
Axiological investigation into the Slavic languages

Summary

The collective monograph **Axiological Investigation into the Slavic Languages** consists of 13 essays and is divided into three big parts according to the type of data analyzed.

The first part „Axiology and Slavic Manuscripts“ opens with the co-authored essay **The Image of God in Language as a Communication Tool and the Axiological Aspects of Feast and Celebration** (*Peter Žeňuch – Svetlana Šašerina*). It focuses, first of all, on the value of the language, which is a crucial notion for the whole monographic investigation. The study also scrutinizes the names of God and the Divine and discusses the values relevant for the Christian ritual year.

The authors argue that the basic source of the cultural identity of a nation is its language, which acts not only as a means of communication, but is a testament to the historical and, more broadly, empirical existence of the community's axiological system.

The value system of the Christian community represents, for example, a set of names associated with God, God's government and glory. It is a specific linguistic means referring to the doxological dimension of thinking about God. This linguistic means are represented by such a nomenclature, that points to the theocratic-axiological dimension of the human's mind expressed by the language expressions, which allows a man to describe his attitude to God as the starting-point for the functioning of the world. It is mainly an abstract expression of a priori, unknowable, inexpressible and indescribable value that can inspire mercy and justice.

The expression of hierophania by linguistic means is variable in the language development. The word itself is characterized by the fact that it names phenomena, events and things, and so is an integral part of this value system. Therefore, the denomination cannot be arbitrarily changed or confused in relation to the named reality of God. Nothing is therefore random in the system of denominations linked to the value system, and the individual denominations and terms referring to God are functionally, formally, but especially semantically unambiguous and unmistakable.

In all languages, the personal names of God are considered as a natural reflection of man's desire to be in his presence. The image of God in the

different languages, into which the Bible text has been translated to, are considered as anthropomorphic names of God. The value of the concept of God is based on the doctrine of God as the creator of the world, in which a human, created in the image of God, acts. Thus, God naturally reveals himself as a human person that penetrates everyone and everything. After all, the human nature of the Holy God, who has taken the form of the created man, has played a very important role in the spiritual evolution of humanism.

The valuable and important part of the Holy days in Christian life are fasting, prayer and alms. Observation of feast rules is an obligation arising from the Decalogue. The celebration of feasts has not only a liturgical dimension, it is also a continuation of spiritual events of an individual nature, such as alms, fasting and restraint. Events of a spiritual nature are the result of a person's spiritual growth in his life, and therefore they are also an expression of a reward acceptance in the form of a feast and celebration. Such a celebration is the joy of participating in the life of the community – agape. The fellowship of the Church celebrates feasts associated with biblical events by constantly presenting in them the daily spiritual dimension of the individual's life from birth to death. The feast is associated with the ceremony, so it is important to know not only the formal but also the axiological dimension of the Christian perception of the feast. This fact is illustrated with examples of manuscripts of the didactical genre of Carpathian origin from the 17th-18th century.

The second essay **Stereotypes in the Anti-Latin Polemics during the Middle Ages: The Prologue of the Dispute between *Panagiot* and *Azymit* according to BAR Ms.slav. 649** (*Marijana Cibranska-Kostova*) is dedicated to the evaluation of the stereotypes characteristic for the religious discourse in the Middle Ages. It focuses on the Prologue of the anti-Latin text *Dispute of Panagiot with Azymit* according to the unpublished copy in the 16th century Tulcea miscellany from the collection of the Romanian Academy. The purpose of the study is to follow how the mechanisms of ethnocultural specificity and the cultural stereotypes of negation towards the Western Christianity have been created. The literary and linguistic techniques of creation of a negative stereotype are discussed, such as: laconicism; mixture of real and fictive; creation of an antipode couple; object symbolism; use of lexis with pejorative character; possible paronomasia, a word play in the names; parody of persons and events.

