Verbalization of the Concept Language Policy: Online Research

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***Abstract*---**The article deals with the issues of revealing the semantic structure of the concept Language Policy based on the online experiment. Most participants of the experiment represent Ukraine and European countries such as France and Germany, Poland and a few respondents from the USA and Turkey. The analysis of the similarities and differences of the concept Language Policy established via an associative experiment done with the help of respondents from different countries helps to outline their national specific features, which contribute to a deeper understanding of both foreign and native languages and cultures through the analyses of the semantic structure of the concept in question. It is emphasized that Language Policy has become a widespread phenomenon in modern Ukrainian and European societies from the social point of view. The study of a linguistic situation in a society can be considered to be an important means of forming the ability to conduct intercultural dialogues. As for the methods and linguistic tools they can vary depending on the applicable target. The article identifies common and different aspects in of the field structures of the concept Language Policy done in multilingual sociolinguistic surroundings.

***Keywords*---**associative experiment, field structure, language policy, multilingualism, online research, verbalization.

1301

Introduction

The development of complex linguistic fields (sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc.) is aimed at the study of interaction of the language with some aspects of people's mentality in their native cultures. Language is one of the phenomena that undergo changes. The relationships of the language and culture are realized through mentality. It should be noted that one of the important means of empirical verification on the mental level is the procedure of differentiation of the concept and non-concept. In such a way the study of the concept Language Policy is of crucial importance in modern society not only from the standpoint of sociolinguistics, but also from the linguistic worldview (Nikitina, 1987).

At present, there are a great deal of works dedicated to the study of concepts written by home and foreign linguistics in which conceptology goes beyond its borders and becomes an independent field of science. Cognitive science studies concepts, their structure, evolution, spheres of concepts and systems of concepts using different approaches and methods. However, the concept Language Policy has hardly been studied from the linguistic perspective. The current relevance of this research consists in the fact that there have been some changes in the semantics of the concept Language Policy in a multilingual aspect. These changes in the semantic structure of the concept Language Policy are represented in the associations, which this concept arises, depending on the nations these people represent (Hudcovičová et al., 2021; Yenikeyeva & Klymenko, 2021).

The aim of the article is to study the function and the peculiarities of the semantic structure of the concept Language Policy at the contemporary level of social and political development of the society in various countries. To our knowledge, no study to date has examined the concept Language Policy from the point of an associative linguistic experiment. The material for the investigation was taken from the responses of the residents of Ukraine, France, Germany, Poland, the USA on the questionnaires concerning the associations connected with the concept Language Policy. To meet this aim, it is necessary to define the following objectives:

- To describe the approaches to the concept study and the position of a linguistic experiment in it.
- To point out the essence of an associative experiment in the analysis of the concept.
- To conduct an associative experiment to identify the peculiarities of the concept`s content.

As noted by Mustajoki (2000), a typical linguistic experiment is the clarification of associative reactions of people, in which the methodology "stimulus => reaction" is used, which is characteristic of psychology. In the analysis of linguistic experiment Mustajoki points out that typically used in an associative research, are hundreds of informants. In some other psycholinguistic experiments, it is assumed that people's reactions are largely similar. Therefore, the number of respondents may not exceed 30. In this vein, otwithstanding the methodology of associative experiments "stimulus => reaction" represents a typical approach to psychological research, conducting a study using a written questionnaire most

likely brings this experiment closer to a sociological research. It has been noted that psychological experiments, as a rule, are carried out under strict laboratory conditions (Intiana & Sapiin, 2017; Latupeirissa & Sayd, 2019).

