

Russian Psycholinguistics: Contribution to the Theory of Intercultural Communication

Natalia V. UFIMTSEVA

Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences

Abstract: The present article describes the contribution of Russian psycholinguistics to the theory of intercultural communication. Language is understood as an activity structure that occupies a central place in the human psyche as it provides access to culture (i.e. to an image of the world as the main component of culture). The main obstacle in any kind of communication, especially cross-cultural communication, is the fact that a thought cannot be directly transferred from one head to another. To communicate we use special signs, mainly linguistic ones, and therefore we rely on the knowledge that we acquired in our native culture. This is a key point for the Moscow school of psycholinguistics and for the field of research named ethnopsycholinguistics. The specific systemic character of the 'world image' (*obraz mira*) can be revealed through a large-scale associative experiment and associative dictionaries compiled based on results of the latter. The material of a direct associative dictionary makes it possible to observe the systemic character of the knowledge that is designated by the bodies of signs (i.e. words) of a given language, while a reverse dictionary allows for the observation of the systemic character of the world image of naïve (ordinary) culture members through analyzing the core of the verbal associative network.

Keywords: Moscow school of psycholinguistics, ethnopsycholinguistics, associative experiment, associative dictionary, verbal associative network

1. Introduction

Since its inception, Russian psycholinguistics has had its own unique character as it is based on the achievements of the Russian school of psychology - on the cultural-historical psychology of L. S. Vygotsky and activity theory of A. N. Leontiev. This is what has determined the range of problems considered by modern researchers in Russia, namely, the ontogenesis of language competence; speech production; speech perception; speech communication, etc. In all these areas, Russian psycholinguistics has its own achievements, the most significant of which being the development of a speech production model (or the model of language competence functioning) based on aphasiological evidence (T. V. Akhutina-Ryabova, A. A. Leontiev), the view of language as an activity structure (A. A. Leontiev), the theory of language consciousness (Ye. F. Tarasov, N. V. Ufimtseva) and lacuna theory (Ju. A. Sorokin, I. Ju. Markovina).

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1. Definition of Language

In Russian psycholinguistics, language is viewed as an activity structure which comprises “language meanings that are social units by their nature, universal organization of speech activity into different units and levels, and operators specific to each language (i.e., actual means of speech production and perception)” (Leontiev, 1999, p. 42). Language represented in such a way becomes a universal means of connection between man, culture and the ‘world image’ (*obraz mira*), the latter forming the main part of culture through language meanings.

Language, considered as an activity structure, is said to consist of two “languages”: the inner language and the outer one. The inner, or conceptual, language mediates the activity of the mind (i.e., while searching for and processing information) and has nothing to do with any particular language in the world. The outer, or formal, language is used for communication with other members of a particular culture. The joint functioning of these two “languages” makes up the phenomenon known as consciousness (Jinkin, 1982, p. 141).

In this context, language is also regarded as an instrument that serves consciousness: it allows for- inner thoughts to be transferred into outer words, since we think in our inner language, and externalize the results of thinking in outer, or formal language. We use this outer formal language in communication with other members of our culture. It is also formed during the process of ontogenesis in the form of specific mechanisms with a finite number of states: grammar and phonetics.

The fact that a child masters the semiotic function (i.e., the ‘sign’, the human capacity for symbolic activity) during the process of ontogenesis is a crucial point for this conception of language, since the possibility of mutual understanding through the use of outer formal language is based on the semiotic function and is determined by the knowledge shared by the members of the same culture. The body of the sign refers to the meanings shared by all members of the same culture. Members of any culture acquire these meanings during the process of socialization and must retrieve them from their memory in the process of communication, the extent of mutual understanding depending on the similarity of these meanings. Yet as meanings are always differently interpreted in individual consciousness (i.e. they are individualized), complete understanding is impossible even between representatives of the same culture.

Language viewed as an activity structure occupies a central place in the human psyche as it provides access to culture (i.e. to an *image of the world* as the main component of culture). It also allows for the inner sense structure of a thought to be transferred into the outer structure of a formal language and thus makes the former accessible for observation. Finally, it makes the mutual understanding between members of a particular culture possible.

