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SEMANTIC STRUCTURE AND SYNONYMIC SERIES OF ENGLISH VERBS UNITED BY THE MEANING THINK

Balyasnikova Marina Aleksandrovna,

Senior Lecturer, Department of English Lexicology and Stylistics,

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Email: m.balyasnikova@list.ru

Turabayeva Lazzat Kalikulovna
Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Shymkent State University
Email: turabaeva-71@mail.ru

Abstract

The article examines the lexical-semantic group of English verbs united by the meaning think and analyzes the semantic relations between its elements. The study is based on the method of componential analysis and the examination of definitions from explanatory and synonymic dictionaries, which makes it possible to identify similarities and differences among synonymous verbs. Particular attention is paid to the polysemy of the verb think, its various lexical-semantic variants, and the system of synonymic series forming the structure of the semantic field. The results of the analysis demonstrate that the polysemy of verbs and their participation in different synonymic and antonymic relations create a complex network of connections within the lexical-semantic system of the language.

Keyword

lexical-semantic group, semantic field, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, componential analysis, lexical-semantic variant, semantic structure of a word, paradigmatic relations, lexical system of language.

Introduction

The study of various language systems is motivated by the necessity of conducting a thorough analysis of the nature of the relationships between words within a particular microsystem. The importance of such research is evident for clarifying the boundaries of the microsystems under investigation within the lexical-semantic system of a given language. This, in turn, is of interest not only to lexicology and lexicography but also to the methodology of teaching a foreign language.

Although lexicology contains a number of works devoted to the study of lexical-semantic groups [10, p. 43], the specific nature of the semantic features of polysemantic words that belong to different lexical-semantic groups creates a complex system of relationships between words that are members of one lexical-semantic group and words that are members of other lexical-semantic groups. This situation requires a more detailed description. The identification and analysis of the type of semantic relationship between words within a particular microsystem make it possible to differentiate lexical-semantic groups of words more

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precisely. It also helps to reveal more fully the structure of the semantic field and to identify qualitative connections between its members that are not recorded in dictionaries [9, p. 75].

Methods

In describing the synonymic verbs **think**, the study employs the methodology for investigating synonymic relations between lexical units proposed by V. G. Vilyuman, according to which synonyms are regarded as such lexical units that display similarities and slight differences in their meanings and functions [8, p. 37].

The study of the semantic characteristics of verbs is carried out using componential analysis based on the definitions provided in explanatory dictionaries, while taking into account their direct and indirect semantic connections with other lexical units. Such an approach to the examination of semantically related words makes it possible to reveal more fully the specific nature of the interaction between words within the lexical-semantic system of a language and, in addition, to refine the list of synonyms within a single synonymic set.

Results

The object of the study is a group of English verbs united by the meaning **think**. A detailed examination of classes of verbs is of unquestionable interest, since the verb plays a central role in sentence construction and constitutes the center of most syntagmatic relations. Special attention to the specific nature of this verb and to a whole series of other verbs connected with it through semantic relations is обусловлено, first, by its frequency (according to the frequency dictionary of Edward L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge, the verb **think** belongs to the first thousand words), and second, by its polysemy (the semantic structure of **think** includes about seventeen meanings) [6, p. 53]. This article is devoted to the description of the meanings of the verb **think** and the synonymic sets of verbs that belong to the lexical-semantic group **think**.

The lexical-semantic group unites words that are identical in one meaning and do not coincide in others. Following Yu. D. Apresyan, the meaning of a word is understood as the semantics of the sign and that part of its paradigmatics which is included in the interpretative framework of its definition [7, p. 325]. Information about the meanings of the verbs was obtained through componential analysis based on the data of explanatory dictionaries.

