

THE STUDY OF SEMANTIC FIELDS IN COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

Amanov Alisher Kahramonovich

Acting Associate Professor at Tashkent State Transport University

Abstract: This article analyzes the concept of semantic fields in comparative linguistics and its significance within the discipline. Semantic fields represent systematic groupings that form the lexical structure and domains of meaning in language. In this field of linguistics, semantic fields play an important role in identifying both differences and similarities between languages. The article provides detailed information on semantic fields, their connection with language and culture, as well as various methodological approaches accepted by linguists, such as semantic mapping, componential analysis, prototype theory, and cognitive analysis. Through comparative analysis, the unique characteristics and cultural contexts of languages are thoroughly examined.

Keywords: comparative linguistics, semantic field, lexical units, relevance, semantic mapping, componential analysis, prototype theory, cognitive analysis, language and culture.

CHOG'ISHTIRMA TILSHUNOSLIKDA SEMANTIK MAYDONLAR TADQIQI

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola komparativ lingvistikada semantik maydonlar tushunchasini va uning fan ichidagi ahamiyatini tahlil qiladi. Semantik maydonlar tilning leksik tuzilishini va ma'no sohalarini tashkil etuvchi tizimli guruhlardir. Bu lingvistik sohada semantik maydonlar tillar o'rtasidagi farqlar va o'xshashliklarni aniqlashda muhim rol o'ynaydi. Maqolada semantik maydonlar, ularning til va madaniyat bilan aloqasi, shuningdek, lingvistlar tomonidan qabul qilingan turli metodologik yondashuvlar, masalan, semantik xaritalash, komponentli tahlil, prototip nazariyasi va kognitiv tahlil haqida batafsil ma'lumot berilgan. Chog'ishtirma tahlil orqali tillarning o'ziga xos xususiyatlari va madaniy kontekstlari chuqur o'rganiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: chog'ishtirma, lingvistika, semantik maydon, leksik birliklar, ahamiyat, semantik xaritalash, komponentli tahlil, prototip nazariyasi, kognitiv tahlil, til va madaniyat.

ИЗУЧЕНИЕ СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИХ ПОЛЕЙ В СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОМ ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИИ

Аннотация: В статье анализируется понятие семантических полей в сравнительном языкознании и их значение в рамках дисциплины. Семантические поля представляют собой систематические группы, которые формируют лексическую структуру и области значений в языке. В этой области языкознания семантические поля играют важную роль в выявлении как различий, так и сходств между языками. В статье представлена подробная информация о семантических полях, их связи с языком и культурой, а также различные методологические подходы, принятые лингвистами, такие как семантическое картирование, компонентный анализ, теория прототипов и когнитивный анализ. Через сравнительный анализ тщательно исследуются уникальные характеристики и культурные контексты языков.

Ключевые слова: сравнительное языкознание, семантическое поле, лексические единицы, актуальность, семантическое картирование, компонентный анализ, теория прототипов, когнитивный анализ, язык и культура.

Introduction: The concept of semantic fields in linguistics helps to gain a deeper understanding of systems of meaning in language. Comparative linguistics aims to identify similarities and differences between two or more languages through comparative analysis. Semantic fields consist of interconnected lexical units in the language's lexical system that are similar or complementary in meaning. These fields are essential in exploring specific semantic groupings in a language and understanding how they are reflected in linguistic and cultural studies. Various branches of linguistics exist, each focused on the study of different elements of language. One such branch, comparative linguistics, seeks to analyze similarities and differences between two or more languages. In this domain, the concept of semantic fields plays a crucial role in analyzing the deeper layers of meaning within language. Semantic fields are systematically organized groupings of units that form the domains of meaning in language, contributing to the structure of the lexical system.

The study of semantic fields within the scope of comparative linguistics reveals not only differences between languages but also highlights shared features. The theory of semantic fields was first introduced by German linguists, who proposed that lexical units in a language are organized into semantically related groups. These groups include lexical items related to a specific topic. For instance, fields such as colors, kinship relations, emotions, actions, and spatial directions each consist of specific lexical units. Units within a semantic field are in paradigmatic relation, meaning they may be interchangeable or serve as complementary elements. In our view, in the process of studying semantic fields in linguistics, it is particularly important and interesting to examine lexical layers that reflect fixed and real-life hierarchical systems found in language. Such lexical layers may include, for example, the group of words that denote military ranks and positions. These lexical units represent clear hierarchies within the linguistic system, semantically reflecting specific social structures in society. As renowned linguist V.V. Morkovkin noted, *the topic of the army has been recognized as one of the most important semantic fields in ideographic dictionaries compiled in ancient times*. This topic was placed alongside themes related to gods and priests, and kings. He particularly references the dictionary of Julius Pollux, compiled in the second century AD based on Greek materials. He also mentions the well-known Sanskrit dictionary *Amarakosha*, compiled during the second to third centuries AD. In these dictionaries, lexical units related to *army* are arranged as a separate semantic field, indicating the hierarchical significance of these concepts in the society of that time.[1] The necessity of using lexicographic materials arises from the fact that dictionaries record the most frequently used lexical units in Russian and Tajik (Persian) languages. These units retain the crystallized state formed during real linguistic interaction. From the perspective of comparative linguistics, this provides opportunities to obtain objective information. In addition, the explanations in dictionaries provide general and essential understanding of word semantics, as linguistics primarily analyzes the systemic or standard meanings of words. These meanings are what enable mutual understanding during communication between speakers. As part of the linguistic worldview, the representation of the *inner person* image through language demonstrates unique characteristics when compared to scientific world models formed through cognitive activity. This image significantly differs from traditional forms of knowledge. The study of word meaning is only possible through comparison with other words belonging to the same lexical-thematic group. Such comparison is conducted through explanation, in the form of *translation* using the signs of the same or another language.[2] In comparative linguistics, the study of how these fields are expressed in different languages also reveals the connection between language and national culture. For instance, the analysis of kinship terms in Uzbek

