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#### GLOBALIZATION AND DYNAMICS OF CONTENT OF CULTURAL VALUES OF MODERN RUSSIAN SOCIETY

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#### *Abstract*

The article is devoted to the problem of the dynamics of key values of the Russian linguocultural community included in the core of its cognitive base. A comprehensive analysis of the data of a psycholinguistic experiment aimed at explicating the real content of the value of *self-sacrifice* and marking its precedent names is presented. The modeling of the actual content of the value of *self-sacrifice* was carried out using the method of semantic gestalt. The study showed that at present, the meaning of the value of *self-sacrifice* is fundamentally at variance with the traditional. At the moment, for the majority of respondents, *self-sacrifice* is not considered a moral law. A significant part of the experiment participants (25%) relates to the moral problem of choosing between personal interest and the interests of others negatively. Some respondents associate self-sacrifice only with their immediate environment. In general, the semantic content of the word leaves typical signs for this concept. An equally important result was the experimentally proven change in the list of case names that personify this value. One of the main factors contributing to changes in the cultural code is school history textbooks. In the course of the psycholinguistic analysis of the texts of these textbooks, it has been proven that they do not meet the main criteria that allow for the directed translation of cultural meanings. As a result of the cumulative impact of all these reasons, there are a gradual disappearance of traditional cultural names of precedent names.

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**Keywords:** Psycholinguistic experiment, semantic gestalt, self-sacrifice, precedent name, culture code.



## 1. Introduction

All human life is subject to two powerful forces: language, which is a special "principle aimed at communicating spiritual contents in relevant subjects" (Benjamin, 2012), which allows a person to express "his own spiritual essence in his language" [ibid], and stories with its great events, invariably associated with blood and fear, that traditional historiography as "a subject of construction, whose place is not empty and homogeneous time, but a time filled with" actual present [Jetztzeit]" (Benjamin 2018), often is small.

However, the language has one more function, no less important than storing the cultural code underlying the world perception and world outlook of the people, manifested primarily in the semantic content of such basic concepts as *life and death*, *truth and truth*, *good and evil*, *beauty and disgrace*, *love* and many others (Vendina, 2007; Gachev, 2007; Boas, 1995). It is he who constructs *I* personality, creating such a view of the world, which is demanded by society (Corballis, 2011; Kelly & Zetsche, 2012; Everett, 2012) and thus gains invisible control over its behavior.

This peculiarity of the language to influence the individual consciousness, repeatedly described both in scientific works and in numerous dystopic novels, has always been used in educational discourse, since it is the level of maturity of higher mental functions, the development of which is central to school age (Vygotskii, 2004, Bruner, 1996), determines the personality characteristics and, accordingly, the content of its image of the world.

## 2. Problem Statement

Psychologists believe that the key result of school education is an established individuality, which implies both a mature outlook and a developed system of moral and ethical values (Leontev, 2004; Bozhovich, 2001), and the latter's specificity is that its formation occurs indirectly, first of all, in the course of studying the subjects of the humanities cycle, including through the texts of history textbooks, which describe various events that lay down in the consciousness of a student the understanding of such phenomena as *heroism*, *patriotism*, *love* (including the Fatherland), *sacrifice*, *heroism*, *compassion*, *tragedy*, etc.

All these entities, as Dal (1981) noted, belong to the mind and character, which together form the spirit, and despite its reality and impossibility, as almost all Russian philosophers say, a person without a spiritual principle, the spirit cannot be correlated with any object, it manifests itself only through signs such as freedom, meaning, creative activity, integrity, love (Berdiaev, 1994). However, the comprehension of the spirit, more precisely, the fundamental principles, its components, at all times is hampered by the fact that, apart from the material form of the word, they have no tangible and visible physical support in reality. They reflect a certain idealized world, the idea of due, as a rule, conflicts with the surrounding reality. Therefore, the knowledge of their inner essence by each member of any linguocultural community becomes possible only through the activities of an individual, i.e. real materiality of value "raw materials", which are "the actions of people elevated to the rank of virtue or evil deed. ... actions of people are interpreted as actions with a plus or minus sign, when there is a measure for this – names that embrace these concepts" (Cherneiko, 2010). Obtaining the status of precedent, i.e. characterized by, on the one hand, superpersonal character, and, on the other, high significance for the person in cognitive and emotional relation (Karaulov,

2010), these names become cumulative signs containing important information for the linguistic culture carriers, included in their common cognitive base – in a certain way structured set of “knowledge and ideas, necessary for all members of a particular national-linguistic and cultural community” (Krasnykh, 2002, p. 407). It is quite obvious from this that the constant transmission (primarily in the process of education) of precedent names to the consciousness of the younger generation has always been considered as one of the main conditions for preserving the cultural values of the people, the forms of external and internal regulation of behavior and a sense of national identity existing in society.

