

On the Ideographic Description of Stylistically and Pragmatically Relevant Aspects of Lexical Meanings

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This paper forms a part of a project intended to develop the main principles of metaideography – the theory of producing lexicographic works in which lexical items are arranged non-alphabetically in accordance with their semantic affinity. The aim of the present study is to highlight the deficiencies of the existing ideographic publications in the representation of stylistically and pragmatically relevant aspects of lexical semantics.

There are two main approaches to the definition of linguistic semantics (Burkhanov 1995). The first one presupposes that only referential meanings of linguistic signs, lexical items in particular, are to be studied within the framework of semantic description. The other holds that linguistic semantics is the study of meaning in words or sentences. Accordingly, one of the most frequently used definitions of meaning implies that the meaning of a linguistic sign is its content. Thus, paraphrasing Katz & Fodor's (1963) formula „linguistic description minus grammar equals semantics”, the subject matter of linguistic semantics can be said to be determinable as follows: „the linguistic sign minus its form equals meaning”.

Meaning thus defined encompasses at least three aspects: a) referential; b) social; c) affective. According to Finegan (1994: 158-161), referential meaning – or denotation – is the meaning that a linguistic expression has by virtue of its ability to refer to an entity: an object, process, or an event in the outside world. The social aspect of meaning indicates social class, ethnicity, regional origin, gender, and context, whereas affective meaning is the information conveyed by an expression

about the attitudes and emotions of the speaker toward the content and the context of expression.

On the other hand, cognitive-semantic approach presupposes that meaning should be equated with conceptualized knowledge of the world. This central tenet of cognitive semantics leads to an understanding of the scope of semantic description which is similar to the one given above. According to Croft (1993), since there is no essential difference between linguistic-semantic representation and general knowledge representation, the subject matter of linguistic semantics is the study of commonsense human experience, which encompasses a considerable part of pragmatic information. He writes: „Thus, that aspect of „pragmatics” which involves the employment of „world knowledge” or „commonsense knowledge”, and even contextual knowledge (since the speech act context is part of our knowledge of the world, albeit a very specific piece of knowledge) becomes part of semantics” (Croft 1993: 337).

The stylistic description of language is developing in two major directions: text stylistics and stylistics of resources. The stylistic text analysis that addresses itself to issues at the interface of linguistic and literary studies is intended to find the artistic principles underlying a writer’s choice of linguistic signs. This approach presupposes the study of a text – usually a literary text – from the viewpoint of the artistic literary effect produced by its various passages. Stylistics of resources aims at the rhetoric/stylistic description of linguistic signs that encompasses the evaluation of their potential as means of expression, including the use of lexical items in certain functional styles and registers.

It is only natural to assume that the representation of stylistically relevant information conveyed by a lexical item should also be considered as an indispensable element of its content and, hence, should be accounted for in its semantic specification. „Stylistically relevant elements of lexical meanings” here mean not only the information about the use of corresponding lexical items in certain functional styles or registers, but also what I elsewhere referred to as „stylistic semantics” (Burkhanov 1994), that is the idioethnic, language-specific phenomena of semantic valency, metaphorical and metonymic mappings, idiomaticity, and polysemy, which form the semantic basis of various stylistic effects.

In any case, whatever the definition of the subject matter of linguistic semantics, the stylistically and pragmatically relevant constituents of lexical semantics are to be adequately represented in the applied-linguistic description of the lexicon, particularly in lexicography, ideographic publications included.

Without trying to solve all the problems concerning the interface of stylistic, pragmatic, and semantic description of the lexicon, it is necessary to present some considerations about their correlation. According to Van Dijk (1977: 201), the delimitation between pragmatics on the one hand and stylistics/rhetorics on the other hand may be drawn on the following grounds: the pragmatic condition would pertain to appropriateness of an utterance, whereas the stylistic/rhetorical variations determine the degree of effectiveness of an utterance.

The category of appropriateness seem to be correlated with the definition of pragmatics as intended speaker's meaning, that is the evaluation of the utterance from the viewpoint whether it is appropriate to express what the speaker wants to say in a particular act of communicative interaction.

There is another definition of pragmatics which holds that it forms a part of the content of a linguistic sign (lexeme, morpheme, and syntactic structure) which represents the speaker's attitude to: 1) reality; 2) the content of the utterance; 3) the listener (Apresyan 1988). It is specifically noted that what is meant in this definition is not the evaluation arising in the process of the speech production, but lexicalized or grammaticalized evaluation which is „built in” the content of linguistic signs and, hence, is an inherent property that characterizes these linguistic signs as units of language as a system (Apresyan 1988: 8-9). Of interest for the purposes of this paper is, of course, lexicalized speaker's attitude that forms a part of lexical semantics of some lexical items.

The aforementioned pragmatic content of lexical meanings constitutes an integral element of commonsense knowledge which arises from everyday experience and in the course of language acquisition. The characteristics of commonsense knowledge in contrast with specialized expert knowledge, including scientific knowledge, have been explored in a number of publications. Out of the recent ones, Taylor (1989: 81-98) and Lakoff & Turner (1989: 60-67) may be cited.

