

Original Paper

Semantic Structure of the Lexeme “litso” and the Lexeme “a face”

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Received: September 9, 2018 Accepted: September 24, 2018 Online Published: October 15, 2018
doi:10.22158/selt.v6n4p312 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/selt.v6n4p312>

Abstract

The article introduces a new approach in linguocognitology based on the semantic analysis of the lexemes, which may become perspective in the studies of the triad: language-personality-national world view. The papers determines the aim—the research of the semantic structure of the lexemes, and the object—common neutral words “litso” and “a face”. The author analyzes semantic, national-cultural and cognitive parametres of these lexemes. The development of derived meanings based on metaphors and metonymy are describes. A set of methods are used: the method of the analysis of the vocabulary definitions, the component analysis, the comparative method and cognitive interpretation of the data obtained. The anticipated results provide an opportunity to understand and explain the world view in multisystem languages. This research has both theoretical and practical value.

Keywords

Semantic structure, lexemes “litso”, “a face”

1. Introduction

In this paper we research one of the actual linguistic problem, namely: the interpretation of the world through the semantic structure of the word. This issue covers such famous scientists as Apresyan, Kubryakova, Popova, Sternin, Wierzbicka, Lakoff, etc. Language initially sets its speakers a certain picture of the world, and each language—another picture (Wierzbicka, 1996, pp. 5-6). Our study is based on the semantic-cognitive approach. “Through the study of the semantics of language signs you can penetrate into the conceptual sphere of people, you can find out what was important for a people in different periods of history. On the basis of this scientific approach were developed methods of cognitive

linguistics, which allow to detect not only the peculiarities of national, but also group and even individual thinking” (Popova & Sternin, 2007, p. 18).

The object of the analysis is commonly used neutral words: Russian lexeme “litso” and English lexeme “a face”. The aim of the study is to identify lexical-semantic, national-cultural and cognitive parameters of these lexemes.

The structure of this paper is divided into six sections including this introduction. Section 2 is dedicated for the Literature Review. Section 3 is described the Method and Procedure of analysis. Section 4 is demonstrated materials and discussion of done work. Section 5 is given the results of study. Finally, the paper ends with a conclusion—section 6.

2. Literature Review

At present time such interdisciplinary science as kognitology, linguoculturology, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics are actively developing. All of them are based on the cognitive-communicative potential of the language and represent a new approach to the triad “language-personality-the national world view”. So the concept and the semantic structure are at the focus of these disciplines.

2.1 The Term “Concept”

The term “concept” in principle is not new, it has been used for a long time. However, in Russia its detailed definition was first given in the Dictionary of cognitive terms: “A term that serves to explain the units of mental or psychological resources of our consciousness and that information structure which reflects the knowledge and experience of a person” (Kubryakova, 2004, p. 90).

The further development of cognitive linguistics leads to the fact that the concept includes the cultural code as part of the human mindset: “The concept is the main cell of culture in the mental world of man” (Stepanov, 2004, p. 43). The same opinion has Wiezhibicka (1996), which in her work explores in detail the concepts of different languages—Russian, Polish, English, Japanese.

Finally, there are works where the content and structure of the given mental unit are described most adequately, as well as its linguistic, sociocultural and ethnospecific aspects (Popova & Sternin, 2007, p. 34): “We define the concept as a discrete mental formation, the basic unit of the human thought code, possessing an ordered internal structure, which is the result of the cognitive activity of the individual and society and carrying complex, encyclopedic information about the reflected object or phenomenon...”.

It is this last definition of the concept that we put in the basis of our research.

2.2 Semantic Structure of the Word

In our work we rely on the semantic structure of the word. The term is differently defined by scientists. Let us state some opinions. The founder of Russian semasiology Zvegintsev (1957, p. 85) understood this term to be a lexical meaning in the semantic aspect: “Semasiology is responsible for studying such problems as the nature of lexical meaning, the types of lexical meanings, the laws of the semantic development of words, the classification of the types of change of meanings...”. However, he was

categorically opposed to including associations, associative processes in the study of the semantics of the word (ibid., pp. 128-129).

The further development of lexical semantics has led to the fact that in the study of meaning began to include not only associations, but also the pragmatics of the sign. So, the Russian scientist Apresyan (1995, p. 67) believes that the lexical meaning includes “a wide range of phenomena, ranging from expressive elements, which at different times and by different authors were called feeling, tone, valeur, emotive, semantic associations, associative signs, connotations, and ending with those modal components of meaning, that Wiezhibicka describes as a modal frame of expression”. In this paper the broad understanding of the semantic structure, developed by Apresyan and Wiezhibicka, is used.

Besides, we add specific national-cultural component, because we believe that the value is not only anthropocentric, but also ethnocentric.

3. Method and Procedure

3.1 The Methodological Basis

The methodological basis of the study is the semantic-cognitive approach. Its main point is that a detailed study of the semantics of linguistic signs makes it possible to reveal the volume and hierarchy of the meanings of the word, and also to gain access to the content of concepts as units of consciousness, to reveal specific and universal moments in national world view.

3.2 The Novelty of the Work

The novelty of the work lies in the fact that it uses a set of methods: the method of analyzing vocabulary definitions, component analysis, a comparative method, a cognitive interpretation of the data obtained. In addition, for the first time a system analysis of the structure of lexemes “litso”, “a face” is used.

3.3 The Procedure

The procedure for analysis is determined by the basic principles of cognitive linguistics and consists in the following: a) The establishment of the etymology of Russian and English lexemes; b) A semantic analysis of lexemes using vocabulary articles; c) Construction of a hierarchy of meanings (direct and transferred); d) Investigation of synonyms and associative series; e) Comparison of the Russian lexeme with the English; f) Identify the universal and national-specific components of lexemes; g) Clarification of the content and structure of concepts in Russian and English.

The analysis of dictionary definitions in combination with other mentioned methods is an original idea of the author of the article, which can be perspective and effective in linguistics and in teaching of foreign languages.

4. Materials and Discussion

The material for the study was taken from explanatory, encyclopedic, etymological, phraseological and associative Russian and English dictionaries, as well as dictionaries of synonyms and thesaurus.

4.1 Structure of Russian Lexeme “litso”

Let us first turn to the structure of the lexeme “litso” (a face) in Russian. It has a complex hierarchy of meanings. Since the designations of human body parts in any language, including Russian, refer to archetypical vocabulary, it is necessary to turn to etymology. The semantic structure of the lexeme during the 11th-18th centuries had the following lexical-semantic variants: 1. The front part of the human head. 2. The internal state of a person. 3. Presence of something. 4. A being, a person. 5. Surface. 6. Character of the play. 7. Human dignity, honor (Zvegintsev, 1957, pp. 247-249). By the twentieth century, the values “surface”, “presence” are lost, and the meaning of “honor, dignity” is preserved only in phraseological units *do not hit the dirt in the face, (do not) lose face*. Modern explanatory dictionaries (Dictionary of modern Russian literary language, 1957; Large academic dictionary of Russian language, 2007; Small academic dictionary, 1999, etc.) give 5 values: 1) the front of the human head; 2) Figurative sense. Individual appearance, distinctive features of someone, something; 3) an individual in society, a member of society; 4) the front side of the house, structure, facade; 5) facing out (front) side of something (fabric, clothing). At first it may seem that the volume of the lexeme has decreased. However, the analysis of the modern use of the word shows that the meaning “a person” is divided into two: the first—“man as an individual”, the second—“man as a member of society”, i.e., determined his place in society, for example: *About a third of the Krasnoyarsk Newspapers and TV channels criticize the first face in the region (“time MN”, 2003); according to investigators, unidentified face [person] secretly stole a picture posted for public viewing on one of the Central streets of Vladimir (Rbkdeyli, 2014)*. Both values are related to the nuclear, realizing the part-whole correlation. Some legal terms *-fizicheskoe litso (an individual person), officialnoye litso (official person), juridicheskoye litso (trustee, legal person)*—also develop the meaning of “member of society”. Currently, this value has become an independent component of the lexeme in connection with the wide spread of social and legal characteristics: official, legal, trustee, etc. The use of the lexeme to refer to a person is the specifics of the Russian language from ancient times to the present day. European languages use a different language sign: a person (Engl.), le personne (FR.). It should be noted that in this case the grammatical status of the word changes: the noun becomes animate, while in other meanings it functions as inanimate. The core of the lexeme is the meaning of physical organ, the front of the human head. This value contains a generic seed “most important to identify anyone, anything”. As a rule, the front part of someone, something, and there is the most noticeable, with individual characteristics of the part. It is the development of species semes. But the principles of their formation are different. The combination *the face of the theater, city, country* are metaphors that emerged on the basis of the importance of individual features, for example: *those who will define the new business face of the Internet business (Expert online, 2001); he had a plan: to change the face of the Russian North (I. Ehrenburg, Do Not breath)*. The nomination *face town, buildings or matter* relate to metonymy, for example: *Face the former House of culture looked obviously older, not renovated long time ago (Evening Moscow, 2003); Iron velour fabric with faces is not recommended (Tailor’s guide)*.

