ASSOCIATIVE MEANING IN RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW EXPRESSION

Sargylana Filippova[*] and Elisabeth Poarch

North-Eastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov, Belinskiy Street 58, 677000 Yakutsk, Russia

Abstract

This article investigates the reflection of the notion 'god' in the Yakut and Russian language consciousnesses, which has been analysed on the material from a free-associative experiment. Associative meanings help us uncover those patterns of traditional behaviour which cause the inclusion of the stimulus within a particular system of relations, characteristic of a given ethnic group. The language consciousnesses of the Yakut and Russian people living in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), as well as the specificity of their religious worldview were investigated on respondents, ranging in age from 16 to 21. Our subjects fell into three groups (approximately 230 people in each group): Russians; Urban Yakuts, who considered Russian as their main or only language of communication; Rural Yakuts, who considered Yakut as their predominant language of communication. A comparative analysis of the associative fields of the stimulus word 'god' (бог/ bog, таҥара/ tangara) allowed us to distinguish the common features in the worldviews that exist in the Yakut and Russian consciousnesses (reactions faith, heaven, church, the Sun, the cross, paradise, light, etc.). As for the differences, Rural Yakuts responded with holy spirit of the upper world/ айыы/ ajyy, spirits of the middle world/ иччи/ ichchi, upper world/ үөһээ дойду/ üöhee dojdu and others, which reflect the traditional religious ideas of the Yakuts about the structure of the world and the existence of several gods and different spirits, which the Yakut people from cities seem to have lost. Overall, the results of the research may be used as material to illustrate the components of the world image preserved in the everyday consciousnesses of the representatives of different ethnic cultures.

Keywords: world image, language consciousness, associative meaning, reflection, verbalization

1. Introduction

Increasing attention to the problems of ethnicity is a characteristic feature of the development of humanities in the modern era. The contradictions that arise between the needs of the ethnic development of peoples and the acceleration of technological trends of modern industrial civilizations reinforce the need for a deep understanding and explanation of the consciousness of ethnic groups that

---

[*]E-mail: filippova_sargylana@mail.ru

influence the social practice and behaviour of large groups of people. The independence of an ethnos is determined by its ability to create optimal conditions for its survival and development, that is, to act as a self-organizing system. This means that in the new historical conditions, the ethnos is able to change its culture and internal structure in such a way as to be preserved not only in a physical, but also cultural sense [1].

An important sign of the existence of an ethnos is the emergence of its self-consciousness with its characteristic idea of common origin and historical destinies [2]. Another sign of the existence of an ethnos is a community of culture. Moreover, common ethnicity and religion may serve as ethno-integrating cultural factors. However, it is necessary to note that representatives of different ethnic communities speak the same language, or representatives of the same ethnic community use different languages. Religion can also lose its value as an ethno-differentiating factor, even if the significance of religion in the life of the ethic community has not changed significantly [2, p. 53-58]. These observations allow us to conclude that it is not a single element but a whole set of cultural elements that play the ethno-integrating role. These are language, religion, folklore, ritual and ceremonial system, norms of communication and behaviour, etc.

The study of images of consciousness of different ethnic groups has become one of the key problems of modern psycholinguistics, as a result of which the question of the role of language in the formation of human consciousness is raised. The so-called 'linguistic world image' is formed in the language, and this image is one of the most profound layers of a human world image [3]. Evgeniy F. Tarasov states that language is the means of forming a person's mental activity and, therefore, language is the means of fixing, processing and preserving the knowledge gained during human activity. He defines language consciousness as the summation of images of consciousness which are dementalized by means of language (words, free phrases, set phrases, sentences, texts and associative fields) [4]. Therefore, the dementalisation and verbalisation of images of consciousness make them available for a distant observer, and studying verbal associations helps to reveal the nature, structure and organization of such images [4].

The free production of words in response to a word stimulus by subjects in the course of a free-associative experiment allows the researches to construct an associative field. Associative fields can be regarded as a reflection of the images of language consciousness. Natalya V. Ufimtseva states that an associative field is not only a fragment of a person's verbal memory, but is also a glimpse into a given ethnic group's world, as reflected in the consciousness of the bearers of a given culture (its cultural descendants) and revealed within a system of motives, values and cultural stereotypes [5]. An associative field represents the so-called associative meaning. In studying the images of consciousness on the basis of an associative field, it is important to note that the semantic meaning of a word and its associative meaning are by their very nature different phenomena. The semantic meaning of a word is found in explanatory dictionaries and considered the externalization of the "scientist's metaknowledge" [6]. The associative

meaning, on the other hand, is the reflection of the language consciousness of a native speaker of a language, and points to the form and the means by which the constituent images of this consciousness are stored and maintained [5]. It is a model that represents associative connections among words. It is the summation of semantic, cognitive, psycholinguistic and syntagmatic relationships of the stimulus with other words.

