

Representation of Gender Concepts in the Russian and Polish Languages

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Abstract: The study considers the topical issues of the modern conceptology in particular, the being and representation of gender concepts in a language. The study provides the linguo-culturological analysis of paroemias containing concepts falling within the, general conceptual term ‘family’ mother-in-law, father-in-law, widower, widow (wdowa-wdowiec) in the Russian and Polish languages. The performed linguo-culturological analysis of conceptual terms relating to the general concept ‘family’ has proved that there is some dialogue between the two Slavic languages and cultures.

Key words: Gender, gender conceptsphere, lingvo-cultural concept, kindred languages, Russian language, Polish language

INTRODUCTION

The Russian linguoculture, like any other linguistic culture of an ethnic group is the voicer of the folk consciousness and represents the most significant concepts. Thus, the concepts of kinship being gender-colored by their nature are the most significant ones in the mentality of speakers of one or another language and carriers of the relevant culture. At the present stage, the presence of certain constants at which the carrier of one or another linguistic culture is aimed appears to be obvious: “Ethno-psycholinguistic norm includes the auto stereotypes of social, ethno-cultural and speech behavior of an individual as a representative of a certain ethnos; besides, it reflects the constants national identity of a person” (Karabulatova *et al.*, 2013).

Our attention was attracted by a significant number of paroemias with the conceptual term ‘family’ at the center in the Slavic conceptsphere. According to the reasonable remark by Bochina and Tsyun (2013), “genre peculiarities of a proverb are didacticism, striving for transfer of the accumulated folk experience and record in the ultimately succinct easy to remember form the generalized observations over the essence of phenomena of the surrounding world are closely related to the axiological view of the world system of values and disvalues of the ethnic group”.

The objective of this study is to provide the comparative linguo-culturological analysis of paroemias with the conceptual term ‘family’ in the Russian and Polish languages including the gender aspect.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials used for the study were dictionary articles with the use of the specified gender concepts of as part of sayings and proverbs of the Russian and Polish languages. The subject of the study paroemias including the concepts that are directly related to the concept ‘family’. In order to solve the tasks set their private methods were used: the descriptive one including comparison, generalization of factual material, method of linguo-culturological analysis.

Classification of factual material in kindred languages with account for functioning and representation of concepts in paroemias open the opportunity of analysis of such terms with regard to the national specifics.

RESULTS

The linguo-culturological analysis of concepts father-in-law and mother-in-law in the kindred languages within the frameworks of this study was performed based on the factual material of paroemias “Like in any other language in the Polish and Russian one proverbs are creation of the folk, they contain the nationally-specific knowledge and ideas, experience and world view peculiar to a certain ethnos and at the same time are the evidence of the common Slavic past of two folks, their spiritual kinship and close cultural-historical links” (Kolosova, 2014).

We’d like to refer to analysis if lexemes meaning the names of the husband’s and wife’s parents (father-in-law

and mother-in-law) as well as to specify their conceptual nature. In our opinion, it is interesting to consider the functioning in the Russian language of the concept 'mother-in-law' (mother of the husband) that does not have a gender opposition that is typical for the concepts of kinship like the concepts 'husband' and 'wife', etc. We dare to state the presence in the Russian language of the concept 'mother of the husband' only that features all attributes of the linguo-cultural concept, namely, the figurative, notional and value components (Bychkova, 2013). This is also evidenced by the presence of a huge number of proverbs and sayings in the Russian language about the mother of the husband that feature evaluative meaning. For example: Husband's mother's tenderness will make you overwhelmed by tears. A fierce husband's mother has eyes on her back. To some is the husband's mother a husband's mummy and to some an angry old woman.

The husband's mother remembers her being young and doesn't trust the daughter-in-law. Once the daughter-in-law enters the yard, the husband's mother goes to the table. The husband's mother scolds her daughter teaches the daughter-in-law. The husband's mother shows anger as the daughter-in-law has fun.

The husband's mother beats a cat and accuses the daughter-in-law for that. The husband's mother said to the daughter-in-law: dear daughter-in-law, enough to grind, take a rest pound a little.

Should a husband's mother appear in the house all goes at sixes and sevens. A husband's mother on the chimney stove like a dog on a chain. The daughter-in-law will not hold for long if the husband's mother praises her (<http://posloviz.ru/category/svekrov/Accessmode-free>. Access date: 12.02.2015).