### **3. Research Questions**

However, today the situation has changed dramatically: for several decades, humankind has existed in an era of globalization, accompanied by a process of transformation of values, norms and various sociocultural practices. A significant part of scientists working in various fields of scientific knowledge are convinced that the main goal of this process is the gradual transfer of the spiritual sphere to the sphere of trade, which is achieved by creating some common, but focused primarily on an individual, “ideals”, standardization moral and ethical norms, and ultimately leads to the destruction of ethnic cultures and the construction of a new type of person – a kind of global personality, completely rejecting the “logo-metanarratives of traditional ethnicity” (Maher, 2010) and aimed “only at an“ individual life project ”with a hedonistic bias” (Kirilina, 2012). This view is supported by experimental data, which show that in the value system of Russian culture, under the influence of factors associated with globalization, which directly touched, among other things, the foundations of the traditional Russian education system, there are gradual shifts. However, the question of how deeply the changes touched the cultural core remains open, so the study of the dynamics of the semantic content of precedent names that store the cultural code, as well as the transformation of their list itself into the cognitive base of the Russian linguocultural community, is acquiring special significance now.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

All of the above has determined the main goal of our experimental research, which was to establish the degree of preservation of the cognitive base of the Russian linguocultural community.

One of the main task was to evaluate the texts of history textbooks used in the educational process, in terms of the effectiveness of their psychological impact, aimed at forming a system of values that are traditional for Russian culture. In the aspect of psycholinguistics, such a task implied the identification of the structure of the field of values of the recipients behind a certain abstract word denoting the cultural dominant value, which is marked by a precedent name stored in the cognitive base.

Based on the fact that the findings of the dominant trends have the highest degree of validity in the study of nuclear values, for the study of the semantic content of the word in the individual consciousness and corresponding to this word precedent name was chosen the value of self-sacrifice, which, as noted by Danilevskii (2011), for the Russian consciousness is the broadest concept, identical to the moral way of life.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the study was the following:

- on consciousness as a form of reflection of objective reality in the human psyche, where elements of social-historical practice, allowing to build objective (generally accepted) pictures of the world, act as a mediating factor. The initial source of socio-historical practice is joint work. In individual development, individual components of labor are successively appropriated by the child in joint activities with adults, in particular in the educational process (Vygotskii, 2004);

- on the specifics of the content of individual consciousness, which at the present stage of development of global society is largely determined by the activities of various social institutions, purposefully affecting the cognitive activity of man and directing it in a certain direction in order to form the required individual social groups of ideas about the surrounding person reality, developed in modern post-non-classical philosophy (Stepin, 2006);

- on the duality of the existence of values in the individual consciousness (Leontev, 2004, 2001), conditioned, on the one hand, by their collective origin and ideological representations of society, and, on the other, by their subjectivity as a consequence of partiality of individual consciousness.

In accordance with the chosen methodology, the following methods were used:

- the method of free associative experiment, during which respondents were asked, firstly, to write the word that first appears in their minds on the incentive of *self-sacrifice*, and, secondly, to write down the names of people who embody this quality:

- the method of component and conceptual analysis for the construction of semantic Gestalt, reflecting the meaning of the value of self-sacrifice in the minds of respondents – representatives of modern students;

- the method of contextual analysis to assess the text material of history textbooks.

The participants of the experiment were university students who studied the history of Russia in textbooks used today in modern education. The total number of respondents – 64 people, the average age – 17 years. The sample was homogeneous, which fully corresponded to the purpose of the study and allowed to describe the specifics of understanding the studied value with maximum completeness.

## 6. Findings

The associative field obtained in the course of the experiment, reflecting the actual meaning of the value of *self-sacrifice* in the individual consciousness, is of interest in several aspects.

First of all, a significant number of reactions (16 out of 64, i.e. 25%): *sacrifice* (8), *sacrifice* (4), *donation* (3) *self-sacrifice* – are synonyms of the word self-sacrifice, or its interpretation – *sacrifice for the benefit of others* (1), and, therefore, reflect only knowledge of the vocabulary of the language. In other words, we are talking about the syndrome of semantic devastation – a state where the loss of personal meaning in the individual consciousness there is only a dictionary "cover".