It is necessary to point out that in psycholinguistics there are current investigations of associative meanings that represent images of language consciousness of different ethnic groups [7-9]. Thus, in our work, based on the provisions formulated in Russian psycholinguistics, we attempted to explore the national-cultural characteristics of the religious beliefs of the Russians and Yakuts by studying the perception of the image of god in Yakut and Russian cultures with the means of a free-associative experiment.

2. Methods

Initially, associative experiments were conducted by Western psychologists and psychiatrists (see C.G. Jung, G.H. Kent & A.J. Rosanoff) to study the processes of perception, the formation of concepts, generalizations, etc. [10, 11]. An associative experiment also helps to define mass consciousness (derived from the consciousnesses of individuals), that is, the perception and view of the world at a certain historical moment by "some collective majority" of members of a society [5, p. 140].

The language consciousness of the Yakuts and Russians and their ideas about god were studied on the basis of a free-associative experiment that we conducted in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) according to the generally accepted international practice of conducting free-associative experiments. The associative questionnaire was formed on the basis of a list of 112 stimuli, which is used for cross-cultural studies in the Department of Psycholinguistics of the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The subjects were students ranging in age from 16 to 21 representing different colleges and universities in the city of Yakutsk. We had 3 groups: Russians, living in Yakutia (about 230 people); Urban Yakut people, who consider Russian as their main or only language of communication (about 230 people); Rural Yakut people, owning their native language (about 230 people). For the latter group, the original list of the stimuli was translated into the Yakut language. The respondents were divided into groups of 10-20 people, taking into account which language they consider the main language of their communication. For the speakers of the Yakut language all the explanations were conducted in the Yakut language.

The division of the Yakut subjects into two groups is due to the presence of differences in the cultural environment of the city and village. The village is the epicentre of traditional culture, while the city is a generator of professional contemporary culture [12]. The Yakut language predominates over the interethnic (Russian) in agricultural regions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), where the

overwhelming number of residents are the Yakuts. In industrial regions and cities the interethnic Russian language prevails over the Yakut one.

To study the common and distinctive features of the content of associative fields in the Yakut and Russian cultures we followed certain stages: (1) we identified the most frequent components in the associative meaning of each stimulus word in each group of subjects, (2) we compared the components of associative fields and their frequency, (3) we identified the commonalities and distinctions of the images of consciousness of the three groups of subjects, (4) we interpreted the reasons for the presence of the common and distinctive features. Thus, when studying the image of god in the language consciousness of the Russians and Yakuts, we used the method of free-associative experiment, and at some stages we applied the methods of quantitative, descriptive, comparative and interpretational analysis.

3. Results

For the purposes of convenience of presentation and ease of understanding, the stimulus is marked by bold and the verbal reactions are in italics. In addition, the first experimental group is labelled Russians, the second – Urban Yakuts, and the third group is called Rural Yakuts. In accordance with this, the following abbreviations are used in the text: RAF – Russian Associative Field; UYAF – Urban Yakut Associative Field; and RYAF – Rural Yakut Associative Field. The numbers in parentheses show the quantity of similar answers to the stimulus.

The content analysis of the frequencies of the associative verbal reactions shows that Russians and Urban Yakuts associated the notion **god**, first of all, with *faith/ вера/ vera* (28 and 31 reactions, respectively), while the most frequent response among Rural Yakuts was *holy spirit/ айыы/ ajyy* (35). In Yakut mythology, the notion 'айыы/ ajyy' meant spirits and **gods** inhabiting the Upper World. The traditional worldview of the Yakut people did not include heaven and hell because they believed that in the universe there were three worlds: The Upper World inhabited by **gods** on nine levels, the Middle for people, spirits and their environment (flora and fauna), and the Lower, occupied by evil spirits [13]. According to S.I. Nikolaev-Somogotto, *holy spirit/ ajyy is* the name of the Yakut religion. He fundamentally disagreed with the opinion that the Yakut religion was 'shamanism', because pure shamanism does not belong to the Yakut religion. Shamanism is only a companion of the religion 'айыы' (aiyy), which contains in itself 'animism', 'fetishism', 'totemism', 'cultism' and 'shamanism' [14]. Thus, there are two opinions regarding the meaning of the notion 'айыы', one of them considers this lexeme as the name of the spirits of the Upper World whilst the other as the name of the religion.

For Russians the notion **god** was connected with *faith/ вера/ vera (28), sky/ небо/ nebo (20), church / церковь/ tserkov' (20), life/ жизнь/ zhizn' (6), paradise/ рай/ raj (6), universe/ вселенная/ vselennaya (5), world/ мир/ mir (5), religion/ религия/ religiya (5), heavens/ небеса/ nebesa (4), Jesus/ Иисус/ Iisus (4)* and so on. **God** was associated with *power/ сила/ sila (4), power, authority/*

власть/ *vlast' (3)*, love/ любовь/ *lyubov' (3)*, hope/ надежда/ *nadezhda (3)*, kindness/ добро/ *dobro (2)* and so on. However, they opposed the notion **god** to *devil/ дьявол/ d'yavol (10)*, *no/ нет/ net (6)*, and *evil being/ черт/ chert (3)*.

