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RUSSIAN CULTURAL SCRIPTS: THE THEORY OF CULTURAL SCRIPTS AND ITS APPLICATIONS

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1. Introduction

"Cultural scripts" are representations of cultural norms which are widely held in a given society and which are reflected in language. The notion of "cultural scripts" can be regarded as an extension of the idea of a "naïve picture of the world", put forward thirty years ago by the Russian semanticist Jurij Apresjan (1974): as shown by Apresjan, the lexicon of any given language reflects a certain "naïve picture of the world" with which the speakers of that language are intimately familiar and which they often tend to take for granted.

The same can be said about "cultural scripts": they present a certain "naïve axiology", that is, a "naïve" set of assumptions about what is good and what is bad to do – and what one can or cannot do – especially in speaking. In any given speech community it is widely assumed that there are good ways of speaking and bad ways of speaking, as there are good and bad ways of behaving; and although not everyone has to agree with these assumptions, everyone is familiar with them because they are reflected in the language itself. In contrast to various universalist frameworks for the study of speech practices, the cultural script model adopts the perspective of a cultural insider, and tries to articulate this perspective in a non-technical way, which would make sense to the insider.[1]

For example, many speakers of English are familiar with the following assumptions:

[people think:]
I can say to another person: "I disagree"
I can't say to another person: "you are wrong"
if I want to say to another person that I disagree
    it is good to say something else at the same time
it is good if this person knows
    that I want to agree with this person about some things

I would go so far as to say that the assumptions spelled out in this formula are part of Anglo culture. Of course we all know that the concept of "Anglo culture" is fraught with difficulties; but no more so than the concept of "the English language". Both these concepts are constructs which for certain purposes may need to be deconstructed. For other purposes, however, they are useful. For example, they are useful in practice, for

teaching migrants to places like Australia, the United States, or England what to expect and how to avoid giving offense unnecessarily; and also, for teaching "Anglos" how to interpret migrants' ways of speaking which may seem offensive, bizarre, "irrational", and so on.

When one speaks of "Anglo culture", or "Russian culture", one can easily be accused of essentialism, reification, and other similar sins; and no doubt it is possible to mistake such constructs for clearly-delineated entities in the real world. As constructs, however, they are useful; in particular, for purposes of cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural education – across geographical boundaries and also within modern multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. As Holdstock (1999:838) points out, "in failing to credit cultural identity with a central role in international and national politics, as well as in the everyday lives of people, we are burying our heads in the sand like the proverbial ostrich".

In my opinion, however, the notion of "Anglo cultural scripts", or "Russian cultural scripts", is even more useful than that of "Anglo culture" or "Russian culture": a script is something tangible, something that can be stated explicitly, something that can be taught, and something that can be supported with clear linguistic evidence.

Ways of thinking which are widely shared in a society become enshrined in ways of speaking. Ways of speaking change as the underlying ways of thinking change. There can be a lag between the two, but as one can see by studying the use of language at the times of revolutions and other dramatic social transformations, ways of speaking can change very quickly, too, in response to changes in prevailing attitudes.

In a sense, the concept of "cultural script" can be compared with the anthropological concept of "cultural pattern" (as advocated, in particular, by Adams and Markus 2001); but it is more explicit, being grounded in a fully explicit linguistic theory (to be discussed below), and it is always supported with linguistic evidence. The concept of "cultural script" as used in this paper and in the other publications by the author and colleagues (cf. e.g. Wierzbicka 1991, 1994, 1996b, 1996c, 1998 and 2001; Goddard 1997 and 2001) is also different (in ways to be discussed below) from what Robert LeVine and his colleagues call "cultural scripts" in their 1996 book Child Care and Culture.

To start with a very simple example, in English there is a common saying "let's agree to disagree". This saying reflects a widely-held idea that, first, one can disagree with other people if one wants to and second, that it is good to agree with them if one can; and furthermore, that when one expresses disagreement it is good to indicate one's willingness to agree on at least some points; so that if we have to disagree "let's at least agree to disagree".

In Russian, there is no saying comparable to "let's agree to disagree". Nor is there any set phrase comparable to the English "I couldn't agree more" – a phrase which emphatically stresses agreement. It is highly significant that there is no parallel phrase in

English emphatically stressing disagreement: "?I couldn't disagree more" (although I have heard a Russian scholar say that in English). On the contrary, English has many conversational routines which de-emphasize disagreement. For example, there is the common conversational routine involving the use of the expression "not really" (– Do you agree? – Not really.). The phrase "not really" indicates, roughly speaking, that while I do not agree with you I wish I didn't have to say that; I say that I don't agree because I have to, not because I want to; I would prefer to say that I agree (but I can't). More generally, "not really" indicates that I know that what I'm going to say is not what you expect and want to hear; and that I'd prefer to say what you want to hear – but can't. There is no corresponding expression in Russian. On the contrary, in Russian there are linguistic routines for highlighting disagreement rather than for playing it down. For example, at a conference in Moscow which I recently attended, I was struck by the frequent use in the discussion of the phrase "ja kategoričeski ne soglasen", 'I categorically disagree'.

A related example is the common conversational response "Right.", as in the following extract from an informal interview (Porpora 2001:79):

> I ask Peter why he feels he should treat people as he does. "You said you were raised to treat people like this?"
> "Right."
> "Okay, that sort of explains why you have those values ..."
> "But why were they taught to me?"
> "No. Not why they were taught to you, but do you think those are values ... I mean different people are taught different values, right?"
> "Right."

The word "right" could not be replaced in this passage with the word "wrong", because there is no corresponding conversational routine in English involving "wrong". In Russian, on the other hand, there is no conversational routine privileging "right' over "wrong"; and the common conversational response ėto verno (roughly, 'that's right') has an equally common negative counterpart ėto neverno (roughly, 'that's wrong').

These are only preliminary examples adduced to explain the concept of "cultural script". The domain on which I want to focus in this paper is not that of "agreement" and "disagreement", but rather, that of "truth". I want to discuss, above all, characteristic Russian attitudes to truth reflected in certain Russian "cultural scripts". I also want to discuss some related cultural scripts, which have to do with saying what one thinks and what one feels.

In Russian culture, in contrast to Anglo culture, it is regarded as perfectly acceptable to say to another person "you are wrong" (ty ne prav). On the other hand, it is not regarded as acceptable to lie to another person under any circumstances (and there is no expression in Russian corresponding to the English "white lies"). It is also regarded as "bad" to say to another person that you think something if you don't in fact do so; or that you feel something if you don't really feel it. And so on.

As these examples show, cultural scripts to be discussed here are not restricted to the more or less superficial level of "speech etiquette" but involve something much deeper; one might say, they involve "speech ethics" – including tacit rules and assumptions governing human conduct which the speakers take for granted because they seem to them to be totally "natural".

In this paper, I want to propose and discuss several such scripts. Before doing this, however, I need to make some methodological points.

First, it is not a question of making some assertions about Russian culture or Russian "national character", or of repeating some familiar stereotypes, but rather of formulating hypotheses which can be supported with linguistic evidence. This evidence can take the form of certain language-specific key words, colloquial phrases, conversational routines, and so on. This is the first methodological principle – the principle of linguistic evidence for the postulated cultural scripts (evidence which presupposes rigorous semantic analysis).

The second methodological principle is that of formulating the proposed cultural scripts in a universal semantic metalanguage. The main point here is that, first, only simple, intuitively intelligible words are admissible in the formulae, (no words restricted to the educated register); and second, that the only admissible words are those which have exact semantic equivalents in all languages, so that all our explications and scripts can be readily transferred to other languages. By adhering to this principle we can avoid anglocentrism in comparing cultural scripts across language and cultures. We can also ensure that our formulae, which articulate the perspective of the cultural insider, can be intelligible to the cultural outsider – and not only to scholars, but also to migrants, language learners, and so on. In other words, these formulae can be used for the purposes of cross-cultural education and communication.

