

RESEARCH IN PECULIAR PERSONAL SELF-INTERPRETATION IN DIFFERENT ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

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In this article the categories of "self-understanding" and "self-construal" are considered from the positions of subject-existential approach. The self-understanding is a process of search of the valuable bases of life of a personality in a socio-cultural context. Self-construal is considered to be the way of self-understanding based on the questions, which a person addresses himself. Each type of self-construal represents a certain type of questions which a person asks, thus defining, the direction of search of the valuable bases of his life. A person's learning of ethno-cultural tradition leads the fact that within a certain cultural tradition people are guided by a certain type of the questions conducting to understanding of certain parts of their "I" that is shown in the dominating type of self-construal. The conducted empirical research has confirmed the supposition of the connection of features of ethnic culture and expression of certain types of self-construal: the highest level of independent and metapersonal self-construal has been revealed among the representatives of the big title ethnos (the Russian respondents); the representatives of the small integrated ethnos (the Adyghs and the Abkhazians) revealed the level of an interdependent self-construal.

Independent self-construal in a bigger measure is characteristic for men, than for women whereas interdependent self-construal is defined, mainly, by features of life of an ethnic group; the metapersonal self-construal doesn't depend on a sex.

The self-construal phenomenon, thus, is reflection at individual level of norms and the values of ethno-culture divided by the individual.

Key words: self-understanding, self-interpretation, independent, interrelated, metapersonal type of self-interpretation.

The post-nonclassical understanding of the world and place of the person in the world is characterized by growth of a reflection of scientists over valuable and semantic contexts of human life. Subject-existential approach to the personality opens prospects of new

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The research is done with financial support by Russian Foundation for Humanitarian Research in the frames of project 14-26-20001 a(M).

interpretation of phenomena of life in relation to which she acts as the subject. As Ryabikina notes, "methodological value of subject approach consists in judgment of the problems arising in connection with realization by the person of the main function – to be the subject of that diverse the existential of spaces in which reorganization he approves itself (himself) as the personality" [Ryabikina, 2013, p. 7]. Znakov especially emphasizes such criterion of subjectivity as development of skills of self-knowledge, self-understanding and the reflections providing to the person a view of from outside: "The subject – is the one who possesses a freedom of choice and makes decisions on commission of moral acts, based on results of self-knowledge, introspection, self-understanding" [Znakov, 2007, p. 67].

Article purposes: analysis of theoretical ideas of self-understanding and self-construal; empirical research of features of self-interpretation of representatives of different ethnic groups.

In the Russian science the problem of self-understanding was initially considered in a context of problem of understanding: any act of understanding is at the same time carried out in two directions; understanding something in the outside world, rising by one step of knowledge, subject at the same time goes deep into itself and as though towers over itself; to understand itself – means "to leave out of the limits and to learn the truth about itself" [Znakov, 2005, p. 212]. The self-understanding as mental process represents gradual identification, opening by the person of the truth about itself, i.e. his correlation with internal criteria of development of the personality.

Therefore, the self-understanding is a process of search of the valuable bases of life of the personality in a socio-cultural context. The self-understanding as result of this process represents the valuable and semantic construct expressing understanding and an explanation by the subject of the world and. The self-understanding always occurs in the certain socio-cultural context, defining a way and outlining self-understanding borders.

Distinguishing the concepts "understanding" and "interpretation", Znakov considers interpretation as "a way of understanding, generation by the subject of sense understood" [Znakov, 2009, p. 21]. As the understanding includes potential possibility of different types of interpretation of the content of understood, its consideration from the different positions, the different points of view, and the self-understanding assumes different types of self-interpretation. From

positions of psychology of human life the subject needs not to receive answers to specific questions, and to understand, what questions are possible and what to set pertinently under certain vital circumstances. Thus, self-construal – the way of self-understanding based on "the questions turned by the subject to, to the knowledge and emotional experience" [Znakov, 2009, p. 19].

