



Components of Emotional Meaning: A sourcebook

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CHAPTER

23 What the GRID can reveal about culture-specific emotion concepts: A case study of Russian “toska”

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Abstract

This chapter explores the applicability of the GRID method in research on culture-specific emotion concepts. Our case-study considers the Russian emotion concept ‘*toska*’ frequently reported to be among ‘key’ concepts in the Russian culture characterized by both cultural saliency and ‘untranslatability’ into other languages. Deriving from the controversy in lexicographers and semanticists’ views about its meaning, the chapter empirically explores two hypotheses, namely, that *toska* is an emotional ‘blend’ of *sadness* and *anxiety* (*Hypothesis 1*) or that *toska* is primarily a sadness word in Russian (*Hypothesis 2*). Although the results provide more robust support to the latter contention, we also show that the GRID method aptly specifies the degree of gradual overlap of the meaning of *toska* with *anxiety/fear* terms in Russian (allegedly important for its meaning), and, more importantly, allows the pinning down of which emotion dimensions and features foreground this overlap.

Keywords: [culture-specific emotion concepts](#), [Russian toska](#), [emotional blends](#)

Subject: [Developmental Psychology](#), [Social Psychology](#)

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23.1 Introduction

The ways emotional experiences are conceptualized and labeled in natural languages vary across cultures. For instance, an emotion word in one language can cover only a part of the meaning of a comparable word in another language (Stepanova et al., 2006), or two different emotion categories (like English *anger* and *sadness*) can be spanned into one emotion concept in another language (Leff, 1973; Orley, 1970; Rosaldo, 1980). Likewise, comparable concepts in different languages can overlap in their central meanings but differ at the periphery or in the links between the category they label and other categories (Russell, 1991a; Pavlenko, 2008).

Among these and other “asymmetries” in emotion conceptualization (see Chapter 3 for an overview), frequent are the instances of linguistically and culturally untranslatable emotion concepts, otherwise referred to as “culture-specific.” These emotion concepts have two major characteristics. The first is their cultural salience, which manifests itself in the frequency of the respective words mentioned in everyday discourse, written language, and self-report (Wierzbicka, 1992b, 1998b; Kitayama et al., 2000). The second trait is their “untranslatability”: the words that refer to them in a language either do not have a one-word equivalent in other languages or, if a conventional translation or approximation is possible, detailed specifications are necessary to properly render their meaning in other cultures. Relevant anthropological, ethnographic, and linguistic literature shows that this phenomenon is widespread and does not only relate to “exotic,” that is, less studied languages. Quite to the contrary, alongside with many non-Western lingual groups who lexicalize emotional experiences without a one-word designation in Western European languages (e.g., Choi & Han, 2008; Geertz, 1959; Gerber, 1985; Russell, 1991a), cultural peculiarity has been reported for words referring to (Western) European emotion concepts (e.g., Altarriba, 2003; Farrell, 2006; Panayiotou, 2004a, b, 2006; Wierzbicka, 1998b). Of relevance for this chapter, numerous relevant cases are attested for emotion words in the Slavic languages (Gladkova, 2005; Levontina & Zaliznyak, 2001; Pavlenko, 2002a, b; Slaměník & Hurychová, 2006; Stefanskyy, 2005, 2006, 2007a, b, 2009a, b; Wierzbicka, 1998a, b; 2001a).

p. 354 The many approaches that evolved to account for the meaning of culture-specific emotion words—ranging from the *Natural Semantic Metalanguage* studies to semi-structured interviews with the native speakers (e.g., Farrell, 2006; Lorenzano, 2006; Lutz, 1982, 1983; Panayiotou, 2004a; Wierzbicka, 2001a)—all have a common denominator. In different phases of the analysis, most of them resort to comparing the culture-specific emotion labels to the prototypical, basic-level ones (Fehr & Russell, 1984; Rosch, 1978), either in the same language or in another language (typically English). At this stage, frequent become the (essentially metaphorical) descriptions of culture-specific emotion terms as “mixtures,” “blends,” or “combinations” of more translatable, “modal” emotional meanings (cf. Scherer, 1994, 2005a, 2009c). For example, German *Angst* is defined as “roughly a cross between ‘anxiety’ and ‘fear’ but with a touch of mystery or existential insecurity” (Wierzbicka, 1998a: 161), the Greek term *stenahorieme* is defined as “a mixture of sadness, discomfort, and suffocation” (Panayiotou, 2004a: 4), Czech *lítost* is said to be “a mixture of the feelings of despair, compassion, remorse and indefinable desire” (Slaměník & Hurychová, 2006: 121).

The GRID methodology is interesting to apply in this context for three reasons. Firstly, GRID targets the semantic profiles of a balanced set of prototypical emotions “[. . .] commonly used in both emotion research and everyday language” (Fontaine et al., 2007: 1050). Thus, comparing the semantic profile of an “untranslatable” emotion term with those of the prototypical emotions (both in the same language and in other languages) can help establish the categorical membership, or memberships, of a “lacunal” emotion word. For instance, if a culture-specific word is described as a “mixture,” or “blend” of emotions X and Y, GRID allows verification if indeed it equally strongly correlates with the respective terms, or, alternatively, to which of the semantic profiles it is still closer in meaning.

