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**PECULIARITIES OF LEXEME MANKIND PERCEPTION
BY UKRAINIAN YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT
OF PRESENT-DAY CHRONOTOPOS**

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Abstract: *The article deals with the peculiarities of perception of the lexical unit mankind by the Ukrainian youth. It also dwells upon the social senses associated with the semantics of this lexeme taking into account the present stage in the development of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian community. The materials of the article are based on the results of the associative experiment. The authors suggest their own vision of gender and mental aspects of the young people perception of the word stimulus mankind as well as they prove the social conditionality of the receptive activities of human consciousness, in particular the dependence of perception of the word as the language unit on the conditions of social chronotopos.*

Keywords: *means of communication, social chronotopos, social meanings, social mentality, mass consciousness, national self-consciousness, mentality, mental profile, perception, semantic field, semantic kernel, associative experiment, lexeme, associative field, associative flow, lexeme-stimulus, gender, gender differences*

INTRODUCTION

Several factors induced us to write this article. The first factor is the experience of work with students, which proves a gradual alteration in the value structure of young people. The second factor is the statements of national researchers, including V. Burlachuk, concerning the changes in social meanings as a result of changes in Ukrainian public consciousness in terms of the social crisis [1], [10, p. 7]. The third factor includes the events that had a great impact on the Ukrainians' consciousness during the period of 2013-2014. Since the language is a means of communication, the meaning of the word is associated with social meanings (concepts, emotions, motives). In addition, the knowledge of things is a component of social meaning. According to the definition of O. Suprunenko [6], the social meanings tend to be updated constantly. A. Sokolov states that it is worthwhile learning social meanings taking into account their movement in the social scope, the way they are understood by the recipients and *"how long these meanings maintain their value for the society"* [5, p. 20]. The researcher of social meanings O. Suprunenko believes that *"only a huge scale wave is able to undermine the foundation of general social meanings. Sometimes the specific events give rise to a deeper understanding and forming on its basis the persistent forms of thinking and its expression, as well as to the formation of certain general meanings"* [6, p. 7]. Thus, two issues are of great interest to us: which notions the lexeme *mankind* is related to in the recipients'

minds at this moment? Whether the situation in the country actively displayed in the mass media has any influence on the traditional perception of the lexeme *mankind*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The proceedings of such researchers as A. Sokolov [5], V. Burlachuk [1], O. Suprunenko [6], O. Denysevych [3], Yu. Makarets [4] became the theoretical basis for our study. The main aspects of the study of social communications and the nature of social meanings are in the focus of interest of the above-mentioned researchers. The investigation into the concepts MANKIND, FAMILY CIRCLE, FAMILY in the linguistic world image of Ukrainians has been made by Yu. Makarets and O. Slipchuk [4]. O. Denysevych [3] emphasizes the possibility of applying the associative experiment in the field of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics as well as its application as the method of studying social impacts on the language taking into consideration the gender specificity of language learning and expression [3, p. 335].

A well-known sociologist A. Sokolov [5] believes that since social meanings are related to the ideal environment, it is necessary to examine them by means of ideal dimensions. For example, by means of the associations which also belong to the ideal and are related to the perception of information units. In our opinion, the associative experiment is the appropriate method of research, which will provide sufficient relevant results. The associative experiment makes it possible to recreate the semantic structure of the word in such a way to be recognized by the recipient. It also allows studying psychological, cultural, as well as sociological equivalents of the meanings that form the associative field of the word stimulus. Appealing primarily to the subconscious (as the participants of the experiment produce associations and do not explain how they understand a particular lexeme), this method also enables to describe the unity of conscious and unconscious meanings, which is defined in sociology as the term "*Social mentality*" [5, p. 56]. In addition, this method enables to clear up whether the associative fields of lexemes-stimuli cover the concepts (meanings, senses) they were traditionally linked by the previous generations, and which are recorded in the Ukrainian language dictionaries. The statistical method as well as the method of analysis and data interpretation should be applied to describe the peculiarities of perception the lexeme *mankind* by modern youth paying attention to the gender differences.

