

**WUT 2020**  
**10<sup>th</sup> International Conference “Word, Utterance, Text: Cognitive, Pragmatic and Cultural Aspects”**

**ANDREY KURBSKY'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH IVAN IV:  
LINGUOCULTURAL DISCREPANCIES**

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***Abstract***

Linguistic research of Andrey Kurbsky's correspondence with Ivan IV shows not so much ideological and political, but a culturally conditioned confrontation, which manifests itself in the peculiarities of text building, starting from the choice of the form of presentation, the way of quoting texts of the Holy Scriptures, the choice of arguments and facts and the manner of their interpretation, the degree of individuality within accepted standards and etiquette formulas. Comparative analysis of the texts of Kurbsky's correspondence with Ivan IV allows to trace literary-written and culturally conditioned norms and values, which due to the peculiarities of messages «in response» determine the structure and content of the text, as well as change the behaviour of communicants and their self-presentation. At the same time, the traditional rhetorically decorated dialogue, which is characteristic of the Middle Ages, is also built inside the messages, where citation and virtual, but conceivable as a real question-response system is used in line with modelling of the corresponding communicative space. The solidity of the fragments, which are interpreted and transformed in the texts of opponents, allows to clarify their literary-aesthetic and mental preferences, which are quite clearly manifested in the criticism of the «multi-noise message» of Tsar in the second message of Andrey Kurbsky and the answer from Ivan The Terrible. Violating accepted traditions, Ivan IV mixes the language means available in his arsenal for effective influence on his subjects, including disgraced boyars.

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**Keywords:** Andrey Kurbsky, Ivan IV, linguistic personality, linguistic worldview, linguoculturology, linguocultural differences.



## 1. Introduction

It is rather obvious that Andrey Kurbsky's correspondence with Ivan IV must be regarded as a phenomenon of Russian sociopolitical thought of the late XVI century, which provoked a wide range of issues of historiographic, philological and textological nature, as well as problems of source studies. It has become a certain "eternal theme" not only in science, but also in public attitudes (more on this topic can be found in the works of Bekasova (2015a), Florya (2019), Likhachev (2015), Perezventsev (2017). The discussions about the meaning of the correspondence do not stop either, as "the monarch, aspiring to reign "on his own", and a boyar Prince, representing the principle of boyar oligarchy, exchange their thoughts with unprecedented outspokenness and abruptness in it" (Platonova, 1917, p. 179).

## 2. Problem Statement

The frankness in comprehension of the most important questions for the Russian society and regarding them from the opposing points of view explain the significance of the legendary correspondence between Tsar and "sovereign's traitor" in cultural and historical aspect, because not only each correspondent became a carrier of interpretation of a whole row of phenomena in accordance with axiological direction of society" (Vorkachev, 2015), but also it built its special linguistic worldview, which to a greater or lesser degree established itself in national consciousness and in many ways it determined modern evaluations of the opponents' personalities and the historical situation (not rarely completely opposite).

Ivan IV and Andrey Kurbsky's correspondence perfectly fits in with the layer of events in spiritual culture, to which, according to Panchenko (2008) "the books, composed in sequences, authors' names suddenly becoming famous, melodies, previously unheard of, extraordinary paintings, freshly constructed buildings and monuments, unexpected ideas and their public recognition and discussion" (p. 81) belong. Despite the fact, that "medieval Russia knew both the dispute principle (there was even a special genre of "strife", and real, face-to-face or without seeing, oral or written scholarly and philosophical arguments" (Panchenko, 2008, p. 267), Tsar's correspondence with the escaped boyar with all its internal, and especially external, consequences, appeared to be completely unprecedented and transitioned to be "an indispensable element of culture". This proves the relevancy of studying the given monument from various points of view and with consideration to achievements of contemporary science, including linguoculturology, which makes it possible to study correspondence of language and culture (Krasnykh, 2017; Maslova, 2018; Morozova & Pimenova, 2016), the peculiarities of linguistic worldview (Lutovinova, 1917; Simashko, 2019) and refraction of national and individual linguistic worldviews in a linguistic persona's activity (Charaudeau, 2014; Morozova, Pimenova, & Utegenova, 2017; Shpilnaya, 2017).

