

The Language and Values of Traditional Culture as A Condition for the Preservation and Ethno-Cultural Development of the Region

Besolova E.B.

North-Ossetian Institute of Humanitarian and Social Studies
named after V.I. Abaev – Branch of the Federal State
Budgetary Institution of Science of the Federal Scientific
Center Vladikavkaz Scientific Center of the Russian
Academy of Sciences
Vladikavkaz, Russia
elenabesolova@mail.ru

Abaeva F.O.

North-Ossetian Institute of Humanitarian and Social Studies
named after V.I. Abaev – Branch of the Federal State
Budgetary Institution of Science of the Federal Scientific
Center Vladikavkaz Scientific Center of the Russian
Academy of Sciences
Vladikavkaz, Russia

Zangieva Za.N.

Vladikavkaz College of Management
Vladikavkaz, Russia
zangieva_zn@mail.ru

Abstract – A new understanding of the triad "language – culture – reality" from the second half of the twentieth century in terms of comprehending traditional spiritual culture acquires the value of preserving and transmitting the experience of generations. It is connected with the problem of the relationship between language and culture: the applicability of linguistic concepts and methods to the description of cultural phenomena; the possibility of structural, semantic and arealogical study of folk rituals, beliefs, folklore and mythology; with the difference between the cultural language and the verbal language; collection and interpretation of information about relic cultural models. An interdisciplinary article attempts to show that one of the conditions for the preservation and ethno-cultural development of an ethnos and a region in an era of rapid globalization is a ritual text, allowing to look at the language from the standpoint of the reflection and preservation of the cultural values of the people in the language, as well as the interpretation of semantics and symbolism contained in the ritual terminology. The relevance of the study is due to the fact that The North Caucasus region is a separate ethno-linguistic region, in which both the preservation of ethno-linguistic identity with its dependence on radical changes in social life, and the dynamics of the integration of culture, language and national heritage are of paramount importance.

Keywords – *Ossetian language, ritualism, Caucasian languages, linguistic, cognitive, signs and features of the ceremonial text.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As it is known, environmental legislation is focused mainly on rational resource saving, preservation of the environment, than on the protection of man and the values he creates, both material and spiritual. Scientists have repeatedly focused our attention on the fact that the processes of globalization and social transformations, creating conditions

for the resumption of dialogue between communities, are also sources of a serious threat of degradation, extinction and destruction hanging over the intangible cultural heritage. This concern is also expressed in the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which calls for the respect and preservation of the intangible cultural heritage; draws attention at the local, national and international levels to the significance of this heritage and its recognition, offering in this case international cooperation and assistance [1].

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The object of the study is traditional culture as one of the conditions for the preservation and ethno-cultural development of an ethnos in an era of rapid globalization.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The subject of consideration in the article is the semantic categories of the language of culture, in particular the ritual text, which, together with the data of the people's history and culture, provides factual and analytical material for research in the field of ethnic mentality, religion, language ecology and ethnoecology. We proceeded from the provisions that the ritual text reveals the main features of the national mentality, world outlook and world perception of the people; that the rite is the most enduring form of traditional culture, the synthesis of absolutely all plans – verbal, actional, ethical, aesthetic, symbolic and mythological.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The authors pursue the goal: proceeding from the position that rites, customs and traditions are peculiar characteristics of ethnic community, and that they reveal a strong interweaving

of stage-different, inadequately refracted representations, expressing unique national outlooks in a specific visual-emotional form, contribute to preserving the identity of North Caucasian region, make it attractive for ethno-tourism.

V. RESEARCH METHODS

An integrated approach is applied to the study of the ceremonial text, interdisciplinary methods are used to examine the factual material through the prism of linguistics, ethnography, archeology, folklore studies and history.

According to the authors, the understanding and interpretation of rituals will be completed by customs and rituals that have been lost as a result of urbanization, industrialization, migration and globalization, as well as the peculiarities of the national way of life and cultural values of the people. Another outstanding scientist V.I. Abaev remarked that this is legitimate, stating that the language is able to serve as a historical source, since "it lives for thousands of years, and its testimony acquires the value of historical documents, the skillful reading of which can tell a lot about the past fates of the people to whom this language belongs" [2].

VI. FINDINGS

Any ritual (especially transitional) pursues the goal: to observe the traditional way of life, thereby protecting itself and its kin. The property of the ceremony – contrast – is reproduced in the requirements for the text, which is used to store, transmit and regulate necessary information that is reproduced from generation to generation. The ritual text maintains constancy, which is interpreted as a positive and natural phenomenon; endowed with the original thematic; performs the functions of storing, transmitting and reproducing information; at the same time, it has a special significance and polyfunctionality, which is motivated by its close connection with the situation (temporal, local and action factors). According to ethno-linguists, the fact that the ritual text is assigned to a specific situation distinguishes it from the base text [3–6].

