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**CONCEPT 'CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY':
THE MECHANISM OF ITS VERBAL REPRESENTATION**

Ph. D. A.R. Davydova

Armavir State Pedagogical University, Russia
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6100-1005
bootlegger@inbox.ru

Ph. D. M.R. Sarkisyan

Pyatigorsk State University, Russia
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0504-3144
smarianne@yandex.ru

Ph. D. O.N. Egorova

Armavir State Pedagogical University, Russia
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3205-8285
olga-nik06@mail.ru

Ph. D. K.V. Davydova

Armavir State Pedagogical University, Russia
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3420-8857
kiradav69@mail.ru

Ph. D. E.A. Soboleva

Armavir State Pedagogical University, Russia
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6311-1539
el_al_soboleva@mail.ru

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Abstract

The paper reopens a discussion of what a concept as a dynamic phenomenon poses, bringing its structure and contents into the limelight. By defining the dynamic essence of the concept we shed some light on the mechanisms of the language manifestation of this mental unit. The paper gives an overview of the way the concept 'Christian Spirituality' is defined. Much emphasis is paid to the features of the verbal representation of the concept 'Christian Spirituality'.

Keywords

Cognition – Concept 'Christian Spirituality' – Intentionality – Cognitive structure

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Highlights

1. We define the concept 'Christian spirituality' as a mental formation, the content of which is the notion of the ideal future life, and the forms of its representation, which are relevant to English-speaking Christian countries y 2. In the analysis of the concept 'Christian spirituality' as the complex mental, dynamic formation, which has a considerable number of characteristics, it is conducive to focus on its multicomponent structure and expose the means of verbalization in the communicative act.

Introduction

The significance of the examination and the investigation of concept 'Christian Spirituality' which is of utmost importance to any Christian's mentality, is quite relevant to its topic for a number of objective reasons: first, this aspect of human existence is a meaningful element of the linguistic world-image of the English people, second, it is noteworthy to underscore the mass revival of spirituality (be it even pseudo spirituality) with what everything seems to be pervaded and conspicuous reversion to cardinal virtues. The goal of the paper is to shed the light on the cognitive modeling of concept 'Christian Spirituality' in terms of its intentionality and stage by stage approach, highlighting the dynamic nature of the concept and determining the mechanisms of its verbalization.

Method of research

The theoretical proposition of our research is based on the dominating role of the focal point of intentionality which has psychological nature. By the focal point of intentionality we mean "a dynamic mental mechanism which focuses on the definite fragments of the concept sphere and decodes the information which is due to verbalize"¹. The multicomponent structure of the concept is exposed by means of the given mechanism. Moreover, due to the focal point of intentionality it becomes possible to ascertain that the concept verbalization takes place stage by stage and its structural elements are interconnected with various logical relations. The given research is conducted within the framework of cognitive linguistics². It poses the experiment of the analysis of the concept as the hierarchic structured dynamic unit of the mental level³. It is devoted to the question of investigating the contents and the structure of concept 'Christian Spirituality'.

¹ O. A. Alimuradov, *Meaning. Concept. Intentionality: monograph* (Pyatigorsk: Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University, 2003), 312.

² N. N. Boldyrev, *Cognitive semantics* (Tambov: Publishing house TSU, 2000); V. Z. Demyankov, "Notion and concept in fiction and the scientific parlance", *Questions of Philology* num 1 (2001): 35-47; T. A. Dijk van, *Communicating racism. ethnic prejudice in thought and talk* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989); G. Genette, *Figures* (Moscow: Publishing house named after the Sabashnikovs, 1998); R. Jackendoff, *Semantic structures* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995); V. I. Karasik, *Language circle: person, concepts, discourse* (Moscow: The Institute of Linguistics Russian Academy of Sciences; Volgograd State Pedagogical Institute, 2004); E. S. Kubryakova, "About the aim of cognitive science and urgent problems of cognitive linguistics", *Questions of cognitive linguistics* num 1 (2004): 6-16; R. W. Langacker, "Discourse in cognitive grammar", *Cognitive Linguistics* Vol: 12 num 2 (2001): 143-188; M. Minsky, *A framework for representing knowledge. Frame conceptions and text understanding* (Boston: NY, 1980), 1-25; Z. D. Popova y I. A. Sternin, "The term 'concept' in linguistic researches. Questions of theory and methodology (Voronezh: VSU, 2000), 3-27 y I. A. Sternin, "Cognitive interpretation in cognitive researches", *Questions of cognitive linguistics* num 1 (2004): 65-70.