Urban Yakuts, like Russians, also associated **god**, first of all, with *faith/ вера/ vera (31)* and *sky/ небо/ nebo (25)*. Other frequent reactions were *Jesus/ Иисус/ Iisus (15)*, *paradise/ рай/ raj (15)*, *spirit/ дух/ dukh (5)*, *church/ церковь/ tserkov' (5)*, *man/ человек/ chelovek (4)*, *angel/ ангел/ angel (4)*, *lord/ господь/ gospod' (3)*, *soul/ душа/ dusha (3)*, *the cross/ крест/ krest (3)*, etc. Urban Yakuts answered *power, authority/ власть/ vlast' (4)* and *light/ свет/ svet (3)*. The stimulus elicited the following opposite reactions: *devil/ дьявол/ d'yavol (4)*, *no/ нет/ net (4)*, *enemy/ враг/ vrag (2)*, *evil being/ черт/ chert (2)*.

Rural Yakuts associated **god** with *holy spirits/ айыы/ ajyy (48)*, *faith/ итэҕэл/ iteğel (37)*, *god's home, church/ дьиэтэ/ dgiete (10)*, *spirit/ иччи/ ichchi (6)*, *sky/ халлаан/ khallaan (5)*, *priest/ аҕабыыт/ ağabyyt (4)*, *man/ кihи/ kihi (3)*, *sun/ күн/ kün (3)*, *upper world/ үөhээ дойду/ üöhee dojdu (2)* and others. They also gave the responses *power/ күүс/ küüs (8)*, *help/ көмө/ kömö (2)* and *light/ сырдык/ syrdyk (2)*. **God** evoked the reactions *evil spirit/ абааhы/ abaahy (15)* and *no/ суох/ suokh (5)*.

Russians gave the following responses connected with qualitative characteristics of **god**: *omnipotent/ всемогущий/ vsemogushchij (6)*, *supreme/ всевышний/ vsevyshnij (3)*, *eternal/ вечный/ vechnyj (2)* and *holy/ святой/ svyatoj (2)*. Urban Yakuts gave the answers *omnipotent/ всемогущий/ vsemogushchij (4)* and *supreme/ всевышний/ vsevyshnij (2)*. Rural Yakuts produced the verbal reactions *high/ үрдүк/ ürdük (4)*, *powerful/ күүстээх/ küüsteekh (2)*, *holy/ сибэтиэй/ sibetiej (2)* and *clean/ ыраас/ yraas (2)*.

On the whole, the percent of frequent answers in associative fields was the following: in RAF there were 72.8% of frequent reactions, in UYAF – 70.3%, in RYAF – 81.3%. The other reactions were single-frequency responses. The comparative analysis of the frequencies of the associative verbal reactions constituting the associative fields to the stimulus **god** for all the three experimental groups allowed us to derive the following table of correlations (the correlations of single responses were not taken into account in our analysis, but we added those single reactions that overlapped with frequent ones in other associative fields – Table 1).

Most of the similarities in the data were observed between RAF and UYAF. The verbal reactions from RYAF also contained some correlations, but the frequency of their reactions revealed that they differed from both RAF and UYAF.

Table 2 presents the response frequencies embracing the three associative fields for which no comparative correlations were found. Note that single-frequency responses were not included.

It seems that in all associative fields there are not many specific reactions to the stimulus **god**, but it is necessary to note that their quantitative indicators differ.

