Larysa Zasiekina

lora_zasyekina@mail.ru

Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University, Ukraine

PSYCHOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO DIAGNOSTICS AND MODIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL NEGATIVE CORE BELIEFS

Abstract. Psycholinguistic approach to diagnostics and modification of individual negative core beliefs. The present research provides the first evidence for psycholinguistics resources in diagnostics and modification of individual negative core beliefs. The individual core beliefs are treated as a system of subjectively experienced feeling of conscious or unconscious nature which expresses the attitude of personality towards himself/ herself, the world and other people. The results of the study were conceptually replicated: Participants' core beliefs of lack of love were significantly correlated with their core beliefs of rejection (r=0.929, p<0.01); core beliefs of helplessness were significantly correlated with their core beliefs of low achievements (r=0.843, p<0.01); core beliefs of lack of control were significantly correlated with their core beliefs of helplessness (r=0.457, p<0.01). The results of correlation and descriptive analysis allowed revealing three groups of core beliefs and their distribution: rejection/ lack of love (17.3%); helplessness/low achievements (56.4%); helplessness/low control (25.6%). The most typical structure for propositions of different core beliefs was defined and the ways of their modification were suggested.

Keywords: negative core beliefs, subjectively experienced feeling, rejection/ lack of love, helplessness/low achievements, and helplessness/low control, propositional analysis, psycholinguistic modification.

Засєкіна Л. В. Психолінгвістична діагностика і реорганізація негативних глибинних переконань особистості

Анотація. У статті представлено психолінгвістичний підхід для дослідження глибинних переконань особистості. Запропоноване авторське визначення негативних глибинних переконань як низки усвідомлених і неусвідомлених переживань, що відображають ставлення людини до світу, до інших, до самої себе та ґрунтуються на особистісній історії людини. Результати кореляційного аналізу дали змогу змогу встановити показники тісного взаємозв'язку частотності глибинних переконань нестачі любові з неприйняттям (r=0.929, p<0.01), безпорадності і низьких досягнень (r=0.843, p<0.01), нестачі контролю і безпорадності (r=0.457, p<0.01). На основі результатів кореляційного аналізу та описової статистики встановлено три групи глибинних переконань та їх відсотковий розподіл: безпорадності/низьких досягнень (56,4%), неприйняття/нестачі любові (17,3%), безпорадності/нестачі контролю (25,6%), визначено їхню пропозиціональну структуру, а також окреслено шляхи для їх психолінгвістичної реорганізації. У зв'язку із тим, що глибинні переконання формуються у дитинстві та більшою мірою є неусвідомленими, їхнє мовне оформлення та інтерпретація відкривають нові психолінгвістичні можливості для діагностики та психотерапевтичної допомоги у формуванні системи здорових глибинних переконань особистості.

Ключові слова: негативні глибинні переконання, переживання, неприйняття/нестача любові,безпорадність/низькі досягнення, безпорадність/нестача контролю, пропози-ціональний аналіз, психолінгвістична реорганізація.

Засекина Л. В. Психолингвистическая диагностика и реорганизация негативных глубинных убеждений личности.

Аннотация. В статье отображен психолингвистический подход к изучению негативных глубинных убеждений личности. Негативные глубинные убеждения трактуются как совокупность осознанных и неосознанных переживаний личности, отображающих ее отношение к себе, к другим и внешнему миру. Результаты корреляционного анализа позволили определить показатели тесной взаимосвязи частотности глубинных убеждений недостатка любви з неприятием (r=0.929, p<0.01), беспомощности и низких достижений (r=0.843, p<0.01), недостатка контроля и беспомощности (r=0.457, p<0.01). На основе кореляционного анализа и описательной статистики определены три группы глубинных убеждений: неприятия/недостатка любви (17,3%); беспомощности/низких достижений (56,4%); беспомощности/недостатка контроля (25,6%); обозначены пропозициональные структуры и выделены способы психолингвистической модификации для каждой группы. В святи с тем, что глубинные убеждения формируются в детстве и являются преимущественно неосознанными, их вербализация и интерпретация открывают новые психолингвистические возможности для диагностики и психотерапевтической помощи, направленной на формирование системы здоровых глубинных убеждений личности.