Secondly and more importantly, GRID can provide a highly granular specification on how a culture-specific term relates to its closest correlate(s) among the prototypical labels. This can be done with the help of relevant analyses both at a more general level, as in considering the positions of emotion terms in the four-dimensional space, and in a more detailed fashion, as in looking at the differences in the emotion components or the (clusters of) individual features in the meaning profiles of emotion terms.

The third advantage, affordable with the GRID method, is the possibility to capture a most salient, or primary meaning of a culture-specific word. By its very design, GRID targets the “invariant,” decontextualized lexical meaning, rather than its actualizations in context (Fontaine et al., 2007, cf. Chapter 4) and, thus, can help establish the “default” semantic profile of an emotion word. Although this bias can be critically evaluated by empiricist approaches in cognitive semantics (cf. Geeraerts, 1999), it can be argued to be particularly helpful for the lexicographic representation of the meanings of emotion words (e.g., in the frequently mutually contradictory dictionary definitions).

The present chapter explores the applicability of the GRID method to the study of culture-specific emotion concepts in a case study of Russian *toska*, an emotion term which is frequently said to refer to a “key” emotion concept in the Russian culture (e.g., Levontina & Zaliznyak, 2001; Stepanov, 1997; Uryson, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1992a, 1998b). In what follows, we briefly outline the previous linguistic research on *toska* and the major debates about its meaning (see Section 23.2), which underlie the hypotheses tested in this study (see Section 23.3).

23.2 Present study

Prior linguistic research on *toska* and the hypotheses of the present study

Toska is a salient emotion term in the Russian language. Several studies report its high frequency in Russian corpora, 59 tokens per million words (Zasorina, 1977) as contrasted to 14, 12, and 9 usages ¹ per million of its English translation equivalents *yearning*, *longing* and *pining* (Kuchera & Francis, 1967, quoted in Wierzbicka, 1992a). Our own corpus search reveals largely the same tendency: while *toska* is used 64.6 times per million words in the Russian National Corpus (henceforth RNC),² the frequencies of *yearning*, *longing* and *pining* in the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC) are 2.74, 7.57, and 0.4, respectively. In addition, relevant corpora searches show that *toska* is more frequent than other SADNESS ³ words in both Russian (*grust'* “sadness”, 22.0, *pečal* “sorrow”, 26.1, and *unynie* “gloom”, 10.9, RNC), and English (*sadness*, 7.5, *grief*, 17.6, *sorrow*, 5.4, BNC).

Another important aspect is the difficulty of rendering *toska* into other languages. One of the studies reports over 20 of its contextual translations in English, including *yearning*, *longing*, *pining*, *desire*, *regret*, *grieving*, *mourning*, *weeping*, *gloom*, *dismay*, *boredom*, *fatigue*, *exhaustion*, *suffering*, *wretchedness*, *sorrow*, *anguish*, *ache*, *pain*, *fretting*, *throes*, and *hyp* (Rudakova, 2002). Another work shows that frequent English correlates of Russian *toska*, in the descending order of frequency, are: *depression*, *boredom*, *depressed*, *anguish*, *longing*, *sadness*, *be/get bored*, *misery*, *melancholy*, and that the occasional contextual correlates also include *mental pain*, *despair*, *wretchedness*, *craving (for)*, *urge*, *anxiety*, *unhappiness*, *sorrow*, *grief*, and *fit* (Anfinogenova, 2006). Rendering *toska* into French appears to be similarly problematic. One of the relevant studies shows that the contextual French approximations of Russian *toska* are *angoisse* “anguish,” *tristesse* “sadness,” *chagrin* “grief,” *anxiété* “anxiety,” and *ennui* “boredom” (Dimitrova, 2001). Another study contends that, together with the three most frequent French correlates of the Russian word (*tristesse* “sadness,” *nostalgie* “nostalgia,” and *angoisse* “anguish”), *toska* is also rendered into French as *affliction* “affliction,” *agitation* “restlessness,” *amertume* “bitterness,” *désespoir* “despair,” *détresse* “distress,” *tourment* “torture,” *douleur* “pain,” *inquiétude* “worry,” *melancolie* “melancholy,” *abattement* “despondency,” *langueur* “languor,” *anxiété* “anxiety,” *cafard* “gloomy,” *chagrin* “grief,” *désir* “desire,” *regret* “regret,” *trouble* “worry,” and *ennui* “boredom” (Vakulenko, 2003). Finally, Russian *toska* appears to have no satisfactory equivalent in German either. Here, it is translated as *Trauer* “sorrow,” *Melancholie* “melancholy,” *Wehmut* “wistfulness,” and *Gram* “grief” (Krasavsky, 2001), or as *Sehnsucht* “yearning,” *Traurigkeit* “mournfulness,” and *Schwermut* “sorrow, nostalgia” (Syritsa, 2008).

The entirety of the translational correlates of *toska* in Western European languages suggests that its meaning can be approximated using the emotion lexemes from three categories, namely: (1) the words denoting varieties of sadness, sorrow, and grief (e.g., English *mourning*, French *tristesse*, and German *Schwermut*); (2) the words referring to a passionate, restless yearning and desire, as well as anguish and anxiety (e.g., English *longing* and *yearning*, French *angoisse*, and German *Sehnsucht*); and (3) the words denoting boredom and gloom (e.g., English *to be bored*, *gloom*, and French *ennui*). Indeed, several linguists speak about *toska* having three components, or facets, one of which brings it close to fear/anxiety; another to sadness, melancholy and nostalgia; and a third to boredom and revulsion (e.g., Levontina & Zaliznyak, 2001: 300).

