

## REGULARITY OF SEMANTIC SHIFTS IN KINSHIP EXPERIENTIAL CLUSTER IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN

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### Abstract

The work realizes the second stage of the project devoted to studying semantic content of experiential cluster of kinship in English and Russian. The first article within the topic was devoted to cognitive modelling of this group of lexis (Stepanova 2019). Based on joint properties that characterize all the kinship concepts and individual set of relationships characteristic for a certain term, this research studies their further semantic development reflecting diverse human engagement in economic, social, spiritual, physiological, etc connections between people in the modern society. This language cluster is very rewarding in this respect and allows to be investigated from the cognitive perspective. Further semantic development of this group of words is most often determined by metaphor. The cognitive theory of metaphor looks at semantic transformations as the product of a certain activity of human consciousness and can be explained with the formula of "*image + experience*". The evolution of thought/idea along the metaphor channel leads to the situation where the image (object, attribute, quality, phenomenon, symbol, etc.) is transferred to a completely new soil and is passed through the already existing system of concepts (experience). As a result, there is an adjustment of the new knowledge/experience to the established old knowledge/experience. Thus, further semantic development of the lexeme signals a change in the categorial structure of consciousness. The methodology of investigation hinges on cognitive approach, where structural methods of cluster organization and indirect nominalization are supported with frame techniques, contextual analysis, comparative and contrastive methods of investigation.

**Keywords:** semantic shifts/development/transformation, cognitive theory of metaphor, cognitive structures/concepts, human consciousness, frame analysis, cognitive modelling

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Human consciousness makes the language itself a language, transforming it from a static phenomenon into a dynamic phenomenon. Consciousness is a natural apparatus for analyzing the world of phenomena, their relationships, ties and development in space and time. The experience of studying cognitive structures gives reason to believe that the semantic transformation of words in a text should be considered as reflexes of these structures in a language. Description of conceptual structures makes it possible to understand the mechanics of further semantic evolution of the word, so to speak, from the inside, from the position of a cognizing subject that carries out linguistic nomination and actualization. The study of systematic vocabulary is supplemented by the study of structures of consciousness, the categories of which act as the primary basis for the semantics of birth, consolidation and evolution of the word.

Cognitive semantics distinguishes the unity of linguistic and non-linguistic properties in terms of sense as one of its main theoretical principles. According to the language concept-forming theory, contextual

meanings of one and the same word are not derived from its direct meaning, but from the corresponding cognitive structures – concepts, frames or scenarios – through certain conceptual transformations (Баранов, Добровольский 1990а). This fundamental thesis does not only remove artificial barriers in lexical semantics, but also allows to look at it as an entity that reflects the world with linguistic means.

## 2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

**The research aims** at studying the channels of semantic shifts of kinship terms, identifying semantic transformations in the texts of different genres, describing the possible types of these transformations and assessing their regularity.

**The research material** is the contextual realizations of kinship terms traced in the texts of various genres in Russian and English, including academic writing, fiction, drama, poetry and non-fiction. Among those, a special role belongs to non-fiction as the most modern and dynamic form characterized by unrestricted use of all the national language resources. As a result of continuous sampling, the database of several thousand quotations with kinship terminology has been collected and studied, however semantic transforms of this group of words make up only 2,5% of the total number of their use.

The domain under study involves around 120 terms in the Russian language (Ломтев 1964), yet due to the limited format of an article we confine ourselves to look only at the basic ones within the category.

**The research methodology** is guided by cognitive approach to the material, which suggests *structural methods* of cluster organization and indirect nominalization realized in phraseological units, scientific and technical terms, different cases of metaphorical and metonymic transfer of sense, which reflect certain semantic processes. It is supported by *frame approach* allowing to describe semantic evolution of lexical units with regard to human consciousness. *The method of contextual analysis* contributes to identifying the cases of semantic development and shifts. *Comparative and contrastive methods* assist in analyzing genetically diverse languages whereas elements of *statistical method* help to assess the volume and size of semantic development of the cluster under study.