Ключевые слова: негативные глубинные убеждения, переживания, неприятие/ недостаток любви, беспомощность/ недостаток контроля, беспомощность/ низкий уровень достижений, пропозициональный анализ, психолингвистическая реорганизация.

Introduction

One of the greatest puzzles of human behavior is how knowledge and experience leads to certain patterns of behavior. The effects of cognitive distortion on compensatory strategies have been long-standing questions in cognitive and behavioral therapy (Beck 2005). One perspective is that the negative core beliefs should be more important for destructive behavior than negative automatic thoughts and conditional beliefs and express stable attitude of individual towards her/himself, the world and the motivation of others. Because the individual core beliefs have been developed since childhood and often have unconscious nature, it is very important for the individual to be aware of the core beliefs and then transform them in more positive or neutral ones by means of Socrates questioning, behavioral experiments and other therapeutic techniques. This view has received support in the literature (Beck 2006, Westbrook 2014, Zasiekina 2015).

Despite the debate about interaction between cognitive distortions, negative automatic thoughts, conditional beliefs and core beliefs, the primary researcher who has examined the predominant effect of core beliefs on cognitive distortions is A. Beck (2005). Although he was most interested in depression and anxiety, his inclusion of core beliefs and cognitive distortions into the context of different mental disorders uncovered a typical core beliefs and cognitive distortion for each disorder.

This typology of cognitive distortion is represented by filtering, polarized thinking, overgeneralization, jumping to conclusions, catastrophizing, personalization, control fallacies, fallacy of fairness, shoulds, blaming, emotional reasoning, fallacy of change, global labeling, always being fallacy, heaven's reward fallacy (Beck 1976; Haritonov 2009).

However, cognitive distortions can be improved through modification of individual core beliefs which require deep study of their nature. In the Beck's (1976,

2005) paradigm core beliefs are unconditional beliefs which are a basis for interpreting experience. A. Beck (2005) differentiated the core beliefs from schema, arguing that they belong to network of scheme with negative automatic thoughts, conditional beliefs and interpersonal strategies.

Beck (1976) gives as the credit H. Head for introducing the concept of schema to psychology, who restricted its meaning to a person's internal body image and after this it was given its modern meaning by the English psychologist F. Bartlett (1937) to account for the observation that errors in the recall of stories tend to make them more conventional, which was attributed to the assimilation of the stories to pre-existing schemata. J. Piaget used concept scheme which was synonymous with scheme but restricted to conscious cognitive representations and plans.

Developing the Aristotle's idea about the necessity of "world alphabet" based on language categories and grammatical structures for interpreting of physical and social world, we suggest forming "core beliefs alphabet" for revealing and reorganization of negative core beliefs as a part of complex individual schema (Gould 1978). The concept of core beliefs in Post-soviet psychology is closely connected with term "perezhivannya" as a system of subjectively experienced feeling of conscious or unconscious nature which expresses the attitude of personality towards himself/ herself, the world and other people (Vygotsky 2001). S. Rubintein (1989) captured the essence of the subjectively experienced feeling as mental event which is deeply connected with individual life story.

The central finding from the theoretical research is that there different kinds of individual core beliefs: rejection, helplessness (Beck, 2005); lack of love, low achievements, and low control (Beck 2006) and negative attitude of personality towards himself/ herself, the world and other people (Westbrook 2014).

The individual core beliefs in our study are treated as a system of subjectively experienced feeling of conscious or unconscious nature which expresses the attitude of personality towards himself/ herself, the world and other people.

The objective of the article is psycholinguistic diagnostics and modification of individual negative core beliefs.

Methods

Participants (N=72, mean age = 20.57 years, SD=6.78) students of Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European University, 28 man and 44 women were asked during 5-min study to write 3–5 negative thoughts (about themselves, others and the world), which decrease their efficiency in different life spheres. We intended to test whether the core beliefs are connected with rejection/ lack of love, helplessness/low achievements, and helplessness/low control and express the attitude of personality towards himself/ herself, the world and other people. Subsequently, each statement was assessed from two standpoints: 1) rejection/ lack of love, helplessness/low achievements, and helplessness/low control (1– point scale: 0 – absence of core belief; 1 – presence of core belief) and attitude of personality towards himself/ herself, the world and other people (1 – point scale: 0 – absence of attitude; 1 – presence of attitude).

