Asian Educational Discourse: Construction of Ontological Security

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Abstract

This article considers the problem of ontology security through Asian educational discourse, which is structurally determined by the process of moral self-improvement. Considered are trends in improving the management of educational system by developing the culture of quality, which is considered as the next stage of the Asian education systems development after the "quality of education" stage. We suggest an approach for assessing the vitality of educational process and its product based on monitoring trainees' aptitudes system and school capabilities in developing and maintaining this system. In this study we refer to the concept of vitality and viability when describing the general theory of viability in connection with the core principles of Asian educational discourse. We outline main trends in the development of modern educational system in Asian university given the process of globalization and its impact on educational reforms in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, the category of education quality in Asian system of higher education and narrative monitoring of Chinese students' cognitive structures viability at Altai State University are introduced.

Keywords: vitality, ontological security, Asian university, educational discourse, habitus.

Introduction

The problem of ontological security becomes especially relevant in modern conditions of human civilization survival. Kozlova (1998) associates the category of ontological security with the concept of vitality in terms of life on the edge of survival, balancing on the brink of life and death.

According to modern postclassical methodologies, social processes are reconstructed as the system of relational determinations, which allows describing social construction of the ontological security. The construction of ontological security is carried out by rethinking the consumption as an element of reproduction (Bart, 1996, Baudrillard, 1999, Toffler, 1986, De Certeau, 1984; Yigit & Tarman, 2016), thus making it possible to fit in with the dominant order by developing skills of adaptability, resistance, sneaking and escaping.

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Toffler (1986) created neologism "prosuming" (produclion + consuming) to show the active nature of consumption. "Vitality", "viability" and "survival" are used in Western social sciences of the 19th century. Vitality was used for the ability to keep up with the times, to move to the future as in the Latin saying "Non progredi est regredi". Within the classical science discourse, vitality is often associated with the ability to "be part of progress", part of modernization, and civilization, as the ability to resist the barbarism (Kozlova, 1998). Akhiezer (1996) defines the terms "survival" and "viability" as connotations of the concept "vitality". And while the survival can be identified with the process of life ("real life"), the viability is seen close to the "reproduction" category (Akhiezer, 1996). The survival is reduced to the inertia of life: the subject survives because it exists. In the course of their life people continuously face different dangers, and their lives depend on the ability to break through limited experience and constantly extend and build it up. Educational processes should take a special place in developing the vitality of modern society and crating certain forms of institutionalization and socialization within the educational discourse. The concept of vitality as survival is developed in the Asian educational discourse, which promotes the reproduction of human capital basing on the human personality improvement.

Asian countries show the largest most rapidly growing world economy, which demonstrates no signs of slowing or stagnation (Zhao et al., 2011; Tarman & Yigit, 2013; Tarman, Chigisheva, 2017). Some researchers believe that the 19th century is the Asian century. Since great attention is paid to the wonderful Asian economic performance, Asian education also becomes the object of study.

Analytical studies on Asian education say that Chinese civilization or Confucian civilization form the dominant culture in China and Chinese communities in Southeast Asia including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea and Vietnam.

Major objectives of education in Chinese communities are formed under the influence of Confucian doctrine and represent the cultivation of humanity, integrity, beauty, justice and impartiality through self-development, which is the basis for strong family, government and peace. It is believed, that life quality in a society depends on the level of its members' self-development (Tu, 2000).

Some researches of cultural perspectives of Asian education believe that the postulates of Eastern philosophy remain relevant and influence the modern educational paradigm in Asian

countries (Ip, 1996; Li, 2008). Confucius paid special attention to the role of education in building an ideal life and social order. Education shall help an individual to live a dignified life in the community and state. Thus, as Li notes, the objectives of Asian education are based on moral cultivation. According to the moral philosophy of Confucius, everyone can get an idea of civilized personality from the text of the Great Teachings (大學).

According to Confucius teachings, those who want to bring order to the state shall first bring order to their families, and those who want to bring order to their families shall first bring order to their own lives, and those who want to bring order to their lives shall strengthen up their minds, and those who want their mind be strengthened up shall make their thoughts sincere (Ip, 1996; Li, 2008).

Thus, moral self-improvement is a person's most fundamental goal in life, and only by reaching this goal one can start a family, govern the state, and keep peace in the world (修身、齊家、治國、平天下).