Materials and Methods

The methodology of the concept study is a set of techniques because the concept, according to Stepanov (1997), has a "layered structure" (Stepanov, 1997). Maslova (2004), notes that in the study of concepts the associative field is extremely important, and hence the identification of associative complexes is the main task in describing the concepts. Identifies two approaches to the study of concepts: linguocultural and linguocognitive. In our study, we will use these approaches, since we believe that it allows us to analyze the concept Language Policy in terms of the specifics of the national conceptual sphere and the derivation of the field model, which allows identifying the basic conceptual signs of the concept Language Policy by a particular society (Cargile et al., 1994; McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

Under the linguocultural approach the researcher understands the study of the specifics of the national conceptual sphere during the transition from culture to consciousness. This approach defines the concept as the basic unit of culture, possessing imaginative, conceptual signs. From the standpoint of the linguocognitive approach to the concept study, the field model was developed, and presented in terms of the core and the periphery. Adherents of this approach Sternin (1985), investigate lexemes, the meanings of which forms the content of national speech consciousness, and also form a general worldview of the native speakers of this language (Blommaert et al., 2005; Henry & Apelgren, 2008).

The research is based on the linguocognitive approach, with regard to some practices of the linguocultural approach, as we endeavor to identify common features and differences in the formation of mental representations. The concept Language Policy is analyzed specifically through the prism of perception by native speakers without their prior preparation and with some general cultural background. The semantic structure of a concept can also be obtained with the help of a native speaker, since the concept system creates the worldview in which it is shown how one perceives the world. If a person has a rich cultural experience, a broad view of life, these facts are directly reflected in the replenishment of the vocabulary, and as a result, in a greater range of meanings of words. That explains why people have a great variety of conceptual signs that the concept contains (Fagerberg & Verspagen, 2009; Anderson, 2003).

To investigate the concept Language Policy, we rely on two main approaches to the concept study: the linguocognitive and linguocultural ones. The benefit of the linguocognitive approach is that it involves the analysis of concepts directed from consciousness to culture, and the linguocultural one studies the influence of the culture on the mentality of its user. As for the methods of the concept research, there have been no clear stages of analysis so far. The researchers Boldyrev (2008); Dzyuba (2018); Frumkina (1995); Maslova (2004); Rozvod (2015); Ryzhkina (2014); Stepanov (1997); Tokarev (2003), agree that not only may the concept analysis procedure be different, but also the result. It was stated that the

methods of the linguocultural approach may be relevant for the methods of the linguocognitive approach; in addition, both approaches can be complementary (Faye et al., 2004; Schunk, 1986).

Results and Discussion

There has also been an attempt to unite the two methods into one. It is determined that one of the most common methods of concept study is the conceptual analysis, which can be supplemented by linguistic experiments to study a particular concept in detail. Four types of linguistic experiments have been identified by Mustajoki (2000):

- The natural science experiment, characterized by the use of instruments, special equipment and laboratory conditions;
- The sociological experiment conducted to determine the opinion of people;
- The psychological experiment which is of great interest to the researcher from the point of view of the respondent's answers (detection of associative reaction of informants);
- The "linguistic" experiment, which a. Mustajoki calls a conditionally linguistic one.

An associative experiment was chosen as a case-study approach to allow for a deeper insight into the role of an associative experiment in the study of the semantic structure of the concept as well as a significant influence on the analysis of concept content. The associative field makes it possible to obtain language material based on the responses of the carrier of a certain culture and language. The associative experiment takes a special place among reconstructive methods of linguistic consciousness, enabling the identification of mental lexicon, verbal memory and cultural stereotypes of the nation (Fedoryuk, 2016). People's interpretation of the meanings of certain word-symbols (concepts) may differ significantly from their true meanings; that depends on many extralinguistic factors, the most influential one being the political situation and culture system. The associative experiment plays an important part in the reconstruction of the linguistic consciousness of the interviewed people, as it allows us to get as close as possible to the mental vocabulary, verbal memory and cultural stereotypes of particular people. The associative experiment helps us to identify the content of the concept in the cognitive consciousness of native speakers and to rank the features that create the concept in terms of its intensity. The core of linguistic consciousness includes those associations in the associative-verbal network that have the highest number of connections that are singled out on the basis of the frequency principle (Paleeva, 2015).