2.2. Ethnopsycholinguistics

The main obstacle to any communication, especially cross-cultural communication, is the fact that a thought cannot be directly transferred from one head to another. To communicate, we use special signs, mainly linguistic ones, and therefore we rely on the knowledge that we have acquired in our native culture. This is a key point for the Moscow school of psycholinguistics and for the field of research named ethnopsycholinguistics. We can say that ethnopsycholinguistic research within Russian psycholinguistics began in 1970s as a study of the cultural specificity of speech communication.

A. A. Leontiev defined ethnopsycholinguistics as “a branch of psycholinguistics which studies national and cultural variation in: a) speech operations, speech acts and entire acts of speech activity; b) language consciousness, i.e., the cognitive use of language and other sign systems functionally equivalent to it; c) the external and internal organization of speech communication processes” (Leontiev, 1999, p. 192).

Later on, the Moscow school of psycholinguistics became interested in the content of consciousness of a member of a particular culture.

It has already become common knowledge among psycholinguists that to be able to communicate the partners have to share not only a code (i.e., language) but also the knowledge about the world (i.e., to have common consciousness). Thus, thanks to both the research of lexicon structure (done by A. A. Zalevskaya and her associates on the material of the Edinburgh Associative Thesaurus (EAT) and the research of language consciousness (conducted by the Moscow school of psycholinguistics on the material of the Russian Associative Dictionary [RAD], the Slavic Associative Dictionary, etc.), we now have the area of the psycholinguistic research which tries to investigate the content of a national consciousness. Based on the shared content of a national consciousness, members of a culture formulate and transfer their thoughts to each other.

In this sense, any cross-cultural dialogue has a somewhat “pathological” character (Tarasov, 1996), since typically the participants who belong to different cultures would only share a code (i.e., a language) but would each have a different knowledge of the world.

2.3. Systemic Character of Culture

Another finding that the Russian psycholinguistics can share with those involved in cross-cultural communication studies is to show the systemic character of consciousness of a member of any culture, although the idea of the systemic character of culture is not something completely new. The systemic structure of consciousness was already recognized by L. S. Vygotsky, who considered ‘sense’ analysis, which aims to discover the structure of meanings and senses, to be the only way to study it.

Before we go on to discuss the above mentioned thesis, I would like to give an example which shows that, when communicating, people will intuitively rely on the systemic character of culture and sometimes may be aware of it. My example relates to the end of the 19th century, when the possibility of marriage between Princess Alix of Hesse and Grand Duke Nicholas, heir to the throne of Russia, was being discussed. Queen Victoria, the princess’s grandmother, was strongly against that marriage, the main reason for her disagreement being her perception of a complete contradiction between Russian and English cultural values. This kind of intuitive perception can now be fully confirmed by the objective data of large-scale associative experiments being carried out by Russian psycholinguistics to identify the core of the language consciousness. Now, thanks to Russian and English associative thesauruses, we can clearly see the differences between Russian and English ‘world images’ (*obrazy mira*) and realize that these differences have a systemic character.

While communicating with members of a different culture we are confronted with a different system, which comprises both the system of culture as a whole and the system of knowledge lying behind every single cultural object. Naïve (ordinary) language speakers (members of

any culture) will estimate a foreign culture from their own cultural perspective; this is the only tool they have to interpret a foreign culture. According to Ye. F. Tarasov (Tarasov, 1998), the main obstacle to identical understanding of a communicative act by representatives of different cultures is the so-called ‘functional and systemic characteristics of cultural objects’, in contrast to their natural characteristics which do not depend on the peculiarities of this or that culture. Only cultural objects have functional characteristics. Their understanding by foreigners is possible, though it presents some difficulties. As for systemic characteristics of cultural objects, their understanding requires comprehension of culture as a system. “Systemic characteristics of cultural objects are not directly observable; they are supersensible and often symbolic. The symbolic character of the systemic qualities of cultural objects is not represented in the objects themselves. It is open only to a person possessing the knowledge of the system in which a particular cultural object acquires these qualities. Consequently, supersensible characteristics of objects of a particular culture are available only for representatives of this culture, who possess the knowledge of cultural and social systems, the latter comprising these cultural objects as an element” (Tarasov, 1988, p. 33).

We can assume that a great deal of cross-cultural misunderstanding can be traced to a lack of knowledge of systemic characteristics of cultural objects. Thus, the only way to solve the problem of cross-cultural misunderstanding is to study the systemic structure of culture and knowledge lying behind cultural objects.

