

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.18454/RULB.11.14>Малыхина Т.М.<sup>1</sup>, Ларина Л.И.<sup>2</sup>, Писарева Л.Е.<sup>3</sup>, Праведникова Т.В.<sup>4</sup>, Кузьмина А.В.<sup>5</sup>, Косицына Н.О.<sup>6</sup>, Стародубцева Е.А.<sup>7</sup><sup>1,2,3,4,6,7</sup> Доцент, кандидат филологических наук, <sup>5</sup> кандидат филологических наук, Курский государственный университет**КОНЦЕПТ «РОССИЯ» ЧЕРЕЗ ПРИЗМУ ЭТНОЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОГО И ЭТИМОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО АНАЛИЗА***Аннотация*

Знание этимологии может помочь понять не только значение слова, но и лучше понять процесс эволюции языка, в котором, как известно, отражается весь ход истории. Кроме того, изучение этимологии языка позволяет идентифицировать слова, первоначально русские, обозначающие традиционные русские предметы. Авторы рассматривают концепт «Россия» как одно из важнейших понятий, объединяющих многие аспекты языковой картины мира: оплодотворяющую влагу, воду, свет («солнца лик»), цвет, род и развитие жизни, мир и бел-свет, общность народов, родимую землю и государство.

**Ключевые слова:** концепт, макроэтимология, языковая картина мира, ментальность, праязык, археология языка.

Malykhina T.M.<sup>1</sup>, Larina L.I.<sup>2</sup>, Pisareva L.E.<sup>3</sup>, Pravednikova T.V.<sup>4</sup>, Kuzmina A.V.<sup>5</sup>, Kositsyna N.O.<sup>6</sup>, Starodubtseva E.A.<sup>7</sup><sup>1,2,3,4,6,7</sup> Associate Professor, PhD in Philology, <sup>5</sup> PhD in Philology, Kursk State University**THE CONCEPT OF “RUSSIA” THROUGH ETHNO-LINGUISTIC AND ETYMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS***Abstract*

*Etymology can help understand word meanings as well as the process of language evolution. This process is a reflection of the entire history course. In addition, the study of language etymology makes it possible to identify words originally Russian denoting traditional Russian subjects. The authors deal with the concept of “Russia” as one of the most important concepts, integrating many aspects of linguistic world image: fertilizing moisture, water, light (“the face of the sun”), colour, rod (gender) and life development, the world and the white light, the community of peoples, Rodimaya zemlya (native land) and the State.*

**Keywords:** concept, macroetymology, linguistic world image, mentality, protolanguage, language archaeology.

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**Introduction**

Different scholars study linguistic world image from different perspectives and they become more aware of the fact that language reflects the real world surrounding us as well as social self-awareness, mentality, life style, traditions, customs and value systems [16, P. 14]. The way every nation sees this world is reflected in their native language. The language facts can help restore its history, philosophy, and psychology. Word meanings which make up linguistic world image reflect extralinguistic reality, the most important aspects of it. Cognitive processes help people develop their skills to learn and understand the world, in other words, to construct meanings and concepts about the objects of cognition. Information about possible and real things in the world composes meaning or concept [8, P. 102].

Technical, formalistic approach to language phenomena makes it impossible to understand the meaning of different language concepts. Therefore the most important aim of our conceptual study is to develop ideas connected with concept as a key, information, linguistic and cultural unit. The analysis of this unit is based on context, logical, mental connections which are stipulated by culture.

One of the most important concepts incorporating different aspects of linguistic world image is the concept of “Russia”.

The first mention of the people called *rus* (*rusy*, *rosy*) can be found in European written sources in the 19th century. These facts were partly taken from the ancient manuscripts, testifying to wide settlement called *rusi* (*rosi*) from the North Sea to the Azov Sea.

In one of the well-known fundamental works N.M. Karamzin, a highly respected Russian historian, wrote about “wild people plunged into the depth of ignorance”, who didn't leave their own historical monuments. He meant the tribes which inhabited the most part of Europe and Asia; which later became Russian [5, P. 31]. The reasons why the

identity of ancient Russian culture was denied and the historical existence of the Russian people was recognized only in the beginning of the 9th century AD (the 4th–6th centuries in some sources) were apparently generated by influence of the official government and the church, both of which were equally satisfied with the history dated back to the Ruriks' power and adoption of Christianity. Thus, so far, even in university and school textbooks there is a widely held opinion that up to the 9th century “Russian people seemed to stay out of history, as if they did not exist and when they appeared on the historical arena (as if from nowhere), they just took the ideology, culture and state and legal traditions developed before them and without them” [3, P. 25].

