

media has changed not only the form of the language, but how we interact. People now relate to each other in communicative bursts.

Using social media to bring about new ideas and new means of communication is a very effective approach for marketers to take. A lot of people who drive business are young and the evolving language is a large part of their everyday practice. If marketers are going to gain the edge, they need to speak the same language.

Social media will be around for a very long time. It is important to realize that you have to adapt to the evolution and keep up with all of the new technologies and language that are being offered. If you don't, it will be like the Tower of Babel. Everyone will be speaking but nobody will be speaking a common language. Language is alive and keeping an open mind about letting new concepts and new words in to be a part of it is generally an intelligent thing to do.

References

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_slang.
2. http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Социальная_сеть.
3. <http://www.internetslang.com/>.
4. <http://www.cooltoptenlist.com/2012/08/Social-networks.html>.
5. <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-internet-slang.htm>.

Scientific supervisor E.B. Belousova, senior lecturer of TPU

Kosheutova N.V., Osina P.M.

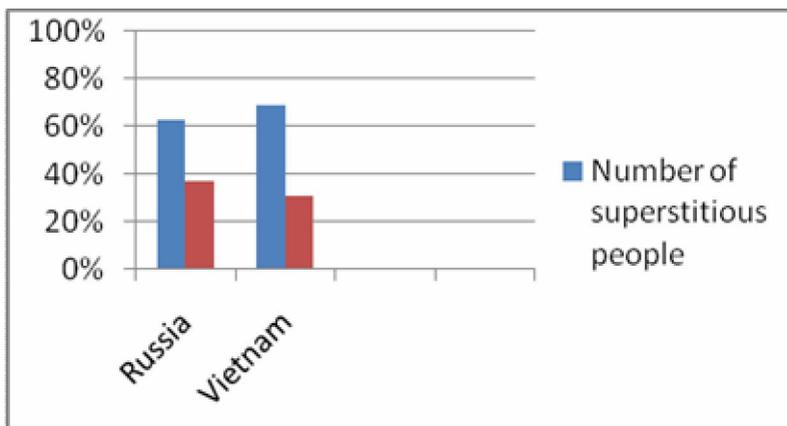
National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University

THE NOTION OF SUPERSTITION IN RUSSIAN AND VIETNAMESE CULTURES

Superstition is the belief in unknown and mysterious. It is the belief that certain events bring good or bad luck and that cannot be explained by reason or science. In short, superstition means a blind belief. Superstition is a worldwide phenomenon. People in every country have some superstitions. The Russian and Vietnamese superstitions will be analyzed in this work.

The word *Mê tín* in Vietnamese consists of two words. The first word is *Mê* means *spellbound* (очаровывать, заволаговывать) in English. The second word is *tín* means to believe (верить). By that, the collocation *Mê tín* in English is to believe in something spellbinding or mystical. However, in all languages in the world it means the same things.

We conducted a sociological survey to make this research and it revealed that there are many superstitions in Russia and in Vietnam. About 63 per cent of Russian and 69 per cent of Vietnamese people believe in superstitions.



All superstitions can be divided into groups: luck superstitions, wedding superstitions and food superstitions.

First, luck superstitions are the most important in all spheres. Both in Russia and in Vietnam if the first person you meet when you leave your house is a woman, you will have a bad luck. Also in Russia to see a woman with an empty bucket or cart is considered to be a bad omen. Russian people believe that if you meet a woman with an empty bucket, the day will not be successful. That is why the street cleaners always put some equipment (brooms, rakes) in empty carts. You need to keep out the way to a woman with an empty bucket or to cross the road – otherwise it can scare your luck. A broken mirror is an unlucky sign. If you look at a broken mirror, or keep broken mirrors or plates, it will bring you a bad luck. The superstition says that if you look into a broken mirror, you break your inner world, and your soul becomes defenceless against the dark forces.

Vietnamese people believe that the number 3 is not so lucky if you're talking about the number of people in a photo. Apparently, it brings bad luck to everyone in the photograph and we have heard some people say that the individual who takes the centre slot in such photo will die young. Nevertheless, in Russia 3 is a lucky number. Russian people say, «God loves trinity». Superstitions associated with the number three come from the ancient times. On this basis, the Christian religion is

erected into a dogma representation of the Holy Trinity – one God, projecting in three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is also the so-called three-finger God sign that protects the spiritual from evil spirits.

In Vietnam the number 2 is a lucky number. Giving someone a \$2 bill will make this person very happy indeed. However in Russia the number 2 is a usual number and there are not any superstitions about it.

All people want to be lucky especially students and there is a large number of superstitions about exams, good marks in Russia as well as in Vietnam. For example, Vietnamese students believe that if they eat an egg before an exam, they will have a bad luck. In addition, some students' superstitions are – if you eat a squid the first day of the month, you will have a bad luck. If you see a snake on the way to your destination, you should go home because you will have a bad luck.