2.4. Language Consciousness

Since the early 1990s of the 20th century, a new methodological framework for ethnopsycholinguistic research has been developed in the Moscow school of psycholinguistics. Its central problem is the study of the national-cultural specificity of language consciousness, the difference between national consciousnesses of communicants being recognized as the main cause of misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication. According to A. Leontiev, the term “language consciousness” used by the Moscow school of psycholinguistics can be compared with the term “world image” (*obraz mira*) common to Russian psychology, since the latter denotes the reflection of the object world in a person’s psyche, this reflection being mediated by object meanings and corresponding cognitive schemas, and being amenable to conscious reflection (Leontiev, 1988, pp. 195-196). At present, “language consciousness” is understood as a set of structures of consciousness formed by social knowledge related to language signs (Tarasov, 1988, pp. 176-177). “Images of language consciousness comprise mental knowledge developed by a person primarily in speech communication, and sensory knowledge which appears in the mind as a result of processing of perceptual data received from sense organs during object-oriented activity” (Tarasov, 2000, p. 3).

The search for new ways of investigation resulted in the formation of a cross-cultural ontology of national mentality analysis, when ‘images of consciousness’ of one national culture are analyzed through contrastive comparison with those of another culture. This raised the problem of the methodology of such contrastive investigations when language and culture are considered to be the forms of social consciousness, the latter functioning as the image of “us” (the image of a native ethnos) and the image of “the other”.

The investigations are based on the idea that phenomena of reality perceived by people in activity and communication are reflected in their consciousness in such a way that this reflection fixes causal and spatial connections of phenomena and emotions evoked by perception of these phenomena, the 'world image' (*obraz mira*) changing from one culture to another. It is clear that language consciousness cannot be the object of analysis during the processes in which it is realized. It can only be investigated as a product of past activity or, in other words, it can be the object of analysis in its converted forms alienated from the subject of consciousness (in the forms of culture objects and quasi-objects).

The exploration of the cultural peculiarities of language consciousness specifies language consciousness itself: it is regarded as a means of learning a foreign culture in its object, activity and mental forms as well as a means of understanding a native culture. The ontology (in philosophical meaning of the term) of language consciousness investigation is cross-cultural communication which is accompanied by inevitable communicative conflicts, or conflicts of incomplete understanding, caused by a lack of common knowledge (Tarasov, 1996, pp. 7-22; 1998, p.p. 30-34).

The specific character of communication when using a certain national language consists in: 1) the specific organization of speech according to the rules of the language, 2) the specific images of consciousness reflecting objects of a certain culture, 3) the specific systemic character of the 'world image'. Therefore, in order to achieve mutual understanding communicants should possess 1) common knowledge of the language they use (and common skills of verbal communication) as well as 2) common knowledge of the world in the form of images of consciousness (Tarasov, 1996, pp. 7-22).

In modern linguistics, there is a well-established tradition of exploring national character and attitudes with the help of key words identified through the analysis of cultural texts and dictionaries. The Russian psycholinguistics approaches this problem acting on the premise that the 'world image' of any culture has its own systemic character as "there is a system of object meanings, social stereotypes, and cognitive schemes in the base of the world view of each nation. Therefore, consciousness is always ethnically determined; it is impossible to recode the world view of one nation into that of another" (Tarasov, 1996, p. 20).

2.5. Associative Dictionary

The specific systemic character of the world image can be revealed through a mass associative experiment and associative dictionaries compiled on the basis of the latter. Associative dictionaries can be of two types - direct (from stimulus to reaction) and reverse (from reaction to stimulus). The material of a direct associative dictionary makes it possible to observe the systemic character of the knowledge that is designated by the bodies of signs (i.e. words) of a given language, while a reverse dictionary gives an opportunity to observe the systemic character of the world image of ordinary culture representatives through analyzing the core of an associative-verbal network. The existence of the **core** of lexicon of an average language speaker, according to A. A. Zalevskaya, rests upon the following psychological assumption: "The words which are of special importance for a respondent as a personality have the maximum number of associative connections. These words denote the most capacious concepts whose

associative connections have the highest probability of reproduction. The number of words with the maximum associative power makes up no more than 2% of the total lexicon¹ (Zalevskaya, 1981, p. 17). Approximately the same figure is valid for the elements of the English core of the language consciousness (as well as the Russian one) in their relation to the total number of units in the associative-verbal network. At present there are several associative databases: The Russian Associative Dictionary (<http://www.tesaurus.ru/dict/dict.php>), The Edinburgh Associative Thesaurus (<http://www.eat.rl.ac.uk/>), The French Associative Dictionary (<http://dictaverf.nsu.ru>).

