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DENOMINATIONS FOR ALCOHOLIC INEBRIATION IN THE LIGHT OF SYSTEMIC STUDY OF LEXIS

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Abstract. The article is devoted to a contrastive typology of equivalent verbs in Russian and Czech, related to alcoholic drinking. The study includes a research into the denotative meaning of verbs of inebriation, as well as the motivating components constituting the inner forms of these verbs in the contrasted languages. The analysis is based on the integrative approach incorporating the semantic field theory, the theory of componential analysis and the theory of prototypes. This method allows one to present the results of milestone analysis as a study of contrastive typology, particularly a typology of syntactic relations between the semantic predicate and its actants, a typology of componential structures in accordance with the semantic components making up lexical meaning, a typology of motivating components reflecting the prototype of denomination. The contrastive analysis shows prevalence of cross-linguistic similarity over divergence between the Russian and the Czech languages, especially regarding prototypically structured idioms denoting excessive alcoholic inebriation.

Keywords: actant, inner form, meaning, identifier, category, modifier, prototype, seme, semantic component, predicate, semantic field, contrastive typology.

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Introduction

This study is conducted within the framework of *contrastive typology of languages*, otherwise termed by V. Mathesius *characterology* [2]. This is a division of *linguistic typology* that normally reduces the number of contrasted objects to the minimum. Therefore, this contrastive research into expression of a well-known social phenomenon is based on the data of only two Slavonic languages.

Yet, the importance of cross-linguistic studies, no matter the minimal number of contrasted objects, cannot be underestimated due to the search for common and distinctive features of languages; most importantly, contrastive studies aim at establishing linguistic universals reflecting the essential features of human language irrespective of its concrete representations.

Alcoholic inebriation has always been the source of the most joyous and the most sorrowful moments of human life. The phenomenon of stimulation, agitation and intoxication by alcohol is reflected in the vocabulary of most human languages. It is safe to say that socially, cross-culturally and linguistically, this specific lexicon represents a widespread mankind's universal. Owing to this curiously universal reality, the explorer has

at his/her disposal quite an affluent lexical material; cf.: empirical studies based on the material of various languages [1; 5; 8; 10].

The object of research and methodology. Thus, the object of research is a number of *alconyms* of the Russian language (R.L.) and the Czech language (C.L.) drawn out of online dictionaries.

It is but natural that such a theme – linguistic expression of alcoholic inebriation – should be characterized by the lowered functional style, as well as a typical trend for creating idioms out of standard words for drinking alcohol. All that impedes carrying out a systemic selection of *alconyms* dispersed in dictionaries of various types, so the explorer has to settle for an optional, if not arbitrary, selection of the material, being content with translations from explanatory and thesaurus dictionaries (see the list of dictionaries employed).

A systemic research of lexical units grouped together by a common theme suggests revealing their semantic relations which results in forming relevant subgroups and segmenting the denotata of these units into *semes* within each subgroup.

However, lexical meaning does not boil down only to its denotatum registered by its dictionary definition. It is necessary to take into account the inner form of the motivated word as its characteristic component expressing “a definite aggregate of additional associations” [7, c. 161–162]. Such additional associations are “harmonic vibrations” of the semantic structures of all denominations, especially in contrastive studies of *alconymic* denominations. Without analyzing “overtones” of meaning, research into “the spectrum” of meaning cannot be complete.

Accordingly, G. Frege, an outstanding philosopher of language, includes into the content of a denomination both *meaning* and *sense* (the inner form of the denomination); cf. the corresponding terms *Bedeutung* “meaning” and *Sinn* “sense” used by G. Frege [6, c. 230–247]. Thus, a systemic empirical study of lexical meaning ought to combine a research into denotative meaning and an inquiry of the inner form of lexically motivated words and phrases.

There are three approaches to perform a systemic study of meaning: 1) in the light of semantic predicates, 2) in the light of semantic fields and componential analysis, 3) in the light of the theory of prototypes.

The results of the study

A study of lexical meaning in the light of semantic predicates is an approach to analyze denominations of a certain semantic theme (such as the theme of alcoholic inebriation) with reference to their syntagmatic relations. The units of analysis fall into free word groups.

The theory of semantic predicates suggests relationship between *predicates* (semantic components characterizing objects) and *actants* (participants in a situation explaining the predicate) [2, c. 39]. For example, in the situation of alcoholic drinking there are two such actants for the predicate “drinking alcohol”: 1) subject (S) “the one who does the drinking” and 2) object (O) “the drink”.

