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Some semantic and etymological characteristics of English verbs describing sensual and emotional activity of a person

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION. The study discusses some semantic and etymological characteristics of English verbs describing the sensuous-emotional activity of a person. The way people interpret their emotions depends on the “lexical grid of coordinates” given to them by their native language. And in this vein, the linguistic picture of the world appears as knowledge fixed in the content of linguistic forms, as a kind of system of belonging to the world and a form of its categorization. The need to correlate the prototypical approach in categorization with the conceptualization of historical models [etymological]. **RESEARCH METHODS.** Within the framework of the development of this topic, the main research methods that made it possible to identify some semantic and etymological features of English verbs describing the sensual and emotional activity of a person are: the descriptive method, the method of component analysis, the method of formalization. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.** The actualization of the problems of language – consciousness – emotion in linguistics has affected the development of topics and concepts related to the emotional world of a person “as one of the microcosms”. And in this regard, it is interesting that the history of the origin of verbs of emotions and the periods of their emergence lift the veil on how speakers are accustomed to “conceptualize” emotional states. The study of the conceptual structure of the word (in the study – verbs of emotions) according to the etymological analysis can provide important data for further study of the conceptual sphere describing the sensual and emotional activity of a person. **CONCLUSION.** When studying the emotional world of a person, his feelings, it is necessary to understand that each language imposes its own interpretive grid of coordinates. Studying the semantic space of the English language, in particular, the microcosm of sensual and emotional activity of a person, in the form presented at the present stage of language development, we obtain certain knowledge about this conceptual sphere of English speakers, objectified by the signs of the language and reflected in its semantic space.

Keywords: to interpret, emotions, conceptsphere, the origin of emotion verbs, conceptualization, emotional states, semantic space

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Семантические и этимологические характеристики английских глаголов, описывающих чувственную и эмоциональную деятельность человека

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Аннотация

ВВЕДЕНИЕ. Рассмотрены некоторые семантические и этимологические характеристики английских глаголов, описывающих чувственно-эмоциональную деятельность человека. То, как люди интерпретируют свои эмоции, зависит от «лексической сетки координат», которую даёт им родной язык. И в этом ключе языковая картина мира предстаёт как знание, зафиксированное в содержании языковых форм, как своеобразная система принадлежности к миру и форма его категоризации. Возникает необходимость соотнесения прототипического подхода в категоризации с концептуализацией исторических моделей [этимологических]. **МЕТОДЫ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ.** Основными методами исследования, позволившими выявить некоторые семантические и этимологические особенности английских глаголов, описывающих чувственную и эмоциональную деятельность человека, являются: описательный метод, метод компонентного анализа, метод формализации. **РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ.** Актуализация проблем языка – сознания – эмоции в лингвистике повлияла на развитие тем и понятий, связанных с эмоциональным миром человека «как одним из микрокосмов». И в этой связи интересно, что история происхождения глаголов эмоций и периоды их возникновения приоткрывают завесу над тем, как носители привыкли «концептуализировать» эмоциональные состояния. Изучение концептуальной структуры слова (в исследовании – глаголов эмоций) по данным этимологического анализа может дать важные данные для дальнейшего изучения понятийной сферы, описывающей чувственную и эмоциональную деятельность человека. **ЗАКЛЮЧЕНИЕ.** Изучая эмоциональный мир человека, его чувства, необходимо понимать, что каждый язык накладывает свою интерпретативную сетку координат. Изучая семантическое пространство английского языка, в частности, микрокосм чувственной и эмоциональной активности человека, в том виде, в котором он представлен на современном этапе развития языка, мы получаем определённые знания об этой понятийной сфере носителей английского языка, объективируемые знаками языка и отражённые в его семантическом пространстве.