Materials of mass associative experiments reflect real consciousness of naïve (ordinary) language speakers and can be used for both the analysis of its synchronic state and of the changes which occur in the consciousness during a certain period of time (diachronic aspect). In cross-cultural comparison, these materials can be used both to identify similarities or differences of cultures as a whole (i.e. the systemic character of the world image) and to identify similarities or differences in the knowledge that is designated by *pseudo-equivalent* words (the systemic character of knowledge as reflected in the structure of an associative field).

3. An Instance of Analysis of Associative Dictionaries Data

Using the data on the core of the language consciousness can complement traditional linguistic analysis and look at cultural differences in terms of the systemic character of the world image of a particular culture. This is the only possible way to understand the differences between cultures that are really essential for a representative of a particular culture. For example, let us consider such an object of culture as *friend*.

We will start with the analysis of the concepts FRIENDSHIP and FRIEND carried out by Anna Wierzbicka (Wierzbicka, 2001). She arrives at the conclusion that “friends” cannot be recognized as a universally important social or psychological category. Thus, in Anglo-American culture the meaning of the concepts FRIENDSHIP and FRIEND has changed a lot, being significantly devalued. As Anna Wierzbicka puts it, the meaning of the word *friend* has ‘weakened’ so that it is now necessary to use the expression *a close friend* to make the word *friend* to regain its former ‘power’. Something of the old value of the word *friend* has survived in the derived noun *friendship*: whereas in the old usage, *friends* were related to one another by *friendship*, in the current usage one can have many more *friends* than *friendships*, and only *close friends* can now be said to be linked by *friendship* (Wierzbicka, 2001, p. 69).

Anna Wierzbicka points out that the idea of “friendship” in the Anglo-American culture has given way to the new ideal of “meeting new people”, the latter now being called “friends” (Wierzbicka, 2001). On the other hand, Nadezhda Lebedeva believes that *family protection*, *health*, *true friendship*, *fidelity*, *intellect*, *sense of life*, and *inner harmony* constitute Russian basic cultural values passed on from one generation to another (Lebedeva, 2000, p.p. 73-87).

¹ This is the result of experimental studies performed by Russian psychologists.

The “maximum associative power” is measured statistically on materials of the reverse associative dictionary.

Now let us turn to the associative dictionaries. The concept FRIEND according to The Russian Associative Dictionary takes a very important place in the core of the Russian language consciousness (the word was the response to 565 different stimuli, its rank in the core being 9.5, i.e., 9.5th is the word number in the list of 530 words that have more than 100 entering links according to the data of the reverse dictionary). Thus, FRIEND stimulated the following associations: *vernyy* (faithful; 69 associative responses), *nadezhnyy* (reliable; 9), *nastoyashchiy* (true; 9), *staryy* (old; 4). Important characteristics of FRIEND are *blizkiy* (close; 16 associative responses), *zakadychnyy* (bosom; 8), *lyubimyy* (beloved; 4), *serdechnyy* (warm-hearted; 4). Such a FRIEND is naturally *luchshiy* (the best; 20), *miyy* (nice, sweet; 12), *edinstvennyy* (the only one; 9) and *iz detstva* (from childhood; 33). FRIEND is *tovarishch* (comrade; 27), *brat* (brother; 10) but very often *sobaka* (dog; 17). The opposition FRIEND – *vrag* (enemy; 47) though being quite stable in Russian consciousness at present is yet represented by rather a small group of reactions in the associative field. Moreover, according to the dictionary *Assotsiatsii Detey ot Shesti do Desiati Let* [Associations of Children from 6 to 10 Years Old] (Beresneva & al., 1995), the word FRIEND occupies a very important place in the world image of children brought up in the Russian culture already at the age of 10, which once again proves the importance of this notion for Russian culture (The analysis of the dictionary revealed that the word FRIEND is becoming a frequent association among 10 years old children. At earlier age this tendency is not observed). Thirty-three stimuli (out of 70) given to children in the associative experiment caused the reaction FRIEND, the total number of such reactions being 568. Similar data are represented in the *Ruskii Assotsiativnyy Slovar'* [Russian Associative Dictionary] (Gol'din & al., 2011).

