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INTERNAL FORM OF THE WORD AS NATIONAL AND
CULTURAL IDENTITY FACTOR

Grudeva Elena (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Stavropol State Agrarian University, Zootechnicheskiy lane, 12, Stavropol, Russia, elena-grudeva@yandex.ru

Abstract

The main method of studying concepts is the comparative analysis, focused on identifying distinctive features and characteristics. Identification of ethno-cultural specifics, in our opinion, is a very effective tool to find out the internal or inner form of the word, to stereotype models of perception and behaviour, and all further meanings and transformations of the word occur, arise and exist in the language due to the etymological basis (internal form). Within the framework of cross-linguistic comparison, the etymology of the concept makes it a unit of national mentality. Research subjects are the concepts SUMMER and AUTUMN. They are ambivalent and archetypal in their content and express the national specificity of the conceptualisation of reality by an ethnic group. The purpose of the research is to determine the archaic core of the concepts in the Russian and English languages with further comparative analysis of components in their structure. In fact, different linguistic cultures have identical concepts, which can be classified according to different criteria. Usually identical concepts do not coincide completely in their content, which indicates their national identity. Such differences in perception of the same things play a significant role in the process of intercultural communication. As a result of the undertaken empirical analysis, the idea of understanding language as a cultural and historical environment that reflects general relations between linguistic and extralinguistic phenomena was confirmed. The material of the article may be of interest for further research in cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics and linguistic culturology.

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1. Introduction

Language and mind are connected, since language shows all the peculiarities of extralinguistic reality that is considered as adequate by people who use a particular language. We perceive and understand reality through the lens of our native language and culture. Therefore, all the words representing language concepts simultaneously reflect and affect mind, behaviour and cultural environment of native speakers.

There are a great number of concepts that reflect the expressive national peculiarities in the cultural environment of each nation. Usually it is difficult or even impossible to express these concepts in a foreign language. This indicates their national specificity and mental uniqueness. The perception of the surrounding reality and the understanding of facts and things of everyday life are affected by many of these concepts. Moreover, these concepts determine the national characteristics of communicative behaviour of people. In order to understand mind and behaviour of other people, the methods to identify and describe the content of such concepts are extremely important (Trubachev, 1993).

SUMMER and AUTUMN are the concepts that have perceptive and sensory core; they are ambivalent and archetypal in their content and show the specificity of the world by an ethnic group, so their multivariate analysis is important and interesting for identifying common and national specific elements of the Slavic and Germanic linguistic picture. Besides, the historical and cultural approaches we have taken in our research are the least developed direction in the research of such concepts. Thus, etymology is the source for the conceptual content or “core”. It reflects the original "naive" ideas about the denotation.

2. Problem Statement

There are many works devoted to the study and description of concepts. Definition and understanding of concepts, their structure and content differ, but all researchers point out that the concept contains internal and external forms.

Potebnya (1976) first introduced the concept of “internal form” (pp. 146-175). According to him it is necessary to distinguish the external form of speech. It means that it is necessary to articulate sound and content, objectified through sound and the internal form of a word. It is its closest etymological meaning and the way the content is presented. The external and internal forms are not inseparable from each other. If the internal form changes, the external form also changes; the external form ceases to be itself without the internal content, but at the same time it differs from it. “Inner form of the word is the content of thought to consciousness <...> The inner, or internal form is the center of the image, one of its features, prevailing over all others”.

Zhukov (1987) defines the internal (inner) form in verbal way. It is the basis of the name of particular phraseological units and point out to a motivating value in lexical meaning of a sign always occupying a peripheral position in relation to other values. In addition, “the inner form of the word tends to be forgotten and eventually disappears”.

According to Alefirenko (2003, pp. 64-70), the internal form is defined by semantics elements and can be seen as its genetic basis. “Internal form of the word is its etymology, synchronous component of

its semantic structure that serves as idioethnic basis for indirectly derived category, i.e. at its core internal form contains both connotative and evaluative and semantic components”.

