

MSC 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.
COMMUNICATION»****THE RUSSIAN WORD IN THE CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT:
ASSOCIATIVE STUDIES OF LANGUAGE CONSCIOUSNESS**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of worldview in the language consciousness of the Russians living on the territory of Kazakhstan and in Russia. The issues of adaptability and stability of individual elements of the language and culture of the Russian ethnic group in the dynamics of both changed socio-economic conditions and under the influence of the cross-cultural environment are investigated in this paper. The degree of stability and variability of the linguistic worldview of the Russians living in different areas using the stimuli of associative data (extracted from existing dictionaries and our own field research) and the analysis of proverbial agnomy in the language environment of the youth audience are analyzed. The purpose of the study was to confirm the difference of language consciousness of the Russian Diaspora in Kazakhstan from that of the Russian-Russians, which is due to the influence of the Kazakh culture: to determine the degree and quality characteristics of this influence; to establish the basic unchangeable constants of the ethnic consciousness of the Russians and its variable components.

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1. Introduction

It is common knowledge that any ethnic group living in a cross-cultural environment perceives elements of the culture they come in contact with. Many diasporic peoples have experience of such adaptation of languages and cultures in multinational states (in particular, in Kazakhstan and Russia); however, some of them may experience a powerful language shift and even lose their linguistic identity in the process of assimilation. In relation to the Russian language in Kazakhstan, according to Suleimenova (2019), "it should be said that it, along with Kazakh, has become a language in the direction of which a language shift has also taken place" (p. 82).

It is obvious that Russian language culture was quite naturally and expectedly influenced by Kazakh culture under the conditions of foreign culture existence and functioning in Kazakhstan, and traces of such Kazakh and Russian linguistic and cultural interaction were repeatedly noted by Kazakh researchers Suleimenova (2019), Shaimerdenova and Suleimenova (2020), Baigutova et al. (2015), Arynbaeva (2019), etc. In this regard, the problem of different and changing worldviews and their reflection in the linguistic view of the world among different ethnic groups and, what is especially interesting, within one ethnic group, what is the Russian superethnos (Ufimtseva, 2017; Ufimtseva & Balyasnikova, 2019), which includes different images (and pictures) of the world depending on the difference in places of residence (in Russia and abroad), socio-cultural, professional, gender and other factors, as well as the age of its representatives.

Currently, in the linguoculturological and ethnolinguistic context, the content of the worldview is analyzed through a combination of various concepts: family, homeland, love, friendship, friend, etc. In psycholinguistics, these concepts are referred to as basic values and are studied in the mirror of language consciousness. The content of basic values, their transformation and dynamics are actively studied on the basis of theoretical approaches of modern linguistics. In particular, they are most constructively studied in the framework of linguoculturology, linguistic axiology, ethnolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Since the value system is a multidimensional phenomenon, there are several areas of research within linguistic concepts. At the same time, the main means of analysis and interpretation is language as a material for comprehending and understanding the value worldview of a particular ethnic group, and the associative experiment actively used by modern psycholinguistics has become a fairly reliable and generally recognized way of accessing language consciousness.

2. Problem Statement

2.1. Associative dictionaries as a model of language consciousness of an ethnic group: a comparative aspect

Images of language consciousness obtained using an associative experiment are considered in comparison of two or more cultures, in the context of different generations of the same ethnic group (if there are such data in previous studies), and so on. For example, the materials of the associative dictionaries of the Russian language and the content of the two Kazakh associative dictionaries allow for comparative studies of changes in the linguistic consciousness of the ethnic group in different life periods: to determine the degree of transformation of the mental, moral and emotional climate, follow changes in the associative

level of stereotyped reactions that reflect the content of the basic values, and to identify the vectors of displacement of value priorities at different times.

At the same time, the true differences in the culture of an ethnic group are not so much focused on identifying basic values (they are rather of a supra-ethnic, general humanistic nature) and not on fixing differences in value priorities, but on a special set of traditional, archetypal features peculiar to this ethnic group, on their unique combination and original implementation. At the same time, the mixing and combining of differences existing within any ethnic group, including interference differences acquired in an inhomogeneous intercultural environment, is unique: our work is devoted to the study of such intra-ethnic language shifts - the search for differences "within themselves", within one ethnic group, but living in different areas. We assume that the worldview reflected in the language consciousness of even one ethnic group (for example, Russian) may be different depending on the geography and environment of residence, the degree of assimilation with the indigenous population, may also be determined by socio-economic, age, socio-professional and gender factors, etc.

