

## THE BASIC ETHNIC IDENTITY CONCEPT IN THE METAPHORICAL AND VALUE PERSPECTIVE

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*The paper demonstrates the language policy of ethnic integration within the multicultural communicative space of the Caucasian and Transcaucasian regions. The analysis of conceptual metaphors of statements about the importance of state languages and the ethnic identity of the peoples inhabiting these republics is carried out on a variety of Internet material.*

**Key words:** *interethnic communication, multilingualism, conceptual model, the Russian language, native language, cognitive metaphor, cognitive linguistics, communicative space.*

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Active development of a new scientific branch – political linguistics – is connected with the increased interest in research of socio-ethnolinguistic problems which reflect the development peculiarities of modern internal and external political processes at various levels of their manifestation. This explains the relevance of the addressing to a material of a political discourse of public opinion poll in a polylingual perspective.

Polylingualism has become a norm in modern society. Various aspects of this phenomenon have been studied in some theoretical directions and methodological approaches – linguistic, psychological, sociological, pedagogical. However, value-significant, figurative and cognitive analysis of objectification of the concept "ethnic (Ossetian) language" in linguistic and polyethnic consciousness of North and South Ossetians is carried out for the first time.

The functional distribution of Russian and native languages directly depends on the social and professional variety of addressees and the communication strategy. Despite the presence of coordinating bilingualism in both republics interference in the speech of Ossetian-Russian bilinguals is a norm of usage. This situation is primarily influenced by the role of Russian as a source of formation of special lexical groups, and also due to the differentiation of Ossetian and Russian in terms of communication areas: Russian is more focused on business and pedagogical communication areas, on realizing interethnic communication and establishing international relations. As for the Ossetian language, it is largely used in everyday and artistic communication [Lakoff, Johnson 1980; Tameryan, Zheltukhina, Slyshkin, Shevchenko, Katermina, Sausheva 2018; Tameryan, Zheltukhina, Anikejeva, Arkhipenko, Soboleva, Skuybedina 2020; Качмазова, Тамерьян 2017].

The article aims to conduct complex cognitive research of the features of fixation in the Ossetian-Russian language worldview of the people of the Republic of North and South Ossetia of the metaphorical image of ethnic language as a significant factor influencing the formation of the polyethnic aspect of communication.

The research was based on questionnaires about the importance of the Ossetian language, slogans of cultural and educational events on Ossetian Language Day, and materials of parliamentary speeches and meetings of the authorities of the Republics of North and South Ossetia. The study was guided by discursive and contextual approaches and the method of conceptual analysis.

The metaphorical representation of the Ossetian language in contemporary North and South Ossetian discourse, presented in a bilingual incarnation, testifies to the formed topical ideologemes of intercultural and interethnic interaction and the value priorities of nations who consider the language of any ethnic group a common asset and a factor in strengthening the spiritual community of people.

The contexts' analysis through the prism of J. Lakoff and M. Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor [Lakoff, Johnson 1980] serves as a tool to identify the axiological meaningful content of the concept of the Ossetian language as the language of the titular ethnic group not only among Ossetian-Russian bilinguals but also among speakers of Russian as a native language or language of interethnic communication.

The head of the Republic S. I. Menyalo expressed the profound need to maintain a common space of interethnic and intercultural communication on the Day of Slavonic Language and Culture which followed the Day of Ossetian Language and Literature. In the opinion of the leader such language policy demonstrates the commonality of the linguistic space of all the peoples living of our multi-ethnic Republic: Чтить и соблюдать осетинские традиции и культуру, любить и ценить наш родной язык. Нам всем необходимо жить в мире и согласии и трудиться на благо своего родного края, на благо народа. Если мы будем стремиться к этому, то и в дальнейшем будут крепнуть и процветать Осетия и наш родной язык (<http://alania.gov.ru/news/9617>. 15.05.2021, 12:47).

He also stressed the importance of preserving the Ossetian language and the need to translate the works of national authors into Russian (<http://alania.gov.ru/news/10178> 29.09.2021).

Former Head of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania V.Z. Bitarov has repeatedly stressed the need for intercultural interaction: Мы всегда вместе, и богатейшие сокровища каждой нации и народности, составляющих понятие многонациональная семья Северной Осетии – наше общее достояние.