It is important to emphasize the following aspects of knowledge of the world. Firstly, expert knowledge is language-dependent, whereas commonsense knowledge is culturally determined and language-specific. Secondly, cognitive models that organize commonsense knowledge are unconscious and may be explicated only after careful semantic analysis, whereas expert knowledge is conscious and logically organized. Thirdly, the expert and commonsense categorizations of the world coexist not only in different social groups within the speech community, but within individual members of this community.

Of great interest in this connection are the lexical items that refer to the same denotatum. Their referential meanings are identical, whereas the affective and

pragmatic aspects of their lexical meanings differ considerably. From the viewpoint of cognitive semantics, they may be said to be profiled against the same cognitive domain, but, in addition, they are profiled against other conceptual domains. Russian lexical items denoting the same class of animals may serve as a good example of the case: *osjol – išak* with the referential meaning 'donkey', *lošad' – kon'* with the referential meaning 'horse', *sobaka – pjos* 'dog', etc. The difference in their affective and pragmatic aspects of meaning is particularly evident after the analysis of the metaphoric extensions of these lexical items and their derivatives.

It is noteworthy that, since Russian nouns are characterized by the category of gender, the semantic features 'MALE' or 'FEMALE' may be implicitly represented, or rather implied by the grammatical markers 'Masculine' or 'Feminine'.

The lexical items *sobaka – pjos* seem to be particularly close in meaning, but they display some differences in categorization which I will try to show. Before we proceed, it is important to note that a particular linguistic community emphasizes only some aspects of the commonsense concept or attributes some other characteristics to a given class of animals. For example, only some attributes of the commonsense concept of 'DOG', as specified by Wierzbicka (1985: 169-170), are particularly salient in Russian linguistic mentality.

Firstly, *sobaka*, a noun of the feminine gender, is the general term used in expert taxonomies irrespective of the sex to which the animal belongs: *storoževaja sobaka* 'watch dog', *ohotnič'ja sobaka* 'hunting dog', and so on. This lexical item is used in publications on biology, physiology, and other scientific disciplines, serves as an entry word in encyclopedias, and so on. Though this lexical item is of feminine gender, it applies to all animals of this kind. In the case of need to specify the sex of the animal, two lexical items are used: *kobel* 'male dog' and *suka* 'bitch'.

Secondly, the word *sobaka* is a lexical item that belongs to the general vocabulary, and as such is profiled against not only the conceptual domain of animals of this kind, but some other domains too. This specific categorization may be most advantageously highlighted in comparison with the categorization of the lexical item *pjos*, that also refers to dogs.

The analysis of the everyday usage of the word *sobaka* and its derivative *sobačij*, as well as idioms and collocations it forms, shows the following:

a) the everyday concept emphasizes that this animal is friendly to the people it lives with. A popular saying that immediately comes to the mind of a native speaker of Russian has it *Sobaka – drug človeka* 'The dog is the Man's friend';

b) life is sometimes hard on dogs and thus they deserve compassion, cf.: *sobač'ja žizn'*, the same in English *dog's life*, and in Azerbaijani it *günləri* – literally 'dog's

days'. In all the three languages these expressions mean 'difficult life comparable to that of a dog'. Their meanings are based on the metaphorical extension of one of the specifications of the commonsense concept 'dog's life is hard';

c) the commonsense concept also highlights that dogs may be bad to people who do not live with them, cf.: the comparative construction *zloj kak sobaka* 'angry like a dog', *sobačit'sja* /coloq./ 'to quarrel', that is 'behave like a dog'.

Unlike *sobaka*, the lexical item *pjos*, since it is of masculine gender, tends to be used in reference to male dogs only, though it can be applied to female species too. The reason probably being that, unlike people, or other animals, such as lions, goats, etc., telling the difference between male and female species of dogs implies closer inspection.

The semantic analysis of lexical meanings have shown that the major difference between the lexical items *sobaka* and *pjos* is that the latter is profiled against the domain of submission. The meaning of *pjos* implies condensing attitude to dogs, as well as attributes base qualities and deficiencies in health or appearance to these animals:

a) cowardess, at least in respect to the master, for example: *On kak pijos ližet ruku, kotoraja ego b'jot* 'like a dog, he licks the hand that punishes him'. Metaphorically, *pjos* refers to male human beings, whereas *sobačonka* – a derivative lexical item formed by the diminutive suffix from *sobaka* – will rather be used in reference to female humans, cf.: *Ona kak sobačonka ližet ruku, kotoraja jeje b'jot* 'like a dog, she licks the hand that punishes her';

b) meanness, for example: *tsepnoj pjos* 'a dog that is chained and, for this reason, aggressive to strangers';

c) of bad appearance because of loss of hair caused by mange, for example: *šeludivyj pjos* 'a mangy dog'.

