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SEMANTIC PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS IN THE VOCABULARY OF UNRELATED LANGUAGES

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Abstract

The paper is devoted to the analysis of denotative similarities and differences of multivalent verbs in genetically and typologically diverse languages: Russian, English and Tatar. Productive models of metaphorical and metonymic transfer in the sphere of physical predicates are analyzed through semantic typology and cognitive linguistics. Besides, general and unique models for a particular language are defined. The most productive metaphorical models include "physical process → physical action", "physical process → existential sphere" having general character and "physical process → social sphere", "physical process → physiological sphere", etc. presented in a certain language. The productive metonymic models include such models as "physical process → physical action", "physical process → physiological sphere", etc. It is clear that metaphorical transfers form the basis for secondary meaning of a bigger number of analyzed verbal predicates irrespective of the fact whether these models are general or ethnospecific. General models of semantic derivation in the sphere of physical verbal predicates demonstrate parallel development of similar or close derivative meanings of these units, which may be explained by the unity of cognitive mechanisms of association. Besides, secondary meanings of analyzed lexemes reflect the principle of anthropocentrism since they point to denotative spheres corresponding to different types of human activity. The study is relevant for comparative semasiology, linguistics of universals, semantic typology, theory of translation and other areas of modern linguistics. The purpose of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of semantic derivation models in relation to physical predicates within typologically different languages.

Keywords: Metaphor, metonymy, typologically different languages, verbal predicates, semantic universals, anthropocentrism.

1. Introduction

Modern linguistics is characterized by an increased interest in the study of denotative dynamics of a language, which corresponds to such fundamental principle of anthropocentric paradigm as semantic centrism. At the same time scientists primarily draw their attention to the analysis of dependence of denotative transformations on a number of interrelated internal and external factors, which can unequally appear in certain languages during different periods of their development. The internal factors include the tendency to save linguistic efforts, which causes the possibility of using ready forms to express new cogitative content. Non-linguistic factors mainly include conditionality of the process and the result of semantic development of a word under sociocultural, psychological, pragmatic and other communication conditions, which predetermine the change of communicative needs of a speaker thus changing the meaning of linguistic units. At present the denotative dynamics of a word is studied in terms of several approaches: 1) system approach that identifies regular models of semantic derivation in synchrony/diachrony with subsequent creation of their catalog (Zaliznyak, 2013; Blank, 2000; Goddard, 1998; Koch, 2001; Traugott & Dasher, 2002; Vanhove, 2008a); 2) functional approach focused on conditionality of semantic development of a word by changing the communication needs, in other words – discursive characteristics of communication process (Chudinov, 2003); 3) cognitive approach that analyzes regularities of new meanings in terms of prototypical situation connecting lexical-semantic options of a linguistic unit in a whole; conditionality of semantic changes by mental processes, in particular by the association mechanisms (Boldyrev, 2016; Kustova, 2000; Haser, 2000; Vanhove, 2008b, etc.); 4) pragmatic approach considering the attitude of a speaker/listener to process and result of secondary nomination (Peregrin, 2003), etc. At the same time many issues concerning definition and complex description of the final set of semantic derivation models in a particular language/languages, their interrelation, efficiency rate in synchrony/diachrony, general/unique character, etc. are insufficiently studied.

2. Problem Statement

It seems quite interesting and perspective to study the semantic derivation using the material of genetically and typologically different languages since the results of such analysis allow revealing general and ethnospecific parameters of semantic derivation and showing its conditionality caused by cognitive, pragmatic, linguocultural and other factors, including specifics of background knowledge behind semantic transition models and the worldview of native speakers, etc. (Kiseleva & Todosienko, 2019). Besides, such study is aimed at system introduction of productive models of secondary meaning in terms of adequate transmission of semantics of a multivalent word throughout cross-cultural communication and translation practice.

3. Research Questions

The study is focused on polysemic physical predicates in unrelated multi-structural languages (Russian, English and Tatar), while our attention is mainly paid to productive models of semantic derivation demonstrating regularities of new meanings. The relevance of the study is caused by certain factors: 1) the considered predicates are characterized by complex network system of meanings, which has regular

character in the above languages; 2) centuries-old socio-political, economic and other relations between the representatives of Russian and English linguistic cultures on the one hand, and Russian and Tatar – on the other hand, cause intensive language contacts resulting to borrowing and calquing, including their semantic aspect. In this regard the study of the origin of new meanings of verbs of one semantic group within contacting languages, including cases of parallel development of similar secondary meaning, seems quite interesting.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of semantic derivation models in relation to physical predicates within typologically different languages (Russian, English, Tatar) in terms of their general/unique nature, to define the degree of their regularity in either language. Since the indirect nomination is the most productive type of semantic derivation we will mainly concentrate on models of metaphorical and metonymic transfer.

