

“Yuppie” As A Phenomenon Of Success In American Culture

By

Liliya R. Mukharlyamova¹

¹Kazan Federal University, Candidate of Philology, assistant professor of the Department of Language and Intercultural Communication of KFU, Kazan, Russia

E.mail: ¹mukharlyamova@mail.ru,

Sholpan K. Zharkynbekova²

²Doctor of Philology, Prof. of Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan,

E.mail: ²zharkyn.sh.k@gmail.com

Elmira B. Zadanova³

³PhD student of Department of Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan,

E.mail: ³elmira1587@mail.ru,

Leysan Shayakhmetova⁴

⁴Kazan Federal University, Candidate of Philology, associate professor of the Department of Language and Intercultural Communication of KFU, Kazan, Russia

E.mail: ⁴habirshah@mail.ru, id

Abstract

The work is written in the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, which emphasizes the influence of the cultural environment on mental processes. Among the changes in society in recent decades, caused by changes in public consciousness, the spread of the idea of personal success has become very significant. In this regard, our article is devoted to the description of the linguocultural type of “yuppie” as a personality associated with success in American culture.

The research methods used were a comprehensive approach of collecting, processing, analyzing linguistic means, descriptive, interpretative, definitional. Appealing to the definitional method allows us to take a deeper look at the phenomenon of “yuppie”, as the analysis of dictionary articles draws us not only to the etymology of the acronym, but also to the history of the emergence of this trend.

The results of our research are as follows: "Yuppies" demonstrate their success, they want to be noticed, and they flaunt their achievements. At the same time, they prioritize success and career in their lives, putting all other life priorities on the back burner. The data obtained as a result of the study indicate the focus of American culture on success, on achieving results, on career advancement. Realization in the society for the individual is brought to the forefront. This analysis seems to be interesting for the application of the obtained results in the courses of intercultural communication, linguocultural studies, cognitive linguistics.

Key words: linguocultural type, axiology, world picture, cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication.

1 Introduction

Modern culture asserts the model of life success - a person's achievement in the outside world. The relevance of this study is due to the interest of linguistic science to the problems of language and culture, as well as the little study of the object of research. The article presents the linguocultural type “yuppie”, which symbolizes a successful personality in American culture. The analysis of lexical means describing the linguocultural type “yuppie” in the American version of English clearly showed the special role played by this current in American culture. As it turned out, this trend developed in the 1980s, and the “Yuppie” is a bright representative of this subculture, embodying a successful and ambitious man. The study of the phenomenon of success is very popular among scholars. This is evidenced by special studies in psychology [1], sociology [2], cultural anthropology [3], and others.

It is known that in the behavior of linguocultural types one or another values of a certain culture are traced [4]. The type collects in itself certain value attitudes. The description of the “Yuppie” type was carried out in accordance with the algorithm proposed by the Russian researcher O.A. Dmitrieva [5]. This algorithm implies a step-by-step analysis of the conceptual, figurative and value components of linguocultural typography, as well as coverage of the historical, cultural, social and psychological sides of the typified personality. In our study, we explored the social side, namely highlighting the substructure of social experience, which was analyzed in the article.

2 Methods

Dictionary definitions, newspaper and magazine articles, fiction, and Internet resources were used as the research material. To describe the conceptual component of the type, the method of dictionary definitions was taken as the basis. The identification of the signs of success of the “yuppie” type were determined by using the contextual method, as well as interpretative and descriptive analysis of the obtained results.

3 Results And Discussions

The notion of “yuppie” emerged in connection with a revision of certain values in American society, when rich, educated, business-minded young people, whose ideal was success and money, appeared on the scene. American dictionaries give the following definitions of “yuppie”: Yuppie is an acronym, formed in the USA from the initial letters of Young Urban Professional, it came on the scene in 1984, and at first competed with yumpie (formed from “Young Upwardly Mobile People”) [6].