## 3 DISCUSSION

Semantic evolution of kinship terminology is vast and varied and the channel of its expansion is most often a metaphor. Metaphor can also be considered as a substantial engine of extending the meaning to phenomena that are often heterogeneous, random and/or cognitively unrelated to the concept of kinship (for example, the technical terms in specific branches of knowledge). The nature, properties, and functions of metaphor are described in many volumes of research. Without repeating the postulates of the theory of metaphor, we will only note its concept-forming features.

Studies by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) allow to conclude that our thinking is metaphorical. One concept can be transmitted through a system of other concepts highlighting one side of the phenomenon and dimming the other, no less important and significant (ex., *love as fight, art, work, travel, madness/illness, etc.*). This suggests that concepts are as multifaceted and multidimensional as the real world, and metaphors reflecting a concept highlight only its separate individual features.

Metaphor is an ambiguous phenomenon. By its importance in the mental mapping of reality and forming conceptual system of the world, it can be compared with one of the main drivers of consciousness. Focusing on certain aspects of the unknown as an analogy to the already known, the metaphor makes it possible to build assumption based on facts already verified by practice/experience.

We believe that the essence of a metaphor can be expressed by the formula “image + experience”, where the image is an object (phenomenon, quality, attribute, symbol, etc.) that is transferred to the new soil (activity) and experience is taken as an established system of concepts. Such mental process can lead to new knowledge, which implies the nominative or conceptual function of a metaphor, or a new vision of already known phenomena, which is widely reflected in literature and poetry.

The ontologization as a process is often accompanied by the spread of close and deeply established concepts into other spheres of human life and activities. The word whose meaning is determined by the class of objects receives the status of the name of an object that is not part of the extensional set common for this word (Баранов, Сегреев 1987). Such mechanism, common to the process of metaphorisation, can be easily traced in the kinship cluster, which is an extremely fertile and rewarding material. Forming the most fundamental (basic) structures of human consciousness because these names constitute a deep, primordial national language layer, sanctified by customs, traditions and ritual rites, the kinship terms willingly lend themselves to semantic transformations. Conceptual system of kinship is cognitively imposed through the

“image + experience” channel upon various spheres of activity and leaves material evidence fixed in language. Similar picture can be observed not only in Russian, but also in many other languages.

Anthropomorphic metaphor is represented in the language by a numerous and varied examples. Identification of the world with a human being remains an indispensable device in cognition. There are at least five types of anthropomorphic analogies in microelectronics alone (Лапиня 1988): (ex., *материнская плазма, family, mother crystal, parent, twin, generation, etc.*). Applying the term *affinity*, mathematicians do not even realise that this word denotes kinship by husband or wife and is a hidden metaphor (Александрова 1978).

In Russian Orthodox Church, the head of the parish is called *father (batyushka)* and the head of a female monastery is referred to as *Mother Superior (matushka)*. In the first case we can note the inclusion of the meaning of father in the structure of church subordination through the model of authority and respect, and in the second case – through the model of respect for mother as the key family figure responsible of maintaining comfort and warmth in the home. In relation to church, the family frame also includes brother and sister slots, which determine the patterns of behaviour of clergymen in relation to each other and their parishioners.

Examples of wide expansion of the terms of a given conceptual sphere to other areas can be continued with art. For example, in English, a female administrator who is responsible for living conditions of theatre artists on a tour is called a *mother*. Her functions are fully consistent with the model of material relations in the concept of kinship. This meaning has become so widespread in the language that it is fixed in dictionaries, ex., *Ma, I gathered was the universal theatrical name for landladies, and they could make your life comfortable or decidedly uncomfortable (Randall)*.

Professional circles of industry, science and art traditionally use Baptist ritual terms. The concept of *godfather/godmother* in this case has a sense of *mentor, teacher, master*.