The next essay **Axiological Aspects of Time in Bulgarian Medieval Manuscripts** (*Vaňa Mičeva*) examines the semantic realizations and verbalizations of *time* as a value in the history of the Bulgarian language and

culture. The author has studied linguistic data found in Old Bulgarian manuscripts from the 9th–11th cc. and New Bulgarian damascenes from the 17th c. The system of words and phrases that represent *day* and *night* as a value and its distribution in different cultural contexts are analyzed in relation to Christian ideas of the Middle Ages, social and practical experience of people and the new ideas of the pre-Revival period. From axiological point of view it may be said that the changes in the language representants and in the meanings of the concept *time* prove its exclusive value. Evaluation of time comprises pre-Christian attitudes to the parts of the day and night which reflect some pagan beliefs into the evil spirits. In the essay **The Names of Non-Christian Temple in the Literature of Slavia Orthodoxa and the Valuable System of Medieval Man – Language Aspects** (*Elka Mirčeva*) evaluation of the pre-Christian and proto-Bulgarian language facts continues. Bulgaria accepted Christianity as the official religion during the reign of Prince Baptist Boris-Michael I in 864. From here on, the fight for the hearts and minds of people who must quickly accept the new God is to accept the newly built temples as a place of worship, not only forgetting, but branding the gods of their grandfathers. To this stigma must be added the numerous unknown to the Proto-Bulgarians and Slavic religious beliefs, which enter the texts with the translation of Byzantine literature. The first translations and the subsequent tradition unequivocally name the Christian temples with the old German loan of the church. However, the pagan shrines in medieval literature have a surprisingly large number of names. There is a large number of Proto-Bulgarian words that take on the names of the profane and the foreign issues. Along with the Greek words used for their name, numerous Greco-Slavic and Proto-Bulgarian-Slavic hybrids were created. The essay deals with one Biblical citation (1 Samuel 12: 10) and its old-Bulgarian translation. The last essay in this part **Traditional Values Related to the Monastic Life in the Context of the Byzantine-Slavic Tradition in Slovakia in the 18th – 19th Centuries** (*Lubomíra Wilšinská*) sheds light on the axiological aspects of life of the monastic community during the period of Joannicius Georgius Basilovits OSBM (1742 – 1821), the Basilian monk and the Greek Catholic monastic superior who is considered to be a leading figure of the Byzantine-Slavic tradition in Slovakia in the milieu of the historical diocese of Mukachevo. The traditional values such as love, prayer, obedience, modesty, virginity, marriage present in the ascetical works of Basilovits are important in the context of the Byzantine-Slavic monastic tradition. In the study a particular attention is paid to the comparison of Basilovits's works to the work *Pravila monašeskaja / Regulae monasticae* written by Vičentije Jova-

nović (1689 – 1737), the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci (from 1731). An initial analysis of the important bilingual Latin-Church Slavonic edition of the Serbian monastic tradition indicates that Basilovits was also inspired by that work in the formation of his monastic rules for the Basilians whose activities in monasteries reflected the values of monastic life in the historical diocese of Mukachevo. It is evident that Basilovits defines values such as love, humility, poverty, asceticism and other Christian virtues of monastic life in his works when trying to apply them in everyday life of Christians. At the same time, Basilovits shows that values inspired by monasticism grow out of the Christian church communities further into society and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, in spite of historical distance, one can state that in the ascetical works of Joannicius Georgius Basilovits there is a rare message about traditional cultural and spiritual values, which the whole Slavic world still honors and maintains up to the present day.