Literature Review

Studying the impact of globalization on educational reforms in the Asia-Pacific region, Currie (1998) identified several interesting trends, including the following: 1. moving from elite to mass education; 2. privatization of education; 3. corporate management in education (managerialism); 4. spread of transnational education.

Besides, Cheng (2005) in the study of educational reforms in the Asia-Pacific region identified different trends on macro-, meso-, site- and operational levels of different educational systems.

As a response to globalization challenges, the Asia-Pacific region reforms its education management systems by: 1. creating new national strategies and educational objectives; 2. rearranging educational system at different levels; 3. making changes to marketing, privatization and diversification of education; 4. strengthening decentralization based on the institute of management; 5. focusing on education quality and standards, bringing tools to estimate education outcomes.

These trends characterize changes in the education management in Sinitic communities of the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in such leading countries as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Vietnam (Cheng, 2005).

Taiwan has recently developed the concept of "Taiwan innovation and global strategy: education of new citizens with full individual potential", in which the Ministry of Education identifies three core concepts of education: 1. developing individual abilities, 2. acceptance of globalization, 3. support for poor people. In addition to these three concepts, four core concepts of education are introduced (Tu, 2006):

Table 1

Core concepts of Taiwan innovative educational strategy

Principle 1: educa-tion/development of modern citizens and related strategies	Principle 2: establishing national consciousness, and related strategies	Principle 3: expanding global vision, and related strategies	Principle 4: enhancing social concern and related strategies
Enhancing language skills	Promoting Taiwan's distinguishing features	Promoting educational internationalization	Supporting economically disadvantaged (poor)
Enhancing culture and technology	Respecting diversity of culture	Innovation and character expression	Supporting educationally disadvantaged (uneducated)
Enhancing diverse and common values	National power advancement	Expanding international student exchange	Lessening regional disadvantages
			Enhancing responsibility education

Note. Source: Tu, 2006, p. 198.

The general trend in Asian education is cultivating the culture of quality, which is considered as the next stage of Asian educational systems development after the quality of education stage (Mishra, 2006). The development is defined by the quality assessment system represented in the educational market by different models adapted by Asian countries to their national priorities and cultural features. Sanaya Mishra identifies five main models for assessing the quality of education, which are accpeted in the Asian segment of global education, namely: the Baldrige Criteria, ISO 9000:2000, Capability Maturity Model, Six Sigma, and Total Quality Management. The tools and methods of quality assessment are represented by: process flowcharts, graphs, pareto analysis, fishbone diagrams, scatter diagrams, check sheets and control charts.

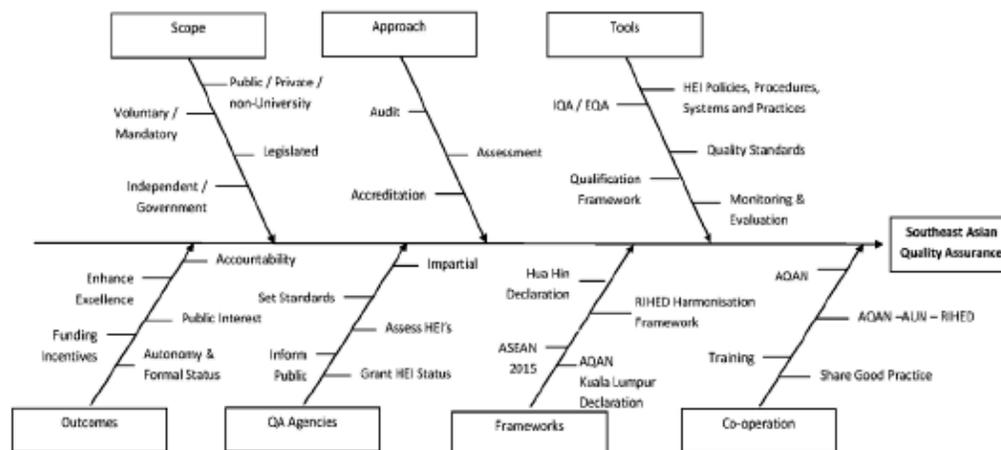Below is an example of a fishbone diagram (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual map of quality assessment elements: fishbone diagram

Source: Mishra, 2006, p. 39.

