

TRADITIONAL AND NON- TRADITIONAL VALUES IN RUSSIA, BULGARIA AND SLOVAKIA: ETHNOLINGUISTIC, COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

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Abstract: The article embodies some results of a joint international research project on linguistic and ethnocultural dynamics of traditional and non-traditional values in the three countries of the Slavic world. First, the terminology in Russian, Bulgarian and Slovakian languages is analyzed, with the outcome that the term ‘value(s)’ as denoting an abstract notion is a recent development in Slavic languages. Second, the notions of the traditional and non-traditional values are characterized in a comparative way and the possible border (lexical, pragmatical, etc.) between them is marked. Thirdly, the dynamics of changes in the axiological hierarchy is investigated and the reasons for the changes of evaluation are defined with the examples by the development of several values (‘old age’, ‘friend’, etc.). Finally, axiological historical methodology is illustrated by the review of Russian-Bulgarian sources that give an opportunity to reflect on values. The study demonstrates its actuality as COVID-19 has spread all over the world, drastically changing the routines and preferences of people, correspondingly the hierarchy of values and its vocabulary. Language is at the center of this axiological study, being the main source of and engine for evaluation.

Keywords: axiology, dynamics of the values, ethnolinguistics, folklore, paraliturgical texts, Balkan region, Bulgarian, Russian, Slovak

Introduction

Axiology founded as a philosophic discipline during the last several decades has drastically broadened its borders and is now embracing many other humanitarian and social disciplines.¹ A group of 15 scholars from three Slavic countries unified their efforts in search for common axiological aspects in various academic fields from the point of view of linguists (ethnolinguists, textologists, historians of Slavic languages, specialists in semantics and dialects), folklorists, ethnographers and historians, working in our Russian-Bulgarian-Slovak joint research project “Linguistic and ethnocultural dynamics of traditional and non-traditional values in the Slavic world”.

In this article, we present some significant points of our research which consider the main axiological terminology and changes in its contemporary usage, specific characteristics of a value expressed in the texts (in its broad sense) as such, some means of investigating of axiology of various texts and the reasons for the modification of the hierarchy of the values. In 2020, in the times of this pandemic, these topics obtain greater actuality and value.

There are several academic fields exploited in this project. Ethnolinguistics as presented by Moscow (or Slavic) school² with its well developed set of methods and approaches towards the multifaceted data (language, folklore, ethnographic issues) is the leading discipline in this study and correspondingly the article. Evaluation of phenomena, subjects, actions, actors and properties, be it explicit or implicit, is a distinctive feature of the language worldview (Tolstaia 2015: 15–16). A number of ethnolinguistic publications on folk axiology have proved the efficacy of such cohesion of these two disciplines (Sedakova 2011; Bartmiński 2011, 2014; Kitanova 2015; Vinogradova 2016; Micheva 2016; Micheva-Pecheva 2013).

For our research the comparative investigation of values in European countries according to certain ethnolinguistic and sociolinguistic scholarly procedure which is carried out within the framework of EUROJOS, an international project under the supervision of E. Bartmiński (Lublin, Poland), the founder of The Lublin Ethnolinguistic School, is very significant.³ These studies have resulted in a series of publications including six volumes of “Axiological dictionary of the Slavs and their neighbors” (LAS 2015–2019) and we partly use this methodology, as well as the achievements of Polish linguistic axiology (Puzynina 1992; Adamowski & Wójcicka (eds.) 2015). The role of these investigations and publications is depicted in detail by Liudmila Fedorova (2018).

Another important scholarly methodology of this article is the combination of comparative and semiotic approaches. Comparison, exactly like evaluation, may be evident and covert, in many cases it serves as the foundation for assessment. This approach is valid for historical linguistic axiological investigations, for Slavic theological and other medieval manuscripts (Žeňuch 2019; Mircheva 2019), for folklore idioms (Kitanova 2015; Kirilova 2015) and other written and oral texts. In Old Slavic theological manuscripts, as scholars show, highly valued virtues can be described without any comparison and be presented like their opposites in condemnation of sin, while other manuscripts demonstrate “the good, the sacred Christian” openly opposing it to “the bad, pagan” (Mircheva 2019). As well, the value system of the Christian community represents a set of names associated with God, God’s government and glory. It is a specific linguistic means referring to the doxological dimension of thinking about God (Žeňuch & Šašerina 2019). The monastic life based on a strict set of values, such as vow of chastity of soul and body, modesty, obedience, fasting, praying, etc. (Wilšínská 2019).

