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Linguistic reflection of different types of thinking

When studying the world picture verbalized in languages it is necessary to take into account different types of thinking which occur in different cultures.

Long before the appearance of verbal language the practical thinking prevailed among all the other types. It became more active in a particular situation, and the action was performed just after the thought about it, without any reasoning or inner speech [1]. With the further development of thought (and particularly, of memory) the perceived phenomena etched in the mind as images.

Each image (as an element of the ancient world picture) has been associated with a number of other images. The memory of the ancient man tightly grasped each "picture" of the situation and kept the relationship of images to each other. Subsequently, these visual connections were reflected in lexical structures. For example, in the ancient languages some objects referring to the same semantic range were often designated by one word or by the same root.

The connection of images in the "semantic series" by associations exists in several languages of modern peoples living in the primitive (or tribal) systems. The study of these peoples' languages allows us to suggest possible ways of human visual world picture formation in general. G. Lakoff described the situation in the Australian aboriginal language dirbal where one semantic category contained "women", "sun", "fire", "dangerous objects", searing plants (nettle), "fire worm" (apparently some searing caterpillar) and crickets.

Considering the Germanic languages on this subject we find a similar phenomenon: naming of completely different objects (from the modern point of view) by the same word or by the derivatives from one root. The concepts of "fire" and "water" are of a particular interest in this area – and the Old Germanic languages give us mane examples.

The connection of water and fire verbalized in the Old Germanic languages goes back to the Indo-European culture. Indo-European mythology has a myth about "the birth of fire in the water" – for example, in the ancient Indian mythology the god of

fire, Agni was born in the water. In the Old Germanic mythology fire and water were the two elements which joined together to create the Universe. This part of world picture was reflected in the language: Old Norse and Old English words indicating "water" and "fire" often come from the same root. Old English root "brand" had several derivatives root with the meaning "sea", "water", "burn", "fire". The same can be said about the Old Norse root "brim" [3]. This can be considered as remnants of the common Germanic linguistic representation of the unity of fire and water (as alive, active elements of a common nature). It is important to underline that in the Old English literature one can find other lexical expressions of fire and water unity. For example, there existed a special word "ligyþ" "wave, influx of flame" [3].

The fact that names of such opposite things as water and fire or fire and pool were formed from one root can seem strange for modern people. But water and fire were united in the primitive world picture of old Germans. Thus in the naming of the reality phenomena it was not the objective features of things that played a crucial role but the place of these things in the visual, mythological world picture.

The study of the Germanic concepts "fire" and "water" connection expressed at the lexical level of languages is supplemented by the grammatical data. The Old Germanic nouns denoting fire and water are interesting from the point of view of their grammatical design – exactly, they have a common type of declination and stem formation. The type of their stem shows that in ancient times these nouns belonged to the active class and could be treated as animate, because they indicated an active force [4].

Thus, the verbalization of "fire" and "water" concepts in the Old Germanic languages brightly shows the reflection of visual thinking which is characteristic of ancient people. These phenomena got numerous names in Old Germanic languages, so they are reflected as the most important for people. The use of the same names for fire and water shows not only the predominance of visual thinking among the ancient Germans, but also about the interpenetration of the corresponding concepts.

When the mythological perception of reality gradually went off in the human society, and people became more and more civilized, the importance of fire and water became not as great as in the ancient times. This change of people's attitude to fire and water reduced the number of their names. As a result in modern languages it is enough to have one principal name for each of these phenomena.

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