Conspicuous is the fact that even the use of the suffixal derivative from the lexeme husband's mother with a diminutive meaning dear husband's mother features ironic meaning. The clearly expressed evaluative connotation of the suffix of subjective estimation attaching the relevant notional shade to the lexeme.

As for the lexeme (husband's father), the use of this unit in proverbs is so rare that it is difficult to determine its evaluative component.

As is known in Russia a son brought his wife to his parents' house where all of them had to live together. As the result conflicts between the mother and the wife developed (such proverbs as 'Two housewives can not get on with each other on the one kitchen' are known). Consequently in the daughter-in-law opinion, the husband's mother is a tyrant and despot from whom one should always expect disapproval and negative attitude in whole. In very rare cases relationships between the

daughter-in-law and husband's mother were good. The evidence of that are a very few sayings about a good husband's mother. For example: a kind-hearted husband's mother is like second mother for the bride

A husband's mother is flesh and blood to anyone (<http://posloviz.ru/category/svekrov/Accessmode-free>. Access date: 12.02.2015).

As a rule, the husband's father was rather neutral in his estimates that must be the reason why he is not steeped in the areola of unfriendliness. All these ideas of people could not but be reflected in the national language.

If we refer to the 'wife's mother' concept we will not see such an expressed negative evaluative basis. In this case, the attitude to the wife's mother is expressed through the perception of the man husband. For example: The father relies on the trotter and the son-in-law on the wife's mother. For a good wife's mother is the son-in-law her favorite son. The wife's mother thought there would be too much food for five persons and the son-in-law ate it all at once.

A wife's mother can milk the mortar for the son-in-law. The son-in-law and his father are the dearest guests for the wife's mother. On the shrove day the son-in-law visits his mother-in-law (<http://posloviz.ru/category/svekrov/Accessmode-free>. Access date: 12.02.2015).

The wife's mother usually welcomes the son-in-law, wines and dines him. For a good reason there is still the tradition alive to visit the wife's mother on the Pancake Week. However, there are sayings in the Russian language where the wife's mother image is not that glowing. They emphasize the negative traits of the wife's mother.

The wife is for advice, the wife's mother for welcoming yet the birth mother is the dearest one. Wife's mother's pockets are empty. A single oak is just an oak a hundred oaks is a grove. A single devil is just a devil and a hundred of devils is mother-in-law (<http://posloviz.ru/category/svekrov/Accessmode-free>. Access date: 12.02.2015).

Sayings about the wife's father cannot be found in the dictionaries. This is why, it makes no sense to speak of the conceptuality of this term.

We believe it is telling that in the Polish cultural and linguistic views of the world the image of a relative is represented on the part of one of the spouses no matter husband or wife and phonetically the lexemes coincide with the Russian version. In terms of the gender aspect, it is telling that in the Polish mentality just like in the Russian one the female correlate features a negative connotation while the male one does not produce any

bright paroemias at all. Literally: no one can get on with the mother-in-law as well as she does with herself.

Based on the above the conclusion may be drawn that no matter how much the young marrieds try to improve the common living with the more adult relatives, it is impossible to satisfy neither the wife's nor the husband's mother. As the result, the attitude to these relatives is the following: An evil husband's mother is more annoying than a sick tooth.

The terms widow and widower are certainly represented in the Russian linguistic consciousness, since such a situation when one of the spouses stays alone because of the death of another one happens to be. It has the tragic background and is accordingly expressed in paroemias. For example: being unmarried is sugary, being married a bother and being a widow is like to stand in water reaching the throat.

Who hasn't been a widow has not experienced a trouble. To marry a widow is like to put on the old pants: not a louse but a nit. A widow is a fleshly human. A widower is not the father to children but a full orphan himself. Widow, sew loose sleeves to put inside the words that will never come true (<http://posloviz.ru/category/svekrov/Accessmode-free>. Access date: 12.02.2015).

At the same time, there is a well-known expression 'grass widow' formed from the word 'widow', its diminutive derivative that to the a certain reduce the tragic areola of this term. Thus, the word combination 'grass widow' means a woman staying alone not because her husband died but because he had not been home for a long time for some reasons. In this case, the word widow in such a context gains an additional connotation a woman that feels free and single and may afford to hook up.