The syntactic structure to represent the concept of inebriation is a *proposition* that connects the actant either to a verb predicate (P-v), or to an attribute predicate (P-a), or to a substantive predicate (P-s); cf. the following elementary propositions: R.L. 1) *отец пьянствует* (S «отец» + verb predicate «пьянствовать»); 2) *пьяный отец* (attribute predicate «пьяный» + S «отец»); 3) *пьянство отца* (substantive predicate «пьянство» + S

«отец»); *отец пьяница* (S «отец» + substantive predicate «пьяница»); the following are combinations of the predicate P (P-a, P-s, P-v) with its actants (S-actant and V-actant):

attribute predicates (“drunk”) [P-a (+ S)] / [(S +) P-a]: /e.g./ R.L. *бухой, в стельку пьяный, поддамый, полупьяный, пропитой, пьющий, пьяный, пьяный как сапожник, развеселый* etc.; C.L. *nadraný, nakurážený, nalitý, ožralý jako slíva, opilý pod obraz, ožralý jak zakon káze, zmámený, zlitý, zpitý* etc.;

substantive predicates (“drinker”) [P-s (+ V)] /e.g./ R.L. *выпивоха, забуддыга, пропойца, пьяница, пьянчуга* etc.; C.L. *kořala, kořalečnik, nedopita, opilá, opilec, ožralec, piják, pijan* etc.;

verb predicates (“to drink”) [(S +) P-v] /e.g./ R.L. *глушить, залить глаза, квасить, керосинить, лакать, набратся, надраться, нажраться, напиться вдребезги, напиться до поросычьего визга, напиться как свинья, нарезать, спиться, хлестать, шарахать* etc.; C.L. *chlastat, napít se, nasávat, opíjet se, opít do němoty, ožirat se, ožrat na mol, ožrat se jako prase, pít, pít jako Holendr, spatřit / vidět bílé myšky, trunčit, uchlastat, uchlastat (se) / upít (se) k smrti, upít se, zpíjet se* etc.

A study of lexical meaning in the light of semantic fields is an approach to analyze denominations of a certain semantic theme (such as the theme of alcoholic inebriation) with reference to their paradigmatic relations. The units of analysis fall into parts of speech and into semantic components making up denotative lexical meaning.

The theory of componential semantic analysis is based on the presumption of the discrete nature of the world [9, с. 52] which makes it possible to model any object of reality by way of “necessary and sufficient” components to identify this object.

The objective character of this approach is verified by the truth condition principle. For example, the definition of the verb *опьянеть* “to get drunk” in Russian traced back to the corresponding adjective *пьяный* “excited or intoxicated by alcoholic drink” («возбужденный от вина, одурманенный вином») (see Ожегов 2000, с. 735) points to the combination of semantic components: [X] “to drink” + [Y] “alcohol” = Z “alcoholic inebriation”. The truth of the statement $X + Y = Z$ is proven by the statements showing contradiction to the truth condition: 1) “X drank Y, but did not achieve the state of Z”, 2) “X drank Y, but Y did not cause Z”. Each of these statements contradicts the condition, being false, as the first statement shows contradiction of the result of the action (Z) to the action itself (X + Y), while the second statement shows contradiction of the result of the action (Z) to its condition (Y). Thus, the objective result of componential analysis is verified and asserted by the analysis of syntactic structures.

The following are componential structures of “alcoholic” verbal predicates varying the seme “degree of inebriation” in the languages of contrast:

[action + inebriation + temperate (inebriation)] R.L. *заливать, залить глаза / шары, заложить за галстук, пить, подвыпить, подгулять, промочить горло, принять на грудь* etc.; C.L. *napít se, nasávat, pít, trunčit* etc.

[action + inebriation + excessive (inebriation)] R.L. *нажраться, накачаться, накеросиниться, наклюкаться, налакаться, налижаться, налимониться, напиться, напиться вдребезги, напиться допьяна, натрескаться, нахлестаться, перебрать, перепить, пить беспробудно, спиться, хватить лишнего, хлестать, шарахать* etc.; C.L. *chlastat* «хлестать», *nalívat se / nalévat se, nasávat jako o závod, opíjet se, opít do němoty, ožirat se, ožrat na mol, ožrat se jako prase, pít jako Holendr, pít pod*

obraz, spatřit / vidět bílé myšky, uchlastat (se) k smrti, upít se, upít (se) k smrti, zpíjet se etc.