Blinova (1995) supposes that the internal form of a word “performs a cultural function, since it is one of the main means of expressing the linguistic picture of the world and the mental culture of the nation”.

3. Research Questions

The author considers the concepts SUMMER and AUTUMN in the context of cultural linguistics. Despite the broad coverage of linguistic and cultural descriptions of the concepts, the psychological and philosophical characteristics of these mental units are not clarified.

4. Purpose of the Study

The author studies the etymology of the concepts of SUMMER and AUTUMN in the Russian and English languages. They trace the evolution of these concepts in the linguistic consciousness and determine the images or inner form of coding them in the minds of speakers of ancient Russian and English languages. The author supposes that etymology is the source which gives the development of the conceptual content and reflection of the initial “naïve” ideas about the denotation, which formed the “core” of the concept. Non-personal, formal content of the concept cannot be separated from its “memory” and a dynamic process of the emergence of verbal or non-verbal form that was “packed” initially in the meaning of a concept. The concept develops in the semantic space between the lower and the upper limits of meaning giving its inner form.

5. Research Methods

Etymology is the source which gives the development of the conceptual content and reflection of the initial “naïve” ideas about the denotation, which formed the “core” of the concept. However the purpose of this research was not only to simulate the concepts, but to compare them in the Russian and English languages and find differences and similarities in their structure.

Etymological dictionaries analysis allows tracing the origin of SUMMER and AUTUMN in the Russian and English languages. Therefore it allows determining the archaic core (or cores) underlying these concepts and predominate over all other signs.

6. Findings

6.1. Etymological analysis of Russian and English concept SUMMER

Summarizing the information, presented in the etymological dictionaries of the Slavic languages, we obtained the following data: Russian lexeme “лето” (summer) refers to word forms having such meanings as “согреть” = to warm (слецъць – Bulgarian); “год” = year (lěto – Upper Sorbian); “время года” = season (lěco – Upper Sorbian); “день” = day (laidhe – ancient Irish); “дождь” = rain (lytus –

Lithuanian); “прекрасный” = nice (lactus – Latin); “время, год” = time, year (льто – ancient Slavic); “лить” = to pour (лѣѡ – ancient Slavic).

In dictionaries there are forms, similar to a lexeme “лето” in ancient Slavic, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Czech, Ukrainian, Polish languages pointing to an all Slavic origin of this lexeme: ancient Slavic - літо, Serbian and Croatian - лето, Bulgarian - лято, Czech - léto, Slovak - leto, Slovenian - léto, Polish - lato, Upper Sorbian language and Lower Sorbian language leto.

Some author believes that lexeme “лето” has the core similar not only for all Slavic, but also Indo-European languages. Thus, Vasmer (1986) notes, that the word “лето” relates to Old Gutnish laþigs meaning “in spring time”, to the Swedish dialect lading, laing – “spring”, Teutonic lēþ - ladigs – “last spring” and to the Irish laithe – “a day”. These lexemes might come to the Scandinavian languages from the Middle English where it means “Annunciation, spring church holiday”. Some Celtic and Slavic analogues are also given: Gothic dags – “a day”, ancient Prussian dagis – “summer”, Lithuanian dāgas – “harvest”. Leto may be close to ancient Slavic words лѣѡ, лити – “to pour” and to Lithuanian lytùs, lietùs – “rain”.

Preobrazhenskij (1910) also points out to the similarity of Russian word “лето” with the Old Gutnish and the ancient Irish equivalents. He supposes that the origin of “лето” may relate to “лить” = to pour, and was used to describe a period or time of rains. In addition it is possible to compare this lexeme with the Irish lith meaning summer, holiday of nature.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that лето (summer) was detached from the initially two-part system of seasons that existed in Indo-European languages – a syncretic concept spring-summer. Thus, according to the “Slavic Antiquities” dictionary, folk Slavic calendar divides a year into two seasons - cold and warm. The calendar is divided according to the special climatic characteristics and type of agricultural activity. It also notes the absence of concept ЛЕТО in Old Slavic language. This season was called “mezhen”, “mezhonnoe vremya” meaning a period of low water, as the transition time between two basic and more extensive seasons - spring and autumn (Tolstoj, 1995).