Historical insights based on memoirs, diaries and other sources of meetings between two cultures and nations and their comparisons generate relevant ideas on the evaluation and help to compare the hierarchy of values (Gusev 2019a, 2019b).

The semiotic binary oppositions are a significant tool for any kind of axiological comparative (and not only) research (Frolova 2015). To discover the hidden values the researcher can start with an examination of an anti-value (the second part of the opposition), and this is exactly one of the strategies we apply to investigating folk medical, apocryphal texts as well as modern ethno-linguistic dictionaries. Linguistic methods are of high significance in this study, as they are in all spheres concerning the study of Slavic languages (lexicology and semantics, dialectal differences, borrowings, words combination, etc.). Taboos and euphemisms as the general principles for the denotation of ‘dangerous’ phenomena are also taken into account (Valentsova 2019; Žeňuchová 2019; Kitanova 2019).

For this study, the very opposition of ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional values’ needs to be clarified. We argue that there is no distinct border between these two categories, they often overlap, and their hierarchies depend a lot on current ideology, religion, economy, politics, fashion, etc. Drastic shifts and the dynamic development of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ values is caused by the changes in society as part of the whole and also individually, personally. This leads us to the key question – what is a value and how does it obtain its terminology which develops alongside the transformations of societies and languages.

Terminology

First and foremost the key terms *value/values* in the Russian, Bulgarian and Slovak languages have to be examined⁴. According to our hypothesis, the terms undergo considerable transformations in the course of historical change of a language and its society. The history of the lexical coverage of these notions in Slavic languages (Russian, Bulgarian *ценности*, Slovak *hodnoty* and *cennost*, Polish *wartości*⁵) shows different ways of compiling the national vocabularies – the usage of various Old Slavic roots, borrowing, etc. and as such is an interesting object for a historical and comparative linguistic study.

In Russian and Bulgarian languages, where the cultural and economic vocabularies are very similar, but still differ (partly because of many balkanisms in

Bulgarian language), the lexical designation of values coincides and correlates with what is “expensive” in material as well as “dear” in spiritual aspects. We compare its lexicographical designations in principal modern Russian and Bulgarian dictionaries. Due to the lack of space, we will give just a few random examples. The dictionary entry in a single-volume Russian dictionary (Post-Soviet edition) provides such an entry, **Ценность** 1. see *Ценный*; 2. Price, cost; 3. Property peculiar to something, importance, significance; 4. *usually in plural form* Item or phenomenon of value. *Safekeeping of valuables. Cultural values. Spiritual values. Material values* (Shvedova 2007: 1078). According to the Bulgarian language dictionary in one volume, published during socialist times, “value” has an exclusively material meaning **Ценност** is 1. A valuable item (but not money), treasure; 2. Price, cost (Andreychin 1973: 1091).

Dictionaries published in the 19th century do not present semantics of “importance” at all. For instance, the Bulgarian dictionary compiled by Naiden Gerov in the 19th century does not contain the substantive value (*ценност*), but records the verbs *ценя* (“to cost”, “bargain”) and the adjective *ценен* “valuable” which is given exclusively in its material meaning (Gerov 1895–1904, 5: 532). V. I. Dal’ interprets the Russian abstract substantive “value” by means of an adjective and also through the words “cost” and “expensiveness”. The adjective *ценный* is determined as “worth of much”, “what is put into price” (Dal’ 1955: 578). There is no abstract meaning of something like important, dear, meaningful.

