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ORTHODOX HOLIDAYS LEXEMES AS REFLECTION OF MODERN LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Maria N. Dmitrieva (a) *, Tatiana V. Vozbrannaya (b), Yuliya V. Borisova (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) St. Petersburg Mining University, Line, 2, 21 Vasilyevsky Island, St. Petersburg, Russia,
Dmitrieva-Marija83@yandex.ru

(b) St. Petersburg Mining University, Line, 2, 21 Vasilyevsky Island, St. Petersburg, Russia, t777777@mail.ru

(c) St. Petersburg Mining University, Line, 2, 21 Vasilyevsky Island, St. Petersburg, Russia, borisova1977@inbox.ru

Abstract

This article is devoted to the Orthodox holidays lexemes – Christmas and Baptism, which are a reflection of religious beliefs of modern linguistic personality, as well as an essential component of conceptualization of holidays in the Russian language picture of the world. The need of analysis of these lexical units is determined by the acquisition of special significance of religious beliefs in modern society, which is reflected in many components of language and culture, in particular, in holidays. Research of lexemes of holidays means the work with lexicographical sources, as they can trace the nature of this vocabulary in a certain period of time. The process of using the associative experiment in the study involves an attempt to present the mental information in the verbal form of a set of reactions-associations. The analysis of the results obtained in the free associative experiment on the stimulus-Christmas and stimulus-Baptism allows us to highlight the main directions of association of the investigated lexical names of these holidays. By penetrating into linguistic consciousness of native speakers of the Russian language and explicating a significant part of the conceptual space of the language, the associative experiment allows us to go beyond lexicographically fixed semantics and discover cognitive-psychological and linguistic peculiarities of the people. Thus, for modeling the religious picture of the world the source can be not only the names of Orthodox holidays, but also free associations, which contain national and cultural information, reflecting the religious representations of the nation.

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Keywords: Experiment, lexeme, language personality, religious component



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1. Introduction

Culture and language as sign and semiotic systems have been in constant dialogue since their development. In the system of any national language there are many images, symbols, mythology, which are defined by the world understanding and worldview of the given people. The national language is reproduced from generation to generation, as well as philosophical and cultural national attitudes and traditions of the people, who are the representatives of culture. Religion, adopted by the linguistic society in question, plays a special role in shaping the cultural and national consciousness of the people, since it constitutes an essential layer of culture. Turning to the religion of the people contributes to understanding of their worldview, spiritual interests and values.

2. Problem Statement

Culture is a complex phenomenon; it defines not only the system of value orientations of the society as a whole, but also the system of values of an individual linguistic personality. In Mechkovskaya's (1996) opinion, the problem of "language and culture" is multidimensional < ... > language and culture are constantly interacting with each other" (p. 45). Nature, everyday life, religion – everything which is connected with customs of this or that culture has its own language forms.

According to Humboldt's judgment in "Language and Philosophy of Culture", the view of the world embodied in the language develops in the culture of the people. Humboldt (1985) understood language as "a certain spiritual force that shapes the culture of the people from within" (p. 57). Thus, the relationship between language and culture became the subject of research of many scientists, such as Arutyunova (1998); Karasik (2004); Kolesov (2004) in the various fields of scientific knowledge, and thus it has defined the problems of many linguistic studies.

In this paper, the relationship between language and culture is traced in the definition of semantics and associative potential of lexical names of holidays containing a religious component and constituting an essential part of the national picture of the world of the modern linguistic personality.

There is a practice of studying religion as a component of culture in various aspects: philosophical, regional, linguistics. In this article we will talk about the linguistic and cultural aspect, in which it is possible to trace the associative potential and semantics of the lexemes that give names to the religious holidays in the representation of a modern native speaker of Russian.

3. Research Questions

The analysis of linguistic units, which are names of Orthodox holidays, in the linguistic and cultural aspect, is influenced by the religious content of the lexemes, which includes axiological characteristics, as it reflects the most important issues of existence. At the same time, language keeps a close touch with religion, which is conditioned by interpenetration and influence of religion and language.

In the linguistics of the XXI century, language is presented as a source of knowledge and ideas about the world and the culture in which the native speaker of the language is. Appealing to religion and to the history of language helps in understanding and penetration into the national picture of the

world. The language verbalizes the images of the national picture of the world and embodies them in iconic linguistic units. The study of the lexemes of the Orthodox holidays in the linguistic and cultural aspect is necessary for revealing the naive ideas of the modern native speaker of the Russian language, which were formed under the influence of the national worldview and world perception.

It is interesting to analyse the lexemes of Christmas and Baptism containing a religious component, as religion in Russia of the XXI century acts as a cultural identification and tradition of public life, which is reflected in a significant part of the language and is verbalized in the linguistic consciousness of a modern native speaker.

The idea of a Russian holiday is influenced by economic and social changes in the society, which determines the mobility of the body of lexical means that verbalize the semantics of the holiday in modern Russia. The works of Lyubimova, Kotelnikov, Vezhbitskaya and others are devoted to these problems.

The active use of the principle of anthropocentric approach in scientific research in the XXI century is closely connected with the ideographic description of vocabulary, as well as with the cognitive approach used in this description. The use of ideographic dictionaries in the work with vocabulary is necessary because the vocabulary in these dictionaries is presented not in alphabetical order, but by lexical groups and subgroups. Besides, using ideographic dictionaries, one can trace the nature of the presented vocabulary in a certain period of time. Ideographic dictionaries provide an opportunity "to predict various syntactic and semantic changes by the fact of placing a number of related words next to each other" (Babenko, 2005, p. 4). Finally, an ideographic dictionary gives, in a sense, a complete or almost complete picture of the world which is around.

During the analysis of the lexemes Christmas and Baptism the following explanatory and ideographic dictionaries were used: "Russian Semantic Dictionary" under the editorship of Shvedova "Large explanatory dictionary of Russian nouns" under the editorship of Babenko and "Ideographical dictionary of Russian language" under the editorship of Baranov.

4. Purpose of the Study

It seems necessary to reveal the semantic-associative potential of lexical names of Orthodox holidays, containing a religious component and constituting an essential component of the national picture of the world of a modern linguistic personality, on the basis of ideographic dictionaries and on the basis of associative experiment.

5. Research Methods

The Free associative experiment (FAE) was used as the main method of the research of the lexemes Christmas and Baptism. It was based on the fixed data of ideographic dictionaries, in which the lexical units under research were presented.

The associative experiment (AE) is one of the effective methods of experimental research not only in linguistics, but also in other fields of science. In the first works on psycholinguistics (in the 50s of the XX century in the USA and Germany), the advantage of associative experiment was in studying the

specificity of the language, human language ability, the structure of the word meaning. This experiment was widely used in cognitive linguistics, identifying cognitive images in the process of cognitive interpretation, as well as in semasiology. The use of AE allows the study of associative links from stimulus to reaction and from reaction to stimulus. Analysis of the semantics and functioning of the lexemes in modern Russian often relies on data from associative verbal fields, which represent a network of words associated with the linguistic personality, covering "with a certain completeness the whole vocabulary of a modern average Russian native speaker" (Tarasov, 2000, p. 27.). The semantic features of certain language units that are relevant to the consciousness of native speakers are manifested in the content of the associative verbal network and are found not only as "understood and used in communication semantic components related to the word", but also as "features that reflect the general information data of the person, his or her encyclopaedic knowledge about the subject and phenomenon" (Popova & Sternin, 2007, p. 180).

Associations are of great importance in human speech and thinking activity. Each word-association has a conceptual and value component, fixing information and reproducing it in the flow of speech, which ensures understanding of informative and semantic potentials of the words. While studying the semantic features of the lexemes Christmas and Baptism, which represent a certain meaning in language, it is necessary to take into account the semantic space of language, which verbalizes a significant part of the conceptual content of the lexemes and the cognitive community of associations as mental units in linguistic consciousness.

The method of psycholinguistic experiment, to which, first of all, the FAE belongs, makes it possible to reveal the content and conceptual meaning of semantics of the lexical names Christmas and Baptism.