Empirical investigations of the last few decades, undertaken by many scholars, across a wide spectrum of languages, show that there are about 60 such "universal words" (which stand for universal human concepts); and that they have their own, fairly simple, universal grammar. (Cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka eds. 1994 and 2002, Wierzbicka 1996a):

The table of universal human concepts (English version; for other versions, see Goddard and Wierzbicka eds 2002)

Substantives:	I, YOU, SOMEONE(PERSON), SOMETHING(THING), PEOPLE, BODY
Determiners:	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER
Quantifiers:	ONE, TWO, SOME, MANY/MUCH, ALL
Attributes:	GOOD, BAD, BIG, SMALL
Mental predicates:	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR
Speech:	SAY, WORDS, TRUE
Actions, events, movement:	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE
Existence, and possession:	THERE IS, HAVE
Life and death:	LIVE, DIE
Logical concepts:	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF
Time:	WHEN(TIME), NOW, AFTER, BEFORE, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME
Space:	WHERE(PLACE), HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE
Intensifier, augmentor:	VERY, MORE
Taxonomy, partonomy:	KIND OF, PART OF
Similarity:	LIKE (HOW, AS)

These universal concepts, and the mini-language based on them, are for me the essential analytical tool. Using this mini-language (the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, or NSM), one can explain most things to most people; and one can bridge the conceptual divides between ordinary languages and cultures.

As D'Andrade (2001:246) notes, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage "offers a potential means to ground all complex concepts in ordinary language and translate concepts from one language to another without loss or distortion in meaning". And what applies to concepts, applies also to shared understandings, that is, to what colleagues and I have been calling, for more than a decade, "cultural scripts".

Thus, while the notion of cultural scripts as used in NSM theory of meaning and culture is akin to what is called "cultural scripts" in LeVine et al. 2001, it is also different, because it is anchored in an empirically discovered set of universal human concepts. If one uses technical English to describe cultural norms, assumptions and values of speakers of languages other than English, one is necessarily taking the position of an outsider. By contrast, if we use the Natural Semantic Metalanguage which relies exclusively on empirically discovered universal human concepts, we can attempt to enter the speakers'

inner world, and to articulate their ideas from their own point of view – while at the same time making them intelligible to others. To quote D'Andrade's (2001:249) comments on the NSM theory and empirical findings again:

> [these] universal terms are analogous to the atoms of the physical world … Of the enormous number of combinations of theses terms that make up the sentences that correspond to the possible ideas/meanings/knowledge/understandings of a person, some are cultural – that is, are intersubjectively shared by collectives within a society. Just as more than a hundred kinds of atoms can combine into more than 20 million kinds of molecules, so the 50 or more universal concepts can combine into hundreds of thousands of ideas. This puts the anthropologist who knows and is able to use the Natural Semantic Metalanguage in the same position as the chemist who knows about atoms – most of the actual things in the world are molecules, and it is their properties that one wants to investigate.

"Cultural scripts" can also be seen as such molecules; and by using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, we can both articulate them "from the native's point of view" and make them intelligible to cultural outsiders. In this paper, I will try to apply this method to Russian cultural scripts, in particular, those concerning speech, truth, and interpersonal communication.[1]

2. The importance of "truth" in Russian culture

The theme of "truth" occupies a very important place in Russian culture. The fact that Russian has not one word for truth but two - pravda and istina, reflects the salience of this general theme in Russian culture, and the frequent occurrence of istina in collocations with words like iskat' 'to seek' and poiski 'search' (plural) reflects the link between this theme and widely recognised ideals and values. One characteristic example from Russian literature: 'I don't need gold, I only seek the truth [istina].' (Alexander Pushkin, Sceny iz rycarskix vremen).

But if the characteristically Russian concept of "istina" ('higher truth', 'absolute truth', 'hidden truth') plays a significant role in Russian culture, the concept of 'pravda' is even more central to it, as the numerous proverbs and sayings (many of them rhymed) illustrate. For example:

> "Without truth, it is easier to live, but hard to die."
> "Everything will pass, only truth remains."

"Don't take anyone to court for truth but take off your hat and bow."
"Eat bread-and-salt, but heed the truth!"

Alexander Solzhenitsyn ended his Nobel lecture on literature with the comment that "the Russian language loves proverbs about truth" and that these proverbs insistently express "the heavy experience of the Russian people". As a particularly remarkable example, he adduces the following: "One word of truth outweighs the whole world", adding (with an allusion to his "Gulag Archipelago") that this belief constitutes the foundation of his own life's work".

What is no less revealing than proverbs is common collocations such as, above all, pravda-matka 'truth-mother' and pravda-matuška (matuška being a tender, peasant-style diminutive for 'mother'), often in combination with the verbs govorit' 'speak' or rezat' 'cut' (i.e. speak); or in the phrase rezat' pravdu v glaza 'to throw the cutting truth into a person's face'.

The idea of vigorously throwing the whole "cutting truth into another person's face" ("into their eyes"), combined with the view that the "full truth" must be loved, cherished, and respected like a mother, is part and parcel of Russian culture. The sentence: "Ljublju pravdu-matušku" 'I love the-truth-the-(dear-little-)mother' cited in SSRLJ is equally revealing of the traditional Russian preoccupation with and attitudes towards "truth" - or, more exactly, towards "telling the truth". From a cross-cultural perspective it is striking that "telling the truth" is contrasted in Russian culture in an absolute way, with "telling untruth", and that these two categories of speech are seen as not only diametrically opposed but also as morally charged. I propose the following cultural script concerning the value of "telling the truth" as opposed to "telling untruth".

The PRAVDA script (in universal human concepts)
people can say two kinds of things to other people
things of one kind are true
it is good if someone wants to say things of this kind to other people
things of the other kind are not true
it is not good if someone wants to say things of this other kind to other people
it is bad if someone wants other people to think that these things are true

From a Russian cultural point of view, this script may seem quite natural, and it might be assumed that it would be shared in all cultures. But this is not the case. In fact, there are many societies where this script would seem far too extreme, far too polarized, and where people would not wish to identify with it at all.

There are also cultures where this script may exist but where it is not as salient as

it is in Russian culture. Before the Russian script can be discussed from a cross-cultural perspective, however, I need to establish that there is such a script in Russian culture. I also need to explain the intended meaning of this script, and in particular, its relation to the Russian words pravda ('truth') and nepravda ('untruth'), which feature prominently in the phrasing of the Russian version of the script.

3. TRUE/PRAVDA as a prime and its relation to the noun "pravda" (pravda$_2$)

Universal human concepts can only be identified within certain syntactic frames. For "truth" (TRUE), the canonical universal frames are these: "this is true", "this is not true". In the Russian NSM, their equivalents are: "ėto pravda", "ėto nepravda". Thus, the universal prime TRUE/PRAVDA is realized in English as an adjective (true), whereas in Russian, it is realized as a predicative word homophonous with the noun pravda. Interestingly, this special predicative use of the Russian word pravda is identifed in the New Explanatory Dictionary of the Synonyms of the Russian Language (2000) as distinct from the noun pravda, occurring as a complement of verbs of speech, e.g. govorit' pravdu 'to speak the truth', and of verbs of knowing, e.g. znat' pravdu 'to know the truth'. I think this distinction is fully justified, and I will call the predicative use pravda$_1$ and the noun, pravda$_2$. Since pravda$_1$ occurs in the canonical universal frames, I will assume that it is the indefinable Russian exponent of the universal prime realized in English as the adjective true. The English noun truth can be defined via the indefinable adjective true, and the Russian noun pravda$_2$ can be defined via the indefinable predicative pravda$_1$. The other Russian words of this semantic field, in particular the nouns nepravda and istina, the adjectives pravdivyj, istinnyj and vernyj, the verbs lgat' and vrat' 'to lie', and the predicative words verno and neverno, have all to be defined via the indefinable and universal pravda$_1$.

Proceeding in this way is contrary to the tradition established in the Russian linguistic literature, where pravda is usually defined either via the word dejstvitel'nost' 'reality' or via the word fakt 'fact' (or both). For example, the New Explanatory Dictionary (p.223) defines pravda as 'faithful reflection of facts'. From my point of view, however, all the three words used in this definition are problematic: none of them is either indefinable or universal. The word otraženie 'reflection' is also metaphorical. From a universal perspective, a definition of this kind would not be very helpful because each of its words would constitute a puzzle of its own.

The collection Kul'turnye Koncepty (1991) in the series "Logičeskij Analiz Jazyka" defines pravda along the lines of "speech matching reality" (cf. e.g. p.33). But from a universal perspective, this is not satisfactory either, because the concept of dejstvitel'nost' 'reality' is very complex, and certainly far from universal, and so is the concept of sootvetstvie 'matching'. Not everything can be defined, and what is universal, does not need to be defined. But concepts like fakty 'facts' and dejstvitel'nost' 'reality' can

be defined, and need to be defined, because they are not universal.