Yumpie (a person or social group) moving or aspiring to move to a higher social class or to a position of increased status or power) [7, p.1817].

Yuppies – Young urban/or upwardly mobile professional people. A popular acronym from the 1980s, and of American origin [8].

Having considered various concepts of scientists and proposed models for studying the structure of linguocultural type, we propose to consider the typified personality according to **the substructure of social experience**, where we highlight the following parameters: level

of education, way of life, attitude to family, attitude to work, attitude to politics, attitude to religion.

A person's social experience is a variable parameter, as it can change over time. The manifestation of certain traits of linguistic personality may depend on the position of the person in the family, in the collective, society, according to the origin. It is also necessary to take into account the level of education, which affects the development of personality.

So let's take a look at the yuppie education level parameter. Higher education is the stage that gives yuppies a prestigious high-wage job. John Hammond, in his article on yuppies, writes: «Young Urban Professionals, children of the baby boom who now have college degrees and high-paying jobs», «...high educational levels, and now occupational attainments and salaries which match their ambitions» [9]. Education for yuppies is the first step towards success. American newspaper New York Times published an article about yuppies in 1984: «...This truly is the Year of the Yuppies, the educated, computer-literate, audiophile children of the baby boom» [9]. The yuppies are described as educated, literate people.

The main criterion for belonging to a “yuppie” is a lifestyle. The yuppie's bizarre lifestyle preferences were intended to elicit populist guffaws. Here are some of the things, according to *The Yuppie Handbook*, that the budding yupster could not live without: gourmet coffee, a Burberry trench coat, expensive running shoes, a Cuisinart, a renovated kitchen with a double sink, smoked mozzarella from Dean & DeLuca, a housekeeper, a mortgage, a Coach bag, a Gucci briefcase, and a Rolex [10]. Yuppie wealth is manifested through the consumption of branded goods, expensive cuisine, the presence of servants, luxurious furnishings.

The indisputable attribute of a yuppie is a fast and, of course, expensive car. A yuppie lives in an expensive apartment (for example, a loft or a penthouse) furnished with exclusive furniture. A yuppie is said to like to drive a VW Golf GT, BMW or Porsche, write with a Mont Blanc pen, visit wine bars, carry a Filofax/personal organizer, own a mobile telephone, wear design clothes, be a member of a health club and go on skiing holidays every winter! [10]. These examples demonstrate yuppie attributes, buying expensive things and going to nice restaurants are manifestations of yuppie success and a certain superiority over others that yuppies are disliked for. Thus, the yuppie lifestyle is “the beautiful life”: wealth, success and prestige.

Family is not a top priority for yuppies, unlike career. Yuppies try to postpone starting a family for as long as possible and prefer to be single because family and children interfere with career growth. This can be illustrated by the following example: The yuppies are more likely to be single, and, if married, are more likely to postpone or exclude parenting in their life plans [11]. Two “yuppies” can make a very stable married couple due to the similar values of both. Nevertheless, yuppie women are characterized by “serial monogamy” – a sequence of several short-lived de facto marriages.

Workaholics yuppies love their job and do it with pleasure. They typically work extremely long hours in high pressure positions [11]. This example shows how long and hard yuppies can work. But it often leads to stress and illness, the so-called «yuppie disease» (any of a number of debilitating long-lasting viral disorders associated with stress, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, whose symptoms include muscle weakness, chronic tiredness, and

depression) [12]. This familiar yuppie condition has become known as the yuppie disease of the average American, tired at work, stressed out.

