

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.18454/RULB.12.06>

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СТРУКТУРА И СОСТАВЛЯЮЩИЕ КОНЦЕПТОСФЕРЫ ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВО*Аннотация*

В статье представлен один из вариантов структурирования глобальной концептосферы ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВО. Концептосфера представляет собой комплексное образование, состоящее, в свою очередь, из двух концептосфер – ПРИРОДНОЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВО и ПОЛИТИКО-АДМИНИСТРАТИВНОЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВО, которые взаимодействуют между собой через входящие в их состав компоненты, отражая способность человеческого сознания к классифицирующей деятельности и когнитивному моделированию и определяя необходимый уровень детализации, достаточный для распознавания географического места/объекта.

Ключевые слова: концептосфера, географическое пространство, языковая репрезентация концептосферы.

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GEOGRAPHIC SPACE AS A SPHERE OF CONCEPTS: STRUCTURE AND CONSTITUENTS*Abstract*

The paper reflects an attempt to structure a global sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE. The sphere of concepts is represented as a holistic phenomenon consisting, in its turn, of two minor spheres of concepts – NATURAL SPACE and POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE, which correlate with each other through the constituting them components, thus reflecting classifying and categorizing human abilities. The interaction of these two spheres of concepts defines the necessary level of detail sufficient enough to identify a geographic site/object.

Keywords: sphere of concepts, geographic space, language representation of the sphere of concepts.

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Introduction

The geographic concept (or sphere of concepts) is represented in modern research rather fragmentally. The paper dwells on the geographic component as it is a universal constituent of the human existence directly connected with such a global sphere of concepts as SPACE where the sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE plays an important role: thus, the ability (and a vital necessity) of the human awareness to fix a certain position within physical boundaries determines basic parameters of the human well-being in general. Moreover, the geographic component is part and parcel of other spheres of concepts connected with the functioning of the human society, such as POLITICS, CULTURE, SPORT, etc [see: 5], and at the same time, it establishes immediate links with the sphere of concepts NATURE/ENVIRONMENT through indicating seasons, weather conditions, natural phenomena (wind, storm etc), flora and fauna. Thus, the geographic component can be detected, in its direct or indirect representation, almost in all fundamental structures defining the life of human beings.

SPACE is also one of the most important constituents of our existence; accordingly, spatial concepts are of particular significance for mental sphere [see: 2; 4]. As G. Marotta notes: “There is no doubt that all animal species have some kind of mental representation of space, i.e. of the location of objects, places and paths among places. These representations derive from special cognitive capacities, which are shared across species – including humans, at least for a large set” [10, P. 12]. Specific characteristics of SPACE can be represented through its linkages with time, topological and metric parameters, anthropocentricity in the man’s perception. It is noteworthy that spatial parameters are experienced by human beings vertically and horizontally; consequently, while studying spatial concepts the categories of verticality and horizontality acquire special importance. SPACE serves as a basis for the formation of other numerous categories [see: 2]. An immediate constituent of any world picture is an ensemble of spatial images reflected in the awareness of a certain ethnic group and codified in language [3]. As V.G. Gak claims: “... space is rather easily perceived

by man. To comprehend space, it is just enough to open the eyes, turn the head, hold out the hand etc. Space is one of the fundamental existential specifiers that is experienced and differentiated by a human being. It is inbuilt in the man’s world where man positions himself as the center of macro- and microcosm” [2, P. 127].

Y.S. Kubryakova notes that during the course of evolution man has acquired two systems of the world view as a result of developing sensory experience: one is responsible for selecting objects and observing everything that surrounds a person, the second one is served to determine distance to an object/objects as well as its/their relative location. Due to the first system, man gets an idea of space as a background against which some figures (objects) are located; the second system contributes to the formation of the orientation concepts (remoteness – proximity of objects, a particular location towards the observer, and so on) [4, P. 88].

Being a universal category, SPACE has been widely studied by scholars from various perspectives [see, for example: 11; 12].

Hence, the proportion of lexis with spatial meaning is rather significant in any language as spatial parameters define the essence of man’s survival in this world since ancient times. Linguistics deals with two fundamental types of spatial meanings: *the meanings of orientation* and *the meanings of localization*.

Method

For structuring spatial relations the notion of the *sphere of concepts* appears to be the most relevant one. According to the definition introduced by D.S. Likhachov, the sphere of concepts comprises all the national multiplicity of concepts and is formed through all the potentials and systems of concepts that exist in the native speakers’ awareness [6, P. 160-162]. In this paper the sphere of concepts is viewed as an integrated formation that includes a number of concepts representing a certain domain of knowledge [see, for example: 9]. While structuring the sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE, methods of cognitive modelling and conceptual analysis have been applied.

Discussion

Spatial relations are rather often viewed through the semantic category LOCALITY: thus, O.Ya. Ivanova describes the sphere of concepts SPACE as its representation through the semantic field LOCALITY/LOCATION. The kernel part of the field and its semantic dominant is represented by a unit possessing the most general meaning [3, P. 2, 6, 16]. The central part of the field belongs to the word *place*. On the first stage of fragmenting the field three specifiers of the lexis with the semantic component *locality* can be distinguished: *space* (an unlimited extension in all measurements and directions); *territory* (space within defined borders); *structure and facilities*. The next step of fragmenting presupposes a differentiation of every specifier through more clearly defined nominations: *space* – *land, air; territory* – *state, region, district; structures and facilities* – *enterprise, company, dwelling*.

O.A. Volchek, when analyzing the lexico-semantic group with the dominant *space*, refers to this group words with general local semantics (*world, planet*), words denoting land-based objects (*bank, hill*), water-based objects (*river, lake*), airspace (*sky, air*), atmospheric phenomena (*wind, frost*), vegetation (*forest, grove*), habitats (*region, district*), human settlements (*town, village*), routes (*road, highway*) [1].

A.M. Mukhachova [8] describes spatial relations through the notion of concept. According to her research, concept SPACE is part of the overall world picture and consists of a number of elements that can be classified as a conceptual field. The field has a multi-level hierarchical structure with its constituents objectified in language through the lexemes with the meaning of *locality*.

A.L. Medvedeva in her thesis [7] uses the term *geographic sphere of concepts* and represents it as a hierarchically organized unity of components:

- the highest level is occupied by mega-concepts LANDSCAPE and WATER SPACE;
- the next level is taken by concepts-hyperonyms RELIEF and VEGETATION which relate in their content to the mega-concept LANDSCAPE as well as to the concepts-hyperonyms *bank (shore), water body, watercourse*;
- the third level of the hierarchy is represented by the concepts-hyponyms *upland, plane, depression in the ground*; these constituents are directly connected with the concept-hyperonym RELIEF; the concepts-hyponyms VEGETATION with the predominance of a tree-like structure and VEGETATION with the predominance of a herb-like structure refer to the concept-hyperonym VEGETATION; the concept-hyperonym WATER BODY includes in its turn such concepts-hyponyms as *enclosed water space, bay, swamp (mush)*; at the same time, the concepts-hyponyms *strait (passage), river, stream, brook, waterfall* also belong to this concept; a separate position in the structure is occupied by the concept-hyponym *bottom topography*;
- the last level of the hierarchy is taken by the nominants that verbalize all the constituents of the conceptual field GEOGRAPHIC SPACE.

Thus, summarizing all the data of the research mentioned above, we can state that GEOGRAPHIC SPACE is part of a more global formation – the sphere of concepts SPACE which reflects fundamental aspects of man's existence in the environment.

Results

With respect to all of the above, GEOGRAPHIC SPACE is quite a specific phenomenon both from the perspective of cognitive aspect and from the nominative value of units that

materialize it in language. If we follow the idea of GEOGRAPHIC SPACE as a sphere of concepts [see: 6; 9] being at the same time part of a more global formation SPACE, we may claim that a geographic identifier is rather a relative indicator whose representation in language depends on the degree of the generalization required as the necessity to define a certain locality or orientation in the environment as a whole.

The sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE is one of the components of more global unities, namely: UNIVERSE and COSMOS which include a more localized element – the sphere of concepts PLANET (the EARTH, in our case). Within the sphere of concepts PLANET (the EARTH) we can distinguish such spheres of concepts as NATURAL SPACE and POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE which overlap but differ first and foremost by the components “natural/artificial” (though to a certain extent – rather loosely, as quite a number of objects that can be referred to the sphere of concepts NATURAL SPACE are man-made: such as, for example, *the Suez Canal, the Uglich Reservoir*).

The sphere of concepts NATURAL SPACE comprises such mega-concepts as LAND, WATER SPACE, AIRSPACE. It is interesting to note that it could be rather reasonable to suggest that these mega-concepts should be arranged according to a unified principle. However, AIRSPACE is somewhat different as for its structure: we can hardly distinguish here any components similar to those of LANDSCAPE and WATER SPACE (such as, for instance, *continents and oceans*). Even if we try to describe the components of this sphere of concepts, its stratification appears to be possible only by following the principle of the vertical orientation, namely: *stratosphere, mesosphere, etc.*

In its turn, the mega-concept LAND may include those constituents that seem to belong to the sphere of concepts WATER SPACE: *seas, rivers, lakes, etc.* So, we have to take into account the aspect of the so-called ‘inclusion’ of an object as part of the extra-linguistic reality into the composition of a specified geographic space. Meanwhile, referring the denotations of the land components, – such as *continent, island* – to the mega-concept WATER SPACE is hardly reasonable in spite of the fact that the very objects are connected with natural water space due to their geographic localization.

