

Semantic space of the word-formative nests *high / low* in the comparative aspect (on the material of the Russian and English languages)

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Abstract. The article depicts the results of the analysis of derivational-semantic organization of the word-formative nests *high / low* in the comparative aspect in the Russian and English languages. Some universal and specific features of word building and semantic structure of the Russian and English derivatives have been determined in the research. The analysis shows that the same concept, the same fragment of reality in the Russian and English languages receives different derivational determination, i.e. it has different forms of linguistic expression.

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Introduction

The term ‘word formation’ is ambiguous in modern linguistics. In one usage of the term, it is equivalent to ‘morphology’ and refers to matters such as affixation and reduplication as used in the creation of words. In the more widely accepted sense of the term, word formation refers to the creation of new lexemes in a given language [1]. Comparative study of word-formation of languages belonging to different systems, as well as many other important areas of modern linguistics, began in the late XX and early XXI centuries. Now it has got a new impetus for its development. Harmonious correlation of system- and anthropocentrism principles allows linguists researching word-formation to reach a new level of generalization and to look at the objects and results of word-formative determination through the prism of linguistic consciousness and definite linguistic culture.

Actual interest to the content side of word-formation processes, analysis of derivational-semantic space of the language lets us get information about some features of human nominative and cognitive activity, namely it specifies the structure of knowledge embedded in a derived word [2].

A top word as well as each derivative of a word-formative nest has its own, often quite voluminous and complex semantic structure. Semantic space of a family of words focuses a wealth of information about the laws of interaction of meanings in the process of generation of individual derivatives and in the formation of a family of words in general. According to A.N. Tikhonov, the author of the “Word-building dictionary of the Russian language”, semantic links between cognates in a

word-formative nest varied. Very often one and the same derivative attracts meanings of the different words [3]. L.V. Krasilnikova states that a family of words (a word-formative nest) should be considered as a special multi-component frame comprising a specific set of concepts, as it relates to the vast or rather definite denotative area full of extra linguistic realities and relevant concepts [4].

Results

The Russian word-formative nests with the tops *high / low* are characterized by a large number of derivative adjectives and adverbs with the modification type of meaning (subjectively estimated with emotional and evaluative component). Derivatives of this kind relate only to basic (nominative) meaning of adjectives *high / low* - 'having a large stretch of bottom-up' and 'having a little stretch from the bottom up'. They are usually formed with the help of various Russian suffixes [5]. In the correlative English word-formative nest this semantic area is not expressed at the word-formation level. The only exceptions are the derivatives which form degrees of comparison of an adjective: *high - higher - the highest*. In combination with some nouns the derivatives of this type name identical phenomena in the English and Russian languages: *higher mathematics, higher education, higher degree* (an academic degree higher than a bachelor's degree), *higher doctorate* (the highest degree of Doctor of Science).

The adjectival blocks of the Russian and English word-formative nests “low” include the derivative *lower*. Correlative nominative units detect similarities and differences in terms of their semantic structure. Nominative area of these words matches in

the following cases: 'representing the lowest level of development': *lower animals, lower organisms*; 'not related to the ruling, privileged class': *lower classes, lower orders, the lower strata of society, the lower ranks of life*. However, English derivative *lower* implements some unique components of meanings, for example: 'the initial (in education)': *lower classes* - junior classes (literally: the lower classes). In combination with some nouns, this derivative is characterized by a strongly pronounced originality: *lower regions* - Hell, Sheol (jocularly), basement, room for servants; *lower world* - earth, hell; *the lower end of the table* (for guests of less honor) [6].

