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Linguistic and cultural image of home among rehabilitated youth

Home is a concept that accompanies man at all times and in each historical epoch. It is of paramount importance not only in Europe but in all cultures' spiritual and material heritage. 'It determines the circle of elementary experiences of every human being and is at the very centre of the generally recognized system of values – alongside such concepts as mother, family [...] and homeland – with which it is connected by a network of semantic dependencies' (Bartmiński 2006: 167). Home is one of the concepts acquired and assimilated through 'experiencing the world'.

The youth staying at the Youth Educational Centres are individuals at risk of exclusion and social dezadaptation. Recent research shows that they often experience deficits in social competencies and struggle with socialising (Wysocka, 2017). Although the YECs aim to reshape their students' attitude towards their future life, some students leave the custody of the centres with 'warped' preconceptions. An analysis of the linguistic picture of 'home' concept provides insight into the paradigm that the adolescents will adhere to while creating their own home and family, as well as their values, visions, expectations and aspirations regarding 'home'.

The following research is an attempt to present the conceptualization of HOME based on the statements of socially maladjusted youth staying in youth educational centres (YEC)¹, with a primary focus on how the rehabilitated youth categorized HOME, what features they attributed to it, and as what picture it created.

Methods

Sample selection and context

Youth educational centres are intended for socially maladjusted children and adolescents who require special organization of learning, working methods and upbringing. They function as rehabilitation and educational facilities, or as rehabilitation and rehabilitation centres for children and adolescents with mild intellectual disabilities. Their tasks include eliminating the causes and symptoms of social maladjustment and preparing wards to live in accordance with social and legal standards. These centres are intended only for young people to whom the juvenile and domestic relations departments of district courts have applied an educational measure in the form of placement in the YEC. Currently, there are 5,468 wards in 97 centres in Poland: 3,729 boys and 1,733 girls.

456 people aged 17 to 20 ($M = 17.31$; $SD = 0.68$) participated in the interview. According to the Polish law, wards stay at YEC until the age of 18, but the study also covered people who become independent, staying in sheltered apartments or branches of centres. Among respondents, women constituted 59.2%, while men amounted to 40.8%. Such a large number of girls participating in the study results from the specificity of centres in the Mazowieckie voivodeship: 6 YECs are for girls, 5 are coeducational, and 9 are for boys. Additionally, more women expressed their willingness to participate in this research.

data collection (how)

Method of analysis

To reconstruct the linguistic picture of HOME as part of the world picture of the rehabilitated youth, the research tools of cognitive ethnolinguistics were used. This study is based on the assumptions and methodology of, inter alia, such works on pragmalinguistics and cognitive linguistics as: Hjelmslev (1953), Dubois (1965), Mounin (1965), Greimas (1966), Apresjan, Melčuk, Žolkovsky (1969), Guiraud (1974, 1976), Rosch (1975), Sapir (1978), Whorf (1982), Pottier (1992), Labov (1994), Wittgenstein (1997), Lakoff (2001), Vaňková (2001), Taylor (2001, 2007), Kleiber (2003), Langacker (2005), Vaňková, Nebeská (2005).

Research Question

We adopted the following facets for HOME:

1. what is home? 2. where is home? 3. what is at home? (inside and out) 4. whose home is it? (who lives there and what are their relationships?) 5. what are you doing at home? (home as the subject of action), 6. what is done with the home? (home as an object of activity) 7. what is the home like? (home attributes; values, emotions, feelings).

Results and Discussion

Before we present the profile study, we shall outline the systemic meaning of HOME, as it largely corresponds to the prototype picture of a given concept (cf. Rutkowska 2015: 2).

The foreground code meaning of HOME concept is provided in lexicographic studies. It is an onomasiological approach that determines which linguistic elements function in a given linguistic area and a given epoch as their signs. Home is a polysemic expression, as reflected in dictionaries, e.g. 1. 'building in which one lives or works (house)'; 2. 'flat or room in which one lives'; 3. 'family and people with whom you live'; 4. 'all matters related to family life'; 5. 'family or dynasty'; 6. 'place from which someone comes (homeland)' (Bańko 2000: 291), or 1. 'building (house)', 2. 'apartment', 3. 'family', 4. 'household', 5. 'dynasty, family', 6. 'post', or 'various types of posts, care and cultural organizations, social relations, groups and organizations'; b. 'seat of institution', 7. 'institution', or 'service institution'; b. 'seat of serving institution', 8. 'centre being a meeting place' etc. (WSJP 2016). Home is therefore both a place and a community of people. Both these dimensions are linked by the idea of living (Burzyńska-Kamieniecka & Kamieniecki 2017: 264).

