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BINARY CONCEPTS AS AN OBJECT OF LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

The article deals with the study of the main modern approaches of the concept investigation. Special attention has been paid to the methods of binary concepts analysis in modern linguistics. The research has been conducted on the example of the binary concepts HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS in modern English. The author has carried out the definition analysis of lexemes verbalizing the concepts HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS. It has been stated that the conceptual core of the binary concepts is represented by three main content components which prove their binary nature and reveal that happiness is a positive emotion deriving from the luck or the beneficial event of any kind, it is a state of well-being, abundance, pleasure and bliss while unhappiness is a negative emotional state occurring from adverse events or conditions, it is a failure, trouble, and misfortune. The research also examines combinatorial properties and synonymous series of lexemes "happiness" and "unhappiness" as a means of expressing the analysed concepts. The article deals with the actualization of key lexemes in the context, defines additional conceptual characteristics of the binary concepts HAPPINESS:: UNHAPPINESS and determines their associative field. The author has come to the conclusion that the study of the lexical-semantic representation of the concepts allows determining the conceptually meaningful characteristics of happiness and unhappiness as the key notions representing English speakers' worldview.

Key words: concept, binary opposition, binary concept, verbalization.

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БІНАРНІ КОНЦЕПТИ ЯК ОБ'ЄКТ ЛІНГВІСТИЧНОГО ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

Статтю присвячено вивченню основних сучасних підходів та методів дослідження концептів взагалі та бінарних концептів зокрема. Наукову розвідку здійснено на прикладі бінарних концептів ЩАСТЯ :: НЕЩАСТЯ в сучасній англійській мові. Автором здійснюється дефініційний аналіз лексем, що вербалізують досліджувані бінарні концепти, вивчаються комбінаторні властивості та синонімічні ряди лексем "happiness" та "unhappiness" як засіб вираження аналізованих концептів. У статті також розглядається актуалізація ключових лексем у контексті, визначаються додаткові концептуальні характеристики бінарних концептів ЩАСТЯ::НЕЩАСТЯ та аналізується їхнє асоціативне поле за допомогою лексем, що вживаються у їхньому найближчому оточенні.

Ключові слова: концепт, бінарна опозиція, бінарний концепт, вербалізація.

The modern paradigm of linguistic studies is characterized by the anthropocentric approach, which has become a new stage in the evolutionary linguistic development. This approach shifts the priority of linguistic research to the study of the human cognition processes and their reflection in language. The conceptualization of reality fragments by human consciousness and its verbalization is the most relevant topic in modern linguistics. Thus, the concept and its representation in language become the focal point in many linguistic studies.

Numerous works by home (S.A. Zhabotynska, A.M. Pryhodko, N.V. Bratus, etc.) and foreign (V.I. Karasyk, R.M. Frumkina, Yu. S. Stepanov, A. Wierzbička, etc.) scholars have been devoted to the nature of concepts, their structure, research methods, taxonomy and language representation. The scholars are unanimous in the fact that the concept is a multidimensional mental entity and receives indirect objectification through language, and, on the other hand, it is characterized by individual, socio-cultural and contextual variability and thus can only be fully represented in numerous communication situations.

In the process of interaction with the environment, a person has cognized it and created the worldview structured as a bipolar multitude in different planes: from the everyday vision of the world in its cosmogonic model. Being the basis of conceptualization, the opposition includes associations about similarities and differences as well as factors of reality perception which are subjective for each individual. Linguists believe that concepts are grouped in series connected by links and form a network comparable to the world view, and within these series they are organized according to the principle of opposition and binarism [2, p. 20]. These binary concepts include HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS.

The **relevance** of the study is determined by the great significance of the binary concepts HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS in the system of English speakers' national and cultural values. The analysis of the means verbalizing the binary concepts in English reflects the relationship between language and culture, contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural specifics of lexical and phraseological units used to actualize the considered concepts in language.

