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**TO THE QUESTION OF CONCRETE NOUNS AS SOURCES FOR
ITALIAN QUANTIZERS**

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Abstract

The concept "QUANTITY" as well as the concepts "SPACE" and "TIME", has a universally significant global character. These are the fundamental categories of philosophy, natural science, sociology, physics and other humanitarian and exact sciences. These categories are a kind of "coordinate frame" with the help of which people belonging to a particular culture perceive the world and describe it. These concepts are expressed in any contemporary language with the help of both lexical and grammatical means. The concept "QUANTITY" includes images, categories and concepts that reflect the most essential aspects of the reality around us. This research is devoted to the process of metaphorization of quantifiable lexemes as the focal principle of the formation of quantizers. The author considers the foremost approaches to the essence of the concept "QUANTITY", the peculiarities of the semantics of subject nouns as well as the key mechanisms of metaphorization of quantifiable meanings in the Italian language.

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1. Introduction

The conceptual category of QUANTITY along with the concepts TIME, SPACE, QUALITY has universal nature, common to all mankind. These concepts are central for the whole concept sphere. They are coded in the language by means of grammar and vocabulary (Razorenov, 2010). QUANTITY, first pointed out by Aristotle, has always been the subject matter of various branches of science. The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that the concept of QUANTITY is the main subject of study for a variety of sciences. Linguistic variants of the embodiment of quantitative relations have been repeatedly interpreted in lexicological studies conducted with the involvement of different languages of the world. The theoretical base of the research paper is rooted in the publications of Chelnokova (2017), Khomskiy (1999), Lakoff (2009), Razorenov (2010), focused mostly on the expression of different types of quantity in language. Besides, one of the works of Cherdantseva (1988); was taken into consideration, where metaphors as well as quantitative metaphors and the process of conceptualizing the quantitative properties of a metaphor are thoroughly analysed. A significant characteristic of the research is the scrutiny of stages of metaphorization and so-called "donor zones", which became possible thanks to the works of Doetjes (1994), Fedyaeva (2016), Rakhilina and Lee Soo Hyun (2009), describing anthropocentric character of number, space and time language interpretation. With the help of the works of Antoine Meillet (1921), Maisak (2000, 2004) it was possible to see the way quantizers go through the indispensable process of grammaticalization.

2. Problem Statement

The relevance of the study undertaken is chiefly determined by the fact that the concept of QUANTITY is one of the essential notions of any developed language. The way quantifiable relations are manifested linguistically has been thoroughly observed in numerous lexicological researches. However, as it is mentioned in some research papers on cognitive linguistics, while conventional ways of expressing quantitative relations in the Italian language are thoroughly analysed, the means of conveying the concept of quantity have not appeared to be systematically handled so far, therefore much remains to be done in the mentioned field of linguistics.

Scientific originality of this research paper is determined by the fact that the Italian quantifiable lexis is for the first time studied through the lens of semantics of words, which are sources for quantizers of an indefinite number, i.e. the so-called "donor zones". This term was borrowed from the research paper by Rakhilina and Lee Soo Hyun (2009).

3. Research Questions

To achieve this goal in the course of writing the work, a number of specific tasks were solved:

- to accumulate a list of quantizers of an indefinitely large and indefinitely small quantity on the material of the modern Italian language;
- to indicate the main donor zones of Italian quantitative lexemes;
- to reveal the correspondence of various donor zones of the quantizers studied by us.

4. Purpose of the Study

The key goal mainly pursued in the study is to make up a list of Italian quantizers of indefinitely large and small amount and to analyse the semantics of nouns serving as sources for quantizers.

According to the purpose the following tasks were submitted:

- to provide a list of quantizers of an indefinitely large and indefinitely small number based on the linguistic material of modern Italian language;
- to highlight the main so-called “donor-zones” of the lexemes under study;
- to undertake a comparative analysis of the examined donor zones.

5. Research Methods

To achieve the designated purpose and solve the tasks that concretize it, a structural approach was used in the paper, grounded on a combination of the following methods of factual analysis: the comparative method, the method of constituent analysis, the method of studying dictionary meanings, as well as the method of quantitative processing of the data gained.

6. Findings

This study scrutinizes the quantifiable vocabulary of the Italian language. By quantifiable vocabulary, linguistic units are meant that specifically indicate some specific amount. The quantizer also evaluate or assess the grade of what is being calculated. Any quantizer replies to the questions like “How much?”, “How many?” or “To what degree so and so?” (Sapir, 1993). Quantizers are predisposed to convey notions of measurement, escalation, and intensification. With the help of a quantizer, the utterer conveys the quantitative component of the surrounding reality.

For example:

She needs **both** files.

This no-fat attitude worries me, because the **avalanche** of fat-free foods makes their goal nearly achievable.

I did three **lots** of exams last summer.

We can use quantizers before nouns as well (They ate **a few** crackers and drank **some** coffee), instead of nouns (Do you want any? There wasn't any left) and in of-phrases (She left most of the toffies for him. She could not eat all of them).

The object of the present study is concrete nouns, which in their first meaning mention explicit and exact objects, but as part of the genitive structure “N de/di N” they undertake some morphological transformation and develop into quantizers with the meaning of an indefinitely large number or an indefinitely small number.

For instance, in the English language the lexical units like “forest” or “ocean” are vivid examples of quantizers. In their primary meaning, both of them characterize natural objects, nevertheless, being a part of the nominal genitive construction “N of N” these units denote “an indefinitely large number of

smth” (cf. : a forest of hands, an ocean of voices). Thus, these lexical units do not refer to some objects any longer but rate (and mostly overrate) some indefinitely large amount.

