



The problem of differentiating semantic and conceptual
spaces of the language

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Introduction

Human knowledge about the universe and the method by which the person classifies the universe is expressed in the language. On the other hand, the language is the only mechanism through which we can get into the hidden human mental sphere. Language research is closely associated with the research of cognition, implying identification of the segmentation of the universe being determined by the peculiarities of time and space.

If we don't look at the cognitive linguistics from the perspective of its origination (from the perspective of thought, conscious activities and the sphere of cognition study), but from the perspective of its place in the linguistic system, it will turn out that cognitive linguistics researches the content parameters of the language.

The actuality of the research: The need to demonstrate integral and differentiating markers of mental structures (knowledge representation structures) and the language structure is increasingly felt in the modern linguistic research. Cognitive linguistics still has a number

of controversial issues regarding the relation between the concept and means of its objectification in language. The existence of some kind of a link between the language system and the conceptual system is evident. The research of the “bridge” between the linguistic and the conceptual systems is the context in which the actuality of the work is revealed.

The purpose of the research is to define the concept of "beauty" in the modern English language by differentiating semantic and conceptual spaces.

The applied methodology implies segmentation of the research process by stages. Research stages serve to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Search and analysis of special literature;
2. Searching for concepts united around one sign and determine existence of the mentioned sign as the existence of a cognitive structure;
3. Identification of cognitive signs of groups of lexical units;

4. Building up contradictory lexical-semantic fields of “Beauty” in modern English;
5. Constructing contradictory semantic frames of “Beauty” in modern English;
6. Constructing lexical-semantic field and semantic frames;
7. Drawing specific theoretical conclusions as a result of analysis.

Hypothesis of the research sounds the following way: A semantic item corresponding to a specific lexical item has two sets of references, One of them being the conceptual system, while the other being the lexical one. Supposedly, semantics can perform the function of a perfect “bridge” between linguistic and conceptual systems.

Individual scientific methods (typical of the field of philology), disciplinary methods (typical of the field of linguistics) and interdisciplinary methods as well as philosophical (analytical) and general scientific (systemic-structural and modeling) methods and approaches are relevant to our research.

Thus, the complex, dynamic, integral and subordinated system of methods is applied in the methodology. In other words, methodological pluralism is presented, which implies the use of different methods and principles in the one intellectual sphere through their synthesis. In this specific case we mean synthesis of differentiation and integration processes.

Poly-paradigmatic research methodology realized in the work is focused both on the cognitive linguistics and structural linguistics. The methods developed within the premises of systemic-structural and anthropocentric theories are equally relevant to the presented work, the methods of semantic decomposition and conceptual analysis are implied.

Scientific novelty of the work implies structuring the concept of “Beauty” in modern English from the systemic- structural, linguo-cognitive and axiological perspectives.

The practical value of the research is determined by the following fact: the data obtained are valid for

cognitive linguistics as well as for structural linguistics and courses of English Language lexicology.

Systemic- structural and cognitive directions of the linguistic research have a claim on self-sufficiency – each direction considers that only based on it the opposite direction obtains its sense.

All the stages of the research have evidenced the necessity of determining the direction of linguistic analysis, which would be a reasonable basis for the synthesized form of systemic-structural and linguo-cognitive directions. Searching of the above mentioned form does not imply denial of the previous or modern theory, but it assumes positive development of already existed one.

Synthesis of systemic- structural and linguo-cognitive perspectives ensures completeness and adequacy of interpretation of multi-dimensional phenomenon. This very fact determines the theoretical value of the work.

The data are obtained from the English language dictionaries and Berkley's frame network database.

The structure of the work comprises: introduction, chapters, sub- chapters, conclusions and bibliography.

Scientific novelty and actuality of the theme is grounded in the introductory part of the work. Research objectives, key tasks for achieving goals, theoretical and practical values of the theme and research methodology are defined.

In the first chapter – "Significance of the Language Units and Human Cognitive Experience" – peculiarity of the relation between the word and the concept is discussed; The essence of the concept in the contexts of linguo- cultural studies and cognitive linguistics is defined; Integral and differential markers of semantic and conceptual analyses are determined.

