

THE CONCEPT OF THE FAMILY IN THE THINKING OF THE YOUNG GENERATION OF UKRAINIANS

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Abstract: The article aims to analyze the reflections on the word-stimulus FAMILY, provided by participants of a free-associative experiment, to establish the semantic and structural organization of the studied concept's associative field and identify values that determine the image of a family in the young generation. The language best reflects the nationally determined and individual features of the worldview of the individual and gives an idea of the semantic content of ethnocultural constants that exist in the collective consciousness. Analyzing the associations obtained through an associative experiment; it is possible to make "visible" to the researcher the processes of thinking, the functioning of consciousness and psyche of an individual or social group. The main method of studying the isolated language-thinking construct is an associative experiment. At the stage of processing empirical material, the method of mathematical calculations is applied. The selected conceptual features allowed reproducing the family's image in the language consciousness of the young generation of Ukrainians. The image of this fragment of social reality in young people's minds is multifaceted, covering a range of conceptual features that allow saying that the family for the young generation of Ukrainians is a "personal terminal value" that will determine their behavior in society and personal life. Associative reactions to the word-stimulus FAMILY received lead to the conclusion that in the minds of young Ukrainians ingrained awareness of the importance of the traditional family in creating a comfortable psycho-emotional environment for development and social vital activity of the individual.

Keywords: Association, Associative experiment, Concept, Conceptual feature, Linguistic consciousness.

1 Introduction

21st-century linguistics is clearly anthropocentric, aimed at studying the language activities of both groups of people and individuals. Among all sign systems, the language best reflects nationally determined. Individual features of a person's worldview express his spiritual values, beliefs, aesthetic preferences, gives an idea of the systemic and semantic content of ethnocultural constants that exist in the collective consciousness. Scholars use language as a channel of penetration into the mentality of national, age, gender, professional communities of people to obtain information that will contribute to the successful modeling of society, understanding the actions or inaction of its groups in economic and political conditions, planning of educational and cultural-educational activities at state and regional levels [1, 2, 4].

The methodology of linguistic research in this area is based on psycholinguistic experiment, in particular, to study the consciousness of linguistic personality; scientists use associative experiment because by analyzing the associations obtained with it, it is possible to identify subjective factors in language, make "visible" to the researcher thought processes, the functioning of consciousness and psyche of the individual and society.

The phenomenon of associations as cognitive and emotional activity of the human psyche first attracted the attention of philosophers and researchers in the field of psychology by George Berkeley, David Hartley, Thomas Brown, Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Jacques Lacan, Alexander Ben, Hermann Ebbinghaus, Wilhelm Ivan, Wilhelm Ivan Pavlov.

2 Literature Review

In linguistics, interest in associations is related to the psychological approach to language learning. The influence of the psyche on the formation of the linguistic system, in particular in its national manifestations, has been in the center of attention of linguists since the end of the eighteenth century and to this day (G. Steintal, G. Paul, O. Potebnya, E. Sepir, I. Trier, I. Baudouin de Courtenay, L. Scherba, L. Vygotsky, C. Osgood,

J. Miller, O. Leontiev, Yu. Stepanov, A. Vezhbytska). Von Humboldt first noted in his writings the verbalization of associative connections that arise in communication participants' minds [5, 7, 14, 15, 17, 19]. The founder of structuralism, F. de Saussure, singled out the associative type of relationship between words and emphasized that "the associative groups formed in our consciousness are not limited to the convergence of members of the relationship that have something in common in each case and thus creates as many associative series as there are different relations" [22, p.158].

The study of the associative connections between words has opened up unlimited possibilities in the scientific understanding of the phenomenon of the picture of the world in the minds of both individuals and communities of people united by different characteristics [21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30]. The analysis of verbal explications of associative reflections obtained experimentally was described in the works of F. Galton, G. Kent, R. Woodworth, A. Rozanova, M. Rosenzweig, L. Postman, K. Noble, and A. Vezhbytska. An important contribution to the linguistic research of associations was made by M. Krushevsky, a Kazan Linguistic School representative, who distinguished between direct associations caused by semantic relations between words as linguistic signs and indirect ones caused by the properties of their denotations. In turn, this made it possible to understand how subjective reality and the objective image of the world relate to the human mind.