The idea of community and diversity lies in cherishing the nation's wealth: нам одинаково дороги и русские сказки, и нартский эпос народов Кавказа, и греческие танцы, и грузинские песни, и украинские частушки и традиционно значимое для осетин уважение к истории Отечества, к его главным духовным истокам, ставшим общей судьбой для всех народов России

(<http://alaniatv.ru/privetstvie-vyacheslava-bitarova-v-den-slavyanskoj-pismennosti-i-kultury/> ).

In 2003 a decree on the celebration of the Ossetian Language and Literature Day was issued in Russian and Ossetian to increase public attention to the preservation and development of the Ossetian language as an important component of national culture and as a reflection of the Republic's language policy strategy (<http://nslib.fmweb.ru/karta/language.html>)

Since the collapse of the USSR Ossetians have been a divided ethnic group - North Ossetians living in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania within the Russian Federation, and South Ossetians on the other side of the Caucasus Range who seceded from Georgia and proclaimed an independent state in 1991. The Ossetian language is represented by the Iron and Digor dialects and a number of accents.

Relying on a blitz survey conducted in South Ossetia and analyzing the slogans for events on the Ossetian Language Day as well as the statements of the politicians, we revealed metaphorical and value dominants that represent ideas of the Ossetian language in the linguistic consciousness of the Ossetian bilinguals and indigenous residents of other nationalities of the Republic (<http://cominf.org/node/1166529916>).

The psychological metaphor of language representation first introduced by W. von Humboldt – язык народа есть его дух, и дух народа есть его язык [Гумбольдт 1985: 70-71] has become the most resonant for this study. The categorization of a basic ethnic value, the Ossetian language, reflected the persistence of a spiritual core, a source of identity, as one of the most important attributes of social nature and a powerful factor in the formation of the Ossetian ethnic group.

The explication of the native language image is structurally represented by the single metaphorical model "the Ossetian language is culture/tradition/history" and metaphorical clusters consisting of psychological, historical, cultural, value, religious types of cognitive metaphors or their combinations, serving as multidirectional projections from several conceptual domains:

Осетинский язык – душа осетинского этноса, его культура, его древний быт, его традиции;

Язык – это душа народа;

Известно, что язык – это элемент культуры и духовности нации;

Для меня родной язык – это святое, моя история и культура;

Родной язык у осетин – это самое драгоценное, что может быть, и надо его сохранить;

Язык – это самая ценная часть нашей культуры, а литература – ее богатство;

Язык – это наиболее значимая часть нашей культуры, а литература – это наше богатство.

The idea of the value and role of the mother tongue is verbalized through an additive metaphorical model, joining floristic, base and connective metaphors: язык - это цветок души человека, основа нашей силы, прочный мост между поколениями, audible: пусть родной язык будет слышен в каждом доме Осетии. The President of South Ossetia in his message to the citizens on the Ossetian Language and Literature Day noted that the holiday was one of the most significant (<https://sputnik-ossetia.ru/2021ю10.05.2021>).

Родной язык для каждого народа – бесценный дар, сохраняющий вековую мудрость прошлого и дающий силы жить и создавать ради благополучия будущих поколений (<http://sevosetia.ru/Article/In5.05.20206:00>).

In the discourse of the republics' leaders and ordinary citizens political metaphor is marked by ideology. For example, at the First Congress of the Ossetian Language Teachers in Vladikavkaz and during the celebration of the Ossetian Language and Literature Day in South Ossetia the leaders justified the significance of measures to develop the national language through value metaphors: «Самое

ценное, что оставили нам наши предки – это наш родной язык (<https://sputnik-ossetia.ru/2021ю10.05.2021>).

Язык по своему значению считается главной историко-культурной ценностью, живой памятью народа и продолжением его истории. Через века наши предки пронесли главное достояние своей нации – родной язык. Он не раз был на грани исчезновения, но родной язык все же удалось сохранить.

The clarifying metaphor of receptacle accumulates the types of metaphor discussed above representing the Ossetian language as the treasury of ethnicity; Осетинский язык является хранителем богатейшей духовной культуры (<http://cominf.org/node/1166529916>).

There are 110 nationalities in North Ossetia and over 16 ethnic groups in South Ossetia as follows: "everyone who participates in Ossetian culture is Ossetian" regardless of nationality.

