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

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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.

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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 methods in 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-

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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 possibilities of 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, obtained by the comparative historical method (Dronova, 2011: 102-107). The results confirmed the verificative effectiveness 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 of the semantics representational allow a 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 modern diachronic 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 recontextualization of 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 features involved in the analysis of lexical units at different historical stages of the German and English languages.

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