Table 1

Distribution of negative individual core beliefs

№	Kinds of core beliefs	Distribution
1	Rejection	21.15%
2	Helplessness	30.77%
3	Low achievements	19.23%
5	Lack of love	13.46%
6	Low control	15.38%
		100%

We analyzed 468 propositions from the study of negative core beliefs from 72 participants on the basis of their written propositions. We thus obtained the distribution of negative core beliefs illustrating within-participants core beliefs variations (Table 1). The results suggest that the most significant sphere for our respondents is helplessness which can lead to rejection of significant others. It is perhaps connected with primary type of students' activity – professional training, success of which determines the acceptance in class group and increases their social identity.

Correlations among the variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Intercorrelations among the variables

	Rejection	Helplessness	Lack of love	Low achievements	Lack of control
Helplessness	-0.386**	1.000	-0.309*	0.843	0.457
Lack of love	0.929**	-0.309**	1.000	-0.334	-0.472
Low achievements	-0.476**	0.843	-0.309*	1.000	-0.266*
Lack of control	-0.262*	0.457	-0.472**	-0.266*	1.000
Rejection	1.000	-0.386**	0.929**	-0.474**	-0.262*

$p*<0,05; p**< 0,01$

The results of the study were conceptually replicated: Participants' core beliefs of lack of love were significantly correlated with their core beliefs of rejection, with lack of love being negatively correlated with helplessness and lack of control. Participants' core beliefs of helplessness were significantly correlated with their core beliefs of low achievements, with helplessness being negatively correlated with lack of love and rejection. Participants' core beliefs of lack of control were significantly correlated with their core beliefs of helplessness with lack of control being negatively correlated with lack of love, low achievements and rejection.

On the basis of our correlation analysis, we divided three groups of core beliefs which are closely interrelated: rejection/ lack of love (17.3%): e.g., "I am worthless"; helplessness/low achievements (56.4%): e.g., "I am failure"; helplessness /lack of control (25.6%): e.g., "Something terrible will happen".

The propositional structures of negative core beliefs were analyzed. The method of propositional analysis (Anderson 1976) allows revealing distribution of the main elements of propositions: fact (argument – the main external or internal subject/object, predicate – attitude and directed external or internal object); context (space and time). Figure 1 depicts the most typical distribution of propositional elements in the core beliefs rejection/ lack of love.
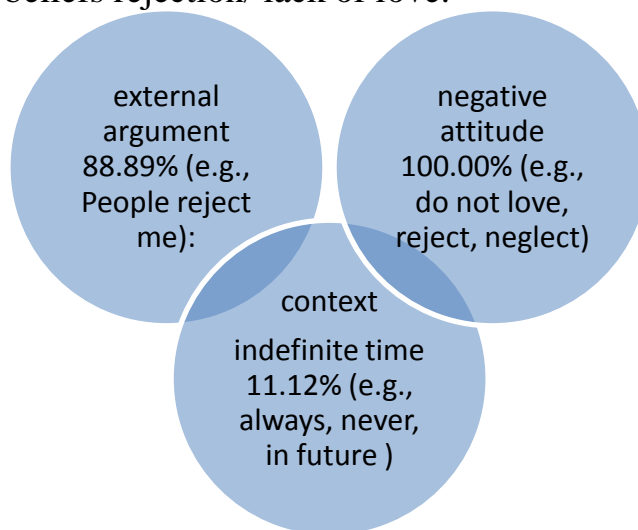

Fig.1. *Propositional structure of the core beliefs rejection/ lack of love*

The psycholinguistic modification of these negative core beliefs is represented by transforming external argument into internal one (e.g., I am worth of love just as human being); changing negative modality of the attitude into positive one (e.g., to respect, to accept); defining the exact time (this evening, tonight, tomorrow at 7 p.m.).

