



Ethnosemiometric Parameterisation of Diachronic Core of the Concept TRUTH and its Profiles in the British Axioconceptosphere

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Abstract

The article deals with the diachronic core of the value concept TRUTH, which is a mental construct, a model with a complex network of conceptual and motivational features demonstrating a variety of primary semantic features of the designated concepts firstly for a person of pagan consciousness and later for a Christian one. These signs are detected by ethnosemiometric parameterisation of the internal form of the name of the concept which holds their primary origins. This objectifies the concept in the value dimension and reflects the collective archetype representation of the British about the concept. Also, the reconstruction of cognitive mechanisms of transfer of its diachronic conceptual features from one sphere to another (established order – faith) is carried out. Therefore, the value is always the center of the concept, since the concept is a “bundle of culture”, which is based on a value and significance principle. There are grounds to assert that the axioconceptosphere of each ethnic group is ontological and epistemological synergetic-evolutionary entity, in which their archetypal signs are transformed as historically and evolutionarily, as culturally, socially, spiritually, individually. Depending on the type of values that the concept TRUTH objectifies, some of its features become central, while others are marginalized. To verify this assumption, we propose the 2-stage algorithm of ethnosemiometric parameterisation of the value concept TRUTH: the first stage – the analysis of Indo-European and Proto Germanic forms and meanings of its name – the lexeme truth with their semantic transitions, and the second stage – analysis of etymological and semantic profiles of the lexeme truth with the words trust, belief, faith, which have the meaning of faith in the English language. We have made a preliminary conclusion that in the long search of an answer to “What is the truth?” the researchers assert that mentalizing of this concept in consciousness is determined by the peculiarity of national worldview and axioconceptosphere where primary senses of the value concept TRUTH were formed in ontogenesis as its diachronic core. The conceptual and content features are best realized within the framework of separate models of the world: scientific, naive, religious.

Keywords: concept Truth, axioconceptosphere, ethnosemiometry, diachronic core.

1. Introduction

The concept of the interdependence of the transcendent and the existential (biological, psychological, social, cultural, etc.) ways of human Genesis, according to L. Vikolova and K. Serebrennikova, is based primarily on such phenomenon as identity [8]. We believe this notion began to form first in the sphere of initial (syncretic) consciousness of ancient ethnic groups who at that stage unconsciously felt the difference between “friends” and “foe”.

This articulation of issue requires a more detailed explanation of the concept “ethnic and cultural identity”, which was realized by the British gradually in different evolutionary periods of their development. The focus should be on the disclosure of relationships between the key dichotomy of language and ethnicity that remains central in the ethnography (A. Baiburin), sociology (A. Maimakova) and ethnolinguistics (W. von Humboldt) and the discussion around which has exacerbated by modern geopolitical, territorial, intercultural contacts and even conflicts.

Indo-European (I.-E.) ethnic group should be considered in the context of the search of their homeland (territory of residence and further migration), which became the main theme in Indo-European (L. Zalizniak) and predominantly linguistic research (T. Gamkrelidze).

L. Gumilev asserted natural character of ethnic formations and noted that at the time of the occurrence a single ethnic group got a boost of single energy charge and, having exhausted it, passed either to the bifurcation state with the environment or broke up into parts. According to L. Gumilev, in the biosphere there are natural groups of people with a common stereotype of behavior, a kind of internal structure, which oppose themselves to all other similar groups [2]. This implies the assumption that the ethnic group is an organic social structure, which is based on the system of ethnic and cultural information and the translator of which is the language. Each language stands as a productive system



of symbols and reflects the experience of the people. People unconsciously transfer the norms established by the language into the sphere of experience. These statements relate to the ethnic constants formed and preserved in the consciousness of certain groups of people. These constants are inherited by the next generations in the form of values, meanings, norms and rules and become mental formations – concepts. The key value concept of the British culture, which origin dates back to the Indo-European period, is the concept TRUTH.

2. Research methodology

Study of understanding and evaluation of the self in relation to the “other/others” and toward the world in general can be effective with the method of ethnosemiometry, which relies on the assumption that the processes of world conceptualization in semiosis are accompanied by the process of evaluation [6].