Discussion

The semantic structure of the verb **think**, that is, its various meanings, may be expressed by different lexical-semantic variants:

1. produce, form by mental process; change, effect in some way by mental operation; formulate in mind; conceive; imagine;
2. review in mind; examine mentally; consider; remark mentally; devise mentally; reflect upon;
3. form an adequate idea; conceive rationally;
4. call in mind; remember; recollect; bring smth. to mind; make a discovery or invention; have expectation; discover; invent; suggest; propose;
5. reflect; meditate; ponder; consider;
6. conceive of as a thing possible; imagine;

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7. hold as an opinion; view mentally; believe; consider; judge; assume; bear in mind; recollect; have judgement or opinion; entertain a view of; esteem; suppose; look upon;
8. propose in mind; have in one's mind as an intention; purpose; intend; hope;
9. feel; anticipate, expect;
10. expect;
11. exercise in mind; exercise the powers; know; feel; cognize; cogitate; reflect;
12. recall anything in mind;
13. hold;
14. exercise the judgement; deliberate; meditate;
15. entertain a particular opinion;
16. seem; appear;
17. have an opinion or belief; form an opinion; comprehend; effect.

As a result of a comparative analysis of the definitions found in explanatory and synonymic dictionaries of the English language, it may be concluded that the verbs exercise, recognize, consider, imagine, devise, ponder, cogitate, reflect, meditate, conceive, ruminate are synonyms of **think** in its first meaning; the verbs judge, examine, consider, study, weigh, inspect, regard, view, deliberate, look, review, scrutinize, determine, reflect upon — are synonyms of **think** in its second meaning; and the verbs consider, estimate, calculate, hold, esteem, regard, aim, guess, value, appraise, conceive rationally — are synonyms of **think** in its third meaning [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

Moreover, on the basis of semantic similarity, the following sets of words may be distinguished:

think — conceive, imagine, formulate, devise, realize, reflect, perceive;

think — remember, recall, recollect, hold, remind, discover;

think — imagine, conceive, fancy, muse, suppose, dream;

think — hold, view, contemplate, observe, see, regard, survey, behold, look (upon);

think — believe, consider, dream, imagine, suppose, assume, regard, presume, deem, judge, guess, reckon, look (at, upon), hold, conceive, fancy, view, expect, calculate, count, surmise, imply, estimate, esteem, behold;

think — purpose, intend, summon, recall, propose, design, plan, hope, expect, meditate, look (forward), consider, contemplate, mean, aim, suppose, imply, devise, imagine, invent, concoct, cogitate, scheme, calculate, suggest;

think — know, feel, will, cognize, perceive, experience, appear, recognize, realize, see, seem, look;

think — deliberate, meditate, ponder, brood, cogitate, consider, contemplate, imagine, mean, ruminate, wish, reflect;

think — seem, appear, look, feel, perceive, know, expect, anticipate;

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think — entertain, consider, muse, purpose, suppose, contrive, devise, deliberate, study, contemplate, reflect, dream, hold, opine, imagine, observe.

The resulting sets overlap, since most of the verbs are synonymous with one another or possess meanings that are close to the meaning of **think**.

Members of one of the synonymic sets, namely: believe, consider, conceive, imagine, assume, presume, think, regard, deem, judge, guess, reckon, look (at, upon), esteem, fancy, view, calculate, count, surmise, imply, estimate, behold, esteem – are semantically connected with the antonyms doubt and question through **believe** [5, p.35]. Antonyms are considered to be lexical units that are opposite in their meanings and identical in their distributional features [11, p.45].

The direct semantic connection of the verbs **seem** and **appear** with the verbs **be** and **exist** makes it possible to speak of an indirect semantic relationship that exists between the antonyms and the members of the synonymic sets: think, know, feel, perceive, believe, experience, appear, recognize, realize, see, seem, look, feel, perceive, know, expect.

The inclusion of polysemantic words simultaneously in several synonymic sets and the establishment through them of connections with other lexical-semantic groups demonstrate the flexibility of the lexical system of a language. It is precisely this property of lexical units that manifests itself when compiling synonymic sets of analogous words in two or more languages.

Conclusion

Thus, as a result of the study of the direct and indirect semantic relations of the verb **think** with other verbs of the English language, the boundaries of this lexical-semantic group have been clarified and the hierarchy of the verbs synonymous with **think** in its different meanings has been established.

It should be noted that the polysemy of most synonyms of **think** creates a complex and diverse network of relations both within a single synonymic set and between the members of different synonymic sets within one lexical-semantic group.

Moreover, owing to their semantic features, polysemantic lexemes, being simultaneously members of several microsystems—synonymic and antonymic sets as well as thematic groups—determine the interconnection of individual lexical microsystems within the overall lexical system of the language.

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