"Self-construal" concept actively used in the western science in the last decades and defined as "constellation of thoughts, feelings, and the actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others" [Singelis, 1994, p. 581], allows to describe and investigate self-interpretation types. According to what question asks himself the person, he learns something about himself. In our opinion, each type of self- construal represents a certain type of questions which the person asks, defining, thereby, the direction of search of the valuable bases of the life and outlining that context within which there is a self-understanding. Using different types of self- construal, the subject is capable to understand the different aspects of the personality. In the western psychology three types of self- construal corresponding, in our opinion, to the main ways of self-understanding were allocated, described and empirically investigated.

An independent self-construal is the way of self-understanding assuming statement of questions, directed on detection of information on the uniqueness, the distinctive features, "bounded, unitary, stable self, that is separated from social context" [Singelis, 1994, p. 581]. Using such way of self-understanding, individuals are inclined to feel and realize first of all the uniqueness, the distinctive features, the opportunities, personal qualities and own purposes [Markus, Kitayama, 1991]. The aspect of self-understanding considered as cognitive self-representation is studied in development psychology [Damon, Hart, 1982]. For James, the self was divided into two main components, the "Me" and the "I". The "I" is the "self-as-knower", the aspect of self that continually organizes and interprets experience in a purely subjective manner. In the course of realization of this strategy "I" learns "Me". The special place within studying of a phenomenon of self-understanding in this direction is taken by a problem of difference of the subject from other people who play an essential role in designing of intelligent identity. According to basic provisions of this approach of people can't have feeling about the one who is he is, without feeling experience about

the one whom he isn't that involves awareness of the distinctive features [Damon, Hart, 1982, p. 844].

An interdependent self-construal is the way of self-understanding representing statement of questions, directed on designing of representation of the subject about itself as the member of a certain community (a family, ethnic, religious, professional group). An interdependent self-construal is defined as "flexible, variable" self that emphasizes (a) external, public features such as statuses, roles, and relationships, (b) belonging and fitting in, (c) occupying one's proper place and engaging in appropriate action, and (d) being indirect in communication and "reading others mind" [Singelis, 1994, p. 581]. This way of self-construal is presented first of all by ability and tendency of the subject to identification of with a certain group, to understanding of through compliance to norms and values of this group. This way of self-understanding assumes interpretation of the motives, intentions, acts through their comparison to cultural and social norms and rules, that is valuable and semantic interpretation of the personality in a context of group values.

Metapersonal self-construal – the way of self-understanding representing statement of questions, directed on search of sense of the existence, the acts to system of coordinates which goes beyond the personality and covers wider parties of human existence, life, soul or space, designing of idea of, concerning to "essence outside the individual and other people, to the universal center binding all mankind" [DeCicco, 2007, c. 51]. This type of self-construal characterizes experience of the highest moments of the personal life, being accompanied feeling: "it also is real I". In a context of psychology of the subject metapersonal self-interpretation can be considered as subjectivity manifestation, as in the fullest and broad sense of the word the subject – "this all mankind as a whole, representing inconsistent system unity of subjects of other level and scale: the states, the nations, ethnos, public classes and groups, the individuals interacting with each other" [Brushlinskij A.V., 1994, p. 4].

And the related features of the personality, knowledge, social interaction a large number both theoretical, and empirical researches is devoted to a problem of an independent-interdependent self-construal [Lyons, 1983; Markus, Kitayama, 1994; Markus, Kitayama, 1991; Markus, Cross, 1990]. In recent years one more type of self-construal – metapersonal as, according to researchers, independent-interdependent

self-interpretation describes not all range of cultural installations of the person, even taken together was conceptualized and empirically studied, they give an incomplete picture of the personality [Friedman, 2007]. Today it is a little empirical researches of metapersonal self-construal and its communication with other psychological constructs, practically all of them are carried out by T. DeCicco and her colleagues [DeCicco, 2007; DeCicco, Stroink, 2007; Mara, DeCicco, Stroink, 2010].

