

## PhR 2019 Philological Readings

### LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL AND DERIVATIONAL LANGUAGE UNITS IN LINGUO-COGNITIVE ASPECT OF STUDY

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#### *Abstract*

This article is devoted to word-formation phenomena and lexico-grammatical language units from the point of view of cognitive linguistics. The focus is on the derivational processes as well as the mechanisms of forming new meanings of prepositions, which are considered in regard to the interaction of linguistic and conceptual levels. The necessity to study derivational phenomena and the mechanisms of forming new meanings of prepositions in the cognitive aspect is caused by both the relevance of linguo-cognitive approach to language studies and the need to explain the processes of forming new linguistic semantics, which in its turn leads to understanding cognitive peculiarities of human thought. The suggested study angle allows to regard the processes of prepositional and word-forming derivativeness in the aspect of interaction between linguistic and conceptual semantics. Despite the fact that every derivational model as much as a new prepositional meaning are not undirected, but appear to be the result of human speech activity, the new conceptual structure is not always characterised by being transparent. The traits of interacting concepts may get mixed, which leads to some new semantic developments, not equal to the sum of initial semantics. One of the relevant approaches to regard derivational phenomena and semantics of lexico-grammatical language units is to study them in the framework of conceptual integration and conceptual derivation theory.

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## 1. Introduction

Linguo-cognitive approach to studying the language phenomena and processes is based, as it is known, on the regarding the language as a means of representation, organisation, transferring and acquiring knowledge. In one of its functions language serves as a means of fixating the information which was received and processed in the course of human cognitive activity. Therefore, the linguistic forms of all the levels hold the traces of this activity and become "a projection of what is cognised" (Kubryakova, 2004). Admitting this fact allowed the scholars to state the interpreting possibilities of language means, and so that the possibility of reconstructing (modelling) the contents of conceptual structures on the basis of analyzing language structures which represent this content and from there - the explanation of language diversity, reflected in the variety of expression forms.

Scientific interest to the phenomena of categorisation and conceptualisation allowed to come to the categorial level of research, which provided an impetus to comprehension of notional categories (such as evaluation, emotiveness, negation, etc.) as well as grammatical categories in the linguo-cognitive aspect. Grammatical, lexico-grammatical and word-forming categories were also admitted to possess interpreting potential, while the categories themselves and their language forms started to be regarded as, on the one hand, the formats of representing *linguistic* knowledge, and on the other hand, as some specially organised means of "packaging" the existing knowledge of objective reality, which reflects the peculiarities of the cognitive process itself, representing this knowledge and its interaction with the language system. Boldyrev's (2012) theory of linguistic formats of knowledge makes it possible to consequently describe grammatical and lexico-grammatical categories and their forms as the ones belonging to a particular format (lexical categories - grammatical categories - modus categories).

Semantic analysis of lexico-grammatical language units was attempted in various language studies on the earliest stages of establishing cognitive linguistics by such scientists as Hawkins (1988), Janda (1986, 1988), Vandeloise (1991). Their works prefigured the interest of modern scientists to how the language expresses spatial relationships and which topological characteristics of objects appear to be relevant for the language. Aside that, the above-mentioned researches put to question the validity of the line between polysemy and homonymy drawn by structuralists. Lexical networks of polysemy as suggested by cognitivists, allow to visually express the degrees of proximity or remoteness of the meanings from the centre, the types and the strength of connections between meanings, and therefore, to come closer to the comprehension of the cognitive processes in the human consciousness.

Modern linguistics tends to thoroughly study the mechanisms of language functioning in its interaction with a human perceiving the world. The results of research carried in the area of linguistic representation of knowledge (as in the works of Boldyrev, 2012, 2014; Kubryakova, 1978, 1997, 2004) document that the language does not exist on its own, but serves a purpose of reflecting the knowledge and providing its transmitting in the communication process.

Cognitive processes which accompany or precede nomination play an important role in the understanding and explaining word-formation processes and their results. The nominating act is just a part of a much more massive and more difficult process of forming new words and expressions. The significance of the subject who forms new words and expression in the process of translating some mental

connotation to linguistic one predestines anthropocentric approach to study the derivational language level among others.

