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## Ethnocultural Concepts of Family Life on the Material of Texts of Wedding Wishes

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### Abstract

The family can be studied as an ethnic phenomenon, as a constant interaction of family members inevitably affected by ethnic norms and behavioral patterns. The purpose of the article was to determine the ethnic and cultural features in the concept of family life in the Western European, Russian and Kazakh mentality. Cross-cultural analysis that supplemented by component and contextual methods was carried out on a material of English and French texts of wishes (as an example of Western European world view), Kazakh wishes, Russian wedding wishes. Presentation of early family life as a new way was turned out universal. However, understanding of family life in terms of the way gives the same epistemic characteristics to stereotypical ideas about the family which has the concept of WAY in the corresponding culture. In English and French world views family life is an exciting adventure of the two partners where they feel comfortable and interesting. In the Russian mentality family life is a tough road of two opposing personalities. In Kazakh culture family life is a continuation of a long journey of each of a newly wedded couple.

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### 1. Introduction

Family can be considered as a social and ethnical phenomenon as the interaction of family members, their everyday communication takes place under the inevitable influence of ethnical norms and social-behavioural stereotypes. In collectivist cultures, the interaction of family members is subjected to the external estimation from

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the social group that also has its criteria – good family \ bad, good wife \ bad, etc.; it also contains ethnical attitudes and stereotypes.

This work is the consequence of the idea to define differences in stereotypical concept of an ideal family by comparing texts of wedding wishes in English, French, Russian and Kazakh languages. However, topics of congratulations turned out to be different: guests that say wishes a priori thought that a young family is the best, and wishes say about values and qualities of family life. Despite general wishes of love and happiness in all toasts, they demonstrate different priorities of the collective / individual and have the peculiarities that originate from the conditions of ethnos formation.

In the process of the research we have analysed 56 wishes in English and 40 in French (as an example of Western European outlook), 98 congratulations in Russian and 87 toasts and wishes in Kazakh.

Cross-cultural analysis of the material was conducted with the help of component and contextual techniques as well as the technique of comparison of grammatical structures and syntactical constructions that realise the same semantic content in the texts in different languages.

The priority of the individual or collective in the compared cultures finds its reflection in grammatical constructions of a simple typical sentence that implies that the speaker has a family – *I have a family*, *U menya est sem'ya*, *Menin otbasym bar*. M. Kut'eva marks the interrelation of grammatical constructions of a language and general way of thinking of its speaker by comparing phrases in Spanish, Russian and English. Among other conclusions, M. Kut'eva points out the internal concentration of thinking of an English language personality on themselves on the example *I have + complement...*, where *I* is on the first place as the agent of action; the agent is active (Kut'eva 2012; see also Zhel'vis, Kut'eva 2013). In the phrases we have compared, *I* is also in the centre, a *family* is a complement. Whereas in the Russian phrase *u menya est sem'ya*, ego feature is shifted on the indirect object and family takes the main place. Summarising the priority of collective in Russian culture as contrasted to individualism of the Spanish, M. Kut'eva marks that even the Russian word *sschast'e* (happiness) hints at necessity to be part of something huge and meaningful by its internal form (Kut'eva 2012: 25). The analysis of the Kazakh phrase made by the same technique demonstrates a bigger priority of collective, ego feature is shifted on the attributive part of the syntagm of the subject *Menin otbasym bar* – literally, *my family have*. While in the English phrase *family* is depended on the verb, in the Russian phrase *sem'ya* is the main part of the sentence, and ego *I* is dependent on being – *est'*. And in the Kazakh phrase, the form of the verb is affected by the word *otbasy* (family), ego *I Menin* (my) is dependent on *otbasy* (family) by adding a suffix to the word *otbasym*, that is, the existence of *family* does not depend on *I*.

## 2. Research design

### Wishes as the national precedent text

According to Y.N. Karaulov, who introduced this term in science, a precedent text is a text that is important for one or another person in cognitive and emotional relation (1), well-known to this person, his/her predecessors and contemporaries (2), which is repeatedly referred to in the discourse of this linguistic personality (Karaulov 2007: 216). Expanding this definition, G.G. Slyshkin and M.A. Yefremova assign “any sequence of sign units that is characterised by integrity and coherence and possesses a value for a definite cultural group” to precedent texts (Slyshkin, Yefremova 2004: 45). A toast corresponds to these definitions. Precedence of a toast is formed from the following factors. A toast is characterised by positive emotional disposition and presence of a cultural-etiquette component. A standard text of a toast is known to everyone and there is a set of canonical wishes (of happiness, health). This text is regularly reproduced; in certain situations, it is obligatory (ritualised); there is a great amount of collections of toasts and wishes in which they are fixed and exist as a fact of contemporary culture. According to L.S. Chikilyova, precedence of a toast is defined by the fact that it is a communicative fragment that is kept in the linguistic memory of the linguistic personality. Therefore, if we consider a toast as part of the linguocultural community, it acts as a national precedent (Chikilyova 2004: 64). N.I. Shikhkebirova also thinks that a toast is a national precedent: it meets the requirements of life ideology of a certain social medium. Moreover, intertextual aspects of precedence, where a parable, fairy-tale, legend, etc. acts as the source of a toast, are connected with cultural artefacts (Sikhkebirova 2012). Following L. Chikilyova and N. Sikhkebirova, we consider that a toast is a

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