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**THE CONCEPT OF “HOME” IN RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE  
LITERATURE OF RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN**

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***Abstract***

The processes of globalization and the rapid time both influence on the perception of basic conceptual notions. Fiction is a special repository of information, which contains ideas about various concepts, including the concept of "home", so our study was carried out on the basis of fiction from Russian and Kazakhstani Russian-language literature of the 21st century. The cultures of Russia and Kazakhstan have been in close interaction since ancient times, which is actively continuing in the modern world, so our study is comparative in nature. The results of the study are the consideration of the notion of “concept”, a generalization of the results of research of the concept of “home” in the Russian language picture of the world, as well as the study of representations of this concept in modern Russian-language literature of Russia and Kazakhstan based on the works of the Russian author M. Petrosyan “Dom, v kotorom...” [“The house in which...”], Kazakh Russian-language writer N. Verevochkin “Zub mamonta. Letopis mertvogo goroda” [Tooth of a mammoth. Chronicle of the Dead City]. These novels reflect the vision of the world of certain social and age groups, therefore, the representations of the concept “home” reflected in these works are enshrined in the Russian language picture of the world.

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## **1. Introduction**

The study of the conceptosphere is an actively developing area in modern philological sciences. The concept of “home” is one of the most important concepts in the Russian language picture of the world, which is reflected in literature as well. The common historical past, the modern process of globalization could not but leave a trace on the vision of the world by the inhabitants of two neighboring countries – Russia and Kazakhstan. In order to confirm or refute this, our study is comparative in nature, namely, it is based on a comparison of the concept of “home” in the works of contemporary Russian-speaking authors who represent these countries.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, information on the connection of language with culture, human thinking is important. Study of the concept allows you to get this information. Russia and Kazakhstan are multinational countries, in the first of which Russian is the state language, and in the second – the language of interethnic communication. A common understanding of the same concepts by the people of both countries is important for the successful implementation of intercultural communication.

## **3. Research Questions**

### **3.1. Notion of “concept”**

To conduct the study, it was necessary to distinguish between cognitive, linguistic and cultural concepts. A cognitive concept is considered as “a discrete mental formation, which is the basic unit of a person’s mental code, has a relatively ordered internal structure, and is the result of cognitive activity of an individual and society” (Popova & Sternin, 2007, p. 34). Linguoculturological concepts – “clots of culture in the human mind, in the form of which culture enters the mental world of man; that’s whereby the person himself enters the culture or even influences it” (Stepanov, 2004, p. 43). Fiction concepts are dedicated to the study of the individual author’s picture of the world. At the same time, in the text of the fictional work there is a combination of linguistic and individual author’s concepts, since “in the text the concept continues to include both general linguistic and personal author’s meanings, as well as those that the reader can attach” (Burdin & Avvakumova, 2019, p. 99). The notion of fiction concept and its complex, multidimensional character were investigated in the works of Askoldov (1997, pp. 267-279), Burdin and Avvakumova (2019, pp. 97-100), Mileyko and Rus-Bryushinina (2016, pp. 128-130) and others.

### **3.2. The concept of "home" from the point of view of linguoculturology, literary criticism, cognitive linguistics**

The issue of understanding the concept of home from the point of view of cognitive linguistics is well developed in science. The most significant works on this topic are summarized in the manual of Maslova “Cognitive Linguistics”, where the house is presented as “a building; double of man; the house has the functions of limitation and protection, opposed to the forest” (Maslova, 2005, p. 235). In an

associative experiment conducted as part of the work on cognitive linguistics, home “was associated mainly with family, warmth, and comfort” (Zjang, 2016, p. 41). In the work of Stepanov's “Constants: Dictionary of Russian culture” the concept of “home” is moving closer to the concept of “comfort” (Stepanov, 2004, pp. 826-827); in the study Ananyeva and Gabdullina (2019, p. 468) – with the concept of “homeland”. From the point of view of linguoculturology, the house is considered as a dwelling, “your own” world; endowed with human properties (Mikhailova, 2015, p. 154-155). The English word “home” has a lot of meanings (such as place, family, comfort etc.), but the word “house” has only the meaning of “building”. Whereas a Russian word “дом” reflects all these meanings. Taking into account the difficulty of translating the meanings of a given word into English, it should be remembered that the word “home” has a broader meaning, thus when using the word “house” the translator means “building”. The word “home” is considered as a concept, and the word “house” as part of the concept.

When studying the concept, a comparative method is actively used. The materials of research in such works are often literature and folklore of different languages. This can be seen in the examples of the works of Sokolova (2018, pp. 209-215), Shakolo (2019, pp. 223-238), Tian and Gudkov (2018, pp. 40-47), Evdokimova, Lyapaeva, and Fedayay (2018, pp. 78-84) and other scientists.

