A Concept as a Diachronic Phenomenon: Heuristic Comparative Historical Analysis (Based on the "Purity" Lexical-semantic Field in the German and English Languages)

Lyubov P. Dronova[a],*

[a]Tomsk State University, 36, Lenin Ave., Tomsk, 634050, Russia

Abstract

The article is devoted to improving the methods of conceptual analysis to represent the concept in its evolution. To solve this problem it is proposed to bring the tools of modern comparative science relying on an integrative method. The effectiveness of cooperation between two areas of linguistics at the level of diachronic analysis techniques in the article is demonstrated, firstly, in terms of the possibility of mutual verification of results. Secondly, the effectiveness of such interaction is shown by the example of the use of diachronic research as the initial stage of conceptual analysis in the reconstruction of the concept evolution.

1. Introduction

One of the most fundamental methodological changes in modern linguistics is the fundamental combination of synchronic and diachronic analysis techniques in the practice of semantic research. It is no coincidence that this change in the methodology of linguistics occurs during the formation of cognitive theory for which the description language diachronic aspect becomes extremely important, as the reference to the origin of these facts becomes one of the main research methodsin the explanation of the linguistic phenomena. Based on the conclusion that the possibility of semantic development of a word embedded in its original semantic structure, in foreign linguistic-

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +7-3822-53-48-99; fax: +7-3822-53-48-99.
  E-mail address: lpdronova@mail.ru

cognitive science implements a dynamic approach primarily within the framework of propositional-frame analysis technique to identify prototypical semantics through the "analytical framework" - schemes, scripts, cognitive models (Ch. Fillmore, L. Talmy, D. Geeraerts, E. Sweetser, and many others).We believe that the dynamic approach can be implemented within the framework of modern diachronic study, based on an integrative method, using the material of a specific fragment of the language lexical-semantic system. So obtained diachronic semantics is a reasoned basis for cognitive interpretation.

2. Methodology

Significantly different from the outside, the semantic component of the unit meaning content and a deep, conceptual structure, is, of course, correlated with its linguistic realization. Accordingly, a dynamic approach, a diachronic aspect of linguistic semantics representation - this is an invisible chain, fastening the oriented cognitive linguistics and comparative studies, based on the principles of modern diachronic research (historical, systemic-structural and functional approach, integrated and interdisciplinary research methods, and historical irreal- cultural characteristics of the analyzed facts). The consequence of this apparent "meeting" of an area of linguistics' (cognitive) interests and possibilitiesof other studies (comparative historical studies) is a need for a broad inspection method, and a method of realization of their interaction. It appears that there may be two areas of cooperation. Firstly, the verification area - checking (comparison) the results of the diachronic presentation of the same linguistic material by means of conceptual analysis and comparative-historical analysis, based on an integrative approach. Secondly, the direct use of comparative historical trends diachronic study as the initial phase of the conceptual analysis.

The effectiveness of the verification directions of the comparative historical method was tested by comparing the findings of different ways of diachronic semantics interpretation: cognitive analysis as a dynamic image-scheme in relation to lexical means of possibility modality expression and necessity of the English language (Sweetser, 1998) and the reconstruction of evolution of the semantics lexical means of expression of this modality, obtainedby the comparative historical method (Dronova, 2011: 102-107). The results confirmed the verificativeeffectiveness of the comparative-historical method as more flexible, able to consistently and discretely show the stages of diachronic semantics of the analyzed language unit formation. In turn, the discrete and phasing features ofthe semantics representationallowa reinforcement of the results of the actual vision of the linguistic semantic development with arguments of historical, cultural and areal character. This article summarizes the progress and findings of the comparative analysis.

The assumption of the possibility of diachronic study of comparative historical trends direct use as the initial phase of conceptual analysis is based on the following. The most problematic in the conceptual analysis is to consider the concept in evolution, in its historical aspect. At the same time, in Russian linguistics there is an effective method of historical analysis of the language facts, it has gained a high level of theoretical and practical diachronic research. This is because modern comparative historical linguistics, aware of imperfection of any method is based on an integrative method, which included, in addition to the comparative-historical, the other methods of language analysis on an improved procedure for reconstruction and accounting for all variants of the national language (Makaev, Toporov, Trubachov etc.).