As mentioned earlier, in Russian there are two words, not one, which correspond (roughly) to the English word truth: pravda and istina, and some writers on the subject assume that of the two, istina is more basic and that pravda can be defined via istina (cf. e.g. Kul'turnye Koncepty p.34). In fact, however, istina is a complex culture-specific Russian concept which itself needs to be defined - no less complex than pravda (used as a noun).

In her article entitled "Truth: background and connotations", N.D. Arutjunova (1991:21) writes: "It is hard to imagine a language in which the concept of 'istina' would not be expressed. In Russian, there are two words which express this concept: istina and pravda."

I agree with the spirit of this comment, but not with the phrasing. Empirical cross-linguistic investigations suggest that the concept TRUE - that is, PRAVDA$_1$ - is indeed universal and has an identifiable exponent in every language (see Wierzbicka 1996a, Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002). At the same time, one could not agree that the concept istina is universal. On the contrary, I believe that istina is a unique Russian concept; and that this concept can only be explained to outsiders via the concept pravda$_1$ (TRUE) - not via the noun pravda (pravda$_2$), which itself is language-specific and needs to be explained to outsiders, but the predicative pravda$_1$, as used in the frame "ėto pravda", "ėto nepravda".

Elsewhere, N. D. Arutjunova (1995:7) notes that "'pravda' is one of the key concepts of Russian culture". I think that this is true, and that in fact both pravda$_2$ and istina belong to key concepts of Russian culture; I also think that nepravda ('untruth'), too, is one of the key concepts of Russian culture, as are lož' and vran'e (roughly, 'lying'). On this point, I totally agree with the New Explanatory Dictionary (2000), which says (p.223): "The concepts of nepravda, lož' and vran'e occupy an important place in the Russian linguistic picture of the world." But again, to explain all these concepts to outsiders, we have to go via universals.

First of all, we need to acknowledge that in the canonical universal frame "ėto nepravda" 'this is not true' the predicative word nepravda (nepravda$_1$) stands for a simple combination of two semantic primes: ne NOT and pravda$_1$ TRUE. Nothing further can, or need, be said about the meaning of nepravda$_1$. On the other hand, the noun nepravda, which occurs as a complement of the verbs of speech (as in govorit' nepravdu 'to speak untruth'), is semantically complex. The New Explanatory Dictionary (ibid.) defines nepravda as follows: "incorrect (nevernaja) transfer (peredača) of facts (fakty) in conditions when one does know the truth". Again, from a universal point of view this doesn't solve the problem, because this definition depends on the complex and language-specific concept pravda$_2$, and on equally complex and language-specific concepts

equivalent in English; and many other languages don't have a word for 'facts' either).

In my own view, both pravda$_2$ and nepravda$_2$ can be satisfactorily defined in terms of the universal concept TRUE, that is, PRAVDA$_1$ (plus, in the case of nepravda$_2$, another universal concept: negation). Consider, for example, the following sentence: "On skazal nepravdu." ('he said untruth'). It is very striking that this seemingly simple Russian sentence cannot be exactly translated into English. One could try the following: "he said something, this something was not true"; but such a paraphrase would lose the implication (noted in the New Explanatory Dictionary) that the speaker knew that what he or she was saying was not true. It would also lose the evaluating character of the Russian sense: the implication that "speaking untruth" is not good.

The concept nepravda$_1$ does not include the assumption that the speaker knows the truth (that is, that one knows that what one is saying is not true). For example, if one despairingly attacks oneself, saying that one is worthless and contemptible, the addressee could object saying: "ėto nepravda!" ('this is not true!'), without doubting in the least the first speaker's sincerity. On the other hand, the concept nepravda$_2$, as in "govorit' nepravdu", 'to speak untruth' does imply that the speaker knows that what he/she is saying is not true.

I think, however, that the Russian concept nepravda$_2$ includes more than what has been stated so far: it also refers to interpersonal relations and to values.

N. D. Arutjunova (1995:17) writes that "Pravda links truth [istina] and ethics", and I think this is right in so far as pravda (pravda$_2$) implies positive evaluation, whereas nepravda (nepravda$_2$) implies negative evaluation. In addition, all the writers on the subject of pravda and nepravda link these concepts with the human activity of speaking. I. B. Šatunovskij (1991:35) speaks in this connection of the "human, subjective factor [which] is present in pravda in all its uses, and he notes that one would not normally say in Russian ob"ektivnaja (objective) pravda, whereas one could say ob"ektivnaja istina 'objective truth'".

I do not think these considerations (about the human factor) apply to pravda$_1$, that is the exponent of the universal concept TRUE, but they do apply to the language-specific pravda$_2$ and nepravda$_2$. In fact, I would propose that the Russian opposites govorit' pravdu 'to speak pravda' and govorit' nepravdu 'to speak untruth' embody in their meaning, as a kind of background scenario, the core of the Russian cultural script proposed here earlier. Thus:

Ivan skazal nepravdu.
Ivan said/told untruth =

Ivan said something

he knew that this something was not true
people can say two kinds of things to other people
things of one kind are true
it is good if a person wants to say things of this kind to other people
Ivan did not say something of this kind
things of the other kind are not true
it is not good if someone wants to say things of this other kind to other people
Ivan said something of this other kind

(The explication of pravda$_2$ will be essentially symmetrical.)

Naturally, the English noun truth also incorporates in its meaning the component "this is something true", but it does not incorporate the Russian background scenario, and in fact, as I will try to show, it incorporates a background scenario of its own, different from the Russian one. This explains, I believe, why the English noun truth cannot always be rendered in Russian as pravda.

For example, in the translations of the Gospels, Jesus' words rendered in English as "I am the way, the truth, and the life" are normally rendered in Russian with the word istina, not pravda; and so is Pilate's celebrated question: "What is truth?" "Čto takoe istina?". This indicates that although the Russian pravda has to be translated into English as truth, and often vice versa (e.g. "he told the truth - on skazal pravdu/*istinu"), in some respects truth is closer to istina than to pravda.

Similarly, the English phrase truth conditions, which is one of the key terms of logic and related disciplines, is rendered into Russian as uslovija istinnosti, and cannot be rendered as uslovija pravdy. The notion of "truth conditions" opposes "true" to "false" - as properties of sentences, or beliefs, and does not take into account the relation between the speaker and the addressee. Pravda$_2$, on the other hand, focusses on what people say to people; it is not contrasted with falsehood but, roughly speaking, with "lying" (that is, with lož' and vran'e). In fact, many Russian writers on the subject link pravda - in contrast to istina - with the concept of "iskrennost'", roughly 'sincerity' (which I will discuss later), and with the speaker's intention to be "truthful" to the addressee (cf. e.g. Levontina 1995).

A related point is that collocations like objective truth are perfectly acceptable in English, whereas, as mentioned earlier, ob"ektivnaja pravda is not acceptable in Russian. This, too, suggests that the "human" and evaluative aspect of pravda (pravda$_2$) is absent from the English truth.

Most strikingly, perhaps, truth doesn't have a colloquial counterpart in untruth, and so it is not perceived against the background of "untruth". By contrast, in Russian, speaking the pravda ("truth") is naturally perceived against the background of speaking

nepravda ("untruth").

Significantly, English has the collocation white lies, which is absent in Russian. The very existence of this collocation shows that in Anglo culture "speaking the truth" is not an absolute non-negotiable moral imperative, as it is in Russian culture. From an Anglo point of view, the universe of discourse is not as black and white as it is from a Russian point of view but contains many colours, and many shades. There is "truth", and there is "lying", but there are also "white lies"; there is "small talk", "polite conversation", "understatement"; there are "compliments" (a far broader and more important category than the Russian komplimenty); and there is the whole cultural emphasis on not hurting other people's feelings (truth or not truth), to which I will return later. First, however, let us examine more closely the meaning of the English word truth, and also, that of the other key Russian word related to it, istina.

4. "Truth" and "istina"

The English word truth, which, as we have seen, sometimes has to be translated into Russian as pravda, and sometimes as istina, is more concerned with knowledge than is pravda. Like pravda, truth, too, refers in its meaning to speech, but it is not as exclusively focussed on speech: the important thing is not so much to tell the truth as to know the truth. From a Russian point of view, people want people to tell pravda to others, and they want to know istina. They may also want to "know pravda", but this would normally involve "being told pravda". From an Anglo point of view, however, people want to know the truth, and this doesn't necessarily involve being told the truth. For example, in a court of law the goal is to find out the truth about the matter; establishing whether the witnesses or the accused are telling the truth is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Unlike "telling pravda", "knowing the truth" has no opposite. There is no duality here, no choice between "truth" and "untruth"; and if truth is discussed in a contrastive manner, it is often contrasted with "error" rather than with "lying". (For example, this is what encyclopaedias and similar works tend to do in their entry on "truth"). "Lying" has its closest opposite in English not in "truth" as such but in "truthfulness". "Truth" as such is, largely, a question of "knowing the truth". The assumption is that people often don't know the truth, and that it may be difficult to establish the truth — not so much because human beings are prone to lying but because human beings are prone to error: it is difficult to know things, one can mistake appearances for reality, it may be difficult to establish the facts. What matters most is not whether we can trust and believe other people but how we can gather and assess objective evidence.

Thus, I would propose that the English noun truth can be explicated along the following lines:

truth
people say many things
some of these things are true, some of these things are not true
people think many things
some of these things are true, some of these things are not true
it is good if a person can know about some things
that these things are true

The article on "truth" in the Oxford Companion to Philosophy (1995:880) states: "The term 'truth' seems to denote a property which is also expressed by the truth-predicate 'is true'". This impression is deceptive. In fact, as discussed earlier, '[is] true' is a universal human concept whereas 'truth' is a culture-specific Anglo concept, distinct, for example, from both the Russian concept 'pravda$_2$' and the Russian concept 'istina' (and without any counterparts at all in numerous other languages). The same article in the Oxford Companion to Philosophy states that "it seems unlikely that philosophers will ever (...) give up asking 'What is truth?' and assuming that the answer is something of importance" (p.882). It is important to realize, however, that this very question depends, to some extent, on the folk-philosophy embodied in the English language. Russian philosophers are more likely to ask "What is istina?"; and it will not be the same question.

The most striking difference between istina and pravda is that istina doesn't have an opposite: there is no "ne-istina". In this, istina is similar to the English truth. It is also similar to the English truth in its emphasis on knowledge, which is absent from the Russian pravda. But the English truth refers, in its meaning, to both knowledge and speech, and one can speak in English both of "telling the truth" and "knowing the truth". In Russian, however, one cannot normally speak of "telling the istina" (*govorit' istinu). Istina is concerned not with speech but with knowledge alone — especially the knowledge of what is hidden, perhaps inaccessible, and yet important and of general interest; something worth searching for.

istina
(a) it is good if people can know some things about some things
(b) many people don't know these things
(c) people know that when someone thinks something about something
this can be not true
(d) it is good if people can know about some things
that these things are true

I have not included any references to "true speech" in this explication, because, as mentioned earlier, istina normally does not combine with verbs of speech (for example, one normally can't say *govorit' istinu 'speak the istina' in Russian). I have nonetheless included the word true (pravda$_1$), to account for the intuitively felt link between istina and pravda$_2$, and the (partial) overlap in their use. The references to a potential gap between thinking and knowledge account for the link between the concepts of istina and dejstvitel'nost' ("reality"). It is interesting to note that the adjective istinnyj is used in collocations which translate English nominal phrases with the adjective real, e.g. "istinnyj talant", 'a real talent' or "istinnyj drug" 'a real friend'. These collocations, too, indicate that istina is concerned more with the difference between "reality" and "appearance" than with any concern about speaking or not speaking the truth. In the proposed explication this contrast between what is real and what is apparent is reflected by means of the primes KNOW and THINK, as well as TRUE and NOT: what people think may NOT be true, but what they know must be true.

According to the New Explanatory Dictionary (2000:233), "istina is, above all, faithful representation of certain general laws of being". This "generality" of istina is contrasted with the particularity of pravda, which is said to be a faithful representation of facts. Levontina's (1995:33) statement that "istina is served by the priests of religion and science" points in the same direction: religion and science are concerned with "general truths" rather than with "particular facts". In the explication proposed here, the more general nature of istina (or its wider relevance) is reflected in component (a): "it is good if people can know some things about some things". This component hints at something important that is good for people to know; and it accounts, to some extent, for common collocations like poiski istiny 'searching (plural) for istina', približat'sja k istine 'to approach the istina', and put' k istine 'the path to istina'. It also explains why istina cannot refer explicitly to particular facts (cf. *istina o čem-to, *istina about something, in contrast to pravda o čem-to, pravda about something).

Levontina (1995:93) states that "pravda, in contrast to istina, is linked not so much with correspondence between an utterance and reality, as with sincerity (iskrennost'), that is, with human intentions". While the concepts of "correspondence", "reality", and "sincerity" are complex and language-specific, and cannot be used in explications, the observation is consistent with the explications proposed here: pravda (pravda$_2$) concerns what someone wants to say (to other people), whereas istina concerns what is good for people to know.

Russian authors writing about istina often emphasize that istina may be beyond human reach and that "in some sense, only God knows istina" (Bulygina and Šmelev 1997:481). This idea is reflected in component (b) of the proposed explication ("many people don't know these things"). Components (c) and (d) link istina with pravda$_2$, as it

too relies on the prime TRUE (PRAVDA$_1$).

The idea that istina is inaccessible to people (that, "in some sense, only God knows istina") would be reflected in the explication more closely if instead of saying "many people don't know these things" we said "some people think that people can't know these things". I have refrained, however, from phrasing the relevant component (c) in this way because it would be inconsistent with situations where some people do know the istina. Consider for example the following sentence (from Solzhenitsyn's novel The First Circle):

> In the midst of the jostling crowd of grown-ups, who did not understand this simple truth [istina], he felt desperately lonely. (Solzhenitsyn 1996)

Clearly the boy does know the istina in this case – while many other, grown-up, people don't know it. The phrasing "many people don't know these things" fits this context better than "many people think that these people can't know these things", let alone than "people can't know these things".

Bulygina and Šmelev note that while scientists seek to discover istina (and not pravda), an angry mother wants to know the pravda (and not istina) about who broke her favourite cup. I think the phrase uznat' pravdu 'to come to know the pravda' refers, implicitly, to true speech: the mother wants to know who broke the cup and so she wants to be told the truth (pravda) about it. Thus, while pravda in the collocation uznat' pravdu does not have an opposite (*uznat' nepravdu), it still refers, implicitly, to two kinds of speech, true and untrue.

Bulygina and Šmelev (ibid.) also note that while the witnesses in a court swear to speak the pravda, the court seeks to establish the istina. Why, then, can't a mother seek to establish the istina as to who broke the cup? Bulygina and Šmelev say that "istina is something that people don't know and that the court should establish". But if it is a matter of establishing who murdered the victim then someone (the murderer) does know, just as the person who broke the cup knows who is the culprit. I think the explication of istina proposed here does account for the fact that this word can be used with reference to the court but not to the mother: the components "it is good if people can know some things about some things" and "many people want to know these things" make sense with respect to a murder but not with respect to a broken cup. The following example from The First Circle, is also helpful here:

> If Rubin had found himself looking down the barrels of ten pistols he would not have been afraid. No threat of prison or of banishment

> to Solovki would have forced him to tell them [lit. would have torn out of him] what they wanted to hear [istina]. But how could he lie to the Party? He could keep nothing back in this black and red confessional booth.

There is no question here of any general laws, but rather, of some quite particular facts. Yet these facts represent something that, firstly, some people want to know, secondly, something that is seen as precious knowledge (good to know), and thirdly, something that can be seen as inaccessible. This explains, I think, why the word istina is appropriate in this context.