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

The aim of our study is to compare representations of the concept of “home” on the basis of the works of Russian and Kazakhstani authors of the 21st century. Modern literature reflects the state of culture of our days, presents the results of human thinking. That is why, in our opinion, the study of the concept on the basis of literature of the XXI century is the most relevant. The comparative aspect allows you to compare the world view of people living in different territories with different gender and national characteristics. To analyze the concept of “home”, we selected the novels by Petrosyan (2017) “Dom, v kotorom...” [“The house in which...”], Kazakh Russian-language writer Verevochkin (2010) “Zub mamonta. Letopis mertvogo goroda” [Tooth of a mammoth. Chronicle of the Dead City]. These works are valuable for literary criticism, which is confirmed by the research of Afanasyeva (2017, pp. 119-125), Sinegubova (2018, pp. 198-205) and others. Despite certain differences, both works are written in Russian, which allows us to say that both authors think in the same language, which defines their picture of the world.

#### **5. Research Methods**

To study the subject of research, we used the following methods: analysis, synthesis, comparative method, descriptive method, classification, generalization, conceptual analysis. Using these methods allowed us to obtain information about the concept under study.

#### **6. Findings**

**6.1.** The action in the novel “Dom, v kotorom...” [“The house in which...”] (Petrosyan, 2017) takes place in three locations: Дом (House), Изнанка (Inside) and Наружность (Outside), one way or

another opposed to each other on the principle of belonging to the real or magical world; location in the real world: inside the territory of the House or outside it (Table 01).

**Table 01.** Location Names in “Dom, v kotorom...” [“The house in which...”] by M. Petrosyan

	The territory of the boarding house	Outside this territory
Reality	Дом (House)	Наружность (Outside)
Irreality	Изнанка Дома (Inside of the House)	–

Locations *Дом* (House) and *Изнанка* (Inside) belong directly to the boarding house. The house itself is called a boarding school. *Изнанка* (Inside) is the magical, fantastic part of the House, the movement of which occurs consciously or unconsciously among some residents of the House. The novel contains descriptions of the Inside of the House made by different heroes, but it is noted that they are talking about the same location. Its components: forest, highway, gas station, snack bar, hotel and other houses. Thus, the concept of “home” in this work is characterized by a combination with the concept of “forest”. This is a feature of the artistic concept in the work we are considering and is an important element of the individual author’s picture of the world.

**6.2.** In the work of Verevchkin (2010), it is about the destruction of not only a small city in the north of Kazakhstan, but also about the collapse of the USSR – the homeland of the heroes of the novel – the fictional concept of “home” in this work is closely connected with the concepts of “homeland”, “city”, “village”. Often the combination of these concepts in the text of the novel is so intense that it becomes impossible to distinguish between them. The destruction of houses is similar to the collapse of the country, the breaking of the fate of heroes. During the analysis, it was determined that the word *homeland* is a representative of the concept of “home”. For example, we took the following quote: «*А в той комнате, забитой поленицами дров, он, наверное, и был зачат в любви. Это безмолвное пространство, этот отстойник тоски и есть его родина*» (“*And in that room, which was full of firewood, he must have been conceived in love. This silent space, this sedimentation tank of melancholy is his homeland*”) (Verevchkin, 2010, p. 32). Thus, the concept of “home” also includes representatives of the concept of “homeland” from the work we are studying.

**6.3.** In the novel “Zub mamonta. Letopis mertvogo goroda” [Tooth of a mammoth. Chronicle of the Dead City] a dream space is highlighted, which plays a large role in the description of the studied fictional concept. In the dream that Ruslan sees, one of the main characters of the work, there is an adobe skyscraper. Representatives of the studied concept in the oneiric space will be the words *building, skyscraper, tower, skyscraper, hut, structure* (Verevchkin, 2010). All of them belong to the adobe skyscraper. We can make a logical conclusion that the adobe skyscraper is very fragile, since a high-rise building constructed from a mixture of clay, manure and straw will be fragile and will not last long. Thus, fragility will be one of the important signs of the concept of “home” in this work.