By contrast with Russian, the Bulgarian language apart from *ценност* uses one other synonymous term to denote material and spiritual value, which is *стойност*. The respective Russian substantive *стоимость* only has a financial, material meaning. The Bulgarian word *стойност*, as well as *ценност*, is borrowed from economic vocabulary, but in some usages both terms are synonymous to “value” understood as importance, relevance. Interestingly enough, this meaning of *стойност* is presented in the dictionaries of socialist times. Compare the Bulgarian definition and respective example: **стойност** 1. *Fig. meaning.* importance, significance, price with and example: *Нравствената стойност на една постъпка се определя не от мотивите ѝ, а от съзнанието за последиците ѝ.* (“The moral value of a deed is determined by the recognition of its consequences, not the intentions” Dim. Dimov) (Andreychin 1973: 969). *Ценност* though, dominates in Bulgarian contemporary scholarly axiological discourse.

The Slovak language provides interesting materials for the comparison of semantics and functioning of the terms under investigation. The words derived from common Slavic **cěna* (as “treasure”, “value”) have given place to words derived from the Common Slavic root **god*, see more (Šivic-Dular 1999). Words *hodnota* and *cennost'* are not present in the multilingual dictionary compiled by Anton Bernolak (1825), but the verbs *cenit'* and adjectives of roots *cen-* and *hod-* are present with the designation of the monetary value of things and people. In the present-day Slovak language *hodnota* and *cennost'* are used frequently, often they are synonyms, however there are some verbal nuances of their use, pragmatics and semantics. *Hodnota* is used more as a term in axiological studies, while *cennost'* can be found predominantly in historical and cultural heritage contexts.

Thus, words denoting “value” as notions in Russian, Bulgarian, and Slovak languages of the 19th – early 20th centuries were used by no means in the same sense as they function in present-day discourse. Now they function as a term which designates its own block of phenomena and characteristics (see below about their usage).

In the list of values we analyze within the ethnolinguistic and historical framework of our project, there are mainly abstract, ideal, natural notions (“life”, “love”, “family”, “bravery”, “honor”, “health”, “old age”, “water”, “education”, etc.). In the language of patriarchal culture these notions will not bear the collective names of “values”. Talking with elders in our expeditions in rural areas of the three countries discussed here we will hardly hear “love”, “family”, “respect”, “honesty” in answers to our question “What are your values?”⁶ Informants may understand our question only in a material sense and as values will mention “a ring inherited from my mother” or perhaps a house, land or some other items and objects⁷.

Therefore, when we study traditional values during field work we use other lexicon, different idioms and constructions, for instance, “What is important for you?”, “What is significant, dear for you?” or “What is the main principle of family life, of upbringing children?” or “For what do you respect another person?” etc. To “extract” and formulate the traditional values we have to study the whole context, not just thorough direct questions, and all the linguistic means that people express what is dear to them. The vocabulary is of special importance here: synonyms and word-constructions assist in determining the key values. The adjective “valuable” in its second meaning is interpreted

as a figurative adjective meaning “having great merits, important, necessary”. These are precisely the definitions that are the key ones by the implication in conversations regarding values with the carriers of traditional culture.

Therefore, for us, “values” is an artificial working term if it is applied to a traditional, folk culture. We use it as a work concept in our project. Moreover, the term is artificial when we study medieval religious literature, and the authors of our project demonstrate that (Mircheva 2019; Tsiibranska-Kostova 2019; Žeňuch 2019).

Values in Present-Day Discourse

Compared to traditional life and speech patterns, the present-day discourse gives the researchers quite a different status of the term “values” and respective derivatives. Here we are dealing with something which is no more than an artificial working construction. People not only verbalize values and mention them frequently, but posit their preferences drawing up hierarchy. That refers to individual, personal values that often correlate with needs (compare with Maslow’s pyramid) as well as to public, state, corporate (in business language), school, company values.⁸

Correspondingly, the term “values” is eroded, its semantic and pragmatic volumes are inexplicit and vague, or hyperinflated (Gusev 2019b: 246). Now it has become just a “convenient word” for the designation of one’s position whatever it may be. “Values” has passed into a proxy-word, it can be a symbol of *weltanschauung*, a perception of the world or a code of opinions on everyday behavior. The frequency of the words’ use is quite high. Today “values” in Russian, Bulgarian and the Slovak languages is the umbrella synonym for words of partly similar or close meaning. Depending on context, the word “values” may be used for the designation of “views” “ideas” or “mental set” (in political or historical discourses), “virtue, laws (in religious discourse)”, “rules of life, beliefs” (in personal, private discourse), “intentions”, “resolutions”, “principles”, “messages” (in business) and some others.

