

# THE “HOUSE/HOME” AND “HOMELAND” ASSOCIATIVE FIELDS IN THE YAKUT AND RUSSIAN LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESSES

## ОБРАЗЫ «ДОМ» И «РОДИНА» В ЯЗЫКОВОМ СОЗНАНИИ НОСИТЕЛЕЙ РУССКОЙ И ЯКУТСКОЙ КУЛЬТУР

## YAKUT VE RUS DİL BİLİNCİNDE “EV/YUVA” VE “VATAN” KAVRAMLARININ TEZAHÜRÜ

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### ABSTRACT

The article is concerned with the images constituting the consciousnesses of the Yakut and Russian people, living in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), analysing verbal associations for the word-stimuli “home” and “Homeland”. The choice of word-stimuli is determined by the fact that the images existing in the linguistic consciousnesses of the Yakut and Sakha experimental subjects, living in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and uniting by the territorial unity, are of great interest now. The results of the research can be used as a way to illustrate different variations in the everyday consciousnesses of different ethnic cultures.

**Keywords:** Verbal Associations, Associative Meaning, Linguistic Consciousness, Correlates.

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Статья посвящена исследованию образов мира якутов и русских, проживающих в Якутии, посредством анализа вербальных ассоциаций на слова-стимулы «дом» и «родина». Выбор слов-стимулов определяется тем, что большой интерес вызывают образы, которые существуют в языковом сознании русских и якутских испытуемых, живущих в Якутии и объединенных пространственным единством. Результаты подобных исследований применимы в качестве иллюстрации различных вариантов обыденного сознания представителей разных этнических культур.

**Ключевые слова:** Вербальные Ассоциации, Ассоциативное Значение, Языковое Сознание, Корреляты.

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## ÖZET

Makalede “ev” ve “vatan” teşvik kelimeleri içeren angaje cümlelerin tahlili üzerine Yakutistan’da oturan Yakut ve Rusların hayal dünyası incelenmiştir. Teşvik kelimelerin seçilmesi Yakutya’da aynı ortamda yaşayan Rus ve Yakutların dilsel şuurlarında bulunan dikkat çekici şekillerden seçilmiştir. Benzeri araştırmaların sonuçları çeşitli etnik kültürlerin ortak bilinçleri olarak gösterilebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sözcük Çağrışımları, Ortak Anlam, Dilsel Şuur, Bağdaştırmalar.

Analysis of verbal association norms, gathered experimentally, is one of the most popular methods of studying fragments of verbal memory of a person which cause the inclusion of the word-stimulus within a particular system of relations, characteristic of a given ethnic or social group. The experimentally acquired 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 and revealed within a system of motives, values and cultural (Ufimtseva, 1996: 140).

The linguistic consciousnesses of the Yakut and the Russian peoples were investigated on the basis of the material from the free-associative experiment, conducted by us in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) according to the internationally accepted methodological standards of performance of the associative experiment. Our subjects were the students of higher educational institutions of Yakutsk City – the bearers of the Russian and the Yakut cultures.

The experimental subjects consisted of three groups:

1. the bearers of the Russian culture, living in the same socio-cultural milieu as the bearers of the Yakut culture;
2. the bearers of the Yakut culture, who considered Russian as their main or the only language of communication (City Yakut);
3. the bearers of the Yakut culture, who considered their native language as the main language of communication (Village Yakut).

For the last group of subjects the initial list of the word-stimuli was translated into the Yakut language.

Each group consists of approximately 230 people.

For the purposes of convenience of presentation and ease of understanding, all word-stimuli are in bold and verbal reactions are in italics (note: instead of the associative words in the Russian and Yakut languages, their English correlates are given). Also, the first experimental group is labeled the Russian Subjects, the second, the City Yakut, and the third group is dubbed the Village Yakut. In accordance with this, the following abbreviations are used in the text: RAF – Russian Associative Field; CYAF – City Yakut Associative Field; and VYAF – Village Yakut Associative Field.

