

**LATIP 2021****International Conference on Language and Technology in the Interdisciplinary Paradigm****PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS OF MEMBERS OF A LEXICAL  
SEMANTIC GROUP WITH GRADED SEMANTICS**

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Voronezh, Russia, sergey-ermakov.1811@mail.ru**Abstract**

This paper considers the paradigmatic relations of members of the lexical-semantic group with the graded semantics of «Names of persons by the command of professional skill» in the English language, which are identified by the aspect description of the graded lexical units of the studied group and their subsequent comparison at the level of semantic characteristics. Differentiation of the dominant characteristic in the structure of lexical meaning according to seminal specifiers allows one to divide the lexical units of the studied lexical-semantic group into the micro groups, to construct the gradation scale of intensity of the dominant characteristic and to describe the antonymous and synonymous paradigms of the members of the studied lexical-semantic group. This paper also presents the distinctive qualities of the category of gradation and describes the main components of the gradation scale. Studies of lexical units in this work were carried out on the basis of complex and systemic methods and approaches to their description and comparison. Also, the authors of this paper developed and applied an algorithm for determining the degree of gradation of antonymous and synonymous paradigms which are included in the lexical-semantic group and formulated distinctive qualities of the category of gradation and described the main components of the gradation scale.

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## 1. Introduction

Modern science shows considerable interest in the peculiarities of the process of intercultural interaction, that is why there is a need for comparative studies that help to identify differences in languages and cultures and their national specifics.

The systemic nature of language is a generally recognized position in linguistics and manifests itself in the ability of words to unite with each other in meaning into various groupings. According to Pokrovsky (1959), whose name is associated with many works on semasiology: "words and their meanings do not live a separate life from each other, but are connected ... independently of our consciousness, in different groups, and the basis for the grouping is similarity or the direct opposite in main meaning" (p. 82).

## 2. Problem Statement

The main focus of this work is:

- to observe the graded semantics of lexical units included in the lexical-semantic group «Names of persons by the command of professional skill» in the English language;
- to consider the degree of gradation of antonymous and synonymous paradigms that are part of the lexical-semantic group.

## 3. Research Questions

- to identify the composition of the lexical-semantic group by the method of generalizing dictionary definitions;
- to compare and differentiate the lexical units by the degree of characteristic of the dominant characteristic by an aspect-structural approach with a template model of seminal description of the meaning of the word semantics;
- to describe the distinctive qualities of the category of gradation and the main components of the gradation scale;
- to report the obtained results in the form of a gradations scale;
- to determine the degree of gradation by an algorithm for determining the degree of gradation of anonymous and synonymous paradigms.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to identify seminal specifiers or gradators "a means which increases or decreases the degree of characteristic" (Kolesnikova 2012, p. 81) in the structure of the meaning of lexical units for transmitting different degrees of characteristic, and to record the gradation of the semantic characteristic "command of professional skill" on the gradation scale, taking into account the fact that gradation is "gradual, the sequence of transition from one to another with strengthening or

weakening the characteristic of any sign, action; division of any process into steps or stages" (Dictionary of modern Russian literary language, 1992, p. 298).

## 5. Research Methods

### 5.1. Method of Generalization of Dictionary Definitions

To obtain a more complete interpretation of lexical units by the number of meanings and their semantic content, we used the method of generalization of dictionary definitions in this work.

The method of generalization of dictionary definitions is based on the principle of complementarity of dictionary definitions of different dictionaries, each of which reflects some essential features of meaning, but the most complete lexicographic description is carried out only by a set of definitions of different dictionaries that complement each other (Sternin, 2013, p. 10).

For example, the lexeme ARTISAN is represented in dictionaries as: - skilled manual worker (The Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 2001, p. 41); - a worker who has special skill and training (English dictionary, 2014); 1) a worker who practices a trade or handicraft; 2) one that produces something in limited quantities often using traditional methods (New Collegiate Dictionary, 2001). When summarizing the dictionary interpretations, the following definition can be formulated as: ARTISAN - a skilled worker who has special skills and training, who is engaged in trade or craft with the use of manual labor, and who produces something in limited quantities, using traditional methods.

### 5.2. An Aspect-Structural Approach with a Template Model of Seminal Description of the Meaning of the Word Semantics

Seminal interpretation of the obtained generalized lexicographic descriptions was carried out by using an aspect-structural approach with a template model of seminal description of the meaning of the word semantics, "which consists of:

- the sequential identification and description of denotative, connotative and functional aspects of the semantics of each sememe;
- the unification of the metalanguage description of the semes within the semantic class or lexico-semantic field;
- the mandatory application of the complete structural and functional typology of the semes of a particular semantic class (template model) to the description of each value – in tracing the presence of all possible types of semes within each aspect in each individual sememe, including both their presence and absence;
- the enumeration of semes within each semantic aspect in a certain fixed order" (Maklakova 2013, par. 9, p. 136), for example:

ARTISAN

denotative aspect: a person, male / / female, has a good command of professional skills / is engaged in trade or craft with the use of manual labor, uses traditional methods;

connotative aspect: non-evaluative, unemotional;

functional aspect: interstitial, commonly used, modern, common, frequent, politically correct, tone-neutral.