Figure 2 depicts the most typical distribution of propositional elements in the core beliefs helplessness/low achievements.
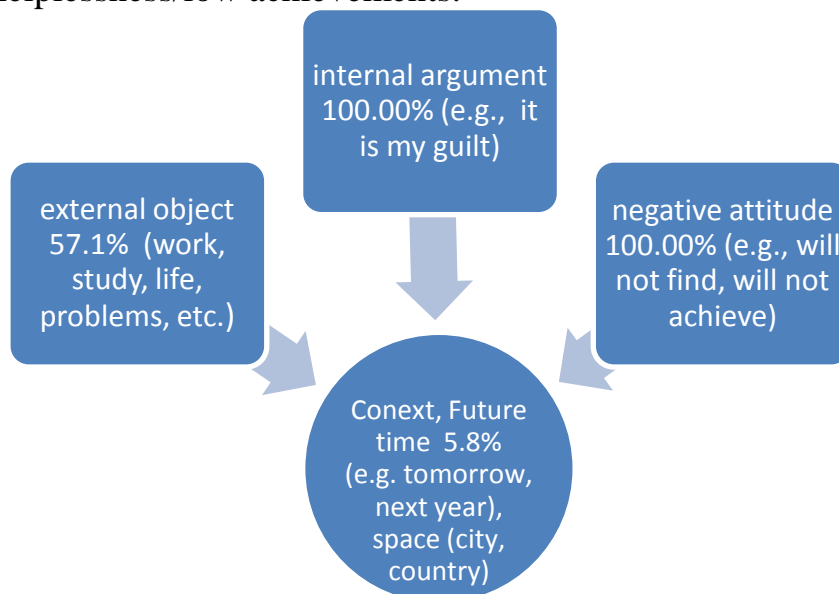

Fig. 2. *Propositional structure of the core beliefs helplessness/low achievements*

The psycholinguistic modification of these negative core beliefs is represented by transforming internal argument into external one (e.g., all people have positive and negative personality traits); changing negative modality of the attitude into positive one (e.g., will find, will achieve); defining the present time and exact place.

Figure 3 depicts the most typical distribution of propositional elements in the core beliefs of helplessness/lack of control.
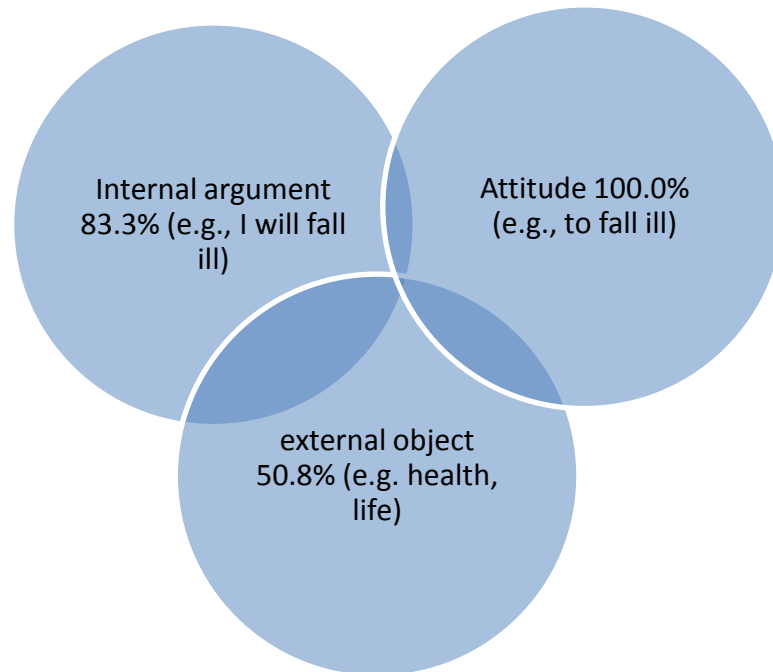

Fig. 3. *Propositional structure of the core beliefs helplessness/lack of control*

The psycholinguistic modification of these negative core beliefs is represented by expanding the external argument with internal one (e.g., there are many factors of health and disease); changing negative modality of the attitude into positive one (e.g., to recover, to keep healthy); expanding the object (different spheres of life: nature, seasons which are beyond of human control).

Conclusions

The present research provides the first evidence for psycholinguistics avenues for diagnostics and modification of individual negative core beliefs. Negative core beliefs are usually formed in the early childhood and typically concentrated around themes of lovability (e.g., "I am undesirable"), adequacy ("I am incompetent"), and/or helplessness (e.g., "I am trapped"). Because core beliefs are problematic to discover it is important to understand and verbally articulate them for further modification. The psycholinguistic diagnostics of the structure of core beliefs allows revealing their type and increasing functioning in many domains of individual life.

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