In a number of researches it was shown that the type of self-construal can be rather flexible, depending on the current motives and a situation, than stable personal property [Kuhnen, Hannover, 2000; Trafimow, Triandis, Goto, 1991; Trafimow, Silverman, Fan, Law, 1997]. Activation of a certain type of self-construal influences process of social knowledge: researches showed that individuals with the activated dependent self-construal are more attentive to a social context, their opinions are more caused by a context [Kim, Klinge, Sharkey, Park, Smith, Cai, 2000], they are more sympathetic to social norms [Gardner, Gabriel, Lee, 1999]. Interdependent individuals more slopes to approval of values of a collectivism, and independent interpretation – individualism [Singelis, 1994].

In cross-cultural psychology the question is actively discussed, what reasons caused distinctions in level of different types of self-construal of representatives of different cultural traditions. Markus and Kitayama explain distinctions in self-construal by features of socialization in different cultures: in individualistic society socialization is directed on that the person could become the unique personality, express itself, achieve the personal objectives; in the collectivist cultures socialization is directed on formation of motivation and the behavior, meeting group standards and promoting wellbeing of group. When people successfully carry out these cultural tasks, they test content and, respectively, their self-assessment raises. As the cultural bases of metapersonal self-construal T. DeCicco considers east spiritual traditions, basic traditions of the Buddhism are united by aspiration to go beyond the restrictions [Majkov, Kozlov, 2007].

Thus, in the western psychology self-construal is thought to mediate and explain the effects of cultural on a wide variety of outcome variables. [Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, Heyman, 1996]. So, M. Kim describes self-construal as most often used theoretical construct, for generalization of results of cross-cultural

researches in the field of communicative motivation [Kim, Klinge, Sharkey, Park, Smith, Cai, 2000].

A number of researchers, however, are skeptical about a problem of a validity of self-construal as the construct explaining cross-cultural distinctions. D. Matsumoto considers that these psychological phenomena "really exist, but their fundamental bases are connected with something other, than individualism and a collectivism" [Matsumoto, 2002]. H. Park and T. Levin, analyzing results of research of communication between type of culture and self-construal, come to a conclusion that they don't correspond to basic approvals of the theory [Park H. S., Levine T. R., Sharkey W. F., 1998].

To reveal a construct validity "self-construal", to define, whether self-construal by reflection of features of culture is, scientists carried out meta-analysis of results of a number of cross-cultural researches [Levine, Bresnahan, Park, Lapinski, Lee, Lee, 2003]. Their task was to reveal, whether the mutually independent self-interpretation is dominating in the western, individualistic cultures, and interdependent – in east, mainly Asian cultures. Having analyzed results of researches in which more than 4 000 examinees from the countries of America, Europe and Asia participated, scientists came to a conclusion that it is impossible to claim unambiguously that individuals from Japan, Korea, China or Taiwan are score higher on measures of interdependent self-construal than individuals of the USA, Canada or Australia. Also the statement was disproved that individuals from Asia cultures are score higher on measures of interdependent self-construal than on measures of independent self-construal. T. Levin on the basis of data meta-analysis drew a conclusion that existing researches don't confirm that fact that the self-construal reflects individual culture level or explains cross-cultural distinctions.

We consider self-construal as the way of self-understanding based on certain type of questions which the person asks, determining by that the direction of search of the valuable bases of the life and outlining that context within which there is a self-understanding. This context is initially set by culture within which there is a formation of the personality. The main specifics of life of the person are belonging not only to the nature, but also to culture which represents historically certain types of the organization of life and activity of people [Gurevich, 1995]. The main feature of cultural formation of the person – absorption in directly these cultural forms which inevitably have

ethnic character. Formation of the subject is connected with its initial "absorption" in ethno-cultural tradition that, in turn, assumes existence socio-cultural a determinant in its personal formation.

Interiorization the person of cultural forms is various: it and development by the individual of various socio-cultural codes defining and structuring his behavior [Goffman, 2003], and deeper penetration of cultural forms into personal structures in a context of an inclusiveness of the person in socially organized kinds of activity. In the course of activity there is an interiorization of the standard party of culture, including development of the samples defining cultural norms. As human life represents life in culture, formation of the person assumes assimilation of norms of culture [Shvyrev, 2001]. Thus, development and acceptance by the identity of cultural samples leads to that within a certain cultural tradition people are guided by a certain type of the questions conducting to understanding of certain parties of the personality that is shown in dominating type of self- construal.

