



Representation of the Concept of SAFETY in the English-Language Media Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The concept of SAFETY is the main focus of attention of the authors. The aim of the work is to study its representation in the English-language media discourse on the material of the texts of articles published in British newspapers. In the course of the study, a set of methods was applied, including, along with general scientific (continuous sampling, classification, description), linguistic (conceptual, discursive, semantic, contextual analysis) methods. The study found that the content of the concept of SAFETY in the English-language media discourse reveals a variety of ideas about safety, ways to ensure it and the attitude of native speakers to it. There are three most repeated conceptual metaphors, with the help of which the concept of safety gets its actualization in the English language media discourse: "safety – goal", "safety – value", "safety - fear". The theoretical significance of the research results is to clarify its meaning and modes of representation of the concept of SAFETY that combines in its conceptual content, a variety of denotative and evaluative components, and practical significance is connected with the possibility of their use in compiling dictionaries and vocabularies of concepts in the practice of university teaching lexicology, as well as elective disciplines related to the study of ethno-linguistics, cultural linguistics, culture, language etc.

1. Introduction

According to cognitive linguistics, the center of all cognitive activity is language. In the study of language units and forms from the standpoint of anthropocentrism, the way a certain vision of the world by man is reflected in the language is put forward for scientists. Thus, attention is focused on the possibilities of conceptualization of the cognitive experience of the carrier of a certain linguistic culture. Our knowledge about the world around us, fixed in the language, is being steadily enriched and expanded, as a result, the language itself is changing [1]. The reason for this is the continuous change in the world around us, and a man, as his natural component, also is developing, adapting to new conditions.

The problem of safety arose with the appearance of man, his activities to protect against the dangers of the world,



natural disasters and social threats. Currently, in the scale of social values, safety occupies the main place, it is given exceptional importance, because people feel the need for it, regardless of age, nationality, place of residence, level of education and other factors [2]. This is due to the unstable political situation in the world, military conflicts, environmental problems, which together can cause uncertainty in their own future [3]. Thus, safety throughout the history of human development has been and remains one of the key problems.

In our opinion, the most reasonable is the consideration of the concept of SAFETY through the appeal to the concept, because it is the concept that makes it possible to fully analyze its contextual nature. The relevance of the study is due to the necessity to study the content and textual representation of this concept in the framework of cognitive and cultural paradigms. The appeal to the media discourse enables us to consider its functional and semantic features, which are of the greatest importance for modern English linguoculture, and to identify ways of their actualization. It is revealed that the concept of SAFETY is characterized by semantic richness and connection with the cultural and sociological aspect of the world picture.

2. Literature Review

In modern linguistics, there is no single approach to the study of the concept, as there is no single interpretation of the term itself. From the point of view of the content, a concept is considered as a notion that is correlated with the meaning of words [4]; as a generalized knowledge about a particular object or phenomenon of reality, fixed in the collective consciousness [5]; as a mental entity, with its linguistic and cultural specifics and revealing the body of knowledge and experience acquired during various cognitive activities [6]; as a result of human cognition of the world [7]. It is impossible not to agree with Yu.S. Stepanov that the structure of the concept includes a set of components that makes it a fact of culture, including etymology, history, modern understanding [8]. The majority of authors agree that, representing an abstract semantic formation, the concept has valuable significance for a particular language community at a certain stage of its development and belongs to the generalized national language consciousness [4, 7, 8, 9].

According to the researchers, each nation has its own way of conceptualization in view of the special worldview peculiar to it [10]. The variety of language means that verbalize concepts depends both on the historical epoch and on the richness of the cultural heritage of the people, the peculiarities of their mentality and the principles of information coding. S.G. Vorgachev quite rightly argues that the semantic composition of concepts varies in different cultures, ethnic groups and even social groups [11]. Culture finds a unique embodiment in language, by means of which there is a formation, expression and transmission to subsequent generations of a unique, characteristic of a certain ethnic culture, the picture of the world [12]. That is why one of the effective ways to study the attitude and value system of representatives of a certain culture is the analysis of the linguistic expression of concepts [9]. Concepts that occupy an important place in the life of an ethnic group and reflect the value priorities of culture are of unconditional research interest. The increasing interest in such studies stems from the fact that in the conditions of globalization there is a tendency of different countries to establish strong international relations, which becomes the basis for the understanding of representatives of other cultures and perception of their world [13].