The same is true for the lexeme that being the derivative from the word with diminutive suffix is used for calling a woman who still hopes to get re-married and therefore behaves not too reserved and stiffly as is right and proper for a mourning widow. On the other hand, a may also mean a young woman that became of widow. However, all the above said hardly allows speaking of the complete concept 'widow', 'widower' or 'widowhood' in the Russian linguistic view of the world since although these terms have partially got the conceptual connotation, they do not comply with the attributes if the linguocultural concept named by Karasik (2002) to the full extent.

As compared to the previous concepts in the Polish language one may note a quire large amount of paroemias

in which the terms wdowa-wdowiec are used. One may state the general negative perception of this status of a man and a woman caused by tragic events in the family's life. Most examples contain kind of a warning for those who twist their fortune with a widow or a widower. For example: literally: Who marries a widow will soon regret it; literally: if a widower takes you to his bosom he'll bury you in a moment.

Appealingly in the Polish linguistic view of the world there is an established image that directly associated widowhood with the soonest. As the result, the bright metaphoric images appear: Literally: Throw a stone to a widower and a ring to a young (unmarried) man (Polskie, 2003).

The paroemias structure represents an obvious opposition of such conceptual terms as death life, death is associated with tears, rocks while life with health, joy, etc. In our opinion, it is illustrated in the following paroemias; literally: widow's tears are not good for health; U wdowy chleb gotowy, ale nie kaidemu zdrowy. Literally: a widow has ready bread but it's not for everyone.

Negative perception applies both to men and women who became widowed: literally: who marries a widower bleats like a sheep.

Although, rhyme plays an important role in this example: wdowor-sheep, the deflated image shall also be noted. In the Slavic linguistic consciousness the images of this animal a sheep are used by naming a person with ultimately negative connotation (cf. stupid, black sheep, as stubborn as a mule, etc.). The single example where representation of the widow-widower concept in Polish is provided with a positive evaluation refers to the female definition: literally: even a widow can be good if she is young and healthy.

The representation of the set expression with the lexemes widower-widow in the ironic sense arouses interest Slomiana wdowa (grass widow), Slomiany wdowiec (grass widower). In the Russian linguistic mentality the term 'grass' has been established with respect to a woman: a grass widow is a woman that has been living separately from her husband for a long time. Although, the dictionaries note the presence of the male version grass widower, we should state that is almost not used. One should agree with the opinion of Karasik (2002) that 'By interlanguage comparison of the value views of the world it appears that the difference between representation of some or other concepts is expressed mostly not in the presence or absence of particular attributes but in the occurrence of these attributes and specific combinations thereof'.

In our opinion, these examples confirm the fact that functioning of a concept in the language primarily depends on the mentality of the language speakers. It is known that "Mentality of any nation is formed under the influence of conditions of its life. Favorable climate, fruitful soil, beneficial trade and military situation determine the status of a nation in the world and corresponding self-consciousness and self-feeling, ambitions, estimates, behavior. Religion also plays important part in formation of national mentality because it is not only a cult and belief but a form of consciousness as well" (Mukhametshina and Galimullina, 2014).

Summary: As the result of the study performed one may draw the conclusion as to the similarity and difference presentation of gender concept in the Slavic conceptosphere. It is of no doubt that gender terms in the languages first of all represent the linguo-cultural concepts. The national specifics of perception of this phenomenon is in most cases expressed at the level of individual senses that are inextricably connected with the sphere of emotions, evaluation and due to which the differences in mentalities of kindred ethnic groups are detected which is also presented in the language. According to the reasonable remark by Kolesov (2004), it is the language that "embodies the national character and national idea and national ideals that may be represented in the completed form in the traditional symbols of the particular culture". It has been established that the term 'family' may be considered within the frameworks of the modern concept of linguistic identity as a structural unit communicating the universal and nationally-specific content essential to the linguistic culture of the kindred ethnic groups, i.e., being the cultural concept.

CONCLUSION

A number of terms take solid roots in the mental consciousness of an ethnic group and provide bright

representations in the linguistic world-view of the language speakers which is supported by the practice of use and fixed in the idiomatic fund.

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