Furthermore, when analyzing the structure of the mega-concepts LAND and WATER SPACE, the notion of a *universal geographic identifier* related to the points of the compass (North, South, etc.) should be introduced. This parameter precisely locates the position of an object in space. In the context of global interpretation, universal identifiers permit to classify a geographic object in cognitive and linguistic awareness, at least, in the most general way: thus, the denotation *a northern country* will hardly be associated with such objects as *Australia* or *Cuba*. However, it should be noted that when space localization is narrowed, the definition can be applied to an object situated, for example, in the North of Africa without special reference to the climatic and natural conditions, but at the same time, with a clarifying description required: *Tunisia is a northern African country*. Examples of this sort can be explained by the overlapping of two spheres of concepts – NATURAL SPACE and POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE. In general, a significant part of language representations for the objects of land and water space is a result of the interaction between the components of these two spheres of concepts.

Let us consider a number of illustrative examples that support the previous statement. Most water and land objects

denotations contain both proper and common names, allowing to associate this or that name with the mega-concepts LAND and WATER SPACE (*the Kola Peninsula, the Barents Sea, and so on*). In this regard, such denominations as *the Arctic, the Mediterranean* are rather noteworthy ones: here we may observe a sort of merging of two mega-concepts LAND and WATER SPACE, unlike more or less similar objects, such as *the Pacific Ocean and Alaska*, because the Arctic Region, for instance, comprises both water space and adjacent territories.

Following further subdivision, two concepts-hyperonyms RELIEF and VEGETATION are distinguished within the mega-concept LAND. These concepts may also have a presentation through a geographic name, such as *the Khibiny mountains, Sherwood forest*, though it would be right to say that for this type of natural sites naming is less common – if any, an object appears to be 1) global by the very nature; 2) it is closely connected with man's life (thus, the forest areas of Siberia are unlikely to be represented through proper names all along the massif).

The mega-concept WATER SPACE, besides basic constituents, such as *ocean and sea*, includes the concept-hyperonym *water body* that in its turn, correlates with the concepts-hyponyms *closed water body, bay, marsh (bog)*. The concepts-hyponyms *strait, river, stream, brook, water fall* can be referred to *watercourses*. In cases of the proper names coincidence, a geographic common name (sometimes an illustrative context) is necessary: *town Kola and the river Kola*.

The sphere of concepts POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE comprises the mega-concept-hyperonym COUNTRY/STATE and concepts-hyponyms REGION, DISTRICT, SETTLEMENT (TOWN/CITY, VILLAGE, etc). From a methodological point of view, we may observe a substitution of spatial relations proper to a political-administrative subdivision that is quite permissible, in the author's opinion: going beyond purely spatial relations is commonplace for the classifying function of the human consciousness [see above: 5, P. 17-19]. At the same time, these cases are of a certain degree of complexity at a closer observation: the inclusion of those concepts that are represented through political-administrative names into the sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE, even through the elements of the sphere of concepts POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE, requires a detailed specification due to the complexity of objects themselves: thus, the geographic concept RUSSIA is a hierarchically organized structure which includes the megaconcepts of LANDSCAPE and WATER SPACE. The same refers to

almost any concept that is associated with a geographic object and identified within a political-administrative or territorial administrative subdivision. Indeed, such structures are gestalts; they can be classified according to a purely orientation parameter (*Murmansk* is situated in the *North* of Russia) as well as be considered through the components of political-administrative or territorial administrative ranking: *Pervomaysky District, Bering Street, Semyonovskoye Lake*.

Meanwhile, these constituents "lose" their orientation anchors beyond the context unless they are bearers of a unique local/cultural code (for example, *the Eiffel Tower*), because streets, parks, water bodies sharing the same denomination are rather commonplace not only within one and the same national-cultural environment, but within a multi-cultural one also: *Rose street* can be found in Cheboksary, Voronezh, Rostov-on-Don and Edinburgh.

Following the previous observations, it is necessary to mention that all the above-mentioned components are considered to be the most important ones when structuring the sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE. Besides it, there are several additional, indirect identifiers, such as *climatic parameters, the names of flora and fauna, the nationality* that require greater analysis and discussion.

Conclusion

Summarizing all the stated above, we may conclude that GEOGRAPHIC SPACE establishes linkages with other dominant components of the national world picture.

When identifying the elements of the sphere of concepts GEOGRAPHIC SPACE, the names of geographic sites/objects may be more or less informative firstly, according to their status within the system of local territorial identifiers: thus, street names possess a far less informative potential without any reference to the name of a city or town where these objects are located; the numbers of buildings and constructions are of a far marginal informative value unless the names of the street and town are mentioned, etc.;

secondly, according to the integration of the knowledge actor into the local culture: an average Russian dweller is highly likely to identify the location of *the Murmansk Region and the city of Murmansk*, but such toponyms as *Semyonovskoye Lake, Pervomaysky District* will be informatively gaping for him/her without a relevant context.

Finally, a recipient's general knowledge also matters: if a bearer of geographic knowledge does not live in a particular region, he/she may have some difficulties trying to understand what kind of phenomena, for instance, *the polar night* or *Aurora Borealis* are as he/she has never witnessed them. This sort of information requires further efforts when being extracted and processed.

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