

Studies of the linguistic representation of the concept "distance"

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Abstract: *The article presents a brief description of Conceptology as a version of Cognitive linguistic and depicts its main distinctions from Contensive and Cognitive (in narrow sense) linguistics as a form of expression of Russian mentality in its basic manifestations. The attempt to describe a certain area of vocabulary (spatial adjectives) is based on a distributive and situational analysis of the semantics of the words in question. The peculiarities of the representation of the concept "distance" in the semantics of the studied adjectives were identified, according to which adjectives were*

divided into subgroups, such as for the group high, tall, lofty, low - this is a common complex sign of designating a relatively large / small vertical size of "vertically located (standing) objects, counted up from the support plane located below, however this size should be large enough".

Keywords: concept, far nearby, distant, far-away, distance-size; vertical /horizontal direction - up / down, right / left; object configuration - hollow / incomplete;

Introduction

The concept of "distance" was practically not considered as an independent object of research, although it is quite natural that distance, as an integral part of spatial representations, became the subject of analysis in numerous works devoted to the conceptualization of space and the expression of spatial relations in linguistic semantics.

Studies of this kind were carried out mainly on the material of official parts of speech - prepositions and adverbial words in Russian, English, French, German (for example, the works of Malyar T.N., Seliverstova O.N., Zolotova G.A., Rakhilina E. V., Plungyan V.A., Boykova I.B. and others, as well as foreign authors B.U. Hawkins, K. Brugman, J.R. Taylor, J. Lakoff, S. Vandeloise and others). These works are valuable material for further research. The linguistic representation of the spatial concepts of the service parts of speech in different languages has been investigated, perhaps, more deeply and versatile than the linguistic representation of other no less important concepts, in particular, time, quantity, etc. Comparative works play a special role, allowing to reveal the originality of the linguistic picture of the world.

Unfortunately, other parts of speech, in particular, nouns representing spatial concepts, have always remained outside the scope of researchers' interest.

As for adjectives, until now, adjectives denoting distance as a sign of an object were mainly considered, that

is, the objects themselves were subject to measurement. For example, in the work of Ismailov K.A. English adjectives high, tall, lofty, low are analyzed; long / short; wide, broad / narrow; thick / thin from the point of view of the possibility of using them to describe an object. The dissertation compares similar adjectives in the English and Karakalpak languages [Ismailov 1979].

Literature review

In his analysis, K.A. Ismailov proceeds from the peculiarities of the functioning of adjectives in speech, from their compatibility and the possibility of using them, taking into account certain extralinguistic conditions that were offered to informants during the experiment.

The author does not aim to describe the peculiarities of the representation of the concept "distance" in the semantics of the studied adjectives. Nevertheless, the results obtained allow us to draw certain conclusions on this score. In the course of the work, signs were identified, according to which adjectives were divided into subgroups. For example, for the group high, tall, lofty, low - this is a common complex sign of designating a relatively large / small vertical size of "vertically located (standing) objects, counted up from the support plane located below, however this size should be large enough" [Ismailov 1979, 7]. The same adjectives (high, tall, lofty, low) "can be combined with adjectives from another

subgroup (long , short , wide , narrow) in that“ they determine the dimensions of the object's surfaces lying on a straight line (ie the size of the object in girth or cross-section “[Ismailov 1979, 5].

For other adjectives, generalizing signs are also distinguished, which make it possible to distinguish subgroups and explain their compatibility and features of their use in speech.

Based on his research, the author concludes that “ thick / thin adjectives , in contrast to adjectives of the high / low , long / short , wide / narrow group , report the size of the cross-section of an incomplete object between its two surfaces. And the adjectives deep / shallow convey information either about the size of the cavity, limited on three sides, and about the size, which measures the distance from the 'open' side to the ends of the object (to the bottom, if the depression is directed downward), or about the size horizontally from the observer (perspective size), if the object has a 'facade' “[Ismailov 1979, 5].