We consider the term ethno-semio-metry, after Vikulova and Serebrennikova [8], in two standpoints: firstly as a measurement procedure (which is incorporated in the final component of the term – “metry”) of the two aspects (form and content) fixed (reflected) in the language of values (indicated in the initial component “ethno” and the central one – “semio”). The initial component provides the analysis of a specific linguistic symbolic form in a particular cultural chronotope and cultural deixis while the component “semio” requires to reconstruct the meaning of this form. Thus, semantically loaded signs reveal significant senses correlated with the **sphere of values**. By the chronotope we mean diachronic and synchronic period in the evolution of the British society: from the Indo-European ethnic community through Proto Germanic periods of linguistic unity and the periods of the English language development – anchors of correlation of time (divergent) and space (convergent) relations with the specific ways and means of the world reflection at different stages of consciousness development of its carriers: from mythological and syncretic to the modern differential one. The richness of each national language is determined not only by the vocabulary and broad grammatical possibilities but also by the richness of the conceptual sphere, which reflects the character of the speech personality of a certain ethnic group. The diachronic core of the value concept TRUTH was formulated in mythological and pagan Indo-European consciousness as one of the ethnic archetype constants (V. Karasik) in axioconceptosphere.

3. Results of the research

Previous observations on the symbolism of the primary meanings of the lexeme *truth* suggest that its internal form was formed on the basis of ideas about the image of a tree, because a well-rooted tree is strong, unshakable, stable and powerful. When this word entered old English, it had acquired the meaning “honest, pure”, “persistent, strong, solid” or “trustworthy”, “strong in faith”, “real, true” in proto Germanic period. All these first meanings reach above-mentioned I.-E. roots *deru-*, *dreu-* and became the basis of the internal word form of various Germanic languages: Germ. *Treue* “loyalty”, “devotion”, “precision and correctness”, Icel. *tru* “true”, Swed. *tro*, *trygg*, Old Scand. *tryggr*, Goth. *trauains* “trust, faith”, *triggws* “loyal, reliable”, and other Northern languages: Lith. *drošs* “reliable, trustworthy”, Est. *truu*. It is also appropriate to include the English phrase *true friend*.

It is possible to compare their reflexes and genetic ties with Engl. *trust* “trust”, **true** “genuine”, *truce* “armistice, treaty, union”, *trust* – “faith, reliance”, and *truth* – “right”, “law”.

Returning to the semantics of “hardness, strength” associated with a tree, we note that it is also symbolically connected with the original source of the birth of fire, because the friction of wood on wood gives results in fire. The ritual and sacral functions of fire symbolize the process of purification, and, therefore, fire is considered the source of any birth. It can be traced in semantics of “burn” in the I.-E. root **kel-* (this is typical of many other Indo-European roots) and in its English derivative *clean* which symbolizes **order** and harmony. Latest meanings are reconstructed in I.-E. root **dreu-*, corresponded with Old Ind. *dharmah-* “order, harmony”. These etymological hypotheses reflect the symbolism of the WORLD TREE as a visual image of the reflection of order and harmony, the key to which is **stability**, **firmness**, **honesty** and **faith**, and therefore, **truth** / verity. I.-E. root **tris* (triunity: the symbolic top/crown of the trees – the world of the gods, the kingdom of heaven – SKY; the trunk / rod – human and animal world – the EARTH; the roots / bottom – the underground world of gods and deceased ancestors, the underworld) is reconstructed in Old Engl. *drisn* “hair, rod”. A rod metaphorically represents the vertical (Top – Sky), World Axis which permeates and connects the worlds (heavenly and earthly).

The semantics of “order and harmony” is syncretically connected with the semantics “faith, trust”, which is reconstructed in the (I.-E. root **dreu*, which is the origin of Prus. *drumit* “to believe”, *drumi*



“faith”, Latin. *credere* “to believe”. Same meaning may be connected with Sansk. *dhruva* “hard” (as wood), “permanent”, *dru, daru* “wood,” and with Engl. *tree*; Gr. *δρυς* “oak”.

Given semantic transitions of tree symbolism as the image of stability, firmness, harmony and order into the symbol of **faith** reflect the fact that faith, stability, hardness associated with wood in pre-Christian cultures, especially with such a holy relic for many pagan cultures, including Indo-European, as the oak, which was the place for sacrifice and holy magic rituals. The druid cult considered oak as the most important and sacred tree associated with the center. The name “druid” reaches I.-E. root **dru* “oak” (see **dreu* – “to be firm, resistant”). The oath on an oak as on the strongest tree in druidism ensured firmness and compliance with concluded agreement (hence Goth. *trausti* “agreement, alliance”).