The second part of the monograph **Values and Anti-Values in the Languages, Folklore and Traditional Culture of the Slavs** consists of 5 essays, all of them are dealing with the facts of the archaic Slavic worldview and methodologically are mostly ethnolinguistic and sociolinguistic. The first essay **Axiological Investigation into the Negative Features in the Language and the Traditional Culture of the Slavs** (*Irina Sedakova, Kalina Micheva-Peycheva*) opens a discussion of the axiologically opposite to the values facts – the negative features in the language and culture. This study exemplifies the methodology of the axiological studies „from the contrary“, i.e. the research of the positive, wishful, ideal sphere is fulfilled through the investigation of the negative sphere. On the grounds of the fact that almost each value presumes its opposite notion and constructs a binary pair (life – death, health – illness), first the negative features are described so to determine later the positive values. This method has a certain scientific potential, as the language is very evaluative and the negative expressions dominate over the positive ones. This is even more true for the archaic folk culture, which is based on the ideas of the origin of misfortunes and disasters as the result of the violating the bans. The beginning of the study is based on the structured traditional picture of the world as it is represented in the three ethnolinguistic dictionaries, which cover all Slavic traditions (SD (5 vols), the Bulgarian one (Barbolova, Simeonova, Kitanova et al. 2018) and the Macedonian one (Makarjioska 2016)). The glossaries of these dictionaries contain the major objects, actions, subjects, features as well as the key terms (mostly dialectal), many of them are evaluative as such. First of all,

evil spirits and the diseases, as well as some actions like *lie, steal, beat* can be regarded as negative. The archaic culture though shows their ambivalent status, since these actions occasionally have obligatory character in rituals.

The second part of the essay is devoted to the detailed axiological analysis of the lexemes of the apocryphic prayers, which directly denote the negative features of the evil spirits and illnesses. The reasons for the misfortunes and diseases, according to the traditional views, reflected in the texts, are explained by incorrect behaviour regarding the ritual bans and recommendations. Etymological and words-building study of the folk terms assists in constructing of the hierarchy of the negative parts of the binar oppositions, which merge into a bigger sphere of „anti-values“. Complex and detailed analysis of the denoted archaic facts with negative allusions shows the positive sphere in its fullness. Thus the hierarchy of the traditional Slavic values becomes more comprehensive and scholarly grounded. The theme of the health as opposed to the disease is continued in the essay **Axiology of Health and Disease in Slovak Traditional Culture** (*Marina Valencovová – Katarína Žeňuchová*). The authors note that much attention has been paid to the topic of health in different Slavic traditions. However, in the axiological aspect, this topic has been studied relatively rarely. The article attempts to feasibly fill this gap. The main focus is on the axiological analysis of the notion „disease“ as it is presented in traditional Slovak folk culture and narrative genres of Slovak folk prose.

Slovak traditional culture has preserved a lot of evidence, that health is a vital value and disease is a vital antivalue. It contains recommendations for maintaining health; prohibitions, the violation of which, according to tradition, will lead to its loss; there is also valuation, explicitly expressed in good wishes (*vinše, kol'ady*) or curses; interpretation of this category in narrative folklore, e.g. in fairy tales; in the terminology of ailments and the images of personified diseases.

Meanwhile, disease in traditional culture is multivalued; this appears to be due to diverse subjects of the valuation, different circumstances of turning sick and diverse „objects“, who had undergone the illness. From the axiological point of view it is interesting to observe the names of the diseases, their nominative principles, and motivation for naming, and their origin (vernacular base, borrowed from other languages) reflecting traditional folk ideas of the disease.

Despite the fact that most often disease is valued negatively, as an evil, an enemy, a demon that has seized a person, there are other contexts in which a disease is considered alien, but „own alien“ (these are congenital

and incurable diseases with which a person has to cope). Axiologically, such diseases are included in the neutral spectrum of valuation. Among such diseases counts, for example, slovak *hostec* (plica polonica).

The second situation of a non-negative attitude to the disease is valuation by a community resulting from a person's violation of well-known and tradition-supported prohibitions (usually bans on work on certain days), or as a result of neglect of community norms and laws (non-participation in general ritual activities, holidays etc.). These diseases were considered the natural result of the actions of the individual, his „just deserts“. This type of valuation also includes diseases perceived as God's punishment, which, however, were considered a blessing, the attention of the Creator, and were endured submissively.