The aspect-structural approach allows us to differentiate the close meanings of lexical units, as well as to establish and describe the paradigmatic relations between words by identifying the integral seme as the dominant reference seme for a separate group of language units.

### **5.3. An Algorithm for Determining the Degree of Gradation of Antonymous and Synonymous Paradigms that are Included in the Lexical-Semantic Group**

To determine the degree of gradation of antonymous and synonymous paradigms which are included in the lexical-semantic group, it is necessary to subtract a smaller number module (gradation step) from a larger number module (gradation step). It should be remembered that "the module of a negative number cannot be a negative number and is equal to the opposite number" (Properties of the number module), for example: a pair of lexemes ACE and CRAFTSMAN in which the lexeme ACE is part of a mini-group - Perfect command of professional skills and is on the step of +3 on the gradation scale, whereas the lexeme CRAFTSMAN is part of the mini-group - Good command of professional skills and is on the step of +1 on the gradation scale, forms a synonymous paradigm with the gradation of the 2nd degree ( $3 - 1 = 2$ ).

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. The Distinctive Qualities of the Category of Gradation**

The study of various ways of strengthening/weakening of the characteristic has long been the subject of interest in modern linguistics. The category of gradation, as well as such categories as measure or degree, can be characterized by the presence of the following distinctive qualities:

1) the presence of a characteristic (in our case "command of professional skill"), which helps to observe the fact of deviation of the degree of its manifestation from the normative level (0 – the norm);

2) the presence of poles showing the maximum and minimum degree of manifestation of the characteristic (in our case -3 – Lack of command of professional skill (the minimum degree of manifestation of the characteristic) and + 3 - Perfect command of professional skill (the maximum degree of manifestation of the characteristic);

3) the indication on the discrete (graduated) degree of characteristic, i.e., existence of a graduator or seminal specifier of the dominant characteristic (for example: perfect, skilled, good, etc.), characterizing degree of characteristic and corresponding defined step on the gradation scale which is made by results of the seminal description of the meaning of the word and comparison with other members of the lexical-semantic group;

4) ordering of the characteristic with respect to the norm, zero point on the gradation scale (in our case, 0 = Standard command of professional skill - neutral degree of dominant characteristic). The gradation scale is a graphical representation of the graded characteristic;

5) directionality (vectorality) of the degree of characteristic in relation to increase or decrease on the gradation scale (in our case -3, -2, -1 and +1, +2, +3), relating to the reference point (0 – the norm) on the gradation scale.

## **6.2. The Main Components of the Gradation Scale**

The dynamics of the intensity of the graded degree of characteristic is reflected on the gradation scale. In linguistics, the concept of a gradation scale was introduced and developed by Sepir in his work "Gradation. Semantic study", where the gradation scale is defined as "an ordered series in relation to "more - less" (Sepir, 1985, p. 41) by the example of a series of natural numbers.

The main components of the gradation scale are:

1) a segment of the straight line representing two opposite directions of change of characteristic (increase and decrease) divided into identical intervals, providing a gradual and consistent process of transition from one degree of characteristic to the next;

2) the reference point (0 - the norm), corresponding to the middle of the segment of the straight line and dividing this segment in half, which is at an equal distance from the beginning and end of the segment, and which is the reference point, both towards the increase of degree of characteristic and towards its decrease;

3) poles displaying contrarian concepts in relation to each other, which represent maximum and minimum degree of characteristic, and which are located on opposite sides of the gradation scale (limit points of gradation);

4) steps or stages which correspond to intervals on the gradation scale and indicate on the degree of characteristic, and which correspond to seminal specifiers or gradators transmitting the degree of characteristic.

## **6.3. The Results Obtained after the Seminal Description**

After conducting a seminal description of the lexemes and sememes included in the lexical-semantic group "Names of persons by the command of professional skill", we identified seminal specifiers or gradators transmitting the degree of characteristic and characterizing the gradation of dominant characteristic of the studied lexical-semantic group:

- Perfect command of professional skills.
- Skilled command of professional skills.
- Good command of professional skills.
- Standard command of professional skills.
- Insufficient command of professional skills.
- Poor command of professional skills.
- Lack of command of professional skills.