We will illustrate this with examples from Russian discourse, which are typical for Bulgarian and Slovak, too. “Values” appear in the texts of various genres, in oral speech, in jokes, anecdotes and neo-aphorisms. In general, the blurred characteristics of values is underlined in any kind of discussion. For instance, people say: “You once said that your values (*whatever you may think*)

were rather simple: you were with those who wished good to my people, to Russians” (quotation is taken from interview by Anton Krasovski, m.spletnik.ru, 02.08.2019).

Values are mentioned in texts on many topics, with definite authorship as well as anonymous. We will give several very random examples of the usage. Here is a rather abstract piece of advice given to girls about cultivating romantic relations: “Choose people with values of your own level” (kubliflife.blogspot.com).

Charity foundations write about values: “The principal asset of our country is not oil, not natural gas, not gold, not wood and timber, and not even its il-limitable expanses. The primary asset is the people” (Taki delo, 28.07.2019). Values is a must to be mentioned in psychological blogs that are so popular nowadays, and there are multiple examples. We will adduce one prime example of a “theory of needs and values”: the author’s theory of *sinton*-approach in practical psychology developed by N.I. Kozlov and his colleagues (<https://www.psychologos.ru/articles/view/sinton>); the authors discriminate between three spheres of values: “Venture, business”, “Self-development” and “Life and relationships”. This model provides a typical example of new values emphasizing such values as “self-fulfillment”, “comfort”, “career”, “entertainment and leisure”. They are highlighted with a reference to the basic values of “home”, “family”, and “health”. Traditional values are presented in combination with non-traditional ones. For instance, “health” is connected with “glamour, beauty”; “harmonic development” and “home” are linked to “comfort” and “money”. It is exhibitivite that in this theory – as in modern discourse in general individuality – personalization, is dominated by “I” and “me”.¹⁰

The discussion of daily skills in the present-day epoch, the excessive use of gadgets in particular, is also integrated with the notion of “value”. “We have found that when participants cut off their smart phones due to various reasons, while it is a required coincidence of a strategy and personal values (and values of key colleagues and other important figures of a person’s life) to change habits successfully (m.vedomosti, 24.07.2019). (How one can get rid of digital dependence). By the way, a stable Internet connection is now one of the highest values (needs), which is interestingly discussed in the recent book by Krogerus and Tchäppeler (2019).

Values are the indispensable component of business strategy description. Compare: “My task is to make it so that all of the “Dodo Pizza” values are shared by all of the franchisees”, E. Panteeleva, HR-manager of a company, writes (www.

huntflow.ru, 17.07.2019). The section “Values and mission” is frequent on sites and in the printed materials of banks, firms, schools, colleges, and universities (Kuzevanova 2011). People at the highest state level speak of values (national values, valuable samples, value milestones), values are scribed in laws and instructions. Not infrequently the traditional values of Russia are contraposed to Western values exactly as “traditional” to “non-traditional”. “Sergei Naryshkin, the director of the External Intelligence Service thinks that under the pretext of a people’s emancipation, all over the world the process of aggressive erosion of traditional values takes place (RBC, 18.06.2019; <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/18/06/2019/5d890499a79479br37fe45d>).

Examples can be multiplied considerably. We will pitch upon the point that the notion of “values” is important for the characterization of generations, because here the dynamics of traditional and non-traditional values are reflected. “Generation X represents people born from 1964 through 1984. Their value is their uniqueness, it is important for them to be unlike anybody...” (Pravmir, 06.08.2019). Intergenerational conflicts of all times multiplied by the differences in religious or ideological views, are based on the opposition of values. Here is an example from Irina Sedakova’s experience from her field work in Bulgarian villages populated by Old Believers: in Bulgaria in the 1960s, the youth protested against rigid principles and the convictions of senior Old Believers, including bans on certain clothing, protests against hymnody and the observance of prayer rules, etc. Confessional and family values were challenged, young Old Believers accepted modern socialist then-life principles and were ready to behave like “everybody else”. However, people who denied the faith, the church and rites, came back to the Old Believers’ values as they became older and they came into conflict with the next young generation (Sedakova 2009). Many scientists write about the chronology and the generational contradistinction of old and new values (Ipanova 2005; Vasil’ev 2016).

