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Verbalization of the Concept "Machine" in the Linguistic World Views of Russian and English Speakers

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the verbalization of the concept of "machine" in the Russian and English linguistic conceptions of the world. The study provides a comparative analysis of representation of the concept "machine" in two cultures and reveals ethnocultural specificity for Russian and English speakers. The significance of the work is due to the interest of modern linguistics and the Intercultural Communication Theory in the process of encoding a national mentality in the form of linguistic units. The authors describe ethnoculutural similarities and differences in the verbalization of the concept "machine" in Russian and English.

Keywords: Linguistic world view; concept; ethno-cultural metaphor; semantic analysis; mentality.

1. Introduction

The concept "machine" has become an important part of institutional discourse in the Russian and English languages, as is evident from various clichés including the lexeme "machine". In the collective consciousness of the Russian people such combinations as "машина власти/mashina vlasti" (authority machine),"машина времени/mashina vremeni (time machine), "государственная машина/gosudarstvennaya mashina" (the wheels of state/machinery of government), "стиральная машина/stiralnaya mashina" (washing machine), "собственная машина/sobstvennaya mashina" (my own car) are representative . British people are familiar with the notions of "answering machine", "washing machine", "political machine", and "machine age". The frequency of the use of these collocations is evidence of active usage of the lexeme "machine" by Russian and English language speakers in various discourses.

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2. The study

2.1. Verbalisation of the concept "машина/mashina" in dictionary definitions

In order to analyse a concept and its verbalisation charcteristics it is necessary to first conduct a semantic analysis of a lexeme representing the concept. The brevity and richness of dictionary definitions and information allows us to uncover basic ideas of a people about the word and to obtain information concerning its linguistic world view. In the opinion of A.N. Baranov, there is a "naive" way of representing information registered in a dictionary entry (Mishankina, 2010).

The analysis of the lexeme "машина/mashina" in the Russian Explanatory Dictionaries by V.I. Dal (Dal, 1956), S.I Ozhegov, N.Ju. Shvedova (Ozhegov& Shvedova, 2003) and of the lexeme "machine" in an English thesaurus (Dictionary.com) aims to examine the basic semes that the word "machine" comprises. The word "machine" has common semes in Russian and English, for instance, "mechanism", "organisation", "transport", "automatic action". The comparative analysis helped to educe semes that are not particular to the Russian word: "vending machine" and "some agency, personage, incident or other features introduced into a literary composition". Absence of the first collocation in the Russian language can be explained by the fact that there is another Russian word used to denote this object: "автомат/avtomat". The differences in the word forms between the lexeme "machine" and a set expression "литературный приём" (literary device) can be explained by the specific characters of national cultures, particular perceptions of objects and notions, and by historical traditions. Moreover, Vladimir Dal in his Russian Dictionary introduced a seme "streamlined action" which is not present in the English dictionary entry.

The analysis of associative dictionaries provides further insight into Russian and English speakers basic associative reactions to the lexeme "machine''. According to the data presented in the Russian associative dictionary most common reactions to the word "machine" are: "времени/vremeni" (time) (125), "легковая/legkovaya" (passenger) (30), "Жигули"/Zhiguli (23), "Волга"/Volga (12), автомобиль/avtomobil (car) (11). The most frequent Russian evaluative connotations are "новая/novaya" (new) (8), "красивая/krasivaya" (beautiful) (5), "старая/staraya" (old) (3). The Edinburgh Associative Thesaurus reflects English peoples' reactions to the lexeme "machine" in the following semantic forms of "tool" (90.09), "computer" (60.06), "sewing" (60.06), "gun" (50.05). "English speakers mostly describe the lexeme "machine" using the words "noise" (40.04) and "automatic" (10.01). The present results reveal that the word "машина/mashina" in the Russian language is used mainly to denote a car while English "machine" is more universal. Apparently, in the Russian language there are more lexical units reflecting positive associative reactions concerning car functioning. In the English language, on the contrary, only one positive reaction is presented, while the others are rather negative.

The Online Cambridge Dictionary contains English set expressions which can be divided into two main groups:

1. Set expressions that can be translated with the help of Russian set expressions, containing the word "машина". machine code – машинный язык, coffee machine – кофемашина, drum machine – драм-машина (звуковой модуль с тембрами ударных инструментов и запрограммированными одно- или двухтактными ритмическими рисунками), sewing machine – швейная машина, time machine – машина времени, voting machine - машина для подсчёта голосов (на выборах).
2. word-combinations that are translated by means of Russian set expressions without the word "machine": machine gun – пулемёт, drinks machine – автомат по продаже напитков, slot machine – автомат (торговый по продаже газет, спичек и т.п.), vending machine – торговый автомат, cash machine, automated teller machine – банкомат, poker machine, fruit machine – игровой автомат, pinball machine – автомат для игры в пинбол, kidney machine – искусственная почка, milking machine – доильный аппарат, answering machine – автоответчик, fax machine – факс, machine-readable – читаемый ЭВМ.