**6.4.** There are few representations of the House concept in the work of Petrosyan (2017). The most common is the name “House” itself, which occurs 450 times in the text of the novel. Here, *Дом* (House) is a proper name, therefore it is presented in the text with a capital letter. The representatives that can be found in the text of the work of Petrosyan (2017) can be divided into several semantic groups:

1. official names of the House: *школа* (school); *школа-интернат* (boarding school); *сиротский приют*; *интернат для детей-инвалидов* (an orphanage boarding school for disabled children); «*Дом*

*призрения обездоленных сирот»* (The “House of Charity of the Disappointed Orphans”), which was rated by a young man nicknamed Шакал Табаки (Shakal Tabaki) as *«елейное, пахнущее Диккенсом»* (“an oil, smelling of Dickens”) (Petrosyan, 2017, p. 392). These representatives are found in speeches by the director and caregivers of the House and parents whose children live in the House. Representative information does not have a specific emotionally expressive color;

2. representatives related to the habitat of animals: *нора* (burrow), *гадюшник* (adder), *улей* (hive). From this we can conclude that the speakers compare the inhabitants of the House (i.e. themselves) with animals;

3. representatives associated with the magical essence of the House: *Отсюда* (From Here), *Не Отсюда* (Not From Here), *могущественное и капризное божество* (a powerful and capricious deity), *НЕЧТО* (SOMETHING). These representatives are associated with the Inside of the House (Изнанкой), as well as with the endowment of the House with the functions and abilities of a living being;

4. representations related to the function of the House as a place of residence: *своя территория* (its own territory), *обиталище* (abode), *место обитания* (habitat). A particular note in this group is the representative of the world, which defines the House as the only place in which the characters of the novel exist.

5. Representatives with dismissive, emotionally expressive coloring. These include: *Серый Ящик* (Gray Box); *картонный, раскрашенный ящик со съёмной крышей* (cardboard, painted box with a removable roof), *болото* (swamp).

A special group is formed by such representations that do not refer to the House as the building in which the heroes live, but to the house as a kind of place where the heroes could find comfort and peace (the meaning of the word “home”). Such a contrast is possible, for example, due to a quote: *«Он [Кузнечик] слишком хорошо понимает, что Хламовник [комната в Доме, где жил персонаж]– не дом ему и не может быть домом»* (“He [the Grasshopper] understands too well that Khlamovnik [the room in the House where the character lived] is not his home and cannot be home”) (Petrosyan, 2017, p. 129).

Sometimes, by this place, the heroes do not mean the House as a whole, but its parts, most often – their rooms, which are endowed with special nicknames. These representations include: *комната* (room), *крепость* (fortress), *кровать* (bed), *логово* (den), *Гнездо* (Nest), *Крысятник* (Kryyatnik – a very bad house), *Хламовник* (Khlamovnik – a very bad house with a lot of rubbish in it), *отстойник* (drain box), *Могильник* (burial ground), *Родина* (Motherland), *наш тёплый хлев* (our warm stable), *райские кущи* (paradise). Often these representatives are the names of the habitats of various animals. These representatives are not endowed with a negative connotation, despite their specific names, gaining a negative rating only in the speech of individual characters.

**6.5.** In the work “Zub mamonta. Letopis mertvogo goroda” [Tooth of a mammoth. Chronicle of the Dead City] (Verevchkin, 2010) there are a large number of representatives of the concept of “house”. They can be divided into the following lexical and semantic groups:

1. representatives indicating a state of destruction, abandonment: *бетонный череп*, *недоскреб*, *незавершёнка*, *бетонная пустота*, *убожище нищеты*, *развалины*, *руины*, *безмолвное пространство*

(concrete skull, nezavershenka – (a half-built house), concrete void, abode of poverty, ruins, silent space).

This is the group most frequently encountered in the text;

2. representatives with a negative connotation of meaning, which are mainly closely related to the first group of this classification. These include the following words: *стог соломы, хаос бетонных плит, отстойник тоски, могила, яма, бараки, лачуга, коробка* (a stack of straw, chaos of concrete slabs, a sump of longing, a grave, a pit, barracks, a shack, a box);

3. representatives synonymous with the word "house" in the meaning of a particular place intended for housing. This group includes words such as: *комната, квартира, десять этажей, особнячок, небоскреб, изба, хата, особняк, жилище, человеческое жилье, палатка, землянка, сруб, домик* (a room, an apartment, ten floors, a little mansion, a skyscraper, a hut, a hut, a mansion, a dwelling, human housing, a tent, a dugout, a log house, a little house);

4. representatives related to animal habitat: *лежбище, бетонная пещера, гнездовье, берлога, гнездо* (rookery, concrete cave, nesting, lair, nest). The words *гнездо* (nest) and *гнездовье* (nesting) in this group have a positive rating; other representations are associated with a lack of a sense of comfort;

5. representatives, to some extent related to the function of protection, comfort: *последняя надежда наркоманов, кольцо, уютное место, ковчег* (the last hope of drug addicts, a ring, a cozy place, an ark). This group is opposed to the previous one;

6. representatives used in the text ironically: *хоромы, дворец, Спасская башня* (mansions, palace, Spasskaya tower). It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that these words represent large-sized object;

7. representatives designating specialized agencies: *детдом, Дом культуры* (orphanage, cultural centre). We can come across these words just once.