Table 1. Correlation of frequent reactions to the stimulus god.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
faith/ вера/ vera 28	*вера/ vera 31*	*итэҕэл/ iteğel 37*
sky/ небо/ nebo 20	*небо/ nebo 25*	*халлаан/ khallaan 5*
devil/ дьявол/ d'yavol 10	*дьявол/ d'yavol 4*	*абааһы/ abaahy 15*
church/ церковь/ tserkov' 8	*церковь/ tserkov' 5*	*дьиэтэ/ dgiete 10*
omnipotent/ всемогущий/ vsemogushchij 6	*всемогущий/ vsemogushchij 4*	-
life/ жизнь/ zhizn' 6	-	*олох/ olokh 1*
no/ нет/ net 6	*нет/ net 4*	*суох/ suokh 5*
paradise/ рай/ raj 6	*рай/ raj 15*	*ырай/ yraj 2*
universe/ вселенная/ vselennaya 5	*вселенная/ vselennaya 1*	-
world/ мир/ mir 5	*мир/ mir 1*	-
religion/ религия/ religiya 5	*религия/ religiya 2*	-
exists/ есть/ est' 4	*есть/ est' 3*	*баар/ baar 2*
Jesus/ Иисус/ Iisus 4	*Иисус/ Iisus 15*	-
heavens/ небеса/ nebesa 4	*небеса/ nebesa 1*	-
power/ сила/ sila 4	-	*күүс/ küüs 8*
man/ человек/ chelovek 1	*человек/ chelovek 4*	*киһи/ kihi 3*
power, authority/ власть/ vlast' 3	*власть/ vlast' 4*	-
all/ все/ vse 3	*все/ vse 1*	-
supreme/ всевышний/ vsevyshnij 3	*всевышний/ vsevyshnij 2*	-
spirit/ дух/ dukh 3	*дух/ dukh 5*	-
soul/ душа/ dusha 3	*душа/ dusha 3*	-
love/ любовь/ lyubov' 3	*любовь/ lyubov' 1*	-
hope/ надежда/ nadezhda 3	*надежда/ nadezhda 1*	*эрэл/ erel 1*
sun/ солнце/ solntse 3	*солнце/ solntse 5*	*күн/ kün 3*
evil being/ черт/ chert 3	*черт/ chert 2*	-
believe/ верить/ verit' 2	*верить/ verit' 1*	*итэҕэйии/ iteğejii 1*
eternal/ вечный/ vechnyj 2	-	*үйэлээх/ üjeleekh 1*
lord, potentate/ властелин/ vlastelin 2	-	*тойон/ tojon 2, баһылык/ bahylyk 1*
kindness/ добро/ dobro 2	*добро/ dobro 1*	-
the cross/ крест/ krest 2	*крест/ krest 3*	*кириэс/ kiries 2*
light/ свет/ svet 2	*свет/ svet 3*	*сырдык/ syrdyk 2*
holy/ святой/ svyatoj 2	*святой/ svyatoj 1*	*сибэтиэй/ sibetiej 2*
tsar/ царь/ tsar' 2	*царь/ tsar' 1*	-
angel/ ангел/ angel 1	*ангел/ angel 3*	-
-	*icon/ икона/ ikona 2*	*икона/ ikona 2*
-	*Christ/ Христос/ Khristos 2*	*Христос/ Khristos 2*
-	*enemy/ враг/ vrag 2*	*өстөөх/ östöökh 1*
clouds/ облака/ oblaka 1	*облака/ oblaka 2*	-
one/ один/ odin 1	*один/ odin 2*	-
priest/ священник/ svyashchennik 1	-	*аҕабыыт/ ağabyyt 4*
help/ помощь/ pomoshch' 1	*помощь/ pomoshch' 1*	*көмө/ kömö 2*

Frequencies of responses (Table 2) in RAF and UYAF range from 2 to 3, while RYAF contains more frequent responses like *holy spirit/ айыы/ ajyy (48), spirit/ иччи/ ichchi (6)* and *high/ үрдүк/ ürdük (4)*. It means that in RAF and UYAF the main quantity of reactions found correlations, while in RYAF more specific responses are presented compared to other fields.

Table 2. Specific frequent reactions to the stimulus god.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
eternity/ вечность/ vechnost' 2	-	-
Zeus/ Зевс/ Zevs 2	-	-
earth/ земля/ zemlya 2	-	-
in heaven/ на небе/ na nebe 2	-	-
savior/ спаситель/ spasitel' 2	-	-
-	*lord/ господь/ gospod' 3*	-
-	*idol/ идол/ idol 2*	-
-	*superstition/ суеверие/ sueverie 2*	-
-	-	*holy spirit/ айыы/ ajyy 48*
-	-	*spirit/ иччи/ ichchi 6*
-	-	*high/ үрдүк/ ürdük 4*
-	-	*upper world/ үөһээ дойду/ üöhee dojdu 2*
-	-	*holy spirit of upper world/ үрдүк айыы/ ürdük ajyy 2*
-	-	*holy spirits/ айыылар/ ajyylar 2*
-	-	*mother/ ийэ/ ije 2*
-	-	*powerful/ күүстээх/ küüsteekh 2*
-	-	*clean/ ыраас/ yraas 2*

The analysis of the material gathered from the verbal associative experiment generated the following results: on the whole, the groups were comparable, for the most part, in their perceptions of the stimulus **god**. However, some responses in the associative field of the Yakut people speaking their native language were found to be considerably different in comparison with other experimental groups.

4. Discussion

The analysis of correlations of frequencies reveals many common features in the perception of the stimulus between the three experimental groups, which can be explained by similarities in the attitude to **god** in the Russian and Yakut cultures. For the convenience of the detailed comparative analysis, we divided the frequencies of the verbal reactions into five thematic categories which are presented in Tables 3-7.

Table 3 shows that **god** is closely associated with the concept of *faith*, that is why with the three groups of the respondents, *faith* is the highest frequency response. Religious faith has, as its peculiarity, faith in the reality and substantiality of the supernatural; a person is convinced that the object of his or her faith is not a thought or concept of **god**, but **god** himself – the supernatural as the real-life [15].