This article presents the results of testing the effectiveness of using the theoretical tools and installations of the moderndiachronic study at a certain stage of conceptual analysis, which were carried out using material of the lexical-semantic field of "purity" in the German and English languages. The reason that the lexical-semantic field was the whole object of studies to focus on the specifics of the modern cognitive approach, which is, by definition of D. Geerarts (Rakhilina, 2008: 154), about a departure from modeling of linguistic processes, primarily in the field of semantics based on the "standard" examples and the transition to a recontextualizationof linguistic description, i.e. to return to empirical material as the basis of linguistic research. As a result, the main diagnostic criteria in the analysis of semantic fields are the described features of the context of use, syntagmatic and paradigmatic featuresinvolved in the analysis of lexical units at different historical stages of the German and English languages.

2.1. Research Design

The sequence of stages of the exical-semantic field studies is determined by the fact that a characteristic feature of modern diachronic study is the priority of internal reconstruction, based on the principles of historicism and system: an analysis of the system of relations considered lexical units held as a part of certain lexical-semantic fields (LSF) in synchrony (at different Historical levels of the language history) and as part of participating in the organization of the LSF-etymological word-building nests. The result of this analysis is the semantic field, deployed in a historical perspective, which allows us to determine the direction of motivational relations development, to identify and summarize the range of semantic models, find their cognitive basis, the logical opposition of correlated semantic components, which determines the features of the concept of linguistic representation in its development.

Another feature of modern diachronic study techniques is determined by the functional approach to the analysis of the language facts. The specific nature of the functional approach to comparative historical research was identified by the Czech linguist V. Barnett: "The functional approach applied to the comparison of successive sections of synchronous language system leads us to an understanding of the diachronic analysis as a consistent projection of simultaneous cutting on the other. With projections, we define the changing scope of the functional changes taking place in the system and set the diachronic ratio (the ratio of the historical identity, genetic identity, the relationship of continuity, structural identity, and their inter-linkages) between correlative phenomena of the comparable stages" (Barnett, 1978: 141).

3. Discussion of Results

As noted above, the purpose of this article is to draw attention to the heuristic capabilities of modern diachronic study (relying onan integrative method) in the sphere of conceptual analysis when considering the concept in evolution and verification of the results of this analysis. It is proposed to discuss the possibility of the joint use of these methods, which have already become classics (comparative-historical, structural, linguistic, geographical, typological), at different stages of conceptual analysis (primary and Verification), which has become widespread and been preserving debatable.

Discussion of the importance of such a verification diachronic approach is offered as an example of Eve Sweetser conceptual analysis of modal verbs in the English language in dynamics (Sweetser, 1998: 52-54). Eve Sweetser adapting the basic idea of L. Talmy that modality is considered as the ratio of forces and barriers proposed force-dynamic analysis of modality relying on generalized concepts social-physics forces and barriers. "Talmy would be considered "must"as a barrier limiting anyone's scope to one specific act, and indeed, the power and the restriction will have the same physical result. But "must"have the power to do something, a positive coercion, not a negative limitation".(May and must are perhaps the most clearly force-dynamic of the modals. Talmy's understanding of "may"in terms of a potential but absent barrier seems to me very reasonable, and can be viewed as a restatement of the standard analysis (e.g. "not require not") in terms of the more general concepts of forces and barriers. "Must" is equally readily understood as a compelling force directing the subject towards an act. Talmy would like to view must as a barrier restricting one's domain of action to a certain single act; and it is true that force or constraint would have the same physical result. But "must" has the force of an order to do something, a positive compulsion rather than a negative restriction) (Sweetser, 1998: 52). In other words, such analysis presents"can" as a symbol of positive capacity of a figure, "may" - there is no limit from any side, and "must" - this is irresistible (subordinating) power that forces the subject to the action (positive forcing).

Comparative historical analysis showed that the scheme of semantic evolution implemented in "may" ('have power', 'to be able to' → 'able'), is consistent with the force-dynamic interpretation of "may" as not limited from any side ('to be able 'as' the force sufficient to not feel limited from any side"), and 'know' → 'able' as the semantics for generating 'to be able to' interpretation "can" does not contradict through the nearest physical analogy as a potential force or energy, a positive ability of a figure (or image schema of Sweetser: "can" as the equivalent of a full gas tank in a car, and "may"– the equivalent of an opened garage door!).