In order to survive in the competing world of globalization, universities pay special attention to quality issues in the system of higher education (A Study on Quality Assurance Models in Southeast Asian Countries: Towards a Southeast Asian Quality Assurance Framework, 2012). Thus, quality is considered as a social construct, which can be determined:

▪ in terms of exclusiveness (excessively high standards),

▪ in terms of sequence, consistency and logic demonstrated by «zero defects» and «getting right the first time» that make the quality a culture,

• in terms of purpose consistency (product or activity is consistent with the purpose, meet the customer needs (specifications),

• in terms of money equivalent (through productivity and efficiency),

• in terms of predisposition to transformations (in terms of qualitative transformations).

Quality in higher education requires the establishment of an institutional culture not so much as a matter of total quality management, but rather as part of total quality care, when every professional understands their responsibilities and cares of professional achievements (Barnett, 1992).

We assume that the general theory of viability 世界生活力理论. 世界生活力理论,

which considers the viability as an ability of a living organism, an artificial system or an idea of self-preservation and capabilities reactivation in different environments, shall be recognized as the managing theory in the network production of knowledge under the culture-developing

educational environment, which is modeled by Eurasian cultural identity. Any system organized to survive in changing environment is considered as viable. The rules of a system viability as normative aphorisms, principles of organization, axioms, recursions unity law and recursiveness theorem are identified.

The process of education in Asian university, according to global requirements, shall be structured basing on a KSC modeling frame (knowledge, skill, competence). We believe that given the network nature of knowledge production and the creation of network intellectual capital, this framework in the Asian university shall be represented by the following regulators of knowledge production: Viability, Catching, and Literacy.

The frame which models educational discourse in Asian university is the VCL frame or 生存能力 — 学习能力强 — 读写的能力.

We believe that the following markers of 世界生活力理论 in educational discourse can be represented by the following terminological combinations: process knowledge - 过程知识, condition institutions - 条件制度, factor institutions - 因素制度, intellectual capital - 智力资本, network production manager - 传销生产经理, self-management - 自管理, network production of knowledge - 传销知识生产, intellectual production system - 智力制造制度, intellectual capital accumulation - 智力资本积累, forming a person's character - 性格造成, self-transformation - 自改造, extended education technology - 教育扩展技术 (Khalina, 2014).

The system of competences and quality assessment in Eurasian education is aimed at creating new episteme, which is the Oriental episteme founding Eurasian cultural and communicative space, and reflecting the features of Eurasian cultural landscape. Bgazhnokov (2002) correlates the concept of cultural landscape with the concept of community power, while the territory power (its natural and geographical characteristics) comes up with all processes and results of its interaction with the community power. Bgazhnokov (2002) notes that a human being is simultaneously and alternately the consumer and creator of the living environment, who bares moral responsibility as the creator and an independent unit of the cultural landscape.

United Eurasian cultural landscape presupposes creating a functional model of mental landscapes interaction within the Asian university, when ethical and aesthetic component of the human and living environment interaction becomes especially important, so that the main goal of a human being is to improve and rationalize this interaction (Bgazhnokov, 2008). In this case the quality of educational shall be aimed at forming human needs in favorable environment conditions and tools to satisfy these needs. Bgazhnokov (2002) identifies the empathy culture as the tool of forming human needs in environment favorable conditions, as the system of human values, norms, and institutions aimed at producing and reproducing sympathetic, understanding, and aesthetically matured thinking and behavior (Cicek, Ulker, & Tarman, 2012).

The system of education quality assessment, namely the assessment of vitality/viability/ feasibility of the educational process and product, is based on testing the viability of students' cognitive structures are formed by the need to acquire and process knowledge relevant to the cultural landscape.

Methodological Framework

We study the viability of cognitive structures of Asian educational discourse through the narrative analysis of spatial abilities of students coming to Altai State University from China. The spatial ability relates to such skills as recovering, saving and transformation of visual information within the spatial context (Lohman, 2000). In a more narrow sense, spatial abilities interrelate with individual skills to explore the visual space, recognize forms, shapes and position of objects, create mental representations of these forms, shapes and positions, and manipulate these representations mentally (Carroll, 1993).

The spatial ability is revealed through spatial cognitive engineering focused on human perception of space, its conceptualization and communication with it. The method of spatial cognitive engineering can be used in a foreign language teaching when a teacher acts as the process manager to develop one's innate spatial abilities on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to develop the spatial competence as a set of skills to engineer spatial relations. Spatial relations here are understood as a system of principles of contacting with the environment based on either natural (direct) or formal (indirect) communication assuming rules of transformation from deep to surface structures and vice versa.

