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**Talk 2.5/Speaker: Dr. Nataliya Myhailivna SAVELYUK**

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*itle: Religious Discourse and Recollecting Negative Emotional Events in Individual Memory*

*Abstract*

Recent research has shown that people pray more when experiencing stressful life situations ([Ai, Peterson, Bolling & Rodgers, 2006](#)). Previous studies have demonstrated that forms of religious coping, such as prayer, indicate lower levels of stress, better social adjustment and life satisfaction and increased positive affect (Koenig, George & Siegler, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Prayer and other religious activity might help individuals to cope better with life stress and depression ([Schnittker, 2001](#)). Praying is also the strategy the most frequently used to cope with personal problems (Koenig, George & Siegler, 1988; Bade & Cook, 2008). Evidence consistently suggests that praying is one of the main sources of coping and developing individual resilience (Mahoney, 1997; Case & McMinn, 2007).

Results of some studies have important implications for narrative research in general, methodological issues such as the validity of text analysis programs and subjective memory ratings and the quality of traumatic memories (Bohanek, Fivush & Walker, 2004; Zasiiekina, 2008). Recent findings focus on the religious narrative in multidisciplinary discourse of academic Christian theology: Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology (Conermann et al., [2009](#); Brahier & Johannsen, [2013](#); Sternberg, [1985](#)).

We analyze in the current research praying, confession, preaching and ceremonial action as the main genres of religious discourse – the active verbal and non-verbal communication in a particular life context. We prove that the basic psychological characteristics of all these genres are their dialogism and dominant emotionality, as well as involved archaic psychic structures and functions. We confirm that if such communication on the spiritual level is communication with God or about God in the name of human perfection, then on psychological level it is an effective way of catharsis of negative emotions and strengthening the sense of external support.

From the perspective of psycholinguistics, religious discourse is a verbal approach of the personality to God with certain requests, wishes, gratification and glories, in which mental processes, states and qualities manifest. The intimacy of such appeal provides a high degree of authentic personal expression as well as certain expectations for one or another response. We are considering a prayer both as a spiritual and religious phenomenon and as a significant psychological as well as diagnostic and psychotherapeutic resource. Non-canonical religious discourse is the praying of the personality «in own words», which might include both elements the canonical religious discourse and a relatively free verbal embodiment.

Through an anonymous empirical study, we collected the corpus of written verbalizations of non-canonical religious discourse and we carried out a psycholinguistic analysis of the relevant texts in the context of a conscious expression of negative emotional experience of the individual. Respondents are Ukrainians – aged 18-60 and self-identified as Christians (Orthodox, Catholics, Greek Catholics and Protestants). As proposed by Zasiékina (2008), a computer program TEXTANZ processed the written verbalizations of non-canonical religious discourses. Primary practical application of the study creates possibility for using religious discourse as an important psycholinguistic resource in the reorganization of negative emotional experience.