## 3. Research Questions

In itself, the process of "strives" of the given level and tenseness is quite consequently explicated in metalinguistic reflections of the opponents. At that, every message by both Ivan IV and Andrey Kurbsky could be regarded as a complex of reflexives – "metalinguistic utterances, containing

commentary to the used word or phrase”, which are “*emerged into a certain generally cultural, specifically situational, properly linguistic context*” and they describe “*linguistic and mental cutouts*” of the epoch in its turning points” (Veprava, 2002, p. 5-6).

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

In connection with all the above-mentioned details, the purpose of this study is to investigate linguoculturological discrepancies in the correspondence between Ivan IV and Andrey Kurbsky. Claiming this purpose is in many ways established by the particularities of the texts of the correspondence, where we can clearly see specific representation of linguistic worldview, linguistic consciousness, and the variety of real, prescribed and virtual mental-lingual complex.

#### 5. Research Methods

The established purpose demands complex research methods for investigating linguocultural facts from the point of view of their functioning in the comparative aspect with consideration to the intentions and axiological directions of the correspondents. Such approach fits to the main tendencies in linguoculturological studies, which are aimed at discovering culturally valuable meanings and investigating the patterns of their representation, functioning and transformation in the structuring of linguistic worldview through the localization of linguistic signs (Kovshova, 2016).

#### 6. Findings

##### 6.1. Andrey Kurbsky's first letter

The meaning of such debates on sociopolitical, class-hierarchic and religious “sore spots” is not just in the search of truth, but it is more likely to be in the proclamation of one's own pragmatic and ambitious positions, especially under the conditions of public disclosure. In this regard, Ivan Vasilyevich's correspondence with the escaped boyar, judging by the conditions of its origin and genesis, was targeted at a wide audience within Moscovia – “*within all the great state of Russia [Vo vse ego velikija Rossii gosudarstvo]*” – and beyond its borders (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 12). Andrey Kurbsky begins his correspondence (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 8):

*in the city of Volmer, under my monarch Sigismund Augustus, from which I hoped to be bestowed and comforted over all my griefs by his sovereign mercy [v grade Volmere gosudarja moego Avgusta Zhigimonta korolja, ot nego zhe nadejasja mnogo pozhalovan byti i uteshen ot vseh skorbej moih milostiju ego gosudarskoju].*

During the emigration period, it was important for him to pose himself as a great warchief, who brought numerous victories to Ivan the Terrible: “*Leading and aggressing with your troops [Pred vojskom tvoim hozhah i ishozhah]*”, “*achieving the greatest victories with Angel's help to bring you glory [pobedy presvetly pomoshhiju aggela gospodnja vo slavu tvoju postavljah]*”, “*for the most glorious*

*praise [odolen'ja preslavna na pohvalu tebe sotvorih]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 8). Such a man could take the enemy’s side only for the most serious reasons, and so Kurbsky states the purpose of his First Letter to “*speak of everything in turns without omission [glagolati o vsem po rjadu ne propustih moemu jazyku]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 7) with the murdering sovereign, which, “*vainly attempting to change light into darkness and sweetness into bitterness [tshhasja so userdiem svet vo t'mu prelagati, i sladkoe gor'ko prozyvati]*” became the reason why his God-given warchief “*was devoid of everything and banished from God’s land [vsego lishen byh i ot zemli bozhija ... tune otognan byh]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 8). It explains the oratorical structure of the letter – from general questions, as “*Why have the sovereign beaten, murdered, spilt blood and stained everything in it, thought of death, torture and banishments; having granted death and wanted torment? [Pochto, carju, pobil esi, smert'mi rastorgl esi, krov' prolil esi, krov'mi obagril esi, muki i smerti i gonen'ja umyslil esi; vzdal esi, pogubl'jaja; hotjashhee istjazati...?]*” up to exclusively personal accusations (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 7-8):

*Such evil and outrage have I suffered from you! Such calamities and miseries have you sent upon me! Such lies and treasons have you shown me! I cannot name their numbers as my soul is still smothered in grief! [Koego zla i gonenija ot tebe ne preterpeh! I koih bed i napastej na mja ne podvigl esi! I koih lzhej i izmen na mja ne v"zvel esi! ...za mnozhestvo ih, ne mogu izreshhi, ponezhe gorest'ju eshhe dusha moja ob"jata byst']*.

