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BASIC SOCIAL CATEGORIES: NATURAL SEMANTIC META-LANGUAGE (NSM) APPROACH

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ANNOTATION

The study deals with the NSM analysis, developed by A. Wierzbicka, and its essence to develop the prototype structure of the basic social categories. The hypothesis questioned within this paper: 'Are the NSM analysis results of the category are prone to determine its prototype?'.

The work of Sapir Whorf claims that the linguistic systems of the "pictures of the world" are incompatible with each other, whereas Wierzbicka, on the contrary, asserts that culturally specific concepts are well comparable, as they can be translated into a universal language that excludes these differences. Thus, the language of semantic primitives – NSM, demonstrating its expressive capacity, restricts the set of the meanings for maximum that refuses further decomposition, the only way the semantic content of any complex expression can be made explicitly in full detail.

Key words: basic social categories, lexicographic analysis, componential analysis, cultural concepts, NSM, prototype theory, categorization, semantic primitives.

АСОСИЙ ИЖТИМОИЙ КАТЕГОРИЯЛАР: ТАБИИЙ СЕМАНТИК МЕТАТИЛ ТАҲЛИЛИ

АННОТАЦИЯ

Тадқиқот А.Вежбицкая томонидан ишлаб чиқилган NSM (табиий семантик метатил) таҳлили ва унинг асосий ижтимоий категорияларнинг прототипларини аниқлашдаги ролига бағишланган. Мақоланинг асосий гипотезаси: "NSM таҳлили натижалари категорияларнинг прототипларини аниқлашга қанчалик мойил?", эканлигига асосланган.

Сепир-Уорфга кўра "турли оламларнинг лисоний тасвири бир-бирига мос эмас". Бироқ айни пайтда А.Вежбицкая ўзига хос маданий концептларни қиёслаш мумкинлигини таъкидлайди, чунки унинг таъкидлашича уларни универсал тилга таржима қилиш имконияти мавжуд. Зеро, NSMнинг семантик ибтидолари семаларни максимал даражада қисқартирган ҳолда уларнинг ортиқча шаклланишига чек қўяди.

Калит сўзлар: асосий ижтимоий категориялар, лексикографик таҳлил, компонент таҳлил, маданий концептлар, NSM (табиий семантик метатил), прототип назарияси, категориялаштириш, семантик ибтидолар.

INTRODUCTION

Modern linguistic branches, within the scope of anthropological paradigm in particular, have notably influenced the development of lexicography. Lexicographic resources are one of the active aspects of language and gender studies; their gender analysis gives evidence of the norms of femininity and masculinity from the linguistic viewpoint. Thus, human being as a representative of the language is being researched in the branches as "vocabulary through a person" and "a person through the vocabulary" [Dubichinskiy V.V., 2009;77] [our translation], since the results of gender researches are essential to solve the problems of both approaches.

The ideas of feminist criticism founded in the Western languages in line with gender theory has undoubtedly affected the lexicographic description of the lexical units. Methodological aspect of lexicographic analysis from gender viewpoint includes two approaches: firstly, the usage of lexicographic resource to analyze the national-cultural attributes of communicative gender components; secondly, the study of the usage and method of representing cultural concepts of femininity and masculinity and gender stereotypes in lexicography [Kolesnikova M.S., 2001;14].

Classification of different qualities of a person, including intellectual and behavioral attributes by means of language in lexical-semantic groups is of great importance in linguistics. The studies [Rozina R.I., 1991;52-56] representing national and cultural attributes of the concept *human being* [Safarov Sh.S., 2011; 34-37] confirm the importance to describe culture in accordance with the analysis of the concept *human being*.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

A conceptual analysis of gender marked kinship terms as "human being (odam) and man (erkak)", "wife (xotin) and husband (er)", "son (o'g'il) and girl (qiz)" in the Uzbek language [Ergasheva G.I., 2011] has been carried out on the basis of lexicographic descriptions. The study questioned the identification of the concepts "human being and man" (odam va erkak) and consequently the concepts "child and son" (bola va o'gil) from feminist critique viewpoint; it was based on the social and experimental methods proposed by Y.Stepanov that has been applied in creating the content of the relevant concepts [Stepanov Yu.S., 2001].

A clear evidence of feminist critique is observed in the article of B.Mengliyev, where he takes a semantic analysis of the lexeme *human being*. According to B.Mengliev, the semantic chain of the lexeme *human being* consists of three genetically relevant semes, each of which can be defined as a relative integrity:

1.   The creature that is able to think, speak and work;
2.   A male being;
3.   A mature being [Mengliyev B., 2001; 25].