It is vital to say that when becoming quantizers, lexemes lose some “gears” of their first meaning, however they are able to withhold some additional semasiological particularities, which, lengthwise the quantifiable meaning, establish their connotation (Aksenova, 2014). That is to say, quantizers differ by their “donor zones”, the scrutiny of which appears to be the most thought-provoking and vital occupation in examining any quantitative vocabulary.

There have been revealed 29 Italian quantizers of indefinitely large amount:

afflusso, arma, bagaglio, bouquet, branco, diluvio, esercito, fascio, fila, fiume, fortuna, frutto, grappolo, groviglio, invasione, manica, marea, mondo, montagna, mucchio, nuvola, oceano, pioggia, raffica, spazzatura, squadra, valanga, voragine, vortice / influx, weapon, baggage, herd, flood, army, bundle, row, river, luck, fruit, cluster, tangle, invasion, sleeve, tide, world, mountain, pile, cloud, ocean, rain, gust, garbage, team, avalanche, chasm, vortex.

Quantizers of indefinitely small amount (25 lexemes) are the following ones:

atomo, bit, blob, mollica, punto, elemento, frazione, grano, iota, minim, boccone, particella, pezzo, straccio, scintilla, ombra, frammento, scheggia, scintilla, spezia, spot, stiver, tittle, tot, rivolo / atom, bit, blob, crumb, dot, drop, element, farthing, fraction, grain, hair, iota, minim, morsel, particle, piece, rag, scintilla, scrap, shadow, shred, sliver, spark, spice, spot, stiver, tittle, tot, trickle.

Both lists include only concrete nouns, but not all words imaginable in the given prepositional genitive construction with the meaning “a lot”, like *abbondanza, parte, ricchezza* etc. as they originally convey the idea of large multitude. A full list would consist of all the words possibly able to be part of the genitive construction N de/di, but their analysis goes beyond the scope of the current research.

Some names – such as “un bouquet” – initially have a dual nature, denoting a specific object of the external world, which is a set of objects of a certain kind (cf. a bouquet of flowers), so they are able to appear in a genitive construction even in their original meaning. In this case, the marker of their transition to the class of quantizers is a significant expansion of compatibility, cf. a bouquet of flowers is a bouquet of problems, which, as in the case of initially non-relational names, is accompanied by their acquisition of purely quantitative semantics with an evaluative component. All this means that these names are drawn into the process of grammaticalization: for each of them, at this moment, a gradual exit from the status of a commonplace lexical unit begins, and theoretically this process may even end with a transition to a grammatical indicator (Rakhilina, 2010).

The quantizer of a large amount is for the most part associated with some qualitative (often visual) image of the amount that it denotes, while the quantizer of a small quantity is often used by speakers to emphasize the complete absence of an object – even the smallest part of it or almost complete – except for that very small part. In this case, suchlike constructions are used that could be called “quasi-negative” – with particles like **just, only, solely**, or **at least / merely**: *All birthday parties usually leave behind **only** a handful of photographs.*

I have examined the semantics of lexemes, which are sources for Italian quantizers of an indefinitely small and large amount, i.e. the so-called “donor zones”. The analysis makes it possible to distinguish several groups, sometimes overlapping each other (Table 1).

Table 1. Donor zones

INDEFINITELY LARGE QUANTITY	INDEFINITELY SMALL QUANTITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vertical objects (<i>montagna, mucchio</i>); - spacious/unlimited surfaces (<i>mondo</i>); - objects consisting of many items (<i>fascio, cluster</i>); - oriented torrents of substance (<i>fiume, vortice</i>); - moving in the air and falling masses or multitudes (<i>nuvola, pioggia</i>); - suddenly appearing masses or multitudes (<i>valanga, diluvio, manica</i>); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a small part of smth (<i>brandello</i>); - a small mass/volume of an object (<i>goccia, boccone</i>); - a small limited surface (<i>scintilla, spot, punto</i>); - a small material object (<i>tot, capelli</i>); - small measure of volume (<i>grano</i>);

First of all, for quantizers of an indefinitely large amount these are the words meaning vertical objects (*montagna, mucchio*) according to the acknowledged formula of metaphorical shift proposed by John Lakoff, HIGHER => BIGGER (Lakoff, 2009).

For quantizers of an indefinitely small amount these are the words with the original meaning "a particle of smth" (*brandello*). The semantic transference occurs according to the formula SMALL PART of smth => SMALL AMOUNT of smth (“a small piece or particle of smth” => “small amount”).

7. Conclusion

There appear to be a more or less equal number of quantizers of indefinitely large and small amount. There are several donor zones for quantizers of indefinitely large and small amount. The comparative analysis of the so-called “donor zones” has showed that the donor zone “part of the substance” is dominant for quantizers of an indefinitely small amount, since this zone is represented by the largest number of names in our study. The donor zone "dynamic masses" is central to the quantifiable zone of an indefinitely large amount, since it is exemplified by the largest number of names in our research. Such donor zones as “space”, “oriented torrents of substance”, “masses of substance moving in the air or falling down” have turned out to be quite common for both types of quantizers, while the donor zones like “vertical objects”, “objects consisting of many items”, “small material objects”, “a small part of smth”, “a small measure of volume” do not correspond and can be found only within the boundaries of one group they originally belong to.

Thus, future study of quantizers presupposes a comparative analysis of Italian, English and Russian donor zones, the meaning of quantitateness through the prism of deicticity, intensity and connotation as well as such characteristics as the degree of grammaticalization and specific peculiarities of their syntactic behavior. Besides, it would be important to ensure if the list of quantifiers expressing some indefinitely large or small quantity is open and can be supplemented with new lexical units on different grammatical and syntactical levels.

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