5. Evidence for the Russian cultural script

Having discussed the semantics of pravda, nepravda, truth, and istina, we can return to the Russian cultural script outlined at the outset. What is the evidence for the reality, and salience, of this script in Russian culture? First of all we need to emphasize again the existence of the word nepravda 'untruth' in the Russian language and its great salience in Russian discourse. The parallel use of pravda and nepravda in collocations like govorit' pravdu 'to speak the truth' and govorit' nepravdu 'to speak untruth' is a good example of dual polar models of thought in Russian culture, emphasized in the classic work by Jurij Lotman and Boris Uspensky (1984) — dual models opposing two poles, with no middle ground in-between. Referring in particular to medieval Russia, but with important implications for Russian culture in later times, up to the present. Lotman and Uspensky (1984:4) write:

> The specific feature of the aspect of Russian culture of that time which interests us is its fundamental polarity. The basic cultural values (ideological, political, religious) in the system of medieval Russia are arranged in a bipolar value field divided by a sharp line and without any neutral axiological zone. (…) In the Catholic Christian West life after death is divided into three zones: paradise, purgatory, and hell. Similarly, life on earth is thought of as demonstrating three kinds of behavior: definitely sinful, definitely holy, and a neutral kind (…) This neutral sphere becomes a structural reserve from which tomorrow's system develops. (…) The Russian medieval system was constructed on a marked dualism. (…) The Russian system divides life beyond the grave into heaven and hell. There is no provision for an intermediate zone. And correspondingly, behavior in this life is either sinful or holy.

The great salience in contemporary Russian discourse of words of extreme moral evaluation such as, on the one hand, podlec, negodjaj, merzavec 'terrible scoundrel, base person' and on the other, of words like blagorodnyj 'noble, lofty', and expressions like prekrasnyj čelovek 'a beautiful human being' suggests the continuity of this axiological dualism and moral extremism in Russian culture (cf. Wierzbicka 1992); and it is certainly consistent with the duality of "pravda" and "nepravda", and pravda" and "lož'" in Russian everyday discourse.

In Bulgakov's novel Master and Margarita, Ieshua (Jesus) says: "it's easy and pleasant to speak the truth (pravda)". The Russian linguist Šatunovskij (1991:36) comments on this utterance as follows: "The process of saying what one knows/thinks is much simpler and requires less effort than the procedure of "distorting" the truth [istina], which requires the switching on of the imagination."

It seems clear, however, that both Ieshua's remark and Šatunovskij's comment are coloured by Russian cultural scripts. There can be no doubt that from other cultural perspectives, the process of "speaking the truth" would not seem equally straightforward, and that the moral contrast between "speaking the truth" and "speaking untruth" would not be seen in equally black and white terms.

In other cultures, speaking the truth regardless of the circumstances could be regarded as inconsiderate, crude, even dangerous. Similarly, saying what one thinks – "prjamo" ("straight"), "otkrovenno" ("openly") and "čestno" ("honestly") – could be regarded as childish, immature, self-centred and irresponsible. The idea that it is easy and pleasant to tell the truth or to say what one really thinks could be seen as bizarre in many cultures, where it would be assumed, rather, that it can be difficult and dangerous to say what one thinks and what one regards as true, and that it is easy and pleasant to say what is socially acceptable, what is expected by the addressee (e.g. conversational formulae), what can be conducive to social harmony, and the like. I will return to this question of different cultural perspectives on truth and on speaking one's mind at the end of the paper.

6. Truthfulness and lying

The reality of the script posited here for Russian culture may be disputed on the grounds that Russians often see themselves as prone to lying. The classic text in this regard is Dostoevsky's essay "On lying" ("Nečto o vran'e"), in which he writes, inter alia (p.133):

> Lately, I was suddenly struck by the thought that in Russia, among our educated classes, there cannot be even one man who wouldn't be addicted to lying [lgat']. I am certain that in other nations, in the

> overwhelming majority of them, only scoundrels are lying; they are lying for the sake of material gain, that is, with directly criminal interest. Well, in our case, even the most esteemed people may be lying for no reason at all, and with most honorable aims. We are lying almost invariably for the sake of hospitality. One wishes to create in the listener an aesthetical impression, to give him pleasure, and so one lies even, so to speak, sacrificing oneself to the listener.

The anthropologist Dale Pesmen, the author of the acclaimed recent book Russia and Soul, appears to accept Dostoevsky's comments at face value when she refers to "the values and practices of lying" as "a poignant aspect of dusha [soul] culture":

> A woman, talking with a friend in my presence, happily exclaimed 'What Russian can help stretching the truth occasionally?' I have no statistics on Russian mendacity, but what matters is that talk about lying and fibbing enjoys an exuberant vocabulary and corresponds lavishly to that of Russian soul. (Pesmen 2000:64)

Is it true that Russian has an exuberant vocabulary of "lying" as compared, for example, with English? I think the statement is defensible, in so far as Russian has two widely used words comparable to the English lie, that is, lgat' and vrat', as well as the common expression govorit' nepravdu 'to tell untruth'. It is also true that vrat' has a rich family of widely used derivates: privrat', sovrat', navrat', and so on; and that there is the widely used abstract noun lož', the widely recognized speech genre of vran'e, and above all, the basic speech category of nepravda 'untruth'. What this "exuberant vocabulary" suggests, however, is not a greater mendacity than in other societies, but a greater concern about truth, a greater cultural focus on telling the truth. Dostoevsky's comment that Russians lie out of hospitality sounds somewhat amusing from an Anglo point of view, because in English, such "lies" would be described as "white lies" and not regarded as "real lies" at all. But Russian (as mentioned earlier) has no word or expression for "white lies" and makes no similar distinction between "lies" and "white lies": as Dostoevsky's comments illustrate, they are all seen as "lies".

What is a characteristic Russian category, with no equivalent in English, is "vran'e", that is, "lying as verbal art" (with no pejorative evaluation implied). The New Explanatory Dictionary comments on this category as follows (2000:226):

> The most typical case of vran'e is "artistic vran'e" — a play of imagination, inventing things, talk without any relation to reality.

> This kind of vranie is entirely innocent; its goal lies not in self-interest but in entertainment, because it is interesting, amusing, more engrossing than the truth. Cf. e.g. "Everybody was listening with interest to this engaging story, and when Behemot had finished, they all exclaimed in a chorus: Vran'e! (Bulgakov, Master and Margarita).

The existence of this salient speech genre of vran'e (entertaining talk not corresponding to reality) highlights the fact that the "concern about truth", characteristic of Russian culture, does not involve avoidance, or condemnation, of "untrue utterances" as such, but rather, of the practice of telling people something untrue and wanting them to think that it is true. The noun vran'e, which does not imply such an intent, is not inherently pejorative, whereas the noun lož', which does imply it, is always pejorative. This is why I have included in the Russian "truth and untruth" script the components which have been capitalized in the formula below:

> people say two kinds of things TO OTHER PEOPLE
> things of one kind are true
> it is good if someone wants to say things of this kind TO OTHER PEOPLE
> things of the other kind are not true
> it is not good if someone wants to say things of this other kind TO OTHER PEOPLE
> IT IS BAD IF SOMEONE WANTS OTHER PEOPLE TO THINK THAT THESE THINGS ARE TRUE

Without the capitalized parts, this script would be inconsistent with the existence of vran'e as a recognizable (and not necessarily offensive) speech genre. I would argue, however, that with these parts, the script is consistent with the available linguistic evidence: from a Russian cultural point of view, there may be nothing wrong with saying (sometimes, for "artistic purposes") things that are not true, but there is something wrong with wanting other people to think that untrue things one is saying are true. The Russian script contrasting "pravda" and "nepravda" focuses very much on how a person relates to other people (truthfully or untruthfully). Vran'e is not necessarily bad because it is not necessarily done "to another person": it requires an audience rather than an addressee, and (as noted by Boris Pasternak) it is not necessarily intended as deception (obman).

There are many conversational routines in Russian which reflect the cultural emphasis on "true speech" as a basis for interpersonal interaction. To mention a few, there is the conversational response "Nepravda!" ('Untruth!'), which expresses not only the

proposition "this is not true" but also an (often emotionally charged) interpersonal protest; there is also the commonly used conversational tag "ne pravda li?" 'isn't [this] true?', seeking agreement in the name of truth; there are the common conversational oaths: čestnoe slovo 'word of honour' (often used in relation to complete trivia) and kljanus' 'I swear' (in literature often translated into English as simply "honestly"), with which the speaker is urging the addressee to believe that his or her words are true; there is also the common conversational plea "ver'te mne, ver'te!" or "pover' mne!" ('believe me!').

