

POLYSEMANTIZATION PROCESSES IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH AS A BASIS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A UNIVERSAL ALGORITHM FOR PREDICTING CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS

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Abstract:

This article is based on the study of lexical polysemy within the framework of semantic theory. It is devoted to the study and comparative analysis of polysemantization processes from the point of view of the development of applied linguistics. The research described in the article is relevant to the further development and improvement of automated text analyzers.

Keywords: polysemy, comparative analysis, connotative meaning, automatic text analysis

Introduction

The study of lexical polysemy, as one of the significant areas of semantic theory, in recent years is increasingly becoming the subject of research of many linguists. In this article we turn to the study of polysemantization processes occurring in Russian and English at the present stage of their development and influencing the further development of lexical meaning. Thus, it is very important for us that many modern scientists consider semantics from the position of steadily growing interest in this field of linguistics [1].

In various languages the processes of polysemantization occur under the influence of various factors which form in consciousness of the person a special way of thinking, construction of associative connections and perception of the world. Depending on what is the basis of associative connections - connection, adjacency of phenomena or generality of some their features and consequent similarity - there are metonymic and metaphorical transfers of meanings and as their variants - synecdoche and functional transfer [3].

One of the most common ways of acquiring additional meanings is metaphorical transfer, which provides an opportunity to look at a new phenomenon on the basis of already acquired knowledge and experience, to know the new through the already known, fixed in language in the form of a linguistic unit. The anthropocentricity and anthropometricity of the metaphor play an important role in selecting the properties that serve as the basis for metaphoric transfer. Thanks to these properties, metaphor becomes the main means of forming a linguistic picture of the world, which reflects aspects of the inner world and related associations, as well as concepts of the real world.

Based on theoretical research, we analyzed empirical material selected from the explanatory dictionaries of the Russian and English languages. We selected the linguistic units, which were

subjected to polysemantization in the period from 2000 to 2013. During the analysis it was found that the main way of formation of polysemantic units is metaphorical transfer. This phenomenon is universal for both Russian and English languages. The following lexical units, selected from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, can be given as an example.

In the fifth edition of the dictionary, the noun blizzard had one meaning, a snowstorm with very strong winds. E.g. The blizzard struck the north-east yesterday, causing serious damage. In the process of language change, semantic changes occurred in the meaning of the word, and by metaphorical transfer a second meaning was formed, which is shown in the eighth edition of the dictionary: blizzard – a large quantity of things that may seem to be attacking you. E.g. a blizzard of documents.

In connection with the above, it seems that the study of the processes of polysemy occurring in various languages of the world can be of considerable importance from the point of view of further development of research in the field of both theoretical and applied linguistics. The solution of the corresponding problems is characterized by the paramount importance from the position of automated research of texts, since at present one of the key problems of machine understanding of statements in a natural language is the perception of meanings, which is essentially impossible without correct processing of multivalued words.

Alongside with the most obvious and relatively easy-to-implement method of introducing dictionary databases into automated analyzers, it seems necessary to develop heuristic methods of different properties, as the use of dictionary increases the amount of computational resources spent on processing and storage of the information connected with the analyzer. Besides, the dictionary is inevitably finite and, even with regular updates, does not provide an opportunity to work successfully with new variations in the field of lexical polysemy and metaphorical reinterpretation of the meanings of certain words.

Accordingly, the development of specialized algorithms that allow one to process lexical polysemy without involving dictionary data or with a minimum of them seems promising. Application of appropriate techniques allows one to reduce resource consumption and enhance the efficiency of analyzers, overcoming the fundamental limitation of dictionary databases, about which it was mentioned above. The idea of heuristics in the interpretation of polysemantic words, accordingly, leads us to considerations of studying and comparing the processes of polysemantization that ensure the development of new meanings in words of a particular natural language.

Indeed, if we assume that the processes of polysemantization in different languages proceed in a similar way, it will be possible to form a universal heuristic algorithm for predicting the further development of new meanings in monosemantic lexical units. An automated parser, which has such a logical mechanism, could overcome the existing limitations and more or less efficiently predict the possible reinterpretation of some or other words, thus making hypotheses concerning the obscure text fragments and samples; in the best case such an algorithm could be independent of the language specificity, but in the case of particular languages the potential of such heuristic algorithms could also be useful for the improvement of the existing systems of the human language processing.

Thus, we can conclude that the study of polysemantization processes in different languages, and first of all their comparative study, is currently characterized by an essential significance and urgency from the point of view of further development and improvement of automated text analyzers.

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