

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.23.3.21>**ЛИНГВОКОГНИТИВНАЯ СПЕЦИФИКА И МЕТОДИКА ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ КОНКРЕТНО-ПРЕДМЕТНОГО КОНЦЕПТА (НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО И РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКОВ)**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Цель настоящего исследования – представить методику многоаспектного анализа конкретно-предметных концептов, учитывающую их лингвокогнитивную специфику. Научная новизна обусловлена предлагаемым алгоритмом реконструкции конкретно-предметного концепта, заключающемся в анализе метафоризированных языковых единиц разной степени структурной сложности – фразеологизмов и лексем. Представленная в результате методика включает несколько этапов – анализ типов языковой репрезентации концепта; когнитивно-семантический анализ с целью реконструировать прототип концепта; анализ метафоричности языкового материала для описания метафорического потенциала концепта. В статье обосновывается достаточно универсальный характер данной методики, которая может быть использована для описания конкретно-предметных концептов, составляющих фрагменты картин мира носителей различных языков.

Ключевые слова: когнитивная лингвистика, концепт, когнитема, фразеологизм, переосмысленная лексема, метафора.

LINGUO-COGNITIVE IDENTITY OF OBJECT-DENOTING CONCEPTS AND A METHODOLOGY FOR THEIR ANALYSIS (BASED ON THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES)

Research article

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Abstract

The purpose of the research is to offer a methodology for a multifaceted analysis of object-denoting concepts, which takes cognizance of their linguo-cognitive identity. The scientific novelty lies in the author's algorithm of reconstructing an object-denoting concept. This algorithm consists of a series of analyses of metaphorized linguistic units with various degrees of structural complexity – phraseologisms and lexemes. The resulting methodology suggests several stages – the first is an analysis of types of verbal representation of a concept; this is followed by a cognitive and semantic analysis aimed at reconstructing the prototype of the concept; the final stage focuses on exploring metaphoricity of the linguistic material with the intention of describing the metaphorical potential of the concept. The article substantiates a rather universal nature of this methodology, which can be used to study object-denoting concepts making up fragments of worldviews specific to speakers of different languages.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, concept, cognitheme, phraseological unit, lexeme with transferred meaning, metaphor.

Introduction

The cognitive approach in linguistics, which has garnered widespread acceptance all over the world, enables researchers to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the semantics of discrete linguistic items, to combine the findings from analyzing various units of language, and, as a result, to produce an overall picture of the verbal representation of some fragment of reality. Not infrequently, cognitive linguists use the term ‘concept’ to denote a perception of some part of the surrounding world reflected in language. It should be noted that there exist different approaches when it comes to interpreting the essence of a concept, but linguists are obviously concerned with the linguistic form of its manifestation. This study rests on conceptions where the concept is regarded as all the knowledge about an object extracted from analyzing the content space formed by the semantics of linguistic nominations under study [4], [9]. We regard the concept as a mental formation reconstructed within an all-around linguistic (lingua-cultural) analysis of a body of language units having various degrees of structural complexity. Such an interpretation of the notion of a concept is deemed the most functional for carrying out a cognitive analysis of linguistic signs.

The epistemic value of using concepts for reconstructing parts of linguistic worldviews is caused by the fact that the concept possesses a greater degree of generality and abstractness and for that reason is capable of showing how meanings held by a whole array of language units used to describe some extralinguistic object interact in a person's mental space. Drawing upon the semantics of linguistic signs, researchers get access to cognitive space lying beyond language, which helps structure and enhance our knowledge about language.

In the course of studying language material linguists attempt to describe the concept of interest according to certain parameters, reveal its idiosyncrasies, and present their own construal of its structure. Researchers all over the world have extensively described abstract concepts, which a priori do not have any clearly defined ontological boundaries (such as the Russian concepts of ЛЮБОВЬ, ТОСКА, or the English concepts of LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, TRUTH). In contrast to abstract concepts, which regularly catch the attention of linguists, object-denoting concepts represent a poorly researched category, albeit they merit an equally thorough analysis, since they help understand how people perceive and reinterpret objects of the

surrounding world. Thus, the relevance and timeliness of this study are connected with the fact that it fills in the gaps in this research area and contains theoretical and empirical premises for further scientific forays in the given direction. Many object-denoting concepts have a virtually universal nature. This is due to the fact that the corresponding correlates of the material world are extremely common, and they are present in the life and culture of speakers of a wide variety of languages. Therefore, their study in the comparative vein can yield valuable information on the similarities and differences in world perception of people from different linguistic cultures.