5.   Research Methods

The models of semantic derivation are defined and systematized through physical verbal predicates recorded in the *System Semantic Dictionary of the Russian Language* by Vasilyev (2009) with their equivalents in English and Tatar languages. To ensure the adequacy of linguistic analysis we used a set of research methods, including the following: (1) method of semantic field identifying denotatively close linguistic units and presenting the relations between them as a complex network of dependences; (2) method of cataloguing of semantic transitions proposed by Zaliznyak (2013), according to which the structure of a polysemant can be schematically presented as the system of unidirectional relations of its separate meanings, like 'to catch' → 'to understand', 'empty' → 'vain', etc.; (3) methods of cognitive linguistics making it possible to model the relation of basic and derived meanings in terms of conceptual metaphor: conceptual spheres interacting during the formation of a secondary meaning are defined as "source domains" and "target domains" respectively, and the process of conceptualization by means of a metaphor – as "conceptual mapping" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In addition to the analyzed group of verbs the above methods are implemented through definition and systematized description of models, which reflect the appearance of derivative meanings, for example: "physical process → physical action", "physical process → physiological sphere", etc., where the first member of a pair means the initial denotative sphere bound to basic meaning, and the second – the derived sphere regarding the secondary meaning.

6.   Findings

The system nature of semantic derivation models in typologically different languages can be exemplified by physical verbs with the meaning of frying and fermentation/souring. Lack of identical secondary meanings simultaneously present in three languages is typical for these verbs; however we may note similar figurative meaning of these predicates in two languages.

I. General metaphorical models:

1. "Physical process → physiological sphere". Thus, the Russian verb *зарумяниться* (to blush) and Tatar *пешү* develop similar metaphorical meaning in this sphere: "to blush, to blush with shame, to be confused" (hereinafter the interpretation of the analyzed verbs are given according to the following lexicographic sources: DMRLL, 1950-1965; TTAS, 1977-1981; LD, 2001) and "тырышып эшләүдән, оялудан кызару, кызарып китү" ('to blush, to blush with shame, to blush from hard work") respectively (hereinafter the translation of English and Tatar verbs belongs to the authors. – L.K., V.I., Z.T., V.S., Z.A.).

2. "Physical process → existential sphere". During their transfer to this sphere the Russian verbs *поджаривать/поджарить (*to roast/roast) – "to subject someone, something to fire, heat; to subject to torture by fire, heat", *изжаривать/изжарить* (to fry) – "to put to death burning; to burn" and the English verb *fry* – "to kill someone on an electric chair, or to be killed on an electric chair as a punishment" get similar metaphorical meanings.

II. Unique metaphorical models:

1. "Physical process → physical action". This model is presented in the Russian language by a verb *жарить* (to fry) – "to do something strenuously, with passion".

2. "Physical process → physiological sphere": the Tatar verb *пешү* gains specific metaphorical meaning connected with the analyzed sphere – "өлгерү, җитлегү (җиләк-җимешләр, шулай укбашаклы игеннәр турында)" ("to ripen, be poured – about ears, berries"), the verb *куыру* – "шулай ук салкын һаның, суыкның тәнне чеметеп-чеметеп алуы турында әйтелә" ("to pinch skin under the influence of cold air") and "кайнар яки ачы ашамлыкның авызны, иренне авырттыруы, ачыттыруы турында" ("a mouth, lips hurt because of hot or bitter food").

3. "Physical process → social sphere". The Tatar verb *куыру* develops unique metaphorical meaning "бер яктан җитлегү, тәҗрибә-белем алу, чыныгу, үсеп җиту" ("to get experience, knowledge, to become tempered, climb a career ladder").