The metaphors of portable values confirmed these derivatives as *a faceless, impersonal, depersonalize*, which contain this “do not have their faces”: *a faceless town, depersonalized mass*. From the many phraseological units containing the lexeme “litso” (face), we can mention the idioms *to have your own face, not to have your own face, face to face, in the face of something, to show the goods face, there is no face on someone, regardless of the face, look (truth, death) in the face, etc.*

4.2 Synonymic Row of Lexeme “litso”

Turning to the analysis of a synonymic row with the dominant “litso”, it should be noted that the Dictionary of the Russian Synonyms (Alexandrova, 2006, p. 195) includes 27 words, from which only *lik, lichiko, mordochka, mordashka* have the positive evaluation, and the other 23 words—have a negative one. Here are some examples: *lik* (traditional, poetic, non-equivalent), *lichnost* (colloquial), *fizionomia* (slangy), *morda* (muzzle), *murlo, rozha* (mug), *riashka, rylo, kharia, fizia, fiziomordia* (all are colloquial). *Glaza u Kotovasova krasnye, lichnost blednaya, ves drozhit* (A. Chekhov, *V bane*); *Vasha fiziomordia mne ponravilas* (A. Tolstoy, *Mechtatel*); *Nikakomu Rublevu i Nesterovu/Lik takoy i prisnitsya ne mog* (A. Mezhirov, *Potolok.*) / *Kotovasov's eyes are red, the muzzle is pale, he's trembling all over* (A. Chekhov, *In the Bathhouse*); *I liked your physiognomy* (A. Tolstoy, *The Dreamer*); *Neither Rublev nor Nesterov // Such a face(divine face) couldn't be seen in a dream* (A. Mezhirov, *The Ceiling*).

4.3 Compatibility of Lexeme “Litso”

Analyzing the compatibility of the lexeme “litso”, we can distinguish several groups of the adjectives that are different on semantic. The cognitive classifiers are the adjectives describing the face in its direct meaning in the context of: a) shape: *asymmetrical, round, swollen, puffy, regular, oblong, cheekbony, narrow, and wide*; b) size: *large, little, small, tiny*; c) colours: *white, pale, tanned, sallow, ruddy, swarthy, black, red, blue, green, yellow*; d) emotions: *dispassionate, expressive, happy, sad, amused, angry, pensive, frustrated, friendly, joyful, confused, grumpy, strict, gloomy, surprised*; e) intelligence: *clever, silly, dullish, intelligent, stupid*; f) age: *young, youthful, old, senile, elderly*; g) gender: *male, female*; h) character traits: *domineering, strong-willed, proud, haughty, brave, tough, gentle, kind*; i) social class: *aristocratic, royal, boorish, peasant*; j) religious concepts: *angelic, divine, biblical, demonic, devilish*.