However, Russian students have their own superstitions: a student that is going to take an exam must not wear any new clothing as it scares away good grades. Another superstition, or rather a ritual they have the night before the exam, is related to a Russian concept of «free load» – an occasion when someone receives a good grade at the exam without taking any effort. In Russia, they believe that such «freebie» should be caught. So the night before the exam at midnight Russian students hang out of a window, open their students' record-books, wave them in the air and scrim: «Come here, freebie, big or small!» When the «freebie» is «caught», the record-book is closed and should not be opened by anyone except for the examiner at the exam next day. There is also a common belief in Russia that if you sleep on a book, the knowledge will somehow be transferred into your mind. That is why many Russian students sleep on tutorials, books and examination questions the night before they take the exam.

Of course, rituals cannot help a student that does not study. But these little cultural traditions make a student's life more colourful and enjoyable for the students.

The next type of superstitions is the wedding superstitions. For example, superstition, sometimes, plays more than a passing role in Vietnamese society. By the time a boy is old enough to marry, he may not be able to wed the girl he loves because she was born in the wrong year. According to the 12-year lunar calendar commonly used throughout Asia, many of the years are considered incompatible. Such years are thought to bring misfortune if they are improperly matched with other years. Thus a young man born in «the Year of the Tiger», cannot marry his beloved from «the Year of the Horse» unless he wants to risk a break

in family ties with his parents and elder relatives. To the conservative relatives, the Tiger and Horse are incompatible and surely bring bad luck to such marriage.

Less global superstition in Vietnam about weddings is if it rains during the wedding, it means prosperity and happiness for the newlyweds. Also if a flame on one of the wedding candles is extinguished first, it means this person will die ahead of the other. Moreover the groom must arrive before the bride at the church to avoid bad luck.

Another superstition is connected with an owl. The hoot of an owl is regarded as a bad omen announcing death or illness. According to ancient tradition the bird must be chased away and those who heard its cry should be extremely cautious about their personal safety.

There are some unique superstitions in Russia about wedding. It is an unlucky sign if the groom is younger than the bride. Besides, nowadays Russians still believe that marriages contracted in May are destined to be unhappy. There are even some sayings about this, like «Good people do not get married in May», «He'd be happy to wed, but May does not let», «Those married in May will always pine». May is considered to be a «difficult month» and so any initiative undertaken in May is reportedly doomed to failure. Such a prejudice most probably owes its existence to the fact that «May» in Russian (mai) sounds common to the word mayatsa, i. e. «pine» or «suffer».

In addition, there are many superstitions about wedding and family in Vietnam and in Russia. For example in Vietnam if you see a newlywed couple, you'll have a bad luck. Nevertheless, in Russia if you see the wedding is a good luck. Also in Russia as well as in Vietnam people should not tell someone that their new baby is wonderful. It is often thought that an excessive praise for a new child may cause it to become possessed by evil spirits, abducted by them, or even killed by them. So by all means say something nice – just don't overdo it.

There are a lot of superstitions about food. For instance, in Russia people believe that they should cut bread only with a knife. Don't break it with your hands. Otherwise your life will be broken. In addition, if you eat from a knife, you will be «angry like a dog». Moreover Russians believe that if you spill the salt, you will inevitably quarrel with a member of your family. But this superstition has a reasonable explanation. The matter of fact is that in ancient Russia, the salt was very expensive and therefore its loss could definitely lead to a quarrel. It is believed that this omen appeared during the riots and uprisings in Russia in the middle of the 17 century; when salt cost its weight in gold. But

Russian people quickly found a way to avoid troubles. If a Russian believes in omens and spills salt, it is unnecessary to worry. It is enough to laugh or to hit yourself in the forehead.

Vietnamese and Russian people believe that the empty dishes or bottles bring a bad luck. Russians believe that you must not put empty bottles, keys or change on the table. These are all bad omens of financial loss and tears. Also, this omen works not only in the kitchen at home, but also in public places that is why guests at a dinner party in a restaurant grab a bottle that has just been emptied and put it under the table or starts looking around for a waiter. Moreover, in Vietnam single bowls of rice and chopsticks should not be served. At least two should always be placed on a table. One bowl is for the dead. Never let chopsticks touch others or make unnecessary noise with them. Do not place chopsticks in food and leave them there.

To sum up we can say that all countries are different but all people are the same. Russian and Vietnamese cultures have many similar superstitions that people believe in and that they pay attention to. This similarity comes maybe from the fact that Russia is partly an Asian country. However, all countries have their own features. Moreover, our countries have their own traditions and traits. Times change and so do people and their world view but superstitions stay eternal.

References

1. Bodo K., Gibson N. Childbirth customs in Vietnamese traditions. – Canadian Family Physician. – 1999. – № 45. – P. 690–697.
2. Goldman C. Vietnamese cultural profile. An Initiative of Qld Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care. March 2009. West End: Diversicare.
3. Vyse, Stuart A (2000). *Believing in Magic: The Psychology of Superstition*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. pp. 19–22.
4. Saigon Expat Diaries [Site]. URL: <http://www.saigondistrict1.com/> (access date: 10.04.2014).
5. Russian Superstitions [Site]. URL: <http://gorussia.about.com/> (access date: 10.04.2014).

*Scientific supervisor's A.V. Loginova, senior lecturer of TPU,
N.V. Aksenova, senior lecturer of TPU*