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However, a major controversy in the views of lexicographers and semanticists about the meaning of *toska* can be assigned to two major positions. The first position is that *toska* is a **“mixture,” or “blend” of sadness and anxiety**. This view is shared by several lexicographic sources: in Ozhegov (1988), a most reputable dictionary of the Russian language, *toska* is defined as “soul-felt anxiety combined with sadness” (Ibid: 656⁴). Other dictionaries define *toska* as a “painful emotional state characterized by yearning, sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion” (Chernyh, 1993, II: 253), or as “languor of the soul, torturous sadness, anxiety, worry, dread” (Dal’, 1880).

Many linguists (Levontina & Zaliznyak, 2001: 299–300; Stepanov, 1997; Stefanskyy, 2005, 2006) speak about an interesting parallel between the frequent metaphorical association of Russian *toska* to the idea of squeezing, tightness, or compression, as in *toska szhala serdce* “*toska* compressed/squeezed the heart,” and the attested etymological links between European ANXIETY words and the words to denote physical tightness or compression (e.g., German *Angst*, French *angoisse*, and English *anguish* derive from Latin *angustia* “tightness” → Latin *angor* “compression,” “anxiety”).

Finally, the view on *toska* as a “blend” of sadness and anxiety comes from translation studies. In parallel to the tendency to translate *toska* by both SADNESS and ANXIETY words in European languages, *toska* is used as a contextual translation equivalent of both FEAR/ANXIETY and SADNESS words in other Slavic languages, such as Polish *lek* “fear,” *niepokoj* “anxiety, unrest,” Czech *uzkost* “anxiety,” on the one hand, and Polish *żal* “sorrow,” *smutek* “sadness,” and Czech *smutek* “sadness,” on the other hand (Stefanskyy, 2005, 2006, 2009a).

The second position on the debate about the meaning of Russian *toska* is the view that it is **essentially a SADNESS word** in Russian. For instance, Apresjan and associates (1997) group the Russian words *pečal’* “sorrow,” *toska*, and *grust’* “sadness” into one category of words denoting “the unpleasant experiences a person undergoes when s/he wants something s/he doesn’t have and doesn’t believe one can get it.” The same view is shared by the editor of the *Russian Dictionary of Synonyms* where *toska* is attributed SADNESS-related synonyms: *unynie* “doom,” *melancholia* “melancholy,” and *handra* “spleen” (Evgen’eva, 2003). Finally, *grust’* “sadness,” *pečal’* “sorrow” and *toska* repeatedly emerge in each others’ explications in *The Russian Associative Dictionary* based on the free associations of native speakers (Karaulov et al., 2002).

In tune with the lexicographers, Anna Wierzbicka identifies “sadness,” “emptiness caused by the absence or unavailability of somebody or something good,” “intolerable suffering” as the key semantic components of Russian *toska*. However, her NMS scenarios of *toska* and *grust’* “sadness” suggest that these two emotional experiences are caused by different types of eliciting events: while the main event appraisal in Russian *grust’* “sadness” is a negative event happening in the past, *toska* is elicited by the desire for something good to happen (see Table 23.1).

Table 23.1 NSM scenarios of Russian *toska* and *grust'*

TOSKA scenario	GRUST' scenario
X thinks something like this:	X thinks something like this:
I want something good to happen	I know: something bad happened now
I do not know what	I don't want things like this happen
I know: it cannot happen	I know I can't do anything
	Because this person thinks this, this person feels something for a short time
	(Wierzbicka, 1992b: 172)
(Wierzbicka, 1998a: 14)	

p. 357 The categorical membership of *toska* as a SADNESS word has also been substantiated in two experimental linguistic studies. The first is a hierarchical clustering study of negative emotion words in Russian based on the native speakers' similarity judgments (Solovyev, 2008). This study shows that *grust'* "sadness," *pečal* "sorrow," and *toska* cluster together and emerge as a distinct group of words, as opposed to five other clusters denoting grief (e.g., *gore* "woe," *skorb'* "mourning"), anguish (e.g., *trevoga* "anxiety," *smyatenie* "agitation"), disappointment (e.g., *ogorchenie* "being upset," *rasstrojstvo* "disappointment"), despair (e.g., *otchayanie* "despair," *beznadezhnost'* "despondency"), and apathy (e.g., *depressiya* "depression," *handra* "spleen"). The second relevant experimental study is a cognitive linguistic investigation of the behavioral profiles (Divjak & Gries, 2006) of SADNESS words in Russian. This study reports that the range and the frequency of distribution of prepositional constructions in which *toska* and Russian SADNESS words appear bear a significantly higher similarity to each other than to the constructional profiles of their non-synonyms (Janda & Solovyev, 2009).

The two positions discussed above—that *toska* is an emotional "blend" of sadness and anxiety or that *toska* is primarily a SADNESS word—underlie the hypotheses tested in this study. Using the GRID approach, we aim to verify whether *toska* bears a significantly closer resemblance to the semantic profile of Russian *grust'* "sadness" and other SADNESS words in Russian (Hypothesis 1) or, alternatively, whether it equally strongly correlates with both SADNESS and ANXIETY words (Hypothesis 2).

Among the methods used to capture the meaning of *toska* in previous research, GRID is closest to the experimental approach illustrated in Solovyev (2008). Firstly, both approaches are data-driven (rather than based on non-systematic linguistic evidence); secondly, both methods derive from the native speakers' assessments of the meaning of words (rather than researchers' introspection). At the same time, GRID is a stronger method in this context because it allows the overcoming of two limitations inherent in the technique of hierarchical clustering derived from similarity judgments. The latter technique is a discrete method which offers an "either-or" solution, that is, it can only suggest that a term either belongs to a cluster or does not belong to it. So, if *toska* were a "blended" emotion with a strong overlap with ANXIETY but yet a more pronounced overlap with SADNESS, it would still emerge in the SADNESS cluster. By contrast, GRID allows for assessing the *degree of overlap* with both clusters of words, even if this overlap is less pronounced in one of the cases. The second limitation of Solovyev's study (2008) is that it is based on semantic similarity judgments, and thus does not specify the reasons why *toska* clusters with SADNESS, but not with ANXIETY words. With GRID, however, it is possible to see which (clusters of) rating features, emotion components, or dimensions are responsible for the outcome.

Data

The data used in this chapter come from the Russian GRID sample ($N = 166$, 102 females, mean age 23.7).⁵ For comparative purposes, we also use eight more samples from the GRID database. These include four Western European/American datasets: British English ($N = 201$, 124 females; mean age, 21.51), US American English ($N = 182$, 129 females; mean age, 18.5), German ($N = 120$, 92 females; mean age 24.5), and French ($N = 140$, 101 females; mean age, 23.8). The four Slavic samples are Polish ($N = 187$, 131 females; mean age, 24.5), Czech ($N = 120$, 43 females, mean age, 19.28), Slovak ($N = 128$, 107 females, mean age, 22.2), and Ukrainian ($N = 147$, 89 females; mean age, 22.3).

23.3 Results

Toska in Russian: a variety of sadness, or a mixture of sadness and anxiety?

Four types of findings affordable with the GRID method—all capturing different levels of granularity of semantic similarity or divergence—provide evidence on the categorical membership of *toska* in Russian.

The first piece of evidence comes from the feature-based hierarchical clustering of Russian emotion words. Here our result fully replicates Solovyev's (2008) finding: *toska* indeed clusters with Russian *grust'* "sadness" and the two words form a distinct outlier cluster in the class of Russian negative emotion terms (see Figure 23.1, in bold).

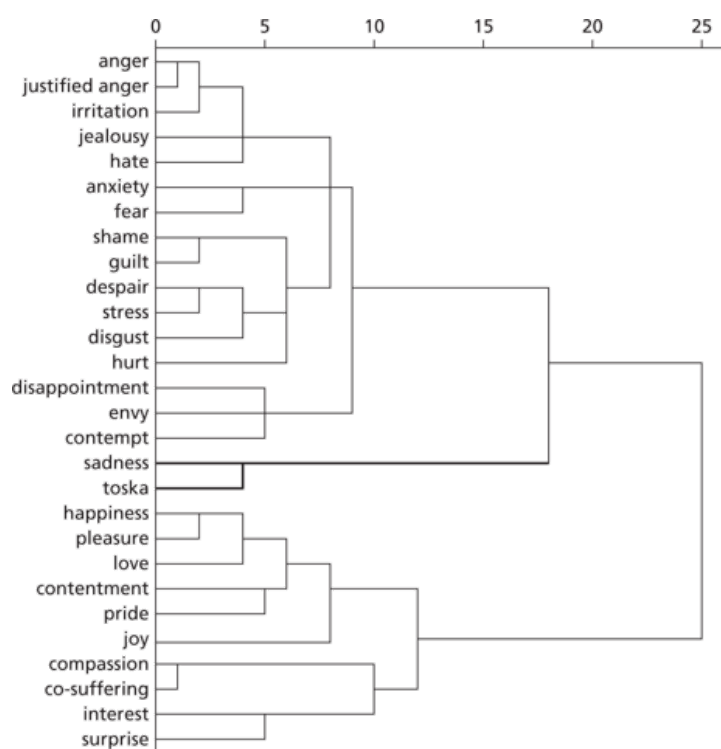


Figure 23.1 Hierarchical clustering of 27 Russian prototypical emotion terms and *toska*.

Note: for better readability, English translations are used for Russian emotion terms (except *toska*). Clustering was performed on centered means, the metric used is squared Euclidean distances with features as variables (Z-normalized) and emotion words as cases.

However, using GRID feature ratings as the basis for the hierarchical clustering offers much richer detail than the same technique applied to the graded similarity judgments. With GRID, it is possible not only to see which words cluster together, but also to inspect which features discriminate well between clusters, that is, foreground the most important properties of a cluster (Divjak & Gries, 2008). Here, calculating t -values⁶ facilitate determining which variables are most strongly represented in a cluster as compared to all other groups. The features with the highest positive t -values for the (*grust'*, *toska*) cluster, which are simultaneously negative for the words in all other clusters are shown in Table 23.2. Clearly, these are prototypical features reported for SADNESS experiences across cultures (cf. Folkman & Lazarus, 1986, Lazarus, 1991a), including feelings of weakness and powerlessness (# 119, 137, 87, 122), low degree of AROUSAL (# 37, 39, 41, 74), the overall lack of expressive symptoms (# 75, 49, 58, 68) except for crying (# 57), and, most prominently, withdrawal/avoidance tendencies (# 55, 61, 98, 99, 102, 97).⁷

Table 23.2 Features with the highest t -values in the [*grust'*, *toska*] cluster