In our study we focus on the verbalization of the linguistic concept Language Policy in the language of fixation, and how people perceive this concept with regard to extralinguistic factors. Sternin (1985), points out that in order to describe meanings of the concept adequately, both nominative and communicative aspects of the meaning are important. Therefore, communicative analysis of the meaning must be supplemented by a logical analysis of the level of knowledge of the relevant subject achieved by the society, experimental techniques of competences analysis, by the communicative experience of the

researcher, wheares psychological, psycholinguistic, neurophysiological experiments confirm with obvious evidence that in mental and physical terms words and their meanings are understood differently (Sternin, 1985).

Respondents from the following countries participated in the associative experiment: Ukraine (60), France (18), Poland (17), Germany (15), the USA (8) and Turkey (2). The purpose of the experiment was to compare the ways in which lexical units actualize the concept Language Policy, and how this concept is objectified in the minds of the residents of these countries. Bajdak (2010), notes that experimental methods, including associative experiment, allow us to obtain information of emotional and significative nature, as well as to reveal the most important elements (cognitive signs) of the concept. During the experiment, it has been determined that the associative field of each native speaker has its own associative field revealed in terms of both the content and the degree of cohesion between them. Evaluation associations that contain emotionally-evaluative characteristics of a concept study indicate an emotional component that is related to the word-stimulus or particular relationships to the word being identified. The reactions obtained help us to get the understanding of the significance or frames to which culture situations the concepts under the study belong (Paleeva, 2015).

Having conducted the associative experiment, we have used questionnaires (a set of questions designed to elicit a controlled set of answers from multiple respondents, because they "have a number of inherent advantages, including an easy set up for comparative studies, the possibility of gathering data from multiple participants/respondents, and options for different types of implementation." (Vander Klok & Conner, 2019). The questionnaire contains seven questions regarding the country, age, mother tongue, etc. It was created in electronic format and placed on Google Drive. Because the topic of the given research is the concept Language Policy, the questionnaire included two obligatory questions: the first question was to identify the country the respondent is from the second question. Because the respondents provide their associations with the lexical unit language policy and fix their verbal representations. It should be noted that all the respondents were informed that this questionnaire is of linguistic character (Suwija et al., 2019; Tetty, 2020).

The procedure for conducting an associative experiment is as follows: in order to identify the content of the concept Language Policy the informant is invited to give an association (reaction (R)) to each of the word-stimulus (S). This should be done without thinking, immediately fixing the word(s) that come to mind, with the time limit of 5 6 seconds. When conducting such an experiment, a linguist is interested in both the semantic and grammatical relationships, as well as the images, motives, and evaluations that arise. The focus is on the language, as a means of objectifying processes entering the mind, as linguists are interested in the form that association takes (Pautova, 2007). In the associative experiment under research, the analysis of word-stimulus associations was conducted on the basis of online questionnaires with people of different countries. The respondents were proposed to give first several (2-6) words / word combinations associated with the concept Language Policy that come to mind (Johnson, 2001; Ufimtseva, 2014).