Lexicographic analysis of the concept "human being" (odam) in the Uzbek etymological dictionary is as follows: Arabic word, ъ*adamu* – the name of the first human Adam; ъ*adam* – person. Uzbek language has borrowed it in the form of adam (odam) [Rahmatullayev Sh., 1992].

Uzbek explanatory dictionary defines "odam" as "a member of society, a person"

[Ma'rufov T., 1981].   *Odam* in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Active Words of the Uzbek Language:

1)   A person, a human being, a supreme being;
2)   Each member of the society, a person;
3)   Each member of the community or family [Hojiyev A., Nurmonov A., 2001].

The definitions show that *human being* refers to both man and woman. However examples given in the dictionaries demonstrate that a *male being* is primarily meant under *odam:*

"...mo'ysafid yoshdagi shu **odam** *– oz emas-ko'p emas, naq olti yuz ellik betlik ulkan romanni inglizchadan o'girib, o'quvchilarga tortiq qilishga jazm etdi* [Iminov A., 2010; 5].

"Peska[1] onam xush ko'rgan **odamlardan** *biri bo'lib, uning o'ta bema'ni, telba qiliqlari ham onam nazarida kechirarli edi"* [Iminov A., 2010; 11].

Er in "Devonu lugotit-turk" defined and rendered as *odam*:

Pushmaz **er** *bo'z qush tutar, evmas* **er** *o'rung qush tutar –*
 Ishda siqilmaydigan **odam** *oq lochinni ham tutadi,*
Shoshilmagan **odam** *eng yaxshi bozini ovlaydi"* [Abdullayev X.D., 2005;51].

In the following example *odam* implies both sexes which is supported by the traditional feminist theory:

Mana shu samimiy iltijolar zamiridagi muruvvat har qanday bag'ritosh odamni ham eritib yuborgudek edi [Iminov A., 2010; 5].

According to the method indicating the role of the concept and its social significance, we observe that *odam* is identified with a male person rather than female. For instance, the analysis of the concept in common life situations can be represented as such: when a male person knocks the door, one says *bir odam turibdi* (a human being is outside), unconsciously implying a male person. Yet, if a woman knocks the door, we never say *bir odam turibdi* but *bir ayol turibdi* (a woman is outside).

Compare the examples below:
Bu *ayolning* kimsasizligi, ojizligi ko'nglimni yumshatdi [Iminov A., 2010; 23].
Bu *odamning* kimsasizligi, ojizligi ko'nglimni yumshatdi.
"Loneliness and weakness of this *woman* warmed my heart".
"Loneliness and weakness of this *person* warmed my heart".

A similar view is observed with a *person,* whether it implies mostly male to female. However, the main point of the present paragraph is to demonstrate the essence of NSM analysis in the scope of hermeneutic theory, i.e. to what extent NSM results prevail lexicographic analyses to achieve "understanding", moreover their contribution to define prototypes of the relevant categories.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis questioned within this paragraph is that 'the NSM analysis results of the category are prone to determine its prototype'. Consequently, we found

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[1] The name of the male professor

it reasonable to give a brief explanation to the NSM approach developed by Anna Wierzbicka and a prototype theory as well, the latter being defined through the first.

L.Hjemslev in Prolegomena to a Theory of Language [Hjemslev L, 1953] made a structural semantic analysis of kin terms as men, women, boys, and girls, which implied a progressive reducing of complex semantic entities to simpler semantic elements. For instance, *man* implies 'he-human being', *woman* implies 'she-human being', *boy* is 'he-human being, child' and *girl* is 'she-human being, child, whereas *human being* and *child* may be represented as the elements.

A parallel style of structural analysis came to be known as componential analysis (CA) after the kinship terms and various farmyard animal species componential analysis were employed in the works of Lounsbury (1956) and Goodenough (1956), J.Lyons (1968), A.Lehrer (1974), G.Leech (1974) and Eugene Nida (1975).

In spite, the kinship terms constitute rather small part of the anthropological picture, but their successful yielding to structural analysis came out as canonical introductory material for an array of researches.

A lot of introductory linguistics textbooks illustrate a standard feature of semantic analysis, lexical decomposition, or componential analysis of kinship terms (Fromkin, Rodman *et al* (2005) and O'Grady *et al* (1997)) (cf. Cliff Goddard, Anna Wierzbicka) as following.

man: woman:
[+HUMAN] [+HUMAN]
[+MALE] [-MALE]
[+ADULT] [+ADULT]
boy: girl
 [+HUMAN] [+HUMAN]
[+MALE] [-MALE]
[-ADULT] [-ADULT]

The analysis does not carry an exceptional character, since the third feature may vary to MATURE, ADULT, YOUNG. Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka believe that the above shown analysis is profoundly flawed [Goddard C,Wierzbicka A., 2013; 24]. Their task was to expose the inadequacies of the canonical analysis and to provide more satisfactory analysis from cognitive viewpoint – galvanizing the issues of semantic methodology. They argue that fundamental questions for semantic analysis turn on the issue of semantic metalanguage through introducing the analytical method of the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) approach. They propose original semantic explications in terms of the words *men, women and children, babies, boys* and *girls* claiming for their superiority over the standard analyses.

