



## **The problem of representation of the concept “hero image” in the linguistic and educational process**

**Marina R. Gozalova<sup>1</sup>**

**Magomed G. Gazilov<sup>2</sup>**

**Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 12 (2)**

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 11 Dec 2020

Date of revision: 10 March 2021

Date of acceptance: 09 June 2021

**Marina R. Gozalova, Magomed G. Gazilov (2021). The problem of representation of the concept “hero image” in the linguistic and social-spiritual space of the modern world society. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 12(2). 88 – 94.**

---

<sup>1</sup>Director of Higher School of International Cooperation of RSUTS, FSBEI HPE “Russian State University of Tourism and Service,” Moscow, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup>Professor of Higher School of International Cooperation of RSUTS, FSBEI HPE “Russian State University of Tourism and Service,” Moscow, Russian Federation



## **The problem of representation of the concept “hero image” in the linguistic and educational process**

**Marina R. Gozalova<sup>1\*</sup>, Magomed G. Gazilov<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Director of Higher School of International Cooperation of RSUTS, FSBEI HPE “Russian State University of Tourism and Service,” Moscow, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup>Professor of Higher School of International Cooperation of RSUTS, FSBEI HPE “Russian State University of Tourism and Service,” Moscow, Russian Federation

\*Corresponding Author

Email ID: mgozalova@mail.ru

### **ABSTRACT**

This study's object is linguistic and educational means that express the hero image as a phenomenon of the formation of the process of cultural development of the people. This paper aims to study the representation of the image of heroin in the linguistic, educational and socio-spiritual space of the youth of the modern world society. The relevance of the research lies in the fact that the linguistic features and ways of teaching the hero image and the changes that the image of hero undergoes over time in the languages of different peoples are explored: in recent years, the world has seen the process of transforming heroic images, their revaluation, and devaluation. In the modern social and spiritual space, the image of a real hero changes. The study material was the data from dictionaries, fictitious books, mass media, as well as questionnaires. Europe and, first of all, France for the Russians have historically been a cultural hero, being guided by which Russia has often transformed itself in the course of its history, but the image of this cultural hero has greatly changed in the 21st century in the era of the end of neoliberal globalization.

**Keywords:** French, Russian, Heroic image, Comparative studies, Linguistic means, Educational means.

### **INTRODUCTION**

A hero is a real individual or a key fictional character who, by feats of ingenuity, courage, or power, battles adversity in the face of risk. The hero is also used to refer to either gender, like other previously strictly gender-specific words (like the actor), while heroin only refers to women. For the sake of glory and honor, the initial hero form of classical epics did such things. On the other hand, instead of the classical aim of riches, pride, and glory, there are post-classical and contemporary heroes who perform great deeds or selfless actions for the common good. A villain is the antonym of a hero. Other words relevant to the notion of a hero can include "good guy" or "white hat." In classical literature, in heroic epic poetry celebrated by ancient legends of a people, sometimes aiming for military conquest and living by a constantly flawed personal honor code, the hero is the main or revered character. The word “герой” (hero) (“heroes” – Greek) means a demigod or apotheosized person. The ancient Greeks had heroes to be half-blooded, as well as outstanding personalities who were distinguished by their great deeds (Wright, 2005; Gomez-Zara et al., 2018; Salerno et al., 2020). The title of hero gave a person advantages: they worshiped him, wrote poems, and sang songs in his honor (Fisun et al., 2020; Collins, 2020).

One can contrast the word “hero” with the word “idol,” that is, a person who is admired by the masses and whom subconsciously one wants to become, for example, actors, musicians, athletes, etc., can be idols. The concept “hero” is often met in literature (Zhang, 2005; Mark & Pearson, 2001; Connelly & Massie, 1989; Allison & Goethals, 2016).

A literary hero is a spokesman for an action of the plot that reveals the content of a work.