The second chapter – "lexical-Semantic and Conceptual Spaces of "Beauty" " - is dedicated to the analysis of the transformation of the concept of "Beauty"

through time and space; In the given chapter the repertoire of lexical-semantic field and semantic frame of "Beauty" in modern English language is identified.

In the third chapter –“Associational Spaces of the Concept of “Beauty” – thematic spaces associated with the concept of research are presented, nominative fields of their language representatives are revealed and semantic frames associated with the concept of research are constructed.

The Concluding Chapter summarizes and generalizes research results.

Chapter 1. Meaning of Language Units and Human Cognitive experience

The essence of the concept as a mental unit is accessible by analyzing its objectivation means in language.

The essence of the conceptual analyses lies in the concept modeling and in identification of the relations between concepts. That means not only description of separate words, but also determination of peculiarities of

relations in the whole conceptual field and between its elements.

The problem of determining the relation between conceptual and semantic types of analyses, basically implies the problem of determining the relation between conceptual sphere and semantic space.

Conceptual sphere is a pure sphere of thinking. It consists of the concepts that exist in forms of semantic icons, charts, notions, frames and scenarios. Semantic space of language is a part of the conceptual sphere that has obtained its expression through language signs and meanings. Semantics represents arranged entity of interdependent units. The relations between the elements of the semantic space reflect the relations between the concepts of the conceptual sphere. Semantic space is the part of the conceptual sphere, which is expressed through the language signs and meanings.

Conceptual sphere is much broader than the part which is expressed by lingual means. However, it is

possible to penetrate into the human conceptual sphere through the study of semantics of language signs.

Chapter II. Lexical-Semantic and Conceptual Spaces of “Beauty”

“Beauty” is a subjective content. Subjectivity of the content implies possibility of different perception of the phenomenon. The mentioned difference is conditioned by differential psychology of different nations and individuals.

Accordingly, content-bases sphere molded by one individual might be characterized by “probability” from the point of view of another individual.

“Probability” implies alternativeness of existence of the content in the “content spheres” of the subjective content. This fact is determined by the existence of differential psychology of different nations and individuals. For example: from the point of view of one individual - “proportional” means “beautiful”, while from

the point of view of another individual being “proportional” doesn’t imply being “beautiful”.

In the semantic structure of the elements of the field periphery semantic component of “beauty” is contextually conditioned, In other words, peculiarity of the content of “Beauty” is fully subject to the peculiarity of the context.

Chapter 3. Associative Space of the Concept of “Beauty”.

Content- based elements associated with the concept of “beauty” unite elements on the basis of existence of common semantic denominator in their semantic structure.

The mentioned basis imply:

- a) Unification of elements according to their semantic similarities or closeness;
- b) Unification of elements through different semantic correlations.

This means that in the unities where the elements are united on the basis the mentioned relation, analogy is prioritized, while contrast being ignored. Thus,

the process of constructing the unity based on the mentioned type of relation between elements implies the process of searching integrals and not differentials.

Associative spaces are connected with each other – attraction is evidenced among them. Spaces are not closed and their boundaries are not distinct, spaces intersect each other and continue in each other.

Conclusion

At first sight, conceptual analysis is similar to the semantic one, but the purpose of the semantic analysis is to explain the word, while conceptual analysis aims at representing peculiarities of the knowledge about the universe.

The essence of the conceptual analysis is to identify the relation between modeling of the concept and its links with other concepts, which implies not only description of the essence of the word, but also the definition of the entire conceptual field and relations between its elements.

Semantic analysis is focused on the explication of the semantic structure of the word, while conceptual analysis implies the search for the concepts that are integrated around the integral sign and determination of the existence of this sign as a cognitive structure.

Similarity / difference between conceptual sphere and semantic space is the following:

Conceptual sphere consists of concepts; It represents a sphere of pure thinking. Semantic space of language is the part of the conceptual sphere that has obtained its expression through the language signs and meanings.

Conceptual sphere is much broader than its part being expressed by linguistic means. As far as objectivation of the concept in the language is possible by means of lingual meanings, it is possible to penetrate into the human conceptual sphere through the study of the semantics of the language signs.

In some sense, semantic space and conceptual sphere are two identical phenomena - both of them are associated with the process of thinking. The main difference between the

semantic space and conceptual sphere lies in the following fact: language meaning (quantum of semantic space) is linked to the lingual sign, while the concept (element of the conceptual sphere) is not linked to the lingual sign. Dealing with the analysis of the conceptual sphere the following regularity gives evidence: conceptual sphere could be (or could not be) expressed by the lingual sign.

