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HOSPITALITY FROM THE RUSSIAN AND VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVES: WEB CORPORA ANALYSIS

The article presents a fragment of the large-scale international study aimed at investigating the Russians and Vietnamese self- and mutual perceptions embedded in language and culture. In order to discriminate the cultural difference in the content of the notions designated by the quasi-equivalent lexemes in the two languages, the authors attempt to analyze one of the common characteristics of Russian and Vietnamese “self-portraits”. The notion of hospitality (гостеприимство/hiếu khách) was examined using corpus data. The SketchEngine and two built-in web corpora, ruTenTen11 and VietnameseWaC, were utilized for automatic construction of thesauri of this notion. It was shown that the sets of semantic components that describe the studied lexical unit demonstrate certain degree of incongruity and provide additional information about Russian and Vietnamese “self-portraits” that include quasi-equivalent lexis.

Keywords: corpus study, psycholinguistics, intercultural Russian-Vietnamese dialogue, ethnic self-identification, characterological self-portrait.

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ГОСТЕПРИИМСТВО В ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИИ РУССКИХ И ВЬЕТНАМЦЕВ: ДАННЫЕ ВЕБ-КОРПУСОВ

В настоящей работе представлен фрагмент масштабного международно-го исследования, направленного на изучение функционирующих в языке и культуре взаимных представлений и самопредставлений русских и вьетнамцев. С целью выявления культурных различий в содержании понятий, выраженных квази-эквивалентными лексемами, авторы предприняли попытку проанализировать одну общую характеристику «автопортретов» русского и вьетнамского народов. Объектом исследования послужило понятие гостеприимство/hiếu khách, изученное на материале корпусных данных. Для автоматического создания тезауруса данного понятия использовался сервис SketchEngine и два встроенных веб-корпуса, ruTenTen11 и VietnameseWaC. Показано, что набор семантических компонентов, составляющих значение изучаемых лексических единиц двух языков, демонстрирует определенную степень неконгруэнтности и позволяет получить дополнительную информацию об «автопортретах» русских и вьетнамцев, включающих в себя квази-эквивалентную лексику.

Ключевые слова: корпусное исследование, психолингвистика, межкультурный диалог Россия — Вьетнам, этническая самоидентификация, характерологический автопортрет.

Introduction

The multi-level investigation of mutual perceptions between representatives of different cultures and nations is a crucial for proper intercultural dialogue, the establishment of which prevents possible misunderstanding, miscommunication, and intercultural conflicts. Russia and Vietnam are the two nations with a long history of mutually beneficial relationship in many fields. A number of previous studies were devoted to the investigation of the culture-specific linguistic images of the world, namely the concept of Vietnam in the Russian linguistic consciousness [Uong, 2018]; the regional aspects of the Russian linguistic consciousness [Balyasnikova et al., 2018]; the reflection of the world in the linguistic consciousness of the Vietnamese [Nguyen, 2000]; etc. In order to reveal the differences in the linguistic images of the world, such studies often include the comparison of the data obtained in different nations, contrasting, e. g., the concept holiday [Haitong and Chulkina, 2021] and the *svoy-chuzhoy* opposition [Paderina and Xue, 2021] in the Russians and the Chinese; the concept of hometown in German, Russian, and Vietnamese cultures [Mymrina and Abdrashitova, 2015], to mention but a few. However, comprehensive, multifaceted studies devoted to mutual representation of the Russians and the Vietnamese in language and culture were initiated only recently [Markovina et al., 2021; Markovina et al., 2022].

This paper relies on the data obtained in the questionnaire-based study of Russian–Vietnamese mutual perceptions from linguistic and cultural perspectives [Markovina et al., 2022]. One of the notions, hospitality (*гостеприимство*/hiếu khách), was among the most frequent characteristics attributed by both the Russian and the Vietnamese respondents to their respective nations. Bearing in mind the importance of hospitality for the cultural frameworks of the two nations, we decided to further investigate *гостеприимство*/hiếu khách by corpus linguistics methods.

