

## Conceptual Opposition "Friend" - "Enemy" In Russian Medieval Period\*

Svetlana G. SAFONOVA, Irina V. EROFEEVA

Kazan State Federal University

**Abstract.** *The study of the Russian mentality development origin is in the focus of many modern studies in linguistics, cognition science, cultural studies and sociology. The article considers one of the key oppositions of the Russian worldview "friend" - "enemy" and the specificity of its representation in the language picture of the world of a medieval man. In order to study it, various methods were used, including the method of conceptual analysis, a descriptive method, including the analysis of lexicographic sources, and the method of contextual analysis. It was determined that the schematism of a man's image in the linguistic picture of the medieval world determined the great sociological development of the concepts "friend" and "enemy" in the Old Russian consciousness. This opposition was primarily associated with the implementation of military or social relationships idea and much less often with interpersonal relations. The article describes the derivations from the foundations of the friend and the enemy, their synonymous parallels were revealed, and the semantic specialization of each lexical unit and the peculiarity of the syntagmatic relations were determined. The results of the study are important to develop the picture of the historical evolution concerning the notion of friendship in Russian linguistic consciousness, to understand the semantic shifts in the meaning of lexemes representing an opposition under study. The reinterpretation of friendly relations took place in the Russian worldview. They were understood as a state inherent to the masses of people, to the perception of friendship as a deep feeling related with the spiritual sphere of a man. The results of the study are significant in linguistic, cultural, psychological and cognitive relationships.*

**Key words:** conceptual opposition, language picture of the world, semantics, the Middle Ages, Russian annals.

### Introduction

During the study of different concept representation ways in the medieval world picture, it is necessary to take into account the values and the ideals of that epoch and the environment. People in feudal society adhered to certain views, conditioned by the culture and the traditions of their time. The most significant factors that influenced the world outlook of a person of that era were the kept folk and pagan traditions, on the one hand, and new ideas related to the influence of Christianity on the other. The most complete combination of these trends was reflected in the annals, as the monuments of compilations, which had both folklore and religious sources.

According to researchers, the most important signs of Old Russian works were historicism (fiction was practically absent), publicism, patriotism and traditionality.<sup>1</sup> According to these signs in the literature of Ancient Rus, the ideal was a spiritual man, who was characterized in standard formulations. The schematism of a man's image predetermined an insufficient elaboration of the

---

\* The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

<sup>1</sup> I. P. Eremin, *Lectures and articles on the history of ancient Russian literature*, Leningrad, Leningrad State University, 1987; A. Ya. Gurevich, *The categories of medieval culture*, Moscow, Art, 1984; V. V. Kuskov, *The history of ancient Russian literature*, Moscow, Higher School, 1998; D. S. Lihachev, *Historical poetics of Russian literature*, St. Petersburg, Aleteyya, 1999; S. Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

semantic sphere, connected with the description of interpersonal relations. Therefore, the idea of friendship developed gradually in the Russian mentality, for a long time.

In the modern world, the concept of a "friend" is an important element of Russian national conceptual sphere. It refers to the basic social concepts that appeal to ethical concepts. The value of friendship is an ethnic-cultural stereotype,<sup>2</sup> a "genome of culture".<sup>3</sup> The concept of friendship in modern Russian suggests many aspects, each of which realizes the semantics of good relations between close people, mutual assistance, support and spiritual affinity.

In ancient times, friendship belonged to sociological concepts and assumed more formal, external relations, although even then the conceptual concept of friendship contained a value-based ethical component. In the process of the concept "friendship" historical development the psychological aspects of the phenomenon are strengthened, friendship begins to denote the relations based on inner affection, the community of views, goals and feelings. The evolution of the conceptual view of a friend and friendship is the transition from the understanding of this phenomenon as the support in social relations to the designation of assistance and the assistance in interpersonal relationships. "The shift of meaning from the horizontal plane (the ratio of wide coverage, but of shallow depth) to the vertical one (a great depth of connections, spiritual kinship and the close relations of their participants) is evident".<sup>4</sup>

## **Methods**

In order to study the specific features of the linguistic representation of the concepts "friend" - "enemy", a number of research methods are used. First of all, the method of conceptual analysis, which allows to identify the main features of the relevant concept cultural content. In the framework of this approach, it is important to analyze the lexicographic sources, since it is the dictionary data that provide the most adequate representation of the realities and the language means of their expression. The method of etymological reconstruction allows us to restore the most ancient Slavic judgments about friendship, to characterize the origins of its significance. Among traditional linguistic methods, they used descriptive method, the method of component analysis, the method of contextual analysis, as well as the historical method, due to which the evolution of a meaningful concept for the Russian language consciousness is traced.