Methods

This research makes use of the following methods: a cognitive and semantic (namely, cognitheme) analysis and a definitional analysis; a method of interpreting conceptual metaphors and an analysis of metaphoricity; a method of analyzing the verbal representation of a concept. The material for the research was collected by a continuous sampling method from phraseological and lexical dictionaries.

Discussion

Concepts can be characterized based on the way they correspond to denotata of the material world (at this point it should be noted that we stick to the conception that a denotatum is held to mean an object or phenomenon of the surrounding world 'captured' in language by a sign [8], [6]). The ontological essence of the group of concepts we are interested in is in the fact that in extralinguistic reality they correspond to a certain discrete material object of the surrounding world – for that matter, concepts of this kind become crystallized in consciousness as a result of perceiving denotata that have an objective existence in the world. Their linguistic essence lies in the fact that a noun will function as the name objectifying a concept in language.

As is well known, common nouns can be divided into several categories:

- 1) concrete nouns (or concrete object nouns) – these are nominals with quite concrete semantics, which are susceptible to being counted numerically (e.g., denominations of people, animate beings, objects);
- 2) mass nouns (or concrete mass nouns);
- 3) abstract nouns;
- 4) collective nouns.

A concrete nominal is a form of generalizing objects of material reality (tangible things), a form of creating a class of objects existing only in consciousness, which retains their sensory image [11, P. 66]. Sometimes they speak simply about 'concrete' lexis, which designates physical things and is opposed to words that refer to mental entities [10, P. 7]. Words of concrete lexis always have an individual object or phenomenon of reality as their denotatum. Such words can be defined by enumerating objectively existing attributes of an object [8, P. 641]. The class of concrete object nouns is characterized by the so-called 'cluster effect', i.e. designating a whole host of properties of an object [7, P. 28]. The concepts of nominals of concrete classes have a more collective nature compared to abstract nominations [1, P. 56]. Accordingly, going by the typology that exists for linguistic nominations of concepts, we can define the kind of lingua-mental formations under study as 'object-denoting concepts'.

Below we present an algorithm for analyzing linguistic units verbalizing an individual object-denoting concept, with the aim of reconstructing its generalized structure. This methodology was developed on the basis of the language material representing the two English concepts CAT and DOG. Phraseological and lexical units of the English language (a total of around 1400 items) served as the study material for the research. Then the efficacy of this methodology was tested when studying the equivalent Russian concepts (КОШКА and СОБАКА) on the basis of the Russian language material totaling around 1300 phraseologisms and lexemes. Thus, the research techniques and procedures offered here can be recommended for analyzing other object-denoting concepts representing worldviews of speakers of different languages.

The ontological identity of object-denoting concepts suggests that of special value for a linguo-cognitive analysis should be a study of their verbalizations in metaphorically modified language units with various degrees of structural complexity – namely, in phraseologisms and lexemes with fixed figurative meanings. From a cognitive perspective, such units come across as multi-dimensional structures having two information layers – the level of the inner form and the level of actual meaning, each of which reflects a certain worldview. When studying an object-denoting concept, the focus of attention shifts to the inner form of a linguistic nomination, since it is the inner form that captures the salient cognitive attributes of a concept, i.e. those attributes that are treated by the collective consciousness as socially and culturally meaningful. Studying object-denoting concepts is interesting from a culturological perspective and highly informative for the further development of the cognitive movement in linguistics, as their reconstruction helps determine how human consciousness perceives and mentally 'processes' tangible items of the surrounding world and uses them for reinterpreting phenomena of reality.

Before embarking on the conceptual analysis as such, it is necessary to determine a linguistic unit acting as the name of an object-denoting concept in the language. Such a linguistic unit should encapsulate the most generalized, invariant image of the denotatum; moreover, it usually belongs to the basic level of categorization, which is particularly significant for mundane consciousness. Thus, for instance, the nouns *cat* and *dog* will function as the names of the zooconcepts CAT and DOG, and the nouns *кошка* and *собака* will act as the names of the Russian concepts КОШКА and СОБАКА.