3. Research Questions

Long-term observations give reason to assume that the Russians living in Russia and the Russians living in Kazakhstan, despite the commonality of language and culture, have different specific features of national psychology, mentality, verbal behavior, in other words – have different images of the world reflected in different linguistic worldviews. This is convincingly proved by the materials of associative experiments, which are recognized as one of the most effective ways to "internalize" the language consciousness of the studied ethnic group as a whole and its individual representatives in particular. Currently, the scientific arsenal of psycholinguistic associative lexicography already has a solid body of associative dictionaries, the predictive value of which and the powerful scientific potential contained in them can hardly be overestimated. The Russian associative lexicography has been established, and consequently, it has become necessary to identify and discuss the main types of Russian associative dictionaries (Dmitryuk, 2019).

For the purpose of "externizing" of the linguistic worldview of Russian-speaking representatives of Kazakhstan (hereinafter referred to as RK) a free associative experiment with 200 ethnic Russian-speaking informants-students of various universities in Shymkent (partly with Russian-speaking representatives of other ethnic groups for whom Russian was their native language: Koreans, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.) was conducted. The list of stimulus words was based on a list of words that was widely tested in the practice of free associative experiment (Ufimtseva, 1996), which included personal pronouns (I, we) and some kinship categories (*father of one's godchild, father of the son / daughter-in-law, etc.*).

The language consciousness of the Russian-speaking Russians (RR) is based on the content of published associative dictionaries: the Russian associative dictionary (RAD) by Karaulov (1994 -1998) and the Slavic associative dictionary (SAD) by Ufimtseva et al. (2004). The words *grandmother, brother, grandfather, friend, earth, godfather, world, husband, man, we, homeland, father of son / daughter-in-law, family, person, I*, etc. were selected for the pilot study of strategies for associating two comparable groups (RK and RR). The choice of these stimulus words is explained by the fact that they are part of the "core of the language consciousness" of the Russians and are among the basic values of the ethnic group. Such

stimulus words as *father of one's godchild*, *father of son / daughter-in-law*, etc. were chosen for the purpose of identifying the agnomy of traditional Russian concepts from the field of kinship relations and studying the functioning of Russian proverbs in the speech (and in the language consciousness) of modern youth.

Besides, in the course of comparing the associative strategies of the Russian-Kazakhs and the Russian-Russians it was interesting and necessary to compare the analyzed material with the content of Kazakh associative dictionaries of different periods: the Kazakh-Russian associative dictionary-KRAD (Dmitryuk, 1998) of the Soviet period and the modern Kazakh associative dictionary - KAD (Dmitryuk et al., 2014). This allowed us to partially reject our hypothesis that Russian language consciousness in modern Kazakhstan differs from the Russian language consciousness in Russia, and this difference is due to the influence of the Kazakh culture; to determine the degree and qualitative characteristics of this influence was the purpose of our comparative study. However, we believed that Russian-Russian language worldview basic (nuclear) components should remain unchanged, and in this case it is necessary to identify which meanings / knowledge in the Russian worldview (and in the worldview reflected in their minds) are variable, and which, on the contrary, constitute the constants of ethnic consciousness.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to confirm the difference between the Russian language consciousness of the Russian Diaspora living in Kazakhstan and that of the Russian-Russians, that is caused by the influence of the Kazakh culture: to determine the degree and qualitative characteristics of this influence; to establish the basic unchanging constants of the ethnic consciousness of the Russians and its variable components.

5. Research Methods

We analyzed the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the associative fields obtained as a result of an experiment with a group of RK (200 informants), then compared with the content of the associative fields of similar stimuli in the previously mentioned Russian and Kazakh associative dictionaries. The number of quantitative characteristics analyzed included the proximity of associative reactions (i.e., the percentage of identical associations in different sources), as well as the coefficient of association diversity and reaction ranks.