## **Results And Discussion**

According to etymology, the word friend goes back to o-c- \*drug, <i.e. the base \* dh(e)reugh- "to support", "to prop", "to hold". Thus, historically, the idea of

---

<sup>2</sup> N. Alefirekom, "Language as a State of Ethno-Cultural Consciousness," in *XLinguae Journal*, VIII (2015), no. 3, p. 2-18.

<sup>3</sup> L. Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*, 1<sup>st</sup> volume – "Concept Structuring Systems," New York, The MIT Press, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> V.I. Karasik, I.A. Sternin (eds.), *The anthology of concepts*, 1<sup>st</sup> volume, Volgograd, Paradigm, 2005.

support and assistance is realized in the idea of friendship. Initially, the word friend meant a satellite. The comparison with the data of other i.e. languages suggests that for the Old Russian language the idea of a friend reflected primarily the relations in military situations. So, the Goth. driugan has the meaning "to provide military assistance", "to collaborate in a campaign", an ancient Isl. draugr is a "warrior, a kinsman"<sup>5</sup>. An adjective education of the "other one" is also related to the word friend etymologically, but its meaning does not reflect the idea of assistance.

The number of the word "friend" use is insignificant in the annals, which indicates that the idea of friendship did not receive a clear expression in the worldview of Russian Middle Ages. In the earliest Russian chronicle - the Novgorod first chronicle of the Synodal List (further NIL) - the word "friend" has the meaning of "a close person, a neighbor" as the part of the oldest proverb and up to now: "Аще бо кто добро другу чинилъ, то добро бы было; а копяя подь другомъ яму, сам ся в ню вьвалитъ" (НИ: 82). In the "Tale of Bygone Years" (later ТВУ), in the story about the trial of faiths by Vladimir, relating to the church literature and including a copious citation of religious texts, the word "a friend" is also understood as a "close person": "Они же рѣша ему. аще сего пустиши не имашши быти другъ кясреви"(ТВУ: 103).

However, the idea of cooperation in military operations is implemented much more often in the Old Russian language within the semantics of the word "friend". In this case, the lexeme is used in the meanings of "ally", that is, it refers to the parties that concluded a military alliance: "Рече же князь Печенѣжъскіи къ Прѣтичю. буди ми другъ. онъ же рече. тако створю. и подаста руку межю собою" (ТВУ: 67). When peaceful relations are established between opposing sides, a handshake is used as a ritual of friendship, which indicates the antiquity of this gesture. Its origin is connected with pragmatic goals: the need to show that the communication participants do not have weapons in their hands and are peace-loving.

The word "mate" is more common in chronicle texts is the synonym for a lexeme "friend". This education has a clear word-formation structure and the correlation with the verb of acceptance in the sense "to love, to be kind, to care for someone". The derivative mate is formed with the suffix -tel, referring to the stylistically marked means of the language from the period under study.

In modern Russian, these synonyms refer to ideographic ones and differ by additional shades of meaning. If a friend is a close person with a deep relationship, then a mate is a person the communication with whom is more superficial. In the Old Russian language, such nuances have not become apparent yet due to the weak development of friendship phenomenon psychological aspect. Especially often the word mate is noted in the Moscow chronicle of 1479 (hereinafter МС). It denotes both interpersonal relations, which is reflected in the meaning of "a buddy, a friend," and social relations that are reflected in the meaning of "a supporter, a like-minded person", which is explicated in the fragments of documentary content from

---

<sup>5</sup> P. Ya. Chernykh, *Historical and etymological dictionary of modern Russian language*, vol. 1-2, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Moscow, V. I. 1999.

the annals: "Въ утреи же побегоша ко князю на Городище тысячкыи Ратимборъ и Гаврило Кияниновъ, и инии приятели его" (МС: 149).