Results

It is possible to identify three stages of analysis that the language material should be subjected to if we strive to achieve a relatively precise reconstruction of an object-denoting concept.

1. The first stage consists in the analysis of the *verbal representation* of a concept. The point is that the nature and models of the actualization of an object-denoting concept in language have a variegated character, which explains the need for developing such a *typology of the verbal representation* of a concept that would be capable of embracing linguistic units of different structural complexity [3]. The idiosyncrasy of an object-denoting concept is that it is manifested in language by

means of a whole range of linguistic nominations, which reflect different aspects of the existence of a certain object in the world and form the lexical-and-semantic field of the concept. On this ground we can distinguish certain types of the *phraseological* and *lexical representation* of an object-denoting concept.

When verbalized in phraseologisms, object-denoting concepts are in most cases objectified by means of a lexeme that designates the concept's physical correlate per se (in the conducted research these were zoolexemes). This is the most prototypical representation of the concept, which we defined as its *direct* representation (Modest *dogs* miss much meat; Всякой *кошке* подавай сапожки). Verbs (*howl*; *скулить*), interjections (*bow-wow*; *мур—мур*), and other nouns describing the existence of the denotatum in extralinguistic reality (*barking*; *своя*) should be treated as the cases of an *indirect* representation of the concept. Indirect representation can have a *structurally inseparable* (one-word) character (*howl* at the moon; *лаять* на свой хвост) or (which is seen more often) a *structurally separable* (multi-word) character, when the entire situation (frame) represented at the cognitive level of the inner form serves as the concept's manifestation (*draw the badger*; *свернуться клубочком*). The latter type can be in its turn subdivided into *agentive* and *non-agentive* representations. In the case with the agentive representation the denotatum in the frame of the inner form takes on the function of an agent, being the doer of an action described in it (*put up one's back*; *Мышей не ловит*). We deal with a case of the non-agentive representation if the denotatum plays a secondary role in creating the frame of the inner form, being not an agent, but, for instance, a patient experiencing a third-party act (*call smb. to heel*; *посадить на привязь кого—л.*).

The four concepts under study lent themselves to identifying several additional, less prototypical types of their language manifestation: this is a *double* (joint) representation of the concept (The *cat* and *dog* may kiss, yet are none the better friends; И *псу* конурка, и *коту* печурка), which can also come in a *double indirect* variety (Один *рычит* да *лает*, другая *мурлычет* да *фыркает*); and an *alternative* representation – if phraseologisms exist in the form of variants, which verbalize alternately either one concept, or the other (Enough to make a *cat/dog* laugh; Черного *кота/кобеля* не отмоешь добела). Such a representation of the concept quite often has an *indirect* nature, and the alternative at the level of the inner form is not necessarily limited to only a dog or a cat (*lick one's wounds*; *вцепиться в глотку кому—л.* – originally said about a *dog* or a *wolf*). At the periphery of the phraseological representation of a concept lies a *metaphorical* representation, when a lexeme objectifying the concept is used in the phraseologism in its metaphorical meaning rooted in language (A *cur's* death for a *cur*; *Брехать* – не пахать, спина не болит).

The identified subtypes of the verbal representation are due to the characteristic features of the specific concepts under study – it is quite plausible that the analysis of other object-denoting concepts will reveal not all of the above-mentioned varieties, or, conversely, the current findings will be enhanced by some newly discovered 'touches to the portrait'.

The basic types of the verbal representation of concepts as described for phraseologisms can also be applicable to metaphorized structurally inseparable linguistic units. Within the direct representation, it makes sense to classify lexemes objectifying the concept based on the extent to which they reflect a generalized idea about the denotatum under study, which is rooted in the national collective consciousness. Lexemes are assigned to several levels depending on their degree of prototypicality in representing the concept, which makes it possible to develop the following overarching taxonomy of verbal representations of a concept in lexemes:

I *Direct representation*:

1) *Prototypical* lexemes with their *periphery*. Prototypical lexemes can be only nouns (in our case these were the names of the concepts).

