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SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE NAMES OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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INTRODUCTION

From the standpoint of lexical semantics, every word is a complex semantic structure — a sememe — composed of smaller units of meaning, namely semes. Breaking a word's meaning down into semes (componential analysis) makes it possible to reveal, precisely and consistently, the semantic similarities and differences between lexemes. Moreover, lexemes do not exist in isolation but enter into semantic relations with one another, forming semantic fields and hyper-hyponymic (generic-specific) systems.

The names of means of transport provide convenient material for semantic analysis, since this lexical-semantic group is internally coherent in structure and possesses clear hierarchical and componential relations. The aim of this paper is to identify and comparatively analyze the semantic features of transport names in English and Uzbek, including their place within the semantic field, their semic composition, and the processes of semantic development (narrowing, broadening, polysemy) that they have undergone. The study draws on the theoretical views of D.N. Shmelev and L.M. Vasilyev in the field of lexical semantics [1], [2].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material of the study consists of more than 80 names of means of transport, selected from explanatory dictionaries of English and Uzbek. The study employed the semantic-field method, to determine the hierarchical relations among lexemes; the componential (semic) analysis method, to break down the meaning of a lexeme into semes; and the comparative-typological method, to compare the results across the two languages. Semic analysis was carried out on the basis of dictionary definitions, by identifying differential (distinguishing) semes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The semantic field and hyper-hyponymic structure of transport names

In English, the lexeme “vehicle,” and in Uzbek, “transport vositasi” (or, colloquially, “ulov”), functions as the hyperonym (archilexeme) of the semantic field of transport names. Beneath this archilexeme lie three major hyponymic groups: land transport (car/mashina, bus/avtobus, motorcycle/mototsikl), water transport (ship/kema, boat/qayiq), and air transport (airplane/samolyot, helicopter/vertolyot). Each group, in turn, divides further into narrower hyponyms on the basis of additional features such as function, size, or passenger capacity: for example, within the land-transport group, a passenger car and a truck are distinguished by their functional feature.

Although the structure of the semantic field is broadly the same in the two languages, a difference is observed in the number of hyponyms and their degree of branching. In English, for instance, beneath the hyponym “car” there exist numerous narrow hyponyms such as sedan, hatchback, SUV, and coupe, reflecting the need for detailed nomination in this domain in countries with a developed automobile industry. In Uzbek, by contrast, most such narrow hyponyms are borrowed directly from

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English as international terms, which indicates a relative scarcity of independently, internally derived lexemes at this semantic tier in Uzbek.

2. Componential (semic) analysis

To determine the semic composition of transport names, a componential analysis was carried out using the lexemes car (mashina), bus (avtobus), and motorcycle (mototsikl) as examples. The results of the analysis are presented in the table below:

Seme	car	bus	motorcycle
/means of transport/	+	+	+
/wheeled/	+	+	+
/engine-powered/	+	+	+
/enclosed cabin/	+	+	–
/many passengers (8+)/	–	+	–
/two-wheeled/	–	–	+

Table 1. Differential semes of the lexemes car, bus, and motorcycle.

The table shows that all three lexemes share common (integral) semes — /means of transport/, /wheeled/, /engine-powered/ — which form the nucleus of this semantic group. At the same time, differential semes such as /enclosed cabin/, /many passengers/, and /two-wheeled/ distinguish the lexemes from one another and determine their precise place within the semantic field. Importantly, car, bus, and motorcycle (mashina, avtobus, and mototsikl, together with their English equivalents) possess an almost identical semic composition — which shows that the semantic structure of transport names is, to a considerable extent, universal (cross-linguistic) in character, while the difference manifests itself mainly at the level of naming (lexical form).

3. Phenomena of semantic narrowing, broadening, and polysemy

From a diachronic point of view, most transport names have undergone semantic development. The English word car derives from the Latin carrus (“a wheeled cart”), which originally denoted any wheeled means of transport, but underwent semantic narrowing in the twentieth century and became specialized to mean specifically “automobile.” A similar process is observed with the Uzbek word mashina: this word originally denoted the general meaning “mechanism, device” (borrowed from the Russian машина), but in colloquial speech it underwent semantic narrowing and is now used in most contexts specifically to mean “automobile.”

The English lexeme plane offers a vivid example of polysemy: besides the meaning “aircraft,” this word also carries unrelated additional meanings such as “plane” (a flat geometric surface) and “plane” (a carpentry tool) — that is, here the polysemy extends beyond the transport semantic group altogether. Likewise, the lexeme ship, as a noun, denotes “vessel,” but when converted into a verb (through conversion) it expresses the meaning “to send, to deliver” — a semantic shift that arose through the transition from the name of an object to the name of an action. In Uzbek, by contrast, since most transport names (samolyot, poyezd, avtobus) are borrowings and were formed relatively recently, such multilayered polysemy is

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almost never observed — these lexemes typically retain a monosemantic (single-meaning) character.

4. Comparative conclusions

The analysis conducted shows that the semantic structure of transport names (the system of integral and differential semes, hyper-hyponymic relations) is, to a large extent, universal in the two languages, since these lexemes denote the same real-world objects — means of transport. The differences, however, manifest themselves mainly at the level of diachronic semantic development and degree of polysemy: transport names in English, having a longer history in many cases, have more actively undergone processes such as semantic narrowing, broadening, and polysemy, whereas the majority of transport names in Uzbek, being relatively recent borrowings, remain semantically stable and largely monosemantic.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the semantic analysis of the names of means of transport in English and Uzbek has shown that they possess a high degree of universality at the level of the general semantic field and componential structure, but display considerable differences at the level of semantic development (diachrony). These conclusions confirm that the semantic structure of transport names derives from a universal human classification of reality, while their historical development follows the distinct developmental path of each individual language.

The results obtained are of practical value in the fields of lexical semantics, comparative linguistics, and lexicography, including in the process of compiling bilingual dictionaries and standardizing transport terminology.

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