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NEW AND TRADITIONAL EMOTION TERMS IN RUSSIAN: SEMANTICS AND CULTURE

Introduction

The Russian language of the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century attracts the attention of scholars due to its changes, which are determined by the overall economic and social changes in the country.¹ The most significant and characteristic transformations in the language are the following: the increase of the volume and the rate of words borrowed from other languages, the loss of certain words denoting Soviet realia and the loss of ideological flavor of certain words, innovations and massive deviations from the linguistic norms, and the “criminalization” of the lexicon.

This article focuses on one of the above-mentioned phenomena of the contemporary Russian, that is, borrowings as a reflection of the influence of other cultures and languages on Russian. New words that enter Russian from other languages signify changes in the way of life, thinking and behaving. The most revealing in this sense are emotion and value terms because their meanings are reflective of cultural beliefs, assumptions and understandings.² Therefore, the approach implemented in this article is that language, and its lexicon in particular, can be consid-

1. Elena Zemskaia, ed., *Russkii iazyk kontsa XX stoletia (1985-1995)* [The Russian Language of the End of the 20th Century] (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1996); L. Ryazanova-Clarke and T. Wade, *The Russian Language Today* (London: Routledge, 1999); L. Krysin, “Leksicheskoe zaimstvovanie i kal'kirovanie v russkom iazyke poslednikh desiatiletii” [“Lexical borrowings and replication in the Russian language in the previous decades”], *Voprosy iazykoznanii*, 6 (2002), pp. 27-40.

2. In the domain of value words the most prominent example of borrowings is that of *tolerantnost'* and *tolerantnyi*. For the discussion of the meanings of these words in comparison with their English counterparts and Russian traditional terms see Anna Gladkova, “New and Traditional Values in Contemporary Russian. Natural Semantic Metalanguage in Cross-Cultural Semantics,” in *Proceedings of the 2004 Conference of the Australian Linguistics Society*, Ilana Mushin, ed. (2005), available at: dspace.library.usyd.edu.au; Anna Gladkova, “‘Tolerant’: New and traditional values in Russian in comparison with English,” in “Cross-Linguistic Semantics,” Cliff Goddard, ed. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, in press); N. Kupina, and M. Khomiakov, eds., *Filosofskie i lingvokul'turologicheskie problemy tolerantnosti* [Philosophical, Linguistic and Cultural Issues of Tolerance] (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo Universiteta, 2003).

ered a gateway into a people's culture.³ Moreover, changes in a language are indicative of cultural changes.

This article focuses on a term from the domain of emotions – *èmpatiia* (empathy). This word has been used in translated psychology literature for last two to three decades, but it is gradually entering other spheres of Russian discourse. More and more Russian speakers are trying to relate to this word because it is from the sphere indicating personal relationships. These days the word *èmpatiia* is known and used among psychologists, educators, social workers, and people interested in psychology and personal relationships.

Obviously, in the Soviet times *èmpatiia* in this meaning was not used due to the overall avoidance of exposure to foreign psychology literature altogether. However, it should be noted that it has been used for several decades in linguistics as a translation of the English term where it means something like “replacement of the author's point of view on a situation with a point of view of its participants, the identification of the speaker with the referent.”⁴

The most common way to analyze new borrowings is to classify them according to the domain they belong to.⁵ It is by no means a valuable and necessary approach, but it neglects the study of meanings of the new words on their own, as well as in comparison with traditional terms. However, it is a detailed semantic analysis of the borrowed words in comparison with traditional ones that can provide us with valuable insights into the change of culture and ideology.

To understand what place some word plays or will play in a language system it is important to compare its meaning with other words closest to its meaning. The word *èmpatiia* in Russian is being mainly influenced by the English *empathy*; therefore, it can be revealing to compare the English *empathy* with its closest Russian equivalent *soperezhivanie*. *Èmpatiia* is commonly identified with *soperezhivanie* and some people express a point of view that the word *èmpatiia* is not at all necessary in Russian because it means absolutely the same as *soperezhivanie*. For example, a popular newspaper for Russian educators *Pervoe Sentiabria*

3. This idea was expressed and implemented in, for example, Edward Sapir, *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1949); Anna Wierzbicka *Understanding Cultures Through their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); Anna Zalizniak, Irina Levontina and Alexei Shmelev, *Kliuchevye idei russkoi iazykovoï kartiny mira* [Key Ideas of the Russian Language World View] (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2005).

