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THE DICTIONARY OF CULTURAL CONCEPTS AND KEYWORDS OF THE MODERN ERA AS AN INNOVATIVE LEXICOGRAPHICAL PROJECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract The paper examines the scientific and methodological aspects of implementing a student lexicographical project focused on creating the "Dictionary of Cultural Concepts and Keywords of the Modern Era." The author substantiates the didactic value of integrating anthropocentric and linguoculturological approaches into the practice of philological education. The publication reveals the theoretical foundations for identifying the keywords of an era, describes in detail the macro- and microstructure of the projected dictionary, and analyzes the specifics of semanticizing dynamic mental phenomena by philology students.

Keywords: linguoculturology, concept, keywords of an era, educational lexicography, lexicographical design, philological education, project-based method

Introduction

Dynamic sociocultural, technological, and geopolitical transformations of the first decades of the twenty-first century find an immediate and sensitive reflection in the linguistic system. Language does not simply record external changes but acts as an instrument for conceptualizing new experience and mentally mastering a rapidly changing reality. In this regard, contemporary linguistics shows an intensified interest in capturing and analyzing the so-called "keywords of the era" and basic cultural concepts that serve as unique mental anchors of the collective consciousness.

In the system of higher philological education, the study of these processes is often limited to theoretical courses in linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, or sociolinguistics. However, the most effective way to assimilate these complex disciplines is to transition from reproductive learning to activity-based learning. A productive format for such integration is lexicographical design, within which students are engaged in creating the "Dictionary of Cultural Concepts and Keywords of the Modern Era." This project allows future philologists to combine the role of academic researchers with that of practical lexicographers.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Design

The theoretical basis of the project comprises the fundamental principles of anthropocentric linguistics, linguoculturology, and cognitive lexicography. Within this project, a cultural concept is understood as a multidimensional mental formation that includes conceptual, evaluative, and figurative components. In turn, the keywords of an era are defined as lexical units characterized by high frequency, communicative significance, and the ability to accumulate the actual meanings, phobias, values, and expectations of society in a specific historical period.

During the preliminary linguistic monitoring carried out by students under the guidance of the instructor, the wordlist for the future edition is formed. The focus of the researchers includes concepts and marker words that reflect the key spheres of human existence in the modern era. In the technological sphere and the space of virtualization, the authors highlight such phenomena as the digital ecosystem, artificial intelligence, deepfake, metaverse, and clip thinking. The psychological sphere and existential challenges of the time find reflection in the concepts of mindfulness, burnout, toxicity, inclusiveness, and doomscrolling. Vivid sociocultural and behavioral transformations are captured through the lexical units of sharing, cancel culture, coworking, zoomers, and remote work.

The research methodology relies on a combination of methods of conceptual analysis, componential analysis of definitions, contextual analysis, and methods of corpus linguistics, which allow for the verification of the frequency and compatibility of the studied units based on the National Corpus of the Russian Language and topical media texts.

Macro- and Microstructure of the Dictionary of Cultural Concepts and Keywords of the Modern Era

The success of a lexicographical project depends on a clear parametrization of the dictionary space. The macrostructure of the dictionary is based on the alphabetical-thematic principle, which allows combining ease of search with the possibility of a systemic view of the thematic layers of modern culture.

The microstructure, which determines the architecture of the dictionary entry, is developed by the students collectively and must possess a high degree of informativeness, explicating not only purely linguistic but also cultural-pragmatic properties of the word. The description model includes a consistent series of mandatory zones. At the very beginning, the headword or lemma is located, which is presented in its initial form indicating standard stress and grammatical characteristics. This is followed by an etymological note containing brief information about the origin of the word, which is especially relevant for neologisms-anglicisms and loan translations, as well as the time of its active entry into usage.

The most important part is the definitional zone, which is a detailed interpretation of the meaning that captures the current sociocultural sense of the unit. Unlike traditional explanatory dictionaries, the emphasis here is on identifying the evaluative and conceptual cores of the concept. The definition is followed by a cultural-philosophical and pragmatic commentary, which is a text block explicating why a given word became symbolic for the era, what social shifts it reflects, and what connotations are characteristic of it.

An illustrative macrocontext is recognized as a mandatory element, including citation material extracted from authoritative mass media, contemporary fiction, high-quality blogging, or text corpora data. The illustrations must clearly demonstrate the typical collocability and pragmatic potential of the word. The entry concludes with an associative-derivational field that captures synonyms, antonyms, and new formations generated by the given word.

Didactic Potential and Stages of Project Implementation

The process of working on the dictionary is structured as a step-by-step research activity of student micro-groups. At the search and theoretical stage, students immerse themselves in scientific literature, master the conceptual apparatus of linguoculturology, and form a representative wordlist. At the analytical stage, the main research work unfolds, including the collection of contexts, conducting semantic analysis, capturing transformations in word meanings, and writing commentaries.

At the editorial stage, the unification of the texts of the dictionary entries takes place, along with the elimination of tautologies and subjective assessments not supported by linguistic material. The project concludes with a digital representation, which implies the creation of an electronic database, a longread, or an interactive dictionary platform.

The didactic effect of this technology is multifaceted. First of all, students acquire language intuition skills and learn to see deep mental and social processes behind the linguistic form. In addition, lexicographical work strictly disciplines philological thinking, since the need to fit a live, fluid cultural phenomenon into the framework of a strict definition requires the utmost precision of formulations. Finally, the project develops critical thinking, as it obliges students to distance themselves from personal speech habits and objectively analyze the speech practice of society.

Conclusion

The development of the "Dictionary of Cultural Concepts and Keywords of the Modern Era" by philology students is an effective scientific and methodological tool that meets the challenges of modern higher education. The project successfully connects the fundamental theoretical framework of linguistics with applied research tasks. The dictionary created as a result of the project activity represents a valuable cross-section of the speech culture of the early twenty-first century, and the students themselves gain a unique experience of a comprehensive linguoculturological description of dynamic processes in language, which significantly increases the level of their professional competence and research culture.

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