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## A CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEXEME “DEPRESSION (ECONOMY)”

**Summary.** The objective of the present paper is an investigation of the lexeme *depression* (economy) in language and professional discourse with the help of various types of the structural-semantic analysis – definitional, componential, and field (domain)-- based on the data from the British National Corpus of the English language. The end-goal of our study is to present the entry “depression” for the Comprehensive English-Ukrainian Glossary.

**Key words:** concept, component, lexical semantics, contrastive, corpus analysis, definition, professional discourse.

**Introduction.** Lexical Semantics is about the meaning of words and, obviously, this branch of linguistics has reached the apogee in its development – all the lexical units and their constituents are assigned to the categories and paradigms. But the semantic behaviour of words has been unduly neglected in the current works, which appears to emphasize sentential semantics and further on in text or discourse semantics. D. A. Cruse establishes the descriptive and generalizable facts about lexical relations that any formal theory of semantics will have to encompass. The syntagmatic relations of the unit stipulates a full explication of the component word lexical meaning in the sentence structure [1]. R. Temmerman believes that the discourse-centred approach with a focus on terms functioning in text / discourse influenced by linguistic and cognitive shift in terminology [2]. This shift also affects the construction of terminological knowledge bases, some of which lie on an underlying network of semantic relations, and make an effort to encode information in the form of knowledge. Learners of ESL/EFL as well as lexicographers focus their attention on the professional bilingual or multilingual dictionaries. According to our hypothesis the user of the dictionary requires a dictionary entry which must include a term in the word combination its text fragments from various discourse registers and the translation. These strategies are in the streamline of contrastive lexical semantics. Whereas the rule-governed model-oriented approach is necessarily restricted to subsets of vocabulary, the pragmatic approach aims to analyse and describe the whole vocabulary-in-use of the Source Language and the Target Language. Since the pragmatic turn, lexical semantics can no longer develop as an autonomous discipline but has to be developed as an integral part of a theory of language use.

The objective of the present paper is an investigation of the lexeme *depression* in language and professional discourse with the help of various types of the structural-semantic analysis – definitional, componential, and field (domain), it is also based on the British National Corpus analysis of the English language. Lately there has been a breakthrough in the use of computer corpora in linguistic research. Computer corpora are used in both synchronic and diachronic studies - and increasingly also in cross-linguistic research [3, p. 238–264]. The end-goal of our study is to present the entry “depression” for the English-Ukrainian Comprehensive Glossary.

**State of the art.** Current theories of Lexical Semantics [4, p. 272,] offer a comprehensive overview of the major traditions of word meaning research in linguistics. In spite of the growing importance of the lexicon in linguistics, theoretical trends in lexical semantics need to be objectively investigated [5, p. 76–87]. D. A. Cruse and Dirk.

Geeraerts published fundamental books on the evolution of Lexical Semantics from the mid nineteenth century to the present day. It presents the main ideas, the landmark publications, and the dominant figures of five traditions: historical-philological semantics, structuralist semantics, generativist semantics, neo-structuralist semantics, and cognitive semantics [1; 6]. Edda Weigand emphasizes that lexical semantics must be considered to be a ‘part of a theory of language use,’ largely pragmatic in nature [7, p. 5–26]. Nowadays most of the authors adopt a corpus-oriented approach. And ‘a new trend needs a new methodology for the new object ‘vocabulary-in-use,’ which is an uphill work for Lexical Semantics. Primarily, pragmatic use, interlocutors’ worldview and discourse register must be taken into consideration. This work is directly oriented towards improving mono-, bi- and multilingual dictionaries. A person’s worldview represented by the vocabulary is affected by many factors – by the inherited characteristics, background experiences and life situations, the values, attitudes, and habits s/he has developed, and more. Therefore, even though some parts of a worldview are shared by many people in a community, other parts differ for individuals. However, Hans-Georg Gadamer emphasizes that no final interpretation of reality is possible because new life-worlds or world pictures will cause future interpreters to see and experience the world differently [8, p. 79].

**Investigation.** Semantic Relations and the Lexicon explore many paradigmatic semantic relations between words, such as synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy, and their relevance to the mental organization of our vocabularies. M. Lynne Murphy proposes a pragmatic approach to these relations. Whereas traditional approaches have claimed that paradigmatic relations are part of our lexical knowledge which M. Lynne Murphy argues that they constitute metalinguistic knowledge, which can be derived through a single relational principle, and may also be stored as part of our extra-lexical, conceptual representations of a word [9]. A basic model of contrastive analysis is set out by John Sinclair in the first paper. Contrastive linguistics is a systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences. [10; see also: 11, p. 737]. He points out the inadequacy of traditional theories, which divide the lexicon from the grammar, for dealing with the way word meanings change when they are combined in phrases. There seems to be a conflict between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic relations when considering the choice of a lexical item, but the two can be reconciled by a theory that takes context into account.