RESULTS

The experiment involved 100 first and second year students of Zhytomyr National Agro-ecological University (Ukraine). The same number of male and female participants were suggested to write a list of associations in front of the lexemes-stimuli *mankind*, *nation*, *people* that had already been printed in the forms. The research proved that the lexeme *mankind* is primarily associated among the students with such notions as *family*, *family circle*, *relatives*, *generation*, *ancestors*, *parents* and *successors* (Figure 1).

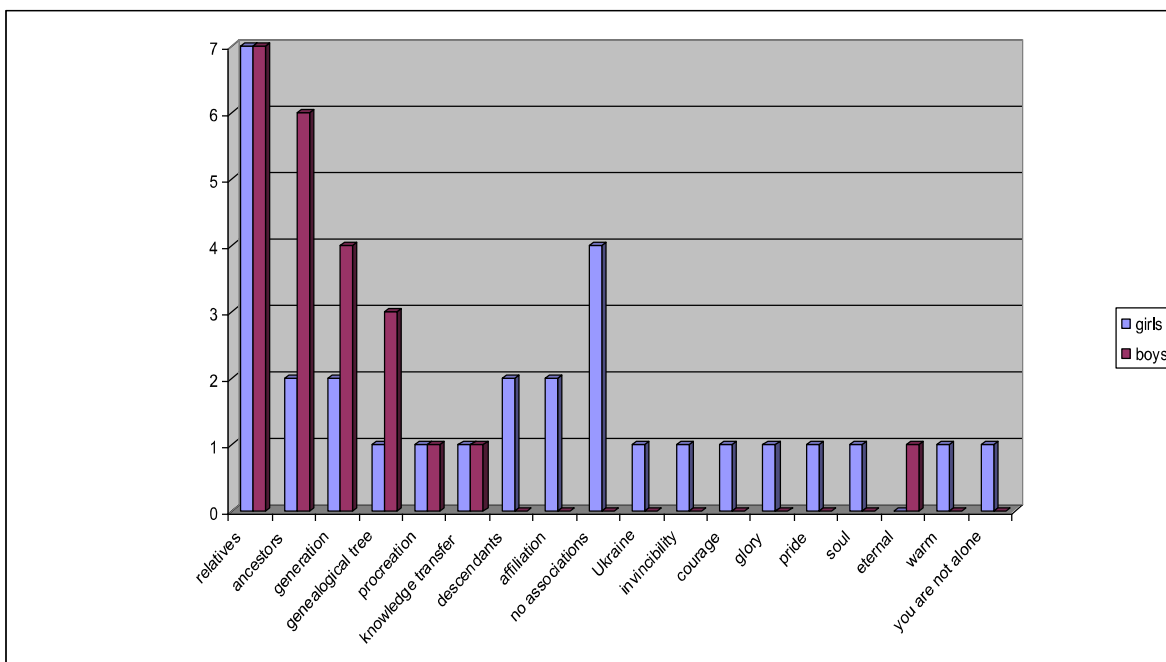


Figure 1: The frequency of using associations reflecting sense values of the experiment participants

Source: authorial observations

These associations actually reflect the semantics of the term "mankind". According to the explanatory dictionary of the Ukrainian language *mankind includes several generations originating from the same ancestor; ling – the grammatical category of the noun in many languages* [2, p. 1225]. Both girls and boys equally actively (14% of respondents) link the lexeme *mankind* with such notions as *family, family circle, relatives* (40% of the most common associations). Among the boys the lexeme *mankind* is associated with *generation* more often (8% of male representatives) compared to the girls. Moreover, the word stimulus *mankind* did not cause any associations among the girls (8% of respondents), which in our opinion is not natural for women. The lexeme *mankind* is identically (2% of boys and 2% of girls) associated with *procreation* and the *knowledge transfer* (approximately 6% of the most common associations). As it is shown in the diagram the girls' understanding of the word *mankind* is represented first of all by such notions as *family, family circle, relatives, ancestors* and *descendants* (the latter two associations cover the concepts of "past" and "future" thus demonstrating some intentionality to these time aspects). The boys' understanding of the lexeme *mankind* includes the following notions: *family, family circle, relatives, generations, parents* and *ancestors* (intention to the past). Thus, the difference in perception of the lexeme *mankind* among boys and girls consists in that fact that the girls subconsciously associate the mankind with both the past and the future, whereas the boys associate it with the past and older generations more often.

Modern sociologist V. Burlachuk affirms that in a crisis situation *"the search for the tradition is supported by the psychological need for inveteracy in the past in*

order to substantiate the title to the group existence as well as to intensify its sense of safety; the tradition selects those historical facts which could appear as the collective symbols in favour of the integration of this group, owing to which the special collective general state, social experience aimed at the maintaining a specific community are formed..." [1, p. 1]. As we can see, the associations obtained also reflect the disposition of meanings to the past. According to V. Burlachuk, common senses that will promote the society integration should exist in the social consciousness during the crisis time. We also managed to identify these senses. They are the so-called "common" recipients' associations. About 200 associations were generated by the students to the word-stimulus *mankind*. 42 of these associations turned to be common. They constitute 21% of the total number of associations.

Thus, such notions as *family, family circle, relatives, generation, ancestors, affiliation, procreation, knowledge transfer* constitute the semantic kernel of the lexeme *mankind* from the point of view of its perception by the students. These notions almost entirely (except the notions related to the last two associations) coincide with the interpretation of the lexeme *mankind* given in the dictionary of Ukrainian language [2] and the structure of the MANKIND concept in the study related to the specifics of its functioning in the Ukrainian linguistic world-image, and carried out by modern linguists Yu. Makarets and O. Slipchuk [4, p. 78]. Obviously, the semantic kernel of the lexeme *mankind* has not changed. But it does not mean that its perception has remained unchanged as well. The rest of association such as *Ukraine, indestructibility, courage, glory, pride, soul, eternal, warm (warmth), you are not alone* should be reckoned in. These associations give an idea of sense values of the experiment participants and are the components of their national self-awareness. Moreover, they suggest that the modern Ukrainian social chronotopos stipulated the appearance of new social meanings, which are not traditionally related to the concept *mankind* in the consciousness of Ukrainians.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The semantic dominant in the associative field of the lexeme-stimulus *mankind* is formed by the associations *family, family circle, relatives, ancestors, generation, genealogical tree, procreation, knowledge transfer, descendants, affiliation, and involvement*. The results obtained after a thorough study indicate to some gender differences in the perception of the lexeme *mankind*. The frequency of using the association *descendants* concerning the word-stimulus *mankind* is predominant among the girls and describes the peculiar semantic vector towards the future. The boys' perception of the same lexeme is quite different. It conveys its sense disposition to the past. Considering the cited above statement of V. Burlachuk we presuppose that the social emotional experience and need for the psychological safety is stronger among the boys during the times of national instability. The word-stimulus *mankind* didn't cause any associations in 4% of girls, whereas the boys always have certain associations with the word-stimulus *mankind*. Unfortunately, it is impossible to explain this phenomenon without further research.

The associations reflecting the social meanings are the constituents of the participants' national self-consciousness. They give the idea of the participants' social values as well as allow creating their mental profile. Nowadays the senses related to the notions *pride, indestructibility, eternity, courage, Ukraine, as well as family, family circle, relatives, ancestors, generation, procreation, descendants* are in the center of the value system of the Ukrainian youth. These senses characterize the current stage in the development of not only the Ukrainian language, but the Ukrainian society taken as a whole.

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