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COGNITIVE AND SEMANTIC ASPECTS OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the generalization of linguistic material, enabling the identification of regularities in its textual arrangement. The semantic and referential features of taxonomic names within texts have been analyzed, which underscores the relevance of the research.

The methodological foundations of the work include the study of cognitive linguistic principles, the identification of extralinguistic objects through taxonomic noun phrases, and the development of recommendations to improve analytical outcomes. The issues addressed in the article are examined using descriptive, comparative, and analytical methods.

In particular, various theories and scholarly literature concerning the problems and developmental stages of modern cognitive linguistics are discussed and reconsidered. The findings of the paper provide practical recommendations. Overall, the subjectivity of taxonomic names is shown to determine their identifying and textual functions.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, taxonomic names, lexical item, reference, description, ontological classes.

Cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language, mind, and sociocultural experience. It first emerged in the 1970s with the development of the triangular model of the linguistic sign, which led to the differentiation of logical semantics into a theory of meaning and a theory of reference. The logical-philosophical and cognitive dimensions of this dichotomy are most clearly articulated in the works of the American philosopher Willard Van Orman

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Quine, often regarded as a foundational figure in cognitive linguistics [Quine 1971 : 142–154].

Cognitive linguistics represents a paradigm shift in the study of language and cognition, moving away from traditional structuralist and generative frameworks. It emphasizes that language is deeply intertwined with human cognitive processes, and therefore understanding the cognitive dimensions of language use is of paramount importance [Qin : 193].

The central goal of cognitive linguistics is to explain how processes of perception, categorization, classification, and world understanding occur; how knowledge is accumulated; and what systems support activities oriented toward information processing. Language is a distinctive human cognitive capacity, yet the intellectual mechanisms responsible for storing and retrieving both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge are fundamentally similar.

Cognitive linguistics incorporates a range of theoretically robust approaches to meaning and structure, united by the premise that language is a central component of cognition. It reflects the interplay of social, psychological, and communicative factors, which must be understood within a coherent framework of conceptualization and mental processing [Chandra : 227].

Researchers highlight one of the chief advantages of cognitive linguistics: its ability to provide a broad perspective on language. This includes access to the diversity of relationships between language and people, as well as the definition of connections between language and intelligence [Croft, Cruse : 356].

Within cognitivism, linguistic phenomena are examined from the standpoint of cognitive semantics. Linguistic data serve as essential material for analyzing and modeling mental processes. A semantic theory grounded in cognitivism must therefore reflect what actually occurs in the human mind.

One of the key tasks of modern linguistics is to investigate how the results of cognition are manifested in language. Such research must take into account the study of human cognitive activity and reflect the specificity of lexical, historical-cultural, and socio-economic data [Aarts : 94–95].

In spoken communication, reference is closely tied to the category of definiteness–indefiniteness, which modern linguistic literature treats as a pragmatic-textual category characterized by gradations of definiteness [Austin : 102–109].

The three-component model of definiteness–indefiniteness proposed by the American linguist Donnellan is shaped both by linguo-pragmatic factors of spoken interaction and by the contextual information that communicants accumulate during discourse. Donnellan differentiates descriptions (noun phrases) into three main types: definite, weakly definite, and indefinite.

Generalizing the linguistic material suggests that in modern English the primary identification of an extralinguistic object is ideally achieved through a weakly definite noun or noun phrase. During secondary identification, however, the indefinite noun phrase is typically replaced by a definite one. The process of reference depends primarily on the cognitive activity of the speaker — specifically, on how the cognition of an extralinguistic object occurs during its naming: either on the basis of ontological (i.e., natural) data objectively characteristic of the object, or through subjective perception that attributes qualities to it or generalizes it [Donnellan : 28–44].

Logic distinguishes two types of extralinguistic classes of objects, depending on the characteristics by which they are classified:

1. Natural or ontological classes, derived from immanent, natural characteristics.

2. Pragmatic or nominal classes, whose existence is conditioned by the subject's orientation of perception, whereby natural objects are presented in a reflective, newly conceptualized mode of being.

Natural or ontological classes are taxonomic in essence, and their set reflects a model of the physical world. Pragmatic or nominal classes, by contrast, are ephemeral, created for specific situations and goals; once the situation passes into the past, their existence ceases. Accordingly, ontological classes are expressed through taxonomic names, while pragmatic classes are reflected in attributive or qualitative names [Lyons : 146–165].

The world is primarily perceived as a set of physical objects, a perspective reflected in the concept of **ontological classes**, which are verbally embodied in taxonomic names. On the basis of generalized lexical definitions, a taxonomic name may be defined as follows: *a taxonomic name designates a representative of a particular ontological class according to those essential features objectively characteristic of it, features that are subject to sensory perception and whose combination creates both the conceptual content of the name and its corresponding subject domain* [Quine 1981 : 34–80].

Accordingly, in the semantic composition of taxonomic names, **denotative semantics** predominate over **significative semantics**, and their definitions are terminological-scientific insofar as the features expressed in them are regarded as general categorical characteristics by which one class of objects is distinguished from another.

For example, consider the definition of the taxonomic name *human* from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1984): *human — n. of or belonging to the genus Homo, distinguished from animals by superior mental development, power of articulate speech, and upright posture* [Allen : 485].