#	feature	t	#	feature	t
74	spoke slower	2.11	87	needed help and support	1.40
92	wanted to do nothing	1.98	41	breathing slowing down	1.38
98	wanted to withdraw into the self	1.96	75	no change in vocal expression	1.35
63	no change in gestures	1.91	68	fell silent	1.35
61	withdrew from people or things	1.85	65	decreased the volume of voice	1.34
93	had no motivation to pay attention	1.85	49	no bodily symptoms	1.34
37	heartbeat slowing down	1.81	58	no change in facial expression	1.30
119	felt tired	1.75	55	closed the eyes	1.26
91	lacked the motivation to do anything	1.57	102	wanted to break contact with others	1.19
57	showed tears	1.51	97	wanted to disappear or hide	1.19
137	felt weak	1.44	99	wanted not to be hurt	1.18
39	muscles relax	1.43	85	wanted to hand over the initiative	1.08
31	suffered an irrevocable loss	1.42	122	felt powerless	1.00
141	hid the emotion by a smile	1.42			

The second piece of evidence in favor of the view that *toska* is a SADNESS word (Hypothesis 1) comes from computing the correlations of *toska* with all other Russian emotion words. Alongside with showing that *toska* correlates the highest with *grust'* “sadness” (0.88), this analysis also reveals its relatively high correlations with two other SADNESS-related labels (*otčayanie* “despair” and *dosada* “disappointment”), but, at the same time, considerably lower correlations with Russian ANXIETY words *trevoga* “anxiety” and *strah* “fear” (see Table 23.3, **in bold**). This analysis also suggests that, in the ANXIETY group, *toska* is closer to Russian *strah* “fear” (0.46) than to *trevoga* “anxiety” (0.37).

Table 23.3 Profile correlations of *toska* with 27 prototypical emotion terms in Russian

word	PC	word	PC	word	PC
sadness	<u>0.88</u>	disgust	0.45	justified anger	0.02
guilt	0.69	envy	0.39	love	−0.32
disappointment	<u>0.68</u>	compassion	0.38	surprise	−0.32
despair	<u>0.67</u>	anxiety	<u>0.37</u>	contentment	−0.38
shame	0.60	irritation	0.28	pleasure	−0.47
being hurt	0.57	contempt	0.27	pride	−0.49
co-suffering	0.47	jealousy	0.26	happiness	−0.49
fear	<u>0.46</u>	hate	0.25	joy	−0.57
stress	0.46	anger	0.19	interest	−0.59

Note: for better readability, English translations are used for Russian emotion terms (except *toska*).

The third analytical procedure where the findings support Hypothesis 1 is the Principal Component Analysis which renders a four-dimensional solution with VALENCE, POWER, AROUSAL, and NOVELTY as defining factors accounting for 75.07% of the total variance in the Russian sample. Here, comparing the dimensional scores of *toska* with those of *grust'* “sadness,” on the one hand, and *trevoga* “anxiety” and *strah* “fear,” on the other hand, shows that the difference is almost always less pronounced in the former case, which suggests that *toska* is closer to SADNESS than to the ANXIETY/FEAR pole on the four emotion dimensions (see Table 23.4, but see the section that follows).

Table 23.4 Dimensional coordinates of Russian SADNESS, Russian ANXIETY words, and *toska*

word	VALENCE	POWER	AROUSAL	NOVELTY
<i>grust'</i> (sadness)	−0.17	−1.30	−2.43	−1.53
<i>toska</i>	−0.12	−0.90	−1.52	−1.43
<i>strah</i> (fear)	−0.42	−0.78	0.93	0.89
<i>trevoga</i> (anxiety)	−0.60	0.15	1.48	−0.09

p. 360 Finally, supporting evidence for Hypothesis 1 comes from the Univariate Analyses of Variance on the component features. For this analysis, we chose *strah* “fear” as the highest correlate of *toska* among ANXIETY/FEAR terms (see Table 23.3) and conducted ANOVA’s on *grust'* “sadness,” *toska*, and *strah* “fear” feature ratings with the Sidak correction for multiple testing. The results yield a picture largely similar to the one obtained in previous analyses. Overall, significant differences between the three terms were found on 44 features. In 25 of these 44 features (56.7%) there is no difference between *grust'* “sadness” and *toska*, but there is a significant difference between *strah* “fear” and *toska* (for the list of these features, see Table 23.5).

Table 23.5 Features differentiating *grust'* (sadness) and *toska* from *strah* (fear)