And what is a "positive forcing" for the pictorial representation of the original (prototypical) semantics of "must"? Functional features of the verb are the intersection of the semantics of external coercion and internal needs

of the entity. On the one hand, it is indeed the designation of forced, against the will of the subject of the action, "must"as 'be obliged or bound by a mandatory requirement to carry out' (I must keep my word), 'required or be forced to do anything because of the use or threat of use of force' (You must obey the law), 'to be forced to do something or in accordance with the rules or feeling integrity '(I must say, that it is a lovely hat). On the other hand, it is an expression of inner need of the subject, 'Need something' (Animals must eat to live), 'have a need or desire to do something' (I must buy that book) (Dictionary, 2006). Features of semantic evolution of Indo-European Germanic sequels * Med- 'measure', 'contemplate', which includesthe English"must" (EDW, 1993: 1198), provide a basis to evaluate the semantic complexity of the organization of "must" and let you see the excessive straightforwardness, simplified in its interpretation in the force-dynamic approach (Dronova, 2011: 107). So, the boundaries of diachronic semantics detection demarcate efficiency of this techniques were revealed: the depth of detection of prototypical semantics depends on the transparency of the "biography" of the words, or rather, how logically consistent, without any "jumps" there has been the historical development of the semantics of the investigated linguistic unit - the way of semantic development, which can be presented as a particular scheme.

Testing the effectiveness of the direct use of diachronic study of comparative historical character as the initial stage of conceptual analysis has been carried out on the material of the lexical-semantic field (LSF) of "purity" of the German and English languages, and the results of this study are presented in the publication (Dronova and Gotlan, 2013: 7-10). Lexicographical data analysis (Duden; DWDS; Holthausen, 1934; Raith, 1944; Bosworth, 1972) showed that at the core of the field are two lexical units: "rein" and "sauber" in German, "clean" and "pure" in English. Typically, only one token is nuclear, which is the most complete (syncretic) expresses the concepts presented in the language level of lexical and semantic field. Non-nuclear units of LSF express certain aspects of the concept, the degree of compartmentalization in the minds of native speakers, so the density of units of the LSF is considered as evidence of the relevance of this concept in a certain period of time in that particular culture. In the lexical-semantic field, "purity" reflects two different approaches to the understanding of the purity both in the German and English languages: the value of 'no impurities, uniform' (Ger. Rein, Engl. Pure) as the understanding of the natural purity, initially characterized by this attribute and value 'without dirt and stains' (sauber / clean) as a symbol of purity, controlled, created by man. Therefore, it turns out that nuclear tokens are complementary functional.

Functional differentiation is not rigid, for example, "rein" and "sauber", according to lexicographical sources, in some cases, have similar usage. For example, if the sauber means "frei von Schmutz, Verunreinigungen"–"without the dirt and debris (about objects, natural phenomena, man)" major importance (Duden), then with a small frequency, according to the data of the corps (DWDS), may be used, and "rein" with the meaning of 'makellossauber: "frei von Flecken, Schmutzoderähnliches"- "no stains and dirt" (on specific subjects, abstract phenomena), "einenreinenTeinthaben" - have a clean (healthy) color of face; "Auf einreines (unbeschriebenes) Blatt Papierschreiben" - to write something on a blank (unscribed) piece of paper (in other words, in this case, "no stains and dirt" means "free" (from any qualities, properties, initially not inherent);"sich in den TornisternneuereineWäschevorfand" - in backpacks there were found new clean things [Duden; DWDS]. In a figurative sense "rein" expresses ethical evaluation –"moral and morally impeccable"; (Übertragung) einreines (unbelastetes) Gewissenhaben» - figurally, have clean (unencumbered smth.) thoughts, conscience; "mitreinenHändendastehen" - to be unstained, not sully reputation; "einereine Jungfrau" - innocent, blameless maid (Duden; DWDS).The same function has "sauber", meaning "relevant applicable ethical and other standards" (about abstract phenomena of man, his behavior);"einsaubererCharakter" - honest temper; "einesaubereHaltung" - moral behavior, where"einsauberesGewissenbewahren" means "to save pure thoughts" (Duden; DWDS). Nevertheless, a comparison of contexts also shows a definite difference in semantics in the compared adjectives: "rein" corresponds with the natural, original purity (the innocence, the Immaculate Virgin, the reputation of fairness), "sauber" focused on the representation of the moral behavior of a person (purity created by human actions). So, the orientation to presentation of different kinds of purity in the language is shown also in the meanings similar to the dictionary representation.