If we take into consideration the data of the reverse dictionaries (*Russian Associative Dictionary*, volumes 2, 4, 6) we will see that the word *friend* most often was the response to the stimuli NASTOYASHCHIY (true; 215 associative responses), LUCHSHIY (the best; 156), VERNYY (faithful; 64), NADEZHNYI (reliable; 52).

The English world image is considerably different. The concept FRIEND holds the rank of 73 (73rd) in the **core** of English language consciousness and has completely different emotional coloring. In the direct associative dictionary by Kiss (Kiss et al., 1972), FRIEND is primarily associated with *enemy* (22) and *foe* (19), followed by *girl* (4) and *good* (4). According to the reverse dictionary *friend* was the response to the stimuli ACQUAINTANCE (68) + AQUAINTANCE (67)², COMPANION (67), COLLEGE (50), BUDDY (36), NEIGHBOR (36) + NEIGHBOUR (33), ALLY (35) (Ufimtseva, 1996).

The peculiarities of Russian and English language consciousness revealed through the analysis of the associative dictionaries data demonstrate the real systemic character of the world image of these two cultures as well as considerable differences in the knowledge which is designated by the pseudo-equivalent words. The body of a sign (i.e., the pronunciation or the written word; this can be correlated with Saussure's *signifiant*) points out the fragment of the real world image of a certain culture, the systemic character of meanings being the reflection of the systemic character of culture as a whole, i.e. the structure of the world image which is

² The authors of the Associative Thesaurus of English recorded all spelling variants of words-reactions that were received from the respondents.

formed in this culture.

Thus, the perception of a foreign culture is always determined by the knowledge gained during the socialization process within the native culture and by the systemic character of the world image of the native culture. Consequently, the systemic properties of cultural objects exist in two forms. First, as a systemic character of culture itself, the latter determining the role and place of a given cultural object in it. Second, as a systemic character of the knowledge (i.e. the structure of meaning) linked with a given cultural object and associated with the word denoting this object.

4. Discussion

The concept of “language consciousness” (see Tarasov, 1996) used for studying, or modelling, the linguistic picture of the world is synonymous to the psychological concept of “the image of the world”. This for the first time has allowed us to construct a real model of the linguistic picture of the world of a naïve language speaker (member of any culture). The model corresponds to the systemic holistic principle and allows us to study the content of language consciousness of various naïve language speakers and culture members.

By such a model I mean the associative verbal network constructed based on the results of large-scale associative experiments with participation of Russian-speaking respondents. The associative verbal network may be presented as a graph. The graph has 103,000 various points, i.e. various words belonging to the network. The number of respondents is 6600 people. They are Russian-speaking students of different specialties aged from 17 to 25, living in various regions of the Russian Federation. The experiment was conducted at the end of the 20th century.³ In 2008 we began to collect experimental data for another Russian associative dictionary. The number of respondents is 15,000. They are also Russian-speaking people of similar age and social background.

Why can the associative verbal network constructed in this way be regarded as a model of the linguistic picture of the world of a naïve (ordinary) language speaker or member of a culture?

Firstly, the model describes the experience of native speakers as creators and recipients of texts and reflects the structure of “rational human communication” (Losev, 2004). To our mind, in this way it also reflects the entire previous verbal and nonverbal experience of native speakers.

Secondly, the model has the holistic character related to the linguistic picture of the world of a native speaker because it is based on the significance/importance of one or other elements in their hierarchy. Analyzing this aspect of the model, we introduce the concept of “the core of language consciousness” where we single out the central segment of the core and indicate the rank of every element.

Thirdly, the associative verbal network can be constructed based on any language if sufficient data collected through associative experiments are available.

³ For more information about the Russian Associative Dictionary and its methodology, see <http://itclaim.ru/Projects/ASIS/>

Fourthly, the associative verbal network is not artificially constructed by a linguist. It is derived from the empirical material where it implicitly exists and thus it reflects the structure. The structure objectively belongs to the linguistic image of the world of a naïve (ordinary) language speaker and to the culture as a system of consciousness because the world is represented to each person through the system of meanings which determines the perception of the real world. Every culture has the elements of experience, which are not always unique and repeated in many cultures. It is the system of organizing the elements of experience that is unique.