The study of the reactions (R) of respondents who indicated their country as Ukraine to the stimulus (S) "language policy" has showed the following associations: state (10), legislation (law, laws) (9), politics (8), society (8), culture (7), rules / regulations (6), communication (5), concepts (4), documentation (4), language (4), state language (4), education (3), prohibition (3), quotas (3), relationships (3), business language (2), country (2), dialect (2), division (2), family (2), linguistic frameworks (2), globalism (2), history (2), identity (2), ideology (2), learning (2), linguistics (2), mother (2), multilingualism (2), nation (2), national minority language (2), negotiations (2), norms (2), school (2), understanding (2), abroad, action, artificial incitement and simulation, authenticity, barrier, business etiquette, business style of communication, children, complexity, consolidation, control, convenience, conversation, demand, development, dialectic, dictionary, diglossia, dignity, disagreement, discrimination, disgust, disrespect, emphasis, error, falsehood, Finnish and Canadian bilingualism, grammar, happiness, honesty, house, humanism, human rights, imposition, incompetence, individuality, influence , instruction, insults, language change, language functioning, language law, language preservation, language tasks, literacy, literary language, literature, love, management, manipulation, meaning, media, misunderstanding, mother tongue, mutual respect, national idea, nationalism, nationality, official, official language, oppression, peace, people, perception, person, planning, popularization, pride, priority, problem, promotion, protection, trajectory, reform, regional language, regulation, repression, requirements, restriction, revival of culture, the Russian language, scandal, simplicity, social class, speech, split of the country, status, street, strengthening, stupidity, subordination, "surzhyk" (the colloquial language with the mix of Ukrainian and Russian words and grammar structures), teacher, the Ukrainian language, Ukrainianization, uncertainty, university, war, work, reform, mother, bilingualism. The analysis of factual material based on an associative experiment conducted among Ukrainians showed that the concept Language Policy is a quite complicated phenomenon and consists of a core Tagnin (2014), and close and far peripheries (Malyuga, 2020).

In the consciousness of Ukrainians Language Policy is a concentrated expression of the ideological and social principles that determine the political and practical attitude of a state system (authorities) to the functioning, development and the interaction of languages, to its role in the life of people fixed in the Constitution of Ukraine where the status of the Ukrainian language is the sole official language. It should be noted that the language policy of Ukraine is regulated by the Law for the Provision of Functioning the Ukrainian Language as a State Language Law of Ukraine). The core of the concept Language Policy is the lexical unit that nominates the concept in modern English – Language Policy. The area of the close periphery of the concept Language Policy consists of the following cognitive signs: state, legislation, politics, society, culture, rules, communication, language, concepts, documentation, etc. Regarding the area of the far periphery of the concept Language Policy, it represents the less frequent associations provided by the Ukrainian respondents: "surzhyk", teacher, bilingualism, war, uncertainty, work, stupidity, etc. As for the French language, it is a common knowledge that there are some limitations to on the use of languages other than the French language, and it is fixed in the Constitution and other documents (Décisionn° 99-412 DC, 1999) that is why the French respondents associate the concept

Language Policy with the official language (4), native language (4), linguoculture (3), regional language (4), language (2), state (2), territory (2), population that proves the abovementioned fact concerning the limitations of the use of other languages in France.

In Germany the respondents associated the concept Language Policy mostly with the German language (6), German as a foreign language (5), the language rights (4), nation (4), multilingualism (2), people, law, speech, official language, minority language, the language of the court, etc. The results show that the Germans mostly associate Language Policy with the German language. There are several law acts stating that the German language possesses the official status and functions in the state administration (Kopp & Ramsauer, 2003). In fact, Germany promotes the rights of the minority languages but the respondents showed a tendency to respect their mother tongue. That points to the importance of national identity of the people. It should be emphasized that the associative experiment involved not only the EU representatives, but also those from the United States (8) and Turkey (2). The analysis of their reactions to the word-stimulus showed that their reactions principally coincide with those of the EU residents. The respondents from the USA and Turkey also verbalized their associations: policy, law, legislation, language, government, politics, culture, ethnicity, identity, country.

Reactions (R) of the respondents who indicated their country as France, Poland, Germany, the USA and Turkey to a the stimulus (S) Language Policy were verbalized by the following lexical units: language (9), legislation (9), official language (7), culture (6), communication (4), history (4), native language (4), politics (4), regional language (4), people (3), society (3), state (3), linguistics (2), nation (2), rules (2), agreement, assimilation, broadcasting, change of status, constitution, courtesy, develop, development, dialect, ethnic groups, family, foreign language, globalization, governance, government, grammar, harmony, honesty, independence, instruction, language discrimination, language level, language promotion, language schools, language study, lingua franca, linguistic culture, literacy, mentality, minority language, multilingualism, native speaker, obligations, parliament, plurilingualism, population, power, protection, reform, religion, respect, roots, science, simplicity, skill, sociology, state language, study, territory, unreliable, vocabulary, writing system.

