

# Social and Cultural Specifics of the Pomor Linguistic Consciousness (Sailors and Fishermen of North Arkhangelsk)

Tatyana Alexandrovna Sidorova<sup>1\*</sup>, Olga Evgenievna Morozova<sup>1</sup>, Elena Evgenievna Kotsova<sup>1</sup>, Natalia Sergeevna Bolgova<sup>1</sup>, Olga Nikolaevna Ivanishcheva<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Embankment of the Northern Dvina, 17, Arkhangelsk, 163002, Russia

<sup>2</sup>Murmansk Arctic State University, Captain Egorov Str., 15, Murmansk, 183038, Russia

\*Corresponding author E-mail: [sidorova.t.a@bk.ru](mailto:sidorova.t.a@bk.ru)

## Abstract

The research subject of this article is the professional vocabulary used by the Arkhangelsk Pomors that has not been thoroughly studied yet. This article aims to fully describe the social and cultural specifics of the linguistic consciousness revealed in the social dialect of coast-dwellers (the Pomors) and their "cultural heirs", sailors and fishermen of North Arkhangelsk. The material source is the professional vocabulary and recorded oral speech of the social dialect used by coast-dwellers and documented in the three-volume dictionary of the popular-colloquial speech of Arkhangelsk. The article also considers such ambiguous terms as *professional vocabulary*, *the Pomors and linguistic consciousness*.

The authors of the article have used the integrative approach to material analysis: cognitive, sociolinguistic and linguistic. The dominant analysis was chosen as the main research method. Notional dominants are understood as mental structures of consciousness that correlate with group values and regulate interpretative activities of the Arkhangelsk Pomors in the process of nominating real-life objects.

The notional dominants of the Pomor social and cultural linguistic consciousness are as follows: reality specification, respect for professional experience and labor as a need, setting for the figurative perception of reality, etc. It is proved that intentional modality is a specific modal component of the Pomor linguistic consciousness.

The research has established that the knowledge connected with linguistic means is socially significant since it marks peculiar features of the linguistic consciousness typical of the social dialect. Sailors and fishermen formed the linguistic world-image correlated with social and cultural perception and interpretation.

The authors of the article have revealed and described such concepts as LABOR, MAN and NATURE associated with the basic concept of the Pomor social dialect – SEA.

The authors have also specified cognitively prominent levels of the Pomor linguistic consciousness.

**Keywords:** Linguistic Consciousness, Notional Dominant, Social Dialect, The Pomors, Professional Vocabulary.

## 1. Introduction

This research is relevant due to a growing scientific interest in linguistic consciousness in general and professional linguistic consciousness in particular. For instance, the following works can be mentioned: by M.M. Bakhtin, L.S. Vygotskii, G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, N.F. Alefirenko, N.D. Arutyunova, A. Vezhbetskaya, L.M. Vekker, N.D. Golev, I.A. Sternin, A.N. Tarasov, A.D. Shmelev, including dissertations of recent years [1-3].

This study aims to fully describe the social and cultural specifics of the linguistic consciousness revealed in the social dialect of coast-dwellers (the Pomors) and their "cultural heirs", sailors and fishermen of North Arkhangelsk.

The material source is the professional vocabulary and recorded oral speech of the social dialect used by coast-dwellers and documented in the three-volume dictionary of the popular-colloquial speech of Arkhangelsk [4, 5].

The factual basis of the article is formed by observing various components of the linguistic consciousness revealed in the professional vocabulary of modern fishermen, sailors and trappers who are "cultural heirs" of the Pomors.

## 2. Methods

While conducting the study, the authors have utilized the integrative approach taking into account cognitive, sociolinguistic and linguistic aspects. They have also implemented the methods of component analysis, analysis of an inner form, motivational structure and its components, as well as some elements of the cognitive approach. However, the dominant analysis of linguistic means was chosen as the main research method.