The **aim** of the study is to analyse approaches to the study of binary concepts on the example of the concepts HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS in modern English.

The term "concept opposition" goes back to such terms as "opposition" and "binary opposition". At present, the binary opposition is a universal means of cognizing the world [7]. It has been established that the description of any world model contains binary oppositions which are of universal character: *life-death, happiness-unhappiness, right-left, good-bad, close-distant, past-future, here-there*. The left side of the opposition is always considered to be positive, the right side is negative [9]. Various terms are used in modern conceptual and cognitive science to denote conceptual oppositions: concept – anti-concept, conceptual opposition, binary opposition, semantically related categories, etc. In our study we use the term "binary concepts" since it implements the meaning of "something that

consists of two parts”, thus, acting as a connecting and opposing element of the studied concepts HAPPINESS and UNHAPPINESS.

The methodology for the study of concepts, offered in the framework of the linguistic-cultural approach, involves a system of research procedures aimed at highlighting different aspects of concepts, namely, the semantic potential of relevant concepts in a given culture. It emphasizes the need to use linguistic data (work with vocabulary and other texts), and the attraction of materials from related disciplines: sociology, psychology, cultural studies, etc. All considered approaches view concepts as mental ways of representing reality in the minds of people as “clusters of meaning”, carry important cultural information and find their concrete expression in the form of signs: in language, in art, etc.

O. I. Sheigal and O. S. Archakova give a list of methods used to research concepts: “component analysis of the keyword semantics – the name of the concept, analysis of the synonyms and derivatives of the keyword, analysis of the compatibility of the keyword (both free and stable phrasal combinations), analysis of proverbs and aphorisms that objectify this concept, psycholinguistic experiments, analysis of texts in different types of discourse” [12, p. 19-24].

V.I. Karasyk offers the following list of steps in the description of the concept: 1) definition; 2) context analysis; 3) etymological analysis; 4) paremyological analysis; 5) questionnaires, interviews [4, p. 131]. Thus, conceptual analysis allows combining the linguistic and cultural semantics of the word, which is delimited in applied linguistics in connection with the division into the language and conceptual picture of the world. Combining these two approaches will lead to an adequate and complete analysis of the concepts of natural language.

According to some scientists, conceptual analysis is not a specific method used to analyze concepts [11, p. 3], but just an intuitive approach to the study, related to the ideas and life benchmarks of the researcher. R.M. Frumkina distinguishes several types of conceptual analysis, dividing them according to: 1) the nature of the analyzed material (complex mental formations of the type of thought, knowledge, etc.); 2) the way of involving the conceptual background; 3) by the way of attracting its own linguistic and conceptual senses, all of the researcher’s experience.

In our opinion, an interesting conceptual analysis has been developed by Yu. S. Stepanov. It can be conditionally called historical-etymological. By engaging in conceptual analysis, he tracks the evolution of the concept content from the analysis of its “internal form” and end with the analysis of the contemporary content of the concept [10].

The construction of the method and the ways of analyzing the concept varies depending on the original position, on the vision and understanding of the conceptual object. The starting position is understood as, at least, two modern trends that consider the concept in different ways. Linguocognitology considers the concept as a substitute for the notion, as a “hint at a possible meaning” [5, p. 282], i.e. the concept is considered as an individual meaning, in contrast to the collective, dictionary-fixed meaning. In linguistic and cultural studies, the basic unit of culture is the concept as a “multidimensional semantic formation, in which the valuative, imaginary and conceptual aspects are singled out” [5, p. 129].

In this regard, it should be noted that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive: “the concept as the mental formation in the consciousness of the individual is the way to the conceptsphere of the society, that is, ultimately, to culture, and the concept as a unit of culture is the fixation of collective experience, which becomes the property of the individual” [5, p. 139]. In other words, the difference exists in the direction: from the individual consciousness to the culture (linguocognitive concept) or, conversely, from culture to the individual consciousness (linguistic-cultural concept).