III. General metonymic models:

1. "Physical process → physiological sphere". This model is implemented through some verbs of the analyzed languages: Russian *изжариваться* (to roast) – "to scorch heat; to burn", *изжаривать/изжарить* (to fry) – "heat, heat excessively to scorch, heat, burn", *поджариваться* (to be roasted) – "to get burns, to burn" and Tatar *пешү* – "кояш нуры яки ялкын кызулыгы, җил һ. б. тәэсиреннән кызару яки каралу" ("to redden or turn black because of strong sunshine or wind, a flame"); Russian *пережариваться* (to be overroasted) ("to warm oneself in the sun too long; to overheat") and Tatar *пешү* – "югары температура тәэсиреннән авырту, җәрәхәтләнү (тән, тире һ. б. турында)" ("to get burn, to be ill under the influence of high temperature – about a body, skin, etc."), *куыру* – "эссе һаваның, эссенең тәнгә килеп бәрелүе, тәннә кыздыруы турында әйтелә" ("about hot air, heat which burns down a body").

IV. Unique metonymic models:

1. "Physical process → physical action". According to this model some verbs develops the following figurative meaning: Russian *прожариваться* (to be fried thoroughly) – "to be subject to strong heat (for clarification)"; English *roast* – "to roast nuts, cocoa beans for giving of special taste"; Tatar *куыру* – "киптерү, корыштыру" ("to dry, dry up"), *пешү* – "пешекләнү ('томить'), *көю* «кызу, эссегә әйләнү"

("to burn, be heated"); Russian verb *пригореть/пригорать* (to burn) forms two specific metonymic meanings: "to stick, stick to something" and "to tightly connect to something as a result of heating".

2. "Physical process → physiological sphere". This model is represented in Tatar language by a predicate *көю*, for which the secondary meaning is typical "бик нык эчәсе килү, эсседән бик нык әлсерәү; эсселәнү" ("to be thirsty because of a heat; to become soft").

The analysis of secondary meanings of verbs relating to the semantic group "fermentation/souring" is equally interesting.

I. General metaphorical models

1. "Physical process → emotional sphere". The Russian verb *киснуть* (to turn sour) and English *sour* have similar metaphorical meaning representing this model: "to grieve, despond, be in suppressed, oppressed mood" and "if a relationship or someone's attitude sours, or if something sours it, it becomes unfriendly or unfavourable" ("to spoil – about relations, to become unfriendly") respectively.

II. Unique metaphorical models

1. "Physical process → social sphere". The Russian verbs *киснуть* (to turn sour) and *закисать/закиснуть* (to sour) have such specific metaphorical meanings as "to maintain monotonous, inactive life" and "to become inactive, sluggish; to fall".

2. "Physical process → physiological sphere". In Russian language some verbs develop unique figurative meaning connected with this sphere: *забродить* (to begin to ferment) – "about a feeling of intoxication"; *бродить* (to wander) – "to worry".

3. "Physical process → emotional sphere". The English verb *leaven* gains specific metaphorical meaning "to make something less boring, serious, or sad" ("to relieve tension, to do something less serious, boring").

III. Unique metonymic models

1. "Physical process → physical action". Unique metonymic meaning is typical for Tatar verb *ачу* "тире, йон турында: ию, черү" ("to become rumpled, rot, spoil – about skin, wool").

7. Conclusion

The results of the study demonstrate that the branched semantic structure is typical for Russian physical verbs, whereas their English and Tatar analogs are characterized by less complex system of secondary meaning, which often "incorporate" several lexical-semantic variations typical for Russian equivalents. It is also found that general and unique cognitive models defining the development of polysemanticism of physical verbs in the analyzed languages often coincide, for example, the models "physical process → emotional sphere", 'physical process → physical impact", etc. Moreover, the same models can be both metaphorical and metonymic, which is reasonable since these cognitive mechanisms actively interact during semantic dynamics of a word. These models include "physical process → physiological sphere", "physical process → physical action", etc. Another interesting fact is that within all analyzed languages the list of metaphorical transfer models is slightly wider than the set of metonymic models. Besides, metaphorical transfers are key for secondary meaning of a bigger number of the analyzed verbal predicates irrespective of the fact whether these models are general or unique. The universal models of semantic derivation within the analyzed languages demonstrate parallel development of identical or close

derivative meaning. It is fair to say that the denotative dynamics of a word is characterized by the contradictory nature: on the one hand, there is regularity and reproducibility of semantic derivation models in the system of a particular language/languages; on the other hand, some relations of word meanings can be illogical, accidental since they reflect not only rational, but also emotional and sensual nature of associative similarities. The derivative meaning models of physical verbs reflect the principle of anthropocentrism since they point to denotative spheres corresponding to different types of human activity (social, physical, etc.).

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