The passages above allow us to pass on to the comparison of old and new values, and the reasons for their dynamics.

Old and New Values: A Shift in Attitudes

The very division of the values into traditional and non-traditional values is questionable.¹¹ Some values are traditional for a religious society, but they are not-traditional for atheistic people. In our project to clarify this opposition we

are dealing with the definitions of “old” and “new” values and we pay much attention to the language of axiological ideas. It appears that the border between traditional and non-traditional values lies partially in the use of vocabulary (compare the vocabulary and slang of older and younger generations) and reflects the discord between generations (Grenier 2007: 718). As any border, it is provisional and there are rather many situations when “old” and “new” axiological notions coincide, since the inventory of traditional values partially persists. However, the content of these notions and their contexts will differ, comparing the changes of notions of family, love, friendship, etc, in patriarchal and modern society.

For instance, the appeal “Do not look down at such a value as friendship” (Facebook, 13.08.2019) nowadays can be a reason for reflection on what friendship, a soul friend, and a bud are. It is a good example for the discussion of values dynamics. As we have already said, values in the Russian, Bulgarian and Slovak post-Socialist societies are articulated publicly; traditional values in modern refinement change their content and pragmatic properties considerably, they are described with different lexis. They are presented openly and informatively in quite another aspect angle (compare advertisement texts, Internet posts). As applied to a “friend”, then the virtual borrowed form of *friend* has found its place in the systems of the Russian and Bulgarian (but not the purist Slovakian!) languages, compare the Russian verbs *зафрендить*, *отфрендить*, (make a friend, cancel friendship) and substantives *френдонад* (fall of friends / being abandoned), *расфренд*, *френдзона* and others (cancellation of friendship, usually initiated unilaterally, zone for friend communication) and similar words in Bulgarian *френд/френдове*. Real and virtual friendships certainly have different contents and surmise different relationships and actions (compare “a meeting with a friend in real life – a walk to a cinema with a girlfriend and a “like” made on a social network in support of a virtual friend, whom the subscriber has never met with). Certain continuity of values can be seen, but friendship is transferred to a new space and new principles of closeness, communication and activity.

It is possible to speak of non-traditional values that, as we have seen, bring new lexis with them or rethought lexis, frequently borrowed and non-typical for the vocabulary of a traditional culture (compare Slavic borrowings “creativity”, “leadership”, “self-realization”, “carrier” and similar words). Values designated in traditional Slavic lexis are transformed considerably in the new world as well.

Articles published five or ten years ago provide materials for the study of values dynamics because the speed of social and technological changes has increased and this circumstance is reflected in the appraisal of notions, phenomena and properties (Sedakova (ed.) 2011). Thus, for instance, the transformation of the traditional value of “old age” is very sensible. In our time old age is drawn back, denied, people fight with it by various ways, declare possibilities of legendary longevity, etc, while in the traditional worldview growing up and the ageing of a human being are inescapable natural processes. We have studied values relying primarily on the methods of ethnolinguistics and using respective materials: lexis and phraseology, folklore pieces, ethnographic data. Ambivalent attitude to the value of old age is obvious, as it is typical for almost each value (Plotnikova 2015). On the one hand, in the traditional worldview, old age correlates with wisdom and experience and on the other with the loss of cognitive abilities, the decrease of physical strength, and with the decline of performability (a case of a axiological binary opposition). Due to such characteristics, the concept of old age receives exactly opposite appraisals, from the sacralization of old age (according to folklore legends, the Lord and saints walk around the earth in the appearance of old people) to its demonization (diseases and characters of the lowest mythology are often presented as old men and old women). The Russian *старцы* (elders) are correlated with the highest sacral values.

