

Linguocultural specifics of the Russian language picture of the world

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Abstract

This article demonstrates various interpretations of such concepts as *picture of the world* and *language picture of the world*, as well as their brief history.

The peculiarities of the national and specific content of the concepts of destiny and time in the linguistic picture of the Russian world are considered. The present research reveals national specific, cultural content of the concepts of destiny and time in the Russian language picture of the world and shows a specific idea of the worldview, stereotypes and attitudes of the Russians.

Keywords: linguoculturology, picture of the world, language picture of the world, the Russian language.

ลักษณะเฉพาะทางภาษาและวัฒนธรรมในภาพสะท้อนของโลกทางภาษารัสเซีย

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความดังกล่าวนำเสนอถึงการตีความที่หลากหลายของมโนทัศน์ “ภาพสะท้อนของโลก” และ “ภาพสะท้อนของโลกทางภาษา” พร้อมทั้งประวัติของมโนทัศน์ดังกล่าวอย่างสังเขป

งานวิจัยดังกล่าวพิจารณาถึงลักษณะเฉพาะทางชนชาติของมโนทัศน์ “โชคชะตาและเวลา” ในภาพสะท้อนของโลกทางภาษารัสเซีย จากการพิจารณาแสดงให้เห็นถึง ลักษณะเฉพาะของชนชาติและมิติทางวัฒนธรรมของมโนทัศน์ “โชคชะตาและเวลา” ในภาพสะท้อนของโลกทางภาษารัสเซีย อีกทั้งแนวคิดเฉพาะของโลกทัศน์ สามัญทัศน์ และทัศนคติของคนรัสเซีย

คำสำคัญ: ภาษาและวัฒนธรรมศึกษา ภาพสะท้อนของโลก ภาพสะท้อนของโลกทางภาษา ภาษารัสเซีย

Introduction

The development of modern linguistics was marked by the spread of an anthropocentric model of language research that assumes study of the relation between language, consciousness and culture. The study of mental images and their verbalization, as

this material helps to see the general and nationally specific in cultures, a special naïve national outlook is especially relevant. This work is done in line with modern linguistic and cultural studies of interrelation of language, consciousness and culture and is devoted to the study of the concepts of "destiny" and "time".

The relevance of the research topic is characterized by the following:

1. The linguistic and cultural approach to language research is relevant in modern linguistics. Linguocultural problems of conceptosphere studies of the Russian language are not sufficiently developed.

2. Fate and time are ones of the basic categories of human existence. Therefore, the concepts of "fate" and "time" require special research. Semantic, evaluative and figurative components of the concepts depend on the national peculiarities of a particular linguistic culture representatives.

3. Russian concepts of "destiny" and "time" as ones of the basic components of the Russian national culture are necessary for understanding the national character. The experience of studying these key concepts in linguoculture opens up the prospects of research into the changes concepts and cultural value in the modern Russian language in the course of anthropocentric research.

The choice of concepts "destiny" and "time" is conditioned by the fact that they are nationally specific and interrelated. They are the key to understanding the Russian worldview.

The object of research is the Russian concepts of "fate" and "time". The subject of the study was the substantial characteristics of the concepts on the material of the Russian language.

The purpose of this work is a comprehensive study of Russian concepts of "fate" and "time" in the Russian language picture of the world.

The methods of research are as follows: component analysis, logical, conceptual and contextual analysis, interpretation method, the method of continuous sampling.

The material for the work was the data of a continuous sample of explanatory, bilingual, phraseological dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms of the Russian language, dictionaries of Russian aphorisms, proverbs and sayings.

The scientific novelty of this work is that it's a first detailed study of the concepts of "fate" and "time" on the Russian language material.

Theoretical significance of the research is in the development of linguoconceptology expanding the list of the studied basic concepts on the material of the Russian language. The work creates a perspective for the description of the conceptsphere of the given language in the future.

Practical significance of this study is that this work can be used in practical exercises in general linguistics, linguoconceptology, lexicology and theory of intercultural communication, in the development of topics for thesis and coursework, as well as in the practice of teaching Russian language.