However culture, predetermining dominating self-construal, doesn't exclude formation and high level of other self-construal. Results of foreign researches and the researchers conducted by us confirm that respondents can show at the same time high level of different self-construal, and also change of level of self- construal in the course of cultural adaptation [DeCicco, Stroink, 2007 is possible; Mara, DeCicco, Stroink, 2010]. In our opinion, understanding by the identity of that the understood can be included in various contexts and generate different type of the questions causing the direction of search of the valuable bases of the life, testifies to completeness of self-understanding. Active use by the person of different self-construal conducts to generation by the subject of different levels of meanings that promotes fuller and adequate self-understanding.

This situation is confirmed also by results of a number of the researches showing that the type of self-construal is caused not only features of culture, but also other factors. American researchers Cross and Madson, having analyzed results of gender researches in the USA in the last decades, come to a conclusion that gender distinctions in many respects correspond to distinctions in types of self- construal [Cross, Madson, 1997]. In their opinion, social and cultural conditions in America promote development of independence and an autonomy in men and dependence at women. Respectively, they promote formation of independent self-construal at the majority of men and dependent –

at the majority of women. Men and women live in different social contexts – independence and dependences, according to their purpose, activity, plans of interaction and value are formed in these contexts. Authors come to a conclusion that many gender distinctions (in knowledge, emotions, motivation and social behavior) it is possible to explain in terms of man's-female type of the self-construal corresponding to the dependent - independently to the type of self-construal which is forming according to socio-cultural conditions and requirements to men and women, developed in the USA. Research also revealed sexual distinctions in self-understanding which can be interpreted in terms of dominating type of self- construal: at women the understanding of is directed mainly on formation of indissoluble internal communication with other people, the self-understanding appears cognitive basis of judgment of the social status, a role and situation in society; the self-understanding provides to men awareness of its difference from other members of society [Znakov, 2005].

We conducted empirical research of features of self-construal of representatives of several ethnic groups. Based on the analysis of results foreign researches, the following hypothes was tested: there will be correlation between features of ethno-cultural tradition and level of self-construal. Participants included 1238 students: the Russian respondents – 327 people (166 male and 166 female), their age was 20.8 years (SD=3.8), respondents Adyghe – 305 people (150 male, 155 female), their age was 22.6 years (SD=3.9), Abkhazian respondents –319 people (153 male, 166 women) their age was 23.1 years (SD=4.6) and Armenian respondents – 307 people (157 female and 150 male) their age was 24.3 years (SD=5.2).

Measures. A questionnaire package of the following scales was administered:

- Self-Construal Scale (SCS) [Singelis, 1994; Tuchena, 2011];
- Metapersonal Self-Construal Scale [DeCicco, 2007; Tuchena, 2012].

Further processing of results by a method of the dispersive analysis and comparison self-construal of ethnic groups and groups of male and female.

Results.

Table 1

Results of research of level of independent self-construal

	n	M	t-test	p-level
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All participants	1238	58,49		
male	626	62,12	9,9	0,001
female	612	54,87		
Russian	327	68,28	15,8	0,001
Adyghe	305	50,35		
Adyghe	305	50,35	5,2	0,001
Abkhazian	319	47,34		
Russian	327	68,28	20,4	0,001
Abkhazian	319	47,34		
Russian	327	68,28	18,7	0,001
Armenian	307	53,40		
Adyghe	305	50,35	3	0,01
Armenian	307	53,40		
Abkhazian	319	47,34	2,4	0,05
Armenian	307	53,40		
Russian male	166	77,82	5,7	0,001
Russian female	161	68,28		
Adyghe male	150	61,68	10,5	0,001
Adyghe female	155	50,35		
Abkhazian male	153	55,58	7,3	0,001
Abkhazian female	166	47,34		
Armenian male	157	53,40	0,1	-
Armenian female	150	53,47		