The organizing point for such a model as a whole and for each of its individual element is the principle of importance (value) by Ferdinand de Saussure. Each element of the associative verbal network has both the meaning and importance (value) simultaneously. It is evidenced by the fact that it is included in the system and its importance (value) is determined on the basis of the system as a whole. For the first time it becomes possible for a linguist to observe the interaction and interdependence of meaning and importance (value) both within the entire associative verbal network and in a separate associative field and to see their changes that reflect the changes taking place in the society. Large arrays of associative data allow the linguist to “see” both the meaning, i.e. the whole totality of associative responses to the stimulus, and the importance (value) of the stimulus as its position in the verbal associative network according to the reverse dictionary. It is determined according to Saussure by “the social life” or by the system of values typical to the given culture.

Here are several examples of changes we have observed as a result of the longitudinal comparison between the two large-scale associative experiments.

The associative field of the stimulus **I** in the Russian Associative Dictionary (RAD, 2002; the data were collected in 1988-1998) includes the following associative responses (all of them are given except those with a frequency of only 1 associative response):

You 77; human 62; student 21; I 18; we 17; personality, he 16; myself 13; love, student-girl, it's me 11; and you, learn 8; I go, good 7; woman 6; girl, fool, live, who, not me, no one, write, myself, swine, tired, good, want 4; know, clever cookie, teacher 3; big, question, the universe, the genius, think, wait, engineer, and she is a cadet, Luda, May, can, well done, do not like, something, one, they, optimist, came, the most, Sveta, family, sit, look, this, went, a good man, selfish 2.

The associative field of the same stimulus **I** (Electronic Database for the European part of the Russian Federation, RAD 2; the data were collected in 2008-2011):

Human 59; personality 33; girl, you 13; student 10; student-girl, I 7; like, he, good 6; good 5; the best, we, the most 4; the best, well done, clever 3; God, letter, paratrooper, kind, friend, am, live, life, and that's all, individuality, king, beauty, cool, I, who, cadet, best of all, favourite, Mammy, have come, myself, juice, such, clever 2.

As we can see, the associative meaning of the word **I** has changed, and it is first of all the change in the significance of some of its elements, for example, human, personality and you and others. You has moved from the first position to the fourth one losing in the frequency (from 77 in the RAD to 13 in the RAD 2), but the response personality raised its rank moving up from the sixth to the second position and doubled its frequency (from 16 to 33).

Let us see whether these changes in the structure of the associative meaning of the stimulus

I are connected with its position in the core of language consciousness of the Russian-speaking people. Let us consider the part of the core we call “Personalities”. In Table 1 below, the figure before the word shows its rank in the core of the language consciousness, while the figure after the word shows the amount of various words it is connected to in the entire associative verbal network.

Table 1. Associative Field of ‘Personalities’ Lexical Items

<i>Russian (RAD)</i>			<i>Russian (RAD 2)</i>		
1	man	1404	1	human	510
9.5	friend	565	8	friend	244
9.5	fool	565	10	I	216
12.5	man	438	15	man	182
19	child	413	19.5	child	172
27	fellow	368	28	fellow	160
36	I	347	35.5	people	147
42	woman	321	42.5	fool	132
46.6	boy	308	56	enemy	120
49	girl	302	66	boy	114
50	guy	301	70	student	111
62	husband	272	70	folk	111
71.5	he	258	75.5	girl	108

The changes in the structure of the associative field of the stimulus I are not sporadic. They are the reflection of the changes in the structure of the core of language consciousness of Russian-speaking people over the past 10-12 years. The rank of I has changed from the 36th in the RAD to the 10th in the RAD 2; therefore, its significance has increased and this is likely to be due to the increase of the value of the personality in the linguistic picture of the world of the modern Russian. These changes do not depend on the language; they are just registered with the help of the language.

Let us see another example. The associative field of the stimulus DOCTOR is represented in the graph in Figure 1. As we can see, two large fragments can be singled out in the associative field. They correspond to the two specific meanings: 1) doctor of medicine, associating with words like белый халат (*belyi khalat* “white coat”), больница (*bol’nitsa* “hospital”) 2) a person engaged in science and scientific research, its specific branches and its specific attributes, associating with words like наука (*nauka* “science”, “study”). Taking into consideration the frequency of responses, we can determine the significance of a particular meaning within the associative field for a native speaker.