Parametric adjectives are characterized by a high degree of their metaphorical meanings, which leads to a weakening and often to a loss of parametric feature in their semantics. Metaphor, according to J. Lakoff and M. Johnson, permeates our daily lives and is manifested not only in language but in thought and action [7]. In the Russian language the word-formative nests "high / low" comprise adverbs called syntactical derivatives. They realize the main meaning of the adjectives: *to fly high, high off the ground*, as well as the figurative meaning: *to appreciate high* 'to appreciate very much'. This zone corresponds to the following English derivative adverbs: *high, highly*. However, in the semantics of English adverbial derivatives parametric sign is often modified in a particular way: *the wind blows high* (literally: wind blowing strongly); *her heart beat high* - (literally: her heart beat strongly, rapidly); *to live high* (literally: to live in luxury, to live well); *a highly original opinion* (literally: very original opinion); *to think too highly of oneself* (literally: to put oneself too high, to think too much about oneself). The same can be said about the adverb *low* in the English and Russian languages: *to bow low; to hang low*. Such nominative units are characterized by a metaphorical usage: *I hope I'll never fall as low as that*. The lexical-semantic variant of the Russian adjective 'dishonorable, vile' is revealed into the English language with the help of the other adverbial units: *to act basely, to behave oneself meanly* [8]. Material above shows that the metaphorical meanings of the adverbial derivatives in two languages coincide.

The adverb *below* in both languages refers to the nominative units motivated by the basic meaning of the original word: *five degrees below zero, below sea level, see below, to remain below, to be below: his apartment is just below*.

In English the adverb *below* has a phraseological type of semantics: *here below* (literally: on the ground, as opposed to the sky), *the place below* (hell); *down below* (in the grave, on the seabed). In some contexts *below* is used as stylistic means, for example, in the marine lexicon: *all hands*

below! (All down! - a command); *under below!* (Beware! Look out! - a command). However, Russian idioms with the adverb *below* passed into English with other language units: *lower someone's dignity* (not befitting anyone, denigrating anyone) - beneath smb's dignity; *lower criticism* - beneath criticism. In the Russian word-formative nest "low" the adverb *below* is an active formative element and may be the first part of the compound word denoting 'later', 'then' (in the following location of speech, text). These derived units have no derivational analogues in English. As a rule, in structural terms, they represent the phrase "Participle II + adverb": *set forth below, mentioned below, named below, stated below, explained below*.

Some special concepts of the English language do not have structural-semantic Russian equivalents: *low-freezing* (with a low freezing point), *low-lying*, (agricultural: with a short period of maturation, e.g. about fruits), *low-powered* (technical: with low power), *low-duty* (technical: of a light type, shallow), *low-pitched* (1. about sound; 2. about room with a low ceiling), *low-level* (at low altitude): *low-level attack* (attack from low elevation). Use of such nominations in a figurative sense is a characteristic of both languages: *low-pitched* - with a low tone, but in a figurative meaning *low-pitched* describes 'a low flight'; *poor and low-pitched desires* - about miserable small insignificant desires [9]. There are similar lexical units in the Russian language: *low-graded* 'low sample with a large admixture of copper and tin (about gold and silver)', but in a figurative meaning it is used to describe smth of a very low quality: *low-grade books*.

In the Russian word-formative nests *high / low* there is a large group of compound adjectives describing the person in terms of his / her moral evaluation, positive or negative qualities. Most of these words are transferred into English by means of derivative adverbs: *highly cultured, highly educated, highly gifted*, or with the help of other language means: *of high moral standards*. Mentioned semantic area of the word-formative nest *high* in English is characterized by its originality. Present nominative units do not have structural and semantic correspondences in the Russian language. This kind of derivatives are not motivated by the basic meaning of the original word *high*: *high-born* - of noble birth (literally: noble), *high-blooded* - noble (literally: of high blood), *high-stomached* (obsolete: courageous, brave) (literally: having high stomach or belly), *high-minded* - a noble, lofty (literally: of high intelligence), *high-mettled* - courageous, brave (literally: very brave), *high-spirited* - brave, courageous (literally: of high spirit), *high-hearted* - courageous, brave; obsolete arrogant (literally: of

high heart), *high-handed* - headstrong, bossy (literally: having high hands): *to be high-handed with somebody* - to keep someone in severity. Sometimes they serve as the basis for generating other words: *high-handed* → *high-handedly* (willfully, imperiously) → *high-handedness* (willfulness, authoritativeness, arbitrary). The presence of such derivatives shows specificity of associative links in the nomination process of the two languages.

In the Russian word-formative nest with the top *low* we identified nominative units characterizing the appearance of a man in his physical parameters. Such Russian words can name different parts of a human (as having a low chest, a low back, a low height, etc.). In this case, when comparing the two languages only a few cases of using the equivalents of word-building structure are found, e.g.: *low-browed*. In contrast to the Russian language, English composites are characterized by the presence in their semantics some figurative meanings: *low-browed* - beetling (about a cliff); dark, gloomy; of low intellectual level. The English word-formative nest *low* presents the derivatives that are used in the description of an internal state of a person when describing his horizons or education: *low-spirited* - depressed, despondent, dejected (literally: droopy). A number of derivatives specified are transferred into Russian by means of other adjectives or phrases: *low-born* - of low origin (literally: born somehow low), *low-bred* - boorish, ill-mannered, rude (literally: brought-up badly), *low-minded* - limited, narrow-minded, vulgar, *low-lived* - poor, with a very modest lifestyle, rude, vulgar.

Some specific nominative units allocate among the composites in the Russian word-formative nest with the top *low*. They have idiomatic component of meaning - 'cringe', 'slavishly bow before anyone'. The relevance of this concept in terms of Russian linguistic thinking confirms many derivatives forming derivational chains which relate to English equivalents - *cringer*, *cringe* (n). To verbalize these concepts in English other nominative units are used as well: *grovel* and the corresponding number of derivatives: *to grovel*, *groveler*, *groveling*, etc.

Some English adjectival derivatives have specific internal form: *high-heeled*: *high-heeled shoes*, *high-kilted* (with a short or tucked up skirt) - indecent (kilt - skirt of a Highlander; children's pleated skirt). There are no such designations based on the word high in Russian.

Usually nouns semantically relate to the basic meaning of the original adjective in the English and Russian languages, e.g. *low*, *lowland* [5]. Some derivative nouns in English do not have structural-semantic correspondences in Russian: *lowliness* -

(low or modest position; modesty obedience); *lowliness of mind* - (bibl. humility). In Russian *lowliness* correlates with lexical-semantic variant of the original adjective 'dishonorable, vile': *lowliness of an act* (literally: meanness of an act). To express this meaning in English, lexical units of other semantic scope are involved: *base act* (in Russian - a low action), *base conduct* (in Russian - ignominy), *base person*, *baseness of conduct* (in Russian - lowliness of conduct), *basely*, *base-born* (of a low origin; sneaky). Substantive block of English derivational nest *high* includes nouns with a specific internal form, in particular, derivatives, naming individuals: *high-binder* (amer. vulgar) - bully, dark personality, *highbrow* - 'aristocrat of the mind', 'intellectual' (literally: having a high forehead), scientist; cf. *lowbrow* - people not applying for a high intellectual level, people with primitive tastes in literature, music, art (literally: having a low brow). Among the specific nominative units, naming the person the following English derivatives can be mentioned: *highwayman* - a robber (from the high road). In the English and Russian correlative derivational nests we identified nouns having idioethnical character of nomination: *the Most High* (literally: upmost) - in religious ideas 'worth of all existing, coming from God', 'one of the names of God'; *Highness* 'titles of some members of the royal house'. English derivational nests present derivatives with a national-cultural component of meaning. They are the names of artifacts: *highboy* and *lowboy* - (amer.) articles of furniture, *high-board* - (sport.), *high cranberry* - (bot.) viburnum; other unique concepts: *high-lows* - lace-up shoes, *highball* - whiskey with soda and ice, served in a tall glass, *high-day* - a holiday [10].

Conclusions

Differences in the word-formative composition of the nests are due to polysemy of initial words, different ways of derivation and derivational meanings forming word-building vocabulary in both languages. The analysis shows that the same concept, the same fragment of reality in the Russian and English languages receives different derivational determination, i.e. it has different forms of linguistic expression. Thus, the derivatives with a specific internal form define the uniqueness of the nominative space of the derivational nests *high* / *low*. Separate semantic zones of both Russian and English derivational nests are not reflected in correlating formations. In contrast to the Russian language, English nominative units are characterized by a high degree of metaphoric meanings and by a great number of derivatives with idiomatic type semantics.

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