It also explains why Kurbsky threatens Tsar with “the Incorruptible Judge’s Trial”, which would measure up to Kurbsky’s accusations.

## 6.2. Ivan IV’s first letter

Ivan VI’s response is built like a certain “mirroring” of Kurbsky’s text, as it “*was accepted and carefully studied [prinjato byst' i urazumljeno vnjatel'no]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p.15), and it could be noticed through the quotations, to which Kurbsky’s message is dissected, as well as in repetitions, comments on particular words and utterances, and text structure. So, the carcass of the two first letters by the correspondents is in the construction that starts with the main Kurbsky’s question-accusation “*Why?*”, and it reoccurs in Ivan The Terrible’s message as many as three times, being amplified by numerous outraged rhetorical questions “*How?*”, which are concentrated in Kurbsky’s letter and scattered in Ivan The Terrible’s texts. However, Tsar centers the second part of his answer to the prince’s letter around sarcastic replies as “*Like that!*”, or around either conditional or temporal constructions that start with “*If*”, “*So*”, “*When*”, just to burst with the nearly final verdict later (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 47):

*What have you written? Who has proclaimed you to be the judge or the teacher? And why have you written this, having reigned terribly, with demon’s spite! You have written it out of your evil, treacherous, pathetic wish and intent, having lost your mind, outraging, trembling, like an evil spirit! [Chto zhe ubo pisal esi? Kto tja postavi sudiju ili uchitelja? – I k chesomu ubo vlast' tvoja, ponezhe ubo pretitel'no povelevaeshi, jako zhe ubo besovskomu zlohitriju podobno! ... ty*

*po svoemu zlobesnomu, izmennomu, sobackomu hoteniju i umyshleniju, izstupiv uma, neistovjasja, besnomu podobjasja, kolebljasja, pisal esi].*

In such close detail, meticulously investigating and commenting on every argument, Tsar returns the accusations of “hubris beyond measure”, which is extended and corrected with “demon’s spite” and “evil intent”, to the sovereign’s traitor, who tragically fell out in both spiritual and physical ways.

Such massive rebuff from the Tsar’s side was caused by Kurbsky’s battalious individualism, amplified by his ordinary military career and the fact that Yaroslavl princes had always been alienated from Muscovite princes, combined with the shock value of his treason and an obvious implication about Ivan Vasilyevich’s illegitimate birth in a dare subscript to the message. One the one hand, Tsar could have ignored the accusations of yet another deserter, the more so since in the very beginning of the Letter Tsar thoroughly explained his origin from Tsar Konstantin, “*the first in Righteousness*”, and the worthiest princes, including his grandfather and father, - “*if I was born in reign, so I shall reign with age by God’s will [jako rodihomsja v carstvii, tako vozrastohom i vocarihomsja bozhiim poveleniem]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 13), but because of this circumstance, and because of all the offences, made by boyar traitors to Tsar and his relatives, remembered in close detail, forced Ivan Vasilyevich to express in his first letter “*for all the great state*” not only the response to all the Kurbsky’s accusations, but also his opinion about the general situation in Rus, and to justify the program of his “autocracy”: “*we have passed the age of fifteen, and as we wish to build our state, so shall we build it with God’s will [Nam zhe pjatagonadesjat leta vozrasta prehodjashhe, i tako sami jahomsja stroiti svoe carstvo, i po bozhie milosti i blago bylo nachalosja stroiti]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 29). On the other hand, judging by his letters to foreign addressees (Adrianova-Peretz, 2005), Ivan The Terrible understood the consequences of such accusations, intricately shaped and ready-made to serve his enemies under the conditions of military opposition: “*without having moved your arms, you have created a lot of evil with the poison of your thought [ashhe i rukami gde ne derzneshi, no mysliju jada svoego smertonosnago mnogo sija zloby sotvorishi]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 13). Aside that, Ivan Vasilyevich relied on his personal experience: “*as I have suffered from you in my boyhood and since then [kakovy zljaja postradah ot vas ot junosti i dosele]*” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 26). Numerous repetitions of plural pronoun “you” clearly states that Kurbsky belongs to the range of “extensively” shown slaves – “you”, the people, who tried to take the power over sovereign Vasyli’s son since he was three. At that, not only Ivan IV understands the “anatomy” of slander, when the ridiculousness of “vile” defamation falls on suitable ground at the right time, but he also knows the patterns of building up verbal reputations (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 29):