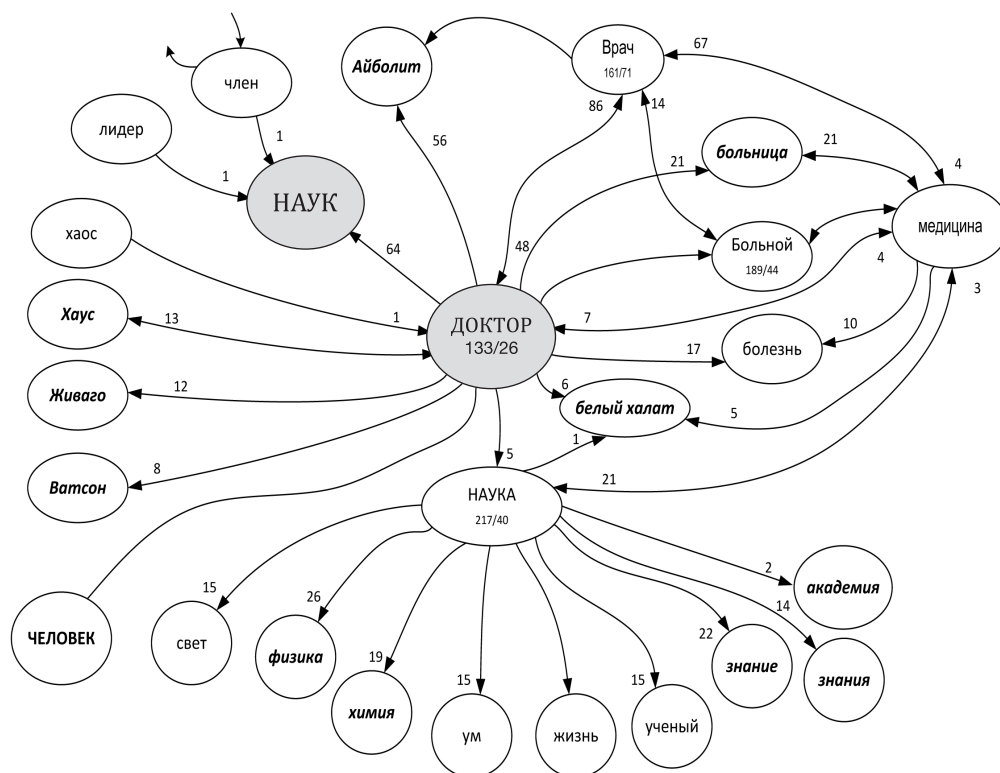


Figure 1. Associative Field of the Stimulus ДОКТОР (DOCTOR)

These examples demonstrate that it is the systemic holistic principle that is operational for the analysis of a linguistic picture of the world, because the actual significance and importance (value) can be detected only in relation to the system as a whole. It should be emphasized that Russian psycholinguistics has accumulated a sufficient body of experimental data to prove the applicability of this principle to the analysis of language ‘images’ of the world (*obrazy mira*) that are operational for naïve (ordinary) language speakers and their culture as a system of consciousness.

References

- Beresneva, Natalia I.; Dubovskaja, Lidia A. & Ovcinnikova, Irina G. (1995). *Associacii detei ot 6 do 10 let* [Associations of children from 6 to 10 years old]. Perm': PGU.
- Jinkin, Nikolai I. (1982). *Retch kak provodnik informacii* [Speech as a conductor of information]. Moscow: Nauka.