Table 2

Results of research of level of interdependent self-construal

n	M	t-test	p-level	n
All participants	1238	58,38		
male	626	66,65	2,9	0,01
female	612	69,43		
Russian	327	60,96	9,2	0,001
Adyghe	305	71,86		
Adyghe	305	71,86	10,5	0,001
Abkhazian	319	78,53		
Russian	327	60,96	17,3	0,001
Abkhazian	319	47,34		
Russian	327	60,96	4,6	0,01
Armenian	307	64,96		
Adyghe	305	71,86	5,2	0,01
Armenian	307	64,96		
Abkhazian	319	78,53	14,9	0,001
Armenian	307	64,96		
Russian male	166	58,38	1,4	-
Russian female	161	60,96		
Adyghe male	150	67,64	3,6	0,01
Adyghe female	155	71,86		

Abkhazian male	153	77,06	1,5	-
Abkhazian female	166	78,53		
Armenian male	157	63,53	2	0,01
Armenian female	150	66,39		

Table 3

Results of research of level of metapersonal self-construal

n	M	t-test	p-level	n
All participants	1238	43,67		
male	626	43,63	0,3	-
female	612	43,72		
Russian	327	47,10	4,2	0,001
Adyghe	305	41,32		
Adyghe	305	41,32	5,1	0,001
Abkhazian	319	43,85		
Russian	327	47,10	9	0,001
Abkhazian	319	43,85		
Russian	327	47,10	7,3	0,001
Armenian	307	42,45		
Adyghe	305	41,32	1,9	-
Armenian	307	42,45		
Abkhazian	319	43,85	3,2	0,01
Armenian	307	42,45		
Russian male	166	46,98	0,3	-
Russian female	161	47,23		
Adyghe male	150	41,10	0,5	-
Adyghe female	155	41,54		
Abkhazian male	153	44,54	1,7	-
Abkhazian female	166	43,14		
Armenian male	157	41,92	1,3	-
Armenian female	150	42,96		

Results of research demonstrated significant distinctions in level of independent self-construal between all ethnic groups. Significant distinctions between groups of male and female (tab. 1). Results of research demonstrated significant distinctions in level of interdependent self-construal between all ethnic groups. Significant distinctions between groups of male and female on all selection and in groups of Adyghe and Armenians (tab. 2) were also revealed. Results of research demonstrated significant distinctions in level of independent self-interpretation between all ethnic groups, except Adyghe and Armenians, significant distinctions between male and female it isn't revealed (tab. 3).

Discussion. The conducted research confirmed the assumption of communication of features of ethno-cultural tradition and the leader like self-construal: at the Russian students the highest of studied groups level of independent and metapersonal self-construal, at Abkhazians – an interdependent self-construal was revealed. Independent self-construal in a bigger measure is characteristic for men, than for women whereas interdependent self-construal is defined, mainly, by features of life of an ethnic group; the metapersonal self-construal doesn't depend on a sex.

Sexual distinctions in level of self-construal appeared the most significant for independent self-interpretation: level of self-construal was significantly higher at men, than at women as a whole on selection, and in each ethno-cultural group. Level of interdependent self-construal as a whole was higher at women, than at men, but in ethnic groups wasn't revealed significant sexual distinctions. Thus, in socio-cultural space investigated by us installation formation on own uniqueness and social comparison in a bigger measure is characteristic for men, than for women. Installation on compliance to expectations of the people around, being shown in interdependent self-construal, is defined by features of ethno-cultural traditions.

The analysis of results of the content-analysis of answers of respondents on a question "That means to me to be the representative of my ethnic group?" revealed qualitative distinctions of different types of self-construal in studied ethno-cultural groups.

Interdependent self-construal at the Russian respondents, happens, mainly, through relationship of the personality and the country (state) and at emotional level is shown in a pride for the country (achievements in different spheres of activity: sports, science, art, policy, military victories) (15,2% mail and 8,8% females), the feeling of accessory to the big country (0,45% mail), feeling of accessory to the strong country (0,45% mail), feeling of patriotism (9,5% mail and 14,4% females), and at behavioural level is shown in readiness for protection of the homeland, interests of the country (4,7% mail), demonstration of belonging to Russia (0,9% of men), not indifferent relation to country problems (3,3% mail and 3,4% females), desire to promote the better future of the country (3,3% of mail and 2,8% females). Understanding of through the relation to actually ethnic group meets much less often and compliance to a national ideal (5,7% mail and 14,2% females), belonging to the Russian family (0,9% mail and 0,5% females) is shown

in feeling of accessory to big ethnos (1,4% mail), pride of belonging to an ethnic group (3,3% mail and 5% females), and shown in care and responsibility for other Russians (1,8% mail and 2,8% females).