Who is “герой” (hero)? Russian dictionary V. I. Dal’ defines this concept as follows, “a knight, a courageous warrior, a fighter, a bogatyr, a miracle warrior, a valiant companion in general and in war and peace, the selfless.” The study shows that the concept “hero” in modern Russian and French has many meanings (Blay, 2006), but in this paper, the word “герой / héros” is considered as follows, “a hero is a person who performs feats, unusual in their courage, valor, selflessness in the name of good and justice.” At the same time, it should be noted that the Russian word “герой” is most likely borrowed not from Greek, but from French, by analogy with the word “героиня” (French héroïne), while French borrowed it from Latin. And the latter borrowed it directly from the Greek language (Xiao-Lei, 2001; Boggs, 1931).

## RESEARCH METHODS: Comparative, as well as survey and analysis methods

The study material was the data from dictionaries, fictitious books, mass media, as well as questionnaires. The image of a hero created in traditional society remains a cultural standard in its basic features to this day, in relation to which we define the “glorification” or “de-glorification” of the era (Shure, 2020; Durbin, 2020; Bota, 2020; Miller, 2000; Martin, 2002; Hoskins, 1987). The ancient image of a hero remains the standard one for today’s judgments about the heroic. The image of hero existed in culture can be understood as a certain national cultural text, an image that, in one way or another, by its actions and life, demonstrates the best models of behavior which this or that nation could reach in the course of its development, the image that represents its national specificity.

## DISCUSSION

Thus, who is a hero? First of all, the heroes for us are the veterans who defended the country in the twentieth century and allowed for a peaceful sky for us (Reeves, 2019; Stein et al., 2020). But in our time, when the war is past, one can also meet heroes. Heroes can be firefighters, police officers who protect us, and doctors who save our lives every day, especially in the current environment of coronavirus pandemic. An ordinary student who has defended a girl can also become a hero ... And the one who participates in raising the money to deliver a sick person from death. This means that heroes can be not only very courageous and strong but kind, sympathetic people as well. Therefore, it is difficult to draw the one-to-one image of the hero, but they all have one thing in common: the desire to help, protect and save. This is probably the essential character of the Hero.

Unfortunately, the theme of heroism has waned these days. Modern culture is characterized by doubt of the possibility of existing heroism in the current conditions and an urgent need for it (Nemchenko, 2019). We also observe, especially in recent years, a process of de-glorification. A “lucky” person (aggressive, emotionally cold, sexy, self-confident, and sociable) becomes a “new hero” of the de-glorified time (Setiawan, 2020; González & Cristina, 2014; Bin Abdul Aziz & Yusoff, 2016):

- the real super-rich;
- fantastic supermen;
- pop stars, football players, pop idols, etc.

Humanity has always felt the need for heroes throughout the history of its development. The image of a hero had its springs in antiquity, evolved, and became an integral part of the culture of the people (Tokarev, 1992). The hero image is characteristic of all mythologies, but each traditional culture brings its own features to it:

- a feature of ancient heroes is their daring fighting against God (Prometheus, Hercules, Theseus, etc.);
- heroes of the Middle Ages are deeply serious, godfearing (French national heroes: Roland (? - 778), Jeanne d’Arc (1412-1431) and others) (D’Abzac-Épezy & De Préneuf, 2012); Russian heroes: Svyatoslav Igorevich (942-972), Evpatiy Kolovrat (1200-1238), Alexander Nevsky (1221-1263), and others.);
- modern heroes are images of heroes who save not only their homeland but the whole world, thereby forming a new heroic model of behavior.

Comparing the images of French and Russian heroes from the standpoint of cultural linguistics, we can assert that, for example, the name of French fighter hero Roland became a symbol of the hero of French epic legends of the cycle of Charles the Great (“Chanson de Roland” “The Song of Roland”): brave “brave,” fidèle “faithful,” généreux “noble,” religieux “very religious,” devoted to (the king, the beloved woman), etc. But he fights far beyond the borders of his homeland. The duty of serving the native land especially becomes apparent in the Russian bogatyr hero. Ilya Muromets, Dobrynya Nikitich, Alyosha Popovich, or Nikita Kozhemyaka, with their characteristic features of naivety, childishness, simplicity of views on the world, defend their fatherland.