As is evident from the data above, spatial factors such as the nature of the plane are essential for representing distance within a single object (“distance-size”); vertical / horizontal direction - up / down, right / left; object configuration - hollow / incomplete; naturally oriented / not naturally oriented. The distance value, as it is presented in the semantics of the studied adjectives, is always relative, i.e. correlated with a certain scale.

Article Zhurinsky A.N. [Zhurinsky 1971] is an attempt to describe a certain area of vocabulary (spatial adjectives) based on a distributive and situational analysis of the semantics of the words in question. At the same time, the author strove to maximize the use of the experimental method, which in this case ensures the objectivity of the researcher's conclusions.

In his work Zhurinsky A.N. explores Russian spatial adjectives (PP) - *long, high, wide, narrow, deep*. He believes that the systems of spatial adjectives in Russian, English, German and French are practically the same. “Some features of the structure of the meaning of spatial adjectives in the Russian language are characteristic of many languages, and possibly universal” [Zhurinsky 1971, 100].

As the author himself writes in his article, “one of the goals of the work was to clarify the existing descriptions of the semantics of PP, but basically the work is, relatively speaking, of a psycholinguistic nature. It is natural to expect,

on the one hand, that the structure of the considered fragment of the semantics of the language is somehow connected with the laws of perception of space by a person (and a person's orientation in space), with social practice of a person, with the arrangement of the reality around us, etc. On the other hand, the connection between semantic parameters and those acts of choice that the speaker produces has been noted more than once “[Zhurinsky 1971, 120]. It is interesting to note that, apart from cognitive linguistics, the author relies on similar theoretical positions and, without using the currently accepted terminology, formulates similar research tasks.

Zhurinsky A.N. offers various grounds for the classification of PP. He emphasizes that “PPs are opposed to each other on many grounds at once and their classification can be carried out on different grounds that do not coincide with each other” [Zhurinsky 1971, 105]. For example, it is proposed to classify PPs according to the type of items they can describe; by the location of objects (in relation to a person interacting with an object; in relation to space).

One of the conclusions of the work is the following: “dimensions are divided into the main ones: height, length and depth - they can be characterized with the help of the PP directly, - and the secondary ones: the width and thickness: these latter can be determined using the PP only if the main size of the object is set “[Zhurinsky 1971, 111]. The author clarifies this statement as follows: “the relationship within the main dimensions is also not a choice relationship: the speaker does not think whether it is necessary to say, for example, deep or high. With the help of the categories according to which PPs are distinguished, there is not a choice of PPs, but the establishment of the class of the object that the speaker wants to characterize. <...> The different nature of the relations that connect PP, distinguishes them, for example, from prepositions and from adverbs, even if these latter differ from each other using the same (or close) signs as PP (cf. on - under , deep - high): prepositions and adverbs are in relation to direct choice “[Zhurinsky 1971,121].

Referring to the authors who carried out similar studies in English, German and French, Zhurinsky A.N. tries to show the universality of his conclusions regarding PP in Russian.

Comparing the data of K.A. Ismailov's thesis and A.N. Zhurinsky's article, it can be noted that in the main characteristics, the representation of "internal distance"

("distance-size") by adjectives in Russian and English really coincides, although a more detailed comparative analysis, apparently could reveal certain differences. For this study, it is especially important to conclude about the differences in the representation of distance and other spatial concepts by adjectives and prepositions.

Boguslavskaya O.Yu. [Boguslavskaya 2000] also considers spatial adjectives and proposes their grounds for their classification. Two antonymic series of PP synonyms were analyzed: *close, near, near, nearby, neighborhood; distant, distant, distant, distant*.