Cognitive science, included in the anthropocentric paradigm of linguistics, contributed to it the principles of explanatoriness and functionality, formulated and well-grounded by Kubryakova (1978, 1997, 2004) and later elaborated in the works of other scholars such as Frumkina (1999), Kravchenko (1996) and others.

Explanatoriness in science is an effort not only to describe the linguistic facts, but also to find them an explanation. In the new linguistic tendencies, the explanation is pushed forward, overshadowing the formal description.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Regarding the morphological categories in the cognitive aspect and their study in the aforementioned angles make it possible to go beyond the limits of language system and to determine the regular patterns and mechanisms of forming this format of representation of linguistic knowledge, which in its turn, happens to be the basis of establishing the functionally consequent theory of language uptake. Cognitive approach allows to come closer to the problem of actualizing the semantic and functional potentials by language units, in this case - by prepositions and derivational morphemes, from the point of view of studying their cognitive bases. In the framework of the given approach it is possible to reveal cognitive and linguistic mechanisms, which determine the formation of an appropriate meaning and influence the process of its realisation. As a hypothesis we put forward a statement of the possibility to describe the processes of prepositional polysemy and to create a new derivational unit in terms of conceptual integration and derivation. At that the development of prepositional semantics may be described as a result of expanding the initial prepositional concept by the derivational mechanism, a creation of new semantics from an existing one on a morphological principle in particular. The appearance of a new derivational unit is described as a complex process, which consists of cognitive stages: focusing on separate characteristics of the object of nomination and singling out the concepts that match to the given characteristics from the sphere of concepts and their interaction first on the principle of compositionality, and then on the principle integration.

Prepositions, being a lexico-grammatical category, as language means that denote relationships and connections between natural objects reconstruct in the language a certain part of ontological worldview, at the same time saving national and cultural peculiarities of perception of this world (that is why there is no absolute correspondence in the amount of meanings of prepositions in different languages). Serving a grammatical function - to denote subordination between notional words - the category of preposition is a certain fragment of ontological language model, which is being formed according to the patterns of its internal structure.

In the context of cognitive processes and their interrelations with the language, the derivational occurrences are especially interesting, because they provide a scientific opportunity to analyse and explore the nominative mechanisms and all the peculiarities connected with morphemal motivational type in a real time environment. The development of cognitive linguistics and the use of cognitive approach in the study of derivational processes made it possible to distinguish the derivational concept as

an independent notion, meaning a generalized unit of thought which reflects some phenomena of reality based on personal, as well as interpretive, experience of the native speaker, and that is coded by derivational formants on the linguistic level. Analysing a derived word in the cognitive aspect also allows to state that under each of its parts there is an elementary (basic) concept. Elementary concepts are united in the framework of the derived word in a special conceptual structure. The derivational structure of the derived word as a specific combination of elementary concepts makes it possible to determine connections between concepts, fixed to the parts of the derived word, and to determine the roles of these connections as the bearers of information (Plotnikova, 2000). A clearly traced dependence of derivational processes on the two types (formants) of knowledge – lexical and grammatical – gives the possibility to follow their interaction and to elicit some patterns of their interinfluence. Lexical concepts aim to reflect qualities, characteristic to the objects of reality, at that possessing and operating a number of means of their expression. Grammatical concepts present characteristics of real objects schematically, like a generalized model. Therefore, each derivational model is not unmotivated, but appears to be a result of human linguistic activity to fix their cognitive experience in the most convenient form of conducting linguistic activities.

### **3. Research Questions**

Present study is devoted to the processes of prepositional and word-forming derivativeness in the aspect of interrelations between linguistic and conceptual semantics.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the present study is the elicit the mechanisms of development of prepositional and morphemic semantics in the framework of derivational constructions of derived verbs in the German language.