## Analysis

If we analyze the French classical fiction, then in the works of fiction of the outstanding French authors of the 20th century: A. Barbusse Fire (Le Feu - Barbusse), R. Gary Roots of Heaven (Les racines du Ciel – Romain Gary), J. Giono The Hussar on the Roof (Le Hussard Sur le Toit – Jean Giono), A. de Saint-Exupery Night Flight (Vol de Nuit- A. De Saint-Exupery) we often meet the linguocultural image of “héros combattant.”

This is related to the fact that these works reflected the typical features of the heroic personality of the twentieth century who fought on the fields of the First and Second World War or defended humanistic values in a fast-moving environment. They had a great influence on French culture, contributing to the formation of a new heroic model of behavior (Muxel, 2008).

In Russian literature, this type, in our opinion, can be attributed to the image of Vasily Tarkin, which acquires a generalizing meaning and becomes an embodiment of the Russian national character:

В бой, вперед, в огонь кромешный  
Он идет, святой и грешный,  
Русский чудо-человек... /  
Into the breach, forward, into the impenetrable fire  
He steps, holy and sinful,  
Russian wonder man ...

The image of Tarkin traces its lineage to Russian folklore. Tarkin, the fictional character of Alexander Tvardovsky, is shown in the poem as both Ivanushka the Joker and Merry Ivanushka, always saying witty things in order to support himself and his comrades. He and Ivanushka the Fool, who only pretended to be a simpleton, but in fact was brave and wise, loved people, and did not lose his sense of humor even in the most difficult situations. He is also a bogatyr with great fortitude and will to victory.

The linguocultural image of a warrior hero is reflected (along with the means of painting, sculpture, music, literature, and cinema) by linguistic means. The linguistic plane of expression of the image is represented by lexical units (most often by a verb and an adjective), stylistic means of the language (most often by comparison), and, in our opinion, is most clearly revealed in phraseological units:

Лучше быть мертвым героем, чем живым трусом. (Better a dead hero than a living coward)

Тот герой, кто за Родину горой. (The hero who stands firm for the Motherland)

Героям страх неведом. (Fear is unknown to heroes)

Пример героя зовет на подвиг. (The example of the hero calls for a feat)

Герой никогда не умрёт, он вечно в народе живёт. (The hero never dies, he lives forever among the people)

На героя и слава бежит. (Glory runs after the hero)

Бей русским боем, будешь героем. (Fight like in Russian battle, you will be a hero)

Героем падешь - подымут, трусом - раздавят. (If you die as a hero, you will be raised, if you die like a coward, you will be crushed)

Герой в бою думает не о смерти, а о победе. The hero in battle does not think about death, but about victory.

Презрение к смерти рождает героев. (Contempt for death gives birth to heroes)

Герой не многих знает, а имя его вся страна повторяет. (The hero knows the few, and the whole country repeats his name)

Слава герою, презрение трусу. (Glory to the hero, contempt for the coward)

Или умру героем, или вернусь героем. (Either die a hero or return a hero)

В бою герой на дядю не оглядывается. (A hero does not look back at his uncle in the battle)

В труде усердного почитают, в войске героя любят. (A diligent worker is esteemed in work, a hero is loved in the army)

Где герой пал, там курган встал. (Where the hero died, the burial mound appeared there)

Где народ, там должен быть и герой. (Where there are people, there must be a hero)

Герои куют победу. (Heroes forge their victory)

French: Chaque époque engendre son héros - (Each era gives birth to its own hero).

Le tombeau des héros est le cœur des vivants - (literally: The tomb of heroes is the heart of the living).

Après la guerre, beaucoup de héros se présentent - (literally: After the war, many heroes come to the fore).