Picture of the world

One of the concepts, the content of which researchers continue to vary intuitively due to the complexity of distinguishing between subjective and objective components, is *picture of the world*. In some fields of science it has remained as a concept, in others it is used both as a concept and as a term. At present, it is difficult to specify a certain scientific field of origin of this concept and to determine the moment of its terminologization. It's generally accepted that the author of this term is Ludwig Wittgenstein, a representative of analytical philosophy, who in 1918 spoke about *picture of the world*, or *picture of reality* (Витгенштейн. 1994). According to another point of view, the term *picture of the world* comes from Leo Weisgerber (Руднев. 1999), who wrote the following statement in the 1930s: "The spiritual content, the treasure of knowledge, which is rightly called *picture of the world* of a particular language lives in and has an impact on the language of a particular community" (Вайсгербер. 1993).

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the word-combination *picture of the world* is also found in the works of other German philologists, philosophers, cultural scholars and anthropologists and representatives of natural sciences. In their works *picture of the world* is traditionally referred to as an *image* or *reflection*, which indicates the literal, but not figurative meaning, emphasizing its conceptual status. This definition of this word-combination is found mainly in the natural sciences. For example, in Physics it is a set of internal images of external objects from which an individual can logically

obtain information about behavior of these objects (Герц. 1914). In Anthropology, *picture of the world* is most often used to designate a schematic representation of the world order, typical of civilizations in the written period of development.

In a dictionary of Philosophy the term *picture of the world* is defined as a general understanding of the world, its structure, types of objects and their interrelations (Лебедев. 2004).

In Psychology the term *picture of the world* is related to the question of perception of the world with the study of psychophysical mechanisms of evaluation of objects in the surrounding space. Therefore, in psychology it is most often replaced with a synonymous term *image of the world*. For example, a soviet psychologist Aleksei N. Leontiev says that the sensual, which is the basis of experience, leads to the emergence of abstractions, which create a framework of oppositions of the mental image of the world that fills the current picture of the world with meanings (Леонтьев. 1983).

The usage *picture of the world* as a term In Linguistics, Culturology, and Linguoculturology enables acceptable synonymy of the following terms *picture of the world*, *model of the world*, and *image of the world*. This tendency can be traced, for example, in the following definitions: "Picture of the world is an integral global image of the world, which is the result of all human spiritual activity" (Постовалова. 1998); "Picture of the world is a simplified replacement of the real world by the invented scheme of the world or the image of it" (Корнилов. 2003); "The cultural (conceptual) picture of the world is a reflection of the real picture of the world through the prism of concepts formed on the basis of person's ideas <...>. It is an image of the world, refracted in the individual's mind. It is a worldview of a person, created as a result of one's physical experience and spiritual activity" (Тер-Минасова. 2007). The only thing that differentiates the concepts of *picture*, *image* and *model of the world* is that *picture* and *image of the world* are formed uncontrollably, arbitrarily, and *model of the world* is "conscious reproduction of the original object by various means" (Каевич. 2004).

Language picture of the world

The concept of *language picture of the world* is characterized by a long history of formation and recognition in foreign and domestic linguistics (Селеменова. 2012: 130-134).

But, despite the fact that the terminological status of *language picture of the world* is not in doubt, the uncertainty of the status of the term *picture of the world* itself has an impact on the ambiguity of the interpretation of the term *language picture of the world* (Любимова. 2011: 15).

Paying attention to the high frequency of references to this concept in a number of scientific research, it's necessary to admit that this term still remains metaphorical to a certain extent, and it does not always receives a sufficiently clear and unambiguous definition, even among specialists of the same field of study (Корнилов. 2011: 3). On this basis, it is necessary to differentiate *culturological* and *linguistic language picture of the world*. Thus, the principle of interdisciplinarity becomes particularly important in the study of this concept, which is conditioned by the cognitive nature of *picture of the world* and the connection between the knowledge of reality and the cultural environment in which people are placed due to their origin. Essentially, in these circumstances, language turns out to be the main (primary) cultural code by which the *picture of the world* is modeled in human mind (Ковалишин. 2011: 84-85).

There are numerous definitions of the term *picture of the world*. These are some of them: It is a scheme of perception of reality fixed in the language and specific for a language group (Яковлева. 1996); *Picture of the world* is a complex semantic space (Красных. 2009); It is an ordered representation of the surrounding reality structure, reflected in the language and expressed through the language (Караулов. 2009); *Language picture of the world* is a part of the conceptual world of an individual, which is tied to the language and refracted through language forms (Кубрякова. 1988), and etc. In other words, *language picture of the world* is a system that records the results of the work of consciousness, but not of an environment, because language cannot create a world separate from human consciousness. Language itself already expresses the human world as a form of reflection of the real world (Колшанский. 2005: 37).