*...as the time fit your sinister devilry, you convinced the feeble-minded that our mother’s mother, princess Anna Glinskaya, with her children took out people’s hearts and with such sorcery they set Moscow on fire [aki vremja blagopoluchno svoej izmennoj zlobe uluchisha, nauchisha narod skudozhajshih umov, butto materi nashej mat', knjagini Anna Glinskaja, s svoimi det’mi i ljud’mi serdca chelovecheskija vyimali i takim charodejstvom Moskvu popalili].*

It must be noted that social-hierarchical breach in Kurbsky's consciousness, that caused outraged response from the sovereign's side, was genetically rooted from the inner strife between princely families and opposition between princes, devoid of power under the conditions of constant elevation of the Muscovite branch. It seems that this insatiable desire of power and redeeming ancestral, career and personal failures explained Kurbsky's arrogant public statement on the necessity to destroy traditional grounds, which, to Ivan IV's mind, "corrupts reigns", but to Kurbsky's opinion, it justified not only his treason for his vassal, but also for the whole state; moreover, he openly pronounced the right of "benevolent" war chiefs to desert to enemy sovereigns and to serve them even at the price of defamation at their former homeland.

Ivan The Terrible's providentialism in regard to Kurbsky's messages was not groundless in the era of equality between the word and the action; it was proven with abundance of lists and corrections of polemic correspondence, as well as the scheme of "Two Ivans", presented by escaped prince and which later became quite relevant in XIX-XXI centuries as a reflection of ideological orientations of both ruling and aspiring to rule political elites.

### **6.3. Contrasts in paradigms, axiological priorities and behavioural reactions**

Kurbsky's letter, with all its visible accusatory heat, was not unheard of in Ancient Rus, especially since its recent past – the collision of Josephites and non-possessors, which was spread way beyond monastery's walls, and it shook not only the Church, but also spiritual-political system of the state, and it could significantly affect the mentality of Russian society; even more so that "the second wave" of this clash took place in the period of Ivan Vasilyevich's rule. However, Andrey Kurbsky infringed a whole range of rules for composing the appeals of such nature. With all the seeming traditionality – altiloquence of utterances, original reference to Tsar as "renowned by God", rhetorical adornment and confessional pathos, Kurbsky's "little scripture" not just brought "the seeds" of new times with western shade to "the basic national cultural prototype" (Benoit, 1906, p. 65), but it really conflicted with the Old Russian canons of textual composition, including writings of such kind.

In particular, the minimal recognition of people's individuality principle was infringed (Bekasova, Moskalchuk, & Prokofyeva, 2013, p. 158-159), as Kurbsky values his own personality almost in a modern way. It was characteristic for all the Kurbsky's messages, where he presented himself not just as first advisor to the ruler, but also as the sovereign; according to the escaped boyar writings, he was numerously mistaken for Tsar on the battlefield.

