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## PROFESSIONAL CONCEPT SPHERE AMONG CADETS OF MILITARY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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### *Abstract*

The article presents the basic concepts of the linguistic personality of the cadets taking military education at a special institution. The concept sphere is described with the reference to the results of a free-associative experiment, which was conducted with the engagement of 512 cadets of the first, second and third year, those who study at Omsk Automobile Armored Engineering Institute. As a result of the study, there have been described the concepts – *service, army, war, victory, Homeland*. The basic (core) and peripheral components have been identified. In the framework of the study, we found out the differences in the cadets' insights about the phenomena in comparison with the definitions presented in dictionaries. The main part of the identified associates has positive semantic content and connotation. *Service (military)* and *the army* are associated with the concepts of duty, honor, conscious choice, pride, discipline, life, defense, as well as with some formal components (dress, uniform, soldier, epaulettes, duty cadet, statute, weapons, etc.). Concept *Homeland* is more dynamic, includes some verbal components – to love, to protect. In the concept “war”, along with the negative images of death, fire, and armed struggle, a significant part (95 reproductions) is taken by the associate *victory*. In general, the concept sphere can be assessed as positively colored, which is becoming an important condition for patriotic feelings development, awareness of military duty and readiness to take the military service with honor in the linguistic consciousness of the cadets as future officers of the Russian army.

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**Keywords:** Conceptsphere, army, service, Motherland, war, language consciousness.



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## 1. Introduction

Personality development that will be self-sufficient, capable of self-development – is the most important task of researchers and educators. A military university as an environment that forms the linguistic personality of a cadet is no exception in this sense. Therefore, the study of the professional conceptsphere of the military people is one of the conditions for positive attitude development towards performing their duties and patriotic feelings formation.

The term concept is “elusive, diffuse” (Maslova, 2007), “nationally determined” and “covers areas of different directions” (Vorkachev, 2003). In this regard, the problem of the concept differentiation is one of the debatable in modern linguistics. The term is claimed by linguistics but does not have a single definition due to its versatility. Researchers associate the emergence of this rather “fashionable” concept with the “growing influence of linguistics itself on other fundamental sciences” (Kubryakova, 2001, p. 4). The fact that the concept is one of the types of cognitive structures of consciousness, inter alia the linguistic one, is recognized by almost all the researchers of the world (Khakhalina, 2008). In our work, we base on this statement. Today, scientists are talking about the established linguistic conceptology – the science that studies the linguistic means of modeling concepts as units of the national concept sphere (Lee, 2009). The lingua-cultural approach to the concept “presupposes recognition of the concept as a culturally determined entity” (Chibysheva, 2005, p. 12), which reflects the “mentality of a certain ethnic group” (Vorkachev, 2003). A concept is “the main unit of the culture in the mental world of a person” (Stepanov, 2004, p. 602), which can be described through “cultural dominants of behavior, historically fixed by the values adopted in the corresponding linguistic culture” (Karasik, 2002, p. 219). The concept always has the opportunity to be realized through a language, inter alia the cognitive ones. “The peculiarity lies in the fact that the essential aspect of the concept is its ability to act as a cognitive tool” (Nekrasova, 2017, p. 36).

The vast majority of researchers, analyzing the structure of the concept, believe that in its composition stands out the central semantic core and peripheral elements. The core of the concept is the vocabulary meaning of a linguistic unit, the periphery is the subjective experience of communicants, the pragmatic components of a lexeme or phraseology unit, connotation, and association (Demeshkina, 2002). The structure of the concept is based on the identification of key components, “which reflect the meanings repeated in the text” (Ananyina, 2006, p. 580). Analyzing the structure of the concept, the researchers are based on the correlation of meanings of the language units with the content elements of the concept. Therefore, the concept is split into smaller units: signs, segments, microconcepts (Frumkina, 2001). The concept is based on the image that distinguishes the concept from the meaning of the word. And if we keep in mind that the language is characterized by imagery, then it is possible to explore the concept by analyzing the associative relations that arise with native speakers in the language practice, in using words. Since often not the word itself (not their meaning) functions in communication, but the image that it embodies.