#	feature	<i>grust'</i>	<i>toska</i>	<i>strah</i>
119	felt tired	6.7 ^a	6.7 ^b	4.1 ^{a,b}
92	wanted to do nothing	6.8 ^a	6.3 ^b	3.5 ^{a,b}
65	decreased the volume of voice	7.6 ^a	6.1 ^b	3.7 ^{a,b}
93	no motivation to pay attention	5.5	5.7 ^b	3.4 ^b
48	felt cold	4.4 ^a	5.1 ^b	7.7 ^{a,b}
30	in danger	4.4 ^a	4.8 ^b	7.6 ^{a,b}
12	caused by chance	3.9 ^a	4.7 ^b	6.8 ^{a,b}
116	was in an intense emotional state	3.7 ^a	4.7 ^b	7.1 ^{a,b}
136	felt nervous	4.4 ^a	4.6 ^b	7.7 ^{a,b}
33	felt weak limbs	4.6	4.5 ^b	7.0 ^b
131	felt calm	4.9 ^a	4.4 ^b	2.3 ^{a,b}
3	unpredictable	3.0 ^a	4.1 ^b	6.3 ^{a,b}
40	muscles tensing (whole body)	2.2 ^a	4.1 ^b	7.4 ^{a,b}
22	required an immediate response	4.2 ^a	4.0 ^b	7.4 ^{a,b}
42	breathing getting faster	2.8 ^a	4.0 ^b	7.0 ^{a,b}
1	suddenly	3.5 ^a	3.9 ^b	7.0 ^{a,b}
95	wanted push things away	4.1	3.8 ^b	6.2 ^b
34	got pale	5.1 ^a	3.8 ^b	7.7 ^{a,b}
32	felt shivers	4.2 ^a	3.7 ^b	7.7 ^{a,b}
28	center of attention	4.7	3.6 ^b	6.2 ^b
59	produced abrupt body movements	2.2 ^a	3.5 ^b	5.7 ^{a,b}
44	perspired or had moist hands	2.7 ^a	3.5 ^b	7.4 ^{a,b}
38	heartbeat getting faster	2.7 ^a	3.4 ^b	7.7 ^{a,b}
56	opened her or his eyes widely	2.5 ^a	3.2 ^b	6.9 ^{a,b}
45	sweat	2.2 ^a	3.0 ^b	6.6 ^{a,b}

Note: *grust'*, *toska*, *strah*—raw mean values; ^a mean difference significant at 0.01 significance level; ^b mean difference significant at 0.01 significance level.

The qualitative aspects suggested by these ANOVA results are also revealing: on the vast majority of features (21 out of 25) *toska* was rated significantly lower than *strah* “fear” on prototypical ANXIETY/FEAR characteristics. These include typical antecedents (sudden and unpredictable events, # 12, 3, 30) requiring immediate action (#22), “somatic” reactions such as changes in bodily temperature (#32, 44, 45, 48), heartbeat and breathing increase (#42, 38), restlessness in body movement (# 59), and muscle tension (# 40), as well as “psychic” reactions such as feeling nervous (#136, cf. Magnusson & Stattin, 1978; Taylor, 1953).

Overall, the four types of analyses presented above offer very convincing support to Hypothesis 1 that *toska* is a sadness term and, taken together, conclusively resolve the ambiguity about the categorical membership of this salient Russian emotion term.

“Anxiety” facet in the meaning of Russian *toska*

- p. 361 Alongside with the robust evidence in support of Hypothesis 1 presented above, the question remains regarding the relatedness of *toska* to ANXIETY/FEAR words in Russian. Three types of findings specify this link. Firstly, the profile correlations show that *toska* is somewhat closer to FEAR/ ANXIETY words than *grust* “sadness” is (0.37 vs 0.23 with *trevoga* and 0.46 vs 0.30 with *strah* “fear”). Secondly come the observations on the emotion dimension scores (see Table 23.4). Here, for one thing, *toska* is closer to *strah* “fear” than to *grust* “sadness” on POWER (score differences 0.12 and 0.4, respectively), suggesting that the experiences of *toska* and *strah* “fear” are relatively less characterized by appraisals of control, feelings of POWER, dominance, and impulses to act (Fontaine et al., 2007: 1051). Furthermore, differences are observed on AROUSAL: while *toska* is clearly at the SADNESS pole on this dimension, it is still closer to *strah* “fear” and *trevoga* “anxiety” than *grust* “sadness” is (the dimension score differences are 2.45 vs 3.36 and 3.0 vs 3.91, respectively, see Table 23.4). Thus, *toska* denotes an emotional state which implies a higher degree of sympathetic AROUSAL than *grust* “sadness” does.
- p. 362 Third and finally, among the 44 features where significant differences between *toska*, *grust* “sadness,” and *strah* “fear” were found (with ANOVA and pairwise comparison with Sidak), on 16 features there is a significant difference between *grust* “sadness” and *strah* “fear,” but *toska* is in-between and does not differ significantly from either of the terms (see Table 23.6). In most of these cases the means of *toska* are closer to those of *grust* “sadness” (which substantiates the conclusion that *toska* is more related to SADNESS than to FEAR/ANXIETY). However, 6 features are exceptions from the pattern (see Table 23.6, **in bold**).

Table 23.6 Features where *toska* is in-between *grust'* (sadness) and *strah* (fear)

#	feature	<i>grust'</i>	<i>toska</i>	<i>strah</i>
57	showed tears	7.8 ^a	6.7	4.9 ^a
98	wanted to withdraw into her/himself	8.6^a	6.7	5.0^a
74	spoke slower	7.6 ^a	6.5	5.1 ^a
134	felt alert	4.8^a	6.5	7.7^a
132	felt out of control	4.7^a	6.4	7.1^a
61	withdrew from people or things	7.7^a	6.0	5.6^a
63	no changes in gestures	6.4 ^a	5.4	3.8 ^a
25	consequences able to live with	6.1 ^a	5.1	3.3 ^a
54	frowned	6.6 ^a	5.1	3.5 ^a
113	wanted to act whatever action it might be	2.8 ^a	4.4	6.5 ^a
15	caused by a supernatural POWER	3.0 ^a	4.1	6.2 ^a
49	had no bodily symptoms at all	4.7 ^a	3.8	2.4 ^a
89	wanted to move	2.2^a	3.8	5.1^a
115	wanted to get totally absorbed in the situation	5.6^a	3.8	2.3^a
73	spoke faster	2.3 ^a	3.7	5.4 ^a
46	felt hot	2.1 ^a	3.5	5.3 ^a

Note: *grust'*, *toska*, *strah*—raw mean values; ^a mean difference significant at 0.01 significance level.