No less curious is the fact that *self-sacrifice* for many respondents is a label with a clear negative connotation (19 reactions, i.e. 29.6%): *dementia* (7) *disgust* (6), *weakness* (6).

Positive reactions (it is important to emphasize that all the answers, except the confidence reaction, occur once, the total number is 11, that is 17%, which is significantly lower than “empty” meanings or denial of value for oneself): *confidence* (4), *dedication*, *loyalty*, *strength*, *heroism*, *perseverance*, *courage*, *humanity*, are associated with personal ideas and, as you might expect, reflect the desire to comprehend the meaning of the word as a way of internal organization of *yourself*.

On the other hand, self-sacrifice is associated with professional activity, i.e. separated in consciousness from personal values (only 6 reactions, that is, 9.3%): *soldier*, *risk*; *war*; *deed*; *volunteer*; *fireman*.

Some of the reactions relate to family relationships, and the quality is attributed to the older generation: mother (6), parents (2).

Thus, the semantic gestalt, i.e. a unit of knowledge about the world, the structure of which reflects the specifics of perception and understanding of a fragment of reality by a native speaker, built on the basis of the resulting associative reactions, has the following dominant spheres: 1) emotion, reflecting a negative attitude to value, for many centuries considered the main quality for Russian culture, the development of which a person should strive for; 2) the relationship in the dyad *parents – children*, with a tendency to expect sacrifice of their interests from their parents; 3) the quality inherent in people engaged in a specific kind of activity; 4) moral and ethical characteristics that allow individuals to perform acts of self-sacrifice.

Judging by the nature of the associations, we can distinguish several different attitudes that determine the personal meaning of the value being studied.

For a part of the respondents, moral laws relate to something purely external, reducible to clichés, not experienced personally, but simply a reproducible stereotype. This can also be attributed to individual reactions, in which the execution of the moral law is expected only from people associated with certain types of activities.

25 % участников эксперимента относятся к моральной проблеме выбора между личным интересом и интересами других резко отрицательно, рассматривая это как глупость.

25% of participants in the experiment relate to the moral problem of choosing between personal interest and the interests of others sharply negative, considering it as nonsense.

Some respondents associate self-sacrifice only with their immediate environment.

Positive reactions are rare and are on the periphery of the field, but attention is attracted by the fact that they lack clichés, an extensive system of connections between self-sacrifice and other moral qualities of the person is seen, which indicates personal reflection and, therefore, the importance of the concept for the individual.

It must be emphasized that the structure of the semantic gestalt modeled by experimental data cannot be considered standard, since normally, such a gestalt “usually consists of several zones (their number varies within  $7 \pm 2$ ), which combine the characteristics of an object or concept corresponding to a field name (= stimulus), typical for a given language consciousness” (Karaulov, 2000, p. 179). However, in our case, emotion dominates, and distinguished signs attributed to the sphere of moral and ethical qualities, allowing to put the interests of others above their own, are rare.

At the next stage of the study, we turned to dictionaries, which made it possible to establish zones of divergence between the cultural and the actual meaning of the value of self-sacrifice.

The analysis of all vocabulary interpretations allows us to present the semantic gestalt, i.e. The dominant spheres of the semantic content of a given word, which is fixed in culture, are as follows: 1) a moral principle followed by a person for the good of other people; 2) voluntariness associated with a high level of development of self-consciousness and faith in God; 3) serving the highest, in comparison with personal, interests and ideas, which requires certain moral qualities of the person - self-denial, heroism, sacrifice; 4) the basis of the growth and development of mankind, the quality that prevents its complete destruction; 5) maternal (parental) self-sacrifice.

Thus, a comparison of two simulated semantic gestalts based on experimental data and data from dictionary entries shows that the only common area for them is *the maternal (parent) self-sacrifice* zone. As for the zone relating to the service of higher ideas, it is rapidly reduced, being replaced by negative emotions and clichés, indicating the alienation of the very idea of self-sacrifice, its ousting from the individual system of life-meaning orientations.

These trends look very interesting, especially if we consider them in close connection with an experimental list of names that reflect the idea of self-sacrifice for modern students.

