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Cross-cultural Anthropology in Slavic Cultural Linguistics

The intellectual tradition of “linguistic culturology” in Slavic studies has introduced the ideas of a national linguistic personality, defined by a specific linguistic image of the world widespread among the speakers who share that linguistic personality. They have also proposed that certain culture-specific words, phrases, their meanings, collocations, and links between them (most notably associative) testify to that specific national linguistic personality. This tradition can be seen in works like (Bartmiński, Chlebda 2008; Bartmiński 2005, 2013, 2014; Karaulov 2010; Kornilov 2014) and (Zaliznyak et al. 2005, 2012). This stream of scholars should be given their due credit, for drawing attention of linguistic community towards the nexus of language and culture. Additionally, Wierzbicka (1992, 1997), although she has a broader linguistic focus, represents similar way of thinking and uses Slavic language materials in her analyses. Outside Slavic languages, and aside from Wierzbicka’s disciples who work with non-Slavic languages, one should mention cultural linguistics (works like [Palmer 1996] and [Sharifian 2011, 2017]), which bears a resemblance to the aforementioned tradition represented by Slavic scholars.

Concurrently, ample research has been done in the field of cross-cultural anthropology, which offers various opportunities to establish solid ground for linguistic comparison. This line of research includes the authors focusing on concrete and measurable dimensions that vary from one culture to another. This tradition of research is aptly summarized in Dahl (2004). In particular, a promising ground for Slavic cultural linguistic work is offered by Hall’s classic patterns (Hall 1959, 1966) and Hofstede’s 6-D model (see [Hofstede, Hofstede 1994] and

[Hofstede 2001]). In one of Hall's classic patterns, monochronic cultures construe time on a single line with very clearly divided past, present, and future, while polychronic cultures construe multiple timelines, where past, present, and future are intertwined. This has various consequences, among others, better time management, and division of personal and work time in monochronic cultures. In one of Hofstede's dimensions, individualistic cultures value competition more than cooperation, while collectivistic cultures value cooperation more than competition.

The present paper strives to point to the opportunities that the aforementioned cross-cultural anthropological approaches offer for further studies in Slavic cultural linguistics. At the same time, it points to the possibilities of introducing a more rigorous and comprehensive methodology in the study of Slavic cultural linguistic phenomena. A more elaborate treatment of this subject is laid out in (Šipka 2019).

In order to illustrate the proposed incorporation of cross-cultural anthropological into the research in Slavic cultural linguistics, an analysis based on the Hall's classic pattern of monochronism vs. polychronism and Hofstede's dimension of individualism vs. collectivism were used in the analysis of multiple equivalence between English and Serbo-Croatian.

Šipka (2007), a list of basic 1542 Serbo-Croatian words, was used to extract entries from the electronic version of Benson (1993), a Serbo-Croatian — English dictionary with multiple English equivalents. This yielded a list comprising 640 items. For more information about the methodology, the taxonomy used to establish subject-matter fields, the limitations of this research, and further analyses in this approach, see (Šipka 2019: 82–95).

The analysis of the subject-matter areas where the cases of multiple equivalence have been found shows the distribution as shown in Table 1 (frequency shows the number of dictionary

entries where multiple equivalence exists, and its percent is also provided).

Table 1. Subject-matter fields of Serbo-Croatian — English Multiple Equivalence

Category	Frequency	Percent
Social roles and Affective-Cognitive Processes (Social Interaction)	172	27.3
Artifacts (Institutions)	65	10.3
Measures	159	25.2
Operators (Logical Operators)	58	9.2
Body Parts	27	4.3
Other	149	23.7
Total	630	100

If these cases of multiple equivalence are analyzed using the aforementioned Hall's classic pattern of monochronism vs. polychronism and Hofstede's dimension of individualism and collectivism, we can see that these cross-cultural differences between mainstream Serbo-Croatian cultures and their English-speaking counterparts can elucidate the fact why is multiple equivalence concentrated in exactly the areas summarized in Table 1. Mainstream English-speaking cultures are monochronic and individualist, their Serbo-Croatian counterparts polychronic and collectivistic. The English language establishes more precise lexical delimitations in broadly understood measures. For example, Serbo-Croatian *račun* has the following English equivalents: *arithmetic, mathematics, calculus, bill, check, account, receipt, calculation, plan*. The same fine grained distinctions exist in English when using logical operators (for example, Serbo-Croatian conjunction *a* can be *and, but, and while* in English) and when "measuring" one's body, i.e., dividing it into pieces (Serbo-Croatian *ruka* is both

arm and *hand*, *noga* is both *foot* and *leg*, etc.) These differences may be explained by the fact that the monochronic nature of the mainstream English-speaking cultures favor more precise delimitations in various fields, which is not the case in polychronic Serbo-Croatian cultures.

On the same token, the English is more precise in social interaction, e.g. Serbo-Croatian *društvo* is: *society, organization, association, club, company, crowd* in English. The same is true for institutions — Serbo-Croatian *vlada* is both *government* and *reign / rule*. This can be connected to the fact that in individualistic English-speaking cultures, it is necessary to protect privacy by being very clear about the concepts in the sphere of social interaction and institutions. Needless to say, in nearly one fourth of the cases (the “other” rubric in the table), the categories of cross-cultural anthropology are not useful explanatory tools. Furthermore that many other factors are at play in all other rubrics. Hall’s and Hofstede’s categories are therefore not the only explanatory tools, but rather important contributing factors that act in concert with many other causes of cross-linguistic differences.

Along with the proposal to include insights from cross-cultural anthropology in Slavic cultural linguistics, the present paper advocates for research based on a model of lexical layers of identity (elaborated upon in [Šipka 2019]). The key idea is that our language gives us an identity on its own in the three interconnected layers: the deep layer that determines how we organize our concepts into words, the interaction layer, that pertains to the cultural circles of our language as evidenced by lexical borrowing, and surface layer, the tradition of normative and other interventions in our language. The research agenda based on the aforementioned key considerations, encompasses the following:

a. An approach that would encompass all lexical layers of cultural identity and all players involved in its creation,

b. Perspectives from various fields of linguistics and social sciences needed to elucidate the layers and their stakeholders,

c. Techniques that explore datasets in their entirety or consistent samples, that approach the language as a separate (albeit connected) entity from ethnicity, nation, etc., and that leave room for random events.

This proposal is thus a modest contribution to the ongoing research, meant to make explorations of Slavic cultural linguistics more rigorous and comprehensive. The insights from cross-cultural anthropology play a very important role in this endeavor. There is a huge potential in using a vast body of knowledge from that field in Slavic cultural linguistics. Slavists should definitely embrace these research prospects that have hitherto remained either out of sight or, at best, on the sidelines.

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