These groups do not include some representations: *объект, многоэтажные грибы, родина, двор, мир, живое существо, государство бабы Нади* (object, multi-story mushrooms, homeland, courtyard, world, living creature, the state of Baba Nadya). Each of them carries an important component in the description of the concept of "home".

So, for example, the representation of the *объект* (object) determines the attitude of the character of Kozlov to the house from the point of view of the builder. Representation of *многоэтажные грибы* (multi-story mushrooms), like the previous one, is associated with construction. This phrase is metaphorical, associated with the phraseological unit «как грибы» (transl: “like mushrooms”) which in Russian means rapid growth.

**6.6.** To determine what will be in the core and on the periphery of a fictional concept, it is necessary to determine its integral parts. In the work of Petrosyan (2017), the most significant features of the House are:

1. endowing it with the properties of a living being: mind, will, feelings, etc. This is confirmed by numerous quotes from the text, for example: «*оказалось, что Дом живой и что он тоже умеет любить*» (Petrosyan, 2017, p. 59); «*Дом взял тебя. Пустил в себя*» (Petrosyan, 2017, p. 213) and many others etc. Such a perception of the essence of the House by the residents of the boarding school explains their special, respectful attitude to the House;

2. almost complete lack of connection with the concepts of "comfort" and "family". The lack of a sense of coziness and nepotism for most residents of the House is explained by the fact that the heroes of the book live in a boarding school, where they have certain difficulties, such as: lack of sympathetic attitude on the part of teachers and educators; beatings of pupils with each other, etc. This observation allows us to highlight the problem of boarding houses for children as places where children are not given the proper amount of attention. Therefore, often pupils feel unnecessary, lonely. This happens despite the fact that a lot of people live in the House and the House is a rather noisy place;

3. connection with magic parallel to the world. This is due to the features of the phenomenon of magical realism. In the text it is realized in the image of the Inside of the House;

4. contradictory perception of the House. Part of the inhabitants of the House (Сфинкс (Sphinx), Курильщик (Smoker), etc.) were afraid of the house for various reasons; other part (Слепой (Blind), Горбач (Humpback), Шакал Табаки (Shakal Tabaki) etc.) loved the house. Such a perception is characteristic of a concept in the fiction, but not linguistic, cultural understanding of the analyzed concept;

5. understanding of the inhabitants of the House as its main value, which can be confirmed by a quote *«Покинувшие Дом были частью этого знания»* ("Those who left the house were part of this knowledge") (Petrosyan, 2017, p. 306). This is also confirmed by a large number of metonyms in the text, where the House is correlated with its inhabitants.

6. the presence in the House of traditions, laws, hierarchies that ensure order in the building. The owner of the House is always one of the teenagers, and not the principal of the school;

7. the connection of the House with the concept of "death", as the inhabitants of the House often died for natural or violent reasons (the death of the characters *Лось, Волк, Помпей, Тень* (Elk, Wolf, Pompeii, Shadow) and many others. The destruction of the House at the end of the work is perceived by the heroes of the novel as his death.

In the course of the analysis of the novel by M. Petrosyan "Дом, в котором..." [The house in which ...] we highlighted the core and periphery of the "house" concept. The core of the concept are words *магия, одиночество, живой* (magic, loneliness, alive). The periphery of the concept is *жители, мир, закон, школа, защита* (residents, world, law, school, protection).

**6.7.** The most important components of the concept of "home" in the novel by Verevchkin (2010) are:

1. connection of the concept of "home" with death, destruction. A symbol of this connection is the skeleton of a mammoth, located under the city: *«Дом построен на костях вымершего животного»* (The house is built on the bones of an extinct animal) (Verevchkin, 2010, p. 2). Later, this connection is reflected in the destruction of the city, the death of its inhabitants, etc.

2. connection with the concept of "family", the inseparability of home from the place of birth. This can be seen in the example of Victor Mamontov, which is spoken of so: *«Жил он с семьей большую часть года у полярного круга, а домой наезжали лишь в летние каникулы»* ("He and his family spent most of the year at the Arctic Circle, and they went home only during the summer holidays") (Verevchkin, 2010, p. 39). Mamontov's house is, firstly, the place of his birth, and secondly, the place where his mother lives. The perception of the house by Ruslan, the main character of the novel is very

interesting. He considers Stepnomorsk to be his home, homeland, where he lived for about a year, but not Alma-Ata, in which he was born and spent most of his life, where his mother and stepfather live.