It is clear that in 30 per cent of such cases the representation forms of Russian and English word combinations are equivalent. 40 per cent of English expressions are equivalent to Russian word combinations where "machine" is equated to the word "автомат/avtomat" (automatic machine). 30 per cent of words are represented in Russian by

nouns with the Greek suffix -mat- serving to express the idea of action (банкомат), and by other independent equivalents lacking the word "machine".

Therefore, it is arguable that the word "machine" in the English language has a more extended sense in comparison to the Russian lexeme often presented by means of the seme "automatic". The word "machine" is used by English speakers in order to describe any object used to perform some human task. In the Russian language the tendency to use the lexeme "machine" to denote sophisticated technical devices facilitating human work is observed. The word "аппарат" denotes any objects which function with minimum monitoring by people and serve to satisfy human needs. At the same time the difference between lexemes "machine" and "автомат/avtomat" can be explained by the sphere limitation of the usage of the words. For instance, the words "vending machine", "fruit machine" and "cash machine" appeared in Russia later than in England. This fact had an impact on the language. Russian people adopted not only western devices but also the English notion of "automatic", emphasizing its particularities.

Many linguists indicate the importance of the influence of a linguistic world view on people's "cognitive and practical activity" (Emer, 2011). Notions reflecting human thinking process in everyday life systematize accumulated knowledge about the world. Metaphor is important for processing information and represents a basic way of cognizing and categorizing the world. Metaphors are created when processing already existing notions, and as a result new concepts appear. To put it differently, the metaphors represent a specific way of creating the very process of understanding the world (Mishankina, 2010).

2.2. *Verbalisation of the concept "машина/mashina" in ethnocultural metaphors*

One of the most important elements of a linguistic world view is the ethnocultural metaphor representing "a way to divide into parts and classify reality accepted within the framework of linguistic community" (Emer, 2011). In order to get a cursory understanding of a concept, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of lexemes, proverbs, phraseological units and idioms based on the concept (Emer, 2011). In this case, it is the concept "machine" acting as the source of metaphoric interference.

The concept structure includes a number of evaluative and symbolic components which are manifested in standard contexts where the concept "machine" is expressed by means of metaphoric interference.

The analysis of situational contexts presented in the Russian National Corpus and British National Corpus in which the lexeme "machine" is present has shown the existence of the following standard contexts: the expressions "накопил и машину купил/nakopil i mashinu kupil", (saved up money and bought a car), "автокредитование/avtocreditovanie" (auto lending), "кредит на машину/credit na mashinu" (a car loan), "содержание машины обходится дорого/soderzhanie masini obhoditsa dorogo" (having car is expensive).

In the expression "я часто думала о том, что было бы, если бы у меня была машина времени/ya chaste dumala o tom, chto bylo by, esli by u menya byla mashina vremeni" (I have often thought about what it would be like to have a time machine) a machine is shown as a desired object possessing power to change things that are humanly impossible.

The opposition of the words "machine" and "car" is becoming apparent in the phrases: "человек – не машина по производству денег/chelovek ne mashina po proizvodstvu deneg" (a person is not a money-making machine), "я человек, а не машина, у меня есть чувства/ya chelovek, a ne mashina, u menya est chuvstva" (I am a person, not a machine, I have feelings), "человек, не проявляющий своих чувств, очень сильно отличается от окружающих"/chelovek, ne proyavlyaushi svoich chuvstv, ochen silno otlichaetsa ot okruzhauchih (a person who does not show emotions strongly differs from those around him or her), такие люди напоминают машину/ takie ludi napominaut mashinu"(those people are similar to a machine).

The phrase "я человек, а не машина, могу ошибаться/ya chelovek, a ne masina, mogu oshibatsa" (I am a person, not a machine, I can make mistakes) confirms the fact that the machine was fixed in collective consciousness as a symbol of good organization and efficiency.

In the collective consciousness of English speakers "machine" represents a symbol of power and complexity: A7D 1157 (hereinafter the unique British National Corpus code is indicated) "And if you want to run a business that involves shipping an unwieldy machine..."

According to the British linguistic world view the word "machine" is a symbol of utility for people. CA2 575 "If you can knit double jacquard on your machine, this is particularly useful for larger sizes...; For mums it was the era of the cheap washing machine that would free them from drudgery". The presence of this characteristic in the semantic field of the concept "machine" is evidence of the fact that English speakers appreciate comfort and practicality.

In many respects, the presence of the meaning "utility" of "machine" in British linguistic consciousness is based on the perception of the machine as a symbol of independence, of the ability to conduct activities with minimum human control or completely without it. H7B 1134 "During the day users are responsible for inputting their own data, while at night this machine runs commercial batch work".

At the same time it is necessary to emphasize that the word "machine" in the British linguistic consciousness has negative connotations due to the fact that it endangers lives of people: AP 2868 "They used a machine gun to tell us so". "She flinches as a machine gun shutters nearby".