As for the ideographic description of these phenomena, it is fair to say that the majority of the existing publications have been most inefficient in representing stylistic and pragmatic information about the lexical items included into the body of the dictionary. It is mostly due to the fact that their classificatory schemes are usually designed as the result of the analysis of referential meanings of the lexical items and/or on the basis of expert knowledge categorizations.

Pragmatic information representing the speaker's attitude to reality, to the listener, and to the content of an utterance, as well as lexical-semantic potential for metaphorical and metonymic extensions, which underlie stylistic effects of various kinds, either have been outside the scope of ideographic description, or have been represented most superfluously.

This situation is a natural result of the existing practice characteristic for many ideographic publications, particularly for those of thesaural type – to provide only listings of semantically-related lexical items which are not furnished with definitions of whatever kind. Unfortunately, this feature of some of the ideographic publications has grown to be considered as a distinctive property of an ideographic dictionary in contrast with its alphabetical counterpart. This idea has found its way into a dictionary of applied linguistic terminology: „**Thesaurus** – an arrangement of words or phrases of a language not in alphabetical order but according to the ideas they express. A *thesaurus* is different from a dictionary. Whereas a dictionary aims at explaining the meaning of words and expressions, a *thesaurus* suggests a range of words or phrases associated with an idea” (Richards, Platt & Weber 1985: 293).

So, in many cases the structure of the classificatory scheme is the only way of representing the semantic relations in the lexicon. As has already been mentioned, the classificatory schemes of ideographic dictionaries are usually designed not as the classifications of actual lexical meanings, but as the classifications of the corresponding expert (scientific, etc.) concepts, the classifications of the world viewed from the standpoint of communicative needs of a foreign or second language learner, and/or the classifications of only the referential aspect of lexical meanings.

For example, Hallig & von Wartburg (1963: 59) have mentioned in the Introduction to their dictionary that they focus their attention on what was referred to as logical or general meanings of lexical items which, according to them, comprise independent, objective, invariable part of lexical meanings, whereas connotations and emotive associations are equated to occasional meanings and considered semantic variables.

Those ideographic publications that provide definitions of lexical items have a wider range of possibilities of semantic specification of lexical items in addition to the position in the classificatory framework. As for the functional styles and communicative registers in which certain lexical items are used, lexicography has developed ample means of their representation. Hence, it is quite easy to provide information of this kind in an ideographic dictionary. For example, *Longman Lexicon* (McArthur 1981) furnishes the data about the stylistic characteristics of the word *carnage* which is places in the class **LIFE AND LIVING THINGS**, subclass **Life and Death**, group **A13 Nouns: killing: carnage** /U/ esp *poet & emph slaughter*: *The carnage on that day was terrible* (McArthur 1981: 4).

This ideographic publication represents individual lexical items in separate entries within the appropriate subdivisions of the overall classification. The entry may contain information about the stylistic properties of a given lexical item: *lit* – literary, *poet* – poetic, *fml* – formal, *infml* – informal, *emph* – emphatic, *pomp* – pompous, *tech* – technical, *emot* – emotive, etc.

Moreover, attempts have been made at the ideographic description of a particular functional style (see, for example: Green 1986).

Thus, the stylistic properties of this kind, that is the social aspect of lexical meanings, are basically describable within the framework of ideography. Dictionary makers can, and sometimes do, make use of the available lexicographic means of the stylistic description of the lexicon. The point is that stylistic data of this kind should be systematically represented in ideographic publications.

As for the representation of pragmatically relevant aspects of lexical meanings, ideography still has to develop adequate tools that will enable lexicographic works of this kind to account for the speaker's attitude to reality, the listener, and the content of the utterance. It is worthy of noting that English lexical items expressing the evaluation of the content of the utterance or the form of communication, such as *frankly*, *honestly*, *to tell you the truth*, *evidently*, *naturally*, etc. have not been accounted for in *Roget's Thesaurus* (1852) and in *Longman Lexicon* (McArthur 1981).

By way of conclusion I would like to emphasize that the representation of this data is not a prerogative of alphabetical lexicography. Metaideography has an obligation to provide effective ways of ideographic description of stylistically and pragmatically relevant aspects of lexical meanings.

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Об идеографическом описании стилистически и прагматически релевантных аспектов значений лексических единиц

Данная статья представляет собой часть исследования, целью которого является разработка принципов метаидеографии - теории составления идеографических словарей. Синоптические карты существующих идеографических словарей построены на основе классификации научных понятий или денотативного аспекта значений словесных знаков. Соответственно, стилистически и прагматически значимая информация о значениях включенных в корпус словаря лексических единиц представлена далеко не адекватно. Если в некоторых идеографических справочниках содержится информация о принадлежности лексических единиц к определенному функциональному стилю, то прагматически значимый аспект плана содержания словесных знаков практически игнорируется.

В данной работе отстаивается точка зрения, согласно которой отображение информации подобного рода отнюдь не является прерогативой алфавитных словарей, а в число задач метаидеографии входит разработка способов отображения данного аспекта значения лексических единиц: