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Transformation of the "Student" Concept in the Russian Linguoculture

Transformación del concepto "estudiante" en la linguocultura rusa

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RESUMEN

El trabajo actual es parte de las investigaciones que se encuentran en la encrucijada del campo disciplinario altamente importante de la lingüística moderna: la lingüoculturología y la linguoconceptología. Se utilizaron los siguientes métodos en el proceso del análisis de material fáctico: método linguoculturoológico, método de campo, métodos descriptivos y diacrónicos, método de análisis de componentes. Las principales posiciones y conclusiones, así como el material fáctico recopilado, pueden utilizarse como material de apoyo para la creación de cursos especiales sobre linguoconceptología, linguoculturología o para la enseñanza de lenguas y culturas como lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: Concepto lingüístico, Idioma ruso, Imagen conceptual del mundo, Linguoconceptología.

ABSTRACT

Current work is part of the research that are located in the crossroads of highly important discipline field of modern linguistics: linguoculturology and linguoconceptology. The following methods were used in the process of the factual material analysis: linguoculturological method, field method, descriptive and diachronic methods and method of component analysis. Main positions and conclusions, as well as the collected factual material, can be used as a supporting material for the creation of special courses about linguoconceptology, linguoculturology or for the teaching of language and culture as foreign ones.

Keywords: Conceptual picture of the world, language linguocultural concept, linguoconceptology, russian language.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the concept proposed by V.I. Karasik, linguocultural concept has three components: figurative, conceptual and evaluative (Karasik et al.: 2001, pp.75-80). We assume that under different circumstances – political, cultural, social etc. – the concept may undergo a certain transformation. Thus the evaluative aspect of linguocultural aspect, for example, may change. This can be proven by the example of the "student" concept transformation over a certain period of time (XIX – early XXI centuries). This period was not randomly chosen: serious changes in the political and cultural paradigms, which had left a strong impact on speakers consciousness and, consequently, on language itself, had happened exactly in this time period. Despite the keen interest of modern researchers in the topic of concepts and their functioning in speaker's linguistic consciousness (Zaglyadkina: 2009, pp.27-31; Suhomlinova: 2013, pp.227-235; Shtyrlina: 2017, pp.88-94), there are currently no works dedicated to the analysis of the "student" concept transformation in Russian linguoculture.

METHODS

The main method of this research is the linguoculturological one, in terms of which the detailed analysis of "student" concept transformation in Russian linguoculture of XIX – XXI centuries was carried out. In order to describe the selected factual material, - collocations, winged words and sayings that are common in the language, precedent texts that exist in the conceptual picture of the Russian language speakers' world (songs, contexts from fiction literature, films) in particular – different methods were used: field method, descriptive and diachronic methods, method of component analysis etc.

The chosen complex of methods allows us to trace the history of the quite long existence of "student" concept in Russian linguoculture (descriptive method), make conclusions about its transformation depending on the cultural realities of one or another era (diachronic method, method of component analysis), analyze the verbalization of given concept (field method). At the same time, linguoculturological orientation of the research, most importantly the analysis of the concept within its components such as conceptual, figurative and evaluative, points out the reality of "student" concept existence in Russian conceptual picture of the world.

RESULTS

Student (from Latin *studens* – hard working or studying) is a person who is receiving higher education (or, in some countries, secondary education). In Ancient Rome and the Middle Ages, any person who was studying would be called student. With the establishment of universities in XII century, the term had been used to identify everyone associated with them; after the introduction of academic degrees (master's degree, professor etc.) only people who were studying were called students (Evgen'eva: 1999). Starting from the Middle Ages, students often left their homeland in order to find a better school or sometimes even a better teacher for themselves. The other goal was to gain business and personal connections and thus easily find the workplace with better conditions in some way (scientific, cultural, professional, religion, etc.). In the XIX century, the fashion for studying in capitals appeared and intensified (Guneroglu & Bekar: 2019, pp.243-253).

In paragraph 3 of Article 33 of Federal law "About Education in Russian Federation", the term "student" is defined as "a person who are mastering educational programs of secondary vocational education, bachelor's degree, specialty or master's degree" (Federal'nyj: 2012).

Students are often encountered on pages of classical Russian literature. The most vivid images can be found in the I.S. Turgenev's novel "Fathers and Sons" (Evgeniy Bazarov), F.M. Dostoevsky's novel "Crime and Punishment" (Rodion Raskolnikov), A.P. Chekhov's play "The Cherry Orchard" (Peter Trofimov) (Chekhov: 2003, p.253).

Authors, while describing the students of that time, had often noted their poorness. Their clothes and appearance help authors note this exact aspect of their characters' lives. There is a reason Peter Trofimov gets called "shabby gentleman" for his unrepresentable appearance: he wears well-worn student uniform and old galoshes. While describing Raskolnikov's appearance, F.M. Dostoevsky draws the reader's attention to the "old ... shoe, full of holes, all covered in dried up mud"; hat on his head is "completely worn out, rusty with age, all torn and bespattered, brimless and bent on one side in a most unseemly fashion". "He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags" (Dostoevskiy: 2003, p.793). At the same time, the author notes the external dignity of his protagonist: "...he was so very badly dressed, and in spite of his humiliating position, his bearing was by no means in keeping with his clothes" (Dostoevskiy: 2003, p.793).

Bazarov, from Turgenev's novel "Fathers and Sons" (Turgenev: 2000, p.443), is quite different from previous characters. His clothes, too, could not be called new or polished. He wears decent clothes, though not new. Turgenev notes such details of his protagonist clothing as an old round hat, the dusty overcoat on his shoulders and old coat. All of Bazarov clothes are referred to as "garment". However, while Trofimov and Raskolnikov are not formally students (Peter was expelled from the university two times, and Rodion cannot continue studying due to his debts), Bazarov tries his best to get the most important from his education in order to work as a doctor. Along with studying, he also practices medical work (Hrnjic: 2016, pp.53-77).

Moreover, the authors repeatedly underline the intelligence and education of students. Thus we know that Raskolnikov used to teach lessons. His analytical mind was able to create his own theory of people's existence on the planet – inhumane, but at the same time strict and consistent. Bazarov is a smart and knowledgeable person. He, too, stands by his opinions and defends them in the arguments with Pavel Petrovich. Peter Trofimov's intelligence is also noted in A.P. Chekhov's play "The Cherry Orchard" (Chekhov: 2003, p.253). He knows and speaks several languages and has a side-job as a translator. All of these facts indicate that the student in pre-revolutionary Russia was a model of knowledge, education and intelligence (Wilson & Soblo: 2020).

DISCUSSION

We have already noted that Trofimov and Raskolnikov are former students. In order to receive higher education, a person should be able to pay for education, along with having good knowledge. Besides that, different class restrictions played an important role. This is why higher education was off-limits for many people. Therefore, student status revealed a lot about the person. In this relation, the conceptual notion of "student" fits into the main opposition of the existing in different cultures concepts "rich-poor" (Rakhimova et al.: 2017, pp.2495-2501).

After the Russian revolution, rules had changed. All citizens were able to receive higher education. However, only people who passed strict entrance exams and who had received sufficient knowledge in order to study in higher education institution were able to do that.

In Soviet times, there were age restrictions for full-time students, which is why "student years" are often associated with youthfulness. Student years are often characterized as the happiest and most carefree years since people's aspirations are aimed not only at self-development, learning and finding yourself but also at finding new emotions and impressions. In doing so, some people may find students "a bunch of idlers". This representation had reflected unto the so-called student folklore (Makleeva et al.: 2016, pp.199-202). Let us cite some examples:

Ne voskhpapi na lekci, student, daby ne pazbydit' blizhnego svoego...

Ot sessii do sessii zhivut studenty veselo.

Student's cheeriness can be accompanied by friendly feasts:

Tak nalivaj student studentke,
Studentki tozhe p'yut vino...

Students, without a doubt, express self-irony and imagine different ways of interpreting the word "student". One of them is the following:

Sonnoe, Teoreticheskij Umnoe Ditya, Estestvenno Ne zhelayushchee Trudit'sya.

[Sleepy, Theoretically Smart Creature, that Naturally Does Not want to Work]

Another way of "deciphering" the word "student" acts as a telegram to parents:

Srochno Trebuetsya Ujma Deneg. Est' Nechego. Tochka (Pavel Bernshtam's website: 2019).

[Really Need a Lot of Money. Nothing to Eat. Dot.]

The idea of poor student existed in Soviet times, too. The cheapest products were often called "student's products" – student's bread, student's sausages, student's cutlet. Student cafeteria offered cheap, albeit not very delicious meals.