4. Jurij Apresian, ed., *Novyi ob'iasnitelnyi slovar' sinonimov russkogo iazyka* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004).

5. This approach is implemented in Zemskaja, ed., *Russkii iazyk kontsa XX stoletia (1985-1995)*; Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, *The Russian Language Today*.

(First of September) provided the following interpretation of the term and its place in the Russian language system:

The term *èmpatiia* is borrowed from English where it has been in use for quite a long time. In this case, like in many similar ones, this borrowing is a terminological excess, a naïve tribute to the West because the content of the term *èmpatiia* is fully conveyed by the Russian word *soperezhivanie*.⁶

In this article, I will argue that the English *empathy* and the Russian *soperezhivanie* are words with significantly different meanings, which are largely related to the cultural assumptions of the societies they belong to. For this purpose, I will conduct a detailed comparative semantic analysis of the English word *empathy* and its closest Russian equivalent *soperezhivanie*. Before I proceed with the discussion of the methodology of semantic analysis, I will justify how linguistic evidence can serve as a source of studying culture.

Data and Methodology

Linguistic Data as Evidence

The understanding that language shapes human thinking became an influential idea of the twentieth century, which emerged from the pioneer works of Humboldt, Sapir, and Whorf. The “linguistic relativity principle,” which was developed by Whorf more than half a century ago, postulates that conceptual systems are relative and depend on language.⁷ Numerous studies in anthropology and cultural psychology have found evidence in favor of this claim and have shown that speakers of different languages and members of different cultures conceptualize emotional and cognitive experiences differently.⁸

6. S. Stepanov, “Proniknovennoe soperezhivanie,” *Shkol'nyi psikholog* (2002), available at: psy.1september.ru/2002/21/5.htm. Here and throughout the article the translation of Russian sources is mine.

7. Benjamin Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1956).

8. See, for example, H. Chua, J. Boland and R. Nisbett, “Cultural Variation in Eye Movement During Scene Perception,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Aug. 30, 102, no. 35 (2005), pp. 12629-33; A. Lillard, “Ethnopsychologies: Cultural Variations in Theories of Mind,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 123, no. 1 (1998), pp. 3-32; C. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988); J. A. Russell “Culture and the Categorization of Emotions,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 110, no. 3 (1991), pp. 426-50; R. A. Shweder, *Why Do Men Barbecue? Recipes for Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2003).

In my research, I aim to study the ways contemporary English speakers use the word *empathy* and to compare them to the ways contemporary Russian speakers use the word *soperezhivanie*. This approach will allow me to contrast the conceptualization of the terms under consideration in the two languages. For this reason, my study is based on the contemporary use of these words from two online corpora: *COBUILD Bank of English* for English (56 million words) and *Natsional'nyi korpus russkogo iazyka* for Russian (140 million words).⁹ Both of these corpora can be regarded as highly representative sources because they comprise examples of written and oral discourse of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

My semantic study relies on the analysis of contexts with the words under consideration and their collocations (that is, common combinations with these words) found in the corpora. My approach is based on the assumption that language is a system with its own rules, which strictly determine the functioning of its elements. These rules condition certain characteristics of a language as a representative of a culture. I aim to search for the linguistic characteristics representative of the cultures involved and interpret cultural information that is encoded in such characteristics.

The aim of my analysis to reconstruct a naïve or folk worldview as reflected in the language.¹⁰ Therefore, the outcome of my research will be to present not a scientific definition, but rather a folk understanding of the terms by common people. The ultimate goal of my research is to propose explications of the concepts under consideration and to compare them between the two languages. I want these explications to be written in a way that is free from any linguistic or cultural bias. I believe that this goal can be best achieved with the “natural semantic metalanguage.”