### **5. Research Methods**

The research was carried out with the use of several research methods. The units for analysing (minimal contexts containing the preposition *vor*, as well as complex derived units, especially complex polypropositional verbs of the German language) were chosen by the method of continuous sampling. The original semantics of the preposition *vor*, along with basic concept of the derivational construction were established on the basis of dictionary unit analysis. Relevant meanings of the preposition *vor* were defined with the use of contextual analysis method and the model of describing processes, lying in the base of the formation of the given preposition, was elaborated. Verbs with combined and incorporated proposition were defined from the chosen complex polypropositional verbs of the German language with the use of conceptional analysis method, and they were studied in the aspect of conceptual interaction.

## 6. Findings

Cognitive approach to the study of grammatical and lexico-grammatical linguistic categories supposes the statement of interconditionality of the linguistic and conceptual levels at its base.

The morphological language level is presented by morphological categories and concepts, which represent some particular units of knowledge, based on linguistic knowledge and the knowledge about how the language can reflect the world, and those categories and concepts perform the function of linguistic mechanisms of morphological representation.

The basis of the prepositional system in the German language (as much as any other European language) is the prepositions of spatial meaning, also called primary prepositions. According to the majority of researchers, space and time played a significant role on the formation of ways to think about the world. Kolesov (2015) believes that the images of space, along with the temporal images, belong to the archetypic conceptions, contained in linguistic world image of various cultures. They reflect the experience of cognising the space and human orientation in the perceived 'surroundings' (Kolesov, 2015). Kubryakova (1997) also considers spatial categorisation as one of the fundamental areas in the human cognition of environment. Having implemented the contextual analysis of relevant expressions, containing the preposition *vor*, new meanings (except the spatial ones), of these prepositions have been found.

Having analysed dictionary definitions, we discovered that the original meaning of the preposition *vor* in the structure of its meanings is the spatial meaning of the position of one object in front of the other or a movement of one object towards the front of the other (ein Lageverhältnis auf, an der Vorderseite, der dem Beobachter zugewandten Seite, auch bei einer Bewegung in gleicher Richtung) (DWDS). Consecutively the above-mentioned meaning appeared to be the basis of formation to figurative spatial meanings. Cf.: Merkel steht also im Grunde wieder vor der Frage, vor der sie zu Beginn ihrer Karriere stand (Die Zeit, 05.01.2018, Nr. 02).

Holding the prototypical element of meaning the position of one object in front of the other, *vor* is also used in the meaning of superiority of one object before the other (DWDS). Cf.: Gerade weil der Tyrann gar nicht der Beste sein oder sich vor anderen auszeichnen will, findet er so viel Freude daran, zu herrschen und sich damit aus der Gesellschaft anderer auszuschließen (Die Zeit, 08.01.2018, Nr. 02).

Speaking of temporal meanings of the preposition *vor*, it is possible to state that the transition of its spatial meaning 'in front of' to the temporal relations, denoting that one event precedes the other, can be detected quite clearly. Cf.: Kurz vor Weihnachten hielt der Papst der Kurie wieder eine Gardinenpredigt. (Die Zeit, 12.01.2018, Nr. 01)

Further development of the semantics of the preposition *vor* led to the emersion of some emotional content. In this meaning the preposition *vor* points at a person, towards whom there is some emotional respond, from veneration to dread. (DWDS). Cf.: Ich habe den größten Respekt vor Vollzeitmamis und Vollzeitdaddys. (Die Zeit, 09.01.2018 (online)); Mein Schrecken vor dem Tod ging all die Jahre nicht weg (Die Zeit, 09.01.2018 (online)).

Unpleasant emotions in their highest degree towards an object which clearly appears before the subject, either physically or just in an imaginary form, make the subject want or need to avoid it (DWDS). Therefore, the preposition *vor* is used with the verbs having a meaning of "escape, seek concealment", as

well as “protect, defend”. Cf.: Geboren wurde Edwin in Clermont-Ferrand, die jüdische Familie seiner Mutter war *vor* den Nazis aus dem Elsass nach Zentralfrankreich geflohen. (Die Zeit, 18.01.2018, Nr. 01); Nach katholischem Verständnis dagegen bewahrt der Heilige Geist die Kirche *vor* dem Widerspruch ihrer Glaubenslehre zum Wort Gottes (Die Zeit, 12.01.2018, Nr. 01).

