The Morphemic and Semantic Analysis of Words

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Abstract: The segmentation of words is generally carried out according to the method of Immediate and ultimate constituents. This method is based on the binary principle, i.e. each stage of the procedure involves two components the word immediately breaks into. Each immediate constituent at the next stage of analysis is in turns broken into smaller meaningful elements. The analysis is completed when we arrive at constituents incapable of further division, i.e. morphemes. These are referred to Ultimate Constituents.

A synchronic morphological analysis is most effectively accomplished by the procedure known as the analysis into Immediate Constituents (IC). Breaking a word into its immediate constituents we observe in each cut the structural order of the constituents. A diagram presenting the three cuts described looks as follows:

1. un-/ gentlemanly

2. un-/ gentleman/-ly

3. un-/ gentle/-man/-ly

The analysis of word-structure at the morphemic level must proceed to the stage of Ultimate Constituents. For example, the noun *friendliness* is first segmented into the ICs: *friend* recurring in the adjectives *friendly-looking* and *friendly* and *ness* found in a countless number of nouns, such as unhappiness, blackness, sameness,etc. The IC ness is at the same time an UC of the word, as it cannot be broken into any smaller elements possessing both sound-form and meaning. Any further division of – *ness* would give individual speech-sounds which denote nothing by themselves.

Morphemeic analysis under the method of Ultimate Constituents may be carried out on the basis of two principles: the so-called root-principle and affix principle. According to the affix principle the splitting of the word into its constituent morphemes is based on the identification of the affix within a set of words. For example, the identification of the suffix –*er* leads to the segmentation of words singer, teacher, swimmer into the derivational morpheme –er and the roots *teach, sing, drive*. According to the root principle, the segmentation of the word is based on the identification of the root-morpheme in a word-cluster. For example, the identification of the root-morpheme *agree* in the words *agreeable, agreement, disagree*.

The reason why any interd may potentially have more than one meaning (be polysemantic) is obvious: the reality of the world is infinite, while the sources of even the richest language are limited. Thus, language keeps stretching out its lexical units to cover new phenomena of objective reality. The speaker observed certain similarities between the objects gets into the way of using words metaphorically. When the metaphor becomes habitual it is included as a lexical-semantic variant in the word's semantic structure. Obviously, if we are linguists, if what we are doing is English Philology, we are bound to learn to cope with words, to find a way of handling them, which

is incomparably more difficult than, for example, discovering and describing grammatical categories, the number of which is strictly limited. Nowhere can we find exact data to prove that this or that person or this or that community uses so many hundreds or thousands of words. Attempts have been made to apply statistical analysis to the study of vocabularies used by this or that social group.

Lexicographers frequently base the dictionary entry on the use of words in different contexts, thus presenting a number of "meaning" whose actual existence is far from proved.

Thus, for instance, the meaning of the adjective "beautiful" in three well-known dictionaries is interpreted in different ways:

"Webster's New World Dictionary "(8, London, 1976) describes "beautiful" as a monosemantic word: beautiful – having beauty.

"The Universal Dictionary of the English Language" is of order of a few thousands, the number of words runs into tens and even hundreds of thousands.

Diachronic study of languages shows that the historical words preceded morphemes. Tracing the origin of affixes F.F.Fortunatov wrote "The observation of the emergence of new forms may originate from some word forms with a normal meaning, the stems in such forms also turn out to have originated from individual words" [1, 148-149]. On the synchronic plane, for a majority of languages the difference between the word and the latter, the former is syntactically independent.

Meanings of words are notional. This means that a word may express a notion, in contrast to a morpheme, which cannot express a notion as a generalised view of a class of objects or phenomena. The syntactic independence of the word is connected with its notional meaning and conversely, the morpheme's inability to express a notion is manifested in its syntactic non-independence.

In contrast to the word, the meaning of the morpheme is associative. The associative nature of the morpheme's meaning is such that it is identified with a number of notions, none of which is expressed by it: the notions with which the morpheme is associated are expressed by the words which contain it: red. Redness, to redden. A word can express different notions in different contexts. H.C.Wyld lists two different meanings [2].

beautiful-possessing beauty; comely; lovely;

"Castle's English Dictionary "(London, 1969) increases the number to four:

beautiful – full of beauty ;

possessing the attributes that constitute beauty;

satisfactory, palatable, delicious; iron, egregious

Exception of material directly from different styles and registers of speech is also one of the tremendous problems. The choice of texts itself presents a number of difficulties. There are, of course, the files of academic dictionary which have been justly regarded as the most reliable source of lexical material.

These lexical "treasure –troves "or "thesauri" have been "dug out "and stored in a systematic way to form the basis of the "best" dictionaries.

What is the methods which could be relied upon to establish the factual system of meaning of polysemantic words of the language?

The problem of the methods of semantic analysis remains one of the most important and at the same time one of the least explored fields in modern linguistics though there are a great number of paper and books on the subject.

The fundamental approach to the study and description of lexical meaning was elaborated by V.V.Vinogradov. He analyzes the overall meaning of a word in terms of: nominative, nominative-derivative, colligation ally and collocation ally conditioned and phraseologically bound meaning [3].

The nominative meaning is the basic of all the other meanings of a word. It is said to be "free" because no linguistic constraints are imposed on its realisations. The word may have several free meanings but they all depend on the nominative one: that is why they are called nominative-derivative. For example: sweet face, voice, singer, little boy, temper, etc.

Side by side with "free" meanings a word may have" linguistically conditioned" meanings which can be of two types: colligationally conditioned and collocationally conditioned. The former can be illustrated by the adjective "ill". When used productively the adjective "ill" means "in bad health". For example: She was *ill* yesterday. My baby is *ill*. The adjective "ill" has a different meaning, namely "bad "when it is used in attributive constructions: ill health, temper, humour, luck etc.

We carried out the semantic analysis of words with the help of much practical material, enormous collection of cards with words. The semantic analysis of words helps to understand the essential features, morphological structure and meanings of a word. The word may have different lexical meanings: logical, emotional, nominative and contextual. All the meanings of a word can be understood exactly from the semantic analysis and from the context.

Literature

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