Thus, in Russian linguistics, it has become traditional to understand *language picture of the world* as the result of the objective world reflection by the ordinary (linguistic) consciousness of a particular language community (Корнилов. 2011: 112).

We are close to understanding of language picture of the world as a kind of worldview through the prism of language (Яковлева, 1996), due to the fact that mastery of

the language implies mastery of the conceptualization of the world reflected in the language (Зализняк. 2012: 11). This fact has two consequences. Initially, since the configurations of ideas in the meaning of the words of the native language are taken for granted by the speaker, the one has some illusion that this is the way life works (Зализняк. 2012: 11). On the basis of simple life experience it becomes obvious that the language dyes the conceptual model of the world in national-cultural colors through the system of its meanings and associations (Серебрянников 1988: 177), because each natural language reflects a certain way of perception and structure of the world. (Зализняк. 2012: 11).

This is the way *national language picture of the world* is formed, reflecting the peculiarities of one or another national-linguistic-cultural community in the language. National language picture of the world defined as a phenomenon that unites many linguistic micro-worlds, the existence of which is conditioned by both the polyfunctionality of the language and the purpose of communication (Хайруллина. 1996: 40-41).

Russian language picture of the world

Russian language picture of the world as one of the national language pictures of the world attracted scientists' attention at the turn of XX-XXI centuries. Due to their efforts, the term "Russian language picture of the world" has entered the linguistic usage and gained scientific recognition.

The language picture of the world is formed by the system of main concepts and their invariant main ideas (Зализняк. 2012: 12). Usually, the main concepts of Russian language picture of the world are such as 'Soul', 'Destiny', 'Sadness', 'Happiness', 'Justice', 'Truth', 'Love', etc.

For example, the linguocultural concept of 'Destiny', or 'Fate', is a basic one in the Russian language. For the Russian-speaking people the concept 'Destiny' is, first of all, predetermined. We may see that in the following proverbs: *Знать, так на роду написано* 'I'm destined to be so'; *Знать, судьба такова* 'that's the lot'; *Видимо, так положено* 'that's the way it should be'; *Чему быть, того не миновать* 'what is meant to be, can't be avoided'; *Судьбу за хвост не схватишь* literally means 'you can't catch your destiny by its tail' and *Судьбу и на коне не объедеши* 'you can't avoid your destiny even on a horse'. Destiny or fate, according to the Russian worldview, is changeable and unpredictable: *Нынче*

– *жив, а завтра – жил* literally ‘alive today, dead tomorrow’; *Рок головы ищет* ‘doom always looks for someone’; *Сегодня – полковник, а завтра – покойник* literally ‘today you are a colonel, tomorrow you are a dead man’. The concept of ‘Destiny’ of Russian people didn’t change much due to Christian influence. Thus, according to Christian views, God is the only one who gives life, and he has prepared his destiny for everyone. This perception of fate is reflected in proverbs: *все мы под богом ходим* literally ‘we all walk under God’ or ‘we all live under God’; *человек предполагает, а бог располагает* ‘man proposes, but God disposes’. The fact that course of life is destined by God forbids people to predict future. Therefore, church condemns fortune-telling and predictions (Мальчакитова. 2014: 67).

The passage above explains the presence of the following peculiarities of the Russian language. Many researchers of the Russian language, first of all, foreign researchers, have noted the abundance of verbs, verb forms and constructions in the Russian language, expressing arbitrary, spontaneous actions that occur themselves and without efforts and control from a speaker. First of all, that’s related to reflexive verbs such as *привелось* ‘fell, came by chance’, *довелось* ‘had an occasion (to), happened (to)’, *пришлось* ‘had to do smth.’, *образуется* ‘it will be fixed, sorted out’, *успеется* ‘having plenty of time, no need to hurry’, *удалось* ‘managed to do smth’, and to impersonal sentences with reflexive verbs and dative case of the subject: *Мне сегодня не спалось* ‘I couldn’t sleep well last night’. Impersonal sentences of this type have no grammatical equivalents in English and are usually transformed into personal sentences.

On the basis of the accumulation of encyclopedic, cultural and background knowledge, the language picture of the world forms the grammatical concept of "time", which particularly alters within each ethnic community, modeling the ways of thinking, and transforming into standards of behavior. The ethnic dissimilarity of the grammatical concept "time" is conditioned by geographical environment, traditions inherited from ancestors, religion, ethnic environment (enmity or friendship with neighbors), cultural influences (Гумилёв. 1993). In this regard, it should be noted that grammatical time in English is represented by the word "tense" rather than "time", as in Russian, for example.