The ritual text begins to act simultaneously with the beginning of the situation and terminates with its ending; this indicates that it, like the base text, has its borders; unlike other types of text, it is not fixed in a rigid framework, therefore the semantic dominant determines its homogeneity and markers.

The boundaries of the text are dynamic, and it can be of any length, depending on the semantic integrity. Behind its form lies a rich cultural layer.

Taking the "appearance" of the word, the text determines a syntagmatic series of concepts and terms, the interpretation of which is impossible without knowledge of the ritual text code. The significance of the accuracy and completeness of the content of the text is dictated by its purpose – to store and reproduce information, because the exact reproduction of the text is the key to its existence, the main function that gives the power of truth to the text.

The maximum safety of information, repeatedly duplicating it, contributes to the simultaneous diversity of

information [6]. This unique feature helps to reconstruct the rite, and possession of a conceptual code close to the notion of "mentality" makes it possible to interpret the rite itself as a link in a chain of family rituals, interpret structural changes: expansion or contraction of individual stages, explain the scarcity or richness of terminology, etc.

So, the rite is a component of the complex information language of folk culture, and therefore we are obliged to consider the rite as a text obeying linguistic, textual laws, and as a cultural phenomenon, taking into account the main cultural categories (space, time, psychological and social indicators), they are represented by cultural oppositions. Built on the opposition of binary distinctive features, cultural oppositions reproduce one of the most ancient types of human thinking – mythopoetic. On the basis of these sets of binary signs, universal sign complexes are constructed, which are an effective means of mastering the world by primitive consciousness. They are a kind of frame, a model of ideas about the world; thanks to cultural oppositions, the text is filled with meaning, and any action performed in the rite becomes logical. It is known that there are few cultural oppositions, but they "are filled with other content, most often antonymous to that which is fixed in most of the others. These situations should be defined and taken into account in a special way" [7]. Let us illustrate.

Cultural oppositions in the text of the funeral-memorial rite (life – death; movement – quietness; one's own – owned by anyone; soul – body; top – bottom; even – uneven; internal – external) have a double function. On the one hand, they give an opportunity to describe the semantics of textual units, and on the other hand, to motivate them, and also serve to characterize the philosophical category of "death". All the means in the ritual under study are subordinated to the same goal – to interpret the tragedy of the phenomenon "death", to make it as understandable as possible. The text of the rite is the intersection of semantic coordinates of such concepts as death, fate, portion, path, grave, cemetery, housing, etc. [6], and these concepts as semantic dominants are capable of constructing the structure of a rite, increasing or decreasing its volume, complexity.

The keenness and urgency of preserving the archaic form of rituals were determined by the goal: to preserve the disappearing vocabulary of the native language. It is the vocabulary of the native language, as the most permeable, that directly reacts to all changes in the economic, cultural, spiritual and social life of the people. In the course of language development, many units of its vocabulary become obsolete, fall out of use. A vivid illustration can be provided by the sectoral vocabulary of the Ossetian language, in which facts of the gradual disappearance of ethnografisms from life and vocabulary are recorded due to the irrelevance of everyday objects themselves [7]. At the same time, the mobility of the vocabulary of language leads to its constant replenishment with new words that have arisen on the basis of their own language, or learned from other languages, the displacement of single words from the language or the loss of their previous meanings.

Since the semantic categories of traditional culture exist only in a cultural context, as has been pointed out more than once in the scientific literature, ideas about them correspond to a certain cultural level. For example, the ritual wedding vocabulary of ethnographic descriptions of the Ossetian wedding, Ossetian folklore collections of folk art, data of dictionaries, including information about the traditional culture of the Ossetians, formed the basis for the reconstruction of the folk ritual text of the Ossetian wedding. As a result, the vocabulary, semantics and symbolism of action, object and character codes were identified and investigated, the verbal component of the Ossetian wedding was described and analyzed; the corpus of ritual wedding terminology was compiled [8]. Ritual terms have a set of characteristics typical of folklore vocabulary: polysemanticism, synonymy, expressiveness, ceremonial symbolism and metaphoricity distinguish them from other terminological systems. For example, the mythopoetic thinking of a primitive man for the first time attempted to unite the origin of the "death" category, depicting the controversial image in creating delightful myths about death (cf. in the heroic epic "Narts" the legend of Soslan's journey to the Land of the Dead). A detailed description of the shadow world appears. Particular importance is attached to the place where the souls of the departed fall. This is not a faceless territorial space, as before, but a whole world in which there are its own inhabitants, its own laws, and even relief is described in detail, indicating rivers, mountains, and vegetation. The most interesting feature of the afterlife is the presence of the court and its attributes. With the advent of the court, the topic of fate arises, which becomes of particular importance for the funeral-memorial ceremony. Cf., on the one hand, adzal – weird, fate – is synonymous with death: Адзалы кӕхыл ныллӕуыд. – His death hour came [9]. On the other hand, this is one of the means of overcoming the fear of death, embodied in the idea of humility: Адзалӕн амал нӕй. – You can't escape the fate. Адзалӕн мадзал нӕй. – You cannot avoid death. Over time, the ideas of death are complicated, supplemented, specified. Death becomes an integral component of the overall picture of the world. In relation to it, people begin to judge life, to determine the hierarchy of life values. From now on, all mankind is conditionally divided into two polar camps: some perceive death as oblivion, while others allow themselves to hope for the acquisition of eternal life, but after death. It is the ideas of the second group that are characteristic of the traditional culture of the Ossetians, which contribute to the interpretation of the laws of the construction and functioning of their ritual text.