System-structural analysis of historically different LSF «slices» of "purity", the functional approach to the analysis of these "slices" showed that the present situation is a fundamentally discrete representation of the concept of "purity" in German and English due to its extralinguistic factors - especially the Christianization of Germany, active invasion of the Latin language in the German linguistic culture, and for England, the influence of Latin as the

language of the Christianization was "cut" by the invasion of the French language and culture (from the XI c., with the Norman Conquest). Until that time, the original German tokens "rein" and "clean" were the main lexical means, most fully and syncretically expressed "purity" in the German and English languages ("sauber" is a borrowing from Medieval Latin, pure - from the French). In Old High German the development of sūbar / sauber, probably came from the designations of moral purity 'sober, prudent' through 'perfect' to denote not only the inner qualities, but also to refer to the external manifestations of the sign "pure" (lat. "sūber", "sūbrius" - a prudent, reliable, trustworthy, moderate, which goes back to the classical Latin "sōbrius" meaning"moderately" (abstention), a sober, thoughtful '(Paul, 1992: 714-715; Du Cange 1886: 502).

Historical and etymological analysis of "purity" LSF lexical means at the different stages of the of German and English languages history identified the nomination features in this particular lexical field and let us to conclude that even at the Teutonic level the idea of purity was ambiguous. This is evidenced by motivational signs Teutonic, West German origin LSF tokens: "screened / cleaned / pure" (hreini / rein), "washed / cleaned / pure" (hlūttar / lauter, hlūtor),"transparent, clear, bright"(schīr / schier, sćīr / sheer and clæne / clean) (EDW, 1993: 1198). These motivational signs reflect the current logical opposition in the meaning of"clean","cleanliness natural" - "purity as a result of human actions". As the typological studies show, the close cooperation between the concepts of "clean" and "clear / light"is characteristic for many languages (Arkhangelsk, 2011: 257-260). Close interaction between these concepts is naturally explained as a symbol of the same character in different kinds of denotation:"clean"- about the sky, the water, the glass - a "transparent, clear, bright", in relation to other groups of denotations"clean" -is with no impurities, homogeny, purified.

Historical changes in the functioning of the earliestlexical representationmeans led to the fact that, for example, LSF"purity"remained all three Teutonic tokens in the German language (hreini, hlūttar, schīr). Their functional load throughout history has underwent changes: hreini / rein ('without dirt and stains', 'without impurity', 'clear, transparent and some estimate meanings) from the Old High German period been a nuclear LSF token, but then its semantic structure was reduced as a result of the competition with "sauber", the same thing happened to the semantics of hlūttar / lauter ('without impurity', 'clear and bright' ethical assessment "morally impeccable ') and schīr / schier (“clear and bright”(USI), without admixture '), the zone of reference is much narrower. There are only two all-German tokens associated with the expression of purity preserved in the history of the English language–"hlūtor" and "sćīr". Throughout recorded history of the English language, they were actively involved in the expression of the concept of "purity" and LSFhad long ranked in the perinuclear zone ("hlūtor" gradually reduced its functional significance, and eventually became archaic,schīr / sheer, in its turn,was preserved up to the modern English period). The lexicographical sources said that clæne/ clean tokensare the main functionally significant linguistic means of expressing the concept of "purity" from the Old English period, which retains its place at the core from the LSF to the present. The adjective «clean» is a regionalism with West German origin. Etymologically, it is probably related to the concept of "natural purity" ('clear, bright, and transparent'). The syncretic notion of purity in this token has emerged on the continent (before the Anglo-Saxons landed in Britain) (Dronova and Gotlan, 2013: 7-10).

The overall meaningful conclusion of the study is that even at the stage of the Teutonic stories there were three interpreted conceptual (semantic) component, linked by ties of "family relationship", to represent the notions of purity: the purity of nature - "no impurities, homogeneous", "clear, bright "and the purity made by a man -"without dirt or spots". These conceptual components were implemented separately in a number of lexical resources, and together, as a whole representation of the concept in a oneunit, which has become a nuclear LSF. Structural dynamics expressed as the presence of two phases of the conceptual part of realization - syncretic and discrete. At the lexical level this is reflected in the LSF nuclear structure initially expressed by a lexical unit (rein / clean), then two (rein, sauber / clean, pure).

4. Conclusion

Thus, the above gradual diachronic analysis based on an integrative approach has shown its effectiveness, firstly, as the verification means of the conceptual analysis results, leading to the opposite direction, from the general to the particular, from the logic circuit, the script to the linguistic facts, and secondly, the possibility and effectiveness of direct use of the diachronic study of comparative historical trends as the initial stage of the conceptual analysis that

gives a retrospective development of semantic studies. This, in turn, allows us to conduct cognitive interpretation and determine the direction of the concept of evolution.

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