Un héros est celui qui conquiert ses passions - (literally: A hero is one who is victorious over his passions).

Il n'y a point de héros pour son valet de chambre - (literally: There is no hero for your valet).

Les proches des grand shommes, sont souvent témoins de leurs faiblesses et de leurs défauts - (literally: Relatives of great people often witness their weaknesses and failings).

Les nations ont besoin de héros et de saints comme la pâte a besoin de levain - (literally: People need heroes and saints like dough needs leaven).

Characterization of the hero as a semantic center provides the key to the disclosure of the meaning of heroism in general. The semantic center of the image of the hero in modern French and Russian languages includes the following chain: striving for absolute goodness, searching for life purpose and humanism; religiosity and attention to such traditional values as God, goodness, beauty, truth, love, freedom, personal dignity, devotion to one's native land, service to society (Oxford, 2008). At the same time, the idea of collegiality is an exceptionally Russian notion. In the course of the work, a questionnaire survey was conducted among 70 native speakers of French and Russian. The respondents were:

- 15 students of the Lyon Lyceum (France), aged 15-16;

- 35 students of the Boarding School of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (Russia), aged 15 - 17;

- 20 students of the College of RSUTS (Russia), aged 15-17.

The survey was aimed at studying the general idea of the hero, its characterization. It should be noted that the respondents who spoke Russian and French often had a problem with the differentiation of heroes. The analysis of the survey showed that in modern adolescents' view of the world, the ideas about the hero, idol, and character were not always differentiated. Russian teenagers confused real heroes with idols, pop singers, and athletes, and the French also had superheroes, magical personage heroes. At the same time, the results of the survey showed that the respondents of both languages in the description of the hero most often used verbs (in Russian - 62%, in French - 59%). This suggests that for adolescents, a behavioral component is the main thing in the image of the hero.

The most common Russian verbs were: защищать (to defend) (30%), спасать (to save) (20%), помогать (to help) (18%), совершать подвиг (to perform a feat) (16%); French verbs – sauver (to save) (40%), défendre (to defend) (20%), aider (to aid) (17%), se battre (to battle) (7%). In addition, the results of the study showed that



when characterizing a hero in French and Russian, the following definitions were most often used: brave, courageux (31%), intelligent (30%), généreux, gentil (23%), patriotique (14%), beau (2%).

Strength is an important quality, but if in antiquity or in the Middle Ages strength was determinative almost in everything, then in the modern image of the hero, along with strength, the mind comes to the fore. Strength without mind hardly decides anything at this stage of human development.

A comparative study of these dictionaries, literary works, mass media also shows that the linguistic plane of expression of the image of the hero in both languages is represented most often by verbs and adjectives and is most vividly represented in phraseological units (Le Tombeau des héros est le cœur des vivants – The hero will never die, he eternally lives among the people. Chaque époque engendre son héros – Each era creates its own hero.

At the same time, it is interesting that the adjective “религиозный, набожный / religieux” (religious, devout) becomes secondary in characterizing the image of the hero of our age in Russian and in French. If the hero of antiquity is the image of a man who often rebels and conflicts with the gods and the hero of the Middle Ages are almost always very religious, nearly a saint, today the word “религиозный / religieux” in Russian and French is fading into the background, becoming insignificant to express the image of a modern hero.

The hero is imagined by the native speakers of the languages compared in work often in the following images: “absolute goodness,” “beauty,” “patriotism,” “freedom,” “strength,” “service to society.” The differences lie in which images are prioritized in the language. The formation of the image of the hero of a particular people of a particular era can be influenced, as already mentioned, by many factors, including the socio-cultural, political, and economic situations in society. And all these changes are reflected in the language of the given people. The investigation shows that the image of a modern Russian hero has been transformed from an ideal image with only positive characteristics to an undefined hero in its qualities (“new Russians” and even bandits), and it again returns to the original positive image. This is the result of the general loss of value orientation, an indistinct notion of the future of the country, and a diminished role of patriotism. It was that time when such combinations as “новые русские” (new Russians) and “малиновые пиджаки” (raspberry-red blazers) emerged in the Russian language. Unfortunately, in the 21st century in Europe and in France in particular, there is a process of de-glorification of the image of a hero as a fighter, a conquering hero. The image of a real hero today is inferior to the artificially created ghosting images of super-héros, super-héroïne (Asterix, Abelix, Phantomett, Spiderman, Catwoman, etc.), which is a popular image of the hero of Western society, preferred today as a role model by the Russian youth.