As compared with many other cultures and among European cultures especially with Anglo culture, in Russian culture speakers appear to be extraordinarily concerned with being believed by other people – with getting other people to think that they are telling the truth. To illustrate from Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard" (Michael Frayn's translation):

> Gaev. (On the verge of tears). You're not my niece - you're my angel. You're everything to me. Believe me. Trust me. (lit. 'Believe me, believe…')

The English translator replaces here the repeated plea "believe me, believe me" with two separate and distinct utterances "Believe me. Trust me.", thus deemphasizing the passionate tone of the Russian utterance. An example with kljanus' vam 'I swear to you' (characteristically replaced by the English translator with a lighter "truly"):

> 'Don't judge me, Petya. I love you as if you were my own child. I should have been glad to let you marry Anya - I truly (lit. I swear to you) should. Only my precious boy, you must study...'

And one example of "giving one's word":

> The house we live in hasn't been ours for a long time now. I'm going to leave, I give you my word.

As Svetlana Boym notes in her book Common Places: Mythologies of everyday life in Russia (1994:99), Dostoevsky, in Diary of a Writer, criticizes the Western legal system of authentication, describing the reliance on objective evidence involved in a trial by jury as "mechanistic" and opposing to it a "Russian solution to the problem", which relies on truthfulness: "We might substitute [sic] this mechanism, this mechanistic method of uncovering the truth ... simply by truth (...) Everything will [then] appear sincere and truthful and not merely a game in uncovering the truth."

In Russian, pravda ("truth") is often associated with believing somebody's words, as in the following sentence from Tolstoy's War and Peace (the Maude translation):

> Prince Andrew felt as if the sound of the waves kept up a refrain to Pierre's words, whispering: "It is true [pravda], believe it."

In English, on the other hand, truth accepted on the strength of somebody's words is often seen as insufficient, as if not valid: only a truth reached by reason and supported by evidence appears to be truly valuable. The following passage from a treatise by John Milton (1990: 261) is characteristic in this respect:

> A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so, or the assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy.

As I have tried to show elsewhere (Wierzbicka 2002 and In press), in Anglo culture, the emphasis on truth diminished over the last few centuries, and the emphasis on reason and evidence increased. To the extent, however, to which a pursuit of truth has remained a cultural value, this truth continues to be linked with knowledge, evidence, and reason, rather than with truthfulness and belief. In Russian culture, with its split between "istina" (as it were "God's truth") and "pravda" ("human truth"), and with its emphasis on "pravda" in interpersonal relations, "truth" is more linked with people; and the theme of "pravda" is related to other great themes of Russian culture, also involving people: the theme of "obščenie" (roughly, talk as communion with other people), the theme of "iskrennost'" (roughly, sincerity / spontaneity), the theme of "duša" ('soul').

7. "Telling the truth" in interpersonal relations

From an Anglo point of view, the insistence on telling the truth, characteristic of Russian discourse, may often seem extreme, not to say excessive. It may be easy and pleasant to speak the truth, but is it always easy and pleasant to hear the truth? Russian expressions like rezat' pravdu v glaza 'to cut the truth into somebody's eyes' and sayings like pravda glaza kolet 'truth burns (pierces) the eyes' show that Russians are well aware of the painful effect that truth-telling may have on the listener. Yet the same expressions and sayings also suggest that telling the truth may stand higher in the hierarchy of values than any consideration for the interlocutor's feelings. For example, the expression rezat' pravdu v glaza suggests that it is good, not bad, to throw the "cutting truth" into one's interlocutor's eyes (usually a truth expressing a negative moral evaluation of the

interlocutor's actions, or person).

It is also good, rather than bad, to speak of another person bez obinjakov, that is, without any "soft padding" or "wrapping" around an unpleasant or painful message; it is good to speak prjamo, that is, "straight". One example from Chekhov (my translation):

> Nikolaj Alekseevič (...), forgive me, I'll speak openly [prjamo, lit. 'straight'], without beating about the bush [bez obinjakov]. In your voice, in your intonation, not to mention your words, there is so much soulless selfishness, so much cold heartlessness... (...) I can't tell you, I don't have a gift of words, but ... I profoundly dislike you! ("Ivanov")

To which the adressee, evidently also concerned about the truth, replies:

> Maybe, maybe...You may be seeing more clearly because you're looking at it from the outside... Probably, I'm very, very guilty... (...) You, doctor, don't like me and you're not hiding it. This does you credit [lit. 'it gives honour to your heart'].

But it is not only a concern for moral truth which can make people speak "straight", "without wrapping". It can also be a simple desire to say to another person what one thinks - for example, about the addressee's appearance. In particular, it is striking (from an Anglo point of view) how in Russian literature people who haven't seen each other for a long time tell each other the "truth" about their changed appearance. Thus, in Chekhov's "Three Sisters" Maša tells Veršinin, when she meets him after many years (English glosses from Karl Kramer's translation, Chekhov 1997):

> Oh, how you've aged! (Through tears). How you've aged!

Similarly, in "The Cherry Orchard" (Michael Frayn's translation), the middle-aged Ljubov' Andreevna tells the student Trofimov after a few years' absence:

> What's this, Petya? Why have you lost your looks?
> Why have you aged so?

And then she continues:

> You were still only a boy before, just a nice young student. You're surely not still a student?

After that, she turns to her brother Leonid, kisses him, and tells him:

> You've aged, too, Leonid.

Ljubov' Andreevna loves her brother, and is fond of the student, but this doesn't mean that any concern for "not hurting their feelings" might get in the way of "telling them the truth" (or "telling them what she really thinks"). Ljubov' Andreevna's gentle, kind-hearted grown-up daughter Varya makes similar remarks to Trofimov - without any malice but simply in recognition of the truth:

> Oh, but Petya, you've grown so ugly, you've aged so!

And two more examples, one from Tolstoy's "War and Peace" and one from recorded oral speech. In the first example, Prince Andrej meets his close friend Pierre after a year's absence:

> And you are getting fatter and fatter!

In the second example, two friends (a man and a woman), both in their early thirties, greet each other affectionately after a couple of years apart (Moscow, June 2001; Valentina Apresjan, personal communication):

> Ty posedela, staruška!
> 'You have become grey, granny!'
> A ty potolstel, moj milyj!
> 'And you have become fat, my dear boy!'

8. The links between "truth" (pravda) and "sincerity" (iskrennost')

In addition to the word obščenie, which was mentioned earlier and to which I will return, another Russian key word related to pravda 'truth' is iskrennost'. Usually this word is translated into English as "sincerity", but in fact it has a much wider range of use, and much greater cultural significance. "Iskrennost'" is often spoken of in Russian as an important and highly valued personal characteristic, the way "kindness" is spoken of in English. A few examples from Chekhov's play "Ivanov" (my translation):

> She is a faithful, sincere (iskrennij) human being!
>
> He has worn me down terribly, but I like him; there is a lot of sincerity (iskrennost') in him!
>
> I was young, passionate, sincere (iskrennij), intelligent.

As this last example shows, one can mourn the loss of one's "iskrennost'" as one can mourn the loss of one's youth.

The adverb iskrenno is frequently used in Russian to emphasize the sincerity of one's feelings and wishes, as in the following example (also from Chekhov, my translation):

> My dear sister, let me wish you sincerely (iskrenno), with all my heart (lit. 'from the soul')... ("Three Sisters")

As the added phrase ot duši, "from the soul", highlights, the word iskrenno does not have here the formality of the English "sincerely", but rather indicates, in a fully colloquial way, a spontaneous outpouring of the heart.

To see that the Russian iskrennost' has a wider range of use than the English sincerity, consider the following sentence from Solzhenitskyn's The First Circle (translated by Max Hayward, Manya Harari and Michael Glenny):

> Such was the childlike innocence [iskrennost'] of this eccentric that Abakumov was quite unperturbed; tolerating this invasion of his desk, he watched Pryanchikov in silence.