On the basis of the above-stated language material, it can be argued that designation of the human front of the head has an ambivalent nature, the semantic field of which is built on the principle of antonymy. We find the following correlates in the sphere of emotions, intelligence, traits of character: *joyful, cheerful - sad, sorrowful; expressive - ordinary, pale; smart - stupid, soft - hard; open - blank, sad; willed - weak-willed, boneless; intellectual - primitive: V litse nichego smelogo, silnogo, muzhestvennogo. Vso slabo, apatichno, vyalo* (A. Chekhov, *Drama na okhote*) / *There was nothing bold, strong or manly in his face. Everything was weak, apathetic and flaccid* (A. Chekhov, *The Drama on the Hunt*). External features of the face and its aesthetic evaluation are also built on the principles above: *beautiful - ugly, cute - nasty, asymmetrical - normal, wide - narrow, large - small, etc.* It is also interesting that in the Russian mentality the adjectives of colour define the face not from an ethnic

point of view, but by the parameters of “healthy/sick”: yellow or black face in the humans with liver problems, fever: *The face blackens in a poor life, and it whitens—in a good one (proverb)*. Blue or red face becomes as the result of cold, heat, poor health: *S yego krasnogo litsa lilsia pot ruchyami, v glazakh svetilos stradanie (A. Chekhov)*. *Rozovoye, rumyanoye litso - priznak zdorovia :Vse telo yego dyshit zdoroviem i siloy. Litso rozovoye, ruki veliki, grud shirokaya, muskulistaya (Chekhov) / The sweat poured out from his red face, the e'yes shone with suffering (A. Chekhov, ibid.)*. *Pink, ruddy face is a sign of health: All his body breathes health and strength. The face is pink, his hands are large, his chest is broad, muscular (Chekhov, ibid.)*. In the American version of the English language *black-face, red-face, yellow-face* mean the skin color, ethnicity. Thus, we can say that the human face in the Russian language is evaluated according to the numerous parameters, including not only the spiritual, moral, intellectual, but also the external and aesthetic quality of a person (Klimenko, 2018, pp. 83-84). The lexemes “person” and “face” are closely connected with the basic national concepts of “Soul”, “Person, Personality”. In the Dictionary of Dal’ we find information, reflecting directly the Orthodox concepts: “The human face is a representative of the highest spiritual gifts: the forehead - heavenly love, the eye - understanding, rational contemplation, the ears - understanding and obedience, the nose - good comprehension, the mouth - thought and teaching; the lip - spiritual praise” (Dal’, 2011, p. 258). This fact is confirmed by the Russian Associative Dictionary (2002, p. 297), noting among the associates such as *chelovek, dusha cheloveka, zerkalo dushi / person, human soul, index of the mind*.

4.4 Structure of Russian Concept “Litso”

Analysis of the vocabulary definitions, synonyms, associates revealed the connotations of evaluative character and national-cultural components of the lexeme, as well as made it possible to clarify the structure of the concept. It can be argued that the concept “Litso” in the Russian language is the dual-core concept: the first core - the physical body of a person, the second core—a person as an individual. Both cores have their near- and far-periphery. Near periphery of the first core includes the physical characteristics (shape, size, gender), distant one - shaped characteristics of an object or concept (the face of a building, the face of literature). Near periphery of the second core consists of intellectual, emotional, and moral characteristics of a person, and the far periphery—its social status. Between the first and second core there is a natural link, because the appearance reflects the inner world (*litso - zerkalo dushi / the face is the index of the mind*).

