

ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА /
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ON THE THREE LINES OF THE COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF PHRASEOLOGY

Research article

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Abstract

The article is aimed at a brief overview of the three basic lines of the cognitive approach to phraseological studies in Russian linguistics: modelling the concepts, represented by phraseological units, applying the theory of frames to the analysis of the formation of phraseological semantics, and interpreting the conceptual foundations of phraseological semantics against the cultural background. The most significant characteristics and variety of the three lines of research are determined; herewith the connection of these lines with one another is stated. The relation of the lines of cognitive approach to the paradigmatic and syntagmatic studies of phraseological signs is established. The article reveals the dominance of synchronic-diachronic view of the semantics of phraseological units, taking into account their etymology and the actual motivation, as well as their usage in the text. In conclusion, the prospects of the studies of phraseological units within the framework of cognitive linguistics are stated.

Keywords: cognitive approach, phraseology, concept, frame, cultural linguistics, cultural specifics.

О ТРЕХ НАПРАВЛЕНИЯХ КОГНИТИВНОГО ПОДХОДА К ФРАЗЕОЛОГИИ

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Цель статьи заключается в кратком обзоре трех основных направлений когнитивного подхода к исследованию фразеологии в отечественной лингвистике: моделирования репрезентированных фразеологическими единицами концептов, применения теории фреймов для анализа формирования фразеологической семантики, интерпретации концептуальных оснований фразеологической семантики на фоне культуры. Определяются существенные характеристики и вариативность каждого из направлений, при этом констатируется связь выделенных направлений друг с другом. Устанавливается соотношение указанных направлений с парадигматическим и синтагматическим подходами к исследованию фразеологических знаков. Выявляется преобладание синхронно-диахронического ракурса рассмотрения семантики фразеологических единиц, учитывающего как их этимологию, так и актуальную мотивировку, а также реализацию в контексте. В заключение констатируется перспективность исследования фразеологических единиц с позиций когнитивной лингвистики.

Ключевые слова: когнитивный подход, фразеология, концепт, фрейм, лингвокультурология, культурная специфика.

Introduction

The article is aimed at systemizing the basic aspects of the cognitive approach to phraseology, which has played an important role in the works of Russian phraseologists for about twenty-five years. Despite its wide implementation and the innumerable descriptions of the views of the most prominent modern researchers, realized in PhD dissertations and papers, based on those views, the delineation of the major lines of studies still requires the introduction of some precision and additional detail. The impetus for this is based on the fact that researchers normally resort to the cognitive / cognitive-semantic and / or linguocultural analysis [6], [13], without specifying their relationship. Though it cannot be claimed that the overview done in this article completely fills the existing gap, nevertheless it feels possible to claim that the article can make a contribution in this respect. There are reasons to believe that the systematization of the cognitive approach in phraseology could be regarded as timely, for it groups the existing research works according to their prevailing aims and procedures. The principle of classification applied in the article is different from those used by other researchers, which allows us to speak about its scientific novelty.

Discussion

The research undertaken in phraseology within the framework of cognitive linguistics falls into three basic lines:

1. Modelling phraseological concepts and describing fragments of the phraseological picture of the world. Basically static mental constructs, represented by phraseological units, are in the focus of attention.

2. Application of the theory of frames for investigating the formation of phraseological semantics and the usage of phraseological units in texts. The focus of attention is on the process and the dynamic constituent of the constructs under modelling.

3. Interpretation of the conceptual foundation of phraseological semantics in its direct connection with cultural codes and signs, i.e. the analysis of phraseological units within the framework of linguocultural linguistics (cultural linguistics in western terminology). The focus is on the relation between mental constructs and culture.

Let us briefly consider the above-mentioned lines of research and the basic results obtained within their framework. It is necessary to mention that these lines are closely connected with the two possible angles from which phraseological units can be examined:

- From the paradigmatic angle as a number of virtual signs used by native speakers, normally regardless of their connection with a certain time period;
- From the syntagmatic angle as used by an individual, who lives in the definite period of time.

Both types of the analysis interact and supplement each other.

The first line of studies aimed at modelling concepts, verbalised by phraseological units taken predominantly as a paradigm, is widely represented in literature. In general, the concept is defined as a combination of conceptual features, extracted from the semantics of phraseological units and projected onto the conceptual level [1], [6], [13], [17]. Thus, the concept is represented by several phraseological units. This line of cognitive research is largely based on the assumption that a concept is concentrated knowledge about some entity, fixed in language signs, dating from different time periods.

As for the structural analysis of phraseological concepts, it varies depending on the researcher's views. Thus, a number of scholars outline conceptual/cognitive features of various types [6], [13], others following in V.I. Karasik footsteps [8, P. 5] describe the conceptual, imagery and assessment components in the structure of the concept [10], [17]. Some base their research on the field structure after I.A. Sternin and Z.D. Popova [14], and investigate the nominative field and the nominative density of the concept [1], or delineate the semantic groups, reflecting the concept [19], [20]. Phraseological concepts can be modelled along with lexical ones as constituting linguistic concepts together – units of the linguistic picture of the world [6], [13].