## CONCLUSION

Having compared the main lexical units that clarify the concept “hero,” as well as having determined the linguistic and educational features of its expression in Russian and French, we can arrive at the following conclusions:

1) a common feature of the Russian word “герой” / hero and the French word “héros” is that they have the same origin: (Greek “heroes” - means a demigod or deified person. But they borrowed them from different languages: Russian - from French, and French - from Latin.

2) Russian “герой” and French “héros” bear the imprint of the linguistic culture in which they were formed. In other words, the image of a hero is characteristic of all peoples, but each traditional culture, each language brings its own features to it;

3) the image of the hero is reflected alongside the means of painting, sculpture, music, literature, cinematography, as well as language means. The results of the questioning of Russian and French adolescents showed that the respondents often had a problem with the differentiation of heroes. The analysis of the questioning showed that in the picture of the world of modern adolescents, the ideas about the hero, idol, and character were not always differentiated. Russian teenagers, along with real heroes, had idols, pop singers, and athletes, and the French also had superheroes, magical personage heroes.

At the same time, the results demonstrate that the respondents of both languages in the description of hero most often use verbs (in Russian - 62%, in French - 59%). This indicates that for adolescents, the main thing in the image of a hero is a behavioral component. In the Russian language the most common verbs were: защищать (to protect), спасать (to save), помогать (to help), совершать подвиг (to accomplish a feat). In French – sauver (to save), défendre (to protect), aider (to help), se battre (to fight). In addition, the results of the study showed that when characterizing the hero in French and Russian, the following definitions were most often used: храбрый / brave, courageux, умный / intelligent, благородный / généreux, добрый / gentil, любящий родину / patriotique, in French also beau (beautiful).

Strength is an important quality, but if in antiquity or in the Middle Ages, strength was determinative in almost everything, then in the modern hero image, mind alongside with strength come to the fore. Strength without intellect and intelligence decides little at this stage of human development.

4) A comparative study of these dictionaries, literary works, mass media also shows that the linguistic plane of expression of the image of hero in both languages is represented most often by verbs and adjectives and is most vividly revealed in phraseological units

5) At the same time, it is interesting that the adjective “религиозный, набожный / religieux” (religious, devout), when characterizing the image of hero of the present, both in Russian and in French, becomes secondary. If the hero of antiquity is the image of a man who often rebels and conflicts with the gods, and the hero of the Middle Ages is almost always very religious, almost a saint, today the word “религиозный / religieux” (religious) in Russian and French is pushed to the sidelines, becoming insignificant for the expressions of the image of a modern hero.

6) The main feature of the expression of the image of hero in the compared languages is that in the Russian language hero is associated, first of all, with “hero as an emancipator”, with “hero as a winner”, in modern French there is no such association.

And in closing, we would like to say that France and Europe for Russian culture have historically been a cultural hero, guided by which Russia radically transformed itself, its existence. Our observations, as well as the results of the survey, show that at the beginning of the 21st century in Russian society there is a certain disenchantment in this cultural hero, Europe is gradually ceasing to be a cultural hero for Russia.

The practical relevance of the work lies in the fact that the study and comparison of different language cultures makes it possible not only to increase the motivation of educational activities, but also to significantly widen the linguistic scopes of students. The results can be used to form sociolinguistic competence in classes in Russian and other foreign languages, as well as to develop courses on intercultural communication.