Moreover, lack of activity, or so-called idleness and the associated vices can metaphorically correlate with the genetic model of kinship. Semantic transformations of this type are enshrined in the Russian folklore, ex., *idleness is the mother of all vices*. Folk riddles still contain fragments of an ancient metaphorical language. This unique segment of national folklore, stemming from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is unfortunately lost in the Russian colloquial genre; however, it does not cease to be curious in terms of modern process of sense development, ex., *What child does mother not nurture? (Fish). Sister is going to visit her brother, but he is hiding from her. (Sun and Moon)*.

Communicative phraseological units in the form of proverbs and sayings are also replete with the kinship terms: *Кому война, а кому – мать родна (To whom is war, and to whom is mother dear); повторенье – мать ученья (Repetition is the mother of learning); mother naked, mother wit, etc.* However, metaphor can be relegated to the background with the emotional meanings of the unit (*мать честная, батюшки светлы*). Therefore, we believe that the general formula of the metaphor “image + experience” as applied to the phraseological level of the language should be supplemented by another component. In its final form, it should be read as follows: image + experience + emotions, where each of the components makes a feasible contribution to the semantic load of phraseology.

Appropriateness of integrated examination of the metaphorical evolution of kinship concepts at various linguistic levels is justified by recognition of lexical and phraseological units of the language as signs of the situations they describe (Пермяков, 1978). This feature allows drawing parallels between linguistic levels and makes it possible to treat units of these levels as frames that characterize a particular behavioral model of a person.

From the above considerations, it is clear that the secondary nomination of words of a given semantic sphere (through metaphor channel) covers various forms of human activities, having, at first glance, nothing in common with each other. However, subtle connection of phenomena, properties and signs naturally fits into the categorical structure of consciousness, which, in turn, selects adequate forms of expression in the language. New things that get into the field of vision are immediately reflected in a word. Material and spiritual life of society globally passes through vocabulary, each conceptual zone is covered by a specific set of language tools of different types of nomination: lexical, phraseological, or their various combinations. Whereas lexical unit embodies the primary and main thing in designation of realities, phraseological nomination reflects the areas associated with a complicated figurative and emotional perception of the world. In any case, the appearance of a metaphor in the text/speech will signal changes in the conceptual system that is sensitive to external stimuli of reality.

#### 4 ANALYSIS OF CONTEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF KINSHIP TERMS

This part of the research looks at semantic transformations of kinship terminology. Their analysis and search for systemic patterns within the cognitive approach to the material are central in the study. Due to the limited format of the article, we will confine ourselves to looking only at the basic terms (mother, father, parents).

Premised on the fundamental thesis of cognitive semantics that all secondary (situational/contextual) meanings of a word are the result of certain transformations in a conceptual system, it is natural to assume that further evolution of the semantic content of a concept can occur through one or several models of simple relations along the metaphor channel. It should be noted that within functional-concept-forming approach, the boundary between the meanings of words and their conceptual structures is purely arbitrary and does not have the status of ontological reality (Баранов, Добровольский 1990б). Thus, the postulate of the unity of linguistic and extra linguistic factors in terms of sense content is becoming fundamental in the cognitive theory.

Being conceptually complex, the kinship terms can be decomposed into a number of simple relations. For this cluster such models are: genetic, nurturing, marital and genealogical, material/spiritual and authority (*mother, father*), sexual in the pair of *wife and husband*, and others. Basic models in the category are more central than the others and differentiate category from another category, whereas inner models determine the relationships and functions of members within the category (Rosch, 1978). Analysis of contextual meanings confirms this point. However, there are certain peculiarities. Firstly, situational meanings are distributed extremely unevenly in the indicated models, and secondly, within each of them they are widely differentiated. For example, within the **genetic model** associated with childbirth, there are more than ten types of semantic transformations. They represent the following conceptual areas (given in order of frequency):

1 Place of birth, homeland: Russia, country, region, land, house, *etc.*

*Родина-мать, страна-мачеха, старуха-мать-изба, отчий край, mother land.*

2 Earth, nature, and space as natural conditions for the origin of life

*Природа-мать, материнская земля, mother-nature.*

3 God, ancestor, founder of the clan, forefather

*Зевс – отец богов и людей; Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation (Shaw).*

4 Founder of the state, national leader, party leader

In this meaning of the word *father*, the model of authority, respect and reverence is also relevant.