The translators have rendered the phrase iskrennost' i neposredstvennost' (roughly 'sincerity and directness') as "innocence"; and indeed, one could hardly speak in English of "childlike sincerity". What the Russian iskrennost' conveys is that one says what one thinks and feels, and that one says it because one wants to say what one thinks and feels. The English sincerity cannot be used as widely as that. As shown by Goddard (2001), it is restricted to situations when one expresses some feelings or thoughts not because one wants to behave in a way that is socially approved. Slightly modifying the formula proposed by Goddard, I would propose the following:

I said it sincerely. =

(a) I said: I think something now
I feel something because of this

(b) it was true

(c) people think that it is good to say things like this to other people at times like this

(d) I didn't say it because of this

The English word sincere (and its derivates) is used only with reference to situations when one says something expected and socially approved, to counteract the suspicion that what one says is therefore not true. It implicitly acknowledges the existence of social conventions and affirms the truth of what was said on a particular occasion against the common knowledge that things of this kind are often said without being true.

The Russian word iskrenno is used much more broadly. It doesn't acknowledge any general practice of saying socially approved things in certain situations, but rather, acknowledges that people don't always speak "from the heart" (ot duši, lit. from the soul), and it celebrates speech "flowing from the heart". Thus, the opposites of iskrennij include not only its negated form neiskrennij, but also words like napusknoj 'affected, unnatural' (from napustit' 'to fill something with some substance') and privityj 'grafted' (as it were unnaturally added from outside). For example, Solzhenitsyn's novel The First Circle includes the following sentence:

> Someone stopped the radiogram and the three of them sang, their musical shortcoming redeemed by depth of feeling ("iskrennost'").

Iskrennost' has not been translated here as "sincerity" but rather as "depth of feeling", and rightly so, because "sincerity" would imply that the people who were singing could be suspected of being insincere, whereas iskrennost' carries no such implications. At the same time, while the phrased "depth of feeling" does not mean exactly the same as iskrennost', it can convey, at least indirectly, the idea that the singing "flows from the heart".

Ja ėto skazala iskrenno. (I said this iskrenno) =

(a) I said: I think something
I feel something because of this

(b) it was true

(c) I said it because I wanted to say what I thought (felt)

(d) I didn't say it because of anything else

The value placed on "iskrennost'" in Russian culture suggests the following cultural scripts:

it is good if a person says something to someone else
because this person wants to say what this person thinks (feels)
not because of anything else

The concomitant scripts are:

it is good if a person wants to say to other people what this person thinks (feels)

it is bad if a person says to other people that this person thinks (feels) something
if it is not true

it is good if a person wants other people to know what this person thinks (feels)

As mentioned earlier, speaking "iskrenno" is also closely related to speaking ot duši, that is, "from the soul". There are many collocations in Russian involving the word duša 'soul', which point to the same, or closely related, cultural scripts. Thus, there is the expression otkrytaja duša 'an open soul', čelovek-duša 'person-soul' (i.e. a person who is "all soul"), there are expressions like govorit' po dušam, otvesti dušu, izlit' dušu, 'pour out one's soul' and so on (cf. Wierzbicka 1992). Crucially, these expressions are inherently positive, as is also the expression prjamoj čelovek 'a straight person' (that is, one who speaks "straight" what he or she thinks), similar in this respect to an iskrennij čelovek 'a sincere person'. The value placed on "iskrennost'" and on speaking "prjamo" ("straight") is undoubtedly linked with the suspicious, if not downright negative, attitude to "social conventions" (uslovnosti), to affectation, to "artificial external politeness" (vnešnjaja privitaja vežlivost'), often expressed by Russian writers (e.g., Losskij 1991:283, Boym 1994:95-102).

9. Truth, "obščenie" (turning in talk to other people), "duša" (soul)

In Russian culture, "truth" (or "pravda") is closely related to telling other people what one thinks – to revealing to other people what is going on in one's "duša" ("soul"). The following passage from Dostoevsky's novel The Brothers Karamazov (English translation by Constance Garnett), in which Ivan Karamazov demands to know the truth about his brother Alyosha's thoughts, is a good illustration of these links:

> '"Speak!", cried Ivan, "I want above everything to know what you thought then. I want the truth, the truth!"
> '"Forgive me, I did think that , too, at the time", whispered Alyosha (…)'

In his classic book Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, Mikhail Bakhtin points out that for Dostoevsky's heroes, self-knowledge, and indeed selfhood itself, is dialogical: one can only know oneself through opening oneself to other people. Bakhtin concludes that for Dostoevsky, "to be means to turn to other people, dialogically" (1963[1929]:338). It seems clear that for Bakhtin, what he calls "the artistic model of the world created by Dostoevsky" (p.362) is a revealing way of looking at human beings in general. When he speaks of "dialogical turning to other people" (dialogičeskoe obščenie) as the real realm of the life of language, he is clearly speaking for himself, and not only for Dostoevsky.

In the English-speaking world, Bakhtin's idea of "dialogical turning to other people" (dialogočeskoe obščenie) as a key aspect of human life and a vital "source of the self" (cf. Taylor 1989, 1995, Hermans 2001) is usually linked with the word dialogue. In Bakhtin's own work, however, it wasn't simply "dialogue" which played such a central role but "dialogičeskoe (dialogical) obščenie", and so, to understand him fully, we need to pay some attention to the word obščenie, too, and not only to the word dialogue.

According to Bakhtin, "one can open another person – or rather, make him or her open themselves only by means of obščenie with him/her, dialogically" (…) Only in obščenie, in interaction with another person, "a human being can be opened [revealed] within a human being, for others and for him/herself" (p.338).

This is not exactly what is normally meant by "dialogue" in English. The notion of "dialogue" does not imply "opening oneself" for another person, let alone "opening another person", and even the idea of making another person open him- or herself" goes far beyond the meaning of the English word dialogue (and beyond the prevailing Anglo expectations and norms).

The anthropologist Dale Pesmen, in her book Russia and Soul, translates Bakhtin's key word obščenie as "communion", and ingeniously renders his "dialogičeskoe obščenie" by alternating the word dialogue with the word communion. She also rightly introduces into her discussion of Bakhtin's "dialogical principle" the word soul (as the nearest English analogue of the Russian duša). To quote:

> Communion, dialogue, is, ideally, life-changing (…) Bakhtin's work is inspired by the premise of the life-changing and life-giving power of dialogue. In "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1990) he more or less abandons literature to discuss reciprocal soul-

> constitution. (…) Bakhtin was committed to describing soul as emerging between people, the depths as "outside [oneself], in the soul of others" (Pesmen 2000:272).

Pesmen rightly links Bakhtin's focus on "dialogical communion" and on its importance for a person's "soul" or "self" ("duša") with certain important aspects of Russian culture, which she call a "dusha culture". She closes, however, on a cautious note – perhaps, overly cautious:

> The power of individuals to develop each other, give each other life and soul, and the related emphasis on vision do not, of course, appear only in Bakhtin or just in dusha culture. They are ancient and wide-spread. The theme of openness and soulfulness as contagious, evolutionary, and development-related that runs through my interviews is also, of course, not just Russian (Pesmen 2000:273).

What this very cautious conclusion omits to point out is that different languages have different key words (and different key expressions, discourse markers, conversational routines, and so on), and that these linguistic elements constitute evidence for different semantic universes and different repertoires of cultural scripts. The existence of these words and expressions in the Russian language, as well as their salience in Russian discourse, point to cultural scripts which can be formulated as follows:

> it is good if a person wants to say to other people what this person thinks (feels)

From a Russian point of view, these scripts may seem self-evident – and assumed to be universal. From an Anglo point of view, however, they are not similarly self-evident. In particular, from an Anglo point of view, it is not always good to tell another person – even a friend – what one thinks about this person's appearance; or about this person's moral failings. On the other hand, linguistic evidence suggests that the following cultural scripts are very salient in modern Anglo culture:

> it is good if a person can say what this person thinks
> if this person wants to say it
> it is bad if a person can't say what this person thinks if this person wants to say it
> it is good if people can know what other people want to say

The first of these scripts spells out the cultural premise of "freedom of expression" and of

a person's "right" to say what he or she thinks, documented for example in Donal Carbaugh's Talking American (1988). The second script reflects the cultural emphasis on interpersonal "communication", on "messages", on knowing what another person "means". "Communication" is not the same thing as "obščenie", and "obščenie" is not an "exchange of messages". The English words communication, message, and mean (which don't have equivalents in Russian) all focus on what people "want to say" rather than on what they think or feel. The English conversational response Right. means, essentially, "I now know what you want to say – this is good" (cf. Wierzbicka 2002); and a similar concern is evident in the preventive conversational routine "don't get me wrong". By contrast, typical Russian conversational responses, such as "pravda", "nepravda", ėto verno" and ėto neverno", focus on "truth" and often express an emphatic rejection of the interlocutor's utterance "bez obinjakov" (without any wrapping). Typical examples of the latter category are nepravda! 'untruth!', da net 'emphatically no', čto vy! literally 'what you!' (as an emphatic rebuttal), and čuš, čepuxa, erunda, all three meaning, roughly, 'rot/rubbish'.