The next stage of the analysis involves the study of etymological and semantic transitions of the lexeme *truth* with the words that in the English language have the semantics of faith: *trust, belief, faith*. Modern understanding of the lexeme *trust* is “strong faith based on logic and internal beliefs”. The Noun *belief* means “a weak faith, which accepts a truth based on logic without any real evidence and facts”. The lexeme *faith* is used to denote “reckless faith without the use of logic and reason”.

The genetic relationship mentioned above becomes evident from these three modern meanings of given lexemes because both lexemes **trust** and **truth** reach the same I.-E. root **deru-*. The semantic structure of the word *trust* mostly preserves the common primary meaning “persistent, firm faith”, and it enables to assert value sense of truth based on a firm belief in something.

We try to trace if there are semantic and genetic links between the three synonymous lexemes, which are all names of the concept TRUST.

In the English language, the lexeme *belief* came into use in the XII century in the Christian meaning as “faith in this religion”, replacing old English *geleafa*, which was also used as “faith, trust” but it was related to West Germanic form **ga-laubon* “respect and trust” (genetic derivatives of which is Old Sax. *gilobo*, Germ. *Glaube*) with the saved and reconstructed I.-E. prefix **ga-* and which was derived from I.-E. etymon **galaub-* “dear, respected”, formed by means of intensive prefix **ga-* + I.-E. root **leubh-* “to care for, desire, love”. Prefix **ga-* has been changed by analogy with the verb *believe*.

Since 1200 it has been used to denote “the basic religious or church doctrines according to which things are considered true as objects of religious significance” [5].

Therefore, semantic transitions of original meaning of faith were connected with “trust in God” and were expressed by the lexeme *belief*, whereas the original semantics of faith, marked by lexeme *trust*, meant a “solid devotion to a person, firm faith in existence as its truth”.

Following semantic ideas about faith can be traced from the middle of the XIII century in the word *faith* and its genetic derivatives *faith, feith, fei, fai* that meant “faithfulness to a promise (hence the religious concept vows)”; “loyalty to a person”; “honesty, veracity, truthfulness”, which was borrowed in English from Old French *feid, foi* “faith, trust, confidence” that comes from Lat. *fides* “trust, faith, confidence”, associated with the root of the verb *fidere* “to trust” which reaches I.-E. form **bheidh-* “trust, confide, persuade”.

Since the XIV century, according to the etymological versions, the lexeme *faith* (Lat. *fides* — religious belief) has acquired a broad religious sense. And since the XVI century the use of the lexeme *trust* within the meaning of “logical mental perception of things in existence as true / truthful” and lexeme *belief-* in the perception of “things to be true as the objects of religious doctrine” have become limited.

4. Summary

The value diachronic core of the concept TRUTH in the consciousness of British as the descendants of Indo-Europeans was formed by sequential formation of ideological and civilizational foundations of GENESIS on the basis of primitive notions about these concepts in three evolutionary stages: 1) pagan / cosmogonic, 2) Christian-biblical, 3) modern European (secular).

Pagan stage of value worldview cognition of truth is characterized by the combination of sacred and profane components. The sacral component is the order of the world, the establishment of the basic structures of existence at the cosmogonic, natural and cultural levels. In this period, the acts of gods founded the key archetypes (ethnic Indo-European constants), which were standard for all spheres of human life. Its profane component is the everyday existence of the Indo-Europeans.

In the pagan model of the world the order and stability were provided by the ritual (as faith in its enforcement to ensure relations with the gods) and the cult of the tree as a visual-sensorial perception of the world, the crown of which metaphorically could be understood as symbolic top – sky, the trunk was conceived as firm and strong faith in the magical power of ritual, the roots — as the ancestors.

In the Germanic model of the world and the British as its descendants, the basis of stability and order of Genesis, i.e. truth, is the cult of the tree as a natural and at the same time cosmogonic object



(artefact), metaphorically indicated as the name of the concept TRUTH even in Old English. During Christianization Indo-European value constants of the concept of TRUTH continue to encode the affirmations accepted as standard under the influence of the idea of transcendent God, God the Creator. However, the dominance of other constants can also be traced, in particular TRUST, BELIEF, FAITH.

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