It may seem like the causal meaning, denoting the reason of some emotional state (DWDS), has lost the original spatial component. However, studying the examples makes it possible to claim that this meaning is expressed implicitly with stating the events, which the subject can see before their eyes, experience them and as a result gets the afore-mentioned emotional response. Cf.: Der Lehrer nickt, und Abdulghaffur macht *vor* Freude einen Hüpfen (Die Zeit, 18.01.2018, Nr. 01).

Therefore, the further development of prepositional semantics is based on reinterpreting the spatial relations, that are expressed by the prepositions, to various types of attributive and objectival relations, and in this regard, we entirely support the ideas of Syedin (1963). In our opinion, the best way to demonstrate the interrelations between the meanings of prepositions is by using the theory of conceptual integration of Fauconnier and Turner (1998) and Turner (2014), which elaborates the ideas of mental spaces. The main point of the theory is the following: the structures of original mental spaces interact and reflect in a new constructible mental space – a blend, which is not equal to any of the original spaces and is not their sum, but represents some new mental space with its own meaning. Spatial prepositions, being a linguistic reflection of interconnections between objects of reality and at that realising their lexical status, correlate with the conceptual level, having their place in the conceptual worldview (as a concept that has spatial semantics in the core of its content). At the same time, the fixation of the given conceptual content to the particular *linguistic* form and its intensive usage become a condition for the possibility to use the language unit again for “packing up” some other content, and the need to use this new package appears every time in connection with the need to express new relations between real objects.

The cognitive approach to the study of the derivational phenomena requires to research derivational semantics in three aspects: representative, semiotic and interpretative. According to the logic of this analysis, the representative aspect of studying the derivational concepts suggests eliciting some special formats of knowledge, that are fixed in the derivational morphemes, ways and forms to human cognition of the world in particular, as well as the characteristics of the surrounding world, which they fix (Besedina, 2013).

The semiotic aspect of study suggests eliciting the patterns of interaction between linguistic and cognitive levels of forming new meanings in the acts of derivational nomination. The interpretative aspect provides eliciting the mechanisms and results of developing derivational meaning of the lexical units, its semantics and structure under the influence of systemic and discursive factors.

Studying the cognitive semantics of complex derivational units, Kubryakova (2004) determined two approaches to study it in connection with distinction of compositional semantics on the hand, and conceptual integration on the other. This research was further developed in the works of Iriskhanova (2002), Boldyrev (2014) and others. According to Iriskhanova (2002), following on from the comparison of compositional semantics and conceptual integration, suggested differentiating them according to the predictability of their characteristics, included in the content of complex units: at that, in her opinion,

“compositionality is in its way the guarantee of some predictability of structural and notional qualities of linguistic units, while integrity is the foundation for heuristicity, - or the creative character and intuitivity of speech activity” (Iriskhanova, 2002, p. 340). During the distinction of the processes of cognitive compositionality and integrity it is necessary to bear in mind presence/absence of formal features of mental merging in complex units as predictable and creative: derivationally word-forming units will more likely be considered in the aspect of the theory of compositional semantics, while complex units, not having formal features of mental merging, will be regarded from the point of view of conceptual integration (Babenko, 2018).

In the first case, derivationally connected linguistic units will fix their intradenotative intercrossing in a unified categorial mental space. For example, in an emotional mental space words denoting one emotion but not belonging to the same categorial grammatical class, interpret this emotion differently: as an attitude (to be jealous, to envy), as a feeling or behavioral motif (jealousy, envy), as a trait of character (jealousness, envy), as a carrier of the feeling (envier), as an instigator of the feeling (envious). As a result, we can observe an intercrossing of lexis denoting emotions to different categorial grammatical classes of words (verbs, nouns, adjectives), and, consecutively, to different categorial semantic fields (lexis of attitude, qualities, etc.). A similar intercrossing can be called intraparadigmatic, representing an emotion in a single mental space with implementing various aspects of its interpretation.