The Russian philosopher Losskij attributes to Russian people a "goodness" which lies in "directly receiving someone else's being into one's soul" and he quotes the words of the heroine of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Kitty: "I can't live in any other way than 'after the heart' [po serdcu]". He comments (1991:292): "Life 'after the heart' creates an openness of the soul [duša] in Russian people and an ease and simplicity in 'talking/communing' [obščenie] with other people without artificial external politeness." Such a characterization of "the Russian people" could no doubt be rejected as self-congratulatory national mythology, but the fact remains that the key words of this passage: duša and obščenie, are indeed salient features of the Russian language and Russian everyday discourse. It is also a fact that the negative attitude to "artificial external politeness" can be supported not only by pointing to frequent attacks by Russian writers who have travelled to Western Europe on "artificial Western politeness" but also by noting the salience in Russian speech of positive words like iskrennij and iskrennost' and expressions like ot duši 'from the soul' and po serdcu, 'after the heart' and their pejorative counterparts like napusknoj, privityj, fal'šivyj, ložnyj, farisejstvo, and so on.

Speaking of the Russian satirical depictions of Western European "superficial civility", "portrayed as untrue and insincere, or accused of affectation", Svetlana Boym, the author of Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia (1994:99), writes:

> The qualities that Dostoevsky loved and regarded as uniquely Russian are "pure-heartedness" and sincerity. The question is, how does Russian sincerity compare to Western? Does it have a different history, or does it deny history altogether? (The comparative study of sincerity is not yet an established scholarly discipline.)

There can't be a "comparative study of sincerity" any more than there can be a "comparative study of iskrennost'", as there can't be a comparative study of 'privacy', because sincerity is – like privacy – an English word, embodying an Anglo concept, just as iskrennost' is a Russian word, embodying a Russian concept. But a comparative study of "cultural scripts" related to such concepts, scripts formulated in universal human concepts, is both possible and needed. Furthermore, the question about the links between culture and history is also pertinent, and can be asked within the "cultural script" framework as well.

We have already linked the polarity of the Russian "pravda" script with the Russian dual models anchored, according to Lotman and Uspensky, in the Russian Orthodox faith. Similarly, it can be hypothesized that the Russian cultural emphasis on obščenie has its roots in the emphasis on "sobornost'" ("spiritual togetherness/oneness") in Russian Christianity (cf. e.g. S. Bulgakov, 1976). The Russian duša is not simply an individual human soul, but a "soul" which comes into being, and which lives, in the "obščenie" (communing talk) with other people. As Pasternak put it in Doktor Živago, "you in others, that's what your soul [duša] is".

Russian writers have often contrasted the omnipresent Russian "duša" 'soul' with what they perceived as the Western "bezdušie" ("soullessness"); and they have often contrasted the Russian love of "truth" (pravda) with what they perceived as the Western cult of reason. (Cf. e.g. Tsvetaeva 1972:464.) Thus, "duša" (soul) is linked in Russian culture with "pravda" (truth), and both are opposed to "reason" as the capacity for "abstract thought". Furthermore, this highly valued truth is not an abstract and impersonal truth, but pravda – pravda which flourishes in human talk, in sincere obščenie among people, in communing with other people through speech – not with an "open mind" (that is, a mind open to ideas), but with an "open duša" – that is, a "soul" (or self) open to other people.

In Solzhenitsyn's novel The First Circle, the KGB major Adam Roitman oversees the work of a prisoner-linguist Lev Rubin, who is engaged in a complex task in forensic phonetics. In the English version of the novel, this passage reads:

> You know, I'm bursting with curiosity. What are your findings so far?
>
> Far from this being an order from a superior, Roitman spoke diffidently, as though afraid that Rubin would refuse to tell him. At moments when he was human, Roitman had great charm… (Solzhenitsyn 1996:507)

The English phrase "when he was human" translates here a Russian phrase which means, literally, "when his soul [duša] was opening". From a Russian point of view, this conveys indeed that at such moments Roitman was being human. The passage is revealing because it shows that one' s duša opens when one shows to other people what one thinks and feels – and when one does it impulsively, spontaneously, because one wants to say to someone else what one thinks and feels, and not because of anything else. But of course there can be many ways of "being human"; the cultural premise that one is being human when one's duša is open in talking to other people is highly culture-specific.

Anglo cultural scripts are very different from Russian scripts. For example, telling someone that they have aged would be likely to be regarded in Anglo culture as unkind and tactless rather than sincere. Generally speaking, the likely effect of one's words on other people can be seen as more important in Anglo culture than speaking the truth, the full truth, and nothing but the truth, and telling other people exactly what one thinks. Thus, different societies show, in their speech practices, different hierarchies of values, and the central values themselves are differently conceived in different societies. Language is a mirror in which such facts are most clearly reflected. Language-specific vocabulary of "truth", and language-specific ways of talking about what is true and what is not true, are a good case in point.

The language-specific Russian concept of "pravda$_2$" is concerned not simply with speaking the truth or knowing the truth but with an attitude of wanting to speak the truth to other people, of wanting to reveal one's thoughts and feelings to other people (regardless of the possible effect of such self-disclosure on those other people). It is therefore linked with other Russian key words, such as obščenie ('communion') and duša ('soul'). Jointly, these key words lead us to certain key cultural scripts. The use of universal human concepts allows us to make these scripts intelligible to outsiders and to make sense of them from a cross-cultural perspective.

NOTE

1. In spirit, LeVine's "cultural scripts" ar akin to NSM "cultural scripts", and often could be translated into the NSM format. As I see it, such a translation would make them more precise and more testable. I will illustrate this with a quote from LeVine's book and its possible "translation" into NSM.

   I. Finally, the scripts for talking to infants, Command for the Gusii versus Questions and Praise for the Americans, are strikingly divergent. American mothers frequently use questions to promote the infant's excited participation in social exchange. They create a protoconversation with repeated questioning, lavishing praise on the infant for each vocal or motor response, which is taken as if it were an answer to the question. Praise continues to be an important part of maternal speech

as the child grows older and the mother thinks of herself as building self-confidence by rewarding the toddler with her verbal approval for each new sign of mastery…

The Gusii script is antithetical in this respect to the American one, as indicated by the rarity of praise and questions in speech directed to the Gusii infants, and the predominance of commands intended partly to prevent or stop them from getting into danger, particularly as they get older (…)

To understand the meanings of command as the dominant script for talking to young children, the avoidance of praise, and the positive values placed on inculcating fear, it is necessary to go beyond the Pediatric model to the model of training in respect and obedience. (pp. 252-253)

A mother is expected to be near enough to her infant to attend to his needs whenever she is not working in the field or market. (…) When the mother is not engaged in essential asks, she should make herself available to the infant by holding, breast-feeding, co-sleeping, and comforting. She should also bathe, feed supplementary foods, permit the baby to play on the lap, and fall asleep on her body. Any mother who did not behave this way regularly and in an organized fashion would be considered remiss. (pp. 147-148)

II. <u>1. Anglo-American "Praise"</u>

[people think:]
it is good for a small child if the mother often says things like this to him/her:
"you did something very good now
I feel something good because of this"

<u>2. Anglo-American "Questions"</u>

[people think:]
it is good for a small child
if the mother often says things like this to him/her:
"I don't know something
I want to know it
because of this, I want you to say something now"

<u>3. Anglo-American emphasis on verbal interaction</u>

[people think:]
it is good for a small child
if the mother often says things to him/her

<u>4. Gusii "Command"</u>

[people think:]
it is good for a small child
if the mother often says things like this to him/her:

"I want you to do something now
you have to do it because of this
if you don't do it something bad can happen to you"

5. Gusii emphasis on physical closeness

[people think:]
it is good for a small child
if he/she is always with the mother
when it can be so

6. Gusii emphasis on bodily contact

[people think:]
it is good for a small child
if his/her body is always touching the mother's body
when it can be so

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