The ritual text is characterized by the presence of external and internal structure. The complexity of the ritual structure depends on the complexity of the transmission of information, and the choice of "folding" or "expanding" its individual stages depends on their specific significance. The structure of the text is closely related to the space-time categories, which allow us to represent the whole mechanism of the rite in motion, more precisely, in the space-time movement.

In the ethnocultural and cultural studies it is well known that the dwelling of the highlander хӕдзар was not only a place of residence, but also a demonstration of the microcosm.

Therefore, each place in it is strictly conditioned and fulfilled its function, for example, the threshold кӕсӕр associated in the national consciousness with the boundary of the internal and external spaces was endowed with increased danger.

No less indicative is the action taken with the threshold not in its customary meaning, but as a place of "transition" associated with the danger of the contact of two spaces: one's own and another's. The action is simple and widespread. The essence of the action is to "shorten the life" of a person, "to bedevil". To do this, the cemetery land or the "enchanted by speeches land" is poured under the threshold. After committing the action, one waits until the person is sick, waste away and die.

The given examples make it possible to make sure that at least two spaces exist in the public consciousness: the external (alien) and the internal (own); functional change of habitual objects, actions, etc., is situationally determined, in which both examples allow to be convinced.

The differentiation of the two spaces in the minds of the highlanders was so great that mixing was out of the question. For example, the most honorable place in the Ossetian house was occupied by a dead man. It was placed near the hearth, i.e. in the center of hadzar. Ethnographic materials make it possible to assert that there is no cleaner or more honorable place than the above mentioned one in the whole hadzar [10].

The semantics of the two spaces is easily reproduced in action and is amplified by a temporary factor. The disappearance of boundaries and the collision of spaces signals the commission of the rite. Fixing such a collision of space in a ritual, as well as attracting cultural oppositions, allows us to interpret the peculiarities of the actions performed during this period, the unusual use of objects, to discover their ritual mark. The combination of several stages in one time period is characteristic for ceremonial time. For example, the temporary unit "funeral day" includes farewell, road and burial. During the ceremony, the status of the main participant, the deceased, changes from the nomination уддзымд, ӕдзард – uninhabited (that is, entering the state) – амӕлӕг, сгуйхт, зӕн (euphemistically) – dead (the state itself) – to the nomination мард – deceased (output from the substance) [11].

A curious feature of ritual time is its reversibility, which makes it possible to reveal the fundamental difference between the properties of ritual time, which exists in popular beliefs, from time in philosophical understanding. For example, it is generally known that a deceased person can be seen alive and healthy in a dream, talk to him, etc., in other words, return the initial moment that takes place before the death is committed, before the funeral. Consequently, the time vector will not be directed from the past through the present to the future, that is, according to philosophical laws, but in the opposite direction – from the present to the past. It seems to us very important to have the very possibility of moving time, although in a dream, in the reverse order, since for the funeral-commemoration rite the opposition (that is, everything is vice versa, different than living people) is a significant and characteristic feature [12]. A characteristic feature of the

second opposition is the strict tightness of the ritual action for a certain time period.

Each period is designed to perform its strictly defined function. Since space and time are intertwined with each other, there is also a dangerous period in time, which is carefully avoided. This is the so-called timelessness, that is, time from twelve to thirteen o'clock in the afternoon or from twenty-four to one in the morning. It is believed that in this period of time dominates the evil force. In order to avoid a collision with an otherworldly force, it is strictly forbidden to carry out the deceased in a specified period of time. That is why the Ossetians take out a dead man in the summer after two o'clock in the afternoon, in the winter after 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

The third opposition is notable for its calendar orientation. On weekdays, the funeral took place on the second or third day after the death. The holiday could set restrictions or impose a ban.

The fourth opposition, which is based on a differential sign, is associated with a memorial time.