We will try to employ the results introduced by Cliff and Wierzbicka, in fact an NSM approach with respect to the treatment of category structures in the scope of cognitive linguistics, i.e. in terms of prototypes.

According to the NSM analysis, the language of description is to be interpretable by the lay people as well, since "the optimal meta language of semantic description is

a standardized and regularized version of a natural language" [Goddard C, Wierzbicka A., 2013;26]. The methodological point for introducing NSM is worth highlighting, as cognitive linguistics assumes that testing and revising hypotheses about meanings depend on our ability to make predictions through semantic description. Meta language excludes technical terms being inclined towards conceptually realistic description – "*native* conceptualization" or "principle of indigenization" [Goddard C, Wierzbicka A., 2013;24]. Hence, it does not mean that exotic terms have no place in semantics; however they urge special justification through special investigation which is a matter of future researches. In other words, an optimal semantic meta language prefers dealing with ordinary natural languages as clear as possible, employing the elements whose meanings are present in all natural languages.

Dealing with the kinship terms Goddard and Wierzbicka have identified KIND, PEOPLE and BODY to be the most important elements, so called semantic primes. It is worth noting that semantic primes may be represented in terms of the time-period expressions A LONG TIME and A SHORT TIME; the dimension term SMALL, the specifier elements THIS and OTHER, and the "logical" concepts BECAUSE and CAN, etc. For instance, shape descriptors as 'LONG', 'ROUND', and 'FLAT' may be introduced towards body-part words.

For present purpose, we are not intended to justify or explain the details of the NSM meta-language as such, but rather to show how it can be introduced into revealing the prototype structure of the terms concerned. On the other hand, it is obvious that the exercise can be seen as an experiment testing the expressive capacity of the NSM meta-language itself.

The importance of categorization within NSM analysis cannot be underestimated, as it is the most important tool of consciousness: essential for normal thinking, practical activity and unconditionally for successful messaging.

An early view that linguistic categories are to be blurred at the periphery but clear at the core has been proposed by the German scientist K.O.Erdmann at the beginning of XX century. However, in the 1970s an American scientist E.Rosch advances a separate theory of prototypes [Rosch E.R., 1978; 27-48]. Her empirical studies have important significance, since they challenge the traditional Aristotelian theory that concepts are stored in consciousness as logical framework of sufficient and necessary conditions that determine the place of each particular category.

Questioning the very theory, E.Rosch argues that most of the everyday concepts have a graded internal structure that is characterized by a prototype (described as a reference point) at the center and blurred boundaries at the periphery. Wittgenstein claims that although the rope consists of many threads, this does not mean that all the threads fall along the length of this rope. Consequently, E.Rosch assumes that the defining properties are not necessarily be shared by all the subspecies of this concept; all members of the category may have a "family resemblance", the similarity which is more likely to be recognized through sensory perception that is determined logically. For example, not all cups have pens and not all of them are used for drinking. In general, E.Rosch comes to conclusion that the meaning of the most of everyday

concepts is not drawn from their defining properties, but from those characteristics that correspond to their most typical members.

It is worth noting that the experiments in the field of coloring by B.Berlin and P.Kay [Berlin B., Kay P., 1969] have shaped the theory of Rosch. Scientists have studied the color category at inter-lingual level: the relation of different cultures towards the colors based on the specific hierarchy. They tried to demonstrate that there is a universal, common for all color gradation.

Based on the theory of prototypes formulated and presented in the field of cognitive psychology by Rosch, modern science, along with cognitive linguistics, considers that the theory of prototypes goes back to the 1970s of the XX century. E.S. Kubryakova defines the theory of prototypes in cognitive linguistics as "a new approach to the phenomena of categorization; concept being viewed as a structure composed of the elements of prototypes" [Kubryakova Ye.S., 1997].

Being a key concept, the prototype implies an abstract image embodying many similar forms of the same object or pattern, the most representative example of the concept that fixes its typical properties. The prototypes are formed based on two models: attribute-frequency model and central tendency model [Robert L., Judith E., 1981]. According to the attribute-frequency model, the prototypes reflect the most recurring characteristics that belong to certain members of the category. Assimilation of prototypes is carried out due to the recurring features of the objects that make up the category. The model of the central tendency combines the principle of "family resemblance", presented by Wittgenstein, and the central tendency developed by Rosch. Wittgenstein [Wittgenstein L., 1953] argues that the word referents are not to have common elements, rather than a family resemblance may link the various referents of a word. E.Rosch & C.B. Mervis, who empirically investigated the existence of family resemblance relationships, in natural language, note that "A family resemblance relationship consists of a set of items of the form AB, BC, CD, DE, that is, each item has at least one, and probably several, elements in common with one or more other items, but no, or few, elements are common to all items" [Rosch E.R., 1978; 27-48]. It can be assumed that prototype is something an average of the entire set of members of the category.