The following form of the concept representation is observed in the constructed frames.

The form of representation is characteristic not of one individual object but of many objects belonging to this concept- concepts are represented by the set of appropriate objects or by the class of multiple objects that imply the absence of multiple representation models of concepts.

Structural connections between the objects cause the emergence of representations of the whole range.

The frame includes not only separate objects, but their "prototypical representatives", in which typical characteristics of all the classes are represented.

The prototype of the object class is an object that clearly reflects the whole structure of the class and which can be regarded as a combination of the signs that are best distinguished from others by these concepts.

Belonging of the object to the class is determined by its similarity with the prototype. Similarity with the prototype and, therefore, its belonging to the class can be reduced to the coincidence/non-coincidence of the prototype with certain signs. Prototypical representation is nothing more than the representation of a number of objects through the signs characteristic of the whole entity.

Concepts with different degree of abstractness create hierarchical system. Signs characteristic of the concept enable to single out different subgroups, while determinants express characteristics of the objects that are specific for the given concept and enable to differentiate its objects from the objects that belong to the other class.

The concepts are related to each other through the ways that can be regarded as associations between concepts. Every concept is connected to the other one.

This connection can be long and indirect, but in the end the two concepts are still connected to each other.

The main process that operates in the frame is the cascade spreadable activation that ensures access to information in this unit, identification of certain concepts in it. Activation spreads in the whole unit, which means that when one concept is activated, this activation spreads over all the concepts related to it.

The ways in which the concepts relate to each other are different. They have different lengths. This length is related to the frequency that implies the frequency of occurrence of the concept in the semantic memory. More frequent concepts are verified more quickly than the rare ones.

The typical, i. e. central members of categories are connected with more general slots by shorter ways, while typical or peripheral members are connected with more general slots by longer ways. In other words, the length of the way shows how close the two concepts are.

Differential cognitive signs are "dispersed" in different segments of the semantic space (core, transitional sphere, periphery), accordingly, specific "point of view", in other words, contours of the differential cognitive sign are not clear in the semantic space, more precisely, fragmentary and inconsistent objectivation of "viewpoints" is present in the semantic space. Objectivators of the specific "viewpoint" are dispersed in the semantic space, accordingly, objectivators of different "viewpoints" are evidenced in the semantic space. This fact shows that, in contrast to the conceptual space, configuration of the semantic space is not defined by the "viewpoint"-configuration of the semantic space is conditioned by the status of the word-identifier, in other words, by the place of the word- identifier in the semantic structure of the elements of the lexical- semantic field.

Semantic space of the language represents a field constructed on the basis of identification of the existence/nonexistence of the word-identifier in the semantic structure of elements. Evidently, in contrast to

the conceptual space, the field can't have the status of the organized space of "viewpoints".

The results of thesis

The results of the thesis have been published in the scientific journal "Scripta Manent" and were presented at the international conference, which was held in September, 2016 at the University of Georgia.

The topic presented on the conference was the criteria of differentiating content- based units. Special attention was drawn to the need of demonstrate integral and differentiating markers of mental structures (knowledge representation structures) and the language structure in the modern linguistic research. Significance of the topic was conditioned by the fact that cognitive linguistics still has a number of controversial issues regarding the relation between the concept and means of its objectification in language. Finally the topic highlights the problem of differentiating semantic and conceptual spaces of the language.

Publications and Conferences

Publications have been published in Multilingual International Scientific Journal “Scripta Manent”:

1. “The problem of differentiating conceptual and semantic spaces of the language” № 1(25) 2015 year.
2. “Cognition, cognitive science and cognitive linguistics.” №1 (29) 2016 year.

Conferences:

1. “Specification of Conceptual analysis”
The University of Georgia Annual Conference VII
30.05.2015.
2. “Human Existence in Culture and Language”
The University of Georgia Annual Conference VIII
28.05.2016.
3. “Criteria of differentiating content – based units.”
The University of Georgia International Conference
“Language, Culture and World View” 21.09.2016.

4. “Semantic cognitive direction of research”

The University of Georgia Annual Conference IX

26.05.2017