In the second case, intercrossing which is not demonstrated formally, can be detected on the edge of various mental spaces, reflecting a connection of different areas: intelligence and speech, evaluation and behavior, emotions and physiology, etc. This type of intercrossing shows interparadigmatic interaction, which represents a merging of concepts of different denotative areas in mental spaces, and as a result, it can be regarded as extercrossing. This very type of crossing can be achieved through mental integration. It should be pointed out that conceptual integration without formal markers of mental merging is characteristic to various language and speech units. As it is known, a more significant capacity of notional structure and a flexibility of meanings is characteristic for verbs, that is why verbal semantics is often a result of deflection or interaction of different concepts. According to the kind of cognitive mechanism, lying at the base of forming new verbal semantics, it is possible to define verbs with combined and inclusive proposition, that express conception of two main ways of gluing mental spaces together in lexical semantics of verbs (Babenko, 2011). In the first case we can see merging of two equal propositions. They are represented by infinitive forms, showing their equality and complementarity while integrating in the same cognitive mental structure. For example, the German verb *vernachlässigen*: neglect somebody or something, pay no attention to somebody or something, handle carelessly or mindlessly, leave behind or abandon (ABBYY Lingvo 11). In the give case it is possible to see a merge of two propositions: “emotional negative careless attitude” and “disregarding, ignoring”, which possess equal meaningfulness in the structure of complex semantics and complete each other. In the second care on proposition is represented as the main one, while the others are included in it on the basis of various types of relations: cause, consequence, aim, manner, etc. For example, the German verb *verdächtigen wegen* - to suspect somebody in something, outspoke suspicion (ABBYY Lingvo 11). “Negative emotional attitude of distrust” is the main proposition in complex semantics of this verb, whereas “blame”, “verbal influence”, “an opinion, inner intelligent judgement” are inclusive, specifying the main

proposition. Cognitive features of different mental spaces get combined in the structure of this verb – the ones of emotional, intellectual spaces and the ones of verbal activity. Therefore, the knowledge about regular connections of different processes and phenomena of reality are expressed in the merging of mental spaces, their interaction and intercrossing, and they are kept in the form of compressed propositions in the semantics of complex polypropositional verbs.

## 7. Conclusion

In the course of our study of propositional semantics it has been stated that semantic transformations could be described with the help of the blend model, elaborated by Fauconnier and Turner (1998), widely known in the cognitive science. This model can be used only in a particular transformation. The necessity to alter this model is caused by the following condition. With the usual lexical metaphor we speak about layering one concept on the other when they interact and forming new semantic space. At that both concepts exist in the linguistic consciousness in their ready state, and the new conceptual structure is born as a result of integration between those two concepts. In the prepositional semantics it is about layering some semantic model (existing in the language) over semantics (formless conceptual content), which is to be put to a linguistic form. As a result, we get a new meaning, packed in an old form, as much as with a lexical metaphor. However, the mechanisms leading to this are different. Modelling these processes and mechanisms will make it possible to discover patterns of creating new prepositional semantics, which in its turn, will allow us to find clues to explanation of prepositional polysemy, that is so important for mastering foreign languages.

Researching semantics of a derived word allowed to make the following statement. In the basis of semantics of the nominative units of this kind there is a propositional structure, especially formed in the human consciousness (or being formed in the course of the nominating act as and then required). The rules of its objectivization are set by derivational modelling. Both creation mechanism and recognition mechanism in the form of derived word could be considered the main mechanisms of verbal and cognitive human activity, as well as discursive human activity on the whole. Derived words, being dynamic conceptual structures, are able to act as one of the means of linguistic interpretation of deep situational semantics. The derived unit is focused on different features of the described phenomena. Acquiring the form of a single-word unit and having specific informational and semantic saturation, it becomes rather convenient for communication, in comparison with more elaborated constructions, and meets discursive demands of communication in the best way. The difficulty of processes of derivational nomination, both on the stage of forming the lexical unit and in the framework of its further functioning in the language supposes creating some new special practices of analysis with the aim to discover mechanisms and patterns of fixing new semantics to a linguistic form and its further development under the influence of systemic and discursive processes.

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