Associative thinking of Ukrainians is in the circle of interests of domestic linguists. The history of the formation and development of scientific knowledge about associations from Aristotle to the beginning of the 21 century was studied by Marchuk [12]. The researcher Surmach described and systematized the experience of modern East Slavic psycholinguistics in the study of verbal associations using an associative experiment [23]. T. Nedashkivska and O. Zagorodnya proposed a comprehensive analysis of stimuli in an associative experiment, an improved classification of reaction associations, and a system for measuring the connotative element of a stimulus [16]. The article by Khraban is devoted to the use of experimental methods in linguistic and psychological investigations. The author substantiated the use of the method of a free-associative experiment to study the semantic field of the word-name [6]. The comparative analysis of the language consciousness of the speakers of East Slavic languages based on the results of numerous psycholinguistic experiments is consistently implemented by D. Terekhova. In a number of works, the researcher reveals the reasons that cause associations specific to each linguistic culture, and also, on the basis of the results of a purposeful associative experiment, she determines the main features of national verbal portraits of Ukrainians, Belarusians, Russians [24].

The results of researches of verbal associations on the Ukrainian lingual ground are codified in N. Butenko's lexicographical works Dictionary of associative norms of the Ukrainian language (1979) and Dictionary of associative meanings of nouns in the Ukrainian language (1989), Associative Dictionary of Ukrainian Advertising Vocabulary (2001) by T. Kovalevskaya, G. Sologub, O. Stavchenko.

During the first decades of the 21st century, in terms of returning to ethnological origins and revival of ethnocultural traditions of the nation, domestic linguistics has been enriched by studies of values that create a unique linguistic and mental aura of the Ukrainian ethnos, form cultural guidelines through which a person belonging to this national community perceives his actions, behavior in society.

Researcher in the field of intercultural communication V. Manakin singled out family, family relations among the basic values of Americans, Germans, Ukrainians [11]. Yu. Makarets and O. Slipchuk found out the correlation of semantic-

culturological volumes of the concepts ANCESTRY, KINDRED, FAMILY in the Ukrainian language picture of the world [10]. The researcher Yakovleva, on the basis of folklore texts and works of Ukrainian writers of the 18th - first half of the 19th century, in particular I. Kotlyarevsky, G. Kvitka-Osnovyanenko, T. Shevchenko, analyzed the semantic space of the concept of FAMILY, which is realized in the etymology of the title name, changes in its semantic structure, derivational productivity, paradigmatic and syntagmatic connections with other lexical units [29]. The communicative-pragmatic content of paremias with the same "kinship" in the Ukrainian linguistic picture of the world was studied by J. Marfina in particular, she found sociocultural, anthropic, actional subcodes in the semantics of these phraseological units [13]. In terms of intercultural communication, A. Ryzhkina compared the concept of FAMILY in Chinese, English, and Ukrainian languages [20].

We focused on the study of the concept of FAMILY in the thinking of Ukrainian youth by analyzing the associations created in the process of subjective reflection of objective reality. This exploration is one of a number of attempts to gradually reproduce the holistic picture of the world formed in the young generation of Ukrainians' linguistic consciousness by collecting and studying verbally embodied associative reactions to stimulus words that name important realities or abstract concepts.

3 Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the study is the doctrine of Leontiev on the image of the world, as well as the concept of perception as a complex mental process, the result of which is the formation in the linguistic consciousness of the image of a certain fragment of the objective world [8]. According to the psycholinguistic tradition, language consciousness is understood as a system of images of objective reality fragments, explained by lexical, phraseological, and syntactic units. It is characteristic of human, in the process of thinking, to combine these linguistic units into associative fields on the basis of both their meanings and the properties of the denotations they denote, as a result of which linguistic-mental constructs are created objective knowledge of individual realities, but also subjective feelings and sensations associated with them, their evaluation, special ideas about their features, properties, functions.

The main method of studying these complex language and thought constructs is an associative experiment. At the stage of processing of empirical material, the method of mathematical calculations is applied.

The aim of the proposed article is to analyze the reflections on the word-stimulus FAMILY, provided in the form of lexical representations by participants of the free-associative experiment, to establish the content and structural organization of the associative field of the studied concept and identify values based on language consciousness of the young generation of Ukrainians.

The respondents were 1st-year students of the Faculty of Philology and Journalism named after Mikhail Stelmakh and 3rd-year students of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology, Training of Higher Qualifications of Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University named after Mikhail Kotsyubynsky, as well as students of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of the Municipal Institution of Higher Education "Vinnytsia Regional Humanitarian and Pedagogical College" with a total number of 170 people. Each participant in the associative experiment was asked to write the first three arbitrary reflections on the word-stimulus "family".

4 Results

Empirical material contains 536 reflections, they represent 108 associations. Based on the criterion of frequency of associations, a structural model of the associative field of the FAMILY

concept was created, in which the nucleus, medial zone and periphery were identified.