³ N. N. Boldyrev, *Cognitive semantics* (Tambov: Publishing house TSU, 2000); E. A. Karamnova, *The cognitive models of the concept STUDY in the modern English language* (Armavir, 2006); V. I.

Results

By means of the analysis of the contents and the structure of concept 'Christian spirituality' we define national and cultural peculiarities of the means of the concept explication in the modern English language. That's why undeniable scientific interest lies in the language verbalizers – literal and figurative (metaphorical and metonymical) nominations and periphrases – syntactic and semantic devices which replace the basic verbalizers. Thus, in this paper we highlight concept 'Christian Spirituality' with its hierarchical and systemic characteristics coming to the fore. We investigate whether or not the semantic components of the concept have similar language explication and what verbalizers are primarily used to convey the semantic components which are notable for their degree of abstraction, theological profoundness and intricate for comprehension.

Discussion

In our research we dwell on the linguistic cognitive modeling of concept 'Christian Spirituality' via defining paramount semantic characteristics, determining their hierarchy and ascertaining the mechanism of their communicative focalization. The structure of the concept is defined by its dynamic nature; it is formed gradually under the influence of the subjective factor. Along with it the impulses of the person are initialized which put the concept into motion. This circumstance allows the concept to be perceived as a dynamic phenomenon that swiftly changes in the communicative act. By defining the dynamic essence of the concept we shed some light on the mechanisms of the language manifestation of this mental unit. The given mental unit has a number of semantic fragments which contain its fundamental characteristics verbalized by the language. These fragments – microfields, fields, subfields – are overlapped, correlated, inducing, and activating each other. They constitute the structure of the concept and relate to each other with this correlation being mutually directed and having an integrative character. It is the sistemacy and the multidirectional relations within the structure of the concept which bring separate microfields, fields together. In the stream of speech in this or that semantic fragment only a part of the concept, be it a field or subfield, is verbalized which is stipulated by the particular intentions of the person.

Therefore, on the basis of the concept forming there is an intended perception of objects and processes which are outward towards the subject of the perception; the peculiarity of each concept is determined by the focal point of intentionality which has psychological nature. By the focal point of intentionality we mean "a dynamic mental mechanism which focuses on the definite fragments of the concept sphere and decodes the information which is due to verbalize"⁴. The focal point of intentionality does not impact the

Karasik, Language circle: person, concepts, discourse (Moscow: The Institute of Linguistics Russian Academy of Sciences; Volgograd State Pedagogical Institute, 2004); V. V. Kolesov, Language and Mentality (Saint Petersburg: Oriental studies of Saint Petersburg, 2004); ³ D. S. Likhachyov, "Concept sphere of the Russian language. Proceedings of the Academy of the USSR", Series Literature and Linguistics Vol: 52 num 1 (1993): 3-9; O. L. Paliy, Cognitive-semantic characteristics of concept "tragic" in W. Shakespeare's historical chronicles (Pyatigorsk, 2004); G. G. Slyshkin, From text to sign: linguistic and cultural concepts of precedent-related in mind and discourse (Moscow: Academia, 2000) y S. G. Vorkachyov, "Linguistic culturology, linguistic identity, concept", Philological sciences num 1 (2001): 64-72.

⁴ O. A. Alimuradov, Meaning. Concept. Intentionality: monograph (Pyatigorsk: Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University, 2003), 312.

whole concept but just the separate part of the concept, microfields, fields, which is liable to verbalize. A number of factors influence the direction of the focal point of intentionality; they reflect the microstrategy of the utterance developed under the influence of cultural knowledge and sociocultural situation. The example of verbalizing the separate fields of concept 'Christian Spirituality', the information of which is scanned by the focal point of intentionality is given below:

(1) Secondly *it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body*⁵.

At the initial stage of verbalizing the field *The Holy Sacrament of Marriage* under the influence of the focal point of intentionality there are the main features against the backdrop of which the sacrament of marriage is characterized. It is verbalized by the following lexical elements, collocations: "marry", "to avoid fornication", "a remedy against sin", "the gift of continency", "undefiled members of Christ's body".