However, there always has been another point of view in Russian science. Many scholars and experts in culture studies have tried to bring the Russian people into European history, to trace their connections with all ancient peoples of Eurasia, the North and the South. In the early 18th century two works devoted to ancient Russian history appeared: the first volume of “History of Russia” by V.N. Tatishchev and “Ancient Russian history ...” by M.V. Lomonosov. Two Russian scholars independently of each other said that the Russian roots went into the depths of thousands of years and these roots are closely connected with the ethnic groups that inhabited the north of Eurasia since ancient times and were known under different names to ancient and other authors [15, P. 96].

**Methods**

Descriptive, comparative-historical, historical and comparative methods have been employed to analyze the text in this study.

**Discussion**

First, it is necessary to look into the matter of linguistic world image in the works of different linguists, historians and experts in culture studies and then to present our ideas of the concept.

The Bible which incorporates the ancient ideas about the world, about the former unity of languages says: “There was one language and one dialect on the whole earth”. In linguistics history there are works of Alfred Trombetti, Holger Petersen who wrote about the original unity of languages. Thus, the Italian philologist put forward the idea of monogenesis of languages and the Danish scholar tried to trace the relations of Indo-European, Semito-Hamitic, Uralian, Altai and other languages.

Like in many sciences “the effect of ignoring” impoverished linguistics but inspite of the “highest censorship” it continued to grow. Thus, there appeared a theory of Nostratic (Pedersen’s term, Soviet linguists called it “Siberia-European”). The scholars supporting this theory said that the idea of protolanguage was based on a comparative analysis of large language families. Particularly, a scrupulous analysis of the Indo-European family in the 20th century proved that people belonging to this family have a common origin and protolanguage. V.N. Demin writes that ancestor people (“*pranarod*”), protolanguage and their common original homeland do not refer only to Indo-Europeans, but to all, without exception ethnic groups, inhabiting the Earth in the past and in the present” [3, P. 36]. The authors of the article, in addition to this judgment, are greatly impressed by the view of the scholars that modern linguistics deliberately limits itself systematizing languages, identifying connections of languages within families, and making “a research field beyond traditional boundaries a forbidden area”. Emphasizing the achievements of etymologists in language origin, it must be said that “most of them do not tend to look far deeper. Indo-European linguistics goes back to the language of the sacred Vedic texts and Sanskrit. Relations of different language families are studied very timidly and without solid historical base. Traditional microetymology which is guided by closely related language links is replaced by macroetymology proceeding from the ancient language community. For macroetymology traditional morphological and phonetic dogmatism does not play a great role, and it allows lexical and morphological modifications unfamiliar to microetymology”. The macro direction makes it possible to climb the “mound” and see the area from a bird’s eye view, that is, “to distract from minor features, small details, and rising up, take a look at the modern vocabulary from the height of the millennium” [3, P. 44].

### Results

Lexical meanings of many modern Russian words as well as words of other languages date back to a common protolanguage. So, what is the concept of “Russia” if it is a part of the overall linguistic world image not just the history of Russian culture and language?

The first thing to look at is Sanskrit which is presented fairly by ancient written monuments. *Rusa* in ancient Indian language is a word to denote light: *rusa* – light, clear, *rus* – light, shine [3, P. 43]. The word *rusy* rooted in Sanskrit nowadays has the same lexical meaning light. [3, P. 43–44]. Interpretation of the meaning of the name *Rus* in this way is not new. N.M. Karamzin’s opponent, Russian historian and ethnographer Z.Ya. Dolenga-Khodakovskiy, denying normanian origin of the word *Rus*, wrote that “in all Slavic dialects it has means only *rusy* (blond) and that a blond braid which all its sons had, as well as *Rusa Kosa* i *Rusi Warkocz* [koca] which Polish kmets (farmers) had, are equally famous” [4, P. 284]. In addition to this argument, he cited the fact that the Slavs called many rivers and mountains as *rusy* (blond). V.I. Dahl in the interpretation of the word *rus* is also close to this point of view: “Rus is the world, light and white

world” He especially singles out the word *svetorusje*, meaning “Russian land, the earth”; “white, free light, free world in Russia” [2, P. 570].