Table 3. Religion, beings and symbols.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
-	-	*holy spirit/ айыы/ ajyy 48*
faith/ вера/ vera 28	*faith/ вера/ vera 31*	*faith/ итэҕэл/ iteğel 37*
religion/ религия/ religiya 5	*religion/ религия/ religiya 2*	-
exists/ есть/ est' 4	*exists/ есть/ est' 3*	*exists/ баар/ baar 2*
Jesus/ Иисус/ Iisus 4	*Jesus/ Иисус/ Iisus 15*	-
spirit/ дух/ dukh 3	*spirit/ дух/ dukh 5*	-
soul/ душа/ dusha 3	*soul/ душа/ dusha 3*	-
sun/ солнце/ solntse 3	*sun/ солнце/ solntse 5*	*sun/ күн/ kün 3*
the cross/ крест/ krest 2	*the cross/ крест/ krest 3*	*the cross/ кириэс/ kiries 2*
lord/ властелин/ vlastelin 2	-	*lord/ тойон/ tojon 2*
-	*icon/ икона/ ikona 2*	*icon/ икона/ ikona 2*
-	*Christ/ Христос/ Khristos 2*	*Christ/ Христос/ Khristos 2*
to believe/ верить/ verit' 2	-	-
tsar/ царь/ tsar' 2	-	-
Zeus/ Зевс/ Zevs 2	-	-
saviour/ спаситель/ spasitel' 2	-	-
-	*lord/ господь/ gospod' 3*	-
-	*angel/ ангел/ angel 3*	-
-	*idol/ идол/ idol 2*	-
-	*the one/ один/ odin 2*	-
-	-	*spirit/ иччи/ ichchi 6*
-	-	*priest/ аҕабыыт/ ağabyyt 4*
-	-	*holy spirits/ айыылар/ ajyylar 2*
-	-	*holy spirit of upper world/ үрдүк айыы/ ürdük ajyy 2*
-	-	*mother/ ийэ/ ije 2*
Total: 62	**Total: 81**	**Total: 114**

Responses *spirit* and *soul* probably reflect the belief in the threefold nature of a person, which consists of body, soul and spirit. From the Christian perspective, the spirit, body and soul exist in unity (1 Thessalonians 5.23). There is the view that animals also have a soul [16], but it is noted that the human soul is much more advanced. It has the highest gifts of the Holy Spirit – mind and knowledge, inspiration, wisdom, etc. [16].

The association of **god** with *sun* can be explained by the idea that the sun for the Russians and Yakuts is something sacred and divine, since it grants life to all living beings. In Yakut culture there was an orientation to the sunrise due to idolization of the source of light; therefore, in daily life the doors of Yakut houses

were oriented to the east [13, p. 31]. In Slavic folklore, the sun appears in beliefs to be a reasonable and perfect being, or is itself a deity, or does **god**'s will. According to Slavic belief, the sun is the eye of **god**, or the small window through which **god** looks at the ground [17].

All kinds of activities (ceremonies, rituals, prayers) are related to the religious practices of believers and used with material objects, such as an *icon* and a *cross*. The image of **god** is associated with the image of the Son of **god** – Jesus Christ (reaction *Jesus* and *Christ*). Rural Yakuts, unlike Urban Yakuts, gave the responses *holy spirit/ айыы/ ajyy, spirit/ иччи/ ichchi, high/ үрдүк/ ürdük, holy spirit of upper world/ үрдүк айыы/ ürdük ajyy, holy spirits/ айыылар/ ajyylar* and *mother/ ийэ/ ije,* which can serve as examples of the preservation of the traditional idea that the Yakuts believe in the presence of several **gods** and spirits. Holy spirits, who are called *айыы/ ajyy,* populate the Upper World, have their own names, and master cattle, birds, people, etc. [18]; spirits *иччи/ ichchi,* living in the Middle World, are the spirits of earth, fire and wood; furthermore, trees, grass and rocks had their own spirits. Mother God *'ийэ* **таҥара/** *ije* **tangara**' helped female children [13, p. 74-75]. Thus, if Orthodoxy assured that the world is created by a single **god**, the Olonkho, a heroic epic tale of the Yakuts, stated that the world is eternal and not created by anyone, and the **gods** themselves are a part of nature and are not engaged in creation, but only in the patronage and tutelage. According to Orthodoxy, **god** is one (reaction *one* in UYAF and the presence of a single response in RAF), and in the Olonkho there are many **gods**, and they are like people: each of them has his or her own family, his or her children and relatives. These **gods** live in the Upper and Lower Worlds: the Upper World is inhabited by **gods** on nine levels, and the Lower is occupied by evil spirits [14].