The fact that an empirical approach prevails in the study of prototypes by E.Rosch is worth attention. In her Cognitive Representation of Semantic Categories (1975) E.Rosch asked 200 American college students to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, whether the items she presented regarded as a good example of the category *furniture*.

Turning to the question of the concept *odam* we assume or rather certify, according to the lexicographical analysis, that it includes both a man and a woman.

NSM analysis of kinship terms developed by Wierzbicka served as a foundation for our hypothesis to be proved. In their "Basic social categories" they provide lexical decomposition in the form of "explicit formulae" [Serio P., 2011] of the term *women*, one of the components of which has been introduced as a semantic molecule [M] in the construction of the concept *men,* whereas *child* has been input as a semantic molecule in regard to the concept *women*.

women

a. people of one kind

b. people of this kind have lived for some time, not for a short time

c. the bodies of people of this kind are not like the bodies of people of another kind

d. there are two kinds of people's bodies

e. some parts of the bodies of one kind are not like parts of the bodies of people of the other kind

f. the bodies of people of this kind are like this:

at some time there can be inside the body of someone of this kind a living body of a child [M]

It is apparent that, the component (f) characterizes women's bodies in terms of their reproductive function, which is, in turn, quite clear explanation for youngsters.

The explication for *men* given by Wierzbicka and Goddard differs from women's in adding the molecule *women*, and they do so in a rather interesting way. Rather than characterising men's bodies in positive terms, a different strategy is employed: men's bodies are established as belonging to one kind and this kind is simply contrasted with 'the bodies of women [M]', which are 'of the other kind'.

men

a. people of one kind

b. people of this kind have lived for some time, not for a short time

c. the bodies of people of this kind are not like the bodies of people of another kind

d. there are two kinds of people's bodies

e. some parts of the bodies of one kind are not like parts of the bodies of people of the other kind

f. the bodies of people of this kind are of one kind

g. the bodies of women [M] are of the other kind

CONCLUSION

Based on the model of the frequency of features, it becomes obvious that the prototype should be that member of the category that more closely corresponds to the frequently occurring combinations of characteristics. Having studied the NSM theory proposed by Wierzbicka and Goddard, one may assume that the NSM results of the category "man" developed by these authors may assist to justify that the prototype of odam (a human being) goes back to Odam Ato (Adam), since it represents the frequency characteristics. So eventually, Odam Ato acquires the prototype status in relation to the category "odam".

Âdam (*Arabic*) is believed to have been the first male human being on Eearth in Islam. Since Adam's role as the father of the human race is looked upon by Muslims with reverence. Muslims also refer to his wife, Hawa (*Arabic*), as the "mother of mankind" who was created from the Adam's rib.

Some cases have been concerned with additional polysemic meanings connected with extra-linguistic factors; how lexical polysemy is treated through NSM approach. The like issues have been discussed in the NSM literature; however, NSM is inclined towards single descriptive meanings of the words concerned, stating them in reductive explications, which allows us not only to detect polysemy, but also to understand it, because it enables to "see" and to compare the relevant meanings in detail.

A familiar example is the words *xotin* and *ayol*, both of which can be used to refer to both *wives* and *women*. According to Wierzbicka "It would not be possible to formulate a single predictive paraphrase, because any paraphrase is broad enough to include both kinds". Therefore, two distinct meanings for each word concerned may be posited as following: It can be pointed out that in the proverb: *Hunari yo'q erkak-dan, Ignasi bor xotin yaxshi,* under *xotin* the opposite sex of male being – *a woman* is being implied*,* whereas *Xotinning chiroyi erdan* proposes a married woman – *a wife.*

It is worth noting that we have faced a lot of cases confirming that lexeme *xotin* (in line with *ayol*) implies two meanings at the same time – social statuses of a *woman* and a *wife*, but the lexemes *er* and *erkak* represent two distinct social statuses of a *husband* and a *male being*. Hegel's aphorism translated by Tyurikov and Shogulomov confirms the statement above: *"Ayol* farzand timsolida erini, er farzand timsolida *xotinini* sevadi; har ikkalasi uchun shu farzand muhabbatning o'zidir".*

The integration of the new methods of prototypical semantics worked out by Rosch and NSM analysis proposed by Wierzbicka may be justified when following a hermeneutic approach aimed at understanding a particular category.

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