Corpus linguistics is a relatively new field of linguistics that enables the researchers to analyze large textual collections (linguistic corpora) by special computer software [McEnery and Hardie, 2012]. However, it can provide information regarding grammar, discourse, metaphors, etc., as well as gain invaluable ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic data about different peoples across the globe.

The current study describes the preliminary results of the interim stage of the international project “Mutual representations of Russians and Vietnamese in language and culture” supported by the RFBR and VASS.

Materials and methods

The notion *гостеприимство*/hiếu khách was investigated using SketchEngine, an online corpus linguistics research tool [Kilgariff et al., 2004], and two built-in corpora, Russian Web 2011 (ruTenTen11, 18.2B words) and Vietnamese Web (VietnameseWaC, 106.4M words). Both corpora are comprised of Internet web-pages (i.e., they are similar in terms of source text genres), are cleaned, deduplicated, and tagged. Moreover, these corpora have close data collection periods (2011 and 2010, respectively). The size difference between the selected corpora was disregarded as only qualitative data were used in the present study.

The semantic comparison of the notions *гостеприимство* and hiếu khách was performed using built-in automatic thesaurus function. The LogDice score values (provided in the parentheses) reflect the co-occurrence of the investigated notions and the notions from the generated thesauri. However, they are provided for information purpose only due to the qualitative nature of the study. The attempt to explain different shades of meaning was made using two lexicographic sources [The Explanatory Dictionary of the Contemporary Russian Language, 2014; The Vietnamese Explanatory and Translation Dictionary].

Results and Discussion

Hospitality is often regarded as a national characteristic (e.g. Russian hospitality) and should not be confused with the hospitality industry. Moreover, it can be viewed as a crosscultural and even transhistorical phenomenon [Kossakowska-Maras, 2020]. Previous studies have focused on the conceptual difference between the Russian and the Chinese hospitality [Tugusheva, 2018], as well as on the investigation of the hospitality in Russian culture using Russian classical literature as the data source [Kiseleva and Sakharchuk, 2019].

The Russians are renowned for their hospitality, which is confirmed by the corpus data. In the Russian corpus, this noun is often combined with corresponding adjectives, such as:

- *радушное гостеприимство* (cordial hospitality), *хлебосольное гостеприимство* (good table–hospitality), *щедрое гостеприимство* (generous hospitality): the qualitative adjectives provide additional shades of meaning;
- *русское гостеприимство* (Russian hospitality), *абхазское гостеприимство* (Abkhaz hospitality), *восточное гостеприимство* (Oriental hospitality): these adjectives denote the region famous for its hospitality;

- непревзойденное гостеприимство (unsurpassed hospitality), исключительное гостеприимство (exceptional hospitality): these adjectives describe the degree of hospitality.

We can assume that the frequency of relevant collocations found in the corpus and their diversity designate the value of the notion (personal quality/character trait) for this particular culture [Ge, 2022].

The Explanatory Dictionary of the Contemporary Russian Language defines гостеприимство (hospitality) as “Радушие по отношению к гостям, любезный прием гостей” (Cordiality towards guests, amiable welcome of guests), thus, confirming that радушие (cordiality, score 0.298) is indeed one of the most important qualities that describe гостеприимство (hospitality). This is supported by both the corpus data and the results of our previous studies, where радушие (cordiality) was one of the mentioned qualities linked with гостеприимство (hospitality) [Markovina et al., 2022].

A hospitable person is usually the one who should demonstrate доброжелательность (benevolence, score 0.273), дружелюбие (friendliness, score 0.272), доброту (kindness, score 0.256), and отзывчивость (responsiveness, score 0.231) towards guests. Щедрость (generosity, score 0.267), as in щедрое гостеприимство (generous hospitality), traditionally characterizes the host’s attitude towards the provision of food and drinks to the guests, while искренность (sincerity, score 0.219) implies the absence of hypocrisy.

