Euclidean distance): a dendrogram was obtained for 61 variables (59 values taking into account age and sex variables). Based on the substantive interpretation of the experimental data, it has been established: social changes of contemporary times influence the worldview of young people.

The statistical analysis revealed core values (“Well-being of Family People”, “Friendship”, “Self-realization”) associated with “their society”. The concept of “self-realization” or the model of “making oneself” reveal the essential side of the worldview of the younger generation that has replaced the dominant idea of collectivism, pointing to the awareness of the uniqueness of “I am”. The concept of “well-being of family people” describes a personal sphere of everyday life associated with a home, close relations and family related people. The idea of prosperity is a presupposition in relation to the concept of “Well-being”, given in the list of concepts in the survey without specification. The concept of “Friendship” demonstrates other-centricity inherited to the Russian self-consciousness and includes some cognitive signs of intimacy, candor, disinterested support, which can be united by common meanings of constancy and reliability.

The concepts, consistently adjacent to the cluster core, refer to the type of declared social values of the highest order and are coordinates in the system of vital life values. We refer to them: Life, Health, Love, Family, Happiness and moral Respect, Honor, Freedom, Kindness, Justice, Truth, Conscience, Dignity. They are all life-purposed universals, which give to the life a meaning of universal human significance and a support to the national identity.

The concept “Security” unites all the values included in the cluster core and expresses the idea of providing favorable living conditions. Note that the concept, according to the observations of specialists (see: Karasik, 2010, pp. 121 - 178), is an extremely general multi-layered one. The name of the concept presented to the respondents without any contextual support allows the possibility of multi interpretations. On the one hand, security is ensured by a stable system of informal relations between close people, but on the other hand, the security function of the state is provided with its defense capability and institutional support of public order. The security provided by the state is based on the trust of citizens and the transparency of social relations. At the same time, the spirit of trust and existential security in society are disturbed during the periods of fundamental transformations of political and social institutions. The radical changes that took place in Russia at the turn of the century had a traumatic effect on the worldview of the older generation. Young people compensate the lack of confidence in the modern institutional system with a value focus on safety, security and comfort, limited by the “inner society” framework.

Emotive ranking of the concepts reveals the core of the conceptual field other than with a rational choice (Fig. 2).

Рис. 2. Emotive ranking of the concepts in the core part of the total sampling

In a situation with the emotive choice, the core of the field turns out to be a cluster that includes the concepts “Love” and “Beauty”. This cluster is combined with the concepts of “Family”, “Kindness”, as total – “the wealth of family relations”. The mentally specific combination of the “principle of personality with the principle of community” (Berdyayev, 1997) determines the perception of the family as part of a

collectivist-type society structure in which the interests of the group prevail over the interests of an individual. The family (We are a group) serves as protection for the individual. In its turn, for the person-centric consciousness, the realization of their own talents and abilities, accompanied with a sense of own righteousness (personal success is a guarantee of well-being in a family), is the main value guide. The emotive choice of value preferences determined in the core a conceptual field of units belonging to extremely abstract semantics, including approved moral, aesthetic, and actually emotional features. These concepts, combined in one extended cluster with the operational value of Family, endow it with high aesthetic and moral characteristics of beauty and kindness. "Love" appears in the center of a cognitive value-preference map.

The concept "Family" is the universal human value, but the Russian consciousness conceptualizes a family in particular, defining it as the basis of the world outlook and world order, an integral, indestructible unity with the power of moral influence. For young people, a family is the center of a prosperous life (successive joining the concepts of "Happiness" and "Health" to the cluster); family protects against external threats and stresses. The concepts "Children", "Well-being of family people" emphasize the operational nature of the value of "Family", the direct connection of the concept with the practice of everyday life. The children development in family and love-based atmosphere is determined by not only the well-being of family people, but also by the well-being of the environment (concept of "Ecology").

For the reasons that the names of concepts presented to the respondents in socio-linguistic monitoring without contextual support allow multiple interpretations, we conducted a psycholinguistic experiment aimed at identifying the core and peripheral conceptual meanings of the basic concepts ambiguously interpreted in the linguistic consciousness of the youth: "Well-being of Family People" "Friendship", "Happiness", "Freedom", "Love", "Faith", "Self-realization".