Also a distinctive feature of the yuppies is their attitude toward politics. This has to do with the history of America and the emergence of a new society. Most Americans think that yuppies are not interested in politics, but this context indicates that yuppies participated in the political life of the country as democrats. “Regan’s 1984 Re-election. Senator Gary Hart of Colorado evoked the image of John F. Kennedy the tousled hair, the appearance of youthful vigor, the talk about “new ideas” and a “new generation”. Hart denounced Mondale as the tool of the unions and other special interests and aimed his campaign at “Yuppies” (young urban professional) and members of the baby boom, those 63.5 million Americans born between 1946 and 1961 when polled, Yuppies generally said they would vote for Regan if Hart did not win the Democratic nomination”. Yuppies are less likely to identify with a political party, but by a large margin, more likely to call themselves liberals and to vote Democratic in presidential elections [12]; Yuppies’ political choices are explained by their life priorities, as they stand for freedom of choice, equal rights, and new career opportunities, democracy being the force that helps to realize their goals.

1984 may be viewed as a landmark in the changing political landscape of the United States, notable primarily for the widening gap between men and women on certain political issues and for the exodus of college students, blue-collar workers, and white southerners from the Democratic coalition. In 1984, however, none of these developments received anything approaching the media attention that was lavished on the emergence of young urban professionals, or “yuppies”, as a political force [13].

Indeed, 1984 was, as Newsweek magazine proclaimed in a cover story, “The Year of the Yuppie”, and yuppies were held largely responsible for the year’s most surprising political development, the strong primary showing of Gary Hart, himself a yuppie emeritus [14]. Analyzing the above examples, 1984 was proclaimed the year of the “Yuppies”, and Harry Hart, former U.S. Senator, was named one of their representatives.

Yuppies were supporters of “new politics”, they were liberals and democrats. Using the following examples, we can examine their political preferences.

Three separated but related ideas lie beneath the surface of the much-ballyhooped yuppie phenomenon. First, young urban professionals are thought to comprise a distinct “class”. That is, a unique confluence of demographic forces – youth, urban residence, and professional status – is thought to distinguish yuppies socially and culturally from other young people, from other city dwellers, from other professionals, and, of course, from the nonyoung, the nonurban, and the nonprofessionals as well [15].

Second, stemming from this unique demographic profile and its social and cultural offshoots are said to be a distinctive set of political attitudes and opinions. Yuppies are usually seen as embodying the “new politics” of the economic conservatism of the 1980s.

Third, as a consequence of their distinctive political views, yuppies are considered to be an increasingly significant voting bloc; that is, they are supposed to require special appeals from candidates and parties, and respond to such appeals in much the same way as do blacks, union members, and other groups in American society – by supporting the parties and candidates who appeal directly to their group interests [16].

In the following example, let us trace what Michael Delli Carpini and Lee Sigelman wrote about the political views of yuppies: «There are some substantial differences between the political opinions of yuppies and other Americans. Yuppies are less likely to identify with a political party, but a large margin, more likely to call themselves liberals and to vote Democratic in presidential elections. On particular issues, yuppies are generally more liberal as well: they are more opposed to capital punishment and wiretaps, disapprove less of communism, and are more likely to favor gun control, to consider the courts too harsh, to support the legalization of marijuana, and to advocate continued American membership in the United Nations. However, yuppies do not stand out from other Americans with respect to dissatisfaction with the taxes they pay» [10].

This example indicates that for yuppies there are no strict boundaries regarding social issues, here they are more liberal than others. They are tolerant of the legalization of marijuana and the carrying of weapons, they don't see it as a problem at all. Which is rather contrary to the conservative views of other people.

The yuppies have been called the “new class” and represented new political views and beliefs. We are of the opinion that yuppies are young people, so their political views are fresh, they live in big cities, therefore, yuppies share the views of city dwellers, they are professionals in their field, therefore they have solid social and political convictions.

Rather than viewing the political distinctiveness of yuppies as an outgrowth of the interaction of youth, urban residence, and professional status, which combine in some unique way, it is possible that yuppies are distinctive because they are, in effect, the sum of their parts: they are young, and therefore partake of the political attitudes of the young; they live in cities, and therefore share the political outlooks of urban dwellers; and they are professionals, and therefore think, socially and politically, like other professionals. The yuppies' liberal tendencies are not due to some unique political profile that results from the combination of being young, urban and professional, but instead are largely due to the separate, additive effects of these three characteristics. That is, yuppies are more liberal than the rest of the population because they are young and young people are generally more liberal; because they are urban, and urbanities are generally more liberal; and because they are professional, and professionals are, on balance and in recent times, more liberal [11].

