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Conceptualization of the Notion of FREEDOM in the Worldview of Foreign Students of Journalism

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Abstract. The study presents the results of a study of the fragments of the journalistic conceptual worldview. This phenomenon is gradually emerging in the minds of future journalists in course of their studies at Russian universities. The key position in the work is occupied by the concept of FREEDOM. This concept was analyzed for its structural and semantic content. The relevance of the study is due to the continuously ongoing transformations in the world and the media. Such changes inevitably affect the worldview of future specialists and their ideas about the basic value for this profession — *freedom*. The purpose of the work is to determine the linguistic content of the concept under consideration by highlighting and analyzing its elements of the nuclear, near–nuclear and peripheral zones. The study is based on an associative experiment using a cinquain technique. The associative questionnaire made it possible to select and analyze from the point of view of semantic content the most frequent representing the concept of FREEDOM in the journalistic worldview of foreign students. The experiment was attended by the 3rd-4th year foreign students-journalists studying in RUDN University. As a result, it was concluded that the concept in question appears in the minds of foreign students studying journalism at Russian universities, primarily as a basic value associated with life and happiness, and not as a professional term fixed in dictionaries.

Keywords: conceptual worldview, education of journalists, journalistic worldview, concept of FREEDOM, Russian as a foreign language

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Концептуализация понятия «свобода» в картине мира иностранных студентов-журналистов

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Аннотация. Представлены результаты исследования концептуальной картины мира, формирующейся в сознании иностранных студентов-журналистов во время обучения в российских вузах. Центральное место в системе занимает концепт СВОБОДА, рассмотренный с точки зрения его структурно-смыслового наполнения. Актуальность исследования обусловлена трансформациями в мире в целом и в журналистике в частности, что неизбежно отражается на мировосприятии будущих специалистов и их представлениях о базовой ценности — свободе. Цель данного исследования — определить языковое наполнение рассматриваемого концепта, проанализировав элементы его ядерной, приядерной и периферийной зоны. Исследование было проведено на базе ассоциативного эксперимента с применением синквейна, одной из технологий критического мышления. Разработанное авторами ассоциативное анкетирование позволило отобрать и проанализировать с точки зрения семантического наполнения наиболее частотные лексемы, репрезентующие концепт СВОБОДА в картине мира иностранных студентов-журналистов. В эксперименте приняли участие иностранные студенты-журналисты, обучающиеся на 3-4 курсе РУДН. В результате были сделаны выводы о том, что рассматриваемый концепт предстает в сознании инофонов, обучающихся журналистике в российских университетах, в первую очередь как базовая ценность, ассоциирующаяся с жизнью и счастьем. Результаты настоящей работы могут быть использованы для дальнейшего изучения журналистской картины мира как социо-культурной реальности, создаваемой СМИ.

Ключевые слова: концептуальная картина мира, образование журналистов, журналистская картина мира, концепт свобода, русский язык

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Introduction

Modern epoch is characterized with its own specifics determined both by the peculiarities of a society on the whole and the vector of developing various professional communities. In his study M.V. Shkondin emphasizes that the socalled "informational module of the world's mobility and mutation" presents the significant constituent of the worldview in the general intellectual cognitive space [1. P. 179]. The accelerating pace of life, the perception of informational streams and the globalization trend have determined substantial cognitive and mental transformations changing journalistic conscience, "the image of journalistic creative work itself and education" [2. P. 59].

Anyhow, journalism depending on the public conscience and at the same time imposing on it, is gradually changing, embracing modern themes and tools of influence Besides there are created new types of mass-media information, and those already existing are being improved. The concept of mass-media pluralism is actively developing and could be interpreted in two ways: both as the highlighting of a certain situation from various aspects, the providing diversified information for the benefit of social interests, and also "demonstrating cultural and geographical variety" [3. P. 2]. While self-forming applied means to elaborate social and culturally marked information, journalism creates its own conceptual sphere serving as the basis to specify its professional worldview. The term "worldview" is multifaceted being reflected in different fields of academic knowledge such as philosophy, linguistics, pedagogy, cultural studies, psychology, philology or literary texts studies, etc. As "a global image of the social realm" worldview makes up a complex system consisting of a number of subsystems, among those the significant position is occupied by linguistic and scientific-research worldviews" [4. P. 111]. The latter one includes professional worldviews which, according to V.D. Mansurova, are naturally integrated in the paradigm of "the categories of modern knowledge" [5. P. 5] and consist of concepts presenting themselves as "linguo-mental formations" [6. P. 243]. On the one hand, a concept is being treated as a unifying link in the public conscience of a nation which represents in itself not just a system of notions, but also "sensual-and-emotional evidence" [7. P. 12]. We share the point of view of L.G. Babenko according to which one can imagine "the structural organization of a concept as "a nucleus", "near-nucleus" and "peripheral" zones [8. P. 183], comprising both notional and "emotional evaluative elements" [9. P. 17]. It's a large multidimensional system which also involves sub-concepts representing "the whole of knowledge concerning the concept given, and its associations..." [10. P. 22].