## **2. Problem Statement**

As a result of the study on concepts relating to *service, army, war, victory, Homeland* and identification of the basic (core) components and peripheral, there have been some differences in cadets' insights regarding the presented phenomena. The concepts have been described in comparison with their dictionary interpretation. The main part of the identified associates has positive semantic content and connotation.

## **3. Research Questions**

What are the specific features of the definition of the keywords, which, at the semantic level, have the general elements of the concept meaning and the generalization of all associations that native speakers face through the allocation of their common semantic components?

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

The article presents the basic concepts of the linguistic personality of cadets who are taking the military education at a special institution. Personality development is considered under the impact gained through the army environment.

## **5. Research Methods**

The material to identify the basic professional concepts was dictaphone-recordings, where the total number of hours was 240. The recordings were made during classes that were on academic disciplines of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year ("Russian language and language culture", "Military history", "Jurisprudence"). The study involved 512 students. The choice of academic disciplines was determined by their humanitarian focus and the ability to enter into the communication or to draw up a monologue during a class to identify leading professional concepts. To determine the structure of the revealed concepts, a free-associative experiment was conducted.

When describing the structure of the concept, we addressed the works of Ananyina (2006). According to the approach that she proposed, the analysis of concepts consists of two stages: 1. Definition of keywords, which contain on a semantic level the common elements of meaning: a) a microconcept core; b) the allocation of peripheral components of the microconcept; 2. generalization of all associations arising at native speakers through the allocation of their common semantic components. According to Frumkina (2001), "when studying associations in the associative experiment, we appeal to the unconscious, deep layer of our psyche" (p. 192) and due to this fact this experiment gives "the possibility to establish the unconscious verbal and nonverbal connections of word- stimulus with other words, and allows by example to reveal for an individual some urgent cognitive signs introduced through in a word-stimulus realities" (Rogozina, 2003, p. 129).

## 6. Findings

In the linguistic consciousness of the cadets, based on the content of the communication, the following concepts can be classified as basic concepts: military service, army, war, Homeland. Analyze of their structure.

The concept of "service" in the modern linguistics has not yet been studied. For the cadets, it is one of the most significant concepts, because it incorporates features of the idea of their professional career. The concept "service" is value-loaded. As representatives of the conceptual component of the concept, the cadets pointed out in the core of the "military service" the following associates: duty (12), service (5), uniform (5), officer (4), life (4), army (4), study (3), education (3), soldier (3)/soldiers (2), guard duty (2), disposition (2), equipment (2), institute (2), school (2), weapons (2), serve (2), to study (2), defense (2), Omsk Military Academy (2), epaulettes (2) – 74 associates (33 %). Assessment reactions/emotions that we identified when analyzing the material: duty (7), strength (5), defender (4), defense (4), honor (4), responsibility (4), pride (4), friendship (3), reliability (3), polite (3), politeness (2), well done (2), professional (2), Homeland (2), hardships and deprivations (2), power (2), discipline (2), disciplined (2) educated (2) – 59 associates (26 %).

Single reactions make up 40 % (reaction-concepts: uniforms, daily routines, insistence, warrior, students, labor, neither a student nor a soldier, Russia, preparation, vacation, study year, cadets, tanks, trench, orders, oath, work, State, officers, statute, timesheet, aircraft, navy float, navy army, rank, position, isolation, duty, army people, employee, a man in camouflage, stars, letter K, uniform, culture, machine gun, barracks, war, etc.; reactions-emotions: ideal, tests, fatigue, insistence, illogicality, rudeness, antilogic, not like everyone else, hardships, a man who gave his young years to Motherland, pain, powerful, seriousness, trained, my love, omnipotent, protection to people, tact, ethics, nobility, serving, be an example to others, stately, threat, elite, ingenuity, difficulties, loyalty to Motherland, example, stability, order, high culture, slim, tall. The majority of some single associates evaluate the military service from the positive side but at the same time the difficulties and distresses of the military life/service have been underlined). Syntagmatic units are represented by an adjective and a verb: strong, indefinite, possess, have.