## 3. Problem Statement

This article studies the social and cultural specifics of the linguistic consciousness of the Pomors living in North Arkhangelsk as speakers of the special social dialect and covers some controversial issues that should be commented on.

Firstly, the role of *professional vocabulary* in the modern Russian language as a special social dialect has not been determined yet. Scholars have not considered the professional vocabulary of certain scientific and industrial spheres in contrast to terminological systems that have been studied since the 1960s [6, 7].

The comprehensive study of professional vocabulary as a separate subsystem of the Russian language has started only recently [8, 9]. Scholars examined the specific conceptualization of the Pomor world-image based on the analysis of hunt vocabulary, objects of nature, geographical terms, stove-related vocabulary and microtoponyms [10].

Nominative-derivational analysis distinguished two groups of professional vocabulary in the speech of fishermen and sailors: objective (nominative) and subjective (expressive) [8]. The authors of the article paid special attention to expressive professional vocabulary that forms the basis of the professional slang of sailors (*kabotazhka* has the same meaning as *kabotazh* and denotes "coastal shipping"). This means of language conspiracy lets members of some professional community relieve anxiety in stressful situations [11].

Secondly, the term *Pomors* remains controversial. Following the lead of other researchers of the Pomor culture, the authors believe that the Pomors are not a separate nation but rather a subethnos within the population of Northern Russia bordered and characterized by the regional spiritual culture, customs, traditions, occupations and everyday life [12-14]. Modern Pomors live in the territory of the Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions, as well as in East Karelia, in the Republic of Komi and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug [15].

Thirdly, the expediency of using the term *linguistic consciousness* in modern linguistics is also disputable. The linguistic consciousness of people who speak a social dialect is due to the linguistic and creative interpretation of real-life concepts historically and socially formed in accordance with the values of a certain social culture and reflected in their semantics. It is a socially conditioned image of the world. This term is actively used in cognitive and semantic studies. The authors believe that the social and cultural specifics of linguistic consciousness is conditioned by the system of moral, ideological and axiological orientations and ideals that have been formed in the mind of a person speaking a social dialect and objectified in their language.

The worldview of sailors and fishermen in North Arkhangelsk as speakers of the social dialect is based on the system of cognitive structures and professional stereotypes determined by the specific professional consciousness of both society and its individual representatives.

The authors consider the process of nomination as a form of conscious human behavior. Therefore, *the research object* is language means. *The research subject* is cognitive structures forming linguistic units.

#### 4. Discussion

The Pomor speech is based on the *North-Russian* dialect that retains the unstressed 'o'. The Pomor vocabulary is mostly associated with their everyday life (nominations of the sea, wind, ice, fishing gear, vessels, etc.).

The specifics of the Pomor culture and worldview reflected in their language is predetermined by natural and social factors, including the absence of the Tatar-Mongol yoke and serfdom in North Russia. Severe weather, long polar nights, longtime separation from one's family during seasonal fisheries and months-long wintering on islands of the northern seas led to the rigorous selection among the Pomors. As a result, the type of brave, proud and free-spirited navigator has been developing since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century [16].

The Pomors are very passionate about words and condemn the use of obscene vocabulary. The imagery, laconism, accuracy and originality of their language can be seen in texts written by the researcher of the Pomor speech – K.P. Hemp [17].

The modern Pomor speech reflects values common to the traditional Pomor culture and significant for the Pomor linguistic world-image, which is proved by records of their oral speech and linguistic studies [10].

The main Pomor priorities are connected with the sea and fishing. The Pomors often say, "*Море – наше поле*" (Mоре – nashe pole/The sea is our field). The SEA concept is sociocultural due to its special role in the linguistic consciousness of those who speak the social dialect. This concept is basic for the maritime culture and includes moral, aesthetic, ideological and axiological orientations and ideals that have been forming a segment of the Pomor linguistic world-image for many centuries. In the Pomor linguistic consciousness, the sea is represented as a complex concept consisting of interacting generalized images: the subject-sea, the object-sea (environment), sea states and sea events (fishing).

The basic concept of the Pomor "naive" consciousness is closely connected with such cultural concepts as LABOR, MAN and NATURE.

LABOR/WORK is one of the basic concepts of the Pomor worldview. Only hard everyday work helps them survive in harsh northern conditions so the ability to work is a crucial value: *Жену себе ищу работающую / Zhenу sebe ishchi rabotyashchuyu / Look for a laborious wife* (record 2002). *Семья у нас хорошая, работающая / Semyа u nas khoroshaya, rabotyashchaya / Our family is good and laborious* (record 2007).

Old Pomors often use such positive characteristics of a person as *hardworking, independent, respectful and humble*. The Pomors prefer speaking *laborious* instead of commonly used *hardworking* ('one who likes working'). This is not accidental. The word *laborious* in Russian is derived from verb (participle) and is characterized by more dynamism and the procedurality of an attribute ('one who is *constantly* in action, in work').

The Pomors did not experience serfdom, therefore they knew how to respect another person and appreciate this quality in other people. The root *-важ/ваг-* (*-vazh/vag-*) (initial meaning – 'weight, heaviness') can be found in the following words: *уважать, уважительный* (*uvazhat, uvazhitelnyi*) meaning to respect another person and understand their importance. *Внуки у меня уважительные, никогда не грубят, после ужина подойдут, поцелуют и скажут: «Спасибо, бабушка» / Vnuki u menya uvazhitelnye, nikogda ne grubyat, posle uzhina podoidut, potseluyut i skazhut: "Spasibo, babushka" / My grandsons are very respectful and polite, they will always approach me after dinner, kiss and say, "Thank you, grandma"* (record 2003).

The Pomor culture respects women. Instead of using the coarse word *баба* (*baba/wench*) they often call women *женка* (*zhenka*), with the non-dismissive suffix *-к-*. The Pomor women had equal rights with their men. Sometimes they even could steer a ship. However, a woman should not be like a man. The Pomor social dialect has the nomination *размужичье* (*razmuzhichie/masculine woman*) based on stereotypes that a woman should not resemble a man in her manners and appearance. The stem *-мужич-* (*-muzhich-*) represents not only conceptual features of *мужик/muzhik* ('coarseness', 'strength', untidiness, etc.) but also the absence of 'femininity' that is condemned in folklife culture. The modality of condemnation is expressed by the neuter gender. A woman resembling a man loses her gender identity and turns into *it*.

This word-building pattern denoting a person by similarity is represented in the derivative word *распетушье/raspetushie* – 'a man who resembles a woman, usually dressed in bright and fancy clothes'. The nomination is based on stereotypes that a man must be strict, masculine, serious, and not resemble a bright and colorful cock. The nomination *распетушье* destroys gender stereotypes, expresses the mode of condemnation and ridicule, which is also supported by the neuter gender and the prefix *ras-*.

The Pomors appreciate independence and one's ability to do everything without others' help or demands. The word *самостоятельный* (*samostoyatelnyi*) is commonly used in the Pomor speech and means 'independent', 'initiative'. *Дом сам построил, баню, все сам – самостоятельный мужик / Dom sam postroil, banyu, vse sam – samostoyatelnyi muzhik / He built a house, steam bath and everything else himself – he is an*

initiative man (record 2009). A host is called CAM (SAM/HIMSELF) and a housewife is described as CAMA (SAMA/HERSELF), which emphasizes their self-sufficiency and independence.

Such a quality as *humbleness* seems unusual for freedom-loving and independent Pomors. However, *humble* is not an absolute synonym of *meek, modest and submissive*. HUMBLENESS is a concept expressing values of the Christian culture. HUMBLENESS is the opposite of HUBRIS. To be humble means to 'live at peace with one's soul, be in the state of harmony with other people, live without hatred, anger or malice'. *Лешка – парень смиренный, нескандальный, себя выше других не ставит, всё хочет, чтобы по-хорошему было / Leshka – paren smirenyi, neskandalnyi, sebya vyshе drugikh ne stavit, vse khochet, chtoby po-khoroshemu bylo / Leshka is a humble and calm person, he does not regard himself as superior and wants everything to be good* (record 2007).

This study has revealed specific social and cultural components of the Pomor linguistic consciousness recorded in the living speech of modern sailors and fishermen in North Arkhangelsk. Secondary nominations are of particular interest. For example, the word *боцман* (botsman/boatswain) has a number of expressive synonyms with idiomatic meanings – *шкура* (shkura/skin), *дракон* (drakon/dragon). The boatswain can punish a guilty crew member. Therefore, he can be called *шкура, дракон*. These nominations realize the emotional modality of condemnation based on the following proposition: the boatswain punishes someone for violating the established rules. Figurative nominations are associated with such popular expressions as "to skin someone alive", "Draco's laws". Members of a black gang are called *черты* (cherty/imps) because they are always stained with fuel oil and grease. For example, to be dirty as hell. The senior engineer is respectfully called *дед* (ded/old man). The modus of respect marks not only his age but also experience, professional skills and abilities.

Among dominants of the linguistic consciousness common to modern sailors and fishermen, as well as old Pomors (see the nomination *работящий*), there is an attitude towards one's work and duties on a ship. It is the indicator of a developed person. Posts on a trawler include a fish catching master, a fish processing master and a senior fish catching master. The word *мастер* (master) actualizes such a modal-evaluative aspect as high quality, expertise and experience. Experience and knowledge are vital values in the sea. An experienced and strong member of some team is called *скуловик* (skulovik). However, there are much more words to characterize inexperienced sailors, including *баклан* (baklan/goose), *карась* (karas/crucian), *кадет* (kadet/cadet), *зуб* (zuek/plover), *ослик* (oslik/donkey).

Any society has its own behavioral norms associated with certain living conditions. The community of sailors and fishermen is no exception. For example, the command "Man overboard!" does not state the fact (objective modality) but calls for help (the modality of necessity) and orders to help this person (imperative modality). The principle of imagery is among typological orientations of the linguistic consciousness common to sailors and fishermen. For instance, it is important for sailors to emphasize the significance and valuableness of an anchor. Using the consonance with the corresponding male name, an anchor is often called *Yakov* or *Yashka*. The command "Drop Yakov!" shows an ironic, playful and condescending attitude toward this object. The command "Cast the breadwinner into water!" reveals a respectful attitude to an anchor which is identified as a person. Thus, the conceptual model "anchor-man" is realized. The nomination *кормилец* (kormilets/breadwinner) reveals the dependence of sailors on the work of an anchor. Therefore, this object on a ship is characterized by the cognitive modality of importance.

The inner form of some nominations is based on the principle of imagery. For example, "a bony shore" is a 'coast littered with a mass of underwater and above-water stones that hinder navigation'. There is the modality of negative evaluation: bones

make it hard to eat fish (bony fish), and stones are a barrier to ships.

The whole series of nominations is based on the knowledge obtained through social experience. This knowledge also indicates the specific linguistic consciousness, including its modal and sociocultural components. The process of conceptualization is conditioned by the worldview of people who speak the social dialect, their point of view, attitude to reality, their own activity and a way of perceiving the surrounding world. Specific nominations testify to the presence of special dominants in the linguistic consciousness that are associated with life experience, traditions, occupational risks, certain situations, etc. For example, a vessel can become covered with ice during a northern winter storm. In this case, it loses stability, can turn over and go underwater. Therefore, there is a special word *околка* (okolka) which indicates the actions of sailors aimed at freeing their ship from ice (to chip or break off ice along the entire perimeter of a ship). The seme 'danger' is not included in the conceptual meaning of this nomination but is one of its constituent elements.

The same seme is included into the conceptual meaning of the Pomor verbal vocabulary describing the restless state of the sea (*взыграло/vzigralo/ran high, ярится/yaritsya/was in a fury*, etc.). These ideas connected with the sea reveal rudiments of the pagan mythological consciousness that are actualized in Pomor ceremonies and traditions. For example, they pour oil into the sea during a storm (to coax the sea), give fishermen the sea sand to save their life, and much more. Proverbs, phraseological units and individual lexemes demonstrate the perception of the sea as a sacral place.

The importance and significance of such realities as *wind, sea, ice and water* also become dominant, which is proved by a large number of their nominations. For instance, there are over 70 wind-related nominations, about 60 ice-related nominations, over 80 sea- and water-related nominations. Thus, the Pomors regard the sea and wind as sacred objects. There is still an expression *молить ветер* (molit veret/pray the wind). This reality is also given anthropomorphic features. The Pomors say about someone's death in the sea: "The sea has taken them".

The nominations of ice, wind and sea reflect properties of these realities that are important for the Pomor hunting and fishing [18]. For example, the properties of ice are as follows: it can have a different surface, including a smooth one (*гладуха/gladukha*), the ability to move driven by force (*забой/zaboi*), collapse when influenced by mass (*ломник/лотник*), be layered (*наслуд/naslud*), be affected by temperature (*нацимёржа/natsimierzha*), exist in separate pieces (*расплав/raspлав*), connect to any surface (*припой/pripoi*), move and stop because of some obstacle (*стамуха/stamukha*), let light go through (*ясеиц/yasenets*), be exposed to external factors (*метуха/metukha*), interact with other objects (*набель/nabel*), and have different thickness (*тонколедуца/tonkoleditsa*), etc.

While nominating ice, the Pomor metalinguistic consciousness recorded appearance causes of various phenomena, signs, danger signals, the results of ice interaction with other objects and natural phenomena, the knowledge of nature laws, etc.

The nominations of wind contain the following conceptual features: the wind can move objects of nature (*водогон/vodogon/making water run, зажомной/zazhonnой/squeezing, лустобой/listoboi/making leaves fall down*); become localized and have a direction (*побережник/poberezhnik/breeze, поветерье/povetrie/tail-wind, шелоник/shelonik/southwesterly wind*); have a place of origin (*глубник/glubnik/gosling blast, морянка/moryanka/sea breeze*), time (*лустобой/listoboi/making leaves fall down, полношник/polunoshnik/midnight wind*); make sounds (*визготок/vizgotok/producing shrieking sounds, стрельба/strelba/producing shot-like sounds*); have different intensity (*хилок/khilok/light breeze, мордотык* (humorous)/*mordotuk/muzzier*). The nominations of wind indicate that the northern weather is harsh, unstable and can change during

the day (*обедник/obednik/southeast wind, паузник/pauzchnik/gosling blast*).

At the same time, the sea is not only a threat but also the source of food for the Pomors. Therefore, the size of fish is of special importance for fishermen and they have special nominations. For example, a large perch is called *горбач* (*gorbach/humpback*); an exhausted salmon during spawning is called *лох* (*loch/lohi* from Finnish).

Fishermen and trappers typically perceive the world in detail. They pay much attention to the habitat of fish, which is reflected in such generic nominations as *bottom fish* (cod, halibut, salmon) and *pelagic fish* (bleak, blue whiting, mackerel, herring, capelin, etc.).

Details are manifested not only in the nomination of an object but also its parts. For instance, *гарпун* (*garpun/harpoon*) – a weapon to hunt for sea animals; *гарпун-линь* (*garpun-lin/foregoer*) – a rope to tie a harpoon to a gun; *гарпунная пушка* (*garpunnaya pushka/harpoon gun*) – a device for throwing a harpoon.