*Отцы-основатели Америки/founding fathers of America, папа-Сталин, Батька (о Сталине), Ленин – папа русских коммунистов.*

5 Person in relation to the spiritual, material and other values created by him/her

*Праотец всевозможных школ светских манер (Петр Великий); отлучить идею от ее родителя, духовный отец телевидения; отцы советской криминалистики; концептуальный отец операции «Ирангейт»; father of the invention.*

6 Virtues, human vices leading to certain results (consequences)

*Безделье – мать всех пороков.*

7 Primary source, root cause, initial position, main part, *etc.*

*Спор – отец всех вещей; прогресс – отец проблем; досуг – отец философии; данные из первых – материнских рук; арго – материнский язык некоторых групп городского населения; материнская плана; the dogmas of their mother-discipline.*

8 Period of time that has historical or other significance for humanity, society, nation or individual (often in a poetic rhetoric)

*Мать-история; матушка-действительность; перестройка - мать родная; Our mother is the Night, into the Day we flow (Gascoyne).*

9 Indicator of significance, priority, seniority among related objects (with the model of respect)

*Киев – мать городов русских; Волга – матушка; батюшка Тихий Дон; Одесса – мама; Ростов – папа; Москва – матушка; Воркута – ё ... мать; матушка Сибирь.*

10 Social system, people, party, organization, company, etc. (with model of respect)

*Монархия – мать порядка; кого в семье народов надо считать отцом, а кого – детишками; отец, мать и сын – вождь, партия, и народ; kind old Mother Post Office.*

11 Actions leading to motherhood/fatherhood, conception of a child, predestination of a woman for childbirth, transfer of qualities (traits, properties) of mother/father to a child

*She was living from her upper, superficial, maternal female self (Lawrence); for the first time I could see a little of her mother in her (Robbins); little bastards wrangling all over the place under the microscope, enough to father an army (Burger).*

12 Objects directly related to childbirth and/or emergence of a new life (in poetry often related to death as the same semantic sphere)

*The room, which is in hospital referred to as the expectant father's sweat-box (Hailey); and wrapped in a cloth – old mother in a shawl – The terrible machine-gun rests (Spender).*

13 Stylistically reduced forms of addressing people, swearing expressions (only in Russian)

We associate this type of transformation with a group of related terms that make up the upper of swear words. The source of the latter, in turn, is the tabooed name of sexual intercourse.

*Ты, че, мать, сегодня такая злая? (жене) Вообрази, Эништейн приходит к власти и говорит: кто там меня не понимает? Бор? Сослать его к такой-то матери.*

The **upbringing (nurturance) model** of the parents (mother/father) concept presents semantic shifts associated with the functions of parenting (along the lines of material and spiritual relations), to people who perform them either by virtue of their duties, or by their own wish.

*Бригадир как отец; люди, ставшие для него вторыми родителями; обделен отцовской лаской; учителя внушают ученикам, что они их вторые мамы; the orphanage had been her mother and father (Shaw); the Mother Superior in orphanage; protect boys from pickpocket fathers (Randall);*

The same model is relevant in the description of spiritual influence through ritual terms of baptism still common in the Russian language.

*Главарь наркобизнеса – крестные отцы; плотная паутина коррупции, которая в условиях нашей экономической системы является истинным крестным отцом, вернее, крестной матерью нашей мафии.*

The **model of spiritual relations**, as one would expect, is the most productive channel for further semantic evolution. However, situational meanings within this model are largely uniform. They are often subject to other models' influence (for example, the model of authority).