Table 4. Locations.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
sky/ небо/ nebo 20	*sky/ небо/ nebo 25*	*sky/ халлаан/ khallaan 5*
church/ церковь/ tserkov' 8	*church/ церковь/ tserkov' 5*	*god's home, church/ дьиэтэ/ dgiete 10*
paradise/ рай/ raj 6	*paradise/ рай/ raj 15*	*paradise/ ырай/ yraj 2*
universe/ вселенная/ vselennaya 5	-	-
world/ мир/ mir 5	-	-
heavens/ небеса/ nebesa 4	-	-
earth/ земля/ zemlya 2	-	-
in heaven/ на небе/ na nebe 2	-	-
-	*clouds/ облака/ oblaka 2*	-
-	-	*upper world/ үөhээ дойду/ üöhee dojdu 2*
Total: 52	**Total: 47**	**Total: 19**

In the second thematic group 'Locations' (Table 4), one of the most frequent answers is *sky*. By the notion *sky* is known not only as the atmosphere, but also the infinite continuation of the *universe* above it; presumably, the sky is

the after-death place for those people who went to *paradise*. The responses *universe, heavens, world, clouds* and *paradise* verbalize the religious beliefs of Christians that the sphere of **god** is above the earth, the kingdom of **god** is in *heaven* (Deuteronomy 4.19). In addition, Russians gave the response *earth* where there is a *world* created by **god**. We believe that these answers reflect the sphere of **god's** domination, where all nations live under the whole *sky* on *earth*.

As for the answer *church*, recorded in all the three groups, it verbalizes the subjects' ideas about the organizational structure of religion, that is, Christianity presupposes the existence of the church as a social institution that unites people on the basis of a common religion. As for Rural Yakuts, their answers also reflect ideas relating to the Christian religion: among the frequent and single responses, there are reactions demonstrating the influence of the Orthodox culture on the culture of the Yakuts (*sky/ халлаан/ khallaan, church/ дьиэтэ/ dgiete, paradise/ ырай/ yraj*). But at the same time, Rural Yakuts preserved the fragments of specific ideas about the place of the existence of **gods**, according to which the **gods** lived in the Upper World (*upper world/ үөһээ дойду/ üöhee dojdu*).

Table 5. Contradictions.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
devil/ дьявол/ d'yavol 10	*devil/ дьявол/ d'yavol 4*	-
no/ нет/ net 6	*no/ нет/ net 4*	*no/ суох/ suokh 5*
evil being/ черт/ chert 3	*evil being/ черт/ chert 2*	-
-	*man/ человек/ chelovek 4*	*man/ кихи/ kihi 3*
-	*enemy/ враг/ vrag 2*	-
-	*superstition/ суеверие/ sueverie 2*	-
-	-	*devil, evil spirit/ абааһы/ abaahy 15*
Total: 19	**Total: 18**	**Total: 23**

Table 5 presents that in the Russian and Yakut cultures **god** is compared with dark forces that dominate hell or worlds under the earthly expanse. **God** is opposed to *devil, hell* and *man*; in RYAF the stimulus is opposed to *evil spirit/ абааһы/ abaahy*, and this lexical unit was previously mentioned as the equivalent of the response *devil* (Table 1). We would like to note that the equivalence of the Russian and Yakut lexical units is conventional, because the Yakut notion 'abaahy' means different spirits who lived in the Middle World (people's dwelling place) and the Lower World. The *devil* as the antipode of **god** in the Christian religion was also singular, whereas in the Yakut traditional beliefs evil deities are numerous. The Lower World means a destructive beginning, death, disaster, disease and everything hostile to people [13, p. 33].

The response *life* among Russians reflects, in our opinion, their idea that life is a gift from **god**, it is **god** who gives life to a human being (Table 6). In Orthodoxy, **god's** *light* is the embodiment of world order, beauty, truth and righteousness. According to popular Christian views, **god** the Father and Jesus Christ, angels and saints possess a luminous nature [19]. Russians and Urban Yakuts also associated the stimulus with *authority*, thereby recognizing that **god**

is the source of *authority*. **God**-established *authority* is the submission of people to **god**; the authority relationship between **god** and people is a special relationship based on *love*, freedom and unity [20].

Table 6. Abstract attributes.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
life/ жизнь/ zhizn' 6	-	-
power/ сила/ sila 4	-	*power/ күүс/ küüs 8*
power, authority/ власть/ vlast' 3	*power, authority/ власть/ vlast' 4*	-
light/ свет/ svet 2	*light/ свет/ svet 3*	*light/ сырдык/ syrdyyk 2*
all/ все/ vse 3	-	-
love/ любовь/ lyubov' 3	-	-
hope/ надежда/ nadezhda 3	-	-
kindness/ добро/ dobro 2	-	-
eternity/ вечность/ vechnost' 2	-	-
-	-	*help/ көмө/ kömö 2*
Total: 28	**Total: 7**	**Total: 12**

The associative fields demonstrate that in the language consciousnesses of all the subjects, **god** is identified with *power*. In the Orthodox religion **god** is the creator of the world, and, therefore, the cause of all existing forces, and all creatures exist by his *power* [*God's Power*, in *Orthodox Encyclopaedia*, https://azbyka.ru/sila-bozhiya, accessed on April 30, 2019]. Christian *hope* is closely associated with Christian faith. True Christian *hope* is a virtue, for it is accompanied by the willingness and determination to endure temporary sufferings and trials and to be resigned to bear one's cross, trusting that everything sent and allowed by **god** will certainly serve us for the good [I.M. Andreevskiy, *Pravoslavno-hristianskoe nravstvennoe bogoslovie (Orthodox-Christian Moral Theology),* in *Azbuka very, Orthodox library, Theology*, https://azbyka.ru/otechn ik/bogoslovie/pravoslavno-hristianskoe-nravstvennoe-bogoslovie/2_4, accessed on April 29, 2019].