When the concept is activated in the process of intellectual or speech activity, the person himself/herself does not think about the constituent elements of its structure, and only the scholar-linguist, operating the given concept as a unit of knowledge, singles out its specific characteristics, or components (conceptual signs), using various techniques and methods, which will be used in our study.

One of the most common methods is the following: the study begins with the choice of the name of the concept. This status is given to the linguistic unit, which conveys the content of the concept most adequately. Choosing the name of the concept is not always unambiguous. In our study, which analyzes the binary concepts of HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS, we have chosen the lexemes “happiness” and “unhappiness” as concept names since these units enable presenting the content and composition of the concepts under consideration in the most comprehensive and general form.

Lexicographic sources are widely used to determine the cognitive content of the concept. To reveal the conceptual content enclosed in the name of the concept, the researchers turn to explanatory dictionaries to analyze its definitions. According to the defining method, the meaning of the word is conventionally equated with its vocabulary definition, and each significant part of the vocabulary definition is considered to be a component of meaning. The semantic structure of the word in the component analysis is considered in the form of a two-plane formation: material – lexemes and the ideal – sememes. The sememe, in its turn, has its structure and contains elementary units of meaning – semes. It is “through the analysis of the semes, we get access to the sphere of the ideal in the language, “catch” the concepts” [1, p. 53].

At the beginning of our study, through component analysis, the nuclear semes have been determined in the semantic structure of key lexemes, with the actualization of which the concepts HAPPINESS::UNHAPPINESS are reflected. The analysis of the definitions of the words “happiness” and “unhappiness” indicate that the conceptual core of HAPPINESS and UNHAPPINESS is represented by three main content components: happiness is a positive emotion, while unhappiness is a negative emotional state; happiness derives from the luck or the beneficial event of any kind, whereas unhappiness occurs from adverse events or conditions; happiness is a state of well-being, abundance, pleasure and bliss, while unhappiness is a failure, a trouble, a misfortune. The key lexemes verbalizing the concept are not the only signs that can activate it in human consciousness. In English, the verbalization of the concepts of HAPPINESS / UNHAPPINESS is presented on the lexical and lexical-grammatical levels (*happiness, happy*, etc.), derivational level (*happy, happily, unhappy, unhappily, happiness, unhappiness*), syntactic level (using occasional sentences).

A separate stage in the study of linguistic concepts is the following method – on the basis of various texts, a sample of examples is collected and the whole range of lexical compatibility of the keywords is revealed, the detailed analysis of which allows identifying the most important features of the concept [10, p. 14]. For instance, many features of happiness / unhappiness will be manifested in combinations of the name “happiness” and “unhappiness” with adjectives where happiness / unhappiness will receive versatile characterization, including highlighting the desired characteristics of happiness as a deep, pure and lasting feeling (e.g. *deep happiness, great happiness, pure happiness, sheer happiness, eternal happiness, lasting happiness*), related to the comprehension of happiness in the English national linguistic personality. Having analyzed the lexemes “happiness”, “happy”, “unhappiness” and “unhappy” in the context,

we can distinguish the following conceptual features of HAPPINESS and UNHAPPINESS on the basis of the combinatoric features of the analyzed words with lexemes fixed in dictionaries: happiness is a fragile feeling that can be lost and can be regained; happiness and unhappiness are feelings that can be shared and experienced together; happiness and unhappiness are very strong emotional states; happiness and unhappiness manifest itself in the person's appearance; happiness can be simulated; happiness is hard to achieve; happiness and unhappiness are feelings that can affect a person physically; happiness and unhappiness are feelings that a person is experiencing for himself/ herself or another person; happiness is a desire to do something; happiness and unhappiness have cause or source.