The association represents links between objects, phenomena, which are based on personal subjective experience. In spite of the fact that the subject's experience may coincide with the experience of the culture to which the society belongs, it will always represent a purely personal cognition of an individual based on past experience (Frumkina, 2001, p. 189). Thus, the most effective method of studying "real meanings" in the "real consciousness" of a native speaker is presented by the AE, since the data on semantics recorded in lexicographical sources may differ significantly from the real picture of the world of a native speaker of the Russian language. Being relatively simple in relation to other AE, the free associative experiment is a rather effective research tool. The advantage of the FAE is that it provides associations taken from not a selective, but from a mass experiment, allowing using the given source of linguistic information, besides the received associations can easily be mathematically processed.

With the aim of revealing semantics in the content of the lexical names Christmas and Baptism in the minds of native speakers of the Russian language, according to the generally accepted international practice of conducting such experiments, in 2015 the FAE was conducted among the students of Russian universities. In the course of the experiment, the participants were asked to respond in writing to the proposed stimuli by any five language units-associations, denoting the images appearing in their consciousness within a certain period of time. The duration of the experiment was limited to five minutes. The approximate age of the participants was 18-20 years. The end product of FAE is a set of associations, which are ranked by the degree of frequency and identification of the main directions of association. Later

the associative-verbal network of reactions became the subject of the research analysis. The reliance on linguistic-cultural and cognitive approaches in this research allowed us to identify the realities that are important for the Russian language consciousness in contemporary 21st century in Russia.

6. Findings

Analysing the results of the associative experiment on the Christmas and Baptism stimulus, no difficulties were recorded in providing responses by respondents. There were 0 rejections and 2500 associations were received for the proposed words.

When analysing the associative series of the lexical name Christmas, an attempt was made to organize reactions, which exist in reality in the national consciousness, in special groups based on a common feature.

The extralinguistic information reflects the concepts and precepts of facts, characteristics of lexical names, thins, peculiarities, properties, etc.

The conceptual information contains the religious component of meaning, name and perception of time periods.

The emotionally-expressive information contains: reactions that express the semantics of the holiday; colour perception of the holiday; emotional and subjective component of the holiday perception; reactions that verbalize the component of "miracle" in the minds of respondents; actualization of the concept of "family"; reactions that express the semantics of birth.

The sociolocal one contains: national characteristics of the holiday; Christmas traditions; characteristics of Christmas outside the Russian national tradition.

The background information contains a component of "food" definition in the semantics of the lexical name Christmas; names of weather conditions and seasons.

Associations are interpreted as language representations that acquire communicative relevance in the mind of a modern native speaker, which have a common component, fixed in the language picture of a linguistic personality.

The conducted experiment with the word Christmas allows us to note the actualization of the lexemes with the religious component, characterizing the holiday and coinciding with the interpretation given in the ideographic dictionaries – the birth of Jesus Christ. Thus, based on these reactions it seems possible to highlight the meaning of the Birth of Jesus Christ, which is one of the key meanings in ideographic dictionaries.

On the basis of the analysis of the results, where the key word-representative is the lexeme Baptism, an attempt was made to combine the reactions of respondents into several groups, verbalizing this or that semantic feature.

The content of extra-linguistic information of the lexeme.

The conceptual information contains religious component of the definition; names and perception of time periods; component of definition of "water" and names of reservoirs; proper names.

The emotionally expressive information contains reactions explicating the semantics of the lexeme "holiday"; colour perception of a holiday; emotional and subjective component; representation of the semantics of childbirth; single notions.

The sociological information contains rites, traditions, elements and actions related to the holiday of Baptism; baptismal traditions.

The background information contains names of weather conditions; the component of the definition of "food" in the semantics of the lexical name Baptism.

Based on the frequency of units represented by this associative series, it is necessary to highlight the main directions of association of the lexeme Baptism, fixed in the mind of a modern native speaker of the Russian language.