Natural Semantic Metalanguage as a Method of Semantic Analysis

Conducting a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic study requires a common measure that does not favor phenomena of one language and culture over those of another. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) developed by Anna Wierzbicka, Cliff Goddard, and their colleagues can be regarded as a common measure of this kind. This

9. *COBUILD. Bank of English*, available at: www.collinswordbanks.co.uk; *Natsional'nyi korpus russkogo iazyka*, available at: www.ruscorpura.ru

10. Jurii Apresian, *Systematic Lexicography* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000); Roy D'Andrade, “A Folk Model of the Mind,” in D. Holland and N. Quinn, eds., *Cultural Models in Language and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 113-47.

method relies on empirically established lexical and grammatical universals, which have been identified on the basis of studies of a large number of unrelated languages. These studies have demonstrated that words such as *emotion*, *happiness*, *sadness*, or *sympathy* cannot be found across all languages and, therefore, cannot be considered as a reliable tool in comparative analysis. However, as NSM studies have also shown, each language has means to express meanings such as *feel*, *know*, *think*, *good*, or *bad*.¹¹ The list of the proposed “semantic universals” comprises about 65 items; these words are used within certain universal combinations to explicate more complex meanings (table 1). The NSM method has been applied extensively in the study of the domain of emotions, as well as in comparative linguistic and cultural studies.¹²

11. Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, eds., *Semantic and Lexical Universals: Theory and Empirical Findings* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1994); Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, eds., *Meaning and Universal Grammar: Theory and Empirical Findings*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002).

12. See, for example, Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999); Jean Harkins and Anna Wierzbicka, eds., *Emotions from Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001); Cliff Goddard, “Contrastive Semantics and Cultural Psychology: ‘Surprise’ in Malay and English,” *Culture and Psychology*, 3, no. 2 (1997), pp. 153-81; Catherine Travis, “Omoiyari as a Core Japanese Value: Japanese-style Empathy?” in A. Athanasiadou and E. Tabakowska, eds., *Speaking of Emotions: Conceptualization and Expression* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 55-82.

Table 1. Exponents of semantic primes (English and Russian versions)

	ENGLISH	RUSSIAN
Substantives:	I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING/THING, PEOPLE, BODY	IA, TY, KTO-TO, CHTO-TO/VESHCH', LIUDI, TELO
Relational substantives:	KIND, PART	ROD, CHAST'
Determiners:	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER/ELSE	ËTOT, TOT ZHE, DRUGOI
Quantifiers:	ONE, TWO, MUCH/MANY, SOME, ALL	ODIN, DVA, MNOGO, NEKOTORYE, VSE
Evaluators:	GOOD, BAD	KHOROSHII, PLOKHOI
Descriptors:	BIG, SMALL	BOL'SHOI, MALEN'KII
Mental predicates:	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	DUMAT', ZNAT', KHOTET', CHUVSTVOVAT', VIDET', SLYSHAT'
Speech:	SAY, WORDS, TRUE	GOVORIT', SLOVA, PRAVDA
Actions, events, movement, contact:	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	DELAT', PROISKHODIT'/SLUCHAT'SIA, DVIGAT'(SIA), KASAT'SIA,
Location, existence, possession, specification:	BE [SOMEWHERE], THERE IS/ EXIST, HAVE, BE	BYT' [GDE-TO], BYT' (sushchestvovat), IMET', BYT' (iavliat'sia)
Life and death:	LIVE, DIE	ZHIT', UMERET'
Time:	WHEN/TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	KOGDA/VREMIA, SEICHAS, DO, POSLE, DOLGO, KOROTKOE VREMIA, NEKOTOROE VREMIA, MOMENT
Space:	WHERE/PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	GDE/MESTO, ZDES', NAD, POD, DALEKO, BLIZKO, STORONA, VNUTRI
Logical concepts:	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	NET/NE, MOZHET BYT', MOCH', POTOMU CHTO, ESLI
Augmentor, intensifier:	VERY, MORE	OCHEN', ESHCHE/BOL'SHE
Similarity:	LIKE	KAK (TAK, KAK)

The aim of the present semantic analysis is to propose semantic explications of the emotion terms under consideration using simple universal concepts. The use of these simple concepts in explications is advantageous for the purposes of my study for three main reasons. Firstly, such explications represent an “insider’s” understanding of the emotions, which is unique to every language. Secondly, simple universal concepts make a good ground for comparative studies because they are free from any linguistic or cultural bias. Thirdly, the analysis of semantic universals and their combinations in explications allows me to relate these explications of emotion terms to broader cultural themes and understandings.

To explain related cultural norms I will also refer to a theory of cultural scripts, which is an offshoot of the NSM theory. According to Goddard, cultural script is “a statement – framed largely or entirely within the non-ethnocentric metalanguage of semantic primes – of some particular attitude, evaluation, or assumption which is hypothesized to be widely known and shared among people of a given speech community.”¹³

The Semantics of the Russian *Soperezhivanie*

Soperezhivanie morphologically consists of the prefix *so-* and the word *perezhivanie*, a language-specific Russian word, which roughly means “intense feeling.” The prefix *so-* is found in many words in Russian – *sotrudnik* (employee), *sosluzhivets* (colleague), *soratnik* (companion-in-arms), etc. as well as in emotion terms – *sochuvstvie* (sympathy) and *sostradanie* (compassion). Russian grammars consider this prefix to be “alive,” which means that words with this prefix are perceived as containing it as a meaningful part.¹⁴ The analysis of words with the prefix *so-* shows that its invariant of meaning in simple universal concepts can be “THE SAME.” Therefore, *soperezhivanie* is about experiencing an “intense feeling,” which is caused by an “intense feeling” of another person.

Prototypical situations when *soperezhivanie* can be experienced are watching a movie or a play, reading a book, or following a sports competition. In such cases, a person becomes affected by the emotional state of other people and in the process of following their stories experiences

13. Cliff Goddard, “Ethnopragmatics: A New Paradigm,” in Cliff Goddard, ed., *Ethnopragmatics: Understanding Discourse in Cultural Context* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), p. 5.

14. Vladimir Vinogradov, *Grammatika russkogo iazyka* [Russian Grammar] (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1960).

the same emotional state. The following are several examples from the Corpus to illustrate this point:

(1) *Anna liubila smotret' latinoamerikanskie serialy, soperezhivala geroiam.*

Anna liked to watch Latin-American soap operas, empathized [*soperezhivat'*] with the characters.

(2) *. . . oni pogruzhaiutsia v mir teksta kak v zhivoi mir, vosprini- maiut ego ne kak vymysel, a kak real'nost'; oni soperezhivaiut geroiam ot vsego serdtsa.*

. . . they plunge into the world of the text like into a real world, perceiving it not like a fantasy, but like a reality, they empathize [*soperezhivat'*] whole-heartedly with the characters.

(3) *Poka zhe tomskim bolet'shchikam prikhoditsia otprashivat'sia s raboty, chtoby soperezhivat' rodnoi komande.*

Meanwhile the Tomsk fans have to ask for leave from their work places in order to support [*soperezhivat'*] their local team.

(4) *Potok akterskoi ènergii vossoedinialsia s nervnoi ènergetikoi zritel'nogo zala, i voznikal akt sovместnogo teatral'nogo èkstaza, vzaimnogo i glubokogo kontakta na raznyx urovniakh soperezhivaniia.*

The flow of the actors' energy reunited with the energy of the audience and there emerged an act of a joint theatrical ecstasy, mutual and deep contact at different levels of empathy [*soperezhivanie*].

In order to feel *soperezhivanie* it is essential for the experiencer to recognize the existence of some bond between oneself and another person. In the case of fans and sports teams, this bond usually develops due to a common place of origin (the person and the team come from the same town or country). In the case of audience members or readers and fictional characters, this bond can be caused by belonging to the same gender or age group, or having had similar experiences. *Soperezhivanie* can also be felt by someone who is away from home and becomes aware of some misfortune happening to the people in their native country (e.g., a terrorist attack, flood, earthquake, etc.), as in (5) and (6).

(5) *My skorbili i molilis' vmeste so vsei stranoi, soperezhivaia i sochuvstvuia postradavshim i ikh rodstvennikam.*

We grieved and prayed together with the whole country, deeply empathized [*soperezhivat'*] and sympathized with the victims and their relatives.

(6) *Brat sledil za sobytiiami v Rossii, soperezhival.*

My brother was following the events in Russia, sympathized [*soperezhivat'*].

Like other emotion terms in Russian which have the prefix *so-* – *sochuvstvie* and *sostradanie* – *soperezhivanie* implies sharing the negative state of another person, and on its own implies a very strong feeling. Examples (7), (8) and (9) illustrate this point.