The study of the dominant sign of objectification of the concept is not sufficient. The word as an element of the lexical-semantic system of language is always implemented as part of one or another lexical paradigm, which allows it to be interpreted as: 1) an invariant of the lexical paradigm, formed by lexical-semantic variants (LSV) of the word; 2) the name of the semantic (synonymous) series, formed by synonyms, correlated with one of the words of the word LSV [5, p. 4]. Consequently, a complete semantic description of the concept consists of descriptions of syntagmatic relationships (that is, by studying the main spheres of the use of linguistic units at the synchronous level) and by identifying the paradigmatic connections of the analyzed word – the name of the concept [6, p. 138], which consists in the inclusion of the word in some semantic series, which includes, in particular, sets of synonyms and antonyms. The latter is an important stage in cognitive research, since semiotic (in other words, nominative) density is recognized as an important characteristic for determining the value of a linguistic-cultural concept [4, p. 4]. Thus, in our study, the analysis of the synonymic series of the lexeme “happiness” has been performed including such units as: *beatitude, blessedness, blissfulness, felicity, gladness, joy, elation, exhilaration, exultation, high, ecstasy, euphoria, glory, heaven, nirvana, paradise, rapture*, etc. The lexeme “unhappiness” is characterized by the following synonyms: *misery, sadness, anguish, desolation, joylessness, sorrow, depression, despondency, gloom, aggravation, exasperation, irritation, vexation, fury, rage*, etc. The considered synonymic series allow concluding that a sense of harmony and prosperity, characterized by relative constancy, a pleasant emotional uplift, which may range in intensity from the restrained manifestation of feelings to violent joy, are valuable in the notion of happiness. The synonymic sets enable revealing the following distinct features of unhappiness: unhappiness is a difficult, often unexpected event, disaster; the synonyms define unhappiness as an emotional experience, suffering, discomfort; the cause of misfortune is a variety of adverse events or lack of the desirable things.

It should also be noted that successfully working with relatively simple semantic units, researchers are confronted with difficulties in modelling multicomponent mental objects, which are denoted by abstract names. Abstract concepts are usually difficult to express in one sentence or as a simple definition; in order to convey the necessary meaning to the fullest extent, concepts of this kind often require detailed descriptions – scientific definitions, text illustrations. Such complicated macro-formations include, of course, the concepts of HAPPINESS and UNHAPPINESS, which, when projecting into linguistic semantics, receive a variety of verbalizing means – from individual lexemes to entire sentences and fragments of the text.

The study will be incomplete without analyzing the context in which the selected units are realized. At the same time, the same word can represent different features of the concept and even different concepts in different communicative conditions depending on the meanings of the word structure, its semantic possibilities of the variability, the forms of linguistic representation. It is due to the fact that appealing to the syntax in the course of communication in English the speaker often uses lexical and grammatical structures that are perceived by the interlocutor intuitively based on the pragmatic situation and interpersonal relationships.

The use of the lexemes “happiness” and “unhappiness” in the same contexts with other lexemes, that are similar in content, indicates the interaction of these concepts with other concepts of English. Thus, the peculiarity of the actualization of the concept HAPPINESS in the text is that the lexemes verbalizing it are in close connection with such concepts as *security, life, freedom, peace, material well-being, purpose, health and confidence* which are key concepts for modern society. In addition to its feature “state of contentment”, the structure of the concept HAPPINESS extends to such components as *life, health, laughter, love, well-being, forgiveness, peace and freedom*. Lexemes that verbalize the binary concept UNHAPPINESS are contextually located in close proximity to lexemes denoting a range of negative emotions: *horror, anger, despair, loneliness*, etc., actualizing the conceptualization of this concept in English speech consciousness.

In summary, the concepts HAPPINESS and UNHAPPINESS represent an opposition, the components of which can relate to each other on the principle of interdependence. The characteristics of the binary concepts HAPPINESS:: UNHAPPINESS are largely determined by their representation with the help of certain lexemes and their semantic features. The study of verbalization means of these concepts allows determining the conceptually meaningful characteristics of happiness and unhappiness as key notions representing English speakers' worldview.

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