From our point of view, journalism as a field of academic knowledge is characterized by the inevitable formation of the two different worldview types. Primarily, in the conscience of the audience, it is aimed at constructing a definite conceptual worldview which is defined by a number of scholars as a media-picture (media-view), on the one hand, it is understood as "a specific type of reality—"media-reality", while on the other hand, it's "a model of "media-reality" in the individual conscience of a person [11. P. 10]. M.V. Shkondin describes this phenomenon to be the worldview forming in the individual conscience of a person

of a definite socio-cultural group "by means of media-system" [12. P. 65]. "Media worldview" bases itself on the interaction of "language, mentality and reality in the sphere of media-communication" [11. P. 7]. On the other hand, while studying cognitive and linguistic peculiarities of the journalistic activity one has to take into consideration the worldview being instantly created in the conscience of already working or just would-be professionals. Following the opinion of V.D. Mansurova and just to avoid the terminological misunderstanding, let's define the latter as the journalistic worldview (In other words, a professional worldview of journalists) making itself to be "a multi-structural self-regulating system" [5. P. 7]). The point of view set in linguistics to treat the journalistic worldview points out its dynamism, constantly ongoing modernization determined by the emergence of new resources and the improvement of those exiting ones disposed at "meeting the informational demands of the participants of public practices" [13. P. 32].

According to M. Deuze and T. Witschge, the significant component to form the journalistic worldview, is the self-perception based not only on professional standards and ideology, but to a greater extent, on "the cultural constituent" [14. P. 166]. Still, in the course of studying the professional journalistic worldview the important role is attributed to the ethno-cultural issues. Developing in parallel with globalization norms and laws the modern society "most deeply inherits the elements of various world cultures" [15. P.134]. However, such transparency and the multilevel cross-cultural interchange doesn't provide for the unification of national worldviews and cultural convergence, as well. One and the same phenomenon transferring from some cultural environment into the other ones would manifest non-similar significance for the representatives of different "acquiring" groups and would differently build in the systems of their world perception. The basic demand of the mass-media auditorium concerns not the receiving of new information, but rather "the comparing of a personal experience with the experience of the other ones" and the possible detection of the opinion consensus [16. P. 837]. In the situations when the conceptual worldview of journalists is substantially discording the world view of the recipients' group there are quite possible communicative failures. To evade such situations, one should pay special attention to the formation of the worldview of the would-be journalists studying in the Russian Federation higher educational institutions.

At present a substantial proportion of students are represented by foreign students from various countries of the world. Their developing professional worldview could overlap the already existing worldview in the consciousness of students speaking another language. It could be explained by the fact that as a rule, such students possess some definite ideas about their future profession correlating with the national model of journalism of their countries. In this situation, it's important not only to form the professional worldview, but also to direct the would-be journalists

to perceiving another, foreign to them worldview, which possibly might be broader and rather ambiguous consisting of closely interrelating "conceptual, linguistic and scientific worldviews" [17. P. 24].

This process couldn't be discussed separately and without considering the learning of the Russian language as a foreign (here and on — RLF). Any language is a rich source of cultural and cross-cultural information. In course of acquiring language and culture special role is given to mastering complex Abstract categories which are conceptually significant for the representatives of journalism. FREEDOM is one of such concepts which also makes one of the value orientations and is represented heterogeneously in the cognitive space of foreign students.

The phenomenon under discussion is rather "unstable", dynamic, could "change with time" and occupy different positions within various conceptual worldviews [18. P. 238] depending on the conditions of extremely rapidly changing journalistic reality. Thus, in the context of journalistic creative work it "is 'overgrown' with such actively translated sub-concepts like "freedom of speech", "freedom of mass-media information", "freedom of information" [19. P. 337], "freedom of the press", "freedom of thought" [20. P. 109], "freedom of journalistic creative work" [21. P. 527] and so on.