4.5 Structure of the English Lexeme “Face”

Let us turn further to the English lexeme *a face*. The short etymology of the word is given by Webster’s Ninth New International Dictionary of English Language: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Vulgar Latin *facia*, from Latin *facies, form, face*. Date: 13th century (Webster, 1993, p. 443).

According to English explanatory dictionaries (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 1987, 1993; Hornby, Gatenby, Wakefield. The Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 1958) the following meanings can be distinguished:

- 1) The front part of the human head including the chin, mouth, nose, cheeks, eyes and the forehead

- the face as a means of identification: countenance (would know that ~ anywhere). She's got a long, thin face

2) *archaic*: Presence, sight

3) A facial expression—ex. a friendly face

- grimace- I was pulling silly faces laugh to make the baby laugh

4) Outward appearance - (put a good face on it)

- disguise, pretense—the hidden face of American politics

- assurance, confidence (maintaining a firm face in spite of adversity)

5) Surface A: a front, upper, or outer surface

- the front of something having two or four sides, façade—the west face of the building

- an exposed surface of rock—the north face of mountain

- any of the plane surfaces that bound a geometric solid—a cube has six faces.

B: a surface specially prepared as

- the principal dressed surface (as of a disk)

- the right side (as a cloth or leather)

- an inscribed, printed, or marked side

C: the surface (as of type) that receives the ink and transfers it to the paper

- a style of type

6) The front of a clock or watch—a watch face with Roman numerals

7) The end or wall of a mine tunnel, drift, or excavation at which work is progressing—breakage face, face wall

8) Face value—coins, paper money, investment documents

9) Dignity, honor, prestige—afraid to lose face, to save face

10) Boldness, impudence—to have the face to do smth

4.6 Synonymic Row of English Lexeme "Face"

A synonymic row in English is much smaller. The dictionaries of English synonyms have 8 synonyms: *countenance* - mood, character, changing emotion; *visage* - more literary term than the face, countenance; *mug* - used in informal context; *puss* - a facile expression (anger or pouting) (Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms, 1973, p. 317). In other dictionaries, we also find *snout*, *physiomy*, *phiz*, *muzzle*, for example: *The very visage of a man in love He has the physiomy of an ascetic Getting your mug in the paper is one of the shameful ways of making a living. His countenance changed, when he heard the news.*

In general, we can say that the semantic structure of the English lexeme is more difficult in quantitative terms; it is specific and demonstrates a somewhat different picture of the world. Accordingly, the English concept is also multifaceted mental formation: there is a kernel, interpretive and figurative parts; near and far periphery.

5. Results

The comparison of the vocabulary definitions of two lexemes shows that the volume amount of English lexemes is much more: the Russian language has five meanings, English - twelve. The kernel meaning of the lexemes (generic seme) are the same: “the front part of human head”, although this part of the body in the English dictionaries is defined much more, include all the parts of the face (lips, forehead, cheeks, etc.). As for the figurative meanings (species seme), they partially coincide, for example, “honour, reputation, prestige”: *poteriat/spasti litso - lose /save face*. The English lexeme (meaning No. 5 -No. 7) presented in great details the characteristics of the different surfaces, faces or sides of different objects with the working surface of tools (hammer, anvil), the surface of the rock, the disc, the boundaries of geometric solids, a shaft in the mine, etc., for example: *the face of a building, of a coin, of a card (the card was lying on its face), a cube has six faces, face wall, lateral faces, breakage face. In Russian, only front surface of the building (facade) or front surface of the matter is presented. Detailed information about different surfaces is the specificity of the English worldview. Specific use of the word “a face” marking the dial (a hand = a hand of a clock!)- a metaphor associated with the perception of surfaces: a watch face with Roman numerals.*

The meanings of two lexemes are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of Lexical Meanings of “Face”, “Litso”