At the periphery of prototypical representations lie the following designations:

- a) based on gender (*tomcat*; *кобель*);
- b) based on age (*whelp*; *котёнок*);
- c) emotionally charged designations (*pussycat*; *куса*).

2) *Non-prototypical* lexemes with their *periphery*. Non-prototypical lexemes comprise designations of the denotatum based on another attribute, such as functional or exterior – *hound*; *борзая*.

At the periphery of non-prototypical representations lie the following lexemes:

- a) adjectives designating affiliation with the genus (*feline*; *собачий*).

II A *grey zone* between the direct and indirect representations, which is exemplified by instances of an *alternative* representation of the concept (*bobtail* – a *horse* or *dog* with a docked tail; a contemptible fellow).

III *Indirect representation*:

- 1) *indirect agentive* subtype (*hard-bitten*; *мурлыкать*);
- 2) *indirect non-agentive* subtype (*to foil*; *уськать*).

2. Traditionally, in the course of studying linguo-concepts researchers attempt to extract information that characterizes the concept from the most credible and accurate perspective, and to produce a formalized portrayal of its structure. As part of the linguo-cognitive algorithm suggested in this article, such a procedure received the name of a *cognitheme analysis*, which represents the next step on the way to reconstructing an object-denoting concept. This analysis relies on the key notion of a *cognitheme* (a propositional bit of knowledge about an object) – the foundation and the operational unit of this analysis. The *cognitheme* was originally introduced by E.V. Ivanova for a cognitive analysis of proverbs as 'two-level signs', which capture two different types of knowledge about the world – at the level of the inner form (the literal level) and the level of actual meaning [5]. A *cognitheme* has a concise formalized wording in the respective language (e.g., 'the cat is playful' for the concept САТ, or 'собака подвергается наказанию' for the concept СОБАКА). Based on this theory, we developed a method for the *cognitheme analysis* of phraseological units, which yields ontologically important information about the 'content filling' of an object-denoting concept [2]; this method was later extrapolated to lexemes as well.

The ontological identity of object-denoting concepts, as well as the overall anthropocentric vector of language mentality lead to the fact that objects of the external world (in our research these were animals) quite seldom appear at the content level of phraseology (at this research stage, it may be possible to assume that anthropoconcepts, albeit they also correlate with a

discrete extralinguistic object (a human), will demonstrate somewhat different patterns of representation in language). Therefore, object-denoting concepts are manifested in the first place at the cognitive level of the inner form of phraseologisms, which determines the corresponding principle of analysis consisting in the cognitheme analysis of this cognitive layer. What is more, the inner form of lexemes with a metaphorical meaning also makes it possible to identify cognithemes making up the structure of an object-denoting concept (e.g., the cognitheme ‘the cat is aggressive’ is registered both in the phraseological unit *to agree like two cats in a gutter* and the lexeme *catfight* – ‘a physical or verbal battle between two or more women’).

For modeling the cognitive architecture of a concept it is necessary to carry out a cognitheme analysis of several types of metaphorized structurally inseparable units. Firstly, these are non-derivatives and derivatives, whose primary meaning represents a certain object, while the secondary meaning originates as a result of metaphorical transfer to another conceptual domain (e.g., *beagle* in the sense of ‘a spy or informer’ with the cognitheme ‘the dog follows scent’; *мурлыкать* in the sense of ‘to hum a song or to murmur’, the cognitheme ‘кошка издает звуки’). Secondly, these are so-called derivational metaphors, i.e. derivatives with a primary metaphorical character of designation, which at the same time represent an object-denoting concept at the level of their inner form (*кошки—мышки* in the sense of ‘a children’s game’, with the cognitheme ‘кошка охотится’; *dog-nap* in the sense of ‘a short nap taken while sitting’, the cognitheme ‘the dog is watchful’). It should be noted that in structurally inseparable designations cognithemes are hidden more deeply due to the fact that the inner form undergoes compression in the process of structural formation of a one-word unit, so that it takes more effort to restore the original motivational situation (there are also cases with the so-called ‘opaque’ inner form).

Based on the analysis of the four zooconcepts we offered the principles for identifying and formalizing concept-forming attributes as cognithemes and described the main types thereof:

1) *Actual cognithemes* – these can have an explicit or implicit nature:

a) *explicit actual cognithemes*.

Explicit cognithemes can be extracted from the literal level of a linguistic unit quite easily – e.g., the phraseological unit *keep a dog and bark oneself* contains the cognithemes ‘the dog is a domestic animal’ and ‘the dog barks’, which can be easily retrieved from the inner form, and the phraseologism *В кои то веки удалось коту с печки прыгнуть, и то лапки отшиб* h as the cognitheme ‘кошка ленивая’.

b) *implicit actual cognithemes*.

Implicit cognithemes are hidden more deeply – in order to discover them, we need to turn to the actual semantic level of a linguistic nomination, or look for some supplementary commentary on the *prototype situation*, i.e. the initial situation which provided the basis for the metaphorical designation (e.g., in the expression *to have hold of the cat by the tail* the cognitheme ‘the cat is a domestic animal’ is revealed only after turning to the level of actual meaning – ‘be at home, by your own fireside’).

2) *Etymological cognithemes* – these always have an implicit nature, since they are revealed based on the interpretation of the *antecedent situation*, i.e. the original situation that can be reconstructed only after a diachronic analysis. For instance, the lexeme *scaredy-cat* is found to contain the cognitheme ‘the cat is at feud with the dog’, which can be extracted only on the basis of the following historical background – ‘the phrase was coined in recognition of a cat’s trait of not standing up against a dog many times its size’.

The group of object-denoting concepts under study lent themselves to identifying a few more types of cognithemes specific to them – these are *mythological* and *metalinguistic* cognithemes. A mythological cognitheme indicates an animal’s imaginary feature deeply rooted in the people’s consciousness (*to bark at the moon* < there is a superstition that it portends death or ill luck; *Черная кошка пробежала между кем—то*). We have a case of metalinguistic cognithemes when the presence of components objectifying a concept in a linguistic nomination at a synchronic point is due to the external form of the corresponding words: *catgut* (< a corruption of ‘gut-cord’); *Make a hog or a dog of it* (‘bring a thing either to one use, or another’); *потом сун с котом*.

Counting the number of cases when the registered cognithemes reveal themselves in linguistic units will make it possible to define the *frequency* of their *actualization* in the language material. Cognitive units that reflect more detailed information about the denotatum (*subcognithemes*) can be integrated into *cluster cognithemes* having a more generalized wording (the following are the examples of cluster cognithemes – ‘the cat is a domestic animal’; ‘собака прожорливая’). Analysis at the cluster level enables us to describe the *phraseological* and *lexical prototypes* of the concept. Our research revealed that the prototypes of the concepts CAT, DOG, КОШКА and СОБАКА are almost entirely made up of *cross-concept* characteristics embracing several concepts. These are such attributive features as ‘aggressive’, ‘voracious’, ‘is a domestic animal’, ‘is punished’, ‘makes unpleasant sounds’, ‘has an external feature’. Most of the identified attributes are marked with a pronounced pejorative evaluation of the corresponding denotata.

The benefit of the cognitheme analysis lies in the fact that it enables researchers to gain access to valuable information chunks, which in their totality are pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle to create a single organizational structure of the linguo-concept. Cognithemes of the inner form function as a motivational basis for the manifestation of an object-denoting concept in metaphorized linguistic units, thus indicating what exactly the linguistic community singles out as a salient attribute of this or that object. In doing so, a cognitheme analysis helps pinpoint not only familiar and commonly-known characteristics of the denotatum, but also its hidden latent features, which bespeaks their significance for the national lingua-cultural consciousness.

3. Finally, at the third and last stage of the cognitive analysis of an object-denoting concept it is necessary to highlight the issue of metaphoricity of the language material objectifying the concept in point. As it has already been stated above, the analysis of metaphoricity is crucial for such a conceptual analysis, given the nature of the concepts per se, which are often represented in language in metaphorically modified units.