Notably, Ivan IV's reaction to Kurbsky's selfish claims mostly correspond with Benoit's accusations of individualism in heresy, as he acts "for the madness of his devilish hubris" (Bekasova, Moskalchuk, & Prokofyeva, 2013, p. 86). That's why in Ivan The Terrible's First Letter there are numerous repetitions of key words that arrange semantic space of the text and in the very beginning of the letter they determine the main goals of condemning this "devilish note" (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 16):

*...is this your decent and benevolent service, if you blame and offend me? You're like a demon, admiring the Judgement of God, and before that, with your vile and selfish accusations [se li vasha prjamaja i dobrohotnaja sluzhba, ezhe ponoshati i ukarjati? Besnomu podobljashesja,*

*koabletesja i bozhij sud voshishhajushhe, i prezhdje bozhija suda svojim zlolukavym samohotnym izlozheniem].*

It also explains the transition of semantic dominant to the second part of defining “benevolent” [dobrohotnyh] war chiefs (according to Kurbsky), where the main formations to describe their words and actions stem from the root -hot- (117 cases), while they actually have a very negative connotations from the point of view of traditional spiritual culture, from *pohot* – an evil wish – non-benevolence, in the same row as treason and unashamed negligence, to sarcastic rhetorical questions, which play around semantic ambiguities as many as 25 times, presenting a full set of acting upon non-benevolence – [nedobrohotstva]: “How can you call these traitors benevolent? [Kako zhe ubo izmennikov sih dobrohotnymi narecheshi» (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 25), «ot tebe naricaemyja dobrohotny vozshatashasjat, jako pijanii, s popom Selivestrom i s nachal'nikom vashim Alekseem Adashovym, mnevshe nas nebytiju bytii...?»]” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 32) and alike.

Transformation of the good into the evil becomes the strongest argumentation in Ivan VI’s First message, when the actions of benevolent boyars like Kurbsky are characterized with the formations with the root -zl- / -zol- [evil, wrong, wicked] (138 cases), empowered with the other roots - *zlodejanie* (wrongdoing), *zlochestie* (wickedness), *zlohulenie* (badmouthing), *zlohitrie* (treachery), *zlosovetie* (dishonesty), *zloumie* (malintent), which ultimately combine in their structure two most negative medieval essences – evil and demonic (also malevolent): “You, lowering to your demonic habit, spitting evil poison [Vy zhe, zlobesnym svoim obychaem podobjashhesja ehidninu otriganiju jad izlivajushhe]” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 18) and so on. Ivan VI constructs a special metaphorical picture of “stealing” and “greedy” evil, devouring “the inner human” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 35). Extensively enumerating “wrongdoings of devilish people”, Ivan The Terrible defines the main point of his message to “the wretch”: “Tsar is to praise the good and punish the bad. So, if you don’t want to fear Tsar, do the good; if you do the bad, beware of Tsar [Car’ bo nest’ bojazn’ delom blagim, no zlym. Hoshheshi li ne bojatisja vlasti, to blagoe tvoriti; ashhe li zlo tvoriti, bojsja]” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 19). Ivan The Terrible’s diversified comments on certain words and phrases represent rather conceptual reflexives, than communicative ones (Ivannikov, 2017, p. 343).

Tsar’s anger also touched upon Kurbsky’s insolence to preach him on behalf of “benevolent” war chiefs, which were prescribed all the achievements of the Russian state, and to threaten to preach by his own name (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 7-8):

*He is my Christ <...> - the judge between you and me [On est’ — Hristos moj <...> — suditel’ mezhu toboju i mnoju]”, “until the end of my days I will blame you, crying, before beginnngless Trinity [do dni skonchjanija zhivota moego budu bezprestanno so slezami vopijati na tja prebeznachjal’noj Troicy]”, “I will command to put this tear soaked little letter to my coffin, before facing the God’s judgement with you [A pisanejce sie, slezami izmochennoe, vo grob s soboju povelju vlozhati, I grjadushhi s toboju na sud boga moego Isusa].*

Ivan Vasilyevich justifies the inadmissibility of Kurbsky's moral teachings with his status of the God-sent ruler, his opponent's secular behavior, his bad knowledge of the Holy Scripture, and, most importantly, with "devilish heresy": "You speak of God, yet you deny his will! [ty ubo sudiju Hrista privodish, del zhe ego otmetaeshisja]" (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 51).