If we take into account that each graduator (or seminal specifier) of this semantic characteristic transmits a certain degree of given characteristic, then, the dynamics of the intensity of the dominant characteristic ("command of professional skill") can be represented by the following gradation scale, for example:

The dynamics of the intensity of the dominant characteristic "command of professional skill":

- +3 - Perfect (highest degree of dominant characteristic);
- +2 - Skilled;
- +1 - Good;
- 0 – Standard (0 – the norm-zero level of measurement);
- -1 - Insufficient;
- -2 - Poor;
- -3 – Lack of (lowest degree of dominant characteristic)

According to this gradation scale of dominant characteristic, it is possible to divide the lexical units of the studied lexical-semantic group into the micro groups according to the command of professional skill, which have the following composition:

1. Perfect command of professional skills: ACE, ARTIST, GENIUS, GURU, MAESTRO, MASTER sememe-2, PRODIGY, MAGICIAN, STAR, VIRTUOSO;

2. Skilled command of professional skills: ADEPT, CONNOISSEUR, CRACKERJACK, DABHAND, EXPERT, HOTSHOT, MAVEN, PROFESSIONAL sememe-2, SCHOLAR, SAVANT, WIZARD, WHIZ;

3. Good command of professional skills: ARTIFICER, ARTISAN, CRAFTSMAN, CRAFTSWOMAN, MASTER sememe-1, PROFICIENT, PRACTITIONER, PROFESSIONAL sememe-1, SPECIALIST, TECHNICIAN, WRIGHT;

4. Standard command of professional skills: HAND, HANDYMAN, HANDICRAFTSMAN, HIND, JOURNEYMAN, EMPLOYEE, OPERATIVE, WORKER;

5. Insufficient command of professional skills: APPRENTICE, ASSISTANT, HELPER, LEARNER, PROBATIONER, ROUSTABOUT;

6. Poor command of professional skills: AMATEUR, DABBLER, DILETTANTE, BUNGLER, LAYMAN, LAYWOMAN, NONPROFESSIONAL, SCIOLIST;

7. Lack of command of professional skills: BEGINNER, GREENHORN, NOVICE, NEWBIE, NOOB, IGNORAMUS, FLEDGLING, ROOKIE, TYRO.

#### **6.4. The Determination of the Degree of Gradation of Antonymous and Synonymous Paradigms**

We can determine the degree of gradation of antonymous and synonymous paradigms which are included in the studied lexical-semantic group by using the gradation scale of the dynamics of the intensity of the dominant characteristic "command of professional skill", where:

- antonymy is understood as "the phenomenon of the opposite of the meanings of linguistic units", and lexical antonyms are "words of one part of speech, opposite in meaning" (Chupryakova 2014, p. 29);

- synonymy is understood as "the phenomenon of complete or partial coincidence of the meanings of linguistic units with different sounds and spellings", and lexical synonyms are "words of the same part of speech that sound and spell differently, but have similar or identical meanings" (Chupryakova 2014, p. 23).

Focusing on the gradation scale and according to the above definition of the concept of synonymy, we can conclude that a pair of lexical units that are included in the same mini group located on any vector of the gradation scale (minus or plus) forms a synonymous paradigm with zero degree of gradation.

Focusing on the gradation scale and according to the above definition of the concept of synonymy, we can conclude that a pair of lexical units that are included in the different mini groups and located on the same vector of the gradation scale (minus or plus) forms a synonymous paradigm with a certain degree of gradation.

Focusing on the gradation scale and according to the above definition of the concept of antonymy, we can conclude that a pair of lexical units that included in mini groups located on opposite vectors of the gradation scale (minus and plus) forms a contrarian antonymous paradigm with a certain degree of gradation.

Focusing on the gradation scale and according to the above definition of the concept of antonymy, we can conclude that a pair of lexical units, where one lexical unit is included in mini group located at any step of any vector of the gradation scale (plus or minus), and the second lexical unit is necessarily included in mini group that is located in step 0 – Standard command of professional skills, forms contradictory antonymous paradigm with a certain degree of gradation.

## 7. Conclusion

As the practice of the study shows:

- a quantitative increase in the degree of gradation indicates a weakening of the paradigmatic relations of lexical units in synonymous and contrarian antonymous pairs;

- a quantitative increase in the degree of gradation indicates a strengthening in the paradigmatic relations of lexical units in contradictor antonymous pairs.

Antonymous and synonymous paradigms are interconnected and based on the commonality of unifying and distinguishing characteristics. The main difference between them is the nature of their opposition: the antonymous paradigm denotes the opposite sides of the same characteristic, while the synonymous paradigm denotes the same side of this characteristic, while revealing its different properties.

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