The formation of spatial competence as a set of skills to design spatial relations in the university educational environment becomes possible through the creation of students' narrative.

Smith (1981) understands narratives as "verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened" (Smith, 1981, p. 168).

Polkinghorne (1988), while noting that the term "narrative" can be used in describing both oral and written presentations, limits its use to the variant of organizational pattern in the form of a story. The author uses this term to describe the story creation process, its internal logic (the plot and themes), and the story, fairytale or poem actual results (the product) as an integrity.

Sarbin (1986) also emphasizes the organizational aspect of the narrative. The narrative is identified as a method for organizing episodes, actions and accounts of actions. The integrity, which integrates facts of everyday life and fictional realities, incorporates the time and place. The narrative allows to include actor's motives into their actions as reasons of things happening.

Polkinghorne (1988) believes that the approach to studying the process of narrative accumulation of knowledge in philosophy and linguistics provides a significant methodological basis for the narrative studies. Studying personal traits through the narrative is seen as a breakthrough in the study of personality, radically different from the traditional studies, which brings us closer to understanding the context of narrative methodology. Some researches focus on people's traits and features instead of purposive / deliberate nature of human experience (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990). Psychologists became more interested in personal accounts and stories as the methods to analyze social-cognitive-motivational aspects of personality. According to McAdams (1985), psychologists began creating mew structures and models to describe new understanding of personal identification in terms of narration.

Organizational and cognitive viability of the Asian university, including Altai State University since it has been recently recognized as an Asian university, is identified by the narrative analysis of narratives created by students came to Altai State University from China. Thus, we consider the narrative analysis and narrative studies as the methodological basis for local spatial cognitive engineering.

Clandinen and Connelly (2000) identify dynamic and interactive nature of the narrative research when studying educational discourse. They note that the narrative research questionnaire is a way to understanding the experience.

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) suggest the following definition for the narrative study: "The data can be collected as a story (a life story provided in an interview or a literary work) or in a different manner (field notes of an anthropologist who writes up his or her

observations as a narrative or in personal letters). It can be the object of the research or a means for the study of another question. It may be used for comparison among groups, to learn about a social phenomenon or historical period, or to explore a personality" (Lieblich et. al., 1998, p. 2). Bruner (1990) characterizes the narrative analysis as "how protagonists interpret things" (Bruner, 1990, p. 51). Riessman identifies the systematic character of interpreting interpretations (Riessman, 1993).

Mishler (1995) divides narrative studies into three classes: 1. referential and temporal order, 2. textual sequence and structure concerning linguistic and narrative strategies to construct the narrative, 3. narrative functions relate to a broader - social and cultural - context of the story.

Our study, in Mishler's classification (1995), belongs to the third class: studying narratives on impressions of Russia formed upon arrival to Russia and after spending some time in the country and at Altai State University.

The purpose of our work is to study the features of the narrative aspect of social construction of ontological security, which allows adapting to the new conditions of cultural and linguistic existence in Russian university.

The narrative text we analyzed was created by more than 40 Chinese students came to the Faculty of Mass Communication, Philology and Political Science of Altai State University to obtain a bachelor's degree in linguistics. Some texts in which the style of giving impressions showed the probability-oriented model of the author's personality were organized in a special group.

The probability-oriented model of personality is developed by modern Russian philosophers Nalimov and Drogalin (1995) with the concept of a multidimensional space-time continuum, the central place in which is occupied by the temporal duad "linear (casual time) time - field (continual) time". Causal relationships are absent in continuum time, and the events of the past, present and future are combined and exist "always - potentially - now".

The goals of this study are:

1. to select narrative texts, in which the probability-oriented model of the author's personality is actualized;

2. to analyze the selected texts in order to identify syntactic and lexical ways of adapting the individual to new spatial realities and through them to a new time order - linear time;

3. to further use observation results as an actual material for improving the language skills of individuals and adjusting their spatial abilities.

Results and Discussion

Spatial cognition is realized in creating life stories when a person structurally associates different episodes of their past with the episodes of their present together with the expectations of the future into an axiologically significant narrative text.

McAdams (1996) believes that the description of personality requires a clear distinction between the I and the Me features of personality. The researcher identifies three levels of personality description: 1. the level of traits, 2. the level of personal goals, 3. the realm of meaning.