#### **6.4. Metalinguistic concepts in the continuation of correspondence between Andrey Kurbsky and Ivan IV**

After uncovering closely investigated main controversies in the first letters, irreconcilable opponents get focused on less significant contradictions, but still important for medieval viewpoints, as each of them understood that they were forming and establishing some new axiological system, shaping it into a verbal body, which, in its turn, would create a new reality under the conditions of the emerged discord and disagreements.

In particular, each author begins to pay attention to some philological controversies. Kurbsky chooses brief epistle with a direction to western examples of belle-lettres (Likhachev, 2015, p. 203-204). Therefore, his Second "brief response" is mostly devoted to elaborating "an extended letter" from Ivan VI, downgraded to the rank of Muscovite prince, from the viewpoint of Kurbsky's "new education". What he noted was "magniloquence and noisefulness"; "poisonous words", which are not worth even a crippled warrior; something, rigorously and viciously snatched "out of many holy words", not just in verses, but in "superfluously and clamorous beyond measure, in whole volumes, in paroemia, in messages". Not being afraid of calling hard names, on two occasions Kurbsky underlines that such writings about "beds and bodywarmers is much like women's blather", and it is not fit for sophisticated and learned men, moreover, it can only amuse small children (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 101). In the Third letter Kurbsky turns to a straight offence: "You have got nothing left to do but to curse like a drunken womanservant!" (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 177). But the thing that Kurbsky especially emphasizes is Ivan IV's main "maladroitness" – the fact that he writes "to an alien land, where people differ not only in their grammar and eloquence, but also in their dialectical and philosophical learnings" [chuzhdu zemlju, ide zhe nekotorye chelovecy obretajutsja, ne tokmo v grammaticeskikh i ritoriskih, no i v dialekticheskikh i filosofskih uchenyej]" (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 101). Moreover, Kurbsky, according to the laws from Cicero's books, notes from which he sends to Muscovite Tsar as an example with his Third reply, demands from Ivan IV to comfort himself – a former loyal servant, who had "accepted the banishment after many offences and exiled for no truth", as it was decent behavior in the new society that he had already got used to – "a knightly men should not be tormented like slaves [ne dostoit muzhem rycerskim svaritisja, aki rabam]" (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, 101-102). Still, Kurbsky could not remain equal to Tsar, as in his response to the Second Ivan The Terrible's "magniloquent" letter, he opts for preaching again: he commands to shorten Tsar's replies to his "epistles", to avoid "barbarically excessive verbs" and accuses him in ignorance: "Tsar's letters limp on both legs", "they are weak in Holy Scriptures"; and then, ultimately, Kurbsky orders Tsar (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, 110):

*...when you come to your senses, when your soul calms, without outrage, read them! I also beg you not to write to other people's servants, as even they can answer to you [ashhe budesh' mudr, v tishine*



*duha, bez gneva, da prochtetshi ih! I k tomu zhe molju ti sja: ne derzaj uzhe pisati do chuznih slug, pache zhe ide zhe umejut otpisati].*

Ivan Vasilyevich's Second letter (1577) was called a missive letter with the emphasis on pointing out the returned city – “*in our patrimony, in the city of Volmer [v nashej otchine, vo grade Volmore]*”, from where he first received a letter from escaped Kurbsky. It is structured just as the First letter, where Ivan IV gives an argumentative answer to every point of the accusation. It's impossible to disagree with D.S. Likhachev's opinion that “Ivan IV's First letter was created on the same principles and by the same people as ambassadorial letters” (Likhachev, 2015, p. 224), but in the Second letter only particular aspects got accentuated, because Kurbsky only limited himself to lack of skill and falseness of Muscovite Prince's studies, but even there Ivan The Terrible underlines that “*we have written little out of a lot. <...> We are not writing to you out of pride or hubris*” [*sija my tebe ot mnoga malo napisahom. <...> A my tebe napisahom sija vsja, ni gordjasja, ni dmjasja*]” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 105).