The description of the title name of the studied concept in lexicographic sources gives an idea of its conceptual basis, represented by the semantic volume of the word "family". The etymology of the noun "family" indicates that its root goes back to the Indo-European language platform, because with a similar sound composition and the same meaning it is known to the ancient Old Slavic, Old Russian, Prussian, Lithuanian, Indian languages [14, p.254]. The dictionaries of the modern Ukrainian language codify the lexical and semantic variants of this polysemous word, united by a common family "group": 1) a group of people consisting of a man, woman, children and other close relatives living together; family; 2) a group of people, peoples, nations united by friendship, common activities, common interests; family; 3) a group of animals, birds, consisting of a male, one or more females and young, 4) a separate group of bees, consisting of worker bees, uterus and drones; swarm; 5) linguistic group of related languages, united by a common origin [3, p. 1129; 31, p. 543].

Analysis of the material obtained experimentally showed that the content of the concept of FAMILY in the linguistic consciousness of young Ukrainians is much broader than the lexicographically described semantic scope of its title; this language-thought construct contains the features that characterize the vision of young people in the family, the emotions associated with this fragment of social reality and its evaluation. Empirical material contains 536 reflections, and they represent 108 associations.

To create a structural model of the associative field of the FAMILY concept, we use the criterion of the frequency of repetition of one association in the answers of the respondents.

The core of the studied language and thought construct includes those reflections that occur in the answers from 10% to 30% of respondents: *love* (53), *mom and dad* (38), *support* (29/2), *joy* (30), *warmth* (28), *coziness* (24), *home* (23), *sibling* (12/10), *happiness* (19), *care/concern* (17).

The medial zone is formed by associations that provided from 4% to 9% of respondents: *help* (16), *grandparents* (9/7), *respect/mutual respect* (11/3), *mutual understanding* (13), *relatives/the most close* 7/3) *friendship* (9), *children* (7), *well-being* (7), *understanding* (7), *communication/conversation* (7), *harmony/order* (6/1).

On the near periphery, there are associations with a frequency of 1% to 3%, expressed by participants in the experiment: *travel* (6), *unity* (6), *communication* (6), *dinner* (5), *rest* (5), *peace* (5), *fidelity/devotion* (4/1), *childhood* (4), *sincerity* (4), *upbringing / education/human formation* (5), *sadness* (4), *meaning of life* (4), *loved ones* (4), *kindness/tenderness* (3), *cat* (3), *dog* (3), *responsibilities* (3), *hugs* (3), *safety* (3), *give birth* (2/1), *quarrels* (2), *cooperation / affairs together* (1/1) *dumplings* (2), *tips* (2), *Motherland* (2), *work/labor* (2), *beauty* (2).

Far periphery is consisted of individual associations: *reliability, beginning and end, rules, interaction, honesty, kisses, good, most important, separation, pride, soul, light, beautiful, husband, responsibility, marriage, Christmas, evening, honesty, justice, many children, harmony, idyll, stroller, kitchen, house, lunch, devotion, traditions, house, reconciliation.*

We believe that the peripheral zones need closer attention of the researcher, because the core and medial contain stereotypes of thinking enshrined in the national-linguistic discourse, and individual associations can discover new meanings that are just emerging and may later affect the collective consciousness.

Having analyzed the associations that arose in the participants of the experiment in the perception of the word-stimulus "family", we highlight the conceptual features that form in the minds of

young Ukrainians language-thinking construct and fill it with specific content:

- Family composition: *mom and dad* (22%), *sibling* (13%), *grandparents* (9%), *children* (4%), *cat* (2%), *dog* (2%), *many children, husband*;
- Family relationships (*care/concern*) (11%), *help / mutual assistance* (9%), *mutual respect, respect* (8%), *mutual understanding* (8%), *friendship* (5%), *unity* (3%), *fidelity* (2%), *honesty, harmony, order, sincerity* (2%), *justice, cooperation / affairs together* (1%) *interaction, reconciliation, responsibility*);
- Experience (*support* (18%), *warmth* (16%), *coziness* (14%), *communication* (3%), *kindness/tenderness* (2%), *security* (2%), *light, reliability, well-being, harmony, idyll*);
- Feelings (*love* (31%), *fidelity/devotion* (3%), *pride*);
- Psycho-emotional states related to the family (*joy* (17%), *happiness* (11%), *peace* (3%), *sadness*);
- Actions and processes (*communication/conversation* (4%), *rest* (3%), *travel* (3%), *education / upbringing / human formation* (3%), *hugs* (2%), *kisses* (1%), *advice, quarrels*);
- Events (*dinner* (3%), *birth* (2%), *wedding, Christmas, lunch*);
- Organization of family life (*work/labor* (1%), *responsibilities, rules, traditions*);
- Localization in space (*home* (13%), *homeland, house, kitchen*);
- Evaluation (*relatives / the most close*) (2%), *meaning of life* (2%), *close, beautiful, beauty, main, beginning and end, good, light, soul*);
- Localization in time (*childhood* (2%), *evening*);
- Homemade dishes (*dumplings*);
- Items (*stroller*).