The following are componential structures of “alcoholic” attribute predicates varying the seme “degree of inebriation” in the languages of contrast:

[attribute + inebriation + temperate (inebriation)] R.L. *бухой, нетрезвый, поддамый, подшофе, полупьяный, пьяный, пьяненький, пьющий, развеселый, хмельной*; C.L. *nadraný, nakurážený, nalitý, namazaný, opilý, oroveň / ořejný, zlitý, ztámený, zpítý*;

[attribute + inebriation + excessive (inebriation)] R.L. *в стельку / как стелька пьяный, забубренный, мертвецки пьяный, пропитой, пропойный, пьяный / пьян как сапожник*; C.L. *nalitý po žábry, nalitý / namazaný / ožralý jako slíva / tágo / dělo, opilý jako Dán / jako drátenák, opilý / zpítý pod obraz (boží), ožralý jako svině, ožralý / **zlitý** jak zákon káže, strašně **zlitý**, vylitý jako dánský listonoš, **zlitý** jak necky, zlitý pod obraz, zlitý / zpítý na mol; zpítý ako prase / svině / čuně / jako dobytek / jako zvíře, zpítý do němoty / do bezvědomi.*

It is remarkable that both languages of contrast show prevalence in expressing excessive inebriation as well as interdependence in the structures of verb and attribute predicates; cf. the following structures: R.L. *пить как сапожник ↔ пьяный как сапожник*; C.L. *ožrat se jako prase ↔ zpítý ako prase, opít do němoty ↔ zpítý do němoty.*

The description of a semantic object only thru its diagnostic properties is not fully satisfying, as a considerable number of characteristics of an object do not form its essential structural part. Thus, A. Wierzbicka distinguishes two types of semantic components, 1) “those which one can make do without”, as their absence is no impediment to identify such an object as cup or mug, 2) those which one cannot do without, as their absence impedes identifying an object; thus, a cup without a handle is still a cup (such as a Chinese cup), but such a component as “small size convenient enough to lift a cup up to one’s mouth with one hand” is indispensable [13, 59]. R. Jackendoff distinguishes three conditions for using a word: necessary, central and typical [12, p. 121]. *The necessary conditions* correspond to the identifying seme qualifying its category significance (such as the seme “dog” for the word *poodle*) *The central conditions* correspond to the differential seme qualifying its significance according to the distance from the category center (such as the cup’s vertical and horizontal dimensions correlated as 1:1). *The typical conditions* do not form any semantic structure as a component; they only denote characteristic (typical) and dispensable properties of an object (such as the presence or absence of a handle to identify the word *cup*). In verbal communication the speaker makes a quick decision referring an object to a certain category due to its substantial characteristics, i.e. *its diagnostic components* [4, c. 65] likely to be followed by the typical conditions.

The major part of properties characterizing alconyms, such as “addiction”, “mental reaction”, “sentimental behavior”, “ataxia” etc. [5] appear to be not diagnostic, but only typical.

A study of lexical meaning in the light of prototypes is an approach closely related to the “sense” (in G. Frege’s conception), or the inner form of the motivated denomination; the pivoting point here is the image underlying a lexical unit.

It is expedient to distinguish two types of motivating components making up the inner form of a lexical unit: *the identifying component (identifier)* and *the modifying component (modifier)* [11, c. 100 и сл.].

The identifier refers an object (or its denomination) to a particular category (a particular semantic field) *directly*, by means of a *prototype* which makes “the best” (the central) image underlying a word or a word group; for instance, in the field of alconyms it is the image represented by the verb “to drink” /e.g./ R.L. *выпить, напиться, перепить, перепиться, пить, подвыпить, пьянствовать, спиваться*; C.L. *napít se, opíjet se, pít, upít se, zpíjet se*.

The modifier refers an object (or its denomination) to a particular category (a particular semantic field) *indirectly*, thru some figurative sense (metaphor or metonymy) which makes “the worse” (the peripheral) image underlying a word or a word group. This image may point to 1) either a kind of liquid /e.g./ R.L. *бражничать, наспиртоваться, квасить*, 2) or an action with a liquid /e.g./ R.L. *заливать, нахлестаться, хлестать*; C.L. *chlastat* (literally “lash”), *nalívat se* (literally “gush”), *nasavat jako o závod* (“to suck in very quickly”); 3) or a part of the human body thru which alcohol “goes home”, such as gorge or breast /e.g./ R.L. *заложить за галстук, промочить горло / глотку, пропустить рюмашку, принять на грудь*; 4) or the swelling of a stomach /e.g./ R.L. *набраться, нажраться, накачаться, натрескаться*; C.L. *nasávat* (literally “to suck in”), *ožírat se* (literally “to gorge”).