To conclude with, it is necessary to state that all the researchers mention the perceptive or sensory characteristics of the Russian concept SUMMER –heat, rain and hot/warm.

English etymological dictionaries indicate the Indo-European origin of the lexemes “summer”. Thus, in “Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology”, word “summer” originates from the form sun (summer - sumor (Old Eng), or samth, sun (Irish)) - sun, the Indo-European core of the lexeme sam also has the meaning half a year, time, season.

In the “Dictionary of Word Origins”, etymological core of the word “summer” originates from sumor / sumur (zomer in Danish, Sommer in German), that indicates “half; middle”. “An Etymological Dictionary of Persian, English and Other Indo-European Languages: Etymological Charts” also gives the basis sem- that in the ancient Indian means “summer, the summer season”.

According to “Collins’ Etymological Dictionary” the word “summer” came into the English language in the XII century. It is close in its meaning to ancient German and ancient Norwegian sumer, meaning “summer season, summer time”, and earlier origin of word may be derived from the ancient Indian of samā, i.e., “year, season”.

“A dictionary of English etymology” also gives some ancient bases and also indicates the basis of *sumor* - “year, season”.

As a result, perceptive or sensory trait of the concept *SUMMER* - sun - is also presented by some English etymologists.

The etymology of the seasons, represented in M. Makovsky’s “Historic - Etymological Dictionary” (Makovskij, 1996) is also extremely interesting in conceptual sense. Here the focus is not on the nature and its forces, but on seasonal human activities. Such approach allows establishing the wider parallels between the ancient roots, which can be disputable from the point of view of traditional etymological analysis. The author gives parallels in the Lithuanian, the Ossetic, the Latin and other languages for each season in the dictionary.

As a result, the internal form of the lexemes “лето” and “summer” in the dictionary relates to:

- rituals (*simyn*, *semun* – *хоровод* (round dance) – Old Ossetian., *sāma* – *клятва* (pledge) – Old Persian, *somi* – *клятва* (pledge) – Old Ossetian);

- hard work, sweat, blood, spilling during the work (*samyaty* - to try, to work to the exhaustion - ancient Indian).

The analysis of the materials of etymological dictionaries allows reconstructing the archetypical cores which are the core of the concept *summer*. For Russian concept *SUMMER* the core images are a day; rain; warm, hot; year, season; for English *SUMMER* core images are sun; half, middle; year, (summer) season. The images, which denote a time span – a day, a season, a time and a year are present in the perception of *SUMMER* both in the Russian and English languages. The etymological images that do not coincide - rain, warm/hot (in Russian) and sun, half/middle (in English) prove the fact that formation of *SUMMER* in Slavic and Germanic cultures was explained by national and cultural specific of conceptualization of this season, uniqueness of national character and traditions. Moreover they specify the geographical position and the environment. Russian summer begins in June. It is a season of rains in Russia. English summer begins in May. It is a period of warm and sunny weather on the British Isles.

To conclude with it is possible to say that such conceptual characteristics of Russian concept *SUMMER* as “rain” and “heat” are presented in the Russian language. The English concept *SUMMER* has conceptual characteristics “sun” and “the middle of season”. It is possible to explain the difference in the perception of this season by the fact that each nation is characterized both by specific natural living conditions and its special system of the conceptualization of surrounding world. This conceptualisation is formed using the process of practical human activity that is based on experience and traditions and inherited from the previous generations. For the ancient Slavs to a greater extent than for the ancient Germans, the conceptualization of seasons in general, and summer in particular, was connected with the forces of Nature and weather conditions, since the periods of agricultural activities largely depended on them.