Qualitatively, the ratings on these six emotion features suggest two important nuances. Firstly, *toska* appears to be closer to *strah* “fear” than it is to *grust'* “sadness” on the feelings of alertness (# 132), as well as the desire to act/move (# 89). This finding is consonant with the reported quality of “restlessness” of *toska* experience (cf. Stefanskyy, 2005, 2006, 2009a; Wierzbicka, 1992b, 1998b). Secondly, *toska* appears to be farther away from *grust'* “sadness” on several features capturing withdrawal/avoidance tendencies and resignation (#61, 98, 115), which suggests that *toska* does not share some of the key traits of SADNESS to the same degree as the category prototype (*grust'*) does.

Overall, the conclusion that can be drawn from the results presented above is that *toska* is relatively closer to FEAR/ANXIETY than the prototypical Russian SADNESS label (*grust'*) is. However, the shift of *toska* from SADNESS to ANXIETY is fairly subtle, so that what is at stake is not a “symmetrical,” comparably strong correlation of *toska* with two emotion categories (Hypothesis 2), but its very substantial overlap with one category (SADNESS), and a very partial relatedness to another one (FEAR/ANXIETY).

Rendering Russian *toska* in other languages

p. 363 As discussed in the section on ‘Prior linguistic research on *toska* and the hypotheses of the present study’, one of the key characteristics of Russian *toska* is the difficulty of rendering its meaning into ↪ other languages, which results in its numerous contextual correlates in other languages, Western European and Slavic alike. By virtue of targeting the “invariant,” decontextualized lexical meaning, GRID cannot resolve conclusively the issue of better translation equivalents of Russian *toska* in specific contexts. However, it allows for verification if the pattern in which *toska* relates to SADNESS and FEAR/ANXIETY in Russian fares well cross-linguistically.

To explore this issue, we have computed the profile correlations of *toska* with all the prototypical emotion terms in seven languages: three spoken by Western European populations (UK and US English, French, and German), and four Slavic (Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Ukrainian).

p. 364 As becomes clear from the results (see Table 23.7), the pattern observed in the Russian data holds very well across all eight different data samples: *toska* invariably correlates highest ↪ with the prototypical SADNESS words, such as English *sadness*, French *tristesse*, Ukrainian *smutok*, or Polish *smutek*. Moreover, its correlations with other allegedly SADNESS-related words (DISAPPOINTMENT and DESPAIR terms) are remarkably high and are, what is crucial, invariably higher than its correlations with ANXIETY, FEAR, and STRESS words.

Table 23.7 Profile correlations of Russian “toska” with SADNESS and ANXIETY words in Western European and Slavic languages

	LG	L	label	PC		LG	L	label	PC
Sadness	Western European	UK	sadness	<u>0.77</u>	Fear	Western European	UK	fear	0.35
		US	sadness	<u>0.75</u>			US	fear	0.36
		Fr	tristesse	<u>0.79</u>			Fr	peur	0.42
		Ger	Trauer	<u>0.74</u>			Ger	Angst	0.43
	Slavic	Pl	smutek	<u>0.83</u>		Slavic	Pl	strach	0.43
		Cz	smutek	<u>0.69</u>			Cz	strach	0.44
		Sl	smútok	<u>0.88</u>			Sl	strach	0.41
		Ukr	smutok	<u>0.79</u>			Ukr	strah	0.46
Disappointment	Western European	UK	disappointment	0.77	Anxiety	Western European	UK	anxiety	0.43
		US	disappointment	0.72			US	anxiety	0.37
		Fr	déception	0.73			Fr	anxiété	0.44
		Ger	Enttäuschung	0.68			Ger	Besorgnis	0.47
	Slavic	Pl	rozczarowanie	0.63		Slavic	Pl	niepokój	0.52
		Cz	zklamání	0.73			Cz	nepokoj	0.49
		Sl	sklamanie	0.63			Sl	úzkost‘	0.46

		Ukr	shkoda	0.59			Ukr	tryvoga	0.43
Despair	Western European	UK	despair	0.66	Stress	Western European	UK	stress	0.39
		US	despair	0.63			US	stress	0.52
		Fr	désespoir	0.78			Fr	stress	0.26
		Ger	Verzweiflung	0.58			Ger	Stress	0.27
	Slavic	Pl	rozpacz	0.59		Slavic	Pl	stres	0.34
		Cz	beznadež	0.65			Cz	stres	0.49
		Sl	beznádej	0.63			Sl	stres	0.34
		Ukr	vidchaj	0.56			Ukr	stres	0.47

Note: LG, language group; L, language; PC, profile correlation; UK, British English; US, American English; Fr, French; Ger, German; Pl, Polish; Cz, Czech; Sl, Slovak; Ukr, Ukrainian.