The authors emphasize different degrees of cognitively prominent levels of the Pomor linguistic consciousness. Figurative and axiological-evaluative levels are most vividly represented. The Pomors often use an archetypal cultural code, i.e. transfer the nominations of human body parts to other objects. For instance, *борода* (*boroda/beard*) – a fishing line entangled when leaving the coil; *бородка* (*borodka/small beard*) – a gaff hook securing a fish; *горловина* (*gorlovina/throat*) – the upper part of a hold located on the deck. The anthropomorphic perception of the world is realized in set phrases like *вода зажила* (*voda zazhila/water came to life*), *море дышит* (*more dushit/the sea breathes*).

The authors of the article should note that the modal aspect of the linguistic consciousness consists of various modal relations. These relations can be explicit or implicit in the structure of a word, its lexical meaning or inner form. They can be internal and external expressing one's opinion on the called object. The viewpoint on the object nomination is called the modal framework in the scientific literature [19]. The assessment is connected with the value system common to some social group, namely fishermen and sailors. One of the forms of modal relations is the notion of different situations and emotions. Thus, fish processing masters on a trawler are called *рогали/rogali*. Fish processing is hard work which is associated with something 'tiresome', 'mud' and 'low qualification'. The word *рогач/rogach* is used in dialects to denote a device to put cast-iron pots into the furnace and later take them out. These devices are always covered with soot. Therefore, sailors who clean and cut fish open were called *рогали*.

The choice of nomination means is determined by intentional modality. The inner mode of intentionality is fixed in a lexical meaning. For example, an inexperienced sailor is called *баклан*. Literally, a cormorant is a 'young seagull'. The characteristic 'young' is connected with the feature 'inexperienced'. These nominations realize a stereotyped axiological orientation that experience is acquired with age. The images of seagulls and fish (*баклан, карась*) were chosen in accordance with sea-related occupations.

The linguistic consciousness comprises cognitive schemes from the modal perspective. For example, the lexeme *хпанец/кхрпета* ('a small ice hole or lead from which a seal appears' [20]) is formed on the intersection of its lexical meaning and inner form (the cognitive cause-effect scheme). The lexeme is motivated by the following background knowledge: it is the place where a seal sleeps, its snoring breath melts ice and forms an ice hole. The command "Rest on the oars!" (stop a boat) is also based on this scheme. To stop a boat, one should take oars out of the water. As a result, they dry in the open air.

## 5. Conclusions

Initially, this article is based on the theory of cognitive linguistics that every word is built over a certain concept, including a

pragmatic aspect. The conceptual content of a word is the result of individual and social experience in the mind of a person.

The Pomor linguistic consciousness formed during their life is a vital part of the cognitive consciousness of modern sailors and fishermen living in North Arkhangelsk. Linguistic consciousness supports mechanisms of speech and nominative activities. In this case, language means in the Pomor speech are considered as a form of thinking and a way of interpreting reality.

The specific linguistic consciousness of sailors and fishermen is determined not only by dominants of their linguistic consciousness, social intentions and the system of values but also by the modal framework of lexical meanings, axiological directives, ideas about typical occupation-related situations and attitude towards them. While conducting this research, the authors have distinguished basic notional dominants forming specific sociocultural components of linguistic consciousness and functioning as criteria for the interpretation of language means. They correlate with the values of Northern Arkhangelsk fishermen and influence both utilitarian and moral norms of behavior.

The authors have determined language means that manifest the social and cultural specifics of the linguistic consciousness common to the social dialect under consideration.

They have also proved the social importance of knowledge that serves as the basis of language means and revealed structural levels of linguistic consciousness. The authors of the article have studied the secondary conceptualization of knowledge by speakers of the social dialect. They have analyzed the social and cultural specifics of the Pomor linguistic consciousness: their system of moral, ideological and axiological orientations and ideals that have been formed in the mind of a person speaking the social dialect and objectified in their language. As a result, they have offered the solution of theoretical debates on the Pomor status, the meaning of *professionalism*, a *notional dominant*, etc. Finally, the authors have clarified the concept of the *linguistic consciousness common to speakers of the social dialect*.

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