3. perception of the house as a living being. This is realized in comparison with a child at home: «Для нее он [дом] давно был живым существом, беззащитным, как ребенок, который не умел говорить, а мог лишь смеяться и плакать» (“For her, he [home] has long been a living creature, defenseless, like a child who could not speak, but could only laugh and cry”) (Verevchkin, 2010, p. 129). Through this sign, the feeling of pity experienced by the character of Baba Nadya (Баба Надя) to the house is expressed.

4. the connection of a large number of memories with the house. This fact causes a special, warm attitude towards home. This positive attitude is typical for most of the characters in the analyzed novel: Kozlov (Козлов), Baba Nadya (Баба Надя), the Mamontov family (семья Мамонтовых), etc. Negative connotations associated with home are realized in the speech of the characters Enko (Енко), Raya (Рая), etc.

5. the need for a fence. The absence of a fence in this work is a symbol of decline, the destruction of the house, while its presence indicates the well-being of the house. So we can conclude that the fence is a necessary condition for the existence of the house, performing a protective function;

6. following the rules, laws. This is realized through the phrase of one of the characters in the novel.: «Еще чего не хватало, чтобы я дома на [миграционный] учет вставала» (“What else was missing for me to get up at the [migration] register”) (Verevchkin, 2010, p. 67).

In the course of the analysis, we determined the structure of the “home” concept in N. Verevchkin’s novel “Zub mamonta. Letopis mertvogo goroda” [Tooth of a mammoth. Chronicle of the Dead City]. The core of the concept are words *родина, смерть* (*homeland, death*). The periphery of the concept is *семья, живой, защита, память, уют* (*family, lively, protection, memory, comfort*).

## 7. Conclusion

The results of our study are not only a definition of the structure of the concept of “home” in the analyzed works, but also a comparison of the concepts:

1. The concept of "home" in both novels is expressed in the names of the habitats of animals. Having analyzed the context, we can understand that this speaks of a sense of disorder in life, a comparison of a person with animals. This observation partially alienates the concept of "house" from the concept of "comfort";

2. Representation of the world is found in both novels, but contains a different meaning. In the novel “Dom, v kotorom...” [“The house in which...”] the house is called the world, because the heroes of the novel do not know another world but for their home. In the novel “Zub mamonta. Letopis mertvogo goroda” [Tooth of a mammoth. Chronicle of the Dead City] representation of the world is heterogeneous: Ruslan perceives the whole world as his house; the world of Kostya Shumny is limited only to the house; for a spider, the house is so huge that it is perceived as a world.

In addition to representations, in the studied novels there coincided a number of the most important features that make up the basis of the concept of “house”. These include the following characteristics:



1. the valuable core of the house is the people living in it. In this case, the inhabitants of the house may not be interconnected by family ties;

2. connection with the concept of "death". In the work of M. Petrosyan, human death is considered more; in the novel by N. Verevchkin - the destruction of the city;

3. isolation from the outside world. Implemented in the need to isolate the house from the outside world with the help of a fence, which additionally organizes the protection function. This includes the space of the yard in the concept of "home";

4. endowment of the house with the characteristics of a living creature. This feature is seen more in the work of M. Petrosyan;

5. the house must be associated with a lot of memories. The assessment of the house by various characters depends on the events experienced, therefore the attitude of the characters varies greatly and can be associated not only with positive, but also extremely negative connotations;

6. if in the work of M. Petrosyan the need to comply with laws and rules is an integral characteristic of the concept under study, in the work of N. Verevchkin the house is perceived as a place that the law does not apply to. Partially, this feature is implemented in the novel of the Kazakhstani author in compliance with traditions.

Thus, each of the concepts in the materials under study has a set of representatives that determine its essence and the defining features that make up its core and periphery. The reconstruction of the concept of "home" in both novels allows us to formulate the author's position, the idea of the book. A large number of coinciding characteristics allows us to say that the place of writing of the novel practically did not affect the perception of the concept of "home" by the authors of the analyzed works. Some of these characteristics are signs of a linguistic and cultural concept (function of protection, isolation, humanization), the presence of which is explained by the same linguistic picture of the world of writers. But in both novels, the connection with some concepts, such as "comfort", "family", is weakened; the convergence of the concept of "home" with the concept of "death" is clearly seen, which is completely uncharacteristic of the linguistic and cultural concept of "home". These signs are the characteristics of the concept in fiction, connecting two different novels on the subject and problems.

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