It is necessary to bring in sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic methods in order to appraise *old age* (and other values) in the modern stage. As it follows from advertisement texts, the media and Internet, from common dialogues, the value of old age as a synonym of knowledge and wisdom in recent years is called into question. Additionally, convenient sources of information acquisition have appeared due to technological progress. Search engines provide answers to questions rapidly, in a few seconds, the verb *погуглить* (“to google”) has entered the Russian language dictionary, compare “Nowadays old age has stopped being a rare treasure... There was a time when we had to grapple with thorny question when addressing elders. But now we address GOOGLE and if we have a problem with the computer we seek help from an adolescent, not from an elder” (Gavande 2019: 21). This is a dubious question though, because getting information and getting wise advice are different in their axiology, as argues the Irish philosopher, priest and poet John O’Donohue, who puts many positive suggestions in the appraisal of wisdom and experience as intrinsic merits of old age (O’Donohue 1997).

At the end of 2019, with the initial spread of COVID-19 and the spread of the coronavirus-induced pandemic all over the world; predominantly elderly people were attacked. The value of old age rose exponentially: grandfathers and grandmothers came into limelight; to save them from the pandemic by any means, became a national task and a top priority in many countries. This is another obstacle of changing assessment and values – the situation of a crisis, be it military, ideological, medical, etc.

Historical Dimensions in Axiology

Now we will turn up to the historical axiological methods and ideas. The historical approach towards the investigation of values cannot be compared with the modern study of the values in language, folklore and rituals; naturally because one cannot find informants who would be able to answer the questions. Historians must deal with just the available historical sources. Official documents in wide circulation do not help scholars, because they declare the wishful thinking which in reality is often not shared even by the authors of the documents themselves (compare the rhetoric of the Soviet party elite of the 1970–80s). The sources which allow us to learn the quantity, the price or the place of an object, in an apartment (lists of belongings, bequests, etc), give oblique grounds for conclusions of the attitude towards a value, as represented by an object. For example, beautifully decorated medieval books and books as such – in houses in Sofia in the 17th century, or on bookshelves in Soviet flats that were full with books which were never read – says a lot about the high value of education (Leontieva 2019).

Much more productive is the usage of personal sources, but in this case we have to take into account their specific features. This type of text is subjective to a certain extent, which is due to an array of factors. The author can be biased or restricted in what he has seen, he can also project causal facts onto unknown phenomena. In addition, in such personal writings there are some inner hidden problems. Auto-communicative sources (diaries) and those addressed to somebody (letters) do not provide valuable information for our investigation, because the authors usually chose and adopted their own feelings and data that was important for the specific addressee. The events the scholars need for their purposes are rarely depicted. On the other hand, these types of sources

are highly verifiable, because the author usually does not have any reasons to give false information.

The most approachable and largest quantitative sources are not addressed to a certain addressee (more frequently memoirs or travelogues), they are aimed at representing the author as an outstanding figure, the one who can interpret an event and draw our attention. That is why they modify the situation, conceal some details; on the other hand, they embellish the events for the readers. Still, these types of sources give scholars plenty of information on the manners, customs and values of the time and of the place. If the scholar knows the biography of the author and the context of the generation of the text, the veracity of the data is really high. It is even more productive to search in the text what, quoting M. Blok “the author allows us to understand without willing to”, i.e. turning our attention toward the details (Blok 1973: 37), not to the general subject. Meanwhile it is not easy to find in memoirs cases of a mention of customs, if they are not changed, and the author does not ponder about this.

Values are evident when two cultures meet and collide. For example, in the 1880–90s the attempts of Tsar Ferdinand soon after his visit to the subjects, his not knowing how to behave beforehand in his usual manner, demonstrated Bulgarian pragmatism and a neglect of conventionalities. As his teacher of the Bulgarian language D. Gachev recollected, “we, people of the time, could not get rid of our villagers’ materialism while evaluating the prince’s kindness”. Thus, somebody who got the award, and discovered that there were no gems in the medal, went out and cried: “Gentleman, just one beer! I will give it away! Who will treat me to a beer?” (Gachev 1983: 39).