The given field is explicitly verbalized due to the lexeme-language markers, in the structure of direct meaning of which there are conceptual semantic components. The definition of the lexeme "ordain"- "*to invest with the office of minister, priest, or rabbi*"⁶ confirms that this sacrament has spiritual and religious underlying reason. The lexemes "remedy", "sin" and the collocation "avoid fornication" indicate the fact that the marriage serves a background against eradicating sins and impart the important information to the given field: physical purity / chastity in the matrimonial life which can't but become an indispensable condition for the moral perfection of the person.

The spiritual character of the sacrament of marriage is orchestrated by the collocation "undefiled members of Christ's body", the essence of which infers in the fact that marriage poses the divine image: the unity of spouses is spiritual and the human body poses the temple of the Holy Trinity. That's why chastity is so essential in the matrimonial life in order to match the spiritual purity. The modifier "undefiled", the meaning of which follows as "*not to make foul, not to corrupt*"⁷, correlates with the lexeme "*fornication*" thus reminding us of the sin of fornication on the one hand, and chastity, impeccability, immaculacy in the connubial life as the fundamental source of the person's spirituality, on the other hand. The collocation "the gift of continency" is of great interest and it is associated in our perception with monks who is endowed with the gift of total abstinence from the carnal sins and desires.

Therefore, the focal point of intentionality within the framework of the field *The Holy Sacrament of Marriage* activates a row of new semantic components which are connected with the given field, in particular "Chastity", "Monkhood", and "Fornication". The fragment in question demonstrates the process of successive verbalization of concept 'Christian Spirituality', as the result of which primarily activated conceptual information is complicated and there are new fields in the sphere of verbalizing. As the example testifies not the entire concept 'Christian Spirituality' is activated but only its separate part, its field, which is represented by the semantics of the language elements.

⁵ I. McEwan, *Atonement* (London: Vintage Books, 2004), 323.

⁶ Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary (N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993), 422.

⁷ Webster's Elementary Dictionary. Ed. by G. and C. Merriam (New York, 1962), 173.

The given approach to the concept structuring is a new knowledge in the domain of defining and determining the mechanisms of the concept realization in the communication.

Discerning and examining the regularity and mechanisms of verbalizing the concept in terms of intentionality and stage by stage approach it is noteworthy to point out that the process of the concept verbalization takes place stage by stage and its structural elements are interconnected with various logical relations (inclusion, exclusion, opposition, and complementarity). The given character of the concept stipulates the basic mechanisms of its verbalization, intentionality and rigid staging of this process, to the example of which we are due to pay our attention:

(2) *The face of an old priest was at the grating, averted from him. He made the sign of the cross and prayed of the priest to bless him for he had sinned.*

- *How long is it since your last confession, my child?*

- *Eight months, father.*

- *And what do you remember since that time?*

He began to confess his sins:

Masses missed, prayers not said, lies.

- *Anything else, my child?*

- *Sins of anger, envy of others, gluttony, vanity, disobedience.*

- *Anything else, my child?*

There was no help. He murmured.

- *I ... committed sins of impurity, father.*

- *With yourself, my child?*

- *And ...with others.*

His sins trickled from his lips, one by one, trickled in shameful drops from his soul, festering and oozing like a sore, a squalid stream of vice. The last sins oozed forth, sluggish, filthy.

The priest was silent. Then he asked.

- You are very young, *my child*, and *let me implore of you* to give up that sin. *It is the cause of many crimes and misfortunes. It is dishonorable and unmanly.* You can not know where that wretched habit will lead you or where it will come against you *as long as you commit that sin, my poor child, you will never be worth one farthing to God.* You will promise God now that by His Holy grace you'll never offend him any more by that wicked sin. Blinded by his tears and by *the light of God's Mercifulness he bent his head and heard the grave words of absolution spoken and saw the priest's hand raised above him in token of forgiveness*⁸.

Against the background of the text material concept 'Christian Spirituality' becomes evident and actualized by means of the field *Confession*. As the text material underscores the concept representation and, consequently, its formation take place in several steps, in the process of which the concept is complicated and there appear new components in its structure, which expand the contents of concept 'Christian Spirituality'.

⁸ J. Joyce. A portrait of the artist as a young man (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), 344.

At the initial stage of verbalizing the concept the focal point of intentionality is directed to form the field *Confession*, the structure of which presupposes highlighting four clue markers which constitute the contents of the given field:

- 1) getting the priest's bless before the confession;
- 2) confession per se;
- 3) the parson's spiritual instruction;
- 4) absolution.