The content analysis of the frequencies of the associative verbal reactions making up the associative fields for the stimulus **home** shows that in the linguistic consciousness of the Russian subjects the given stimulus is associated with the word *family* (26). For them home is *big* (12), *own* (8), *old* (4), *cosy* (3), *native* (2). In the linguistic consciousnesses of the Russian-speaking subjects **home** is also associated with the word *family* (18) but this reaction is not the most frequent one. The most frequent reaction is *comfort*. In this group **home** is *big* (11), *own* (5), *log* (2), *stone* (2), *paternal* (2). In the Village Yakut **home/house**

elicits first of all the following reactions: *hearth (fire)/uot (54) and spouse/kerghen (32)*. Note that in the case with the word *kerghen* we cannot use it as an equivalent to the words “wife” or “husband” as this word together with the word **dgıye** (home/house) denotes family. So we regard this reaction as a correlate to the Russian associate *family*. It is interesting to note that the Village Yakut produced the reaction *mother/iya (11)* which was not denoted among the frequencies of other associative fields.

Speaking about qualitative characteristics of the world **home/house** we can find such reactions as *warm (12), hot (5), big (4), wooden (4), new (2)*.

In the Russian Subjects home/house is associated with *comfort (18), hearth (15)*, as well as *warmth (12), homeland (3), protection (2), cleanliness (2)*. **Home/house** is *roof (12), flat (10), castle (9), hut (khata) (7), cottage (5), accommodation (4), room (3), inner porch (seni) (2)*. Such reactions as *happiness (1), love (1)* are single. For the City Yakut home/house is *comfort (20), hearth (16), warmth (15), homeland (7), happiness (3) and joy (2)*. It is also associated with *roof (10), castle (8), flat (7), summer cottage (datcha) (6), hut (khata) (5), chimney (4), door (3), accommodation (3), building (2), peasant’s house (izba) (2), small hut (izbushka)(2), barn (2), hovel (2)*. In the Village Yakuts **home/house** is associated with the words *farmstead (9), hearth (fire)(2), life (3), homeland (2)*, as well as with *happiness (2)*. In this group of experimental subjects **home/house** elicits the following reactions: *booth/yurt (13), residence (5), door (2), window (2), outdoors (2), room (2), castle (2)*.

The comparative analysis of the frequencies of the associative verbal reactions making up the associative fields allowed us to derive the table of correlations. Note that single-frequency responses are not included.

RAF	CYAF	VYAF
<i>family 26</i>	<i>family 18</i>	<i>spouse 32 family 3</i>
<i>comfort 18 comfortable 3</i>	<i>comfort 20</i>	
<i>hearth 15</i>	<i>hearth 16</i>	<i>hearth 54 fire 2</i>
<i>big 12 roof</i>	<i>big 11</i>	<i>big 4</i>
<i>12 warmth</i>	<i>roof 10</i>	
<i>12 flat 10</i>	<i>warmth 15</i>	<i>warmth 12 heat 5</i>
<i>castle 9</i>	<i>flat 7</i>	
<i>own 8 native 2</i>	<i>castle 8</i>	<i>castle 2</i>
<i>hut (khata) 7</i>	<i>native 5</i>	<i>farmstead 9</i>
<i>accommodation 4</i>	<i>hut (khata) 5</i>	
<i>room 3</i>	<i>accommodation 3</i>	<i>accommodation 5</i>
<i>homeland 3</i>		<i>room 2</i>
	<i>homeland 7</i>	<i>homeland 2</i>
	<i>door 3</i>	<i>door 2</i>
	<i>happiness 3</i>	<i>happiness 2</i>
	<i>log 2</i>	<i>log 4</i>
	<i>rest 2</i>	<i>rest 2</i>

The analysis of the most frequent reactions allows us to make a preliminary conclusion that for both Russian and Yakut experimental subjects **home/house** is a symbolic substitute of the word *family* and the symbol of **home/house** is a *hearth*.

The following table presents response frequencies for which comparative correlations were not found.

RAF	CYAF	VYAF
<i>cottage 5, old 4, burnt 3, protection 2, old people's house 2, inner porch (seni) 2, cleanliness 2</i>	<i>summer cottage (datcha) 6, chimney 4, fireplace 3, my 3, building 2, peasant's house (izba) 2, small hut (izbushka) 2, stone 2, bed 2, paternal 2, joy 2, barn 2, sleep 2, hovel 2</i>	<i>booth (yurt) 13 mother 11, I live, life 3 yard 3 belongings 2 he/she lives 2 new 2 window 2 outdoors 2 nest/kennel 2 cowshed 2</i>

The reactions *yard* and *outdoors* attract attention as very interesting. In villages the Yakuts live mainly in wooden houses so a yard and a house are closely connected. We regard the word *outdoors* as opposite to the word *house* as a person, who live in rural area, when leaving his/her house happens to become outdoors and so identifies him/herself as being outside his/her own house. And this was reflected in their associative field as opposition **home/house** – *outdoors*.

Content analysis of frequencies of associative fields of the stimulus **homeland** showed that in the linguistic consciousness of the Russian experimental subjects the connections of the words **homeland** and *mother* are very strong – *mother* (66). In the City Yakuts the reaction *mother* (32) is also the most frequent one, despite the fact that the frequency of this reaction is twice as fewer than in the Russian subjects. As we can see, in the linguistic consciousnesses of the Russian and the City Yakut subjects the associative connection of the stimulus **homeland** with *mother* is very strong while the reaction *mother* should be more likely regarded not in the literal but in figurative sense – as “the source, the beginning of something, as well as something that is dear, close to everybody” (Ozhegov, 1999: 346). In the Village Yakuts linguistic consciousness the connection **homeland** – *mother* (6) is not so strong, furthermore, it differs from the connection **homeland** – *mother* in Russian language. We can observe the reaction *mother* along with the reaction *father* (5), *relatives* (3) because **homeland** is associated with the place where their relatives live (parents and relatives). We should keep in mind that the Village Yakuts were questioned in Yakutsk where they were studying, so they regarded as their homeland a place where their close relatives lived. In the Russian subjects **homeland** is *Russia* (27), *house/home* (20), *land* (15), *country* (11), *motherland* (9), *native land* (5), *my* (6), *Yakutia* (3), *region (kray)* (2), *world* (2), *the Ukraine* (2). The following associates are connected with word **homeland** - *patriot* (4), *patriotism* (4), *protection* (2), *responsibility* (2). In the City Yakuts **homeland** evokes the following reactions *land* (24), *house/home* (17), *Yakutia* (14), *Russia* (12), *my* (9), *country* (9), *city/town* (7), *motherland* (7), *region (kray)* (4), *native land* (2), *village* (2), *forest* (2), *nature* (2), *patriotism* (6) and *patriot* (6). In the linguistic consciousness of the Village Yakuts **homeland** is *land* (37), *homeland* (27), *Yakutia* (18), *native land* (12), *field*

(*alaas*) (9), *land* (8), *village* (6). The following reactions are also constituted in this group: *paternal land* (4), *region (kray)* (5), *house/home* (3), *world* (3), *my soul* (2), *nature* (2), *republic* (2), *Russia* (2), *region, uluus* (2).

In the linguistic consciousness of the Russian subjects the given stimulus evokes the following qualitative reactions: *native* (3), *big* (2), *beloved* (2), also it correlates with the word *love* (7). For the City Yakuts **homeland** is *beloved* (2) *native* (2), it is associated, like in the Russian subjects, with *love* (4). For the Village Yakuts **homeland** is *beautiful* (4), *big* (4), *nice* (2), *spacious* (2), *clean* (2). It is associated with *love* (4), as well as with *homesickness* (2).

Associative fields reveals many correlations which can be seen in the table.

RAF	CYAF	VYAF
<i>mother</i> 66	<i>mother</i> 32 <i>Mom</i> 5	<i>mother</i> 6
<i>Russia</i> 27	<i>Russia</i> 12	<i>Russia</i> 2
<i>house/home</i> 20	<i>house/home</i> 17	<i>house/home</i> 3
<i>land</i> 15	<i>land</i> 24	<i>land</i> 37 <i>soil</i> 8
<i>country</i> 11 <i>region</i> ( <i>kray</i> ) 2	<i>country</i> 9 <i>region (kray)</i> 4	<i>country</i> 5
<i>native country</i> 9	<i>native country</i> 7	<i>native country</i> 27
<i>native land</i> 5	<i>native land</i> 2	<i>mother land</i> 12 <i>fatherland</i> 4
<i>love</i> 7	<i>love</i> 4	<i>love</i> 4
<i>my</i> 6 <i>patriot</i>	<i>my</i> 9 <i>patriot</i>	
<i>4 patriotism</i>	<i>6 patriotism</i>	
<i>4 war</i> 3	<i>6</i>	<i>war</i> 5
<i>native</i> 3	<i>native</i> 2	
<i>Yakutia</i> 3	<i>Yakutia</i> 14	<i>Yakutia</i> 18
<i>big</i> 2		<i>big</i> 4
<i>beloved</i> 2	<i>beloved</i> 2	
<i>world</i> 2		<i>world</i> 3
	<i>village</i> 2	<i>village</i> 6
	<i>nature</i> 2	<i>nature</i> 2

Yakut reactions *native land* 27, *motherland* 12, *fatherland* 4 are the synonyms of a word-stimulus **homeland**, and they are considered to be the correlates of the reaction *native country*. It is interesting to note that in VYAF there are no correlates of the reactions *patriot*, *patriotism*. All fields contain reactions *Yakutia* and *Russia* but in CYAF the frequency of the reactions *Russia* (12) and *Yakutia* (14) is almost the same while in RAF the frequency of the reaction *Russia* (27) is several times more of the frequency of the reaction *Yakutia* (3). In VYAF the frequency characteristics also differ - *Russia* (2) and *Yakutia* (18). So we come to the conclusion that for the Russian experimental subjects **homeland** is first of all *Russia*, for the Village Yakuts it is *Yakutia* and for the City Yakuts **homeland** is both *Yakutia* and *Russia*.

The following table presents response frequencies for which comparative correlations were not found.

RAF	CYAF	VYAF
<i>foreign land 3, protection 2 responsibility 2 Soviet 2, the Ukraine 2, Golliwog (urodina) 2</i>	<i>city/town 7, forest 2, freedom 2</i>	<i>field (alaas) 9), father 5, beautiful 4, relatives 3, homesickness 2, nice 2, spacious 2, my soul 2, republic 2, region (uluus) 2), clean 2</i>

It is interesting to point out that in RAF the reaction *foreign land* is observed while in CYAF and VYAF opposite to word-stimulus reactions (opposites) are not observed at all. Furthermore, in the Village Yakuts the stimulus **homeland** evokes such reactions as *farther* and *relatives* while in other groups of experimental subjects such associative connection is absent.

The analysis of associative fields of the stimuli **house/home** and **homeland** reveals that in RAF and CYAF the associative relationship **homeland** – *house/home* turns to be very strong and reverse associative relationship **house/home** – *homeland* is considerably weaker. According to the researchers, territorial unity corresponds to blood-related unity (Razumova, 2001: 125). For relatives and friends territorial unity is “homeland”, for a family it is an accommodation or a house. Cohabitation is one of the main features of the identification of a family group. What is more, “the principle of locality is much more important than the principle of housekeeping as the last one cannot always be regarded as the basis of a nuclear family” (Razumova, 2001: 125). If family is “social equivalent of home” (Tokarev, 1970: 15), then “home” is symbolic substitute of “family”. The stability of the given association in the language was observed in our research as well. Ancestral home keeps and accumulates the characteristic features of national culture. The kin territory, according to Razumova, is organized around one centre: definite location or “ancestral home”/homeland where the closest elder relatives live and where relatives usually come to meet. (Razumova, 2001: 126). After the death of old people or the loss of “ancestral home” the image of “homeland” becomes memorial. From time to time but very rarely relatives go there to a symbolic trip and bring the soil of “native hearth”(Razumova, 2001: 126).

The ideas of home are closely connected with land/soil which is regarded as saint and ritually pure (reactions *land, soil*). Before leaving for a foreign land immigrants used to take a handful of native soil with them to settle down successfully in a new place (Vinogradova, 2002: 182). Female symbolism of land is revealed through the metaphor of maternity and the ability to harvest. That’s why, in our opinion, the associative relation **homeland** – *mother* is very strong. The other reason lies in the fact that almost every Russian-speaking person is well acquainted with the poster of the ages of Great Patriotic War which was very popular and is still used in social nets. The poster was created in 1941 by Irakli Toidze and was used as a symbol of generalized character of a mother who appealed to her sons and daughters asking them to protect their motherland. In this poster we can see an image of a woman with a slogan which can be translated as “Mother Motherland is calling!” (Rodina-mat’ zovet!). This image has been used many times and is being actively used now as well as numerous interpretations and parodies in art, sculpture, advertisement.

Before the arrival of the Russian people the Yakuts “had rather vague notion of a territory, and they didn’t have the idea of borders and land properties (Seroshevskiy, 1993: 490), which could be explained by a nomadic way of life of the ancestors of the Yakuts. In all probability, ancestral societies had their own favourite camping grounds which had been considered as being theirs due to the length of ownership and permanent lodging. In addition there was separation into paternal and maternal kin who lived quite far away from each other. Women were mainly alien, and the kin, which they belonged to, was called “iya-usa” (maternal kin), respectively, paternal kin was called “aga-usa” (paternal kin) (Seroshevskiy, 1993: 491). Therefore, homeland according to traditional philosophy of the Yakuts is compared with their parents and relatives. That’s why in Yakut language the words fatherland and motherland can be used though they lost their primary meaning and are used as synonyms. Herewith, homeland in Yakut culture as well as in Russian culture is closely connected with home and native hearth (reactions *home, hearth, house, fire*).

Home is a symbol of family well-being and fortune; it is opposed to outer world and so it is the object of various magic rituals aimed at protection from evil forces (Sleptsov, 1989: 70). Starting the building of the house people put coins and horsehair into the first pole holes. Having fixed the main poles, the Yakuts arranged a feast devoted to the spirit – the host of the house: they set a fire and “treated” it with butter and pieces of meat. The meaning of the ritual is to ask the spirit of this territory to settle down with this family and protect and bless it. The second feast was arranged after the construction of a fire (reaction *fire*): the Yakuts slaughtered cattle and sprinkled ceiling and floor around the fire with its blood. According to researchers this moment was considered as the most important because the fire was not only the source of warmth but also the source of light (Sleptsov, 1989: 70). The Yakut fire was a central detail of interior of a yurt (*balagan* is one of the ancient types of the dwellings of the Yakut people). It was not just a place where food was cooked but also the source of light and warmth (reactions *warmth, heat*), and was considered as a sacred place of the house and was “treated” with the best food (Khatylaeva, 1994: 6).

In Russian culture a fire is also regarded as a symbol of home. It symbolizes the unifying center of a house, “the symbol of spiritual and material unity of relatives living together, the source of life” (Plotnikova, 2002: 142). The elements, which fence the house from the outer world (*roof, walls*), are opposed to the elements providing its connection with the outer world (*door, windows*). According to folk belief, the well-being of a house and household depended on domestic spirits (*domovoys*) who lived in every house under a fire or a doorstep. In modern life, as researchers note, beliefs about *domovoys* are reflected in rituals preserved in traditions of moving to a new place (Razumova, 2001: 136).

In scientific researches a traditional village house is studied quite well, while a city house is not studied enough especially from the viewpoint of its spatial organization and symbolic significance of some parts. According to the scientists’ point of view it is a kitchen which is the main part of a house as here the symbol of a house – a hearth - is placed (Budina, Shmeleva, 1989: 98-100).

Thus, the comparative analysis of Russian and Yakut associative fields of the stimuli **house/home** and **homeland** shows that similarities and differences of the images of consciousnesses of bearers of Russian and Yakut languages are determined by linguistic and cultural reasons. The use of Russian language by the Yakut people as their main or the only language of communication leads to the convergence of their linguistic consciousness with the linguistic consciousness of the Russian people, the use by the Yakut people of their

native language as the main means of communication allows them to preserve the specificity of their linguistic consciousness.

The images of house/home and homeland in linguistic consciousness of the Village Yakuts include specific elements of their traditional world-view established in the form of fixed verbal associations. The City Yakuts preserved the elements of traditional world-view in a lesser degree because the same environment (city) and urban way of life bring together linguistic consciousnesses of the Russian and Russian-speaking City Yakuts.

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