Comparable to diseases, the healers and folk healers themselves were valued ambivalently. Their negative valuation was related to their „power“ and potential harm; it could be the result of somebody's envy and malice; sometimes they were even accused of collusion with the devil, since the healers acted, in the people opinion, against the will of God, who sent the disease. The essay **Axiology of falsehood in Bulgarian proverbs** (*Marija Kitanova*) continues the ambivalent axiological views and is based on the corpus of Bulgarian proverbs, which contains the semantic component of *lie*. The object of the investigation is to uncover the meaning of the proverbs, according to the Langacker's theory of meaning, that characterizes the semantic structure as a conceptual structure. The cognitive analysis follows the lexeme *lie* in the main Bulgarian lexicographical source materials. The term cognitheme is introduced as a propositional unit of measurement of knowledge, and it is reconstructed by the analysis of the semantic space of one or several proverbs and is found functionally significant for the description of the cognitive model of one proverb or a fragment of the paramiological image of the world. The predicted result of this analysis is the division of the ethnocultural stereotypes and ratings. Another ambivalent axiological notion discussed in the monograph is „the youth“: **Youth as a value according to the Bulgarians in the past** (*Joanna Kirilova*). The study analyzes the complex of judgments recorded in the paremias pertaining to the concept of *youth*. The values-oriented stereotypes in the linguistic consciousness of the Bulgarians from the past in relation to youth are presented, the value dominants of this concept are highlighted as an element of the megaconcept *age* in the proverbian fragment of the Bulgarian linguistic picture of the world, with the focus on the conceptual component i.e. its distinctive structure is outlined.

Conceptual traits are grouped according to the type of attitude of the Bulgarian – positive or negative – towards *youth* and young people. Excerpted material demonstrate the ability of the Bulgarians to observe and analyze, and youth is presented both as positive and negative stage of life. The proverbs and sayings contain reflections that are close to the latest theories of so-called age psychology. The proverbial concept of youth also has gender characteristics.

The next essay **Axiological parameters of the earth based on the material from the Slavyanovo village (Bulgaria)** (*Jekaterina N. Struganova*) deals with the nature and discusses the evaluation of some of the elements, the earth. The material for this study was collected during the field research in Slavyanovo village in the North-East of Bulgaria (summer of 2019). Originally this is a Turkish village, but multiple migrations made its society more mixed: now there live Turkish people, who were born in Slavyanovo, Turkish people, who come from Kardzali, and Bulgarians. The field data shows that earth may be considered as a value itself and may represent some other values, such as life, death, health, purity, fertility etc. And we can find the information about these spheres in several parts of the ritual system: agricultural rituals, funeral rituals, healing and magic practices.

According to George Foster, the “good” in such type of the society is limited, it means, that if someone suddenly gets a new recourse, it is “stolen” from other members. Applied to earth, it seems that the fields, which can give food for the table and grass for the animals, are limited too. So the person can only hope to get the minimum for his or her living. That makes the earth the value, which provides life. One might even consider it second after the water as an element, because, if people lack water, they can use earth for the purification ritual. It is common for Muslims.

So, in the hierarchy of the values, the life would be on the top of it, then come the resources for life (water, earth, fire, air and food) and what provides these resources (fertility, moist) and then come death and memory of the kin and the ancestors (the later is since the earth can be regarded as a locus which is evaluated as the place of origin, the motherland).

The third part takes the scholars’ attention into the history, memory and social practices as a source of evaluation. The first essay **Memetics as an expression of cultural communication** (*Lubomír Gábor*) is based on the social practices in the historical region of Pomorania and the island of Rügen in the northern part of present-day Germany. The study is focused on shaping the structural connection of stone as a symbolic artefact that specifi-

cally acquired the axiological aspect of justice and right in the cultural memory of the chosen community. As the methodological basis of this view, we choose a relatively widespread theory of memetics, though not often used in the Slovak environment, whose origin and extension can be attributed to the Anglo-American scientific community (f. e. S. Blackmore, J. Zipes, etc.).