For Ivan The Terrible such thoroughness is an important public business, the whole point of his epistolary strategy (cf. Bekasova, 2015b), rather than exercises in “attical” eloquence; even more so, his reply is corrected by the rules of court action, while Ivan IV understands that this “court” “is for everyone who rejects Holy Christian Mystery” [*ne tokmo tebe semu otvet dati, no i protivu popravshih svjatyja ikony, i vsju hristijanskuju bozhestvennuju tajnu otvergshim*]” (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 14-15), that's why he, as a defendant (cf. Bekasova, 2015b), being responsible for his subjects and for himself before God and before people claims: “This is how I answer them” and “This is how I answer to you”. The reply is made, the letter is composed – and now Ivan The Terrible, in his sovereign habit, demands that his response is “read in syllables”, so he tells Kurbsky (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 105):

...See for yourself, what you have done, and if you want God's Providence to be merciful to us, think of what you have done. Look within yourself and open yourself! [*Sam sebe razsudi, shto ty i kakovo delal, i za chto, i bozhieja smotrenija velichestva ego o nas milosti; razsudi, chto ty sotvoril. Sija v sebe razsmotri i sam sebe raztvori sija vsja*].

Ivan The Terrible's replies, thoroughly elaborated and comprehensive, as in a court action, prove that he can not be regarded as an “emotional writer”, as even his outraged bursts were sharply calculated and reasonably inserted into the correct contexts. Moreover, we must agree with Perezventsev (2017) that “Ivan The Terrible's words manifest a deeply insightful, inwardly systematized worldview of a person, who have intensively thought about his own place in the transient world, as well as the meaning of his own life” (p. 231).

In all probability, infringements of literary canons, social and religious customs, moral values and traditions established in ancient Rus in Kurbsky's “epistles” provoke a detailed elaboration of all the letters from “Christ's traitors”. Plural forms in this case prove the fact that Ivan The Terrible, from Kurbsky's regard, gives “a firm command and word” “in the whole Orthodox city of Moscow” to everyone who would dare to doubt the God-sent sovereign (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 52).

The meaning of Ivan IV's letters is in the fact that he presents to Kurbsky and other traitors a thoughtfully elaborated and hard-fought world model, that the first autocrat built, among others, on the rejection of his opponents's ideas: extreme individualism, a possibility of confessional transformations for personal benefit, ignoring class and power hierarchy: "This is how the Russian land will be under your feet. That is why I am sharpening my cane to write to you [Tako ubo i vy mneste pod nogami byti u vsju Ruskiju zemlju... Sego radi trost' nasha naostrisja k tebe pisati]" (Lourie & Rykov, 1979, p. 105).

The clash of the opponents' polar worldviews, embodied in the language, inevitably causes a certain battle in the field of the language: the discussions of literary manners, making key word rows, establishing one's own style, linguistic comment and analysis, semantic deepening or transformations in lexical space.

## 7. Conclusion

The correspondence between Ivan IV and Andrey Kurbsky, started by the escaped boyar with the purpose of establishing his reputation as a "benevolent war chief", which, along with the others, was given to Tsar to establish the most glorious state, but eventually underwent unjustified troubles and prosecutions, caused "a wide resonance", where Ivan The Terrible elaborated the grounds for Russian autocracy with thorough forethought, and, on the bases of traditional material and spiritual culture, he built an appropriate life model, which was publicly imposed on his subjects.

Understanding the fact that Kurbsky tried to cover his treason under the sycophancy of the language, in many ways determines the degree of Ivan IV's linguistic analysis, which, on the one hand, helps to discover defectiveness and inappropriateness of aggressive personal establishment, and on the other hand, it amplifies the objectivization of one's own worldview setting and its importance in the context of unrestricted autocracy of a God-chosen sovereign.

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