6.2. Etymological analysis of Russian and English concept AUTUMN

Both Russian and English concepts *AUTUMN* are the latest formation in the Indo-European system of seasons, when the three-part system “winter – spring - summer” has transmuted into

contemporary four-part system of seasons. The information of Russian and English etymological dictionaries helped us to reconstruct the archaic cores, which made the basis of this concept.

“The Historic - Etymological Dictionary” by Vasmer (1986) indicates the similarity of the lexemes “осень”= autumn in all Slavic languages: Ukrainian. осінь, Serbian and Slavenian есень φθινοπωρον, Bulgarian есентá, Serbo-Croatian јесен, esentá, Sloven. jesen, Czech. jesen, Slovak. jesen, Polish jesień. Furthermore, word “осень”, according to Vasmer, is very close to Old Prussian assanis = autumn, Gothic of asans = harvest, ancient High German of aran, arn = harvest, yields. He also gave parallels with the Greek ὀπώρB, meaning “the end of the summer period”, “harvest” and “after the harvest”.

Chernykh (1999) notes that the word “осень” came into ancient Russian language approximately in 945. Apart from the similarity of the word to the old Prussian, Gothic and old High German forms, he also showed the relationship with the ancient Scandinavian onn (*aznu) - harvest time.

Preobrazhenskij (1910) besides similarity with the Old Prussian, Gothic and Old High German roots, gave Latin equivalent of annoa, meaning “annual earning” and “grain”.

According to Shansky, “осень” was common for all Slavic languages and had analogies in the Baltic and German languages.

English lexeme “autumn” (autumpne in Old French and autumnus in Latin) was of Etruscan origin. Up to XIV century this season was called “harvest” (Herfst in Danish, Herbst in German), that originated from the root hærfest, the ancient Indian kharbitas or karp - “corp” - “period of harvest”; in the Greek language - karpos - “fruit” or Lithuanian kerpu – “to cut, to harvest”.

English etymological dictionaries present identical forms of the lexeme “autumn”: auctumnus - autumn, year, harvesting; autumnals - autumnal; auctumnus/augeo/auctum - increased, strengthened; an increase, surplus.

Thus, it is possible to state that an internal form of Russian and English concept AUTUMN has the same etymological core: (a period of) harvesting, yields. Complete coincidence in the conceptualization of this season can be explained by the identical influence of autumnal season on the lifestyle of the representatives of Slavic and German linguistic cultures: autumn - season, connected with summing up of the results of agricultural season, harvest time.

7. Conclusion

In the cultural environment of any nation, there are many concepts expressing national characteristics. Usually it is difficult or even impossible to interpret these concepts in another language. It is a clear evidence of their national specificity and mental uniqueness. Many of these concepts influenced the conceptualisation of reality and national peculiarities of communicative behaviour of people. The analysis of the content of such concepts is extremely important for a proper understanding of mentality and behaviour of other nations.

SUMMER and AUTUMN are perceptive and sensory concepts. They are archetypal, ambivalent in their content and express the specifics of the view of the world of an ethnic group. Thus their multivariate analysis is important and interesting for the identification of common and national specific elements of the Slavic and Germanic linguistic picture.

The archetypal images, that are the internal form of the concept SUMMER in both Russian and English, overlap: the period, indicating time – day, season, time and year are present both in Russian and English. The images, that do not coincide – rain in Russian, and sun in English; warm, hot in Russian and half/middle in English - can be explained by the national and cultural specificity of perception of this time of year, traditions and originality of the national character and geographical position and environment.

The internal form of concept AUTUMN – harvest – coincides in both languages. Complete coincidence can be attributed to the very similar influence of the autumnal season on the people's life: autumn is the time of year associated with the end of the agricultural season and harvest, since future welfare depends on successful results of the autumn work.

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