In order to find the stereotypical picture of the house, the "Dictionary of symbols" by Władysław Kopaliński was used. According to Kopaliński, HOME symbolizes safety, durability, shelter, fortress, flat, own corner; household, household members, family, family nest; bloodline, dynasty; homeland; Universe; human body; treasury of wisdom; hospitality (2006: 62).

The picture of reality contained in language, however, becomes visible primarily in the lexical system of the language. Vocabulary is the most important component of the linguistic picture of the world. Thus, the picture of HOME in the conducted interviews is revealed in words and expressions. Respondents' statements contain various uses of the lexeme HOME, and thus, many aspects of meaning, many conceptualizations, many different features within a given aspect and often very numerous lexical exponents of a given feature. The semasiological approach is, therefore, also of paramount importance, showing the ambiguity of a given concept and the relationships between its various meanings (Nowakowska-Kempna 2016: 321-322). In this paper, the semantic structure of the prototypical meaning of HOME is represented as a matrix of cognitive domains, interpreted as an indication of any kind of conceptual content or sphere of experience⁵, with profiles and values specified in the domains (as established based on the created interview questionnaire):

SPACE (appearance of home as a three-dimensional object): *flat (sheltered, training)*⁷, *studio apartment, house (single-family, two-story, small, large, child care home), house (small, one-story), youth educational centre,*

LOCATION (where homes are): *outskirts, town (hometown), village (family), by the sea, by the lake, Italy, Austria, Mazowieckie, Warmia-Masuria, outside Warsaw, outskirts of Warsaw, Warsaw, Zamość, Białystok, Wrocław, Starachowice, Sopot, Gdynia, Młynowiec, Dolnośląskie, Lublin, Stare Bajki. 50 km from Białystok, 70 km from Łomża and 70 from Grajewo,*

WHOLE-PART RELATION: A – external parts of home: *garden (small, large), nature, greenery, yard, garage, swimming pool, balcony, swings*; B – internal parts of home: *ground floor, first floor, kitchen (large), dining room (separate), living room, room (for a child), rooms (two, three, four), bathroom (large, spacious), wardrobe (own),*

MATERIAL, CONTENTS: A – things: *furniture (new, modern), everything new, blinds, flowers, glass (made of glass), floor (made of glass), stairs (made of glass), armchair (soft, for yourself), TV (large), clothes, food (home, warm, plenty), cake (home), fireplace, walls (colorful, pink, green, cream, white, bright colours – light, energetic)*; B – people: *family (full, future, happy, foster), girlfriend, boyfriend, husband (future), wife (future), children, myself, parents, all together, sister and brother-in-law, sister, grandmother, guests,*

ACTIVITIES: A – at home, where [home as PLACE]: *caring for children, raising children, supporting children, taking care of children, cooking, preparing various dishes, eating common meals, cleaning, carrying out religious practices (Catholic, Jehovah's Witnesses), including celebrating holidays, doing something out of nothing, watching movies, watching comedies, smoking*; negation – *not organizing parties, beating children, not making a fuss, living without quarrels, life without alcohol*; B – towards home, where [home as PATIENS]: *keeping the house, taking responsibility for home, taking care of the house, returning home,*

VALUE: A – home attributes: *warm, normal, well-kept, cozy, own, family, quiet, calm, with a homely atmosphere, family atmosphere, single-family, two-story, small, large, new, modern, clean, white*; B – emotions related to home: *love, peace, silence, happiness, warmth, trust, attachment, longing, sense of security, but also trauma, nervousness, experiencing work, children, husband at home.*