Ключевые слова: интерпретировать, эмоции, концептосфера, происхождение глаголов эмоций, концептуализация, эмоциональные состояния, семантическое пространство

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INTRODUCTION

The actualization of the language-consciousness-emotion problem in linguistics has affected the development of topics and concepts related to the human emotional world “as one of the microcosms”. The way people interpret their own emotions depends on the “lexical grid of coordinates” that their native language gives them coordinates [1, p. 57]. In the global linguistic picture of the world, the study of the lexical-semantic system of a language helps to cognize the linguistic models of more private micro-worlds, each of which is characterized by its linguistic originality [2, p. 360].

In this key, the linguistic picture of the world appears as knowledge fixed in the content of linguistic forms, as a peculiar system of world membership, and a form of its categorization. When studying the emotional world of man, his feelings, it is necessary to understand that each language imposes its own interpretive grid of coordinates.

In this regard, it is the history of the origin of emotion verbs and the periods of their emergence that lift the veil over how speakers used to “conceptualize” emotional states. One of the most famous researchers of prototypical categorization writes about the need to correlate the prototypical approach in categorization with historical (etymological) conceptualization. This research aims to consider some semantic and etymological features of English verbs describing human sensual-emotional activity.

RESEARCH METHODS

In connection with the actualization of the language-consciousness-emotion problematic, concepts related to the human emotional world “as one of the microcosms” are being developed in linguistics.

The main research methods, which helped to reveal some semantic-etymological features of English verbs describing human sensual-emotional activity, were: descriptive method, method of component analysis, method of formalization [3, p. 236].

In the modern view, the world picture is correlated with the content of consciousness and

is described as a system of human perceptions of the surrounding reality, a kind of “conceptual framework embedded in consciousness, including both non-verbal and verbalized models [4, p. 76]. The linguistic picture of the world is understood as a subsystem of the conceptual picture of the world, including those of its components to which language signs are correlated [5, p. 17]. The linguistic picture of the world in this understanding appears as knowledge fixed in the content of linguistic forms, as a peculiar system of world membership and a form of its categorization.

In the complex global linguistic picture of the world there are many more private pictures, each of which is characterized by linguistic originality. The principle of defining the “semantics of possible worlds” is based on this circumstance: “the real initial set of worlds sets the semantics of language, within the boundaries of language a set of worlds is reflected, fixed, including “worlds” as “all possible situations” known to man, i.e. some “micro-worlds”, fragments of a single world” [6, p. 44].

For example, the feelings described by the Russian words joy, sadness, longing are significant for Russian culture and Russian language. In English there are no exact equivalents for sadness and longing, but there are such words as sadness, melancholy, nostalgia, which characterize feelings that are somewhat related to sadness and longing, but still not identical to them.

This does not mean, as A. Vezhbetskaya notes, that a native speaker of Anglo-Saxon culture is not capable of feeling sadness or longing, but the corresponding feelings are not specifically identified in a given culture. “By using words denoting emotions in a particular language to describe the universal world of human feelings, we inevitably adopt the conceptualization of the world given by that particular language, so that our description becomes inadequate” [5, p. 344].

A. Vezhbetskaya refers to W. James: “...on this largely vague world of feelings each language imposes its own interpretive grid of coordinates. The number of emotions will be limited by the internal vocabulary of whoever attempts to name each individual emotion, since each na-

tion has found names for shades of feeling that are not distinguished by other nations" [5, p. 236].

The interesting fact is mentioned by T.V. Ahutina: "The way people interpret their own emotions depends on the "lexical grid of coordinates" that their native language gives them" [7, p. 14].

Whether two internal states are interpreted as manifestations of "the same emotion" or as "two different emotions" depends on the prism through which language these emotions are interpreted. "The consciousness of an individual as a representative of a certain linguocultural community perceives and comprehends the surrounding world in accordance with the established norms, rules and attitudes that "filter" his mental world and his psyche from alien elements" [8, p. 20].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In some famous researchers of prototypical categorization we can read about the necessity to correlate the prototypical approach in categorization with historical [etymological] conceptualization.