Initially the focus of verbalizing is directed to get the priest's bless before the confession. The priest's bless is of overriding importance especially during the confession. In the text material it is represented by the following constructions "prayed of the priest", "bless him", "he had sinned", "the face of an old priest", "at the grating". The fragment in question indicates, on the one hand, the image of the priest, the face of whom is hidden from the parishioner. The combination "at the grating" is the case in point to prove the abovementioned. However, on the other hand, the occurrence of the agent "he" and the object to whom the prayer is directed illustrate the presence of two witnesses: the sinner who must expose himself to God with the help of the confessor. In this light the combination "prayed of the priest to bless him" is obviously pertinent to what we mentioned before. The definition of the lexeme "pray" which goes as follows "when people *pray* they speak to God in order to give thanks or ask for His help"⁹ emphasizes the necessity of prayer before the start of the confession, whereas the interpretation of the lexeme "bless" – "when someone such as a priest blesses people or things, he *asks for God's favour and protection for them*"¹⁰ confirms the well-known fact that the person applies to God for help through the priest and gets divine grace and spiritual instructions by the priest's bless.

Further, in the sphere of the focal point of intentionality there appears the confession itself which is given in the form of the question-answering unity. Besides, the following constructions are incorporated into the contents of the field: "trickled from his lips", "shameful drops from his soul", "festering", "oozing like a sore", "a squalid stream of vice", "and the last sins oozed forth", "sluggish, and filthy". The given markers indicate that the confession is the means of expressing repentance which requires the contrition of heart. The definitions of the lexemes "trickle – "to run or fall in drops, to flow in a thin, slow stream"¹¹, "ooze" – "to flow out slowly and quietly"¹², "fester" – "to become *painful* and inflamed"¹³, "vice" – "*evil, a bad habit, a fault*"¹⁴, "filthy" – "if you describe as *filthy*, you mean that you think it is *morally very unpleasant and disgusting, sometimes in a sexual way*"¹⁵ illustrate the sinner's consciousness of his depravity, viciousness tormenting him overmuch. By making the confession the sinner has to go through the shame which is underlined by the following combination "shameful drops". Anadiplosis "*trickled* from his lips, *trickled in shameful drops* from his soul" enhances the sinner's tortures. The definition of the lexeme "filthy" is of utmost

⁹ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (The University of Birmingham: Collins Cobuild, 2001), 1120.

¹⁰ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners... 138.

¹¹ Webster's Elementary Dictionary, Ed. by G. and C. Merriam (New York, 1962), 668.

¹² Webster's Elementary Dictionary... 427.

¹³ Webster's Elementary Dictionary... 239.

¹⁴ Webster's Elementary Dictionary... (New York, 1962), 697.

¹⁵ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary...

interest along with the context where it is used, to be more exact, with the list of the committed sins. The enumerated sins from moral standpoint are pernicious, injurious and dreadful. This circumstance is vividly orchestrated in the definition of the lexeme "filthy" – "*morally very unpleasant and disgusting, sometimes in a sexual way*"¹⁶. Moreover, it also finds its reflection in the following collocation "*sins of impurity*". The definition of the lexeme "impurity" defined as "the state of being no longer pure, especially *sexually pure*"¹⁷ underscores that the person committed the carnal sin. The sinner's pitch of emotional state, his hesitation and reluctance to utter the carnal sins once committed by him are reinforced by the aposiopeses "I ... committed sins of impurity", "And ...with others" At this stage the focus of verbalizing is directed to activate a new conceptual field "*fornication*" which is corroborated by the abundance of the markers. Suffice it to say that the field "*fornication*" is actualized against the background of the formed conceptual field "*confession*".

The further stage in the process of decoding the field "*confession*" is the priest's spiritual instruction of the sinner which is represented by the following verbalizers "let me implore of you", "give up that sin", "dishonorable", "unmanly", "as long as you commit that sin, my poor child, you will never be worth one farthing to God", "promise God", "wicked sin", "my poor child". The grammar constructions "let me implore of you", "my poor child" illustrate the priest's benign attitude and disposition towards his penitent. The focal point of intentionality moves its trajectory and in the realm of the focal point of intentionality there appears a new conceptual field "attitude". The phrase "let me" is defined as follows "you use *let me* when you *are offering politely* to do something"¹⁸. The appearance of the lexeme "politely", the definition of which goes as follows "to behave in a way that is *socially correct and not rude to other people*"¹⁹ recreates in our mind the portrait of the priest, the aim of whom does not consist in the penitent's humiliation or his reproach. The relation between the priest and the penitent which is localized within the given conceptual field is vividly given due to the following combination "my poor child", where the lexeme "poor" is defined as "you use *poor* to express your *sympathy for someone*"²⁰. Therefore, the seme "sympathy", interpreted as "if you have *sympathy for someone* who is in a bad situation, you are *sorry for them*, and *show this in the way you behave towards them*"²¹ leads us to the conclusion that the priest treats the person who is spiritually stranded, in dire straits, with profound sympathy and great love.