These concepts were presented as a set of conceptual meanings corresponding to a set of lexico-semantic variants of words, which nominate the corresponding concepts. In addition, a number of specific features were introduced into the set of conceptual meanings, which allow to remove the ambiguity of some abstract concepts. The respondents (students of the Ural Federal University) were asked to rate the significance of conceptual meanings from 1 to 5 scale. The data processing was carried out according to the method of Spearman. A correlation analysis enabled to establish the core and peripheral meanings of the analyzed concepts. For the concept "Well-being of Family People", the core concept is "health and peace of family people"; a peripheral sign is "material security of family people". For the concept of "Friendship" the core is "intimacy", "emotional affection"; as a peripheral sign is "frankness" and "security". For the concept of "Happiness" the core is "love"; as a peripheral sign is "material well-being", "high social position". For the concept of "Family" the core is "parenting" and "family interests", where is "family interests are higher than personal interests". For the concept of "Freedom" the core is "self-realization"; as a peripheral sign is "create a family". For the concept of "Love" the core is "to create a family", as a peripheral sign is "friendly affection". For the concept of "Faith" the core is "faith in God"; as a peripheral sign is "self-reliance". For the concept of "Self-realization", the core is "to gain wide publicity"; as peripheral is "to have an interesting job."

The analysis of the results showed that the content of the concept comes down not only to the proximity of the selected conceptual features of one concept, but also addresses several conceptual areas.

The core of basic values is a system of interrelated conceptual meanings, organized in a view of a cognitive matrix, in the structure of which some conceptual meanings “take the status of independent components” (Boldyrev, 2009). Organization of knowledge based on the matrix format within the principle of integration is a complex order system.

To confirm this hypothesis an analysis towards “small mass media of the Urals” – newspapers issued in the cities of Sverdlovsk region (Aramil, Nizhny Tagil, Pervouralsk, Revda) was undertaken. The continuous sampling method (automatic search with unmodified homonymy) collected textings from 250 newspapers (2011–2016) stored in Sverdlovsk Regional Universal Scientific Library. For search queries, the following names of value concepts have been chosen: well-being, faith, group solidarity, permissiveness, friendship, warm-heartedness, care, health, sensitivity, hobby, love, frankness, rest, self-realization, freedom, sex, family, happiness, luck, success. The next stage was devoted to systemizing the contexts with the Ural tokens and cognate words. The total amount of collected newspaper material is more than 35 printed newspaper pages.

The sampling allowed to reveal the value aspects in the way of thinking typical to people living in the Ural province province. An Ural city is not a closed space – people identify themselves as Urals and Russians as well, who preserve the national traditions (Vepreva & Kupina, 2016; Kupina, 2016).

The study of the local press has shown that the local mass media are developing a comprehensive axiological strategy aimed at depicting a person organically connected with his native land and being aware of his social role. The integrating function is performed by axiologically marked verbal signs, the semantics of which is included into the space of the history and culture of the Urals. The feature to be unique in texting of municipal newspapers is a “geographic” style.

One of the most important means of expressing evaluative semantics is an adjective, which is ontologically inherent in attributes (attitude, including attitude to a value) as a ground to quality. The Ural token represents the axiological potential of its semantics, allowing it to act as a verbally expressed conceptual unit of an axiosphere: the compatibility of an Ural adjective within an utterances is characterized by regular denotative, emotional, evaluative, aesthetic increments that reflect the filling of the Ural culture matrix. The core component of the Ural axiosphere is the axiological constant “small homeland”, which supports the idea of unity, expressed verbally by tokens as “ours, dear, familiar”. The private features of generosity, wealth, as well as a focus on a necessity to preserve and develop the industry as a source of livelihoods are concentrated in the axiological statement “Ural is the storehouse of our motherland”. The development of qualitative characteristics in a relative adjective “ural” is associated with the attribute characteristics of abstract concepts. Thus, the observation on how a phrase “ural character” functions in a speech helps to actualize the idea of a special linguo-cultural type. Contextual partners reveal significant value aspects of the content in the concept under the analysis: hardness, perseverance, straightness, resilience, severity, thoroughness, hard work, harsh tenderness.