(7) *Ja ostro soperezhival prezidentu.*

I acutely sympathized [*soperezhivat'*] with the president.

(8) *Bol' byla oposredovannaia, ne vpolne podlinnaia, no ia uslyshal, kak dvazhdy stisnulos' serdtse, soperezhival, sochuvstvoval, somnenii net!*

The pain was mediated, not fully genuine, but I heard how my heart painfully contracted twice, I emphasized [*soperezhivat'*], sympathized, no doubt!

(9) *Schast'e buk v slov. Èto byli "Tri tovarishcha" Remarka. Oshchushchenie legkogo pomeshatel'stva ot sliiannosti s sovsem chuzhimi ei liud'mi. Soperezhivaniia do boli v solnechnom spletenii, do rvoty.*

The happiness of letters and words. It was the "Three comrades" by Remarque. A feeling of slight madness from the confluence with completely alien people. Compassion [*soperezhivanie*, PL] "til pain in the solar plexus," "til vomiting."

To conclude, *soperezhivanie* is an emotion, which is caused by the realization of an intense and negative emotional state of another person with whom the experiencer feels some bond and, as a result, experiences the same kind of emotional state, and develops a positive attitude towards that person.

The explication of *soperezhivanie* in simple universal terms can be as follows:

soperezhivanie (*chelovek X soperezhivaet cheloveku Y*)

“person X feels *soperezhivanie* towards person Y”

- a. person X knows that something bad is happening to person Y
- b. X knows that Y feels something bad because of this
- c. when X thinks about it, X feels the same
- d. at the same time X thinks about Y like this:
- e. this person is someone like me
- f. I don't want bad things like this to happen to this person
- g. I want good things to happen to this person
- h. when X thinks like this about Y, X feels something good towards Y

Components (a) and (b) in this explication show that *soperezhivanie* is experienced simultaneously with the negative experience of another person. Component (c) captures that the observer has a similar emotional experience as the object. The content of the mental scenario of *soperezhivanie* (components e to g) includes the following elements: the person wants bad things not to happen to this person and wishes good things to happen to this person. Component (e) explains the reason for the development of this feeling, that is, the recognition of a bond between the experiencer and the target person. Component (h) expresses a positive attitude of the observer to the object.

What is the place of this term in the emotional universe of the Russian language? *Soperezhivanie* is a term which is morphologically and semantically related to the Russian emotion terms *sochuvstvie* and *sostradanie*. These words also share some semantic components with the word *zhalost'*. The meanings of these words were discussed in works by V. Apresian, Gladkova, Levontina, Shmelev, Wierzbicka, and Zalizniak.¹⁵ These scholars agree that these words occupy a significant

15. Valentina Apresian, “‘Fear’ and ‘Pity’ in Russian and English from a Lexicographic Perspective,” *International Journal of Lexicography*, 10, no. 2 (1997), pp. 85-111; Anna Gladkova, “Sochuvstvie and Sostradanie: A Semantic Study of two Russian Emotions. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach,” *Lidil*, 32 (2005), pp. 35-47; Irina Levontina, “Zhalost', sochuvstvie, sostradanie, uchastie,” in Jurii Apresian, ed., *Novyi ob'iasnitelnyi slovar' sinonimov russkogo iazyka* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004), pp. 327-31; Irina Levontina, “Pomiloserdstviute, bratysy!” [“Brothers, have Mercy!”], in *Kliuchevye idei russkoi iazykovoï kartiny mira*, pp. 270-79; Alexei Shmelev, “Skvoznye motivy russkoi iazykovoï kartiny mira,” in *Kliuchevye idei russkoi iazykovoï kartiny mira*, pp. 452-64; Anna Wierzbicka, *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); Anna Zalizniak, “Liubov' i sochuvstvie: k

place among other Russian emotion terms. It has also been shown that these words are language- and culture-specific and, if compared with English for example, they do not have full semantic equivalents. Like in the case with *empathy* and *sopere-zhivanie*, *pity*, *sympathy* and *compassion* are not fully semantically identical with either of the Russian words. An interesting thing that has been shown on the basis of studies of these words is that the words that have the suffix *so-* share a semantic component of “feel the same” and the component “feel something good towards another person.” They also share the component “want to do something good to Y.” The salience of these words as well as their semantic similarity allows me to formulate a cultural script related to them:

Russian cultural script encouraging attitudes of zhalost’ (roughly, “pity”), *sochuvstvie* (roughly, “sympathy”), *sostradanie* (roughly, “compassion”) and *soperezhivanie* (roughly, “empathy”)

[people think like this:]

- a. when someone knows that something bad happened to another someone
- b. it is good if this someone feels something good towards that other someone
- c. it is good if this someone feels the same as the other someone
- d. it is good if this someone wants to do something good for that other someone

This cultural script spells out on the basis of linguistic evidence that in Russian culture it is valued to have good feelings for other people when they feel something bad, to experience their misfortune together with them, and to want to provide help to the ones who are in trouble.

I will now discuss the meaning of the English word *empathy*.

The semantics of the English *empathy*

In English the word *empathy* is relatively new. *The Oxford English Dictionary* refers its first example of use to 1904.¹⁶ According to *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, “empathy” as a concept was first elaborated by Robert Vischer in 1872 as a psychological theory of art.¹⁷

probleme universal’nosti chuvstv i perevodimosti ikh imen” [“Love and Sympathy: Towards the Problem of Universality of Feelings and Translatability of their Names”], in *Kliuchevye idei russkoi iazykovoï kartiny mira*, pp. 205-25.

16. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford Univ. Press, available at: dictionary.oed.com

17. *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, available at: text.virginia.edu/DicHist/dict.html

This theory asserts that because the dynamics of the formal relations in a work of art suggest muscular and emotional attitudes in a viewing subject, that subject experiences those feelings as qualities of the object. In English, the word “empathy” was coined by the American psychologist, Edward Titchener, as a translation of the German *Einfühlung*.

Empathy in English certainly remains a term that is primarily used by professionals in psychology and aesthetics. However, native speakers who are not professionals in these areas also use it. According to the data in the COBUILD Corpus, the frequency of use of *empathy* in speech is comparable with the use of *empathy* in writing: its frequency in the UK books subcorpus is 2.4 occurrences per 1 million words and in the UK spoken subcorpus – 1.8 occurrences per 1 million words.

Empathy refers to a conscious reaction to feelings of another person. As my data suggest, in Anglo folk psychology, as reflected in ordinary English, *empathy* is most commonly conceptualized as a state rather than a feeling. In the COBUILD Corpus, the occurrence of the expression *to have empathy* is ten times higher than that of *to feel empathy* (0.4 vs. 0.04 occurrences per 1 million words respectively). In this regard, *empathy* differs from its closest synonyms – *sympathy* and *compassion* – which are always conceptualized as feelings. In accordance with this finding, I will explicate the expression “to have empathy” in this article.

Empathy is a reaction towards an emotional state of another person. Like *soperezhivanie*, it is based on a certain way of thinking about another person (component “X thinks about Y like this”). The array of emotional states causing *empathy* does not fully coincide with the array of emotional states causing *soperezhivanie*. Like *soperezhivanie*, *empathy* can be caused by a negative emotional state of another person (examples 10-11):

(10) *I have **empathy** for anyone who has been exploited and lied to by members of the press.*

(11) *Mr. Pitt 46. . . , the Member for Mulgrave, also has an **empathy** for small business . . . he and his wife Linda operated a sporting goods retail business before he was elected in 1989.*

However, a negative emotional state is a possible, but not necessary condition for *empathy*. *Empathy* can be experienced towards children whose emotional state is not necessarily negative (examples 12-13):

(12) *Another aspect of Deirdre's evident connection with her son was that, subtly, having an abortion had reinforced her **empathy** for her live son, whom she was now feeding.*

(13) *She had a great **empathy** with children and knew how to keep them alert while they sat.*

Example (14) is about the *empathy* of a writer towards her young audience, whose feelings and concerns are different from those of adults, but are not necessarily bad:

(14) *The wit and humor with which Clarke writes make her books highly entertaining. She has a fresh, original voice and, perhaps importantly an obvious **empathy** with her adolescent audience.*

Moreover, *empathy* is also used as an attitude towards one's enemies (example 15):