The derivative "squad" is more widespread in the language of chronicles, it derived from the word "friend". It is the squad which acts as an active protagonist in many weather articles. Dmitry Likhachev also drew attention to the fact that "every actor in the annals is portrayed as a representative of a certain social category".<sup>6</sup> Thus, the word squad, in which the suffix -ina has the derivational meaning of collectivity, is the designation of the totality of representatives close to a prince, which is reflected in the dictionary meaning of "people close to a prince, prince council and prince army". This value appears after the contamination of other two meanings of the word squad - "comrades, satellites" and "a military detachment, an army". However, it is used in the annals to name the prince's troops, while in the meaning of the word "squad" it reflects the military component represented in the producing basis - the personal noun "friend" as an additional one.

Another derivation from the basis "friend" using the suffix of the abstract meaning -b(a) is the derivative friendship. It acts with the word-formative meaning of the abstract action-state "friendship, society, comradeship" and is noted in isolated cases with sociologized semantics during the description of diplomatic relations: "С ним прииде посоль от короля Римьского Максимиана Фердирикова сына цесарева, именем Юрьи Дѣлаторъ, о любви и о дружбе и о братствѣ" (МС: 331).

Just as the word friend is synonymous with a mate, the derivative friendship has the synonymous word "affinity" in the sense of "friendship, devotion" motivated by the verb of acceptance. As is known, word formation plays an important role in the modeling of a nationally specific language picture of the world,<sup>7</sup> therefore the derived names occupy a special place in the language, which attests to the significance of the corresponding concepts in the minds of native speakers. Therefore, derived names that retain their internal form are more expressive often. Thus, the word affection is noted in the composition of a stable situational formula of "like someone" in the sense of "being committed to someone". In the TBY, the lexeme of affinity is noted with the doubling of the abstract meaning suffixes -zn' and -stv(o), completely synonymous with the word "affinity" in the sense of "devotion".

There are concepts of a friend - an enemy in the relationship of conceptual opposition, which testifies to the division of the surrounding world into one's own and another's and the presence of a boundary that determines the specificity of human existence in society. The sense of the word enemy reflects the system of ethical and normative assessments of the society. The structure of the concept

---

<sup>6</sup> D. S. Likhachev, *A man in the literature of ancient Russia*, Moscow, Nauka, 1970.

<sup>7</sup> N. N. Matveeva, V. G. Fatkhutdinova, "National component in Russian word-formation: linguo-didactic aspect," in *Journal of Language and Literature*, VII (2016), no. 2, p. 233-236; T. Y. Schuklina, T. Y., "Expressive word formation as lingo-cultural phenomenon," in *XLinguae*, IX (2016), no. 3, p. 44 – 50.

under study, like most others in the medieval consciousness, includes religious-mythical and real-historical components. Two basic meanings of the word "enemy" correlate this concept with either a secular, real life - "an enemy, a foe, an adversary", or with the otherworldly, mythical force - "an imp, a devil". The meaning of "a heretic, an apostate, an atheist" is in the area of two marked main values intersection, since it is the nomination of a real person, but serving the supreme spirit of evil.

The concept of "enemy" has been related to military terminology since ancient times.<sup>8</sup> Slavic tribes were in a state of permanent military action, as they were forced to fight for their territories and independence. The representatives of other ethnic groups were seen as the potential enemies who attempted to assure the integrity and the independence of the Slavic principalities. In the medieval picture of the world, the peculiarity of the division of subjects into friends and enemies is their behavior in the conditions of military operations. Therefore, first of all, friends are fellow soldiers, fellow tribesmen, and enemies are foreigners, strangers, the conquerors with territorial and material interests: "И погыбнеть земля руская и врази наши Половци пришедше возмутъ землю Русьскую" (ТБУ: 262).