As we have already noted the root *ros* has the original meaning of *svetly* (light) and, most likely, the names of the rivers do not reflect the name of the location or the name of the inhabitants living there (but it does not also exclude such an association). First of all, the property of water *svetlaya, prozrachnaya* (bright, transparent) is reflected in the river’s name. In this regard, the word *rosa* comes under notice. In Slavic mythology and folklore it means pure transparent reviver, giving fertility to fields (in Taoist mythology *rosa* is a drink of immortal, in Christianity it is a symbol of the God’s good deeds, of the Holy Spirit gifts which revive the withered soul). [9, P. 440].

*Rosa* was considered to be the conductor of God’s will, a mediator in the conversation with the Heaven. *Rosa* is also compared to the life-giving body fluids (mainly blood). In all archaic cultures with myths about predecessors of the world (demiurge) – the Heaven and the Earth – an idea of fertilization, irrigation of the land by heavenly seed is reflected. In this connection the earth sources of water (dew, streams, rivers, lakes) endowed with the ability to grant fertility and productivity are heavenly seeds. According to the popular calendar it was believed that on the day of Luke (May 5) pregnant witches spread white linen on *rosny* grass and did circle dances. If a woman could not have a child, she went to the forest glade above which a warm spring vapour rose, undressed and joined quietly the dancing. And then she tore away a flap from trodden linen, came home, wiped herself with the flap and soon she became pregnant. On that day ancient Slavs celebrated the feast called *Rozhanitsi*. They personified spring and summer blooming of nature and thought that this period was for summer fertility, when harvest became ripe and heavy [11, P. 151]. And the embodiment of masculinity, the ancestor of life, a form of the Most High, the father and the mother of all the gods, the god of Slavic-Russian mythology, who embodies the male hypostasis, was *Rod*:

Rod is the creator of the Universe.

Rod blows life into people.

Rod is the god of the sky and the rain.

Rod is connected with earth water: *rodniki, rodisha* (springs).

Rod is connected with fire.

Rod is associated with *ognoje rodstvo* (underground hell).

Rod is connected with red colour: *rdyanoy, rodry* (flamy).

Rod is connected with *rodia* (ball lightning).

Rod is correlated with Oziris, Sabaoth, Baal, with Jesus Christ (indirectly).

To give birth to children the pagan god Rod must throw from the sky *grudiye rosnoye*, i.e. dew drops, *gradnye grudy* – balls of hail [10, P. 12].

*Ros* is the daughter of Don, *rusalka* (a mermaid) (Don is the son of Dan and Ra, so the Volga-Don was called Ros or the river Rasa) [13, P. 522]. She gave birth to Dazhbog (the God of Sun, giving God, bearer of all goods) from Perun (the God of Thunderstorms, lightning and thunder). *Ros* is the spirit of the river *Ros* (the Volga), the ancestor of the Russian people (through Dazhbog). So, the Eastern Slavs are the sons of Dazhbog and “Russians”, i.e. the descendants of *Ros* [13, P. 522]. *Rusalki* (mermaids) were deities of fields irrigation, i.e. rains or damp morning mists. They were depicted in the form of sirens, beautiful bird-maidens with wings. *Ros* is not

only drops of cool mist on the ground and plants, but also mist itself. There is a well-known saying: “*Poka solntze vzyodet – rosa ochi vyest* (While the grass grows the horse starves)”. The idea of *rusalka* (mermaids) is associated with this morning moisture which is very important for the crops ripening.

*Rusali* were celebrated at the beginning and at the end of winter Christmastime (on the eve of Christmas and Epiphany), framing the annual spell of nature and fate by prayers for water, essential condition of future harvest. The main celebration in honor of *rusalki* (mermaids) was a *rusali* (mermaid) week, which fell on June 19–24 and ended with the Kupala holiday [10, P. 67].

Water in the form of *rosy* (dew) is a personification of feminine in nature, a *rozhdniye*, *vozroshdeniye*, *orosheniye* symbol, a sign of purity and purification. And here why not to recollect the poem by A.A. Fet “Good and evil”:

And how in a small *rosinka* (dewdrop)  
You recognize the face of the sun,  
So you can find the whole universe  
In the sacred depths.