Table 7. Qualities.

RAF	UYAF	RYAF
omnipotent/ всемогущий/ vsemogushchij 6	*omnipotent/ всемогущий/ vsemogushchij 4*	-
supreme/ всевышний/ vsevyshnij 3	*supreme/ всевышний/ vsevyshnij 2*	-
holy/ святой/ svyatoj 2	-	*holy/ сибэтиэй/ sibetiej 2*
eternal/ вечный/ vechnij 2	-	-
-	-	*powerful/ күүстээх/ küüsteekh 2*
-	-	*clean/ ыраас/ yraas 2*
Total: 13	**Total: 6**	**Total: 6**

The response *supreme* (Table 7) means the infinite elevation of **god** over creation; moreover, the notion 'supreme' can be used as one of **god's** names and refers to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit [V.P. Vihlyantsev, *Vsevyshniy (Supreme),* in *Bible Dictionary*, http://holyscripture.ru/dictionaries/?t=vikhliants ev&b=03&n=198, accessed on April 28, 2019]. *Omnipotence* is another essential characteristic of **god**, manifested in the fact that **god** can accomplish everything that He wants, when and how He wants, even without the slightest difficulty, and that no one and nothing can prevent His actions [*Omnipotence*, in *Orthodox Encyclopaedia*, https://azbyka.ru/m-vsemogushhestvo, accessed on April 30, 2019]. Thus, Urban Yakuts and Russian respondents recorded the same answers, verbalizing the Christian ideas about His *omnipotence* and elevation.

For Rural Yakuts, **god** is *powerful/ күүстээх/ küüsteekh, clean/ ыраас/ yraas* and *holy/ сибэтиэй/ sibetiej*, and these qualities correlate with the Orthodox beliefs about the power of **god**, his purity and holiness. It is necessary to note that the lexical unit 'sibetiej' (holy) was borrowed from the Russian language. In the Yakut language there is the notion 'ытык/ ytuk' which means 'holy', but Rural Yakuts did not give such a response.

In general, the associative meanings of the notion **god** make it possible to compare the Yakut and Russian images of language consciousnesses. In the compared cultures, we revealed an intercultural sense of the stimulus, i.e. an objectively existing universal meaning of **god**. At the same time, our study confirms the opinion of researchers that associative fields may contain unique and specific fragments of the national culture, a kind of national cultural sense [21]. The ranking of some responses in the overall hierarchy of Rural Yakuts was found to be considerably different in comparison with the other experimental groups, even with the Yakuts who live in cities. Moreover, Rural Yakuts refrained from giving responses such as *Jesus, religion, omnipotent, supreme, spirit* and *soul,* that reflect the religious beliefs of Christians, but reacted with words that prove the preservation of their traditional religious beliefs, according to which there are several gods and spirits who live in the Upper, Middle and Lower Worlds.

5. Conclusions

In this article, the materials of an associative experiment were utilized to study the content of the associative meanings of the notion **god** in language consciousnesses of the Russians and Yakuts as well as to identify the components that verbalize their religious ideas. Comparison of the national-cultural meanings of the compared cultures made it possible to detect the intercultural meaning of **god**. In addition, the constructed associative fields of the notion **god** helped to reveal distinctive features of the religious beliefs of Rural Yakuts, who retained fragments of the traditional worldview in their language consciousness. Thus, the associative experiment is considered one of the reliable methods of psycholinguistics, which allows us to identify and describe fragments of images of consciousness of different ethnic groups by studying their verbalized reactions.

We would like to note that a comparative analysis of the associative fields of different groups of subjects belonging to the same ethnic group but having been socialized in different languages suggests that linguistic bias affects the ethnic culture as a whole and leads to significant changes in ethnic consciousness [22]. Thus, in the associative fields of Rural Yakuts unique national-cultural components were discovered, reflecting their traditional religious ideas. It means that they have preserved beliefs about the structure of the world and the existence of several gods and different spirits, which the Yakut people from cities seem to have lost. The results of the study show that Urban Yakuts, living in a common environment with Russians (cities and industrial regions), have lost not only their native language, switching to the Russian language and adopting the Russian way of life, but have also become disconnected from the traditional beliefs of the Yakuts.

Thus, we believe that linguistic assimilation can lead to ethnic and religious assimilation. Language is the most important part of ethnicity and is necessary to preserve the identity of the ethnic group. Rural Yakuts have retained elements of traditional culture due to the fact that they use their native language as the main language of communication, as well as the fact that they live in villages and engage in traditional activities. Rural life can contribute to the preservation of traditional national psychology, values, behaviour and beliefs.