- Gol'din, Valrntin E.; Sdobnova, Alevtina P. & Martinov, Aleksei O. (2011). *Russkiy assotsiativnyy slovar v 2-h tomah* [Russian associative dictionary in 2 volumes]. Saratov.
- Karaulov, Jurii N.; Sorokin, Jurii A.; Tarasov, Yevgenii F.; Ufimtseva, Natalia V. & Cherkasova, Galina A. (2002). *Russkiy assotsiativnyy slovar* [Russian associative dictionary]. Vol. 1, 2. Moscow: AST-Astrel'.
- Lebedeva, Nadejda. (2000). Bazovije cennosti russkoi kul'turi na rubeje XXI veka [The basic values of Russian culture at the turn of the 21st century]. *Psihologitcheskii Jurnal* [Psychological Journal], 21(3), 73-87.
- Leontiev, Aleksei A. (1988). Jazikovoje soznaniye i obraz mira [Language consciousness and the image of the world]. *Tezisy IX Vsesoyuznogo simpoziuma po psikholingvistike i teorii kommunikatsii* [Proceedings of the 9th nationwide symposium on psychology and the theory of communication] (pp. 105-106). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania USSR.
- Leontiev, Aleksei A. (1993). Jazikovoje soznanie i obraz mira [Language consciousness and the image of the world]. *Yazyk i soznanie: Paradoksalnaya ratsionalnost* [Language and consciousness: Paradoxical rationality] (pp. 16-21). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania RAN.
- Leontiev, Aleksei A. (1999). *Osnovy psikholingvistiki* [Foundations of psycholinguistics]. Moscow: Smisl.
- Losev, Aleksei F. (2004). *Vvedeniye v obstchuyu teoriju jazikovih modelei* [Introduction to the general theory of language models]. Moscow.: URSS.
- Tarasov, Yevgenij F. (1988). Metodologitcheskije problemi jazikovogo soznaniya [Methodological problems of language consciousness]. *Tezisy IX Vsesoyuznogo simpoziuma po psikholingvistike i teorii kommunikatsii* [Proceedings of the 9th nationwide symposium on psychology and the theory of communication] (pp. 176-177). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania USSR.
- Tarasov, Yevgenij F. (1996). Jazikovoje soznaniye – perespektivi issledovaniya [Language consciousness – research perspectives]. *Etnokulturnaya spetsifika yazykovogo soznaniya* [The ethnocultural specificity of language consciousness] (pp. 7-22). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania RAN.
- Tarasov, Yevgenij F. (1998). K postroeniju teorii mejkul'turnogo obstcheniya [Towards the construction of a theory of intercultural communication]. *Jazikovoje soznanie: Formirovaniye i funkcionirovaniye* [Language consciousness: Formation and functioning] (pp.30-34). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania RAN.
- Tarasov, Yevgenij F. (2000). Jazikovoje soznanie – perspektivi issledovaniya [Language consciousness – research perspectives]. *Jazykovoe soznanie: Soderzhanie i funkcionirovaniye* [Language consciousness: Content and functioning] (pp. 3-4). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania RAN.
- Ufimtseva, Natalia V. (1996). Russkije: Opit estche odnogo samopoznaniya [The Russians: An attempt at one more self-knowledge]. *Etnokulturnaya spetsifika yazykovogo soznaniya* [The ethnocultural specificity of language consciousness] (pp. 139-162). Moscow: Institut Jazikoznania RAN.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. (2001). *Ponimaniye kul'tur čerez posredstvo klutchevikh slov* [Understanding cultures through key words]. Moscow: Jaziki Slav'anskih kul'tur.
- Zalevskaja, Aleksandra A. (1981). O kompleksnom podhode k issledovaniju zakonomernostei

funkcionirovanija jazikovogo mehanizma tcheloveka [On a holistic approach to the study of the regularities of functioning of the human language system]. *Psiholingvisticheskiye issledovanija v oblasti leksiki i fonetiki* [Psycholinguistic research in the domain of lexicology and phonetics] (pp. 28-44). Kalinin: KGU.

Author Note

Natalia V. Ufimtseva (Dr., Full professor of Linguistics) is Head of Ethnopsycholinguistics Department of The Institute of Linguistics of Russian Academy of Sciences; Honorary professor of Harbin Normal University (China), Vice-President of the International Society of Applied Psycholinguistics (ISAPL).

Professional interests: Psycholinguistics, Psychology of Speech, Child's Speech, Intercultural Communication, Verbal Consciousness.

Current Scientific Researches (Grants):

1. Leading Scientific School "Russian Language Personality" № HIII-5740.2014.6, 2014-2015, co-supervisor
2. Grant RGNF № 12-04-12059B "Informational Research Base of Modern Russian Language", 2012-2014, supervisor.
3. Chinese State Humane Grant No.12BYY143, 2013-2015, performer

Carried out at support of the grants HIII-5740.2014.6 ; 12BYY143(China); PГHΦ № 12-04-12059B