Such, as we see, is the consideration of the entire ritual time with the help of oppositions, which makes it possible to talk about the invariance and stability of mythological ideas for such a sphere of folk culture as sacral ritualism.

The life of the Ossetian people is rich in various rites and customs, both calendar and special, associated with birth, marriage and death, and it manifests collective consciousness, mental beliefs, types, genres and forms of folk culture, the established worldview of the ethnoses.

Consideration of "the relationship and connection of language and spiritual culture, language and folk mentality, language and folk art, their interdependence and different types of their correspondence", according to N.I. Tolstoy requires a thorough study of the whole plan of cultural content, folk psychology and mythology, regardless of the means and methods of their formal implementation [3].

It is known that the valley of the Terek River was a space of contacts and the next ensuing place where the North Caucasian peoples developed, helped to overcome ethnic and linguistic differences. Confirmation of ethnocultural commonality between Ossetians and Vainakhs is the similarity in ritualism, in particular, funeral and memorial [13, 14].

Ethnocultural intimacy took place between Ossetians and Balkars, as evidenced by the Ossetian-Balkarian ethnocultural parallels in rituals, which were caused primarily by the interrelated processes of the ethnogenesis of these peoples [15].

Another moment of the formation of the cultural community of mountain peoples is due to the common historical destinies. Economic relations and social ties and relations between Ossetian mountain societies and the feudal lords of Cherkessia, Bolshaya and Malaya Kabarda contributed to the formation of the cultural community of the mountaineers of the North Caucasus. It should be noted that social relations at the inter-ethnic level became another factor contributing to the formation of the ethnocultural North Caucasian community.

The basis of the traditional worldview of the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus was the mythological layers of consciousness. Historical features of the development of mountain culture contributed to the preservation of pagan cults, beliefs, rites, rituals, which were an important component of the everyday and festive life of peoples, and even after these peoples adopted one of the monotheistic religions – Islam or Christianity.

Note that both world religions – Christianity and Islam – even in the environment in which they were established as dominant, under the influence of local pagan beliefs, they acquired ethnically adapted forms. Ethnic adaptation of world religions and their secondary mythologization expressed, in our opinion, in the presence in the structure and content of the pagan beliefs and customs of the mountain peoples of the archaic layers of the myth, the mythological development of reality, such as totemic animals; the cult of the sun-hearth; cult of ancestors; the cult of worship of holy mountains, trees, groves, places hit by lightning; the cult of the patron saints of the family and village, as well as the appearance in the pantheon of gods of the supreme deity, which testified to the decisive importance in the worldview, world outlook and world perception of the mountaineers of mythological forms of thinking and mastering of reality.

The ethnic diversity and commonality of traditional mountain culture was fully manifested in the heroic epic of Narts, which became the heritage of all North Caucasian peoples, and this makes the epic a possible source of reconstruction of the spiritual culture of North Caucasian peoples on its mythological and cosmological basis.

VII. CONCLUSION

So, the mythologization of the universe, the peculiarities of the text of folk rituals and the semantic level of its ideological sphere enable us to search for its ideological origins in their mythological concept. Any action in ritual, any use in the ritual of the subject due to the positions of mythological images; sometimes ordinary household items in the context of the rite acquire sacred meaning and carry an additional semantic filling. Information from the past to the future is transmitted by the main set of symbols, which have the ability to combine different chronological layers of culture and determine its national and areal boundaries, being a kind of memory code.

Ritual objects in the rite specify the text, carry in themselves both symbolic and mythical fullness, perform a utilitarian function, affect the person and the surrounding world, giving way to the accumulated emotions. When the ceremonial text loses its functional connection with the cultural system, with the reality in which it exists, it either disappears or acquires new functions. The ritual vocabulary archaicizes the mythical element that has become irrelevant whereas the vocabulary preserves its relict. In this case, only an appeal to the material sphere of the rite helps to clarify these archaic values, but an appeal to the structure of the rite opens up even greater possibilities.

Oral traditions and forms of expression, including language as a carrier of intangible cultural heritage;

performing arts; customs, ceremonies, festivals; knowledge and customs related to nature and the universe; knowledge and skills related to traditional crafts – all of the above constitutes the spiritual cultural heritage of the people and needs to be taken as measures to ensure the viability, including its identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, popularization, enhancement of its role, its transference, mainly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revival of various aspects of such a heritage [1].

And further. This intangible cultural heritage, in particular on the territory of Ossetia (customs, ceremonies, crypts, tombs, towns of the “dead”, folk crafts, etc.), transmitted from generation to generation, makes ethno-tourism a promising direction of modernization of the socio-economic structure of the region, and this, in our opinion, is significant for the role of national ritualism, which has both an introductory function, and cultural and leisure one.

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