The present in Russian national culture is considered as a convention, for it is instantaneous: the beginning of the event has already moved to the past and its end - in the future; the present is such a short moment, that it does not exist at all (Маслова. 2006: 83).

The present in English, on the contrary, is a moment of presence (Арутюнова. 1998), the background (Кубрякова. 1988), the construct (Телия. 1996) which can reflect the cultural and national mentality of its speakers.

Thus, a Russian language native speaker does not always associate the present with "here and now", or rather, does not attach importance to the situational localization of what is happening. Moreover a Russian native does not feel the present moment, because his moment of presence - the moment between the past and the future - is elusive. The greatest interest for Russian people world understanding is the future time, which becomes a concept in the Russian language worldview. For example, Russian verbs of perfective aspect have forms of future and past tense. However they do not have any forms of present tense, thus it confirms an assumption that the representatives of the Russian-speaking nation gradually develop a habit to avoid the present time, even where it is necessary (Маслова. 2006: 84).

The Russian language picture of the world is also characterized by the perception of the world on the basis of the opposition of categories 'supreme' and 'ordinary'. At the same time, excessive attention to the 'ordinary', to everyday life routine, to the trifles of life is not approved in any way. Such disapproval comes from the rejection of actions for the sake of personal benefit and from unwillingness to sacrifice this benefit. From the point of view of the Russian language conceptualization of the world, it is good when a person is selfless and wasting. It explains and proves the positive connotation of words *широота* and *размах* in the meaning of 'kindness, generosity' and 'lack of limitation, bold initiative, huge scope of work or ideas' respectively, and negative connotation of the word *мелочность* 'pettiness'. As a rule, words of other Slavic languages, etymologically related to the Russian word *корысть* 'self-interest', do not have such negative connotation. However, in the Russian language, in dialectal or archaic usage, the word *корысть* 'self-interest' can be used neutrally or even rather positively. However, a self-interested person is commonly defined as a bad person whose desire to get benefit is reprehensible (Шмелёв. 2009).

For the same reason, the category of 'pleasure' (as opposed to selfless joy) is axiologically doubtful for native speakers of Russian language. The imperative *enjoy it*, with positive connotation and so typical to Anglo-Saxon worldview, is difficult to translate into Russian. The only kind of pleasure that will not be judged but encouraged by public opinion

is aesthetic pleasure, expressed, in particular, by the Russian verb *любоваться* ‘to admire’ (Шмелёв. 2009).

It is essential that the language picture of the world does not remain constant in the course of language development. Thus, the word *проблема* ‘problem’, which came to the Russian language in the 18th century and defined as 'a difficult issue that needs to be resolved', has now become predominantly used as a result of copying from Western European languages in the meaning of a circumstance that interferes with the normal, usual course of events. In other words, it began to define something that needed to be removed in order to restore the normal course of things, in which a person enjoys life. A series of phraseological clichés (mostly calqued) took place as well: *нет проблем* ‘no problem’; *не проблема* ‘not a problem’; *это не моя проблема* ‘it's not my problem’; *это твои проблемы* ‘it's your problem’; *создавать проблемы* ‘to make problems’. All of these expressions suggest that the world has a new perception according to which the normal life living is carefree and unhindered (Зализняк. 2006).

Since implicit meanings are representative of the linguistic conceptualization of the world, their discovery usually requires detailed semantic analysis. Sometimes superficial or inaccurate judgments about the specifics of the Russian language picture of the world, such as the following: “Russians are characterized by lazy carelessness, which is reflected in one of the most Russian words *авось* ‘the expression of a lack of reasonable or unreasonable hope, chance or luck’; “The fact that Russian syntax characterized by impersonal sentences indicates that the Russians are characterized by a fatal incomprehensible force, which has no name”; “The frequency of the word's *destiny* in Russian speech is all about fatalism of Russians”. Such judgments give a simplified or directly wrong idea of the specifics of the world picture, expressed by the Russian language.