First level related to "the process of "selfing" of narrating experience to create a self and the Me as the product, the self which the I narrates". Second level is about "life tasks, coping strategies, values, and various strategic constructs that are contextualized in time, place, or role" (McAdams, 1996, p. 301). Third level identifies "the constructions that form identity. In the modern world, such constructions assume the form of stories of the self—internalized and evolving life stories that integrate the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future" (McAdams, 1996, p. 301).

The life story represents most characteristic methods using which "each individual I arranges the elements of the Me in a temporal sequence complete with setting, scenes, characters, plots, and themes" (McAdams, 1996, p. 307). Thus, the life story is not only about the Me creation, but also about what is created by the culture and human social interrelations. Being socially constructed, life stories are based on empirical factors.

McAdams (1987, 1993, 1996) suggests a number of aspects to analyze life stories: 1. narrative tone, 2. imagery, 3. theme, 4. ideological setting, 5. nuclear episodes, 6. imagoes, 7. endings. Basing on suggested aspects of life stories analysis, we attempted to identify the peculiarities of spatial cognition ability found in narratives created by Chinese students on the following topic: "My impressions of Russia". We focused on the narrative tone, imagery, and nuclear episodes.

Narrative tone is set by:

1.   indexation of impressions: *in the first place, secondly, in the third place*; *this is the first impression, this is the second impression; my first impression*; 2. using the "aphoristic" structures: "Learn well, live well", "My goal is to learn Russian"; 3. verbal representation of the basic emotion conditioned by the narrative genre "impression": "I love Russia. That's all. Thank you"; "I love Barnaul"; "I am very happy to be here learning and living"; "Although we live without parents, but we are also happy! Until now, we are all used to it, and we are sure that everything will be super!"; "What a nice day! I love this city"; "I like this city"; "I love ASU, which occupies a large area"; 4. creation of syntactic patterns with the target word "impression": "There are many impressions about Russia, I want to talk about them"; "These are my impressions of Russia"; "When we got out of the plane we got very cold! This is the first impression for me! And in Barnaul pigeons and birds are very fat, this is my second impression"; 5. Blending of indexation, verbal representation of the basic emotion, and the use of target word "impression": "When we got off the plane we got very cold! This is the first impression for me! Then a few days later we walked along the street. I love buildings of this style. And in Barnaul pigeons and birds are very fat, that is my second impression".

Imagery. The authors of life stories create the imagery of a place where they explore not only new living environment, but also new aesthetic environment, using their poetic and axiological matrix:

"Today we got up in a hurry. The bird did not have time to beat the windows to wake me. I got up, the weather in the fog is like a fairy tale. The city will be very nicely dressed Barnaul pedestrians. In a hurry, the air is clean. One day all are happy and free. Now the sun has appeared. Fog - gradually disappears, Barnaul city eyes";

"I came to Barnaul. Although it is a very small city. But this city is very beautiful, full of art. There are many pigeons there. Many birds. Trees are very tall here. Many different and flowers are here";

"When the landing of the aircraft. Most lovely. The blue sky and fresh air. Barnaul is small, but the surroundings are clean";

"It's a small, beautiful, clean, quiet city";

"There are many flowers along the street. Pigeons and birds everywhere. But the weather is cold especially. Frequent rains. Today, under a great fog";

"My favorite. The blue sky and fresh air. Barnaul is small, but the surroundings are clean".

Nuclear episode. The nuclear episode is the arriving to Barnaul as the final episode of achieving the goal, namely coming to Altai State University. Location "Barnaul" in author's life story is a unit of a mini-network "Harbin – Novosibirsk". Major local unit of the network is "Harbin", which is associated with the past and the system of values and visual imagery. Local unit Novosibirsk is a transfer zone, which is atemporal and aspatial, the threshold of the future, symbolically correlating with the most beloved Barnaul to appear beautiful, clean, with the blue sky and fresh air. Impressions of the "real" Barnaul associated with the present are revealed precisely in the nuclear episodes of narrative. These are the impressions of a completed journey: *a fine rain, colder than in Harbin, fatigue, very cold, it's hard for us to stay in the car for five hours*:

A. When I got out of the plane, it was drizzling on the street. To tell the truth, it is colder in Barnaul than in Harbin. After 5 hours I arrived to Altai State University;

B. We immediately went to Barnaul by bus. In the bus we slept a little because of fatigue. As we arrived in Barnaul, we started to issue various necessary documents. We did not sleep well, because the room was very cold. And the blanket was not warm, we did not eat well, because we were not used to the food. It's hard for us, especially to communicate.