(15) *Speaking from his hospital bed in the Dagestani town of Akasi, grimacing from spine and head injuries, Dubanenko showed obvious **empathy** with his captors. "They know what they're fighting for. I never really understood before; I guess I thought that the Chechens were sort of bandits. But now I see that all they want is to live separately. Why shouldn't they?"*

Therefore, *empathy* is an attitude towards other people whose emotional state is different from the emotional state of the subject. If we try to translate these English examples into Russian, it becomes clear that *soperezhivanie* will not be a good choice in most of the contexts. The first reason is that the situations where people *have empathy*, the other person does not necessarily have a negative emotional state. The second reason is that nothing in these as well as other contextual examples of use indicates that *empathy* implies an intense emotional state of the subject. On the contrary, *empathy* is a controlled rational attitude while *soperezhivanie* is spontaneous. Another difference between these concepts is that *empathy* does not imply a bond between two people; it can be experienced towards people with whom the subject has nothing in common. For *soperezhivanie* establishing some kind of a bond with another person is important. *Empathy* is mainly understanding of the condition of another person. This understanding comes from imagination of what the other person is experiencing.

The explication of *empathy* can be as follows:

empathy (person X has empathy with person Y)

- a. person X thinks about someone else like this:
- b. something is happening to this person
- c. this person feels something because of this
- d. I know what a person can feel when something like this happens
- e. because of this, I know what this person can be feeling now
- f. when a person thinks like this, this person can know how the other person feels

Empathy and *soperezhivanie* significantly differ in the content of the cognitive scenarios involved and, therefore, represent two distinct attitudes. As the linguistic evidence suggests, *empathy* is a controlled conscious reaction of a person to the emotional experience of another person. It does not necessarily involve an emotional attitude, therefore, the “feel” component is absent from its explication. *Soperezhivanie*, like *sochuvstvie* and *sostradanie*, involves sharing the emotional experience of another person and developing a positive attitude towards that person. In spite of these differences, there is no other word in Russian, which is as close in meaning to *empathy* as *soperezhivanie*. Thus, the Russian lexicon has (so to speak) a gap that can be filled with the word *èmpatiia*, which has been recently borrowed from the English *empathy*.

Concluding remarks

I would like to conclude with the discussion of the current place of the word *èmpatiia* in the Russian language system. If we consider the meaning of the word *èmpatiia* as a recent borrowing against the proposed Russian cultural scripts, it becomes obvious that its meaning does not easily match to the existing pattern. *Èmpatiia* does not involve a “feeling” component and it can be experienced by a range of people, which is wider than that for *soperezhivanie*. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the assimilation of this word will not be easy because it is reflective of a worldview that is different from the one encoded in the Russian language.

Currently *èmpatiia* is not a frequently used word in Russian. The National Corpus contains only 20 examples of its use, mainly from professional psychology literature. The first example in the corpus refers to 1999. However, numerous examples of use of *èmpatiia* can be found in the Internet where it is used by professionals, as well as by non-professionals. It can be found in websites with forums where people discuss their personal relationships, as well as in dating websites where

the ability for *èmpatiia* is often mentioned as desired. For example, the following is what a Russian woman writes about herself on a dating website: “*Vspyl’chiva, vysoko razvito chuvstvo èmpatii*” (Hot-tempered, the feeling of empathy is highly developed). Another woman refers to the following qualities of a man she is looking for: “*Ishchu: chelovek s v/o, s razvitym chuvstvom èmpatii, chuvstvom loktia i chuvstvom iu-mora*” (Looking for a man with a university degree, with a developed feeling of empathy, feeling of comradeship and a sense of humor).

The collocations in which the word *èmpatiia* is used are: *sposobnost’ k èmpatii* “ability for empathy,” *proiavliat’ èmpatiuu* “to show empathy,” *sklonnost’ k èmpatii* “inclination to empathy,” *demonstrirovat’ èmpatiuu* “to demonstrate empathy,” *razvitie èmpatii* “development of empathy,” *chuvstvo èmpatii* “feeling of empathy,” *obladat’ èmpatiei* “to have empathy.” These collocations mirror English collocations with *empathy*. So, in many ways the Russian word *èmpatiia* is used in the same way as the English *empathy* and, in future, it will be interesting to observe whether any variation in meaning develops to adjust to Russian emotional scripts.

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