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**BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE NATIONAL CULTURE OF**  
**KALMYKS AND THEIR NATIONAL MENTALITY**

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**Abstract**

The language of a people draws a picture of the world created over the centuries and even millennia. The study of the linguistic picture of the world allows us to reveal its way of life, manners, customs, ideas, knowledge of a person about the world, formed on the basis of everyday experience. The linguistic picture of the world, presented as a text, acts as a source not only for linguists, but also for historians and ethnologists. The language embodies the national idea and national ideals. Language as a mirror of culture reflects all changes in the way of life of the people and their mentality. Language reflects everything that is called life, which means it is movement and change. In this regard, the changing picture of the world of existence of a man and his thinking, which reflects such a problem as tradition and innovation, is of great interest. And in this process of movement there are fundamental constants that do not change, which belong to the spiritual sphere of human existence. Concepts are components of the linguistic picture of the world through the analysis of which it is possible to reveal some of the features of the national worldview. The image of the world in the linguistic picture of the Kalmyks is also interesting. When referring to the images of the Kalmyk world imprinted in the language of the people we see traces of various historical epochs, civilizational periods, cultural types reflecting thinking at various stages of its history..

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## **1. Introduction**

Taking the postulate of national identity, national-cultural specificity of any language and the reflection of the nationally specific in the language itself, it is necessary to solve the question – how, in what ways, being reflected and represented in the language, the national-cultural as an artistic image creates a picture of the national world? Researchers of the Kalmyks' national linguistic picture of the world should begin work on studying the archetypes and artifacts of the language. The primary issues in this direction should be questions of origin, its formation in the process of historical development, questions of mentality and cultural universals.

In the language of the people reflects a picture of the world created over the centuries and millennia. The study of the national linguistic picture of the world allows us to reveal its way of life, manners, customs, ideas and knowledge of a person about the world formed on the basis of everyday experience. The linguistic picture of the world presented as a text acts as a source not only for linguists, but also for historians and ethnologists. The authoritative orientalist and linguist Omakaeva (2005) notes that:

The most important trend and characteristic feature of modern Mongolian studies is an attempt to scientifically comprehend the natural, social and spiritual universe of members of various historical and cultural communities, and theoretically reconstruct their worldview complexes. The main characteristics of an ethnos that determine the type of its mentality, and hence the type of culture, are language and religion, the fruitful study of which is impossible without analyzing such a key concept as a picture of the world. (p. 89)

## **2. Problem Statement**

Concepts are components of the linguistic picture of the world, through the analysis of which it is possible to reveal some of the features of the national worldview. The image of the world in the linguistic picture of the Kalmyks is also interesting. When referring to the images of the Kalmyk world, imprinted in the language of the people, we see traces of various historical epochs, civilizational periods, cultural types reflecting thinking at various stages of its history.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of research in this article is the national mentality and some basic concepts of the national culture of Kalmyks and their role in the system of national-specific stereotypes of speech behavior of Kalmyks.

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

The purpose of this work is to study the national linguistic picture of the world of the Kalmyks, which makes it possible to reveal the way of life, manners, customs, ideas, human knowledge about the world formed on the basis of everyday experience. The linguistic picture of the world, presented as a text,

acts as a source for not only linguists, but also for historians and ethnologists. The language embodies the national idea and national ideals. Language as a mirror of culture reflects all changes in the way of life of the people and their mentality.

## **5. Research Methods**

The main research methods were: a descriptive method, direct observation and a questionnaire method to identify the basic concepts of the national culture of Kalmyks and national mentality.

## **6. Findings**

The originality of national experience determines the peculiarities of the worldview of different peoples. Due to the specifics of the language, in turn, a certain linguistic picture of the world is formed through the prism of which a person perceives the world. The structure of Kalmyk sentences suggests a strict form, a definite word order. The predicate should always be at the end of a sentence. The Kalmyks have an endless sentence conveying a thought. The word should be compound in composition, and the syllables should be open. Are these not the prerequisites for epic reflections on the world! Is not that why the Kalmyks created a masterpiece of world art – the epic “Dzhangar”? The national image of the nomad's world was strictly ordered, and this world order arose in a dwelling, where in a yurt all things and a person's place had their own disposition. The nomad's path was distributed in a circle of nomads, and time was strictly cyclical.

The linguistic picture of the world is not on a par with specialized scientific pictures, it precedes them, forms them, because a person is able to perceive and study the world only thanks to the language in which socio-historical experience is fixed.