References

[1] A.A. Susokolov, *Strukturnye Faktory Samoorganizatsii Etnosa (Structural Factors of Ethnic Selforganisation)*, in *Rasy i narody (Races and nations)*, 20th edn., Col. of Articles, Nauka, Moscow, 1990, 5.

[2] Y.V. Bromlej, *Etnos i etnografiya (Ethnos and ethnography)*, Nauka, Moscow, 1973, 31.

[3] V.I. Postovalova, *Kartina Mira v Zhiznedeiatel'nosti Cheloveka (World Image in Human Activity),* in *Rol' chelovecheskogo faktora v yazyke. Yazyk i kartina mira (The role of human factor in language. Language and world image)*, B.A. Serebrennikov (ed.), Nauka, Moscow, 1988, 8.

[4] E.F. Tarasov, Journal of Psycholinguistics, **2** (2004) 34-47.

[5] N.V. Ufimtseva, *Etnokul'turnaya spetsifika yazykovogo soznaniya (Ethnic and cultural specificity of language consciousness,* N.V. Ufimtseva (ed.), Col. of Articles, Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Science, Moscow, 1996, 139-162.

[6] A.D. Koshelev, *Referentsial'nij Podkhod k Analizu Yazykovykh Znachenij (Referential Approach to the Analysis of Language Meanings),* in *Moskovskij lingvisticheskij al'manakh: Spornoe v lingvistike (Moscow linguistic almanac: Controversies in Linguistics)*, Issue 1, Col. of Articles, Yazyki Slavyanskoj kul'tury, Moscow, 1996, 142.

[7] K.A. Pokoyakova, Mir nauki, kul'tury, obrazovaniya, **71** (2018) 519-520.

[8] N.V. Ufimtseva, Journal of Psycholinguistics, 3**4** (2017) 116-123.

[9] E.S. Balandina, Philological Sciences. Issues of Theory and Practice, **12(2)** (2019) 95-98.

[10] C.G. Jung, *Studies in word-association*, William Heineman, London, 1918, 575.

[11] G.H. Kent and A.J. Rosanoff, Am. J. Insanity, **67** (1910) 37–96.

[12] S.S. Savoskul, *Urbanizatsiya i Etnosotsial'noe Razvitie Narodnostej Krajnego Severa (Urbanization and Ethno-Social Development of the Peoples of the Arctic)*, in *Rasy i narody (Races and nations)*, 19th edn., Col. of Articles, Nauka, Moscow, 1989, 193.

[13] N.A. Alekseev, N.V. Emel'yanov and V.T. Petrov, *Istoricheskij Fol'klor Yakutov (Yakut Historical Folklore)*, in *Predaniya, legendy i mify sakha (yakutov) (Traditions, legends and myths of the Sakha (Yakuts))*, Siberian Publishing House of RAS, Novosibirsk, 1995, 25-34.

[14] S.I. Nikolaev (Somogotto), *Iz istorii religii Aiyy (From the history of the religion Aiyy)*, Olonkho, Yakutsk, 2010, 28.

[15] A.Y. Grigorenko, *Ponyatie, Sushchnost' i Struktura Religii (Notion, Entity and Structure of Religion),* in *Religiovedenie (Religion Studies),* A.Y. Grigorenko (ed.), Peter Press, Saint-Petersburg, 2008, 32.

[16] A. Pitirim (Nechaev), Chelovek Journal, **1** (1990) 133-138.

[17] A.L. Toporkov, *Solntse (The Sun),* in *Slavyanskaya Mifologiya (Slavic Mythology)*, S.M. Tolstaya, T.A. Agapkina & O.V. Belova (eds.), International Relations, Moscow, 2002, 442-443.

[18] A.I. Gogolev, Polar Star, **6** (1992) 167.

[19] A.L. Toporkov, *Svet (Light),* in *Slavyanskaya Mifologiya (Slavic Mythology)*, S.M. Tolstaya, T.A. Agapkina & O.V. Belova (eds.), International Relations, Moscow, 2002, 424.

[20] L.V. Litvinova, *Vlast' (Authority),* in *Orthodox Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, Church Scientific Centre, Moscow, 2014, 109.

[21] E.F. Tarasov and Y.A Sorokin, *Natsional'no-kul'turnaya spetsifika rechevogo i nerechevogo povedeniya (National and Cultural Specificity of Verbal and Non-Verbal Behavior)* in *Natsional'no-kul'turnaya spetsifika rechevogo povedeniya (National and Cultural Specificity of Verbal Behavior)*, A.A. Leontiev, Y.A. Sorokin & E.F. Tarasov (eds.), Nauka, Moscow, 1977, 25.

[22] S.V. Filippova, *The death associative fields in the Yakut and Russian language consciousnesses*, Proc. of 3rd International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts SGEM, STEF92 Technology Ltd, Sofia, 2016, 1047-1054.