23.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to investigate the applicability and the potential of the GRID method in the research on “culture-specific” emotion concepts, a domain that emphasizes cultural variability in emotion conceptualization and lexicalization and asserts that the indigenous emotion categories play a major role in the cultural construction of emotional reality and cultural socialization processes. Our case study focused on the Russian culture-specific concept of *toska*. The word that labels it in Russian is particularly attractive because of its language saliency and the lack of congruent translation correlates in other European languages, Western European and Slavic alike. Translational ambiguity of *toska* is largely underpinned by the controversy in lexicographers and semanticists’ views about its meaning. Here, two principal positions can be discerned: on the one hand, some researchers contend that *toska* is a variety of sadness, and thus pertains to the cluster of SADNESS words in the Russian language, on the other hand, others suggest that *toska* is a “mixture” of sadness and anxiety, and, therefore, has an equally strong relation to both SADNESS and ANXIETY. These two views are the hypotheses tested in the present study.

Our results provide robust support to the view that *toska* bears a significantly higher similarity to SADNESS than to ANXIETY/FEAR words, and does so not only in Russian, but also in seven more languages from three language groups: Germanic (English, German), Romance (French), and Slavic (Czech, Slovak, Polish, and Ukrainian). In the light of this evidence, defining *toska* as “[. . .] anxiety coupled with sadness” (e.g., Ozhegov, 1988: 656) appears to be less appropriate than defining it as a word denoting a SADNESS-related emotional state (Apresjan et al., 1997; Evgen’eva, 2003; Wierzbicka, 1992b, 1998b).

However, the GRID method also shows that Russian *toska* appears to be semantically closer to ANXIETY/FEAR words than the prototypical SADNESS label (*grust’*) is. This shift does not, however, suggest a “symmetrical,” that is, a comparably strong correlation of *toska* with both emotion categories. Rather, an “anxious” component in *toska* constitutes a “potentiality,” which can get actualized in specific contexts. This, in turn, explains why *toska* can contextually be used as a translation correlate of ANXIETY/FEAR words denoting in other languages for example, French *angoisse* and *anxiété*, English *anxiety* and *anguish*, Polish *lek* and *niepokoj*.

Methodologically, the present study illustrates a high investigative potential of the GRID method in the study of culture-specific emotion concepts. Unlike the discrete methods (e.g., hierarchical clustering or classical dimension studies), where only a very small and abstracted aspect of meaning is tapped on—that of the relative similarity of a set of emotion terms within the domain (Moore et al., 1999; Russell, 1980; Russell & Sato, 1995; Solovyev, 2008)—GRID allows the pinning down of the *reasons* underlying those judgments through considering the (dis)similarities of the words’ ratings on a wide range of emotional features. Applied to the study of a disputed categorical membership of a culture-specific term, GRID allows not only to conclusively establish the category to which an emotion label belongs, but also to specify the degree of gradual overlap with the other emotion categories (candidate to be important for its meaning) and to show, in a highly granular fashion, which emotion dimensions or (clusters of) individual features foreground the observed pattern of results.

Further applications of the GRID method in the domain of the research on culture-specific emotion concepts can develop in two directions. Firstly, in addition to the features derived from a range of very diverse emotion theories, more case-relevant features can be included in the instrument so that to capture all the essential characteristics of culture-specific emotion terms. For instance, in the domain of Russian SADNESS words, one of the aspects that differentiates Russian *pečal* “sorrow,” *gore* “grief,” on the one hand, from Russian *grust*’ and *toska*, on the other hand, is the likelihood of respective emotional experiences being elicited by an “identifiable cause” (Wierzbicka, 1998b: 12): while central to the emotional experiences of *pečal* “sorrow” and *gore* “grief,” it is said to be a much less salient characteristic of *grust* “sadness” and *toska*. Thus, including this feature into the rating instrument would allow the verification of its discriminative relevance, and if so, to test whether the difference in its ratings would be congruent with the previous research.

The second direction where GRID could be enhanced in future studies relates to the selection of words to which a culture-specific term is compared. The present study contrasts *toska* to the set of prototypical emotion words. This approach serves the purpose well if the aim is to identify the categorical membership of an untranslatable emotion label. However, this might not be enough to find a best translation equivalent possible (in another language), or a closest synonym available (in the same language) for that word. Future studies including many more relevant terms (e.g., English *yearning* and *anguish*) can definitely be enlightening in this respect.

Notes

- 1 Correspondence concerning this chapter should be addressed to Anna Ogarkova, Swiss Center for the Affective Sciences, 7 Rue des Batoirs, CH-1205, Geneva, Switzerland, e-mail: Anna.Ogarkova@unige.ch
- 2 National Corpus of the Russian Language (<http://www.ruscorpora.ru>) comprises about 180 million words and is one of the most reputable corpora available nowadays for the Russian language.
- 3 Throughout this paper, we are using italics (*toska*) to refer to emotion words, no marks (e.g., sadness) to refer to emotional experiences proper. Small capitals (SADNESS) will be used terminologically, to refer to categories of sadness-like experiences in all languages, without implying that they are the same as the English category of SADNESS, or the English word *sadness*.
- 4 All definitions translated into English by the first author.
- 5 The numbers in the Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian samples include the participants who rated the standard set of 24 GRID words, and another group who rated an extra set. The Russian extra set included the word *toska*.
- 6 The *t*-values for any feature for a cluster *c* out of *n* clusters are computed as follows: (mean within *c*—mean across all *n* clusters)/standard deviation of the mean across all *n* clusters (see Divjak & Gries, 2006, 2008).
- 7 However, certain variability has been attested as to the importance of these SADNESS features in different cultural groups (see, e.g., Vandervoot, 2001).