The fundamental assumption of cognitivism is the ‘conventional (social) nature of linguistic knowledge, or more precisely – the conventional nature of linguistic units’, which makes it possible to reach categorization mechanisms that depend on the external world, in which the categorizing subject lives, as well as on the culture that shapes them and their system of values’ (Maćkiewicz 1999: 53). Thus, categorization remains a process inextricably linked to human perception and cognition of the world (Burešová-Wania 2003: 23-30). It serves as a tool for understanding reality accompanied by interpretation. The world is always seen in a certain way and from a certain perspective. According to John Taylor, ‘the category, contrary to the assumptions of the classical theory, is not built on the principle of common definitional features, but on the principle of a network of intersecting similarities’ (Taylor 2001: 66). According to his definition, categorization is based on four basic assumptions: 1) Categories are defined by means of necessary and sufficient features – each object either has or does not have a given feature, hence it belongs or does not belong to a selected category; 2) Features are binary – a given feature is present or absent and can take the value [+] or [-]; 3) Categories have clear boundaries – a limited place is separated for a defined category and objects in the world are or are not its elements; 4) All elements of a given category are equivalent – each element having all the characteristics of the category and thus belonging to it exists equally with all elements belonging to this category. Belonging to the category is not gradual, the category has no better or worse elements (Burešová-Wania 2003: 24).

Ludwig Wittgenstein called such a structure family resemblance (Wittgenstein 2009: 67). Consequently, to categorize is to search for common and similar features of objects and phenomena, combine specific things into groups in order to better and more clearly perceive the reality of the surrounding world. Attributes should not be perceived as features that certain objects must or may not have (not) to be included in a specific category. Hence, the category understood in this way is associated with the concept of a prototype, understood today as ‘a combination of attributes or properties typical for a category, which, in order to be relevant, does not have to be verified by an instance’ (Kleiber 2003: 64). The prototype thus becomes ‘an abstract entity that consists of attributes essential for a given category’ (Kleiber 2003: 47). The concept of a prototype is directly related to the concept of stereotype. In common understanding, a stereotype is a characteristic of a given reality, an assessment fixed and assigned to a commonly defined concept, usually with a pejorative connotation. Stereotyping is closely related to natural language and based on the subjective categorization of phenomena, conventions and repetition, so the stereotype is ‘a necessary element of the common language and code of culture’ (Bartmiński & Panasiuk 2001: 373). The concept of stereotype is not exclusively related to people and ethnic, regional or professional groups, although it is most often used in this context. The concept of prototype relates predominantly to material things. Stereotyping includes various social situations, attitudes, behaviours, animals, plants, natural objects, etc., so everything that a person learns and thus creates a certain picture of the world to which he or she belongs (cf. Bartmiński & Panasiuk 2001). Thus, stereotypes provide knowledge about the ways of evaluating and behaviour patterns of a given culture.

Categorization in language is made on the verbal and conceptual levels. Accordingly, ‘the basic categorization tool (due to the cognitive function it performs) is the words of the language and the corresponding concepts’ (Wysoczański 2006: 79).

Such understanding of cognitive methodology is consistent with the definition of the linguistic picture of the world (LIW), formulated by Jerzy Bartmiński. Bartmiński considers the linguistic picture of the world as ‘the interpretation of reality contained in language, which can be summed up in the form of a set of judgements about the world, people, things, and events. These can be judgements either recorded in the language itself, in its grammatical forms, vocabulary, clichéd texts (e.g. proverbs), or through the implied forms and texts of the language’ (Bartmiński 1990: 110). Thus, the study of the linguistic picture of the world brings together not only linguistic phenomena but also cultural and social conditions⁴.

HOME definitions in the statements of YEC wards should therefore be considered as specific profiles of this concept that go beyond the Aristotelian model of classical definition. They take into account the experiential framework of the authors of the statements (cf. Rutkowska 2015: 1-2). They are the effect of a subjective, i.e. having its subject, linguistic and conceptual operation consisting in a specific shaping of the picture of an object by presenting it in certain aspects (subcategories, facets), within a certain type of knowledge and in accordance with the requirements of a specific point of view (Bartmiński & Niebrzegowska 1998: 212).

In order to reveal the most important components of the cognitive structure of a given concept, statements containing its nominations should be analyzed ‘in terms of which implicit questions it answers, to which aspects of the concept it relates’. This is because it allows determining what features of the concept called a given word are important for the authors of the statement. In this way, it is possible not to describe the full, comprehensive structure of the meaning of

the selected lexeme, but to reveal its most important components, the most strongly fixed features, imposing the cognitive structure on the concept under study.

