

X. STRESZCZENIE W JEZYKU ANGIELSKIM

CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRADITIONAL SUPERSTITIONS AND PREJUDICES

Superstitions and prejudices are permanent elements of every culture. They appeared and are still appearing in almost all aspects of everyday life. Unfortunately, they can be automatically accepted, uncritically, without wondering about their authenticity.

The main aim of the study was an assessment of contemporary attitudes of society towards traditional superstitions and prejudices, with particular emphasis on medical ones. The specific goals aimed: establishing opinions of examined persons about the meaning of signs of the zodiac he/she was born for person's character development; existence of items, talismans, dates, the days of the week which bring happiness or bad luck; use of advice of fairies, fortune-tellers; reading and exploitation of horoscope indication in everyday life; belief in telepathy; possession by the devil, astrology and the influence the location of the stars and planets on human lives, magic and tarot predictions; use personally and by members of the family the help of healer, quack; used methods of treatment; knowledge and use still working superstitions and prejudices; determining the difference in the above between inhabitants of the village and town, women and men and in the relation to the age of the respondents and making a general measurement of the level of respondents' superstition and assessment of satisfaction from the life of examined persons and its influence on the rate of superstitions of the surveyed.

As the research problem, the verification of the following assumptions was accepted: Does zodiac sign meaning, in which the surveyed were born, have importance in the person's character development in their self-esteem? Do the surveyed believe in the existence of the items, talismans, dates, etc, which bring bad luck or happiness? Do the surveyed know about the existence of quacks, healers and have they ever used their help? Do the surveyed know the methods of the folk treatment? How, in the self-esteem, do they assess their superstitious thinking? Does superstitious thinking depend on place of living, sex, religiosity, using superstitions in life and satisfaction from their lives? Are there differences between surveyed from Poland and Belarus in attitudes towards superstitions and prejudices, with the particular emphasis on medical ones?

11 research problems and 11 hypothesis were also made: 1. In the self-esteem of the surveyed, sign of the zodiac in which they were born is not important in the development of the person's character. 2. The surveyed, in the majority don't believe in the existence of items, talismans, dates, etc, which bring bad luck or happiness. 3. The surveyed know about the existence of quacks, healers, but they have never used their help. 4. The surveyed know the methods of folk treatments, but they are different in Poland and Belarus. 5. The surveyed, in their self-esteem, assess their satisfaction as good. 6. There are differences in the level of satisfaction between the surveyed from Poland and Belarus. 7. The age, sex, place of living, financial situation, marital status, professed faith, being a religious person, and the rate of religiosity had the influence on satisfaction from the life of surveyed persons. 8. In the self-esteem, the surveyed reveal medium superstition. 9. Superstitious thinking depends on the place of living, sex, religiosity, using superstitions/prejudices in their lives, and satisfaction from their lives. 10. There are correlations between satisfaction from life and measure of superstitious thinking in Poland and Belarus. 11. There are differences between the surveyed from Poland and Belarus in attitudes towards superstitions and prejudices with particular emphasis on medical ones.

The surveys were provided after the receiving of the approval of Bioethical Commission of Medical University of Białystok R-I-002/196/2015 (copy in annex) and associated professor Andrzej Szpakow, the Head of Department of Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation in Grodno and professor Sławomir Jerzy Terlikowski, the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences in Medical University of Białystok (approvals of documentations of Bioethical Commission of Medical University of Białystok).

The method of diagnostic survey, in the period from 2011 till 2012 was applied in the study. Group selection was intentional – the surveyed in the range of age 18-30 years. In both groups, 300 questionnaires were distributed. 271 questionnaires from students and employees of the Faculty of Health Sciences in Medical University of Białystok and 237 from students and employees of National University of Janek Kupała in Grodno were returned.

508 persons from Poland and 237 from Belarus took part in the survey. To the research, the following were used: survey questionnaire of attitudes of society towards traditional superstitions and prejudices validated in the Department of Integrated Medical Care; the standardized Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), by Dienera, Emmons, Larsena, Griffina, in polish Jurczyńskiego, version for other professionals, not being psychologists, to assess to what extent, the surveyed is related to his past life and standardized Belief Openness

Questionnaire by Sosnowski and Wiech, to measure the general level of superstitious person thinking.

On the base of the analysis of the results the following conclusions were formulated: The existence of the differences between the surveyed from Poland and Belarus, in attitudes towards superstitions and prejudices, with particular emphasis on medical ones, have been demonstrated. The surveyed from both countries, much more Polish, knew the methods applied in folk medicine and the places of giving advice and knew about the existence of quacks/healers, however, in the majority they have never used their help. In the group of respondents from Poland and Belarus dominated persons with low satisfaction from life and with the high level of superstitious thinking. Both, in Poland and Belarus, statistically significant correlations between satisfaction from life and measure of superstitious thinking were demonstrated. Both, in Poland and Belarus there were no correlations between measure of superstitious thinking and age, sex, place of living, marital status, confession and declared religiosity.

The postulates were also made – Providing further research concerning attitudes of society towards superstitions and prejudices, and preferences of unconventional methods of treatments seem to be rational, because it is important for providing holistic health care. The important role in this range seems to have education of the patient, who should be aware of the fact that folk medicine, with the proper diagnosis, can be only complementary way of treatment in the range of conventional actions.