



**REPRESENTATION OF REGIONAL IDENTITY
IN THE NANAI PROPER NAMES**

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Summary. The article investigates the representation of regional identity in the Nanai proper names of the folk discourse. In this paper, the concept of identity is seen in terms of evolutionarily stable accumulating representation given in the Nanai regional folklore. The Nanai are indigenous population of the Amur River region. The object of the analysis is to identify the hidden meanings contained in the proper names that constitute the uniqueness of the region. The survey of proper names in Nanai tales shows that the typical character for the majority of the texts of folk discourse is a human male. The explanation for this can be found in the traditional way of the family, where the man played a major role, the role of provider and breadwinner.

Keywords: regional identity; proper names; values; world picture.

In the era of globalization of social processes, the development of mass communication, increasing migration the problem of identity takes on the new meaning in the modern world. In the XXI century, a man finds himself at the crossroads of a large number and variety of social and cultural worlds that are quite blur in connection with the above-mentioned processes. Realizing and experiencing his belonging to a plurality of worlds, a man gains the complex identity.

The phenomenon of identity has been actively investigated in modern science, particularly in psychology, sociology, philosophy, linguistics and other spheres. Each of these branches of sciences has gained its knowledge on different terminological apparatus, methods of study, research materials, etc.

The phenomenon of identity is related to the constitution of discourses of "Otherness", "Authenticity", "the Other" in the contemporary socio-cultural space. "Instead of sameness, stability of the individual experience <...> there

comes a man of the modern era, who gains multiple and combined identity" [4]. Identity in this context is understood as an endless process of constitution of the man himself.

While agreeing that the personal identity in the modern world is the result of person's own choice in a rapidly transforming social reality, we cannot but accept the fact that certain reference points in the human life limit freedom of choice. These are the values, or "generalized goals and means of achieving them, which serve as the fundamental norms or ideal achievements" [3].

The values provide the integration of the society, contributing to the implementation of the individual socially approved behavior in life-relevant situations. There is no doubt that the identity (national, gender, professional, etc.) is included in the system of values of the modern man. Identity is derived from the ratio of the world and a man, expressing what is in the world and the fact that a person creates during his life as meaningful to him.





The idea of the constitution of identity in the multiple discourses is supported in a number of other well-known researchers. In particular, L. Phillips and M. V. Jorgensen, following Laclau and Mouffe believe that “identities are accepted, rejected, and are discussed in the discursive processes” [1].

Basing on the simultaneous existence of sameness and uniqueness in the concept of identity, let us highlight in the concept of the identity such coherent structure components as the historical past of the people living in a particular region, the so-called genetic code that is transmitted between the generations, and the current socio-cultural dispositions. On this basis, we can assume that the regional identity as a concept is intercepted in the first place, in evolutionary terms in the picture of the region and is represented in the folklore and literary discourses, and secondly, in terms of actually objectifying in the texts of news, advertising, sports, tourism, pedagogical, political, scientific discourses.

The object of study in this paper is the representation of regional identity in the proper names in folk discourse of the Amur River region. The goal of the analysis is to identify the hidden meanings contained in the proper names that constitute the uniqueness of the Amur River region.

People appeared in the Far East a long time ago. Before the Russian settlements in the Amur River region in the XVII century, the tribes of Daur, Evenki, Nanai (about thirty thousand people) lived on this territory.

In this paper, the concept of identity is seen in terms of evolutionarily stable accumulating representation given in the Nanai regional folklore. Legends, epics of people living in a particular region, point to the historical and cultural identity of the region, as reflected in the

ideological basis of national self-consciousness.

The conceptual worldview of the Nanai, their identity can be traced back to the proper names. In the texts of fairy tales proper names are used not only for the nomination of persons, for heroes of fairy tales, but they also have a certain functional, informational, ideological, and aesthetic value.

The survey of proper names in Nanai tales shows that the typical character for the majority of the texts of folk discourse is a human male. The explanation for this can be found in the traditional way of the family, where the man played a major role, the role of provider and breadwinner.

Proper names in traditional fairy tales go back to the names of hunting tools. For example, the Nanai name Гид comes from the word “spear”, the name Cypэ comes from the word “ax”.

Some names reflect human qualities. Thus, the common name Mergen, often found in fairy tales means:

- 1) lucky;
- 2) reliability;
- 3) the hero of fairy tales, a lucky man [2].

Indeed, Nanai tales describe Mergen as a brave young man who bravely fought the evil spirits for the happiness of people.

Thus, we can see that the Nanai folk tales store and encode knowledge, information and representation of the people about the world.

In fairy tales, national socio-historical experience, namely, traditions, norms, values, beliefs are fixed, having a symbolic nature and defining uniqueness of the Amur River region.

The discourse analysis as a special research strategy, assuming a set of techniques necessary for the understanding of the text and associated with the extra linguistic factors, allows the



reconstruction of the mythological picture of the world, that is, to restore the deeper meanings and symbolic representations.

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