The sense of HOME in young people's narratives is therefore very extensive. The semantic two- and three-dimensionality of this concept is evoked: HOME either means a certain physical and spatial reality with specific parameters: home/house – 'building', or it relates to social reality: home – 'family community'. It also has an axiological dimension (cf. Sławkowa).

The taxonomy of the HOME semantic field is another important aspect to consider. The frequency of occurrence of a given instance in a non-linguistic reality leads to the belief that it is typical among the individuals that make up the species (Lakoff 1986). This, in turn, provides a possibility of using it in typical contexts and shapes the contextual meaning on the basis of the frequency of 'what occurs most often', and thus leads to a generalizing judgement: 'what occurs most often – is typical' and at the same time 'standard' and 'normal' (Nowakowska-Kempna 2016: 325). The rehabilitated youth shapes HOME prototype and the semantic representation based on it by indicating such features that characterize a standard home. These are features with a high frequency: over 60% of the answers. Numerous statements take the shape of a classic definition, built of definiendum, definiens and copula: *Home (House) is a building, Home (House) is an apartment, Home (House) is a building in which one lives, Home is a family*. They are consistent with the prototype approach to HOME: 'residential building', 'building for the family. Ultimately, it can be assumed that HOME is for respondents 'building/apartment where the family lives and performs various activities' (cf. Nowakowska-Kempna 2016: 325). Thus, the prototype captures the material and social dimensions of home. When characterizing a prototype HOME, we shall use expressions with the highest frequency. Young people indicated: *flat, house, cottage*. However, what is important, in the respondents' statements, home is also a *sheltered apartment, training apartment*, and even a *Youth Educational Centre* or *child care home*, which profile the prototypical meaning of HOME. However, such an understanding of HOME is also in line with its contemporary code meaning (cf. WSJP 2016: 'post', or 'various types of posts, care and cultural organizations, social relations, groups and organizations').

As for the location of home, young people say *city* or *town, village, outskirts, by the sea, by the lake*, which is in line with the cognitive definition of this concept. However, the highest attendance is in specific places related to what is known to young people. These are: home country, e.g. *Poland, Italy*, family sites, e.g. *Mazowieckie, Warmia-Masuria*, family cities and towns, e.g. *Warsaw, Zamość, Białystok, Wrocław, Starachowice, Sopot, Gdynia, Lublin*, family villages, e.g. *Młynowiec, Stare Bajki*. Home is therefore also the place of origin – cf. *I'm going home – to Białystok*. Such a categorization of HOME coincides with its lexicographic definition: 'place from which someone comes (homeland)' (cf. Bańko 2000: 291). Only one respondent indicated an unknown place – *Austria*. This shows that for young, socially maladjusted people, family sites are an important location. This is emphasized by statements such as: *At home... in the village; in the village where I grew up; Certainly where I live [...] where everyone knows each other; in the hometown; in the native village*. Despite difficult experiences, a known place gives the respondents a sense of security.

Home must include: *garden, yard, garage. A swimming pool, balcony, swings* were mentioned less frequently. Inside home, there are *kitchen, dining room, living room, bedrooms, bathroom, wardrobe*. The profiles of HOME concept are expressed by exposing the size and character of its space: *large kitchen, separate dining room, large bathroom, spacious bathroom, own wardrobe, two, three, four rooms*. Most often, a home is built of: *concrete, blocks, bricks* or *wood*. Its *walls are painted*, and they are painted mainly with *white* and *light colours: pink, green, cream*. Home furnishings include: *furniture, clothes, food, fireplace, flowers*.

At home lives the closest *family*, mainly *husband, wife* or *boyfriend, girlfriend* and their *children*. Here, young people focus on the family they will start. It is an idealized family, i.e. *complete, future, happy*. A large number of wards need to live without roommates and have something exclusive – cf. *I will be on my own and everything will be for me in this home; me alone; my own wardrobe; an armchair for me*. Young people cannot imagine a home with their parents; only one statement pointed to them. Furthermore, they do not want to create a multigenerational family – cf. *Well, probably not near my parents...; Without parents*. The following people appear with low attendance in the statements: grandparents (*grandmother*), siblings (*sister*), *guests*. Home is also inhabited by animals – most often *dogs*.