6. Findings

Let us consider as an example the content of the associative fields (hereinafter AF) of the *friend* stimulus. The meaning of this word is determined by the relationship of friendship and affection, implies mutual understanding and support, loyalty and devotion, selfless help and reliability. In the practice of the AF analysis, there are different models of their structuring. In this article, we will use a comprehensive method of analysis, taking into account the quantitative and conceptual characteristics of associations.

Despite the appearing correlative proximity of the Russian-Kazakhs' and Russian-Russians' associative thinking (according to the dictionaries of the RAD and SAD) a different degree of "demand" for certain associative reactions to this stimulus is shown in percentage. The data presented in *Table 1* show

that subject-object paradigmatic associations, most often synonymous and antonymic in nature (*comrade, friend, close person, girlfriend; enemy, foe, traitor, enemy, etc.*), are widely represented in the compared AF, but with different quantitative indicators. The value-semantic parameters of the AF stimulus are also characterized by similar paradigmatic (*support, loyalty, friendship, loyalty, rarity, reliability, love, etc.*) and syntagmatic (*loyal, the only one, reliable, close, best, good, loyal, etc.*) reactions. However, when carefully considered, comparative analysis shows both the expected commonality of association strategies and the difference that gives rise to certain arguments and conclusions.

In Table 1 the results of the study, in particular: the rank of frequency of associations for a given stimulus; the list of associations in descending order of frequency according to the data of two Russian associative dictionaries RAD (RR-1) and SAD (RR-2) are presented. The research materials in the Russian-Kazakhs were collected in different periods from 2014 to 2018, in the course of mass free associative experiments that were conducted in student classrooms, where participants were both Russians and Russian-speaking representatives of other ethnic groups, and Kazakhs who chose questionnaires in the Russian language, finding it difficult to answer in their native language. This material was classified according to the ethnic groups maintained, since is undoubtedly of ethno-socio-cultural interest and awaits further investigation.

Table 1. Russian-Russians' and Russian-Kazakhs' central zones of associative fields on the *friend* stimulus

Frequency respond rank	RR-1 (RAD –1994)		RR-2 (CAD –2004)		RK (experiment of 2018)	
	Associates	%	Associates	%	Associates	%
1	True	12,9	Enemy	13,8	Enemy	11,7
2	Enemy	8,8	True	10,4	True	8,2
3	Childhood	6,2	Best, good	3,9	My	5, 6
4	My	5,2	Foe	3,7	Dog, childhood	4,4
5	Comrade	5,0	My	3,5	Close, brother	3,6
6	Best	3,7	Dog	3,4	Comrade	2,7
7	Dog	3,2	Brother	2,8	Old	2,3
8	Close, good	3,0	Girlfriend	2,2	Person's	2,1
9	Dear	2,2	Loyalty	1,8	Bosom, no (I have no)	1,8
10	Brother, girlfriend	1,9	Help	1,7	Real	1,6
11	The only one, the enemy	1,7	Reliable, loyal	1,3	Reliable, buddy	1,4
12	Reliable, real	1,5	Person's	1,2	The only one	1, 3
13	Bosom	1,0	Childhood	1,1	Foe / not a friend	1,2
14	-	-	Friendship, support	1,0	Alone, help	1,0
15	-	-	-	-	Beer	0, 9

In all three associative lists, the first position are occupied by the most typical reactions of the faithful and the enemy. Antonymic associations are generally characteristic of the Russian person (**grandmother** – *grandfather*¹, **light** - *dark*, **day** – *night*, etc.) and are often represented in the central zone of the associative field (AF) of the stimulus. Six associations also coincided three times, but with different rank indicators: *brother, childhood, my, reliable, enemy, dog*, which indicates a fairly stable general language (and general cultural) strategy of association and constant (in general and main positions) perception of the image / concept behind the **friend** stimulus.

Attention is drawn to the general and different reactions in the central zone of associative fields, namely in the group of reactions with a frequency of at least 1% of the total number of all responses, without taking individual and other small associations into account. Russian-Russians RR-1 and RR-2 had common reactions of *best, girlfriend, good* with close frequency indicators; whereas the Russian-Russians group RR-1 in the early 1990s had more matches with the responses of Russian-Kazakhs: *close, the only one, bosom, real and comrade* - five common positions, while Russian-Kazakhs (RR-2) had only two such matches with the group of RR-2 (2000s) - *help* and *person's*. In our opinion, there are reasons to consider the association of a person indirectly close to the reaction of a dog (the degree of "attraction" of these lexemes is high: *a dog is a friend of a person*), which unites it with the above-mentioned coincidence.