There is a stereotype that yuppies are not religious. “Hobart and William Smith College” scholar Wesley Parkins in 1991, in his article “Religious Commitment, Yuppie Values, and Well-Being in Post-Collegiate Life” considered the religious values of the yuppie, he writes: «Respondents were asked indicate the strength of their religious commitment to a religious faith using response categories provided. Graduates who responded with “no religious faith”, “not important to me at all” or “not very strong” were subsequently classified in the category of “low” religiosity (57. 0%). Respondents who indicated that their faith was “fairly strong”, “very strong” or “the most important aspect” were classified in the “high” religiosity category». “Any religious interests are portrayed as not very important, given their fundamental allegiances only to personal fulfillment” [12]. Thus, Wesley Parkins suggests that religion is not an important priority in the life of a yuppie.

It follows that this stereotype is only half a stereotype, since being religious or not is a personal choice of each yuppie.

4 Summary

According to the results of the analysis, the socio-cultural characteristics of the Yuppie type are as follows: yuppies are young people aged 25 to 44, professionals who have received prestigious education and are democratic in their views. Yuppies postpone the creation of a family to a later date, as their main priority is their career, they take care of their health, despite the heavy work schedule. Religion is not so important in the life of a yuppie, belief in God is a personal matter for each yuppie. Political views were defined in the 80's during the birth of the "yuppie" trend, during the Reagan era, they elected Gary Hart, i.e. they were supporters of democracy. The yuppies had a lavish lifestyle, showing off their success and wealth, which was frowned upon by ordinary people.

Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States, was named as one of the brightest representatives of the "yuppies" [12]. He associates success with a breakthrough, struggle, forward movement, victory, which of course characterizes him as an ambitious person. The manifestation of ambition is a person's inclination to advance to success, and thus to achieve all desired goals.

5 Conclusions

The interpretation of success is diverse and contradictory, due to the fact that success itself is a complex multidimensional phenomenon of social reality. Success has a general meaningful nature, is the result of the implementation of socially approved and personally significant goals, largely determines the behavior of social subjects and affects the effectiveness of the social system as a whole.

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Liliya Rashidovna Mukharlyamova, was born in 1984. In 2006 she graduated from the Tatar State University of Humanities and Education. Candidate of Philology. In 2007 she defended her Ph.D. thesis on the topic: “The linguoculturological field of time in the paroemias of the Russian language (in the mirror of the paroemias of the Tatar and English languages)”. Assistant Professor of the Department of Language and Intercultural Communication of KFU. Research interests: comparative study of languages, paroemias.

Zharkynbekova Sholpan Kuzarovna was born in 1963; Doctor of Philological Sciences; Graduated from the Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi; Doctoral thesis on the theme “Conceptualization of color in the Kazakh and Russian linguistic cultures”; Professor of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University; Research interests – comparative linguistics, linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics.

Zadanova Elmira Bekbolatovna – was born in 1987; Master of Science; Graduated from Innovative University of Eurasia (2010); Dissertation thesis «Linguistic means of expressing ethnorelevant meaning of success (in Kazakh, Russian and English)»; PhD student of Department of Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan; Research interests – comparative linguistics, linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication.

Leysan Shayakhmetova, was born in 1979. In 2002 she graduated from the Kazan State Pedagogical University. Candidate of Philology. In 2007 she defended her Ph.D. thesis on the topic: “Concept “Ut” and its reflection in the lyrics of R. Minnullin”. Associate Professor of the Department of Language and Intercultural Communication of KFU. Research interests: comparative study of languages, methods of teaching languages.