Important activities performed at home include: *caring for children, raising children, keeping children, taking care of children, talking, communicating, cooking, preparing various dishes, eating common meals, cleaning, carrying out religious practices*, including *celebrating holidays, watching movies*. It is noteworthy that respondents focus on meeting the children's needs and their upbringing and communication. Only one statement concerned addiction, i.e. *smoking*. *Watching movies* and *watching comedies* were indicated as the only forms of spending free time.

Adolescents show a responsible attitude towards home. They indicated mostly: *keeping the house, taking responsibility for the household, taking care of the house, cleaning the house, returning home*. Home is a value, hence the concepts of *success, happiness, prosperity*, but also responsibility and maturity which are associated with: *money, rent, bills, credit*. The most important emotional value associated with home is *love*. Home is also associated with *trauma, nervousness, and experiencing difficulties*. You miss home, too.

Thus, the basic set of HOME definition features emerges from the statements contained in the interviews. We grouped them into basic categories, creating a synthetic cognitive definition of this concept. The research confirms that the HOME prototype indicated by the youth fits in with the understanding of HOME that is traditional for European culture. It is a 'building/apartment where the family lives and performs various activities'. This meaning of the HOME concept is also within the framework of dictionary definitions. However, it is profiled due to the specific picture of the world of the rehabilitated youth, for whom an institution (e.g. *youth educational centre, child care home or sheltered apartment*) can also be home, as well as – due to their specific needs, above all safety. That is why also *homeland* is the synonym of home. Hence, a home should be located in a well-known place, preferably in their home village or town: *Where would I like to live? Well, in this town where I am; Everyone knows each other and I don't think I would have no heart to move out of there*. It is not without significance, because home belongs to a typical cultural area, to a functionally defined space, which is the object of identification for an individual. In cultural areas, the relationship of an individual and the community with space is of particular importance. Here, functional values concern the sense of security, openness or anonymity, the possibility of taking the desired social roles, and the realization of prestige (Bierwiazzonek 2016: 105). David Hummon (1992) distinguishes five types of attachment to a place, and in the first place, he mentions everyday rootedness, related to long-term living in a given town and not leaving it (Bierwiazzonek 2016: 106). The respondents are in such a situation. What they know both makes them feel safe and makes it possible to repair what was dysfunctional. They focus mainly on the non-material aspect of the home space, i.e. its desired features: *warm, normal, quiet, calm, well-kept, cozy, own, with home and family atmosphere*. The specific decor and home equipment also draw attention. Home and its equipment should be: *clean, new, modern* – cf. *So the house will be clean. Well. Well, because if you invite someone and they sit down, I don't know, at a dirty table or drinks tea from a dirty glass, what will they think about you?; Such a glass flat must be polished like a glass (clean, shining with purity). Pastel colours dominate, as well as white*. Thus, the rehabilitated youth uses the stereotype of an ideal home, which is emphasized by the symbolism of white. White is yet a symbol of perfection, spirituality, (eternal) life, sanctification, holiness, glory, salvation, revelation, redemption, rebirth, grace, eternity, sanctity, rapture; enlightenment, reason, awareness, unawareness, truth, knowledge, timelessness, perfect wisdom, intuition, the strength of spirit; innocence, virginity, chastity, honesty; moderation; marriage; friendship; honesty, disinterestedness, compassion; joy, cheerfulness, happiness, hope; simplicity; conventionality; fear, cowardice; death, mourning; chill; energy; visible world, light, (return of the) day, dawn, day sky, moon, time; majesty, nobility; bloodless revolution, truce, peace, rest (Kopaliński 2006: 19).