Student hostel, or obshchaga, - the place for nonresident students to live in – plays an important role in student lives. Obshchaga is its own world in a miniature. This is a place where students learn to be self-dependent and tolerant, how to find mutual language with other people and how mutually benefit each other.

Nevertheless, the carefree life of students is rather a myth than reality. Majority of the students are responsible and busy people who prepare for exams with all seriousness. Some people combine study and work. These facts were reflected in the widely popular comedy film of the director Leonid Gaidai "Operation Y and Shurik's Other Adventures" (1965), where the protagonist is studying in polytechnic institute and, at the same time, work on a construction site and "rehabilitates" antisocial elements. All of these facts do not prevent him from successfully passing his exams or falling in love – he lives an eventful life of a young Soviet man. For example, the following phrases from the film showcase the listed facts:

– Do you work at a construction site?

– Part-time.

– What do you mean?

– I'm a student at the polytechnic [institute].

– Student...

Or the following phrases that show the realities of students' lives themselves in a comedy film, shown with the irony of negligent students:

– Why is that? Are you celebrating something today?

– To me, each examination is a celebration, professor (student tears up).

– Very good... (professor tears up as well).

Examination session for students is a tense time full of responsibilities. However, some students rely not on their own knowledge, but on shpargalkas. This "abstract of abstract" has many names in student's jargon: shpora, spisuha, krokodil, bomba, garmoshka.

N.M. Shanskiy's etymological dictionary gives this word the following meaning: "Shpargalka – adopted from the Polish language in XVIII century, where szpargalka with the meaning of "written out the paper" goes back to the Greek word spartan on, "nappy; old junk, rags", which is derivative from spargō, "to wrap up, to swaddle" (Shanskiy: 2019). From this fact, we can conclude that shpargalka has been a "dear friend" of students for a long time.

The other widely popular film of the same director, "Kidnapping, Caucasian Style" (1967), features the same protagonist Shurik, who travels to the other part of USSR for his institute practice, which was common for the studentship of that time, in order to collect local folklore. There, in the Caucasus, he meets a woman who is also a student. She leads a healthy and active lifestyle; her hobby is mountaineering. The widely popular phrase Studentka, komsomolka, sportsmenka... [Student, Komsomol, sportswoman...] had become

a saying to describe the smart and diverse woman and is still used widely (Starostina et al.: 2017, pp.141-146; Miftakhova et al.: 2018, pp.1118-1121)

The other reality of Soviet times was *strojotryady* (construction crews), temporary labour collectives for volunteer work in the free-from studying time (mostly summer vacations) that had been working in the different objects of the national economy of Soviet Union. The main goal of *strojotryady* was, aside from students working part-time and getting direct income, to discipline students with the spirit of constructive collectivism and labour respect. The beauty and romance of *strojotryady* had disappeared with them, but they are, to this day, strongly associated with the Soviet studentship.

Speaking of Soviet studentship, it is hard to ignore another important aspect of higher education activity – job distribution after graduation. Work evasion was a punishable offence in USSR. Later those rules were softened, but since it was mandatory before and graduated students could be sent to the most remote region in the country, many regarded it as a test of moral strength: ex-students had to either travel to the given destination and work honestly or find different “loopholes” in order to stay in the hometown or get a new, more prestige destination to be sent.

A modern student is not much different from a Soviet student. Reality had changed, but society’s opinion about education and studentship remains the same.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the “student” concept has seen some changes over two centuries. Main changes were related to, first of all, the gender aspect of this concept, since higher education had been a male prerogative. Furthermore, the idea of “poor” student had changed as well. Modern student can be quite wealthy. Finally, modern realities of the modern studentship, which greatly differ from the Soviet studentship, are that it is considered prestigious to receive foreign education. “Golden” student youth spend a lot of time abroad. However, such distinctive qualities as activity and a sense of purpose have been unchanged in the history of “student” concept.

Authors come to a conclusion that, overall, the transformation of the commonly used “student” concept can be observed in the conceptual picture of the world, with collocations, precedent texts and sayings, which exist in modern Russian language, being the example of that. Main positions and conclusions, as well as the collected factual material, can be used as supporting material for the creation of special courses about linguoconceptology, linguoculturology or for the teaching of language and culture as foreign ones. As scientists note, such research allow us to represent such meaningful concepts in the language picture of the world, as well as trace their transformation in the language consciousness of the nation (Zamaletdinov et al.: 2014, pp.333-335; Aleeva & Safullina: 2016, pp.2727-2734).

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