C. Got on plane. I came to Novosibirsk for the first time. I felt Russian frosts. Sit five hours in the car. I came to Barnaul.

Specific nature of narrative texts created by students came to Altai State University from China for studying required the introduction of additional categories missing in the list of P. McAdams for assessing narrative parameters: ***state, verbalized impression, exact temporal marking of the event, initiation (narrative beginning)***.

State. The state of the author's life story is identified by corresponding lexical units and syntactic constructions like *I feel that I love; I hope that everything is fine; I'm very worried! we are very cold.*

Verbalized impression. Impressions of students who came to Russia are identified not only by the word "impression", but also by syntactic and emotionally complete phrases introduced into the text: a. original communication cliche: *What a nice day! Thank you for meeting! Thanks to all.* b. sentences completing visual observation: *Sometimes I think, are not they cold? Maybe it's beautiful; I am very happy to be here, study and live*.

Exact temporal marking of the event. Specifying exact or relatively accurate date may connect visual and audible perceptions of events thanks to implicitly expected change of the everyday communication code with temporal domination of the visual component for matching content plans and communicative environments.

The first of September. I get on a plane to Russia, because it will study Russian language in the Altai State University

September 9, 2014 at 6:25 I arrived at the Novosibirsk airport. This is the first time I'm flying to Russia to study. I am very excited!

Initiation (narrative beginning). Certain narrative beginning serves as a tuning fork, which, on the one hand, tunes to the corresponding tone-melodic perception of the communicative environment and events, and, on the other hand, it sets the narrative rhythm itself.

Since my childhood, I have heard a lot about Russia from my parents. They say that the Russians are serious and cautious.

As the analysis of students' narrative texts shows, arranging facts in a certain significant order requires author's special imagination and adherence to special aesthetic standards. Bringing order to facts of your life requires activating special spatial cognition, which is the ability not only to navigate in your own life, identifying semantic nodes relevant to you and interesting to others, but also to find linguistic units functionally equivalent to terms marking a certain place for an individual's life content in the social cognitive map.

The specificity of identified spatial ability is that it is based on the harmonization of spatial and temporal parameters of environment, the coordination of linear and field time, i.e. harmonization and coordination of logical thinking (discrete) and information field (continual in its properties).

Conclusion

The quality assessment criteria require, first of all, a rational model of national development, which presupposes the extension of concept "nation" basing on its definition suggested by Soviet linguistics and modified taking into account modern tasks of the state and individual development. Transition to the Eurasian environment, which reflects binary mental specifics of the organizational structure of Eurasia, appears to be more appropriate when

describing the educational discourse in the context of modernized system of relations in Eurasian countries ideologically founded by the concept of Russian Eurasianism.

The system for assessing vitality of educational process and product in the Eurasian environment is based on monitoring the system of students' predispositions ("Habitus" system) and school capabilities to create and support this system. According to P. Riker (2004), Habitus is the principle of separation into logical series, which makes up the perception of the social world. This principle allows, on the one hand, linking together the representations and forms of behavior, and on the other hand, combining these representations and forms of behavior into a social space structure, which might be useful for a reader or researcher in developing their own view of the social world. According to P. Bourdieu (1979), this is the Habitus to form an individual "system of classifications" that "continuously transforms needs into strategies, constraintы into preferences, and generates a set of basic "choices" distributed and distributing life styles" (Bourdieu, 1979). The system of predispositions – Habitus – includes different ways to communicate with reality and imagination, to believe in fictions or reality they imitate.

The concept of Habitus changes the scale of vision and "scaling" of historical events, contributes to the historical view flexibility, methodological freedom of interpretation, which is implemented, according to Riker (2004), in the search for truth in the history.

The ontological security of Eurasian territory is determined by the culture of quality modeled in the Asian university by the educational process frame VCL or 生存能力 — 有传染性的 — 读写的能力.

The modeling frame of educational process 生存能力 — 有传染性的 — 读写的能力 makes up the system of personal predispositions, which drives the vitality of Eurasian cultural landscape.

The ontological security of a person in the Eurasian (Asian) educational environment is connected with the development of corresponding spatial ability, which coordinates the linear time (logical thinking) and the field time (information field). One of the ways to develop this ability for a trainee is the creation of a narrative text with the following permanent elements: narrative tone, imagery, nuclear episodes.

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