Why the RR-2 AF lost the association-Sovietism *comrade* (by the way, it remained in the center of the Russian-Kazakh AF) is partly understandable, but it is surprising that the typically Russian fixed expression *bosom friend* is absent in the central zone of the Slavic associative dictionary (SAD-2004) in the RR-2 group, but it is still relevant in Kazakh Russians (RK), recorded even more often (1.8%) than in RR-1 (1.0%).

It seems obvious that the image of the world (through the concept of **a friend**) of Russian-Kazakhs is closer to the Russians of the Soviet and "Perestroika" time than to the Russians of the "renewing" period of Russia. This conclusion is partially confirmed in the works of Svinchukova (2015), devoted to the study of the language consciousness of the Russian Diaspora in Kazakhstan: "...we can say that the modern image of **a friend** in modern Russians living in Kazakhstan is very similar to the image of 20 years ago" (Svinchukova, 2015, p.132).

As for the discrepancies in the central zone of the three groups of Russian respondents compared, it turns out that the association *dear* is the only one not represented in the other two compared lists (we can assume that this is partly a reminiscent reaction of well-read Soviet youth to Guy de Maupassant's novel "Dear friend"). The RR-2 group has 4 such reactions – *loyalty, friendship, support, and devoted*, and all of them complement the general picture of traditional perception of the friend concept: derivational formations from the stimulus word (**friend** - *friendship*) and its typical characteristics (*loyalty – faithful*), and devoted as the synonymous reaction to it.

Russian-Kazakhs (RK) have five non-matching reactions (*old, no, friend, alone*). The association *no / i have no* occurs with a fairly high frequency rank of 1.8% and the adjacent reaction *alone* has a frequency rank of 1.0%, which proves the fact of the absence of friends or their small number, which was

¹ Here and further on, the stimulus words are highlighted in bold, and the associative reactions are shown in italics, as is traditionally done in associative research works.

not the case in the central zones of the AF of Russian-Russians. The *buddy* associate is semantically close to them (1.4%), which indicates a superficial relationship with a **friend** rather than a trusting and close friendship; this also includes the beer association, partly an indicator of the same casual fragile ties, and this is a reason to think about some of the newly appeared shortage of friends among modern Russian Kazakhs. The old association (2,8%) refers to a typical Russian saying "*Old friends are best*" and serve as evidence of sustainability of the units of phraseological fund (likewise, the *bosom* association) in the language consciousness of the Russian-Kazakhs, which gives ground to consider this fund a viable and popular even in cross-cultural environment.

It is also interesting to compare the analyzed material of typical associative responses of Russian informants of the **friend** stimulus with the meaning given in the Kazakh associative dictionary (Dmitryuk et al., 2014) with the **dos (friend)** stimulus-correlate.

Table 02 shows that six Kazakh associations coincided with the Russian associations of all three groups of respondents: *adal*, *zhodas*, *senimdi*, *zhakyn*, *zhaksy*, *dushpan*, which is due to the semantic proximity of positive connotations associated with the meaning of the stimulus word. Interestingly, antonymous association *dushpan (the enemy)* is atypical for the Kazakhs: it ranks 11th in the frequency response rank.

Table 2. Central zone of the Kazakh associative field of the **dos (friend)** stimulus

Frequency respond rank	Kazakh associative dictionary (Dmitryuk et al., 2014)	Respond frequency (%)
1	Adal (honest)	13,5
2	Zhan (soul, soulful)	9,4
3	Zholdas (comrade)	6,0
4	Bauyr (as a brother)	5,4
5	Senimdi (loyal)	5,0
6	Zhakyn (close)	4,5
7	Sirlas (interlocutor)	4,0
8	Dosym kop (a lot of friends)	3,8
9	Zhaksy (good)	2,7
10	Mengi (forever)	2,6
11	Dushpan (enemy)	2,0
12	Adaldyk (honesty), kurby (girlfriend)	1,9
13	Dos bolu (be a friend)	1,4
14	Dossyz emir bos* (without friends life is empty)	1,0
15	Kol ushyn beru* (giving a helping hand)	0,9