*Rusy* in Slavic-Vedic tradition are the descendants of Rosi and Dazhbog, who settled all over the world. And because of that, ethnonyms and toponyms with the root *rus* are so common throughout Eurasia. A.I. Asov writes, that “in the broadest sense of the word *rusy* means all the nations of the white race according to the Slavic-Vedic tradition”. The Scandinavians consider the name *rus* to be their own, and ancient Etruscan-Pelask who became ancestors of many Western European nations and especially ancient Romans call themselves *rasena*.

The Slavs, according to the Vedic tradition and the “Book of Veles” are the descendants of Slava and Bogumir, once one of the northern Russian people, who, subsequently, disconnected into clans and tribes, eastern: polyane, drevlyane, dregovich, severyane, also vyatichi, krivichi, radimichi; western: czechs, slovak, karpy, lyakchi, and others; then South Slavic people: bulgarians, serbs, croats, etc. Among the Slavs there were also people of Ancient Ruskolani, actually *Rusckije rody* (Russian people), who had only this name, because they were not only the descendants of Rosi but also of the patriarch Rusa, one of the descendants of Slava and Bogumir.

We read in the Book of Veles: “And so from the Islands of the Rising Sun and from the Land of *Utrennyaya Rosa* (morning dew) came he (Bys) to the Land of *Svetlaya Rosa* (light dew) and *Predvechernnyaya Zorya* (before evening dawn). And this is our native *Svyatorosskaya* country, which is called *Rus Alanskaya* and *Arianskaya*, and it is a holy land

of Dazhbog grandchildren who is actually the God giving rain, warmth and day light, and all goods” [12, P. 371].

M.V. Lomonosov, an outstanding scholar and lexicographer of his time, in his “Ancient Russian history” says that *rus*, *Rossiya* is all lands and nations where there is at least a hint of the presence of these roots in their names! Firstly, in his opinion, these are all the Baltic people – Lithuanians, Latvians, Prussians (!), and in favor of this assumption he finds some similarities (kinship) between Slavic and Baltic languages, customs, relationship of the Slavic Perun with the Baltic Perkunas. Secondly, in his opinion, the *Ros* and *Ra* river (one of the ancient names of the Volga) are apparent evidence of the original settlement of *Slavs*, *rosy* here. And *roksolany*, of course, are the same. They settled in the Baltic lands, on the island of Ryugen, where they came to be called *rany*. As a result, according to “The Tale of Bygone Years”, *Varyagi-Rusy* are also called *Slavs-Rusy*, so it is not right to think that they organized the state in Russia which they all came from once [6, P. 100].

Having examined a large number of German sources, A.V. Nazarenko proved that *rus* is always understood under the term *rugi* in Western European written sources of the 9th–11th centuries [7, P. 111–113]. According to V.V. Sedov, *rugi – rus* are *rusy* of the Middle Danube area who lived on the territory of modern Austria and Hungary [14, P. 83–89]. “Russian” toponymy has been preserved for a long time and is preserved nowadays in the Lower and Upper Austria, Shtyriya, Salzburg and Regensburg [1, P. 142].

### Conclusions

Phonetic transformation in the development and differentiation of languages led to the alternation of vowels *o*, *a*, *y* and consonants “s”, “sh”, “zh”, “g”, “d”, “zhd”, “st”, “shch” and others in the roots of the words (it is difficult to identify which of them were initial): *rosa*, *Ros*, *rosy*, *Roseya*, *Rosiya*, *Rus*, *Porusje*, *Staraya Rusa*, *rusy*, *rusak* (a Russian person in general), *rusachka* (a Russian woman, who especially *rusit* – wants to be *rusak*), *rusichi*, *rusalka*, *rusalii*, *rod*, *rodit*, *rodichi*, *rodnik*, *rodnya*, *rodstvennik*, *rodina* (motherland), *Rodimaya zemlya* (native land), *narod*, *priroda*, *roditeli*, *orosheniye* (*rozhanitsy*), *rozhdniye*, *rozhdstvo*, *rost*, *rostki*, *vyrashchivat* and others. Language archaeology involves archeology of meaning and connection between meanings. These examples demonstrate a lexical-semantic unity of the words mentioned above. *Rossia* and *Rodina* are single-root words. Thus, the concept of “Russia” incorporates the basic mental components of Russian national culture: fertilizing moisture, water, light (“sun face”), color, gender and development of life, the world and the white light, community of peoples, native land and the state.

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