Speaking about the importance of historical conceptualization, Y.S. Stepanov notes, the internal form of the concept "love", i.e. the words expressing it – to love, love, is far from being as clear and slender as one can expect from its content. He points out that the verb to love by its origin and form is causative, i.e. meaning "to cause in someone or something a corresponding action, to make someone or something do it" and compares it with the pairs: to drink when to drink and to wake when to wake [9, p. 21]. According to the etymological dictionary the verb "to love", as well as its English equivalent love, corresponds with the ancient Indian lobhayati "to excite desire, to make love, to fall in love". However, as Y.S. Stepanov notes, the second form is lost in Slavic languages. It does not exist in modern English either, which has only love with formally non-causative meaning. The morphological distinctions between the basic forms of noun and verb that existed in the ancient period were erased due to the reduction of non-accentual endings. By the XIV–XV centuries, the process of coincidence of the common case

form of the noun and the infinitive of the verb [love from lufian] became apparent. Formally, the existence of causative and non-causative meanings of the verb love is not expressed, but the conceptual system of English speakers [conceptual picture of the world according to E.S. Kubryakova] continues to preserve these two meanings.

Let us cite the substantiation of Y.S. Stepanov. He writes: "...the concept "Love" developed according to ... the semantic model of 'mutual relations between two persons'... In other words, in the mirror of language "Love" appears as a result of "alternate initiative", "a circle of communication" of "self" with "other", of agent A with agent B. ... The verb "to love", causative, originally meant that someone, agent A, "himself" arouses a desire, a feeling of love in the "other", in agent B, after which there comes a "state of love" in agent A as well" [9, p. 24]. The author also emphasizes the element of mutual likening of two persons in the concept "Love". Thus, historical conceptualization, as O.E. Filimonova says, is the formation and study of the conceptual structure of a word according to the data of etymological analysis can provide important data [10].

Let us consider the meaning of the verb "love": 1) "to have a strong feeling of caring for and liking someone"¹ is common to a number of verbs of emotions, such as to affect; to attach, to cherish, to care for, to fancy, to adore, to dote; 2) to like something very much or enjoy doing something very much"² is common to such verbs as: sympathize, attract, warm. The verb "love" can express an unaccountable or conscious feeling, manifested or not manifested outwardly, directed at a being or thing, action or property: to love a child, to love one's motherland, to love music³.

The verb "to affect" denotes a less deep but more tender feeling of heartfelt sympathy, mani-

¹ Hornby A.S. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. London, Oxford University Press Publ., 1982, vol. 1, 1428 p.

² Ibid.

³ Апресян Y.D. English-Russian synonymic dictionary. Moscow, Russkii yazyk Publ., 1979, 543 p.

fested in external signs of attention: "I like my teacher, but I can't say that she affects me"⁴.

The verb "to attach" expresses a feeling based not so much on deep heartfelt affection as on habit: to attach to one's friend⁵. With regard to the verb hate, the etymological dictionary data shows the following: hate (vb.) – OE hatian = OS (Old Saxon) haton; OHG. hazzōn, Goth hatan (hate), i.e. it is a primordial verb conceptualizing the basic emotion "to hate".

The modern meaning of the verb "to hate" is: 1) "to dislike someone very much"⁶ is common to a number of verbs such as: antipathize, detest, despise, anathematize, disgust, repel, dislike; 2) "to feel a deep intense emotion of anger, animosity and hostility"⁷ is common to verbs such as: loathe, detest, abominate, abhor, curse, damn, sicken, reject, revolve. The verb "hate" in relation to a person expresses a stable feeling of hatred, associated with enmity, open or hidden malice, the desire to harm or destroy the hated person, and in relation to things, phenomena of reality – a deep inner disgust: "The prisoners hated the cruel warden"; "She now hated her husband who had forsaken her and the children"; "I hate the smell of garlic"; "I hate him for his pettiness and cowardice"; "I hate subterfuge"⁸. The verb "hate" can also express a feeling directed at oneself, and in this case denotes extreme dissatisfaction with oneself: "I moved cautiously across the dark and hated myself all the way"⁹.