Among the issues of studying the journalistic worldview, the concept of FREEDOM is of special academic interest because in public conscience it rather often reveals itself as a dichotomous phenomenon; on the one hand, among the Russian native-speakers one can observe somehow determined by liberal democratic influence the tend to overemphasize the concept of FREEDOM involving in it the subconcept of "freedom of speech", a dominant for the Russian conscience [22. P. 181]. On the other hand, it seems quite impossible to draw a well-defined conclusions that the Russian journalism has taken the Western ply as in Russia together with the influence of globalization in the post-Soviet period there gains momentum the "anti-liberal" discourse where the concept of "false or fake freedom" appears more and more often, and the freedom of speech is observed as a manipulative means and a rather doubtful value [23. P. 696]. These factors could make a cause of overlapping of the worldviews over one another and producing a "conflict" of already existing ideas in the conscience of would-be journalists who are being educated in Russian in the Russian Federation.

The purpose of this study is the analysis of the content of the concept FREEDOM within the worldview of the foreign students of journalism who are getting education in the Russian higher educational institutions.

Materials and research methods

In the frames of the present study there were used such research methods as questionnaire surveys, associative experiment, description, and comparison.

We have elaborated an associative questionnaire using a cinquain — of the technological means to develop critical thinking [24. P. 128]. A cinquain

is "a powerful tool of reflection" aimed to develop cognitive skills [25. P. 240] which are typical and necessary for journalistic studies. This means possesses a certain sequence of its elements and the requirements mentioned beforehand which vary depending on the set aims to carry out some definite experiments. The purpose of a cinquain is in creating a certain number of associations.

The questionnaire survey was carried out in December 2022 on the basis of the RUDN Philological faculty. Respondents were given the lexeme "freedom" as the main word, or the "word-stimulus" [25. P. 240]. The respondents were given 10 minutes, during which they had to write down associations.

51 foreign students-journalists took part in this experiment. The respondents were the 3rd — 4th –year RUDN students and they know Russian to a degree facilitating them to communicate in learning, professional and everyday spheres in the Russian-speaking environment.

Among the respondents there were students from such countries as China (25 students) < Vietnam (16 students), Chad (3 students), Guinee-Bissau (2 students), Nigeria (1 student), Syria (3 students), and India (2 students). Due to the fact that 80,4 % of the participants of the questionnaire survey represented their native Chinese and Vietnamese cultures, in course of this study we can rightfully focus the attention on the Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, which in course of the analysis allows orientate to "the lexical background with a national cultural specifics" [27. P. 56] so that to sum up and interpret the obtained results considering the social-and-mental peculiarities of the native speakers of the area.

Data processing was carried out by means of "the cloud of words" technology, which on the basis of the loading the special data program "allows present visually the list of key notions" [28. P. 209]. The volume of a lexeme in the cloud depends on the use frequency. Accordingly, the capital script marks just the key associations which are mentioned in the questionnaire surveys of the participants and also those possessing the maximum value within the frames of the research, because they reflect the content of the collective but not personal, individual worldview of the students of journalism. To interpret the collected linguistic units from the point of view of their semantic volume we used the descriptive method together with comparison allowing validate the equivalence of some phenomena existing in both the Russian and other languages' worldviews.

The content filling of the FREEDOM concept in the journalistic worldview

The associative experiment as a kind of questionnaire survey involving cinquain provided an opportunity to evaluate the modern filling of the FREEDOM concept in the journalistic worldview. The applied technology of "cloud of words" allowed determining the structure of the FREEDOM concept in the conscience

of participants speaking other but Russian languages. Besides, we managed to trace some discrepancy with the dominant perception existing in the journalistic environment which could influence the process to form the professional worldview of the foreign students of the Russian universities.

The results of the study are shown in the cloud of words (Fig.).



The results of the associative survey: the content of the concept of FREEDOM *Source*: authors' study.

The very core of the nucleus of the concept under the study contains the most vivid and frequent images associatively connected with the word-stimulus. The near-nucleus zone demonstrates the units characterized by the recurrence but having a smaller usage or lower frequency. It's worth highlighting that there are similar in meaning lexemes and the same root words belonging to different parts of speech. The periphery traditionally reflects less evident units among which one might see emotionally-marked lexemes. The linguistic filling of the FREEDOM concept revealed in the course of the carried out experiment — associative survey is described in the Table.