Memetics represents a new model for researching the evolution of culture in the process of transgenerational cultural communication. Meme as the basic structural and information unit of memetics is defined as the cultural equivalent of a biological gene.

Meme spreads through imitation and multiple replications among communicating minds and, in order to survive in the process of long-term cultural transmission, it creates structural links with other units, the so-called meme complexes – memplexes.

A suitable example of such a memetic structure, which is particularly apparent in folklore (J. Zipes exhaustively analysed the meme in texts of fairy tales), is the connection of the stone with the aspect of justice and law enforcement in social practice. This connection can be identified as established and widespread not only in oral or written literature, but also in ethnographically documented ritual activities, idioms, toponymy, normative texts of law and others.

The study aims to reconstruct the cultural transmission (memetic replication) of the above-mentioned connection in the cultural memory in the long-term development in the texts of the region of Pomorania and the island of Rügen in the northern part of present-day Germany (administratively falling within the German federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, but a part of Eastern Pomorania is also located in the territory of present-day northern Poland). The oldest known references present in the chronicles of Helmold of Bossau and Saxo Grammaticus from the 12th and 13th centuries are taken into account. They mention the ritual of oath with a stone or near a stone. Available sources of folklore (with an emphasis on tales written down by ethnologists or folklorists Ulrich Jahn and Alfred Haas in the 19th and 20th centuries), sources of ethnology of law (supported by references from Eberhard von Künßberg or Witold Maisel), phraseology of law (supported by collections of Johann Carl Dähnert from the 18th century and its more modern reflection in the work of Rügen ethnologist Dr. Ingrid Schmidt) are also analyzed. These sources help to identify the position of the stone in connection with oaths, enthronisation of kings, making or confirming deals/agreements and contracts, etc. It is evident that the stone as a symbolically structured artefact has been memetically pre-

served in the cultural memory of the Pomeranian society until now through familiar tales, rituals or idioms.

In the essay **The dynamics of changes in understanding of material values among the population of Sofya at 18th century (according to the hereditary records)** (*Anna A. Leontjeva*) a very important issue both of material and spiritual type is investigated. Hereditary records of *kadi* courts mention a wide range of items. While compiling of these documents houses, gardens, household items, furniture, clothes, etc. were taken into account. Detailed analysis of this kind of sources helps the scholars to look at the development and changes of understanding of values among the population of Sofya in the 18th century. Moreover, these documents contain information both about Muslim and Christian communities in Sofya, so there is an opportunity to compare perception of values by representatives of different religions. There is obviously a close link between material and immaterial values, as we can see in the evaluation of the items. Inheritance of the valuable objects relates to such axiological categories, like memory, family, kin, homeland, etc., so material values should not be reduced solely to material aspects. Last but not least there follows the essay **Democracy and democratic values in Bulgaria at the turn of XIX – XX centuries through the eyes of Russian observers** (*Nikita S. Gusev*) which examines whether democracy and democratic values were inherent in the Bulgarians at the turn of the last century. The study is based on the Russian travelogues. The real situation of such concepts as equality, freedom of speech, party competition and the electoral process is considered. All of them were distorted – equality was patriarchal, freedom of speech shocked out of decorum, parties competed for the sympathy of the monarch, elections were held with violations. But the Bulgarians were proud of the fact that Bulgaria was a democratic country. It is concluded that for Bulgarians and Russians democracy was a value. However, in Bulgaria, its implementation was severely distorted.

To conclude, the 13 essays of the collective monograph written by 16 scholars give a wide overview on a set of values and anti-values in various Slavic countries at different stages of development, showing their inherent specification in terms of the vocabulary, word combination and context. The manuscripts, narratives, folk-tales, paremia, travelogues and memoirs treat the values differently. The hierarchy of the values changes depending on the ideology or religion of the country and its dynamics is exemplified by the multiple data of linguistic, cultural and historical character.