The verb "to loathe" expresses the feeling of hatred associated with enmity, anger, but differs from the verb hate in that it often characterizes not only the feeling itself and its object, but also the subject of the feeling, emphasizing its intolerance and intransigence: "I loathe them because they are coarse and brutal"¹⁰.

The verb "to detest" is "to hate very much", verb abominate – "to abhor"; "to hate very

much"¹¹. These verbs express a feeling of extreme dislike with elements of indignation, contempt, connected with violations of moral foundations or norms of behaviour; accompanied by an evaluative judgment: "to abhor a liar"¹².

The verb "to joy" – XIII oral. rejoice [re-joyce, amuse]; XIV oral. enjoy [to rejoice, be glad] – OF joīr [mod. Jouir]: – Rom. * gaudire, for L. gaudere – rejoice. The modern meaning of the verb "to enjoy": 1) "to get pleasure"¹³ is common to such verbs as: excite, gladden delight, enliven; 2) "to make someone pleased"¹⁴ is common to a number of verbs: exult, relish, rejoice, elate, luxuriate. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of the conducted component analysis. The verb "to enjoy" has the broadest meaning, describing always an actual state accompanied by a general rise of feelings: "The fact that a stranger was read to listen enjoyed her".

The verb to delight – "to make someone pleased and joy"¹⁵ expresses a joyful feeling caused by the influence of factors on a person's emotional system: "He delights in music", "He is a naughty boy and delights in teasing his little sister".

The verb to rejoice is "to get and show great joy"¹⁶. This verb expresses a deeper and more intense feeling of joy or happiness, which is manifested in laughter, songs, festive cheer: "to rejoice at the good news"; "to rejoice at the success". The name of an object or action, property, phenomenon acts as a reason for such a state: "He delights in her", "She rejoiced at the chance"¹⁷.

Thus, the lexical-semantic system reflects the essential properties of the reality around us and helps to cognize the linguistic model of the world. D.R. Dowty says that verbs with emotional meaning nominate manifestations in the psycho-emotional sphere of a person. We call such verbs "verbs that express human emotions" or "verbs of emotions". In linguistics, this group of verbs is called "psychological predicates"

⁴ Apresyan Y.D. English-Russian synonymic dictionary.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Hornby A.S. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Apresyan Y.D. English-Russian synonymic dictionary.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary. Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya Publ., 1990, 685 p.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Apresyan Y.D. English-Russian synonymic dictionary.

¹³ Active Study Dictionary of English. London, Longman Group Limited Publ., 1983, 710 p.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Active Study Dictionary of English.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

[11, p. 619]. They are included in the multitude of words of the different parts of speech that cover one area of human experience called “Emotions”.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, the problem of emotions has received great attention within the framework of cognitive research. R. Jackendoff notes that the main difficulty in working out issues related to the understanding of affect, cognition and their relationship is the distinction between what is meant by emotion and cognition [12, p. 129]. In the author’s opinion, the fundamental difference in the definitions of cognition and emotion lies in the degree of attention to the type of information processed in each case: if cognition is usually understood as a series of internal processes involved in mastering, storing, transforming and searching for information (the type of information is not taken into account), then in the defini-

tions of emotion, on the contrary, the type of stimulus or information that produces the emotion is usually mentioned.

We should conclude that the inner emotional world of a person, including a variety of emotional linguistic representations, is only a fragment of a single global picture of the world. Culture has a great influence on the formation of the linguistic picture of the world and, in particular, on the world of human emotions.

Thus, the history of the origin of emotion verbs and the periods of their occurrence lift the veil over how speakers “conceptualized” emotional states in ancient times.

Studying the semantic space of the English language, in particular, the microcosm of human sensual-emotional activity, as it is presented at the present stage of language development, we get certain knowledge about this conceptsphere of native speakers of English, objectified by language signs and reflected in its semantic space.

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