Another example of how cultures meet are provided by Russian emigres in Bulgaria. The ladies who arrived from the cities did not hold back on wearing their dresses, which differed a lot with the garments of the local women, in spite of the fact that the dresses seemed dissolute to the Bulgarians. One emigrated lady recalled, that “occasionally a Bulgarian woman would grasp the dress of the Russian one, having raised it and seeing even more fancy underskirt than the very dress, cried out “Look, they came here to entice our husbands!” So the clothes, casual for the Russians roused the indignation of the Bulgarians (Matveeva 2003: 494). These historical moments though are exceptions, not rules; besides, they show the event statically and therefore they cannot provide a proper source base for the dynamics of values.

Basic traditional and non-traditional values are vividly seen when the representative of conservative views start to expose their attitudes towards various spheres and blame somebody for a departure from the canon. Here, we always have to keep in mind the fact, that “the zealots of the old times” usually embellish and even mythologize the real state of values, creating pastoral pictures.

Authors of memoirs rarely witness the drastic change of the old values and the victory of the new ones, i.e. a striking moment in the dynamics of values. Bulgarian sociologist V. Svintila, in his essays gives many interesting examples from his childhood. The migration from the villages to Sofia, the new bourgeois whom he called “the people without roots” had changed the manners of the citizen and the sight of the city. Before that “coffee without literary or political conversations was considered contemptible stuff”, but now, there appeared cafes where the favorite drink was sold “to go” or it was drunk without any respect (Svintila 2017: 21). But not all the memoirists are that careful in their writing. That’s why an important perspective provides the outside observer, who being in the society studied, finds the values alien and far from their cultural norms. As philologist and culturologist Jury Lotman argued, the norm for the native speaker is not “evident, but sometimes it is not noticeable”. To a foreigner though, the very norm of life, the “correct” behaviour seems strange and worth depicting” (Lotman 2002: 677). So the bearers of foreign values demonstrate to scholars the values of the society studied. For example it is difficult to find in the Bulgarian sources any notes on the virtues of Bulgarian women and the rejection of adultery by their society. The Russian perspective however, underlines these characteristics, beginning from the end of the 19th until the Second World War (Amfiteatrov 1901: 120–126; Matveeva 2003: 494; Karateev 2003: 201, 221; Slutskiy 2005: 56).

An image of “foreign, somebody else’s” is usually constructed in comparison with “native, our own”. The evidence communicated during the First World War by a Don Kazak woman on her sincere surprise of equality and politeness of all the societal layers in Bulgaria as compared to the strict hierarchy of Russian society (*Pis'ma krestian* 1914: 6).

It is important to remember though, that any text says a lot about the cultural context it has been created in. For example, the Russian travelers of the first half of the 19th century were very much surprised by the likeness of the Bulgarian and Russian languages. The idea of Slavic unity was just being shaped at that time, and the similarity of the sounds generated proudness of “the big Slavic

family”. For the period from the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 until the end of the First World War, a few such pleasant surprises were documented; since the idea of Slavism was well developed and was constantly mentioned, it turned ethnic affinity into a value, for the sake of which the Russians went to protect the Serbs in 1914. Later on, the suppression of this rhetoric as a reactionary force, ethnic component as a bourgeois remnant led to the fact that in 1944, Soviet soldiers entering Bulgaria were once again surprised at the proximity of the language (Gusev 2019a). “Slavism” as a value was alien to them, they were brought up in the spirit of “internationalism” and did not have any real knowledge of the southern and western Slavs.

Conclusion

The language (a word, an expression, an idiom, a text) is in the core of any axiological investigation. It generates, shapes, preserves and develops the system of values, it links with them and incorporates them into the national idea and cultural heritage. The linguistic means, the whole language structure assists in providing the detailed notion of a value and its place in the axiological hierarchy. Having studied the values in the theological, historical, folklore texts, dialectal and contemporary Internet discourse one cannot come to a different conclusion.