The inner form of a motivated lexical unit may be expressed either by one of the two motivating components (see above) or by their combination. When combined, the identifier is represented by the prototype (the verb), while the modifier is represented by a figure of comparison /e.g./ R.L. *напиться вдребезги* (cf. *разбиться вдребезги*), *напиться как свинья*, *напиться до зеленого змея / до поросычьего визга / до чертиков*, *пить как сапожник*, *пить по-черному*; cf. C.L. *opít do němoty* (literally “to drink oneself to unconsciousness”), *ožrat se jako prase* (“to gorge like a pig”), *upít (se) k smrti* (“to drink till death”), *pít jako Holendr* (“to drink like a Dutchman”), *vidět bílé myšky* (“to drink till all's blue”, literally “to see white mice”).

Excessive inebriation tends to draw images related to animals or to human beings /e.g./ R.L. *напиться как свинья*, C.L. *zpítý ako prase / svině / čuně* “drunk like a pig”, *zpítý jako zvíře* “drunk like a beast”; R.L. *пьяный как сапожник* “drunk like a bootmaker”; C.L. *opilý jako Dán* “drunk like a Dane”, *pít jako Holendr* “to drink like a Dutchman”, *opilý jako drátenák* “drunk like a basket-weaver”, *vytíý jako dánský listonoš* “drunk like a Danish postman”. A drunken person may also be associated with an inanimate object which shows a complete loss of one’s senses /e.g./ C.L. *namazaný jako slíva* “as drunk as a plum”, *ožralý jako tágo* “as drunk as a stick”, *nalitý jako dělo* “as drunk as a cannon-ball”.

The type of the inner form clearly related to meaning and combining identifier and modifier is liable to variation, the variable component being expressed by the verb prototype or by the more marginal figure of comparison in a phraseological unit /e.g./ R.L. *пить без просыпу / беспробудно / до потери сознания / как сапожник / по-черному*; C.L. *zpítý jako prase / jako svině / jako čuně / jako dobytek / jako zvíře*; *ožralý / zlitý / zpítý jak zákon káže*.

Summary

To summarize,

1) denominations of alcoholic inebriation are subject to semantic analysis both as a) units of a semantic field liable to decomposition into component semes, b) or as semantic

predicates combined with their actants, c) or as prototypes and peripheral objects of the category of inebriation;

2) the most closely related objects of this category are verb and attribute predicates which show a marked similarity of their syntactic structures;

3) the meanings of the alcoholic denominations include both the structural component (their denotative sense) and the inner form (their associative sense) based on the two types of motivating component: identifier and modifier;

4) both languages of contrast are characterized by a great potential to express the meaning of alcoholic inebriation, especially its excessive degree;

5) excessive inebriation stands out particularly clearly in phrases combining the verb predicate and the subject actant; the most characteristic feature of the predicate is a modifier showing excessive drinking figuratively, by way of contrasting it to another object beyond drinking;

6) in general, semantically and structurally, cross-linguistic similarity prevails over cross-linguist variation.

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НАИМЕНОВАНИЯ АЛКОГОЛЬНОГО ОПЬЯНЕНИЯ В СВЕТЕ СИСТЕМНОГО ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ЛЕКСИКИ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена сравнительной типологии эквивалентных глаголов в русском и чешском языках, связанных с употреблением хмельных напитков. Анализ материала включает исследование денотативного значения глаголов опьянения, а также мотивирующих признаков, составляющих внутреннюю форму этих глаголов в языках сравнения. Исследование проводится с помощью интегративного подхода, объединяющего теорию семантических предикатов, теорию семантического поля, теорию комбинаторной семантики и теорию прототипов. Такой подход позволяет представить результаты поэтапного анализа в виде опыта сравнительной типологии, в частности типологии синтаксических отношений между семантическим предикатом и его актантами, типологии компонентных структур в соответствии с выделяемыми компонентами лексического значения, типологии мотивирующих признаков, отражающих прототип именованности. В сравнительном плане наблюдается превалирование межъязыкового сходства над различием между русским и чешским языками, что особенно наглядно проявляется в отношении фразеологизмов с прототипической структурой, выражающих чрезмерную степень алкогольного опьянения.

Ключевые слова: актант, внутренняя форма, значение, идентификатор, категория, модификатор, прототип, сема, семантический компонент, предикат, семантическое поле, сравнительная типология.

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