Both in the English linguistic consciousness and in naive linguistic world view the machine is opposed to humanity, reflecting an inability to exhibit feelings and emotions. This aspect manifests itself in the following contexts:

HWA 920 "I am a woman, not a machine";

A6V 1074 I said "These hands I have got, they are hands not a machine!";

C8S 1635 "He's not a machine, you see";

CBG 931 "I am human, I am not a machine; I'm not a machine – I can't keep working and working".

Standard expressions with the lexeme "machine" are reflected in classic literature. For instance, Anna Karenina describes her husband in the following way: "Это не человек, а машина, и злая машина, когда рассердится/ Eto ne chelovek, a mashina, I zlaya mashina, kogda rasserditsa" (It is not a man, it is a machine. An evil machine, when angry) (Chertkov, 1984). Jane Eyre reproaches Mr. Rochester: "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? – a machine without feelings?" (Chertkov, 1984). These examples show that violence and insensibility towards human values constitute a semantic base of the lexeme "machine" in Russian and English cultures.

In the English language world view a phraseological unit "run as a well-oiled machine" also depicts the machine as an efficient system. Furthermore, there is an opposition between the machine and art fixed in the English language. This idea is not reflected in the Russian naive world view: A08 733 "But a work of art, so-called, is not a machine". A08 741 "Art is not a machine, he wrote, and it is not an organism".

Phraseological units are important material for the analysis of the concept "machine": "Бог из машины/Bog iz mashini" (God from a machine) – a calque from Greek "Deus ex machina" meaning the unexpected conclusion of some situation. The phrase is used in contemporary literature to describe an unexpected resolution of a problem, which occurs with the help of an unexpected intervention by a third party. Mikhail Bulgakov uses this idea in his science-fiction novella "The Fatal Eggs", naming his last chapter "Frosty God on a Machine" (the frost unexpectedly appearing in August kills snakes and crocodiles attacking Moscow). Arkady and Boris Strugatsky evoke this expression in their novels. One of the stories in the collection by Dmitry Glukhovsky "Stories of the Motherland" is titled "Deus Ex Machina".

"Государственная машина/gosudarstvennaya mashina" (the wheels of state/machinery of government) is a phrase used to describe a complex of public institutions so as to emphasize their heartlessness. The phrase was coined by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes when comparing public institutions with some mechanism in his essays. Nonetheless, the phrase was fixed in the colloquial consciousness of Russian people, which is evident from the frequency of its usage in mass media headlines: "как государственная машина пропаганды промывает нам мозги про НАТО и однополярный мир/kak gosudarstvennaya masina propogandi promivaet nam mozgi pro NATO i odnopolyarny mir", (how the propaganda machinery of government brainwashes us about NATO and the

unipolar world), "государственная машина с мелкими поломками/gosudarstvennaya mashina s melkimi polomkami" (The machinery of government with minor breakdowns) (Gaaze).

"A cog in the machine" is an idiom in which the word "machine" is used to denote a big organisation: "I decided to set up my own business because I was tired of just being a cog in a machine".

There is also a fixed expression "стоп машина!/stop mashina!" (stop her!) in the international glossary of navigation terms.

A complex of Russian proverbs is of fundamental importance for the associative field of the concept "machine". The concept "machine" represents force and power and difficulty in handling, in proverbs such as "малый винтик большую машину остановит/maly vintik bolshuyu mashinu ostanovit" (a small screw will stop a big machine) and "без работы и машина ржавеет/bez raboti I mashina rzhaveet" (even a machine rusts without work). The proverb "машину поймёшь – далеко пойдёшь/masinu poimaesh – daleko poidesh" (if you understand the machine you will go far) expresses the collective conception of Russian people about the complexity of the machine as a mechanism.

The analysis of typical contexts and fixed phrases where the key element is the word "machine", helps to reveal symbolic characteristics underlying metaphoric transformation while forming an associative field of a concept.

Evidently, the machine is a symbol of power and complexity; it implies an absence of emotions in the Russian linguistic world view as well as in the English. Moreover, the English linguistic world view established symbolic characteristics underlying the metaphoric transformation while forming the associative field of the concept "machine". In Russian the associative field of the concept "machine" does not include any sense of human utility, autonomy, danger and menace, or opposition to art.

3. Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of lexical semantic variants of the concept "machine" aimed to present basic images that are revealed in the collective consciousness of Russian and English. The symbolic characteristics serving as a base for the concept "machine" are fixed vocabulary entries. The symbolic characteristics fall into typical contexts and standard scenarios in Russian and English cultures. Being formed in the collective consciousness, these concepts represent a combination of cognitive particularities and ways of perceiving axiological priorities of the world by an ethnic group. Opposition of the man and the machine is the main idea present in the concept "machine" in both the Russian and English linguistic world views. Moreover, we have revealed a diversity of metaphoric transfer examples not typical of the other language. This examination reveals specific axiological notions of the national consciousness fixed in the linguistic world view of different languages.

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