In the Economy worldview a *depression* is a severe economic catastrophe in which real GDP falls by at least 10%. A depression is

much more severe than a *recession* and the effects of a depression can last for years. The notion of *depression* in the world view is revealed by the dictionary entry: (1) astronomy: *the angular distance of a celestial object below the horizon*; (2) mathematics: *the size of an angle of depression*; (3) (4) biology: *lowering of psychology: an act of depressing or a state of being depressed; physical or mental vitality or of functional activity*; (5) pathology: *an abnormal lowering of the rate of any physiological activity or function*; (6) geology: *part of a surface that is slightly lower than the rest*; (7) meteorology: *a tropical depression*; (8) astronomy: *below the horizontal plane through the point of observation*; (9) economics: *a long and severe recession in an economy or market; a period of low general economic activity marked especially by rising levels of unemployment heading towards periods of economic depression* [13]. The frequency of the total use of the noun lexeme with its 9 definitions is 2224 in the various discourse registers of the British National Corpus, for instance, spoken (108), fiction – 203, magazine (135), newspaper (170), non-academic (504), academic (641). In the Ukrainian worldview the dictionary entry *депресія* “depression” differentiates all in all four definitions (економічний стан країни): *банкрутство, безробіття, занепад, деградація, депресія, занепадок, застій, підупад, регрес, спад, стагнація*; 2. (психічний стан людини): *депресія, пригнічення, пригніченість, пригноблення, пригнобленість, пригломшнення, пригломшненість*; 3. (моральний стан людини): *депресія, порожнеча, порожнява, розчарування, спустошеність, спустошення*; 4. (стан мистецтва, літератури): *декаданс* [14; 15]. The definitional criterion, Dirk Geeraerts quoting Aristotle specifies that an item has more than one lexical meaning. From the truth-theoretical point of view taken by Willard Van Orman Quine [12, p. 129], a lexical item is polysemous if it can simultaneously be clearly true and clearly false of the same referent, cf.: *depression* “recession in economy” and *depression* “lowering of physical or mental vitality”, etc. [6, p. 351].

We shall focus our attention on the 9-th component and analyse its use in the British National Corpus (100 mln words from the texts). In economics, a depression is commonly defined as an extreme recession that lasts two or more years and characterized by economic factors such as substantial increases in unemployment, a drop in available credit, diminishing output, bankruptcies and sovereign debt defaults, reduced trade and commerce, and sustained volatility in currency values. In times of depression, consumer confidence and investments decrease, causing the economy to shut down. Cf.: the Investopedia specifies *depression* as “a severe and prolonged downturn in economic activity. In economics, a depression is commonly defined as an extreme recession that lasts two or more years and characterized by economic factors such as substantial increases in unemployment, a drop in available credit, diminishing output, bankruptcies and sovereign debt defaults, reduced trade and commerce, and sustained volatility in currency values. In times of depression, consumer confidence and investments decrease, causing the economy to shut down”. Here are some illustrations of the components of the lexical meaning of the noun revealed in the referred discourse registers of the BNC:

1. The country is still in a continuing and worsening economic depression, and while unemployment rises daily...

2. The woman who let Britain slide into the worst depression since the 30s was paid 250,000 last week for just three days' work.

3. The 1973 oil crisis followed by the onset of economic depression deepened the pressures on that system.

4. Its rapid phase from 1870 onwards coincided with a prolonged agricultural depression in the eastern counties.

5. But in the interwar period suffered setbacks as the depression deepened.

6. And rose towards three million during the severe cyclical depression between 1929 and 1932.

7. The restructuring of the British economy in the depression years between the two world wars ...

8. This meant that in the economic depression of the 1930s many Sri Lankan landowners were thus in the hands of foreign money-lenders.

9. It was to enable the government to acquire land sold during the depression to pay off debts.

10. Out of the crisis of investor confidence caused by the Great Depression came the best-known scheme of securities regulation...

11. The world will not stop still, and economic depression and even national economic collapse (so regularly forecast by the doom-mongers) will not...

12. One can distinguish between cyclical changes, which reflect the buoyancy or depression of the economy, and structural changes.

13. Increased risk of take-over as a result of unprofitable growth causing a depression in share price.

14. The last few years have witnessed an unprecedented period of economic depression for Wales accompanied by massive youth unemployment.

15. Between 1873 and 1918 as a result of a severe slump and depression.

16. Due to the fear by capitalists of post-war stagnation and economic depression.

17. Women have seen the major characteristics of the depression of the 1980s depicted.

18. Giant skeleton of the hull [as it] lay neglected during years of depression.

In the language philosophy there has been a controversy of the type of analysis concerning the decompositionality of the word meaning into components, either it is a linguistic or conceptual type because both use the same terminology [5]. A semantic analysis points out the following units which can be founding constituents of the conceptual system (1) *industry*, (2) *commerce*, and (3) *finance*, every constituent is able to organize its own subsystem represented by a semantic field [6, p. 93], though these three subfields appear to be fuzzy what makes them cohesive, for instance, (1) *economic slump, dried-up investments, industrial depression, rising unemployment*, (2) *world trade collapse, trading blocks, tariffs*; (3) *a catastrophic collapse of stock-market prices, imbalance between money supply of money and money demand; liquidity evaporation, money withdrawal from banks, precipitous decline in the assets value, and insolvency* [5]. The periphery constituents of the subfields can break the field boundaries and connect them into one semantic unity. If we consider the semantics of these three subsystems of the conceptual system of *depression* has the common lexeme *slump* which together with constituents of the three subsystems form the nucleus of the system. A particular characteristic of componential analysis is its “binary” opposition, for instance, *balance – imbalance, employment – unemployment, rise – decline, efficient-inefficient*. The componential analysis developed in the second half of the 1950s by European and American linguists argues that word meaning can be described on the basis of a finite set of conceptual building blocks called semantic components or features. Compo-