The concept verbalized by the word receives objectification in speech. The concepts are considered in relation to the content plan of the text, which acts as a form of its representation. To study various conceptual structures, discursive analysis is used, taking into account all extra-linguistic factors: pragmatic, socio-cultural, psychological.

The term discourse has been widely used in linguistic science in recent years. This has led to various interpretations and renderings of it. Many scholars are engaged in a comprehensive study of discourse [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18].

In the information society, media discourse is one of the most common areas of language use. The development and expansion of new forms of mass media is accompanied by a constant increase in the total number of texts in the world information space. Due to its properties and functions, modern media significantly affect the course of linguistic and cultural processes. Their language is becoming a kind of sign system, through which a picture of the surrounding world is formed both in the individual and mass consciousness of native speakers. In this regard, it seems relevant to turn to the media discourse to compile an adequate representation of the picture of modern language processes and phenomena. The cognitive analysis of English-language media texts is designed to reveal the semantics and ways of representing concepts that are of the greatest importance for native speakers at the moment. It is through the media discourse that cognitive and evaluative activity of modern man is carried out. T.G. Dobrosklonskaya points out that this leads to the fact that modern man perceives the surrounding reality through the prism of media texts [17]. Describing their language, the researchers note that media structures leave an imprint on how modern man builds his knowledge about the world. The inherent ideological and cultural specificity of media texts inevitably affect the perception and evaluation of events in the world. For representatives of the information society, media texts act as peculiar texts of culture. Thus, the analysis of the concept of SAFETY, reflected in the English-language media discourse, gives us an idea of the changes that occur in it under the influence of the media. This aroused our interest in identifying a new emerging metaphorical series of modern representation of the concept under study.

3. Research Methodological Framework

The object of the analysis in the article is the concept of SAFETY, the subject is the semantic structure of the concept under study and the ways of its actualization in the English-language media discourse. The aim of the work is to study the representation of the concept of SAFETY in the English-language media discourse on the material of the texts of articles published in British Newspapers (the Financial Times, the Guardian, The Independent, and the Telegraph). To achieve this goal, the following tasks are formulated: 1) to describe the semantic content of the concept of SAFETY in the English language on the basis of the analysis of the representative words *safety* and *security*, to study the dynamics of its semantic structure; 2) to identify the features of the presentation of the studied concept in English-language media texts through the consideration of conceptual metaphors with the referent "safety", affecting the perception of the corresponding phenomenon.

To achieve the result, a complex of general scientific and linguistic methods was applied: a) using the *continuous sampling method*, more than 200 articles published in the British newspapers such as *the Financial Times*, *the Guardian*, *the Independent*, *the Telegraph* over the past three years were selected, the content of which included the main verbalizers (*safety and security*) of the concept of SAFETY [19, 20, 21, 22]; b) discursive analysis allowed to trace the relationship between the linguistic and extra-linguistic levels of the text; c) conceptual analysis is used to determine the way to reflect the concept of SAFETY in the language consciousness of the British; d) semantic analysis enabled to identify the semantic features of the concept in question; e) contextual analysis enabled to explore the language units *safety and security* as a part of the context, in which they are actualized and their meaning is activated; e) using the method of *classification*, a clear distinction was established between personal and social safety, as well as the most repetitive conceptual metaphors; g) with the help of the *description* method, the selected language phenomena are consistently described in terms of their structure and functioning.

4. Results and Discussion

The representation of the concept of SAFETY in the English-language media discourse reveals a variety of ideas about security and its individual aspects, ways of providing it and the attitude of native speakers to it. The use of conceptual analysis enables us to obtain reliable information about the object or phenomenon behind the concept in question, to determine the way it is reflected in the linguistic consciousness of society and the individual.

In English, the concept of SAFETY is based on the words *safety* (safeness, reliability, preservation) and *security* (safeguard, defense, protection). The analysis of the meanings of these words by lexicographic sources [23] enabled to identify a number of its semantic features: a) a safe or protected from danger place, b) the state of absence of danger or protection from it, C) actions that ensure safety, d) persons that ensure safety, e) a sense of confidence and security. As you can see, in English-language dictionary sources recorded a comprehensive understanding of security by native speakers.