To make the picture plain and conspicuous let's resort to the definition of the lexeme "implore" – "if you *implore* someone to do something you ask them to do it in a *forceful, emotional way*"²², and the definition of the lexeme "forceful" – "something that is forceful *has a very powerful effect* and causes you *to think or feel something very strongly*"²³. The combinations "a very powerful effect", "to think or feel something very strongly" highlighted in the definitions indicate that the priest's advice and instructions are of paramount importance to the penitent and he will be able to perceive and make out the reason for his sinful acts. It clearly follows that the priest's goal consists in releasing the sinner from his erroneous and illusive life, full of sins. It is verbalized by the following grammar clause "as long as you commit that sin, my poor child, you will never be worth one farthing to God".

¹⁶ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 536.

¹⁷ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 730.

¹⁸ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 823.

¹⁹ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 1105.

²⁰ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 1108.

²¹ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 1469.

²² Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 727.

²³ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 566.

Therefore, a sin is destructive in its nature, and a person who makes himself similar to the sin is contemptible to God, which is orchestrated in the combination “one farthing to God”. The definition of the lexeme “farthing” – “a small British coin which was worth *a quarter of an old penny*”²⁴ illustrates the person’s dishonorable state who has no aversion to commit sins perennially.

The normal current of the confession presupposes absolution from sins. Thus, the focal point of intentionality changes its previous trajectory and passes to the field “*attitude*”, and the focus of verbalizing is directed to activate the last stage of the confession: “the light of God’s Mercifulness”, “he bent his head”, “heard the grave words of absolution spoken”, “saw the priest’s hand raised”, “in token of forgiveness”. The following grammar clauses “*heard the grave words of absolution spoke*”, “*saw the priest’s hand raised*” are of great importance. To start with, we deal with the moment of absolution from sins which is verbalized by the lexeme “absolution”, defined as “pardon from sin, especially, such pardon pronounced by *a priest to a penitent person*”²⁵. According to the definition the absolution from sins are given by the priest, but the grammar clauses “heard ... spoken”, “saw ... raised” symbolizes the invisible presence of God who grants forgiveness. The metonymical transference is behind it which brings the moment of mystery to the limelight, when under the veil of the clergyman sins are absolved by God himself. This circumstance is implicitly inserted by the following collocation “the light of God’s Mercifulness”, underlying the nature of Almighty: “mercifulness”. The lexeme “mercifulness” is defined as “if you describe *God as Merciful*, you mean that He shows *kindness and forgiveness to you*”²⁶. The semes “kindness”, “forgiveness” highlighted in the definition mentioned above along with the collocation “in token of forgiveness” indicate the beneficence to the penitent and granting him absolution from the sins committed by him. The given accent on the nature of God induces new conceptual field «*mercifulness*» Therefore, in the realm of the focal point of intentionality there appears four fundamental markers of the conceptual field “*confession*”. The detailed analysis of the markers allows us to model the structure of the given field, determine its contents and within the framework of the designated field separate new, adjacent fields, connected with the given field: “*fornication*”, “*attitude*”, “*mercifulness*”.

Conclusion

The conducted analysis provides us with the opportunity to affirm the veracity of opinions about the systemic and structural character of the concept. The appearance of fields in the structure of the concept which are united by the systemic relations leads us to the conclusion about the multicomponent structure of the concept.

Thus, appeal to the linguistic identity, its structure, the dynamics of functioning of linguistic consciousness predetermine that the focus of investigative interest is inevitably riveted on the conceptual structures without consistent and scrupulous examination of which the analysis and modeling of the mental space of the linguistic identity is impossible. The examination of the peculiarities of conceptualization of the reality and its verbal representation, the dynamics of revealing the processes mentioned above and multicomponent structure of concept ‘Christian Spirituality’ are brought into the limelight through the analysis of the language means.

²⁴ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 519.

²⁵ Webster’s Elementary Dictionary... 3.

²⁶ Collins Cobuild English Dictionary... 898.

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