As you know, Humboldt wrote that the history of any language reflects the social history of its people; the root words of the language show which subjects were the most important for the people during the formation of their language. The vocabulary of the language shows what the people think about, while syntax shows how they think. Language most accurately characterizes the people. Humboldt emphasized that each separately taken language is “only a product of the linguistic consciousness of the nation” and that “among all the manifestations through which the spirit and character of the people is cognized, only language is capable of expressing the most peculiar features of the national spirit and character and penetrating into their innermost secrets” (Humboldt, 1984, p. 71).

The language embodies the national idea and national ideals. Language as a mirror of culture reflects all changes in the way of life of the people and their mentality. Language reflects everything that is called life, which means it is movement, a change. In this regard, the changing picture of the world of existence of a man, his thinking, which reflects such a problem as tradition and innovation, is of great interest. And in this process of movement there are fundamental constants that do not undergo changes, which belong to the spiritual sphere of human existence. In this regard, a comparative study of folklore texts and literary sources is interesting.

It is known, if we assume that any language is equivalent to a certain system of concepts with the help of which speakers perceive, structure, classify and interpret information coming from the

surrounding world, then the entire set of concepts of a nation is the conceptual sphere of language, or national linguistic consciousness. The richer the culture of a nation, its folklore, literature, science, fine arts, historical experience, religion, the richer the conceptual sphere of the people. All information about the world around us is contained in our consciousness in the form of cultural universals, or as concepts, that is, the picture of the world of a certain person is their totality, through the prism of which he perceives it. The concept includes emotional, evaluative, expressive parts, without which it is impossible to imagine a particular culture. It is “concepts that connect thought with a language code and, due to this property, are the most optimal units for representing knowledge structures” (Badmaev et al., 2012, p. 104). In the Kalmyk science of language, the features of some concepts were considered by (Esenova et al., 2015; Omakaeva, 2005; Pyurbuev, 2007) and others.

Concepts are components of the linguistic picture of the world, through the analysis of which it is possible to reveal some of the features of the national worldview. The image of the world in the linguistic picture of the Kalmyks is also interesting. When referring to the images of the Kalmyk world, imprinted in the language of the people, we see traces of various historical epochs, civilizational periods, cultural types reflecting thinking at various stages of its history. The anthropocentric picture of the world incorporates concepts that represent the most important spheres of human life, thinking – life, breath, soul – which all fit in a person's chest. The very description of a person is very peculiar among the Kalmyks – human features are highlighted on the face. They fit into the main content of the model of the world: macrocosm /Universe, nature, environment/ and microcosm /man/. Culturologists consider these concepts in the semantic structure of the picture of the world as a sphere, or area of the natural /space-time/, social /moral-ethical/ and spiritual /intellectually-emotive/.

In their interconnection, these concepts give us an idea of the national mentality, self-consciousness, character, people's ethical perception of the world.

The formation of the Kalmyk ethnos has passed a long way, extending back millennia. Ancient peoples and Mongol tribes, in particular, representatives of such ethnic groups as Buryats, Altai, Uighurs, Tuvinians, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Manchus (Uryankhais) and Chinese took part in it. There are also facts of interaction with the peoples of the Caucasus, Tatars, Bashkirs, Nogais and Russians. Among the Kalmyks there are representatives of the Hasgud (Khazgud) clan – Kazakhs noted in Maloderbetovskiy, Bolshederbetovskiy and Ikitsokhurovskiy uluses, Oros (Russians), Mangad (Tatars), Sherksh (Circassians), Nemshmyud (Germans) and others. Common names were Oros (Russian), Orska (a diminutive derivative of Oros), Ser-kesh, Sherkesh (Circassian), Mangad, Mangut (Tatar), Hasak (Kazakh). The participation of Kalmyks as part of the Russian troops in military campaigns in Europe was also reflected in the life of the Kalmyks. In memory of them there were names from which the surnames Polyyanov, Frantsuzov, Nemishev (from the word German), Stoyanov were derived, the name Oteldan was preserved in the patronymic (Timofey Oteldanovich Bembeev, a national people's writer of Kalmykia) and others. The names of the villages of the Orenburg Kalmyks carry echoes of the events of the Patriotic War of 1812, they called them Moscow, Berlin, Paris, etc.