The profound principles of multiculturalism and linguistic diversity which Ossetians have been practicing for centuries serve as a guide for political, economic, social, religious and other directions of interaction in all situations of inter-ethnic communication. Under these conditions all residents of multi-ethnic Ossetia, regardless of their nationality, are aware of the importance of each native language for the spiritual and moral unity of our people. This conclusion is based on the statements of people of different nationalities who consider North and South Ossetia their home, on the patriotic feelings of those «кому дорога история нашего народа, кто считает себя частью Осетии» ([http://sevosetia.ru/Article/In5.05.2020 6:00](http://sevosetia.ru/Article/In5.05.2020%206:00)) as well as those «кто родился и вырос на земле Осетии, кто считает ее своей Родиной, кому дорога многовековая история нашего народа; тем, кому дорога осетинская культура и осетинская речь, кто все свои силы, знания и опыт вкладывает в ее развитие» (<http://alaniatv.ru/privetstvie-vyacheslava-bitarova-v-den-slavyanskoj-pismennosti-i-kultury/>).

The Day of the Ossetian Language and Literature which are compulsory subjects in the school curriculum is celebrated by the representatives of all nationalities living in these regions. Let us demonstrate examples of a cluster metaphorical model conceptualizing the domain of the Ossetian language. The legal and evolutionary metaphorical models are realized through the actualization of the resources of the two conceptual domains: Осетинский язык для нашего народа - это не только уникальный источник национальных обычаев и самобытных традиций, передаваемых от поколения к поколению, но и главный залог его идентичности и развития ([http://sevosetia.ru/Article/In5.05.2020 6:00](http://sevosetia.ru/Article/In5.05.2020%206:00)).

Vladikavkaz and Alan Bishop Leonid who is taking serious steps to introduce the Ossetian language into everyday liturgical practice associates himself with the Ossetian people through cultural, historical and value metaphors and manifests the duty of his service in preserving and developing the ethnic unity of the Ossetians: наши предки смогли пронести сквозь столетия и сохранить для потомков свое сокровище – древний аланский язык; Язык – это живая память народа и продолжение его истории (<https://blagos.ru/content/pozdravlenie-episkopa-vladikavkazskogo-i-alanskogo-leonida-s-dnem-osetinskogo-yazyka-i>).

The metaphor of condition expressed in Ossetian and Russian reflects the hypothetical consequences to which failure to carefully preserve and maintain an ethnic language can lead: Нет языка – нет народа; Если не будет языка, то не будет и народа

Based on the maternalistic comparative metaphorical construction the Ossetian language is compared with own mother: Язык должен быть нам столь же сладок, как родная мать.

The cognitive domain of motherhood is also linked to one respondent who used the phrase впитывать с молоком матери («усваивать с ранних лет»): Язык впитывается с молоком матери (<http://cominf.org/node/1166529916>).

An analysis of the slogans of events and book exhibitions dedicated to the Ossetian language and Literature Day revealed several other perspectives of metaphorical conceptualisation of the Ossetian language - a metaphorical chain expressed by chemical and luminescent models: Осетинский язык! Мой огонь, мой костер! Сверкай!. As a complex cognitive entity, this statement begins with a personified reference to the Ossetian language with a capital letter. The comparative astronomical model exhibits the functional attributes of luminosity: «Осетинский язык через века горит (сияет), как звезда». Таким образом, в осетинской картине мира осетинский язык ассоциируется с источником света, тепла, блеска (<http://mk.alania.gov.ru/news/392>).

To summarize the study we note that thanks to the policy of multiculturalism and the strategy of forming common humanitarian values not only representatives of the Ossetian ethnos but also other nationalities have developed a sense of the "spirit of the Ossetian land" and a common regional identity, expressed through the Ossetian language.

In the bilingual worldview of Ossetian and Russian speakers of North and South Ossetia a metaphorical conceptual representation of the Ossetian language is realized on the basis of such types of conceptual metaphors as astronomic, basic, historical, connective, cultural, psychological, religious, materialistic, receptacle metaphor, luminosity metaphor, conventional, floral, value, legal and evolutionary.

The cognitive models of the Ossetian language image explication are structured into single, combined, cluster and comparative models. The semantic-syntactic combination of key elements in complex metaphorical models is formed through additivity, concretization or refinement.

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Фарниева Белла Урузмаговна, 2022**