and English shows that the same biological relationships are expressed differently in the two languages. While Uzbek has terms like *aka*, *uka*, *opa*, and *singil*, English is limited to *brother* and *sister*. This indicates that the composition of semantic fields is shaped by national and cultural factors in each language. The concept of the conceptual field also plays a crucial role in the study of semantic fields. A conceptual field refers to a collection of lexical units formed around a particular cultural or cognitive domain. For example, in Uzbek, the concept of *non* (bread) is not only associated with food but also with sacredness, blessing, and the source of life. In English, the word *bread* more commonly signifies food or a means of sustenance. This demonstrates how semantic fields reflect culturally specific worldviews. Thus, comparative analyses can provide valuable insights not only in linguistics but also in cultural studies, sociology, and ethnolinguistics.

The first linguist to seriously address modality was V.V. Vinogradov, who emphasized that in every sentence, the modality meaning — i.e., the signal indicating the speaker's attitude toward reality — is a crucial structural feature.[3] Modality is closely connected to predicativity and expresses the speaker's relation to the situation. The idea that a sentence always consists of two layers — objective and subjective — is typically attributed to Charles Bally. These layers are referred to in linguistics as *dictum* (core content) and *modus* (modal aspect). Charles Bally stated that *modality is always present in a sentence; it is the soul of the sentence*. However, this idea was proposed much earlier by the medieval linguists known as the modists. Bally later developed and deepened the modists' concept.[4] Within the framework of studying semantic fields in comparative linguistics, expressions of relevance in language are conceived as a functional-semantic field. The clear or explicit articulation of the expressed semantics and its consistent usage are key factors in the formation of this field.

The central elements for expressing relevance include, first, verbs and words in the category of state, as well as adjectives with the relevant semantics. These words directly express relevance through their specific meanings. Second, imperative and conjunctive forms — expressing commands and probability — reflect relevance. Third, impersonal constructions — that is, subjectless sentences — convey relevance. Fourth, expressions known as *eternal truths* are also associated with relevance semantics, as they present concepts with universal and lasting value.[5] Peripheral elements include secondary means of expressing relevance, such as particles, infinitives, indefinite personal sentences, and analytical or descriptive constructions. These elements typically appear in more descriptive or vague forms and play a lesser role in directly expressing the main semantic function of relevance. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the unique capabilities of each language in the study of semantic fields in comparative linguistics. The semantics of relevance is expressed in different ways through the central and peripheral elements of language, helping us better understand the social and cultural contexts of the language being studied.

In comparative linguistics, various methodological approaches exist for analyzing semantic fields. These include semantic mapping, componential analysis, prototype theory, and cognitive analysis. Through semantic mapping, it is possible to visually represent relationships between lexical units within a particular field, allowing for a comprehensive view of the lexical system. Componential analysis involves examining the meaning components of lexical units. For instance, the shared component between *father* and *uncle* is *male relative*, while the differing component is *direct parent* versus *father's brother*. According to prototype theory, semantic fields consist of central and peripheral elements. Central elements are considered typical representatives. For example, in the semantic field of birds, *pigeon* or *sparrow* may be



central, while *peacock* or *bustard* may be viewed as peripheral. This method enables the analysis of the cognitive structure of semantic fields. Cognitive analysis studies how semantic units are organized in human cognition. When used together, these approaches allow for more comprehensive analyses in comparative linguistics.

The study of semantic fields is also of great significance in translation studies. A semantic unit in one language cannot always be translated directly into another. In such cases, the translator tries to find synonymous units. However, this process may result in loss or shift of meaning. For example, the English words *freedom* and *liberty* are both translated into Uzbek as *erkinlik*, yet they have stylistic and contextual differences. In such situations, analysis within the framework of semantic fields can lead to more nuanced translation options. Semantic fields are widely applied in literary studies as well. The lexical units used in literary texts can reveal the author's aesthetic ideals, ideas, and viewpoints. The theory of semantic fields is particularly useful for analyzing systems of literary imagery. For instance, in Uzbek literature, the semantic field of water symbolizes life, purity, and blessing, while in some Western literature, water may symbolize danger, uncertainty, or the unknown. This shows how national mentality and historical experience influence semantic fields. Today, with the advancement of computational linguistics, the concept of semantic fields is being applied in automatic language analysis. By automatically identifying semantic units in texts, classifying them into fields, and detecting semantic similarities, the performance of artificial intelligence systems in translation, analysis, recommendation, and search engines is improving. In this sense, semantic fields are not only of theoretical but also of practical value, linking comparative linguistics with modern language technologies.

Conclusion: Comparative analysis of semantic fields allows linguists and cultural scholars to understand the unique features of different languages more deeply. This process provides better insight into the social and cultural contexts of language. Analyzing the links between language and culture through semantic fields also helps identify historical and social factors that have influenced language development. The methodological approaches presented in the article offer opportunities for more precise and thorough analysis in the study of semantic fields. In conclusion, studying semantic fields in comparative linguistics not only reveals lexical differences but also serves to analyze worldviews, cultural values, and modes of thinking expressed through language. This enhances cross-linguistic understanding and provides a solid theoretical and practical foundation for fields such as translation, language teaching, text analysis, and linguocultural research.

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