At the moment, the Kalmyk language exists and develops in the environment of other languages of the peoples of Russia. First of all, it is influenced by the Russian language. In the 17–19th centuries, he experienced the influence of the Turkic-speaking peoples of the Urals, Siberia, Volga, Kazakhstan,

Central Asia. The languages of the peoples of the North Caucasus also left their mark on the Kalmyk language. At the same time, we can find the influence of Kalmyk culture and language in the Tatar, Bashkir, Nogai, Adyghe, Karachai and some other languages. In the language of Russian writers in Kalmykia, nearby regions, especially the Astrakhan and Rostov regions, there are borrowed words from the Kalmyk language.

The names of cities and villages and localities originated from the Kalmyk language. In Siberia, you can point to the very name of the region, which in the Kalmyk language (Oirat and Mongolian languages) sounds like Shivr (Shiber), Tyumen (10 thousand), in the Stavropol Territory Essentuki (9 banners), Sanamer (calm), etc. Kalmyk names are found in the toponymy of Rostov, Volgograd, Astrakhan, Voronezh, Tula regions, etc. Of course, the Kalmyk language was affected by the language of the peoples of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, which have now become sovereign republics, and other aborigines of Central Asia that were part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, as well as the peoples of Central Asia.

The language of the Kalmyks, as well as in other languages of the peoples of the planet, reflected the world of ancient peoples who made the history of the East and West.

Unfortunately, globalization has a negative impact on the language of many peoples, including the Kalmyk language. The complex linguistic situation is also associated with the political and economic circumstances taking place in the Russian Federation. The migration of the population from the republic in search of work, when people leave with families, does not provide an opportunity to teach children their native language. Children cut off from the linguistic environment forget their native language. In such conditions, the problem of preserving the language, its successful development becomes one of the most urgent in the life of the society. In this regard, the study of the cultural heritage of the people is of no small importance, which contains cognitive, moral, aesthetic, educational aspects that act as value guidelines for society. This heritage appears in the language of every nation, including the Kalmyk.

They say that language is the code of a people, its culture, it is a means of identifying a person. In this case, the Kalmyk language bears the peculiarities of time, historical events and, presenting a peculiar picture of the world, is the basis and support of the Kalmyks' existence in the world.

The study of extensive material, including written sources (reports of expeditions, notes, essays of travelers and missionaries, notebooks, lexicographic and textual data, scientific research of predecessors), oral materials (stories of informants, results of a linguocultural survey), visual observations, allows us to conclude that Kalmyks have specific communication norms for stereotyped situations. This applies, in particular, to situations of "greeting", "goodbye", "guest", "gratitude", "request", "apology", as well as intra-family relationships. An analysis of stereotyped situations and communication norms in each of them shows that in all cases there are common features that can be called the main elements of the ethnicity of Kalmyk communication. These include the principles of respect/reverence for elders, modesty, tolerance and gender differentiation.

Tolerance, politeness, modesty, restraint of representatives of the Kalmyk linguocultural community have been noted as signs of communicative behavior by many authors (see, for example: Bentkovsky, 1869; Zhitetsky, 1893). These features can be identified as dominant in the system of rules governing the behavior of members of the Kalmyk linguocultural community in different communication

situations. Role functions, gender, age, social status, and typical personality traits determine the ethnic style of the Kalmyks' behavior. In our opinion, the main factors that formed the specific features of the Kalmyks' communicative behavior are the following:

- cattle breeding as a traditional occupation,
- nomadism as a way of doing business,
- unlimited space as a natural habitat,
- patriarchy as a form of organization of social groups and relations within them.

Kalmyk etiquette of communication determines placement in space, gestures, sequence of actions, verbal formulas, tactics, prohibitions, etc. Their use is regulated by such fundamental features as “right”/“left”, “male”/“female”, “senior”/“junior”, “marital status”. They are typical for all representatives of the Mongolian peoples – Khalkhs, Buryats, Kalmyks, ethnic groups of Mongolia and China. However, each of the Mongolian ethnic groups in the process of independent development experienced the impact of other cultures and peoples or developed in their own ethnic environment. This formed the peculiarity of the ethnostyle of the national behavior of individual Mongolian groups.