It is of interest that уют (cosiness, score 0.213), found in the corpus data, is also an important aspect of Russian hospitality: welcoming guests into a place that gives a feeling of comfort, warmth, and relaxation is an essential part of what is understood by the Russian term гостеприимство (hospitality).

In our opinion, both благородство (nobility, score 0.205) and великодушие (magnanimity, score 0.202) are rarely used towards guests; these nouns describe a person of high virtue, who also demonstrates гостеприимство (hospitality).

During the previous stage of the current research, Russian respondents provided two other qualities related to гостеприимство (hospitality) — добродушие (good nature) and жизнелюбие (love of life). The Vietnamese respondents linked hiếu khách (hospitality) to thân thiện (friendliness), nhân ái (benevolence), and niềm nở (cordiality) [Markovina et al., 2022].

The lexicographic source showed that the Russian радушие (cordiality) is a «Сердечное, ласковое отношение, соединенное с гостеприимством» (Warm, affectionate attitude, combined with hospitality) [The

Explanatory Dictionary of the Contemporary Russian Language, 2014], whereas the Vietnamese *hiếu khách* (hospitality) is more active, “enthusiastic” [The Vietnamese Explanatory and Translation Dictionary].

According to the Vietnamese corpus, *hãn hũ* (rarity, score 0.5) is the key component related to the Vietnamese hospitality. However, it describes not the rarity of hospitality itself, but its unsurpassed degree [Quynh 2021; Van Thang 2018]. In a similar manner, Vietnamese hospitality is also characterized by *ưu việt* (superiority, score 0.4) and *chi li* (particularity, score 0.38). Of particular interest is the *trinh khiết* (purity, score 0.32), which may describe the quality of food being served [The Vietnamese Explanatory and Translation Dictionary].

The corpus data suggests that the Vietnamese experience *khối chí* (joyfulness, score 0.34) when welcoming the guests and usually dress with *bảnh* (elegance, score 0.32) for such occasions. A series of notions found in the Vietnamese corpus (*bấp bênh* (precariousness, score 0.298), *nhều khê* (difficulty, score 0.38), and *đạm bạc* (frugality, score 0.34)), in our opinion, may reflect possible economic hardships and other limitations that prevent demonstration of proper hospitality. Another notion, *hiệu nghiệm* (efficacy, score 0.33), might denote the result of hospitality.

The study discussed is the second stage of the international research project aimed at investigating the Russian–Vietnamese mutual perceptions reflected in both languages and cultures. At the first stage of the project the authors obtained two sets of characteristics that constitute the ethnic portraits and self-portraits of the two nations. The second stage provided the comprehensive in-depth analysis of the culture-specific content of the notion hospitality (*гостеприимство/hiếu khách*), based on corpora data. At the further stages of the research all the components of the ethnic portraits and self-portraits will be compared and analyzed based on the methodology developed and tested at the stage described in this paper.

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed the incongruity between the sets of semantic components of the studied lexical units. The hospitality of both peoples is described as generous, but for Russians it is more important to demonstrate their cordiality, while for the Vietnamese hospitality includes the idea of superiority.

The authors are well aware of the limitation of this study, which is the application of the Internet-based corpora as the source for the analysis of the culture-specific notions. Such corpora typically contain the limited

variety of texts, thus, not giving the comprehensive idea of the respective cultures. However, the textual content of the studied corpora provide the foundation for further research on the topic.

The use of corpus linguistics approach yielded additional information about Russian and Vietnamese self-portraits that include quasi-equivalent lexis. The result supports the assumption that the data obtained using traditional methods can be effectively analyzed by corpus linguistics methods and by this combined approach comprehensive description of the meanings of the “common” cultural phenomena of various peoples can be obtained. Based on the results of the stage described, the ethnopsycholinguistic research will be done in order to reconstruct the Russian-Vietnamese mutual perceptions reflected in the respective languages and cultures. The authors believe that the ultimate result of this international project will promote better understanding and more effective cross-cultural communication of the two nations.

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