Meanwhile the language communicates some distinct system assets to the very value, which seem paradoxical. One notion obtains antonymic qualities depending on the context, as we have shown with the “old age” as a value. It can turn into its opposite, an anti-value; a virtue seen from one prospective in one sub-culture, generation, etc. can turn into a sin as regarded from another prospective, and vice versa. We see it while investigating the paraliturgical and hagiography texts (partly from the ascetical texts Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia and today’s Transcarpathian region of Ukraine), historic memoirs and diaries, etc. It is also relevant when the values of national, ideological, religious, economic systems as well as the local, personal preferences are compared. This provides an impulse to the dynamic change of axiological hierarchies, and language is the tool which is used in this transformation first and foremost. Depending on the system of views one notion can be seen as a value or an anti-value, it can get maximum relevance or turn into a marginal concept.

We finalize our article with the expression “Stay Healthy” known in many languages as a cliché to say “Goodbye”, or as a toast “To Your Health”, or as

a good wish, and used to circulate an automatic polite reply without allusion to its literate semantic. In the time of a pandemic, the spread of COVID-19 the value of health has gained its maximum relevance, and as such the language reflects it. Now wishing good health, we mean it and underscore its value.

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Notes

1 Axiology as a branch of philosophy has brought effective and useful ideas and methods into other disciplines. For history of axiology as a scholarly discipline see (Shokhin 1997).

2 The Moscow School of Ethnolinguistics was founded by Nikita Ilych Tolstoy back in the 1970s and after his death taken over by Svetlana M. Tolstaia and their disciples. On the principles of Moscow school on Ethnolinguistics see Tolstoi & Tolstaia 2013.

3 On the specific features of The Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics founded by E. Bartmiński see Tolstaia 2005.

4 For the Slovakian data we are grateful to Dr M. Valentsova. A linguistic comparative study of the terms for “values” in Slavic languages is being prepared and will be published.

5 See a special publication by Jadwiga Puzynina on the Polish axiological terminology (Puzynina 1992).

6 In recent years, the purity of an experiment cannot be attained because TV, radio and sometimes internet aggressively have infiltrated the rural areas of Russia, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. Informants most certainly hear considerations of “values” of state, entrepreneurial or of personal character and start to use them in their speech. Bulgarian and Russian Facebook give a modern usage of “values” for the traditional ones. For example, the page *Values of Petrich* (“Ценностите на Петрич”) is dedicated to the tangible and intangible heritage of a unique place in the South-West of Bulgaria https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100014182059674&__tn__=%2CdC-R-R&eid=AR

BbrtOz0dfN73fGqSnVL0TbG8tmleqMii vocaZs-v1fjnF2zWkSA0GXnkKC6sQHCDvP6DOPVhrqCfX-&hc_ref=ARRPc8bxlAFdP6I6KPjYUXLg9BH2dSCPSyTX1oQjdoYxrULKtTTtOeEsO5EfimFZd34&fref=nf.

7 An interesting case of amalgamation of both material and spiritual values analyzes A. Leontieva on the evaluation of sacred books in religious muslim society is presented in Leontieva 2019.

8 A considerable change of approach to values took place in the years after Perestroika. It was precisely the period, when, with the departure from ideology, the turn-up of religiosity, the possibility of free contacts with West, when a hierarchy of values, different from the hierarchy of the Socialist period, started to develop (Leontiev 1992, 1998; Lapin 1996; Zhuravliova 2006; Zemrach 2006; Schwartz 2012).

9 It is obvious that we are talking not about natural beauty in the traditional sense, but about the beauty attained as a result of the successful work in regards to one's appearance, with the application of "magic" cosmetics and surgery.

10 It should be noted that the Western lifestyle as presented in books and movies exerted a considerable impact on such a hierarchy of values. See Connors 2017.

11 In our project we do not touch upon such modern topics as gay relations and families, gender alluded problems, etc., though they are usually regarded as non-traditional values.

Abbreviation

LAS 2015–2019. *Leksykon aksjologiczny Słowian i ich sąsiadów* [Axiological Dictionary of the Slavs and their Neighbours]. Bartmiński, Jerzy et. al. (eds.). Tom 1–5. Lublin, 2015–2019 (T. 1 — Dom; T. 2 — Europa; T. 3 — Praca; T. 4 — Wolność; T. 5 — Honor).

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