Meanings	Face	Litso
Front Part of Human Head	representatives	representatives
Individual Appearance	representatives	representatives
Person as Individuum	absent	representatives
Person as Member of Society	absent	representatives
Front Side of House, Facade	representatives	representatives
Surface of Rock	representatives	absent
Surface of Geometric Solid	representatives	absent
Right Side (clothe, leather)	representatives	representatives
Inscribed, printed, or marked Side	representatives	absent
Front of Clock or Watch	representatives	absent
Face Value - coins, paper money, investment documents	representatives	absent
End or Wall of Mine Tunnel, Drift	representatives	absent
Dignity, Honor, Prestige	representatives	representatives (idiom)
Boldness, Impudence	representatives	absent

Analyzing further the figurative components, we note that an expression litso-zerkalo dushi in English, Russian and French completely coincide: The face is index of the mind//of the heart; Le visage est l

'image de l'ame. The idiom litsom k litsu - face to face (At last the two men met face to face) are identical. But be careful, when comparing supposedly the same combination. The Russian phrase imet litso means "not to be faceless, to be an individual", and this is a positive characteristic. However, in English to have face to do means "boldness, impudence".

We will also note from coincidence that ever everything connected with the spiritual world or with abstract concepts are the same in both languages: litso (lik) angela, litso (lik) Boga—the face of the Angel, the face of God, litso sudby, litso zakona, litso opasnosti- the fate face, the face of the law, the face of danger.

The shape, size, complexion in general in the direct meaning has the same characteristics in English and in Russian (a long, narrow, round, etc.), for example: *long, little, large face, white, pale, pink face* (excl. the Americanisms *red - face, black-face - Indian, Negro*).

A synonymic row in English is much smaller. The dictionaries of English synonyms have 8 synonyms, but in Russian there are 27 synonyms, some of them are non-equivalent and colloquial words.

In general, we can say that the semantic structure of the English lexeme is more difficult in quantitative terms; it is specific and demonstrates a somewhat different of the worldview. Accordingly, the English concept is also multifaceted mental formation: there is a kernel, interpretive and figurative parts; near and far periphery.

Summing up the analysis results, we can say the following:

The semantic analysis has revealed complex sememic structure of two lexemes "litso" and "face" that demonstrates a diversity of mental formations in both languages. Semantic-cognitive approach has allowed to specify the contents and structure of Russian and English concepts. Both concepts are multicomponent, however the Russian binuclear concept is more difficult on its structure. The main difference is a dual perception of the face in the Russian consciousness - animated (person) and subject, and in the English worldview—only subject: a face - a forward part of the head, a facade, a surface.

All the concepts belong at the same time to the spiritual and corporal sphere, have both universal and specific features. They are based on the sensual image, they have such parameters as sociality, spirituality, worthiness. All this allows to consider extremely significant in the Russian and English linguistic worldview.

6. Conclusion

The theoretical basis of the study was the reflection of the worldview in the semantics structure. The language reflects not only the features of nature or culture, but also the national character of its carriers (Wiezbicka, 1996).

The article was aimed to describe the semantic structure of the English lexeme "a face" and the Russian lexeme "litso", to identify these linguistics, national-cultural and cognitive parameters.

The research allows to draw a conclusion: a) significative and pragmatical components of lexemes have both universal and specific features; b) differences in figurative components are connected with various

perception of the same object by the members of different linguocultural communities; c) the semantic-cognitive method allows not only to describe the concepts by the linguistic means, but also to identify their national-cultural specifics.

The linguo-cognitive approach with the use of semantic analysis is presented to be perspective for fundamental science, also for translation practice and teaching foreign languages.

The theoretical value of the work is that it revealed the detailed structure of the lexemes as well as the content and structure of the relevant concepts in the English and Russian languages. The practical value lies in the clarification of vocabulary definitions, which makes the translation more adequate and facilitates intercultural communication. In addition, the results of the study can be used in the teaching of foreign languages, as they contribute to the formation of linguistic, cultural and communicative competences.

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