Therefore, white colour does not have one universal meaning. White is the colour of non-split light because when it passes through a prism, it splits and gives the colours of the rainbow. The combination of colours: green, red and blue symbolizes the wholeness and synthesis of what is separate. It personifies the renewal of the spiritual life. In terms of meaning, it is also close to the golden colour, because, similarly, it is both colour and light, and therefore, it expresses transcendence. Its symbolism is strongly influenced by the cultural context. In the European culture, white is a symbol of purity and innocence, renewal of spiritual life, which has clear moral connotations (Bonar 2016: 109-111). Moreover, white signifies a new beginning. In the respondents' statements, such a new beginning is also evoked by such concepts as: cleanliness, novelty, modernity. Home meets the basic needs: sleeping, eating, resting, celebration. However, it is *food* that holds the first place, which must be: *homemade, warm and plentiful – there must be a lot of it*. An important element of the equipment is the *fireplace* – cf. *I associate the fireplace in my home with such love, with such, I don't know, something very cool*. Lack of a computer or rarely mentioned TV set might seem quite puzzling. On the other hand, the most important is talking, performing specific activities together, taking care of children, which indicates the directly evoked need to create interpersonal bonds in the space of a home.

In the home, there lives mainly the closest family – one or two generations. Here, young people focus on the idealized family they will establish. A dream and perfect home is in opposition to what young people experienced in their family homes, so in their designed house, one *does not party, argue, make fights, beat children or drink alcohol*. They create the picture of the future home by negating the previous one. The youth indicates that to create a home you need to *grow up, mature and become responsible*. The attitude towards home and its valuation are therefore in line with the

stereotypical picture of home, which symbolizes ‘security, durability, shelter, fortress, apartment, one’s own place’; ‘household, household members, family, family nest’; ‘family, dynasty’; ‘hospitality’. For young people, home is, therefore, a value – it protects against the world, but also equips them to live in the world, satisfies basic emotions and feelings – from basic ones, giving a *sense of security* to complex ones, such as *love, peace, happiness, warmth, trust*, and *attachment*. It is a place where you can experience a whole range of feelings – from love, friendship, joy to resignation and despair. The picture of home created by the youth shows the age-old man’s longing for home, especially when they did not have one or when it was dysfunctional – cf. *But most of the girls here did not have a normal home; I just want it to be, yes. May it be...*

The research on the linguistic and cultural picture of HOME was also conducted with the non-rehabilitated youth speaking four languages: Polish, Bulgarian, German and English (Nowakowska-Kempna, 2016) as well as with Polish students (Maciejewska, 2010). Interestingly, both the prototypical understanding of HOME as ‘building and place where the family lives’ and the most important emotional values related to home, such as *peace, silence, love, longing, warmth, happiness, security, trust*, and *attachment*, are common to all surveyed groups of young people. The similarity of answers in this regard is puzzling. It is worth noting unusual feelings: *warmth* (cf. *Well, may it be warm*) – value perceived by touch; *peace, silence* (cf. *Peace. When there are peace, silence, it is good. No, I am not looking for attractions. I like to sit in silence very much*) – values perceived by hearing and *longing* for home (cf. *I miss home*) experienced even when it has not been lost.

Various institutions are also home to the revaluated people. Interestingly, the non-rehabilitated youth also equates home with an institution, and more specifically, with a care facility. However, it is not home intended for them, but a specific part of the society.

Conclusions

The present paper deals with an important current topic of the conceptualization of HOME by socially maladjusted youth. The aforementioned research shows how the respondents define home. An attempt was made to gauge if and to what extent their understanding of HOME fits within the boundaries of dictionary definitions. Semantic ranges that ranked highest in the young people’s description, as well as features that were important to them were enlisted and discussed accordingly.

The categorization of HOME by the rehabilitated youth confirms that the linguistic picture of home is multi-layered since it results from perceiving the world by both the community and the individual. It is also dynamic, since its basis is inherited from the ancestors, constant and unchanging, and at the same time, it undergoes re-evaluation, re-categorization and re-contextualization. Apart from that, the picture of home is selective, because its particular aspects are more or less emphasized, and axiological – subject to evaluation (see main attributes of the linguistic picture of the world in: Burešová-Wania 2003: 21-22).

Significant differences in the conceptualization of HOME relate to its localization (familiar places, family places), features (modern, clean, white), partly also: its equipment and inhabitants (usually one or two generations), and activities that are performed there (mainly taking care of children and talking)⁸. In these categories, the specific picture of the world of the rehabilitated youth is most visible.

Declarations

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare they have no conflict of interest and were not affiliated with the institution at which the research was conducted.

Availability of data and material

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

Ethics approval and consent

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent (to participate and for publication) was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study.

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