Ethnically specific associations in the AF of the **dos / friend** stimulus are of great interest for research. The high-frequency response here is the lexeme *zhan* (soul, soulful), which is very common in everyday speech of Kazakhs in the meaning of ‘mentally close, native, dear’, used in affectionate greeting *zhanyim* (my soul, beloved) and is very common in male and female proper names: Gulzhan, Ayazhan, Zhansulu, Zhansaya, Baurzhan, Bakhytzhana, Zhanibek and many others. The *bauyr* (literally, ‘liver’) is also an ethnically-marked association. For Kazakhs, the meaning of this organ is very important, it emphasizes blood connection, closeness and is akin to the Russian "heart": For example, relatives are called *bauyrym* (my blood relatives), and the colloquial greeting *bauyrym* (meaning "my brother") is also common, showing a respectful and trusting attitude and a special affection of the speaker in relation to a

dear, close person. Another feature of the associations in the Kazakh sample – response phrases containing proverbs, sayings, idioms, reflected in the AF of the analyzed stimulus: the set-expression of *Dossyz emir bos* (Without friends life is empty) and *Kol ushyn beru* (Giving a helping hand) were reproduced by approximately 1% of respondents.

In conclusion, we refer to a study conducted with the participation of Russian-speaking residents of Russia and Kazakhstan (Dmitryuk & Mezentseva, 2010), which was based on the material of Russian paremiological units (more than 1000 Russian proverbs). Respondents were offered various tasks: restoring a proverb from its fragment, recording proverbs with the proposed concept word, describing the situation in which they can be used in speech, and so on. It was assumed that the language consciousness of native Russian speakers living in Russia, in contrast to the language consciousness of residents of other regions, is expected to maintain its purity, not littered with ethno-cultural, extra-literary and other extralinguistic elements, but the data obtained showed the opposite picture. In particular, a large number of contaminated texts were received from the respondents of the youth and middle age groups, apparently demonstrating both the desire for a kind of "creativity", the desire to update (modernize) a set-expression, or simply ignorance of paroemias in their canonical form. Such a phenomenon was not recorded in the Diaspora language consciousness of the Russians living in Kazakhstan.

7. Conclusion

The content differences found in the associative experiment in the associative fields of equivalent words in the compared languages can provide a convincing confirmation of the influence of the socio-cultural environment on the language consciousness of the speakers of the contacting cultures. In particular, it is possible to judge the source and nature of knowledge associated with a particular word-concept in native speakers. The content and structure of images of language consciousness, considered in dynamics, within the time interval of interest to the researcher, reveals the peculiarities of the impact of social, political, cultural and other events taking place in the life of a people on their consciousness and language.

Comparison of the content of the friend image in the Kazakh and Russian language consciousness reveals the important role of territorial, historical and cultural factors in the perception of this significant concept for peoples. The first two factors display themselves through the fact that the associations of the early 1990s Russian-Russians are similar in many ways to those of Russian-Kazakhs, while those of Russians living in independent Kazakhstan are similar to those of Russians of the Soviet and "perestroika" times: the image of the world (through the idea of each other) of the Russian-Kazakhs are closer to the Russians of the Soviet and "perestroika" time than to the Russians of the "renewing" period of Russia. The importance of the latter factor is evidenced, among others, by associative strategies, in particular, the completion of a paroemia based on a stimulus or response by a phraseologically related association, which is typical for Kazakh respondents.

The paremiological fund is an important repository of cultural knowledge in any national language, and experimental studies make it possible to judge the features of "storing" of his fund in the language consciousness of native speakers and whether it changes in diachrony and under what conditions it is more stable. Our research data show that the paremiological fund of the Russian language is more preserved precisely in the conditions of a foreign cultural environment, performing a special integrating function in

the linguistic and cultural sense, while in the original territory of the titular ethnic group, this fund is more susceptible to the influence of various socio-cultural processes. The process of "washing out" the richest paremiological fund from the speech of native speakers of modern Russian language/culture becomes obvious. Actually, we can also talk about changing the perception of the world by modern Kazakhs and Russians from a psycholinguistic point of view.

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