5 Discussion

The selected conceptual features allow reproducing the image of the family in the language consciousness of the young generation of Ukrainians, formed under the influence of personal life experience, social reality in Ukraine, ethnomental traditions, individual ideas and desires. Among the respondents, 22% associate a family with a *father and mother*, 13% associate a *sister or brother*, 9% associate it with a *grandparent*, and only one association is a *husband*. This indicates the changes taking place in the ethnomental of modern Ukrainian youth. Unlike previous generations, people in the above age group usually do not start their own family. Individuals also include the association of *many children*, which also reflects the social realities of today – having many children in Ukrainian families is a sporadic phenomenon. It is noteworthy that 2% of respondents consider a *cat* or a *dog* to be a family member. This is a sign of a new trend in relation to pets.

Among the recorded conceptual features, the most frequent in terms of frequency of associations and the number of their verbal expressions is the feature “family relationships”. Obviously, this aspect of the family's existence is in the bright spot of young people's consciousness, it is important for them. The following associations dominate: *care/concern* (11%), *mutual assistance / assistance* (9%), *mutual understanding* (8%), *mutual respect, respect* (8%), *friendship* (5%), which define the young people's vision of a family as a unity of people on the basis of equality, parity, and mutual respect.

In 2 to 18 percent of participants in the experiment, the word-stimulus “family” evokes a feeling of *support* (18%), *warmth* (16%), *coziness* (14%), *security* (2%), which creates psychological comfort. It is hoped that young people will transfer this positive experience to their families.

In the range of feelings important for the existence of the family, 31% of respondents named *love*.

Among the psycho-emotional states related to the family, *joy* (17%) and *happiness* (11%) predominate in young people, but there is an individual reaction – *sadness*.

The image of the family in the minds of young people is not static, it is characterized by dynamics, which is manifested in a variety of activities of members, among which the key is *communication* (4%) and *education* (3%); important are *leisure* (3%), *travel* (3%), *hugs* (2%).

Respondents named *dinner* (3%) and *birth* (2%) as the main events associated with family. On the far periphery of the associative field of the concept of FAMILY in the minds of respondents aged 17-20 years the association of *marriage* (single) remained

The conceptual feature “localization in space” contains universal associations: *home* (13%), *house*. The association of the *house* (“*khata*”) is caused exclusively by the Ukrainian linguistic and cultural environment. For a long time, in the language-thinking of Ukrainians, the house connects several generations of one family, preserves the memory of them in family relics: photos, letters, books, embroidery, personal belongings. The household tradition of Ukrainian families to gather in the kitchen for lunch or dinner evoked the association of *kitchen*. We believe that the association *Motherland* (“*Batkvishchyna*”) needs special attention, although it is individual. The awareness of the young generation of Ukrainians of the direct connection of their family with their native land is extremely important for the formation of nationally oriented values, which they will be guided by in their personal and public life.

The natural association with the family is *childhood* (2%) as a period in everyone's life when they need family care the most and feel connected to their family members.

Evaluative associations for the word-stimulus “family” are quite predictable: *relatives, dearest* (6%), *close*. The following associations attract attention: *the meaning of life* (2%), *the main thing, the beginning and the end, goodness, light, soul, beautiful, beauty*. Although they are mostly individual, they show that seventeen- and twenty-year-olds begin to realize deep meanings: in the family, a person begins his life path and in the family completes it; throughout life, the family must retain its importance and be among the priorities, each of its members must ensure that the family remains a place of love, comfort, mutual assistance.

The image of the family as a fragment of social reality in the minds of young people is multifaceted, covers a range of conceptual features that suggest that the family for the young generation of Ukrainians is a “personal terminal value” [18], which will determine their behavior in society and personal life.

6 Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of associative reactions obtained experimentally made it possible to determine the structural and semantic organization of the FAMILY concept's associative field in the thinking of Ukrainians aged 17-20. We found that the core of the studied language and thought construct is created by associations of the family with *mom and dad*, as well as *brother or sister, love, support, joy, warmth, care, and concern*, which indicates an awareness of individuals of this age group themselves as members of their parents family, as young Ukrainians under the age of 20 do not start their own families.

The conceptual features of the family, objectified by associates in the medial zone, suggest that the vast majority of young men and women between the ages of 17 and 20 show a full understanding of the need for mutual respect and understanding, friendship, and communication as basic interpersonal relationships between family members. Associative reactions to the word-stimulus FAMILY, received from interviewees aged 17-20 years, lead to the conclusion that in the minds of young Ukrainians, awareness of the traditional family's importance in creating a comfortable psycho-emotional environment for development and social vital activity of the individual is ingrained.

The next stage should be a study conducted with the associative experiment's involvement with respondents aged 20-25 years and a comparison of the obtained associative reactions with previous results.

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