Along with the incomplete variant of "enemy", there is also a pleophonic "vorog" with the same set of values. The semantics of "foes, ill-wisher" is the most relevant for the texts of chronicles for the lexeme the "enemy" (vorog). In the singular, this name is rarely used, which is related to the general features of the chronicle narrative, in which the actors act as a single, cohesive mass. During the description of the relationship between individual princes, it is possible to use the word "vorog" in singular and in the meaning of "a foe, an ill-wisher", devoid of a military component: "Мюрчюфль же посла къ Николѣ и къ людьмъ въ святую Софию: «язь яль ворога вашего Исаковиця, язь вашъ цесарь" (НП: 47).

The idea of defeating the enemies in the medieval consciousness is associated with the help of divine forces: "Яко врази наша побѣдени быша молитвами святыя Богородица и святого отца нашего Феодосья" (ТБУ: 282). As an abstract representation, denoting the instrument by which an action is performed, the noun prayer appears. A prayer in the religious worldview is the strongest way to combat any evil. The massacre of enemies is correlated with the idea of revenge in both religious and secular terms, and according to Christian ideology revenge comes from God: "И вложили было на Бога мщенье свое яко же рече пророк. и вздам мечь врагом и ненавиющим мя вздам" (ТБУ: 268).

The word enemy could acquire a specialized semantics "a demon, a devil" as the result of a meaning narrowing. In this case, "an enemy" is contrasted to new people-Christians: "А врагъ сѣтовашеться побѣждаемъ новыми людьми хрьстьянскими" (ТБУ: 153).

---

<sup>8</sup> I. Kh. Safin, Ye. I. Kolosova, T. A. Gimranova, "Linguocultural «Military» concept in the Russian linguistic world view: gender aspect," in *Journal of Language and Literature*, VII (2016), no. 2, p. 332-335.

The synonyms of the word enemy were the word "a foe", the substantivized adjectives "opposing", "oppositional", which were also used to nominate both a military adversary and a devil. The complex word "enmity lover" is semantically more capacious definition of devil with the following dictionary meaning: "the one who loves evil".

The derivative "enmity" with the help of the ancient suffix -d(a) from the base "enemy" could have both an abstract meaning and denote "hate, dislike" and the concretized semantics "evil, harm". The derivative name of dislike with the meaning of "strife, enmity, discontent, dislike" synonymous with the formation of enemy is connected with the root -lyub. Another synonym for the word "enmity" was the formation of unfriendliness with the prefix -ne expressing a negative meaning. The use of a number of synonyms with the general meaning of "strife, enmity" is typical of chronicle passages in which prince feuds are described.

### **Summary**

Thus, the study of concepts important for Russian culture was carried out in accordance with modern approaches through the prism of ethnos symbols and values.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the scholars' opinion about changing semantic systems was confirmed under the pressure of changing society needs.<sup>10</sup> In the Old Russian language, the conceptual opposition "friend" - "enemy" was not so much of ethical as of social content. The semantic content of these concepts was more formalized and typed, almost did not affect the sphere of the inner, spiritual sphere of a man. In most cases, the words "friend" and "enemy", reflecting the division of the surrounding world into one's own and another's, were connected with the military sphere and designated the supporters or the opponents in intertribal conflicts. The elements of meaning, representing the psychological aspects of friendship, are expressed in Old Russian language implicitly yet. The word "squad" occupied a special place in the Old Russian language (as is evidenced by a high frequency of use) as a prince's troops designation, the most significant military and social unit in the era of the Russian Middle Ages.

The importance of these concepts in the Old Russian consciousness is evidenced by the derivational possibilities of the words "a friend" and "an enemy", the developed synonymous and antonymic relations in which they were involved. The change of these lexemes semantic content in the direction of their significance increase can be traced for many centuries and reflects the shifts in the worldview of Russian people connected with the strengthening of the humanistic principle. This study shows the relationship of language, history and culture.

---

<sup>9</sup> F. Sharifian, *Cultural Conceptualisations and Language: Theoretical framework and applications*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia. John Benjamins, 2011, p. 238.

<sup>10</sup> B. Nerlich, D. D. Clarke, "Semantic fields and frames: Historical explorations of the interface between language, action, and cognition," in *Journal of Pragmatics*, XXXII (2000), no. 2, p. 125–150.