nential analysis is one of the methods of semantic research which attempts to reduce meaning to its smallest components. It is particularly suited to restricted semantic fields from which intuitively obvious semantic. The semantic (lexical) field approach as the most immediate realization of the structural conception of meaning, can be supplemented with the substantive analysis of the conceptual relationship among the items in the field [6, p. 88]. In cognitive semantics such as *industry, commerce, finance* are not represented just as sets of features with clear-cut boundaries, so that an item can be conceived as falling or not falling under the concept based on whether or not it meets some relevant criteria. The fact is that some items are more easily identified as falling under a concept than others [9]. Therefore, John Sinclair underlines that “the text or discourse is the unique deployment of meaningful units and its particular meaning is not adequately accounted for by any organized concatenation of the fixed meanings of the unit” [10, p. 5].

Let's compare the definitions of depression in the English scientific (Economy) world view: *a severe and prolonged recession characterized by inefficient economic productivity, high unemployment and falling price levels* [5]; and the Ukrainian scientific (Economy) world view – *період економічної кризи, який характеризується спадом виробництва, ділової активності, високим рівнем безробіття, банкрутством* [14; 15]. We can see that they fully coincide. Then we can compare the English semantic (lexical) field “depression in economy”: *abatement, backdrop, bust, constriction, crash, cutback, decline, loss, panic; downbeat, downdraft, downswing, downtrend, downturn reduction, slowdown, stagnation, withdrawal* [5]; and the Ukrainian one: *дефолт, деградація, занепад, занепадок, підупад, регрес, рецесія, застій* [14; 15]. The lexical field approach covers only the ‘regular uses’ of the *depression*, though they are used in ways that deviate from their core meanings in both languages.

The semantic fields differ in their volume but coincide in the core or nucleus components: *recession* “рецесія (падіння),” *slump* “різке падіння.” Both differ mainly in the differential feature “period of duration”; in the first case the duration is not limited, in the second case it is limited by the feature “longer than a few months”. The given concepts of *Depression* in the Conceptual System in the Economy World View must be verified in the English and Ukrainian professional discourse to differentiate between dominant and periphery components that can lay the basis for the Translation practice.

**Conclusions and perspectives.** The difficulties of determining the equivalence of expressions between languages lie in the use of the word as an autonomous unit out of its word combination, phrase, sentence, text and discourse. Under the influence of the syntagmatic (linear) and paradigmatic (vertical) relations in the text/discourse the word actualizes a component of its lexical meaning corresponding to the context. Pragmatic rules determine the use of words – the only way to succeed is through knowledge of the cultures of the societies. Lexicographers, foreign language students need to know that a language is ‘a communicative system bound to a cultural environment. An algorithm of the word meaning study for the lexicographic, translation, and language learning purposes is initiated: First, the definition of the noun *depression* ‘депресія’ in English and Ukrainian as a dictionary entry is investigated; second, semantic components of its lexical meaning are defined; third, the semantic field is modeled to represent the concept of “economy depression”, fourth, the correlation of the component and discourse register is pointed out.

The detailing of the actualized components of the lexical meaning of the unit *depression* (economy) will be undertaken in our further investigation.

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#### Михайленко В. В. Контрастивна перспектива лексеми “depression (economy)”

**Анотація.** Метою дослідження є вивчення лексичної семантики іменника *депресія* (економічна) в мові та професійному дискурсі за допомогою різних типів структурно-семантичного аналізу – дефініційного, компонентного та польового – на основі Британського національного корпусу англійської мови. Кінцевим результатом має бути словникова стаття *депресія* для Англійсько-українського словника.

**Ключові слова:** концепт, компонент, лексична семантика, контрастивний, корпусний аналіз, визначення, професійний дискурс.

**Михайленко В. В. Контрастивная перспектива лексемы “depression (economy)”**

**Аннотация.** Целью исследования является изучение лексической семантики существительного *депрессия* (экономическая) в семантической системе языка и профессиональном дискурсе с помощью различных типов структурно-семантического анализа – дефиниционного,

компонентного и полевого – на основе Британского национального корпуса английского языка. Конечным результатом должна быть словарная статья *депрессия* для англо-украинского словаря.

**Ключевые слова:** концепт, компонент, лексическая семантика, контрастивный, корпусный анализ, определение, профессиональный дискурс.