The set of norms and traditions of communication between Kalmyks is an integral system, which is determined by such cultural features as reverence for elders in age and status, kinship (respect for relatives), *хадмлнн* “reverence by a married woman of her husband’s relatives”, *өкэрлнн* “pampering” young children, cult of the mother, restraint in expressing feelings, etc. A special study of all the elements that determine communication between Kalmyks both within the national community and in intercultural communication, in our opinion, allows us to establish the specifics of the communicative behavior of Kalmyks.

So what determines the main parameters of the Kalmyk mentality? Religious Buddhist philosophical and ethical principles, and in folklore and folk culture these are folk ethical principles, for example, *нүл* and *килнц* “sin”, *йор* “omen”, taboos, unwanted actions, ideas about norms, etiquette.

The mentality of the Kalmyk can be traced in a special way in his concept of life, which incorporates Buddhist philosophy and folk philosophical and ethical ideas. To recreate a holistic portrait of the national image of the world, it is necessary to understand the fundamental principles, categories on which this concept of life, presented in folklore and created by literature, is built. In the national image (picture) of the Kalmyk world, captured in folklore and literature, there is an original concept of life, which is created by religious Buddhist philosophical and folk-ethical ideas. The Buddhist philosophical concept of being, based on the reincarnation of a being, called upon to transform karma by overcoming suffering, gave birth to the culture of the people of the concept of *заян* “fate”, the predetermination of human life. Fate in the minds of the Mongolian peoples, writes The Pyurbееv, in their mythology, folklore, religion (shamanism and Buddhism in the form of Lamaism), traditional culture as a whole is perceived fatalistically as a category that reflects the idea of supernatural, divine forces that predetermine all events in people's lives (Pyurbееv, 2007).

Nadneeva in her study “Buddhism in Kalmykia: moral foundations”, analyzing the Buddhist concept of life and man, notes, “on the one hand, the humanistic, and on the other, the egocentric idea of higher morality, in which there is no place for personal happiness”, “a person should be unpretentious, be satisfied, be free from worldly troubles and fuss, avoid unfriendly physical and verbal actions”. One of

the main religious practices, according to the 14th Dalai Lama, is “the practice of supreme meditative concentration, its main essence is serenity”, she writes. “A person's consciousness should be unclouded, and a person himself is pure and sinless. Self-denial, humility, attaining Buddhahood, love and compassion are the main points in the modern Buddhist concept (Nadneeveva, 1994). The highest principles of Buddhism – equanimity, carelessness (*санамп*), a calm state of mind, reaching apathy, both to evil and to depravity, contemplation – should guide people's lives”. The Kalmyk concept of life presents the world in a cyclical form. But change, a change of fate, according to folk ethical ideas, are constant phenomena, they are defined by the concept of “Tsagin Selgyan” – a time of changes. These features are reflected in the folklore of the Kalmyks. The image of the Kalmyk world presented in folklore represents the concepts of *заян* “fate” and *цагин селгян* “time of change” as constant constants. In this picture of the world, the engine of progress was the desire to change destiny.

We should also say about modesty – one of the important features of the Kalmyks' communicative behavior. Despite the fact that this is mentioned in different places of this study, we note once again that modesty largely regulates behavior in the everyday life of Kalmyks.

In Kalmyk etiquette, modesty is the virtue of every person: men, women, old people, children. Etiquette does not allow for self-praise. The violator of this rule of etiquette is qualified as *көр күн* “braggart, boastful”, in colloquial speech a boastful person is called collectively *көр Манжэ* “boastful Manji”. The prohibition on boasting is recorded in the Kalmyk paroemia: *адг күн бийэн магтдг* “only the last man praises himself”; *күүнэ мунь көр болдг, күлгин мунь жора болдг* “the worst of people is boastful, the worst of trotters is a pacer”. Moreover, in proverbs, boasting is referred to as negative human qualities: *му күн көөрсг, му ишкэ көвкр* “a bad person is arrogant, a bad felting is loose”. Praising the wife is considered especially indecent: *бийэн буульсн ах эргү, баавһаһан буульсн адг эргү* “he who praises his wife is a fool; the one who praises himself is three times a fool (literally: the one who praises his wife is a small fool, the one who praises himself is a big fool)”; *марһад авсн малч али, магтад авсн баавһачн али* “where is your cattle, which you got in a dispute, where is your wife, whom you boasted” (Esenova et al., 2015).

## 7. Conclusion

So, we can say that the communicative behavior of a particular ethnic group is determined by communicative categories and concepts that are a reflection of the national picture of the world. The main features of national communicative behavior depend on national identity and national mentality.

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