*Литература не должна воспитывать? Вздор! На Пушкине воспитывается и поныне, и, не будь у нас великой классики, мы давно бы оскотинились... А если нашей настольной книгой станет книга о зеке с золотой фиксой – «зона» будет наша мама родная (Литературная гозета).*

*Экипаж теплохода «Саша Котов» Дальневосточного пароходства, выражая искреннее соболезнование родственникам погибших в борьбе за свободу России и страны, обращается с предложением к Президенту СССР и коллегии ММФ назвать вновь строящиеся суда именами героев В. Усова, Д. Комаря, И. Кричевского, просит их матерей стать крестными матерями судов (Аргументы и факты).*

The family frame occupies a special place in church: *God the Father, Mother Teresa, Father Alexander, Holy Father, Папа римский; о God, the Father of Heaven (Hartley); How beautiful you are! he said. You are a virgin mother (Lawrence).*

The following example is the most illustrative:

*Все в колонии, от начальника до каждой заключенной, обращаются к ней уважительно: бабушка Варвара. Она здесь как бы мать-настоятельница общины, самая справедливая и пожилая каторжанка (Комсомольская правда).*

This is the case of a double or, rather, reverse metaphor, since the family frame was originally transferred

from secular to church life, but in this example things happen in the other way round: the realities of Orthodox institutions are reflected in brutal reality.

Some quotes relate to poetry: О жгучий холод, злой отец (Леви);

Nor will my mind permit me to linger in the love,

The mother kindness of country among ascending trees (Warner).

Numerous examples of words under study used as epithets will be illustrated in the English language. All these cases, in one way or another, characterize the relationship of people who are not related by kinship. Their spiritual union is described through indirect manifestations, enshrined in culture as a kind of ritual between relatives.

*She enjoyed giving little presents and 'mothering' the younger bachelor dons (Murdock); She gave Kate a sisterly sort of hug. Kate preferred not to think of it as a step-motherly hug (Jaffe); She said it in such a motherly way that I could not interpret it as anything but real concern (Randall); He waits, forcing his face into a pleasantly paternal expression (O'Neill); He patted my hair with a fatherly hand and put me aside (Randall); He'd grapple all the way back home, where parental lights would be burning with midnight disapproval (Burger); Expansively, and with a fatherly air of great knowledge, Banister said, "Oh well, most of the time that doesn't cause any trouble" (Hailey); It was a kindly fatherly smile Stahr had developed inversely when he was a young man pushed into high places (Fitzgerald).*

The line of spiritual relationships between the sexes can also correlate with concepts of kinship. In this case, the meaning of the word is often emphasised with genealogical relationship (especially in situations with age-related differences).

*I thought he was just being fatherly when he sat me on his knee (Randall); I know you want me to mother you, but I won't (Murdock); Her maternal feeling (to her lover) was much more superficial, more under the control of her ego (Lawrence).*

The **model of material relations** is presented in transformations associated with the transfer of parental functions to persons who, by virtue of the professional duties, distribute material goods (directors, administrators, etc.). These meanings are often accompanied by ironic connotations.

*В детстве ее звали скорой помощью, а теперь, когда выросла, стала президентом международного Ордена милосердия и социальной защиты, называют все чаще матушкой, спасительницей, благодатной (Московский комсомолец о Евг. Поплавской). В Ростове арестовали Белкина – директрису самого престижного в городе промтоварного магазина, которую не только сослуживцы, но и пол-Ростова-папы, заискивающе называли Мамой (Литературная газета); if you have a good ma, you'll soon feel at home (Randall about woman-administrator responsible for conveniences of the troop during the tour).*

Cases of interpretation of meaning within the **model of marital relations** are extremely few. Basically, they emphasise the precarious position of a woman with a child who is not bound by marriage and is in need of some kind of social protection.

*Как мать-одиночка, иду я наугад (Еремин): Отель Националь будет превращен в городские ясли-сад для детей одиноких отцов. Безработные проститутки могут переквалифицироваться в воспитательниц (Московский комсомолец).*

The **genealogical model** is a source of concept development along the lines of age criteria.