The content of the concept of "Freedom" in the worldview of foreign student of journalism

The concept zone	Lexemes, or Words
The concept's nucleus zone	свобода, свободный, жизнь, жить, счастье, счастливый, мечта
The concept's near-nucleus zone	демократический, освобождение, освобождать, независимость, выбирать, выбор, летать, быть, состояние, веселый, воля, ценный, ценность
The concept's peripheral zone	право, неограниченный, искать, бегать, получить, спокойный, комфортный, действовать, обсуждать, желанный, идеологический, ограниченный, общество, государство, защищать, ограничивать, играть, птица, полет, крылья, делать

Source: authors' study

Semantic interpretation of the FREEDOM concept in the foreign students' journalistic worldview

Discussing the journalistic self-identification which at most determines the formation of the professional worldview in the conscience of such experts one can't completely neglect the emotional constituent comprising the so-called personal attitude towards a profession. Apart from the proper terminological system which naturally in-builds in the professional cognitive concept sphere it contains subjective perception, associative images inevitably reflected in the journalistic creative work. The thesis mentioned above is confirmed by the results of the carried out associative survey. So, in the course of studying the results obtained with the help of the "cloud of words" technology the conclusions were made concerning the meaningful content of all reviewed concept's FREEDOM zones.

The nucleus zone. On the one hand, FREEDOM presented in the worldview of foreign students is understood as the life itself (Russian lexemes жизнь and жить) — an integral element of human existence, while, on the other hand, it's мечта 'dream' as some idealistic start which a person strives to reach. And in this opposition the second image is dominant. At that, one of the most widely-spread association marked in the questionnaires, are the Russian lexemes счастье and счастливый 'happiness', 'happy'. The steady, firm conceptual connection between the notions of свобода and счастье 'freedom', 'happiness' is also evident due to clearly expressed in the peripheral zone the sub-concept «Полет» 'flight' together with the lexemes of крылья 'wings', летать 'fly', птица 'bird', небо 'sky' which in different types of culture could be associated with the state of joy, spiritual accent, the feeling of open space and independence. For example, such phenomenon is observed in the Chinese [29. P. 3602], French [29. P. 3602], Egyptian, Persian and other linguo-cultures [31. P. 526].

The near-nucleus zone. On the one hand, *freedom* is understood as a certain *status*, *condition* (Russian lexemes *cocmoяние*, *быть*), and a man forms the active source and the willpower of an individual, to whom freedom means an opportunity to *make a choice* of his own free choice, the repeatedly used Russian lexemes *выбирать*, *выбор*, *воля* give the evidence of it.

In a few different questionnaires they mentioned that Russian words освобождение, освобождать, независимость meaning the process of gaining or granting freedom by somebody which allows conclude that the status of freedom isn't available for anyone of everyone. For many people it is a value (Russian lexemes ценность and ценный) it means already mentioned lexemes мечта 'dream', and also демократия 'democracy'. Together with a few times repeated lexeme демократический 'democratic' in a single meaningful tandem there are also sporadically used words and word collocations like: либеральная свобода 'liberal freedom', Америка 'America', Статуя Свободы 'the Statue of Liberty' which emphasize the developing Western influence on some Asian countries — China and Vietnam.

Besides, the respondents' associative field revealed the adjective веселый 'joyful' with the semantics characterizing joy, positive emotions connected with the feeling of *freedom*. This lexeme belonging to the near-nucleus zone is additional to some nucleus zone units like счастливый 'happy', счастье 'happiness', мечта 'dream'.

The near-nucleus zone also contains the mentioned above verb *πemamь* 'fly'. Different from the other elements of the sub-concept «Ποπετ» 'a flight' those are mainly represented by nouns which rather belong to the peripheral zone, and the given lexeme expresses movement which allows conclude the priority of the activity origin meaning.

The peripheral zone. This zone is formed by rarely used words, but nevertheless, they are thematically interconnected among themselves and make a meaningful block:

- птица, полет, крылья / bird, flight, wings;
- делать, действовать / таке, аст;
- право, государство, общество, идеологический / law, state, society, ideological.

There might be seen some meaningful oppositions as well, e.g., *неограниченный*, *ограниченный*, *ограничивать* (In Russian) which allow make conclusions of some possible differences in perceiving the notion under discussion.