It is possible to outline the following avenues of studying metaphoricity of lexemes and phraseologisms. First, the whole of the extensive phraseological material should be divided into phraseological sentences and phraseological phrases, based on

their structure (the form of functioning). Furthermore, if we take account of their *cognitive perspective* (the correlation between the two conceptual levels), this will enable us to develop the following overarching taxonomy:

I *Phraseological sentences*:

1) *metaphorical* phraseological sentences (*The dog that trots about, finds a bone*; *Где пса кормят, там он и лает*) that have only a closed structure (with a fixed set of components);

2) *semi-metaphorical* phraseological sentences, where not all the components have been reinterpreted metaphorically:

a) with a closed structure (*The bad cat deserves a bad rat*; *Были богаты – были лубочные палаты: кошки играли да их ободрали*);

b) with an open structure, i.e. one with a variable component or with a component supplied by speech context (*He gives straw to his dog, and bones to his ass*; *Живут, как собаки у корытца*);

3) *non-metaphorical* phraseological sentences that normally have a closed structure (*Good wife and a good cat are best at home*; *Своя сторонюшка и собаке мила*).

II *Phraseological phrases*:

1) *metaphorical* phraseological phrases (*in the doghouse*; *ловить черную кошку в темной комнате*);

2) *semi-metaphorical* phraseological phrases (*quiet as two kittens*; *собачьи глаза*).

The assignment of phraseologisms to these groups will help establish the value of *average metaphoricity* (i.e. the average proportion of metaphorical designations among the material under study). For the four concepts analyzed this indicator hovered around 40%, which can be viewed as evidence of a considerable metaphorical potential accumulated by these object-denoting concepts.

As to the metaphoricity of derivatives and non-derivatives, its study can yield the following valuable insights:

1) a possibility to draw conclusions on the structural models of the concept's manifestation in one-word nominations (here a lot will stem from the typological features of the language); in our research the analysis showed a high degree of relevance of word-formation processes to forming metaphorized units (in the case with the English concepts); conversely, the study of the Russian concepts showed the predominance of metaphorization of 'ready-made' derivatives;

2) multiple metaphorical reinterpretations of one and the same lexeme demonstrate the relevance of the concept to the national consciousness (this phenomenon was registered for all the four concepts).

Moreover, it is possible to get another insight into the domain of metaphoricity by exploiting the notion of the conceptual metaphor, which has already become a classic in cognitive linguistics [12]. We understand the conceptual metaphor as a generalized model of conceptual changes, which accompany the process of transitioning from one cognitive level to the other – from the level of a basic original meaning to the level of a new transformed meaning, and as a mechanism of accomplishing this transition. It is possible to distinguish types of conceptual metaphors (e.g., anthropomorphic, artifactual, biomorphic) and identify meaningful trends in conceptualization, which characterize the object-denoting concept under study.

The analysis of our language material helped identify the following patterns – in the phraseologisms conceptual metaphors are manifested much more seldom than in the structurally inseparable units. As to the lexemes, conceptual metaphors are found in all the metaphorized non-derived words, albeit they cannot be discovered in all the derivatives, as the components of a derived word are linked by complex logical relations. Overall, a holistic analysis of the inner form and the actual meaning of phraseological and lexical units helps reveal numerous conceptual metaphors underlying entire clusters of metaphorized nominations.

Conceptual metaphors identified in the lexemes corroborate the anthropocentric direction of verbalization processes – more than a half of the word meanings objectifying in each case one of the four analyzed concepts are based on the anthropomorphic metaphor (transfer to the domain of MAN\ЧЕЛОВЕК), with figures ranging from 51% (CAT) to 76% (СОБАКА) (*house-cat* – a stay-at-home; *огрызаться*). The biomorphic metaphor (transfer to the domain of PLANT\РАСТЕНИЕ) is not a preferred choice when it comes to verbalizing the concepts under study – it was registered in isolated instances in the English material and was not found in the Russian material at all. The artifactual metaphor (transfer to the domain of ОБЪЕКТ\ПРЕДМЕТ) is relevant for most of the concepts to a practically equal extent (from 24% to 28% for the concepts СОБАКА, DOG, CAT), but it is somehow much more relevant for the concept КОШКА (around 42%) (*houndstooth* – a check pattern with notched corners; *котуки* – a game, a variant of blind man's buff).