It should be noted that out of 120 respondents, 10 abandoned the experiment. The investigation of factual material, based on an associative experiment conducted on the EU citizens, showed that the concept of Language Policy is a complex phenomenon, consisting of the core and the close and far peripheries. The core of the concept Language Policy is a lexical unit that nominates the concept in modern English – Language Policy. The close periphery of the concept of Language Policy is comprised of ten conceptual signs: language, legislation, official language, culture, communication, history, native language, politics, and regional language.

Comparing the areas of the close periphery of the concept Language Policy based on reactions to word-stimuli in the minds of residents of Ukraine and the European Union countries, it should be noted that the common words-identifiers

are only three: languages, legislation and politics. The influence of the extralinguistic factors led to the transition of some words-identifiers (state, society, rules, concepts, documentation) from the close periphery of the interviewed Ukrainians to the far periphery of the interviewed EU citizens. Some lexical items indicated by the interviewed Ukrainians (concepts, documentation) were absent from all the responds given by the interviewed the EU residents, even within a far periphery. A similar picture is inherent in the structure that was constructed on the basis of data from a survey of EU citizens. Thus, some of the units of the close periphery (history, official language, native language, regional language) are in the far periphery of the interviewed Ukrainians. Due to the linguistic and political situation that existed in Ukraine since 2014, the responses of the EU and Ukraine respondents have differed significantly. Hence, among the 60 respondents who indicated their place of residence in Ukraine 20 associations for the word-stimulus Language Policy contained at least one word-reaction with a negative connotation (discrimination, manipulation, problem, repression, split of the country). Reaction words with a negative connotation of the experiment participants can be referred to the peripheral field of the concept under the study. In our opinion, not only the responses given to the questions, but also the refusal to take the survey are indicative. Thus, during the associative experiment, some respondents refused to answer the questions asked. The highest number of refusals was reported by the French (16.6%) and German (20%) citizens. The reason for rejecting the survey was identical: the concept was not clear to the respondents. Due to the linguistic situation, three respondents found the concept "difficult", two respondents "do not understand the concept", and one respondent was "not interested" in this questionnaire. Some respondents mistakenly confused the linguistic concept Language Policy with a political problem and therefore had an aggressive orientation to the questionnaire.

Ukrainian citizens also refused to respond the questionnaire (6.7%). Thus, due to the linguistic situation in Ukraine, more than half of the all questioned responded cautiously, so it was necessary to explain that this was a purely linguistic concept and it was not related to the policy pursued by Ukraine. It should be noted that among Ukrainians who participated in the survey the percentage of refusals was much smaller than in other countries, though, today the issue of language policy is extremely urgent and vital in Ukraine. This topic has been covered in all the Ukrainian mass media. The attitude of citizens to some problematic questions of the Ukrainian language policy has been explored.

Conclusions

The conducted associative experiment revealed both common and different conceptual features, which are conditioned by the cultural and historical peculiarities of the formation and development of the nation, as well as the individual peculiarities of the respondents, and their own life experiences. In order to analyze the specificity of the semantic structure of the concept language policy there have been described the main approaches to the concept study (linguocognitive and linguocultural ones). It has been mentioned that an associative experiment as a part of linguistic experiment permits the researcher to identify the content of the concept in the cognitive perception of native speakers.

The associative experiment gave us the key information of native speakers` understanding of the concept Language Policy.

Thus, we have found out that representatives of the same language and culture may have associations of generally accepted concept that are significantly different from those of the speakers from other cultures. This is explained by extra linguistic factors, among which the most essential ones are people's awareness of certain phenomena and features of the geopolitical system. The difference between the association and the word-stimulus in the representatives of different countries depends on the national culture. The prospect of further research includes the involvement of representatives of other countries in the associative experiment and the study of the concept that is verbalized in the language of fixation of those countries.

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