## REFERENCES

1. Wright W. Introduction: The hero in popular stories. *Journal of popular film and television*. 2005;32(4):146–148.
2. Gomez-Zara D, Boon M, Birnbaum L. Who is the Hero, the Villain, and the Victim? Detection of Roles in News Articles using Natural Language Techniques. in 23rd International Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces. 2018: 311–315.
3. Salerno AS, Kibler AK, Hardigree CN. ‘I’ll be the hero’: how adolescents negotiate intersectional identities within a high school dual-language program. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. 2020:1–14.
4. Fisun A. Y et al. Hero of the Soviet Union Dyskin Efim Anatolyevich-legendary person (to the 75th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War). *Bulletin of the Russian Military Medical Academy*. 2020;70(2):246–251.
5. Collins S. A Hero No More?: Traces of the Byronic Hero in 19th-Century British Novels. 2020.
6. Zhang J. “Hero,” *Film Quarterly*. 58(4):47–52, 2005.
7. Mark M, Pearson CS. *The hero and the outlaw*. McGraw-Hill. 2001.
8. Connelly B, Massie H. Epic splitting: an Arab folk gloss on the meaning of the hero pattern. 1989.
9. Allison ST, Goethals GR. Hero worship: The elevation of the human spirit. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. 2016;46(2):187–210.
10. Blay M. *Dictionnaire des concepts philosophiques*. Larousse. 2006.
11. Xiao-Lei YAO. Speaking of Hero, Who is Hero— A Comparison on Xiao Feng and Jean Ualjean. *Journal of Tianzhong*. 2001.
12. Boggs RS. The hero in the folk tales of Spain, Germany and Russia. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 44(171): 27–42, 1931.
13. Shure CL. Hero of the People: Reimagining the Trickster in North Korea. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 2020;133(529):259–284.
14. Durbin DT. A Hero for All Seasons: Pride of the Yankees, Brian’s Song, and the Athlete as Christ-Figure. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*. 2020:1–20.
15. Bota M. Holding Out for a Hero (ine). in *The Contestation of Patriarchy in Luis Martín-Santos’ Work*, Springer. 2020: 123–156.
16. Miller DA. *The epic hero*. JHU Press, 2000.
17. Martin RF. *Hero of the Heartland: Billy Sunday and the Transformation of American Society, 1862-1935*. Indiana University Press. 2002.
18. Hoskins J. The headhunter as hero: local traditions and their reinterpretation in national history. *American Ethnologist*. 1987;14(4):605–622.
19. Reeves C. *heroes*. 2019.
20. Stein JY, Bachem R, Lahav Y, Solomon Z. The aging of heroes: Posttraumatic stress, resilience and growth among aging decorated veterans. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. 2020:1–8.
21. Nemchenko L. Vadim Abdrashitov’s workshop: a place for discipline, a place for art. *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*. 2019;13(2): 217–225.

22. Setiawan J. Understanding Indonesian History, Interest in Learning History and National Insight with Nationalism Attitude. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*. 2020;9(2):364-373.
23. González M, Cristina MI. Violence and National History Teaching (1948-2006): An Institutional Colombian Perspective. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*. 2014;3(4): 218-227.
24. Bin Abdul Aziz MN, Yusoff NM. Improving Process Writing with the Use Authentic Assessment. *International Journal of evaluation and Research in Education*. 2016;5(3):200-204.
25. Tokarev SA. Mify narodov mira [Myths of the peoples of the world]. Moscow: Sovetskaya entsiklopediya. 1992;2: p. 719,.
26. D'Abzac-Épezy C, De Préneuf JM. Héros militaire, culture et société (XIXe-XXe siècles). Publications de l'Institut de recherches historiques du Septentrion. 2012.
27. Muxel A. Les héros des jeunes Français Vers un humanisme politique réconciliateur. 2006.
28. Oxford RL. Hero with a thousand faces: Learner autonomy, learning strategies and learning tactics in independent language learning. *Language learning strategies in independent settings*. 2008;33: p. 41,.