There have been accumulated extensive results of modelling phraseological concepts in different languages by now. It is not possible to list all of them, so we can name just a few, e.g., English and Russian phraseological concepts of cat and dog [6], English phraseological concepts of birds [11], Russian and Serbian phraseological concepts of soul [10], English phraseological concepts of negative emotions [16]. This modelling, as a rule, is based on the units taken from a dictionary, but the analysis of phraseological units functioning in texts also contributes to the cause, allowing researchers to discover additional conceptual features or verify those, which were established before [10].

A separate constituent of research within this type of studies is the description of conceptual metaphors, realized in phraseology and significant both for modelling phraseological concepts [10], [11], [16], and describing separate fragments of the phraseological picture of the world [15].

The second line of the cognitive analysis is based on the frame theory and the process of modelling frames, on which one or several phraseological units are based. In Russian linguistics, this approach was elaborated in every detail by A.N. Baranov and D.O. Dobrovolsky [4]. The researchers set themselves the task of describing the mechanism of forming the meaning of a phraseological unit and name this line of studies “the syntagmatics of cognitive operations” [4, P. 226]. They regard the generation of the actual phraseological meaning as a process and a result of frame interaction, frames being defined as conceptual structures for the descriptive representation of knowledge of typical situations with semantically connected slots [4, P. 227]. The researchers offer a convincing proof of the advantage of such an approach over the traditional description of the meaning change and model the basic operations with the slots of the source frame and target frame. The credibility of the delineation and description of cognitive operations is verified by numerous cases of phraseological unit usage.

This approach is also widely used by domestic phraseologists [3], [5], [7].

As for very popular linguocultural studies of phraseology, it feels mandatory first of all to clarify their theoretical foundations. By their nature, linguocultural studies are aimed at the conceptualization of the world reflected by phraseological units and closely connected with cultural codes and cultural signs. In other words, they are based on the cognitive approach to phraseological semantics, but focus on the connection of delineated conceptual features with the specific cultural features. For this reason, from our point of view, linguocultural studies of phraseology can be regarded as a variety of cognitive studies, though they do possess their own components of scientific apparatus. The importance of a cognitive/conceptual paradigm for the development of linguocultural studies as an independent area of research is emphasized by M.L. Kovshova [9]. M.L. Kovshova designates the significance of analyzing the ways culture is reflected in phraseological units and revealing the part played by phraseology in the conceptual sphere of culture [9].

A significant contribution into linguocultural studies of phraseology was made by V.N. Teliya [18] and her school. Linguocultural studies of phraseological units are aimed at outlining their national cultural features. These features are normally delineated through cross-linguistic analysis, which involves the solution of a number of complicated problems. One of them is the definition of the national specific / national cultural component in the semantics, both terms being used as synonyms as a rule. Most researchers regard specific phraseological features, which do not coincide in two or more languages, as such components [2], [12], [21]. This viewpoint rests on the general ideas of how culture is revealed in language, going back to Wilhelm von Humboldt. A phraseological unit is viewed as a reflection of national culture and a “cultural code” [17].

In this connection A.N. Baranov and D.O. Dobrovolsky point out, that not all regular conceptual differences in phraseology refer to cultural differences [4, P. 267]. The cultural relevance of language signs in their opinion has its roots in the connection with other semiotic codes (folklore, beliefs, etc.) [4, P. 272]. But the identification of this connection is in many cases a labourious process, not necessarily giving undisputable results.

Results

The above overview allows us to arrive at the following conclusions:

1. The works of Russian phraseologists in the area of cognitive linguistics can be grouped into three types according to the aim set in them: studies of the results of conceptualization, represented by phraseological units, studies of the dynamics of conceptualization, and studies of the impact of culture on conceptualization. The three basic lines of research outlined in this article are closely connected and often combined, which is explicable by their common objective of modelling conceptualization of the world reflected by language.

2. The conceptualization of the world reflected in phraseological units is modelled from diachronic-synchronic perspectives, from the angle of paradigmatic and syntagmatic approaches. The combination of the above aspects allows Russian phraseologists to build complex structures of mental constructs in the most convincing way. The resulting description of static and dynamic constituents of these mental constructs contributes to the overall cognitive research of phraseological units.

3. The linguocultural studies of phraseology are aimed at the culturally specific conceptualization of the world, represented by phraseological units. In this respect they are based on the cognitive linguistics and its key unit of concept.

4. The area of linguocultural studies of phraseology, originating from cognitive studies, still requires considerable theoretical developments concerning the detailed criteria of cultural relevance of phraseological units / phraseological concepts and specification of the notion of national/cultural component.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to say that the complexity of the phraseological unit structure, its imagery, rich association field and functional versatility in the context make it a very interesting object for cognitive analysis, which inevitably results in the further elaboration of the existing approaches to research, as well as the probability of emergence of the new ones.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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