Moreover, such judgments often contradict one another. Thus, a positive word *задушевность* ‘sincerity, frankness, honesty, closeness’ is sometimes seen as evidence of the propensity of Russians to communicate informally when they are ready to tell each other their innermost thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, one might think that the negative phrase *лезть в душу* ‘to ask a person about one's personal experiences, mental state, when this person does not want to talk about it’ demonstrates the inviolability of the personal space. The freedom in the descriptions of the Russian language conceptualization

of the world may appear as a great value and may be associated with dangers and discomfort. The concept of the word *авось* seems to contradict the desire to insure oneself against any possible surprises, which is reflected in the following expressions as *на всякий случай* ‘just in case’, *мало ли что* ‘who knows’, *а вдруг* ‘what if’.

However, a detailed analysis of the semantics of Russian language expressions in their actual usage allows us to clarify the definition of main ideas of the Russian language conceptualization of the world. Thus, the Russian impersonal constructions are not necessarily related to a spontaneous, fatal or incomprehensible force. However, the meaning of some Russian constructions (and not only the impersonal ones) includes the idea that what happened to a man, even if as a result of his own actions, in fact, happened itself. This idea expressed, by the way, in the famous and often quoted aphorism of the head of the Russian government in 1992-1998, Viktor Chernomyrdin. He said: *Хотели, как лучше, а получилось, как всегда* that in English can be translated as ‘we wanted the best, but it turned out like always’ or ‘we wanted the best, you know the rest’. This phrase itself has become an aphorism in colloquial Russian and is often used to denote actions that imply positive intentions, but either do not give any effect, or lead to destructive consequences. In this case, the focus is not on the subjective will of the speaker, but on the objective result of one’s actions.

A thorough semantic analysis shows that in most cases the "contradictions" in the ideas that form the Russian language picture of the world turn out to be fictitious. It turns out that they reflect different sides of the same view of a subject. Thus, the positive emotional coloring of the words *даль* ‘visible distance’, *ширь* ‘wide area’, *приволье* ‘open and free space lacking restrictions’, *раздолье* ‘open and free space with wide scope for any activity’ does not contradict the desire for comfort. You can enjoy the place, your cozy rooms and your life away from the hustle and bustle of the city. In both cases, the main idea of these words is the desire for peace, which can be achieved both by the fact that there is a large space around it, which is not invaded by any external stimuli as well as by the isolation from the full dangers of the outside world, which is characteristic of coziness.

Summary

The analysis of modern research in linguoculturology and cognitive linguistics allowed to get acquainted with the problems of these sciences, the basic terms of which are the language picture of the world and the concept. For this study, the most interesting is the linguocultural approach, that is, the study within the framework of the relation between language and culture, which is the methodological basis of our research. The linguistic picture of the world and linguocultural concepts as basic concepts of linguoculturology are particularly relevant definitions for us.

Investigation of the problem of interrelation of language and culture related to the world view of the people and the content of the national and cultural language. The study is performed within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, where the subject of cognition and worldview is the linguistic personality, who becomes the center of research.

The picture of the world of any language is considered in a context of mythology, folklore, culture of the given people. Sometimes the picture of the world is understood as a direct reflection of people psychology. Thus, the language picture of the world is a reality reflected in the language. Each ethnos sees the world in its own way, through the prism of its own culture, its own worldview, so the picture of the world of each nation or ethnos is their special worldview, a complete model of the world. The Russian picture of the world is the result of the centuries-old spiritual life of the people and the linguistic personality as a whole.

Linguocultural concepts of "destiny" and "time" lead us to the field of sciences related to linguistics: psychology, philosophy, religious studies, anthropology, ethnography, culturology. These concepts reflect the specific logic inherent in the carriers of a certain linguistic culture. As mental entities, they have national specific features correlated with the worldview, national culture, customs and beliefs, fantasy and history of the people.

The research has shown that linguocultural concepts are always in dynamics, they are constantly changing and filled with new content under the influence of historical events and circumstances of the current time. The language reflects these changes.

The analysis of the language material revealed that the linguistic and cultural concept "destiny" in their formation have gone through a long a period from mythological views to religious and modern ones. These concepts have preserved their characteristics at different

stages of development. The concepts are studied on the basis of various linguistic and cultural materials; they can be considered in the context of phraseology, metaphors, and word formation. Linguistic and cultural concepts of "destiny" and "time" have a wide range of contexts, they actively function in folklore, mythological, religious and artistic texts.

Each language has its own means of representation and a way of language representation. Expressions of the concepts studied within the framework of the worldview of the ethnos and archaic ideas, which are stored in the minds of language natives.

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