- by a modern Russian native speaker Baptism is primarily associated with a religious holiday connected with the baptism of the central personality in Christianity – Jesus Christ and actualizing the concept of faith: church/ faith/ religion/services in the temple; Jesus Christ/God/Saver;
- frequent reactions, associated with the sacral symbol of Christianity – the cross and the corresponding prayer gesture, are noticed: cross/baptism;
- the semantic component of time is defined in the concretization of the time period and the fixed date for the celebration of Baptism in Christian Orthodox culture: January 19 / winter / January / night;
- actualization of the definition of the weather conditions characteristic of the celebration time: frost/ /cold/baptismal cold;
- the component of definition of water: water/cold water/ holy water;
- in the respondents' reactions, the component of significance related to the baptismal folk traditions and the place of the rites is defined: pond/ ice-hole/Jordan/hole dip/ hole dip;
- in the respondents' reactions the significance associated with the events of the Gospel story of Jesus Christ's baptism was mentioned: the river Jordan/ John the Baptist/ Baptism of Christ;
- the precedent name of Prince Vladimir is mentioned: Vladimir KrasnoeSolnyshko/Prince Vladimir;
- the meaning related to traditional fortune-telling on Eve of the Baptism is present: fortune-telling/traditions/fun/carols/ring.

Thus, in the mind of native speakers of Russian the lexeme Baptism is a basic unit of culture, which has different components. The main lines of association of the lexeme revealed as a result of the experiment suggest that a significant part of the content of the lexical unit Baptism in the Russian language picture of the world verbalizes the cultural, national and social aspects.

Taking into account the meaning singled out on the basis of general combinations of directions of association of the received reactions, as a result of the conducted experiment it is possible to name the following informative characteristics of this lexeme: a religious celebration associated with the baptism of Jesus Christ, a winter holiday, special weather conditions (frosts, christening frosts), baptismal bathing, Baptism of Rus, the period of fortune-telling.

It should be noted that the highlighted content characteristics of the lexeme Baptism as a result of FAE are reflected in lexicographical sources. It would be right to note that the lexeme Baptism has a broad semantic meaning in the modern Russian language. Thus, the naive picture of the world, reflected

in the results of the experiment, reveals the attitude that Baptism is characterized both as a religious church holiday and as a folk holiday.

7. Conclusion

The lexical units of the holidays show that language as a semiotic system is in close relationship with another semiotic system – culture. According to Telia (1996), "a powerful cultural source for Russian world understanding was Christianity with its theosophy, moral attitudes and rituals" (p. 218). In a modern society, the ritual as an obligatory part of a holiday (in particular, religious holiday) is more actualized in the consciousness of a modern Russian native speaker than the true content and meaning of the holiday itself.

Thus, we think the conclusion, that the religious ideas of each nation are very important, is reasonable because without taking into account the knowledge of their peculiarities it is quite difficult to imagine a picture of the development and formation of language and culture. Taking into consideration mentioned above, Mechkovskaya's (1996) statement concerning the question of correlation between language and religion deserves great attention: "Language and religion are two semiotics, two images of the world, and two elements in the human soul, rooted in the subconscious, two deepest, different and interconnected beginnings in human culture" (p. 75).

In modern society, religious notions acquire new, secular significance, which is reflected in many components of language and culture, in particular, in holidays. The influence of religion on language and the linguistic situation in the modern world has led to a number of profound "linguistic and communicative processes" (Mechkovskaya, 1996, p. 75). These processes affect not only the conditions of the language's existence, but also its internal communicative possibilities, such as "deepening reflection over the language, expanding the semantic possibilities of the language" and others (Mechkovskaya, 1996, p. 49).

Since the religious picture of the world is related to the spiritual culture of the people, it should be noted that it represents a certain cognitive structure that accumulates knowledge about the system of spiritual values of the modern linguistic personality and the nation as a whole. The religious picture of the world, according to Mechkovskaya (1996), forms "the philosophical, religious and moral consciousness of the ethnos, its worldview, defines the national view of the world, plays a special role in the formation of national and cultural consciousness of the people" (p. 75). Thus, in order to model the religious picture of the world, the source may be not only the names of Orthodox holidays, but also free associations, which contain ethnic and cultural information reflecting, among other things, the religious ideas of the nation.

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