The second concept "army" has not yet been described in studies. As our results showed, the cadets used 205 words-associates. The core of the concept included the following: discipline (17 %), weapons (13 %), disposition (12 %), uniform (12 %), statute (12 %), defense (10 %), war (10 %). The components defense and war in the consciousness of the cadets must be the basic in shaping the patriotic insights among the future officers. War is the associate around which the study at University ought to be built up, so, naturally, it entered the core of the concept. Such an idea about the army corresponds to the future professional activities of the cadets and fills up the concept with dynamism. Unfortunately, the experiment revealed negative or consumer attitude of the cadets to the army (9%). In several questionnaires, the associates of the army concept have become: money, an apartment, profit, arrogance, separation, disorganization, theft, madhouse, horror, chaos (14 replies). Besides, profanity was employed by the cadets as associates (5).

The concept of "war" is one of the leading in Russian culture. The core of this concept among the cadets is shaped by the following notions: death (301 associates), fire (289 associates), politics and armed

struggle (208 associates), World War II (98 associates), victory (55), victory of Russia (18), destruction and ravages (34), blood (19), hero (11), enemy (11). The remaining associations are single: bad, sadness, separation, anger, cold, battle, horror, chaos, valor, etc.

Concept Homeland or Motherland in the modern conceptual and lingua-cultural dictionaries stands out as an independent and significant phenomenon. It is included in the number of the key cultural dominants along with the concepts of love, happiness, beauty, etc. (Esmurzaeva, 2010).

As the experiment showed, the following associates came into the core of the concept: Russia (30 %), home 27 %), mother (24 %), protect (19 %). Among the four components of the core of the concept, the associate “Russia” predominates, which is quite natural and partially coincides with the results of the analysis conducted by the Russian linguists on the structure of the concept. The same applies to two other associates – house and homeland. The component to protect in the structure of the analyzed concept, according to the modern research studies, is completely absent (it is not fixed either in the core or as a peripheral element).

Peripheral associates most clearly reflect the value system of native speakers (more than 20 % of the total number of the components). native (male), native (female); holy, my or mine, dear, nice. And another verbal association is to love.

Since the concepts of “service” and “army” have not yet been studied in science, we can only state the special attitude of the military to these phenomena. The content shows a positive evaluation of the notion "service." As the analysis shows, for the cadets, the service means duty, strength, protection, power, responsibility, pride, reliability, professionalism, discipline and homeland. It was also noted that the service is not easy and it is associated with hardships and distresses. The same can be said about the insight relating to the army. The core associates of the concept army in the linguistic consciousness of the cadets are mostly associated with discipline and weapons, i.e. precisely with the fact that we are all used to seeing, hearing and representing.

The concept "war", as we have already noted, is one of the key concepts for many linguistic cultures. However, if we address the fundamental work of Yu.S. Stepanov “Constants. Dictionary of the Russian culture”, we see that the lexical component of “war” as the center of the concept is not fixed in it. The list of words and phrases mentioned in the dictionary contains only the units “warrior” and “enemy” (Rogozina, 2003). But they are not concept-forming elements. However, in the scientific literature, we find the analysis of the concept “war” both with the example of language units recorded in the dictionaries and with the example of the work of individual authors (both their literary heritage in general and individual works). So, Volkova (2013) compiled a territory-time model of the concept “war” based on the works of V.S. Makanin. As a result there are more than 70 components that can be identified in the structure of the concept, including “blood”, “wounded”, “slaughter”, “weapons”, “horror”, “battle”, “army”, “death”, “fire”, “victory”, and etc. (Golovan, 2003).

Benediktova (2004) gave a detailed description of the positive and negatively colored components of the concept, uniting the idea of war existing in different cultures. So, among the negative assessments there are the following: 1) to give up their positions without a fight, 2) to lose a battle, 3) to commit treason, 4) to show cowardice, 5) to desert, 6) to threaten with aggression, 7) to disseminate discord, cause a war, to go on a warpath, 8) to quarrel, 9) to kill, destroy people, 10) to show unjustified risk,

11) to interfere in other people's affairs, 12) to reveal secrets, 13) to be militant. The positive ones include: 1) courage, 2) self-sacrifice, 3) self-control, endurance, courage, 4) risk for the victory over the enemy, 5) disapproval of war, support for a peaceful course, 6) non-interference in other people's affairs. The war's metaphors can be the following – "war – road", "war is a competition", "war is a theater", "war is a world of animals", "war is a lesson", "war is a punishment for a crime", "war is destruction" (Benediktova, 2004).