Respondents also specified some specific lexemes, and among those were mainly verbs and adjectives characterizing *freedom* as something желанное 'desirable', комфортное 'comfortable', спокойное 'calm' which has to be искать 'seek', получить 'gain' и защищать 'protect', 'defend'. At that, among a few respondents, the associations refer to such lexemes like: бегать 'run', обсуждать 'discuss', играть 'play'.

It's worth mentioning that the notion of "freedom" is fixed in the dictionary of journalistic terms and interpreted as "an opportunity to act in any domain without any restrictions" [32. P. 227]. Some lexemes mentioned in the questionnaires of foreign students of journalism intersect with the definition given above but still belong to the concept's peripheral zone (делать / таке, неограниченный / unlimited) which could signalize of non-terminological students' perception of the notion itself and already coined other systems of dominant ideas in this sphere. We have discovered that the most frequent and significant elements of the concept are the lexemes connected with emotional situations, value orientation, and acute social issues that trouble would-be journalists. And their attention doesn't focus on the professional terminological system.

Besides, the dictionary by B.N. Lozovskiy contains such mentioned in the article notions as "freedom of mass information" [32. P. 227], "freedom of the press" [32. P. 229], "freedom of speech" [32. P. 232], "freedom of creative work" [32. P. 233] which in the questionnaires were either omitted or used in the obscure version (*csoбoda cлosa/freedom of speech*). It's worth highlighting that

in course of analyzing the foreign students' questionnaires there was detected untypically small for the modern Russian language media-sphere amount of using "freedom of speech" item. Remarkably, that the rare elements which could be included in this sub-concept are represented by "cooda obcyhedamb / freedom of discussion", i.e., not just directly translate any definite idea, but have a chance to discuss, to exchange opinions. The dictionary of journalistic terms, freedom of speech is determined as "an opportunity to express opinions, evaluations, judgements without restrictions or any obstacles [32. P. 232], that is, the stress is put not on the bilateral exchange, but on the linear direction of translation.

Thus, in the journalistic worldview the FREEDOM concept, on the one hand, presents itself as an active fundamental basis having great significance for the society and life on the whole, and on the other hand, it makes a figurative, emotionally marked construction. Such conceptualization quite exactly characterize the role, position and value orientation of a modern journalist who has to bring advantage to the society, to undertake action for its *freedom* and let it achieve happiness while at that being free himself and happy in his activity and self-esteem.

The concept under discussion occupies a specific place in the journalistic worldview. It's one of the basic values for representatives of this profession, while their main tasks are to collect, elaborate and translate the information for the auditorium obligatory considering cultural, social and other factors. It's necessary to emphasize the fact that any concept is dynamic and flexible which is why in time as a result of any unexpected disturbances and shocks there occur small or substantial shifts of nucleus, near-nucleus and peripheral zones. Besides, touching upon the disturbances of the kind the important role belongs to the specifics of the cohesive group itself. The 3rd-4th –year foreign students whose professional worldview can still undergo significant transformations and as a rule, be in the phase of development, the system of basic categories has been already formed. However, it's going to change even more and enlarge in the process of further studies which could be programmed under the consideration of the obtained data on the professional conceptual worldview content of the would-be experts.

Conclusions

The carried out study allowed us make conclusions that the conceptualization of the notion of FREEDOM in the worldview of foreign students of journalism is taking place regarding the basic vital values correlating with such core notions as life itself, happiness and dream. For a great many of respondents *freedom* is an active force which helps make a choice and action. At that, there's traced a motive of *non-freedom* which together with the former conclusion gives evidence that many people could have lived differently if they had really felt *freedom*. The notion under discussion for the representatives of professional journalism being

a term fixed in the proper dictionaries doesn't make a term yet for foreign students of journalism. One could suppose that such results characterize not in as much the professional sphere but the basic human values. However, we'd mention that for experts referring to the multifaceted and ambiguous notion it is one of the key items in their activity, and they can emphasize not the understandable and stable terminological meaning, but the complex and equivocal status of *freedom* including the feeling of its deficiency at all. Just for this reason it's crucial to continue investigating the professional mental space taking into account the already formed ideas of the would-be journalists in the course of their studies.

In the prospect, one could mark carrying out the research treating other basic concepts which form the professional worldview. As to the students of the senior courses, fragmentary studies of the professional worldview seem absolutely necessary in the sphere of journalistic education not only from theoretical, by also from practical, applied point of view. Such approach would allow obtain much more vast knowledge of the cognitive space specifics and world perception among those experts which in the future could lay the background for scientific research in the fields of linguistics, journalism and pedagogy.

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