Unlike the words considered in the work of Zhurinsky A.N. and in the dissertation of KA Ismailov, these adjectives characterize not the object itself ("distance-size"), but its location relative to the observer. Boguslavskaya O.Yu. highlights other features in their semantics. At the same time, the following grounds for the classification of spatial adjectives are proposed: distance from an object to a spatial reference point; the nature of the spatial reference point (observer or other object), the nature of the described situation (dynamic, static); attributive or predicative use; as part of a topic or rema; subjective or objective assessment; descriptions of animate or inanimate objects; the presence of the center and periphery. For example, this is, in a condensed form, the classification of four adjectives (*distant, distant, distant, distant*):

Far:

- at a great distance from a spatial reference point (observer or arbitrary object);
- divides the space into parts: the space of the object being oriented, the space of the landmark and the space separating them, which usually contains some other objects, perhaps unknown;
- an objective characteristic of distance, therefore, allows the use of the type of the verb to *seem* in the context of indicators of subjectivity of perception
- used to characterize living beings;
- is used attributively and predicatively.

Far : 2 circles of use

- 1) - stylistically neutral,
 - at a greater distance from the spatial reference point (observer or arbitrary object) than another similar object;
 - a spatial reference point is an observer or an arbitrary object;
 - characterizes unique objects (Far East);

2) - narrative coloring;

- at a great distance from the observer;
- in this case, the space of the observer and the space of the oriented object are opposed as personal space and alien space;
- the opposition is subjective.

Remote'

- at a great distance from the observer;
- divides the space into parts, placing the observer at the center, and the oriented object at the periphery.

Remote:

- describes static objects;
- at a great distance from the spatial reference point (object or observer);
- allows an indication of the distance;
- an objective assessment of the distance, therefore, allows in the context of indicators of subjectivity of perception;
- is used attributively and predicatively.

Adjectives *close, close, near, near,*

the surrounding area can be described as follows:

Close, narrow-minded:

- to describe dynamic situations;
- a spatial reference point may not be an observer, but a physical object named in the text;
- at a short distance from the observer (for a *close one* this distance is less than for a *close one*);
- characterize events or phenomena, as well as sounds;
- can also characterize physical objects if the object and the landmark come closer due to the movement of one or the other;
- a *close* person can, under certain conditions, characterize static objects;
- are used attributively and predicatively.

Nearby, nearby:

- to characterize compact, static, mainly topographic objects;
- the observer is the spatial reference point;
- the object is located at a short distance from the observer;
- the *surrounding* can characterize living beings living around a center.

Near:

- allows both types of spatial reference points (observer and physical object);
- to describe static objects;

- indicates that the distance between the object and the landmark is less than the distance to any other object;

- characterizes unique objects (Middle East).

This work is of great interest in terms of describing the semantic structure of spatial adjectives. On the other hand, it should be noted that the multiplicity and diversity of the classification criteria somewhat obscures the idea of how distance is represented in the semantics of the analyzed units. Nevertheless, the research results provide interesting material for cross-language comparisons.

An important factor for the analysis of these words is the author following Yu.D. Apresyan considers the presence / absence of an observer's point of view in their semantics. The analysis showed that the adverbs *close*, *not far*, *far*, *near* are the relative estimates of the distance of the object from the speaker, and the other adverbs (*not far*, *not far*, *far*, *nearby*, *near*) express absolute estimates. In addition, the author identifies the signs by which adverbs with the semantics "far" / "close" are opposed. It is obligatory / optional horizontal orientation of objects; place in the communicative structure of the statement (topic / rheme); graduability / non-graduability; freedom from connection with physical space. This allowed us to designate 4 models of space, which are set by the adverbs under consideration: 1) a relative, dynamic model (set by adverbs *far*, *near*, *near*, *close*); 2) an absolute, static model (given by adverbs in the *distance*, *in the distance*, *nearby*, *nearby*, *near*); 3) existential quasi-space (given by adverbs *far*, *near*, *near*); 4) the space of otherness (given by adverbs *far*, *close*, *near*). As Yakovleva notes, "the listed spaces are different interpretations of the location of the object of description relative to the speaker, and in this sense they are comparable with each other. Therefore, it seems natural to call these spaces themselves linguistic models inherent in Russian linguistic consciousness, and their totality - a spatial fragment of the Russian linguistic picture of the world" [Yakovleva 1994, 63].