First of all, it is absolutely obvious that *the mother Teresa's* name, dominant in the experimental reaction (49%), has nothing to do with the history of Russia, which is rich in examples of heroic feats and sacrificing one's life for other people. However, its appearance (as well as the appearance of the name of the national heroine of France, *Joan of Arc*, 33%) is quite logical if we consider this fact within the framework of the general trend towards globalization and take into account its main goal, which is actively implemented in the discourse of the mass media that promotes certain universal values and creating universal heroes, as noted above.

Secondly, it seems that no less than the SMK, the contribution to the formation of the list of case names is made by virtual reality, which replaces reality, but retains some of its features. And in this case, the created artificial world constructs, imposes and substitutes the meanings behind some names and events, which in the experiment is reflected in the reactions of Phil Khit, kamikaze, Obi Van Kinobi, Mace Windu.

The third comment is closely related to the previous one and concerns the name of the city of *Stalingrad*, which has always been, above all, a symbol of courage, i.e. courage, peace of mind in danger and courage, as well as heroism as unprecedented resilience, determination, ability to accomplish the feat, although it should be noted that this ability to sacrifice in a critical situation is certainly present on the periphery of the semantic field of these words. And in this regard, the appearance of this name as a marker of the value of *self-sacrifice* is quite ambiguous: it can either be evidence of the semantic emptiness of this abstract concept in the minds of young people, or indicate a shift in this hierarchy in the meaning of the word.

And one more fact, undoubtedly deserving the closest attention, is the negative assessment of the value itself, combined with the names of the *Young Guards* and *Stalingrad*, which, it seems, requires a separate and comprehensive study.

In general, the experimentally obtained data cannot but raise questions that, first of all, are addressed to the modern education system, in particular, the school course of history and, specifically, the texts of textbooks that we addressed at the final stage of the study.

The analysis showed the following.

1. A certain part of the names (A. Meresev, A. Matrosov, N. Ostrovskii, T. Savicheva, "Pavlov's House", Khatyn, Babii Yar, etc.), which symbolized such moral qualities as *self-sacrifice, courage, heroism, tragedy* and were precedent for previous generations, either in textbooks are not mentioned at all (Zhuravlev, 2017), or simply listed in one paragraph as an illustration of the general conclusion about the dominant tendency in the behavior of the Soviet people.

2. Even those names that are present in the texts are placed in a context that does not satisfy the requirement for a context that directly translates meanings (Leontev, 2003) and which causes quite specific associations, carrying "the same image, one and the same the same subjective semantics" (ibid). In the text of textbooks, this law is completely ignored, all the most significant events (the beginning of the war, the defense of the Brest Fortress, the defense of Moscow, etc.) and the battles (Stalingrad, the Kursk Arc, etc.) are described in one or two paragraphs in a clichéd, detached language, which is completely incapable of producing personal meaning.

3. Psychological impact is ensured if three conditions are met: 1) the addressee has as far as possible complete information about the recipient, his motives, interests, and knowledge; 2) the addressee understands the ultimate goal; 3) the addressee knows what optimal means he can achieve his goal (Leontev, 1972). In the textbooks we are considering, there is only a formally declared goal, however, almost every text is the clearest illustration of the contradiction that arises between one of the basic laws of the theory of speech influence, which says: the listener into problems that have a high personal meaning for them (Kharash, 1978), and the intention declared by the authors to give "an objective, consistent and systematic narration of the history of Russia and its people in accordance with the historical and cultural standard" (Zhuravlev, 2017, p. 72).

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, it is possible to fully agree with the researchers, noting that the history cannot be studied without taking into account the personal factor – the biographies of the characters, otherwise no emotional impact on the addressee is simply impossible. Moreover, the authors' biased attitude towards their past, which is transmitted through the text, should be combined with a single periodization and mandatory list of the described military events, battles and heroes that remained forever in the annals of people's memory, consistency and clarity of presentation (Ozhiganova, 2016). And only this combination allows us to ensure not just the transfer of knowledge, but also the translation of a cultural code simultaneously with them.

Today, which is confirmed by the results of our research, the study of history (at least according to the textbooks that have been analyzed) provides neither a cognition of the meaning of the highest values of Russian culture, nor the preservation of the list of national precedent names, and this, in turn, in aggregate with other factors, in particular, with the trends of changes in society associated with globalization processes, in the near future, it cannot but affect the state of the general cognitive base of Russian linguocultural community, erosion of which is fraught with a complete loss of historical memory, the marginalization of the population and, as a consequence, the disappearance of the country itself.

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