This definition is terminologically precise and scientific, as it explicates the general categorical features that differentiate humans from other living beings. These features — thinking, segmented speech, and upright posture — enable humans to engage in cognitive, linguistic, and labor activities.

Generalizing the linguistic material allows us to conclude that taxonomic names are subject to **logical-semantic differentiation**, a process based on the **field principle**, characterized by hyper-hyponymic structuring or hierarchy. In modern linguistic literature, a *field* is generally understood as a set of lexical units organized around the transmission of a common concept. The hierarchy of the field is realized through semantic inclusion, typically expressed in genus–species (hyper–hyponymic) relationships.

Hyper–hyponymy can be illustrated by the system of names denoting a person. The primary hyponym is *human*, which, by virtue of its general categorical features, unites around itself taxonomic names with more specific meanings such as *woman*, *man*, *child*, *girl*, *boy*, *pygmy*, and others. In relation to the central hyponym, these appear as subordinate hyponyms [Essays on Deixis : 34–43].

The subjectivity of taxonomic names determines their identifying features. Generalization of linguistic material makes it possible to reveal some regularities of their arrangement in the text. [Geach : 25–39].

In particular, in a stylistically neutral text, reference is made from weakly defined, background knowledge-creating taxonomic noun phrases to definite phrases, the semantics of which are also retrospective and always based on the

previous text. And the beginning of the text with a definite taxonomic noun phrase is an expressive-stylistic expression of the author's communicative strategy, his subjective and aesthetic-cognitive mode, which aims to immediately concentrate the reader's attention on the subject of discussion and its meaning. [Fillmore : 219–243].

For example, let's take an excerpt from Hemingway's famous story «Indian Camp»: «They walked up through a meadow <...> following the young Indian who carried a lantern. Then they followed a track leading to a logging road. It was much lighter on the road <...> and the young Indian stopped and blew out his lantern and they all walked on along the road <...>. All the old women in the camp had been helping her. The men had moved off up the road to sit in the dark and smoke. Nick's father ordered some water to be put on the stove. "This young lady is going to have a baby, Nick", he said» [Hemingway : 252–253].

The illustrated example is full of taxonomic noun phrases, by means of which the author identifies for the reader those extralinguistic objects, the set of which forms the referential space of the given textual fragment. Moreover, the primary identification of each such object is carried out mainly by a weakly defined noun phrase, which is morphologically actualized by the article «a» or the indefinite pronoun «some»: a meadow, a lantern, a track, a road, a baby. All of the above-mentioned noun phrases are characterized by weak definiteness, since their referent is known only to the speaking subject, i.e. to the author, while it is unknown to the addressee (the reader). [Biber, Conrad, Leech : 48].

Attention should be drawn to the fact that all of the above-mentioned noun phrases, whether definite or indefinite, are singular type identifiers, since they have the ability to refer to extralinguistic objects in a discrete manner [Jespersen : 363–385].

When primary reference is made to a set of taxonomic objects, the use of a definite noun phrase is required without exception, as illustrated in the examples previously considered: «all the women in the camp», «the men».

From the arguments presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- **Definition:** A taxonomic name is a nominal phrase or description that designates a particular ontological (natural) class or its representative according to the essential features objectively characteristic of it. The combination of these features creates both the conceptual content of the name and its corresponding subject domain.

- **Scientific precision:** The definition of a taxonomic name is terminological-scientific, insofar as the features explicated in it are regarded as general categorical characteristics by which one class of objects differs from another.

- **Differentiation:** Taxonomic names are subject to logical-semantic differentiation, a process based on the generic–specific principle of structuring ontological classes of objects. This principle finds expression in the hyper-hyponymic structure of the conceptual field, i.e., in hierarchical organization.

- **Semantic composition:** In taxonomic names, denotative semantics predominate over significative semantics, since they identify an object in terms of features accessible to sensory perception.

- **Textual function:** The semantic nature of taxonomic names determines their identifying and textual features.

In summary, this paper offers a comprehensive review of research in cognitive linguistics and underscores its importance in uncovering the complex processes of cognitive language understanding. Collectively, these studies have enriched

our knowledge of the relationship between language and thought, reshaping the landscape of linguistic and cognitive research.

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КОГНІТИВНІ ТА СЕМАНТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ СУЧАСНОЇ ЛІНГВІСТИКИ

Метою цієї статті є узагальнення лінгвістичного матеріалу, яке дозволяє виявити певні закономірності розташування мовних одиниць у тексті. Визначено семантичні та референційні особливості таксономічних назв у тексті, що зумовило актуальність наукової розвідки.

Методологічними основами цієї праці є дослідження та вивчення аспектів і основ когнітивної лінгвістики, ідентифікація екстралінгвістичних об'єктів за таксономічними іменниковими словосполученнями та розробка рекомендацій щодо покращення результатів.

Визначені у статті проблеми досліджуються за допомогою описового, порівняльного та аналітичного методів. Зокрема, обговорюються та переосмислюються різні теорії та наукова література, пов'язані з проблемами та етапами сучасної когнітивної лінгвістики.

Результати дослідження містять рекомендації. Загалом, суб'єктивність таксономічних назв визначає їхні ідентифікаційні та текстові ознаки.

Ключові слова: когнітивна лінгвістика, таксономічні назви, лексична одиниця, референція, опис, онтологічні класи.