For some parameters, the analysis scheme used by E.S. Yakovleva to Russian dialects and prepositions is similar to that used by Boguslavskaya in her work on dynamics and statics in the semantics of adjectives. But Yakovleva makes more global conclusions, for example, about the category of distance in Russian. The author assumes that this category is closely related to the horizontal orientation of space, i.e. this area of linguistic semantics reflects the "flat" thinking of the

speakers, since the language reflected the most typical landscape [Yakovleva 1994, 31].

So, as mentioned above, there are few studies devoted to the analysis of the concept of "distance" in the semantics of adjectives, while distance is mainly considered as a feature of an object (distance-size). Only in the work of Boguslavskaya "Dynamics and statics in the semantics of spatial adjectives" are Russian adjectives that characterize not the size of an object, but its location, are considered. In other works, adjectives characterizing the objects themselves (in terms of length, width, height) are taken as the object of research, as, for example, in Ismailov and Zhurinsky. Nouns with the meaning of distance were practically not considered.

This paper considers English distance adjectives characterizing the location of an object (*distant*, *remote*, *far*, *far-off*, *faraway*, *near*, *nearby*, *close*) and nouns with a distance value (*distance*, *span*, *length*, *range*, *reach*, *extent*, *stretch*, *spread*, *expanse*). The choice for the study of different parts of speech, representing the same conceptual content, is due to the following considerations.

According to the principles of cognitive science, each part of speech carries a certain "quantum of knowledge", its own categorical meaning. Mental content is presented differently in different parts of speech. As you know, each part of speech (hereinafter PR) is a fuzzy set of units, each of which is characterized by a significant number of features, the full set of which is available only for the "best sample", prototype, of a given category. The basic categories associated with nouns and adjectives are the concepts of objectivity and attributes, respectively. Cognitologists believe that such concepts can be innate. If each part of speech has its own categorical beginning, then a person has the right to choose which part of speech he will fix his thought in the act of nomination. The most important thing is the motive of choice. The differences are in what exactly is in the focus of a person's attention. As noted by E.S. Kubryakov, the specificity of the meanings of the individual parts of speech actually means "the specificity of the representation of knowledge that is activated by the words of different CRs. Using cognitive terminology, one could say that we are talking about mental models or images of a situation depicted in words of different HRs" [Kubryakova 2004, 201].

Quoting A. Vezhbitskaya, Kubryakova writes about the non-identity of the semantics of the adjective and the noun: the first designates a separately selected feature and serves as a "description" of objects, and the noun fixes the type or category of things and serves to categorize them.

The most significant characteristic of the new concept of parts of speech, as E. S. Kubryakova emphasizes, is that the syntactic and discursive functions of individual 4Ps are consistent with their lexical meanings [Kubryakova 2004, 215]. This means that it is especially important to study the similarities and differences in the presentation of identical conceptual content - a concept, for example, the concept "distance", in the semantics of words belonging to different parts of speech.

In conclusion, the article addressed revealing how the concept of "distance" is represented in the semantics of English nouns and adjectives. Nine nouns (distance, span, length, extent, stretch, expanse, spread, range, reach) and eight adjectives (far, far-off, faraway, distant, remote, close, near, nearby) were analyzed. Adjectives and nouns differ in part-of-speech meaning: adjectives carry the idea of attributes, and nouns - of objectivity. For the concept of "distance", the object representation is more natural. Distance can also be interpreted as a feature of an object, in particular, as a property associated with a position in space (a person, an object, a spatial unit). Despite the part-of-speech differences, there is a certain similarity in the representation of distance in the semantics of the studied words.

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