In our study, the war causes predominantly negative associations for all respondents (which, however, is typical to the concept "war", according to the studies conducted by O. Golovan). According to the results of the associative experiment, the core of the concept includes the "death" component, which is generally interpreted as a cultural one. However, the difference in the insights that ordinary native speakers have in mind regarding "war" is revealed quite clearly. A military personnel perceives a war as a phenomenon of their professional life, including the components of "armed struggle" in the core of the concept (and it is quite natural). Besides, the associate "victory"/"victory of Russia" turns out to be a rather significant element, which can be considered as an indicator of some patriotic feelings and spirit in the ranks of the cadets.

The concept "Homeland" also has its specifics based on the results of the associative experiment. According to linguistic studies, the basis (core) of the concept Homeland consists of 4 basic components: 1. Homeland – mother. 2. Homeland – the land of fathers, where the family lives. 3. Homeland – the state (country), in which a person was born. 4. Homeland is a country in which a person is a citizen (Esmurzaeva, 2010). However, an additional core component "protect" appears among the cadets. To protect means to act: to protect the mother, the dearest person on the Earth; defend Russia – the country in which you live and which you swore allegiance to; protect a house – a place where your family lives.

So, the core structure of the concept, revealed within our experiment, has either similar (home, mother, Russia) or excellent (protect) components from general scientific ideas about the core associates. The peripheral components of the concept Homeland are fundamentally different from those described in the works of Esmurzaeva (2010).

If we use the scheme describing the periphery of the concept Homeland, proposed by Esmurzaeva (2010), then the structure can be represented as follows:

The peripheral components of the concept include 1. Natural landscape (place designation): a place of birth and residence, the country, climatic peculiarities; nature and natural resources. 2. Emotional and valuable: close people, relatives, emotions and evaluation, axiological values.

In our study, the following components, the peripheral one, are completely absent: a specific city or village; landscape features; house and its characteristics. Also, imperative words are missing. The periphery of the concept is emotionally colored and represented mainly by adjectives.

## 7. Conclusion

A concept is "the main unit of the culture in the mental world of a person" (Stepanov, 2004, p. 311), which can be described through "cultural dominants of behavior, historically fixed by the values that were adopted in the corresponding linguistic culture" (Karasik, 2002, p. 298). The concept has a complex structure consisting of the center (the most frequent associations and insights that the majority

representatives of this linguistic culture possess) and the periphery (less frequent and less typical semantic associative connections). All elements of the concept are interconnected.

The profession has its specific mark on the perception and formation of the conceptual picture of the world.

The main concepts in the linguistic consciousness of the cadets, which are largely determined by their future professional activities, include the following: military service, army, war, Homeland.

Mostly the concepts “service” and “army” are filled up with the positive ratings and associative relations, which are fraught with the specificity of the cadets' life. The core associates of the concept army in the linguistic consciousness of the cadets are mostly associated with the discipline and weapons, i.e. precisely with the fact that we are all used to seeing, hearing and representing.

The idea of a war is often associated in minds of the cadets with their professional careers. The significant component is the association “victory”. In the linguistic consciousness of the cadets, the image of a victory is tightly associated with the victory in the Great Patriotic War, which is quite natural, since the idea of the victory in the Great Patriotic War is typical to those representatives of the linguistic cultures, whose history is somehow connected with some military operations on the territory of the USSR.

The structure of the concept "Homeland" in the linguistic consciousness of the cadets has its distinctive features. An additional component “protect” appears in the core of the concept and the associate “land of fathers” disappears, moving to the periphery of the image. The peripheral components of the concept are characterized by value and emotionality. All this distinguishes the concept Homeland, shaped in minds of the cadets, from the indicators obtained as a result of classical linguo-cultural studies.

The associative content of the concepts “service” and “army” is an indicator of a predominantly positive attitude towards the future career of the students. Even though the cadets see the challenges and shortcomings of their chosen professional path, the military does not shape some sharp negative attitudes towards it. The core of the concepts “Homeland” and “victory” indicates the presence in the linguistic consciousness of the cadets some patriotism, love to their country, their readiness to defend it under any circumstances. We can say that in this regard, the linguistic personality of the cadets is shaped positively and is the basis on which the beginning of successful military service can start.

The identified and analyzed concepts are closely related to each other. The associative relations are seen both at the core and periphery levels.

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