*Дети мятежных отцов (about young Americans and their indifferent attitude to politics in Комсомольская правда). У газеты трудная судьба. Зато какая тьма замечательных людей начинает отечески щуриться, стоит лишь показать удостоверение «Комсомольца»! Мол, не с тебя мир и газета начинались, голубчик. Не больно важничай (Московский комсомолец); Ах, лучший искус – кровию гордиться, былым отцов, величием корней (Жуков); I don't blame you for the sins of fathers (Randall).*

The **model of authority** can be implemented in semantic transformations, both with a positive and negative rhetoric (царь-батюшка, мать-заступница, папа народов). In the latter case, the terms of kinship take on a derogatory, insulting connotation.

*И после XX съезда портреты «отца народов» продолжали в Китае висеть, труды его изучались и цитировались (Аргументы и факты); нужно ввести новый пост: президент-батюшка (Московский комсомолец); Kester was only poor old Kester, poor old son, sniveling away because he's lost his father-*

*figure (Howatch speaks about the boy, who lost the ideal father in the face of his uncle).*

Cognitive complexity of the concept is expressed in the development of secondary meaning in several models at the same time, for example:

*Моя мать – злая кручина (Лермонтов)* – genetic model + spiritual model.

*Frankly, we “do” find you difficult, Mr Stahr – precisely because you are a paternalistic employer and your influence is very great (Fitzgerald)* – genealogical model + nurturance model + model of respect.

*Motherly hands touched him lightly, lovingly, doing unmotherly things (Shaw)* – genetic model + mother care + sex.

*Who was my father? I didn’t know. To me he was just a source of pain labelled parent* – genetic model + nurturance model + lack of authority.

## 5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings can be worded as follows:

1 New meanings of kinship terms are often extremely unexpected and very individual. However, it is possible to determine the general tendency of their appearance. The new sense stems from the models of simple relations relevant to a certain cognitive concept. Numerous examples prove that the core meaning is still preserved in secondary nominations, however, they gain new additional properties defined by the context, outlining new domain, experience and/or scenario or suggesting a new vision.

2 Correlation of cognitive and semantic levels can be traced in the analysis of situationally transformed meanings. Evolution of meaning occurs along the models of relations that are distinguished in the structure of the concept. Metaphor, being the key engine in mastering the world, allows to extend the gained knowledge and experience in one domain into another domain, often cognitively distant. As a result, there emerge new knowledge or new vision of already known phenomena. Metonymy as another instrument of secondary nomination proved to be of little value in this study.

3 Comparative analysis conducted in this work shows that it is difficult to identify any models that would be more productive in either language. However, there are cases where a certain semantic realization was traced only in one of the languages under consideration. This primarily applies to the model of genetics in *the concept of spouse*. The English transform *midwife* turned out to be the only textual example of this meaning in two languages.

4 As for language differences, it is evident that cognitive development of kinship cluster follows diverse patterns. In English, it realizes, to a greater extent, through word formation (*ex., ma-mother-maternal-motherly-unmotherly-mothering, etc.*), while in Russian exclusively through semantic patterns, *i.e.* semantic shifts within the frame.

5 Cross-cultural differences are not numerous as the basic cognitive structures of kinship are similar in many ways.

6 Analysis of semantic transforms show that the following linguistic factors underlie regularity of semantic variation: the type of semantic transformations (metaphor); frequency of transforms used in one sense or another (the most indicative model in this regard is the model of genetics, which serves as the semantic basis for various thematic directions of metaphorical development of kinship concepts); completeness of the involved lexemes of conceptual micro blocks (mother-father-parents), following certain types of semantic varying.

7 The ability to reflect the dynamics of sense generating process and greater predictive potential should be considered the main advantages of the proposed methodology.

## 6 RESEARCH CONCLUSION

Frame analysis of kinship transformations has proven to be very useful in understanding the cognitive processes in experiencing reality. It allows combining traditional and non-traditional approaches in linguistics. Field and component semantics have accumulated a huge number of facts and significant conceptual tools that can be generalised through cognitive modelling of kinship meaning. In this regard, textual implementations of kinship lexemes should be described as frame modifications associated with the expansion of knowledge about the world in a certain experiential field. The practical result of the work contributes to establishing specific areas of the outside world that become an object of further development

by the public and individual consciousness.

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