Conceptual metaphors containing evaluation represent another area of interest for researchers. We identified a considerable number of conceptual metaphors with transfer to the target domain of BAD\ПЛОХОЙ, INFERIOR\НИЗШИЙ, WORTHLESS\БЕСПОЛЕЗНЫЙ – from 20% to 30% for the English concepts (e.g., *dogsbody* – an undistinguished and unskilled person given a variety of menial tasks; *alley-cat* – a loose woman), with only isolated cases of transfer to the domain of GOOD\ХОРОШИЙ. A much more negative evaluation is inherent in the denotatum of the concept СОБАКА in the Russian national consciousness – transfer to the domain of ПЛОХОЙ was registered in 46% of cases (*псина*; *снюхаться*), with isolated cases for the concept КОШКА (*кот* – said about a lascivious man), while transfer to the domain of ХОРОШИЙ was totally absent in both cases. These findings bring us to the conclusion about an emotional perception of these denotata by native speakers and consequently about their significance for these linguacultures.

Some metaphors (such as MAN\АН ОБЪЕКТ IS A CAT\DOG – ЧЕЛОВЕК\ПРЕДМЕТ – ЭТО КОШКА\СОБАКА) can be definitely qualified as *prototypical*. As to the detailed varieties of conceptual metaphors (e.g., A BAD YOUNG WOMAN IS A CAT – ПЛОХАЯ МОЛОДАЯ ЖЕНЩИНА – ЭТО КОШКА), it is possible to introduce a certain formal criterion – a threshold of *metaphorical prototypicality* – in order to determine their prototypicality. Such a criterion could be regarded as an indicator valid for the description of the *metaphorical potential* of an object-denoting concept.

Therefore, our research is yet one more proof of the tenet of cognitive linguistics that phraseological and metaphorically modified lexical units function as the result of cognitive processing and recording of certain knowledge about the world. Consequently, within the framework of the methodology suggested in this article, metaphorized nominations are regarded as a

key opening the door to all the information about a fragment of extralinguistic reality viewed in mental categories as an object-denoting concept. Such an approach has shaped the corresponding stages of research.

Each of the suggested stages of analyzing an object-denoting concept makes its own contribution to structuring its cognitive essence, enabling linguists to verbally describe a mental construct under study. The cognitheme analysis highlights attributive features relevant for the linguistic community, thus making it possible to delineate the core (prototype) of the concept. Analyzing the conceptual metaphors and the degree of metaphoricity of linguistic designations helps determine the *anthropocentric* and *metaphorical* potentials of the concept, which can be viewed as important indicators of its relevance to the national linguistic culture, alongside the manifold types of its verbal representation. It would be logical to assume that the more models of the concept's representation have been identified, the more it has been assimilated by the linguistic consciousness of the community. As is well known, besides a concentrated area of the prototype, concepts also have a blurred periphery which can overlap with other concepts – for this reason it is so important to also study non-prototypical, marginal manifestations of an object-denoting concept in language, as this helps determine its place within the linguistic worldview. The analysis of types of verbal representation and the cognitheme analysis demonstrate the importance of combining the synchronic dimension in research with the diachronic one, as well as integrating etymological data, if we strive to obtain a multidimensional image of the concept. The cognitheme analysis coupled with the analysis of conceptual metaphors shows the extent of the community's emotional involvement in the perception of a certain fragment of the world. Studies in this vein also have a *prognostic potential*, indicating a feasible direction for the formation of new language units.

Conclusion

Thus, object-denoting concepts have a complex cognitive architecture and require a multifaceted analysis of units manifesting them in language. The above-developed tripartite methodology helps bring out the content of an object-denoting concept to the fullest extent, as it takes cognizance of the typological idiosyncrasies of this variety of concepts, at the same time demonstrating a possibility to apply shared procedures of cognitive analysis to linguistic units with various degrees of structural complexity. Since the suggested research techniques are based on cognitive premises, they are not limited to the material of one particular language, but have a rather universal nature. As part of further research in this vein, the above-described cognitive methodology may be applied to exploring other object-denoting concepts with similar patterns of language manifestation, which represent fragments of various linguistic worldviews. The conducted analysis showed that looking forward, it makes sense to study pairs or small groups of object-denoting concepts in order to build a more vivid and comprehensive picture and reveal similarities and differences by way of contrasting them.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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