Interdependent self-construal at the Adyghe respondents is revealed through relationship the personality – an ethnic group (people) and is shown in, pride of the nation (23% mail and 12.3% of women), feeling of accessory to ancient ethnos (1,2% mail and 1,4% of women). At behavioural level this type of self-interpretation is shown in observance of traditions (10,8% mail and 21,2% of women), transfer of traditions (4,8% mail and 5,1% females), compliance to a national ideal (15,6% and 15,9%), need of positive self-presentation (14,4% and 4,6%).

Interdependent self-interpretation at the Abkhazian respondents is shown as through relationship of the personality and the country (state), and through relationship the personality – an ethnic group (people). In the first case at emotional level it is shown in love for the country, desire to protect it (13,2 % and 8,3% females), feeling of patriotism (1,8% and 1%) and forms motive to promote the better future of the republic (4,4% and 2%). In the second case it is shown at emotional level of pride of the nation (13,5 % and 12,6%), in feeling of accessory to ancient ethnos (0,7% и 1%), and also responsibility before ancestors (4,1% and 3%), love to relatives and responsibility before them (5,6% and 1,6%). At behavioural level it is shown in observance of traditions (12,9% and 12,8%), observance of customs and rules of behavior (4,1% and 11,3%), transfer of traditions (0,9% and 9,8), compliance to a national ideal (16% and 14,1%), need of positive self-presentation (5,1% and 2,2%) and desire to continue a sort (0,3% mail).

Interdependent self-interpretation at the Armenian respondents is shown as through relationship the personality – an ethnic group (people). At emotional level it is shown in pride for a nationality (8,6 % and 14,8%) and feeling of accessory to ancient ethnos (3% mail and 0,7% females). At behavioural level it is shown in observance of traditions (20,1% and 18,4%), observance of customs and rules of behavior (10% and 4,4%), compliance to a national ideal (2,4% and 8%), need of positive self-presentation (4,8% and 0,7%), participation in improvement of life of the people (4% females), care and responsibility for other representatives of the nation (0,7%), unity with another representatives of the nation (2,4% and 4,4%), responsibility before the Armenian ancestors (0,7% of women), desire to continue a sort (0,7% of

women), love to relatives and responsibility before them (5% male and 6% females), responsibility before a family (1,2% male).

Thus, in the conditions of title ethnos as representatives both big and small ethnos show interdependent self-construal through relationship of the personality and the country (state). Representatives of small ethnos there is through relationship of the personality and an ethnic group as a whole, and also a relationship of the personality and small group – a family, relatives. Besides, interdependent self-construal in the conditions of small ethnos receives new measurement: not only in the present, but also in the past and the future that is shown in responsibility before ancestors and descendants.

Metapersonal self-construal at the Russian respondents is shown, mainly, in denial of the importance of an ethnic origin (6% male and 4,2 % females). The main thing of arguments in these cases is the priority of universal values over ethno-cultural: "For me the nationality, the main thing as speak that the person was good" isn't really important; "Before God all are equal". Metapersonal self-construal at representatives of small ethnos is shown not in denial of the importance ethnic, and on the contrary, consideration of ethnic values as universal: respect for seniors, being a basis of social hierarchy, develops into universal ethical value: "to show respect for people around, both senior, and younger, as to the friend, and the enemy". Desire to correspond to an ethno-cultural ideal conduct to universal measurement of own personality.

Results of research confirm the provision on simultaneous existence in culture of the installations corresponding to each considered type of self-construal. The conducted research confirmed the assumption of communication of features of ethno-cultural tradition and the leader like self-construal. The self-construal phenomenon, thus, is reflection at individual level of norms and the values of ethno-culture divided by the individual.

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