An empirical study towards the fundamental values is supported by the use of the language reflection data, the methods of metalinguistic diagnostics (Vepreva & Maltseva, 2017). When fixing the semantic dynamics of the axiosphere, the Urals citizens are aware of the importance of basic national values. In newspaper texts, positive assessments, supported by the use of mentally approved characterizers, perform an integrating function aimed at making linguo-cultural communities more solidary: “And he knew the

magic words - family, support, home”; “Now that great happiness has returned to their lives, which is called simply “family”, etc. At the same time, the investigated corpus of utterances-reflexives allowed to reveal some stress zones. So, for example, universal human moral and ethical ideas about the family are reduced, the modality of the necessity of the family is lost. The traced tendency of forming negative-evaluative connotations for key concepts of the Russian culture creates a situation of a conflict between different value-based systems. The semantic ambivalence of the key concepts is disintegrating, but the indifferent discussion of the humanistic values as an actual, experienced piece of experience demonstrates an integral function of basic concepts for the national culture, the natural need of a native speaker to rely on the nation’s cultural code.

The analysis of the value settings of Internet users was carried out on the basis of the Internet forums located in the official website of Yekaterinburg City - the regional portal at: www.e1.ru and the Ural portal for parents at: www.u-mama.ru (Mikhailova, 2016). The users of these portals are mainly residents of the Ural region, who discuss a problems associated with their living space. The allocation of value meanings, firstly, was carried out on the basis of the names of the forums-directions, and secondly, by sampling axiological conclusions from the verbal communication of the forum participants. The forum map at www.e1.ru and www.u-mama.ru includes matching sections. Integrating value concepts are home, family, health, love, work, education, career, culture. Under the influence of socio-economic reasons in modern society there was a restructuring of the cultural and value preferences of Russians. In the forum discussions the material values are absolutely in dominating position: money, wealth, real estate, prestigious car brands and etc. The value of money is declared and emphasized openly.

The features of the Orthodox religious Internet communication are considered through an example of texts posted in the open official Facebook group “The Parish of the Church of St. Innokentia of Moscow” (Itskovich, 2016). Communicators: church-going, educated people with one or more university degree, active Internet users, registered users in Facebook, make up a relatively small part of the church members (47 people are registered in the group, while over 400 people are members). In the Orthodox group there are two opposing tendencies towards social networks: towards freedom and equality of communication, on the one hand, and hierarchical subordination and observance of traditions - on the other. The communication of the Orthodox Internet users relies on the Orthodox worldview, hence, there is the desire to cooperation, collaboration, a friendly attitude towards a person as a whole, and the absence of facts describing verbal aggression. In the senders' speech, the language means of different “imaginary communities” are mixed: church-slavonicism, high bookish vocabulary and low/poor vocabulary, jargon, adopted words from other languages.

The research team has a constantly updated electronic database of texts, conversations of residents living in the Ural cities. Over the past three years, the text library has considerably increased. The total volume of audio recordings with conversational texts, translated into a written form, is 725,000 characters. Based on the available material, a linguo-axiological interpretation of the whole spoken text has been proposed. Fundamentally to the analysis there is the allocation of two types of value-oriented texting fragments: thematic value and communicative-value, being one or another item of reality can serve not only as an independent object of applying assessments (then the assessment serves as a means of self-expression of a speaker) but as an assessment tool of a speaker towards his interlocutor. An algorithm to comment the

value content of conversational speech interaction has been developed. The difficulty of identifying the cultural and value features of a conversational communication resonates with operating such texting fragments as a dialogical unity, defining the role of speech acts in a broad contexting and a text. It is done through the act of corresponding a specific speech act to the paradigm of the national communication and cultural attitudes.

In the course of this multi-staged study, we: 1) distinguished linguo-cultural communities inside the socio-cultural space of a provincial Ural city; 2) identified the target groups providing us with the information; collected and then summarized preliminary monologic, dialogical, polylogical material reflecting the specificity of the language and communication used by the Ural residents, such as factory workers, youth that works, Orthodox communities, regional Internet communities. The language analysis of the Ural residents was conducted among the residents of the urban suburbs, forming up permanent and temporary micro-groups. People that provide the information are connected with family relations, with having common neighborhood, with business and friendly relationships. The value meanings of conversational texts are identified by sampling evaluative statements of various nature. A multiple analysis of the material reveals the priority values of both Russian speech communication (its constants are frankness, active sympathy and empathy, benevolence and modesty), and the key concepts of the Russian culture united by the idea of joint action (sympathy, consent, empathy, belonging) and by the social institutions as family and friends' community. The values, being a form that reflects in consciousness the personal values of the people providing the information, perform an integrating / disintegrating function.

7. Conclusion

The objectivity of the conclusions about the linguo-axiological reality of the current time is confirmed by the representativeness of the experimental data, by the results of the multi-staged study addressing the different segments of the language and communication specificity of the cities in the Middle Urals.

Acknowledgments

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