The considered concept is widely represented in the media discourse.

In articles published in British newspapers [19, 20, 21, 22] about understanding safety issues and its importance to British society, the presence of various collocations with the specified referent is shown: *serious safety (security) crisis, levels of safety, safety measures / security precaution, dangerous security vulnerabilities, a major security challenge, major safety risk, active safety solutions, security implications*. The use of highlighted expressions indicates not only the awareness of security problems, but also the necessity to take measures to ensure it, as well as foresee the consequences of the taken actions.

The analysis made it possible to identify various aspects of safety related to the sphere of relations between man, society and the state.

First of all, in the texts of newspapers there is a clear separation of personal and social safety. So, personal safety includes: 1) safety of the person, his health and life (*child safety, feel safe, life safety*); 2) safety of honor and dignity of the person, his interests (*school safety* – the educational environment free from bullying). Social safety can be represented as: 1) safety of a certain group of persons (*patient safety, worker safety, press safety, passenger safety, officers' safety, police safety, fan safety, etc.*); 2) safety of society as a whole (*social safety net, social security, public safety, public security*); 3) human safety related to various activities (*workplace safety, factory safety, rail safety, fire safety, food safety (security) / product safety, travel safety, airline safety, car safety / road safety*); 4) the security of the state (*the UK's safety and security, UK safety concerns, safe country, national security risk, national security problem*); 5) the security of the whole world (*world safety, environmental and safety regulations*)

As a proof of the dynamic semantic structure of the concept under study, the expression *cultural safety*, which is used to refer to an environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for people, where an individual as a personality is not attacked or censured [24], should be cited. It is noteworthy that in the eighties of the last century, the phrase *cultural safety* was first heard in the context of problems related to the difficulties faced by indigenous people of New Zealand in the process of teaching nursing. Gradually, the idea of cultural safety was developed, the principles of cultural safety were formulated, according to which it is achieved through the recognition, respect and promotion of the unique cultural identity of the person. The discussion of cultural safety in the media has led to the spread of the concept and the expansion of its meaning.

Modern realities are also reflected in the concept under study, which is confirmed by the appearance and frequent use of such expressions as *internet safety, digital safety, child safety online, secure our networks, internet security threat, safe from hackers*.



The consideration of the ways of presenting the concept under study showed that the attitude to safety in the texts of the considered British media is expressed through a number of conceptual metaphors. It is necessary to note that metaphor is recognized as the main mechanism by which abstract thinking is possible and through which, according to the theory of conceptual metaphor, a person perceives abstract concepts. The formed system of metaphors helps to understand the peculiarities of our interaction with the surrounding reality and how we act based on this understanding.

Our analysis enabled us to identify the three most recurring conceptual metaphors by which the concept of SAFETY gets its actualization in the English-language media discourse: "safety- goal", "safety-value" and "safety-fear".

The first conceptual metaphor "safety- goal" can be traced in the use of such phrases as *to strike for safety*, *to rush to safety*, *to seek safety*, *to meet safety standards*, *safety plan*. At the same time, safety can be perceived as a level that must not only be achieved, but also improved: *to ensure the safety*, *to improve safety*, *to maximize safety*, *to enhance safety*. On the other hand, safety is seen as something that must be defended and fought for: *to defend safety*, *fight for safety*, *to obtain safety*.

The second conceptual metaphor is used to describe safety as the highest value. Safety is put on a par with health, which is confirmed by the repeated use of the phrase *health and safety*. The expression *safety first* is firmly established in the English language and recorded in dictionaries. Any attack on safety is perceived extremely negatively, which can be traced in the context of the use of such phrases as: *to compromise safety*, *to sacrifice safety*, *to put something over safety*.

The third conceptual metaphor expresses the presence in the content of the described concept of ideas about safety as a source of unrest and fear. This can be traced in the use of the following set expressions: *safety fears*, *safety (security) concerns*, *safety hazards*, *safety violations*, *threat to safety*, *security alert*, *no real security*.

5. Conclusion

As a result of our research, it was found that the content of the concept of SAFETY reveals a variety of ideas about security, ways to ensure it and the attitude of native speakers to it. The analysis of the representation of this concept in the English-language media discourse revealed a clear distinction between personal and public safety. Personal safety is considered both from the point of view of safety of life and health of the person (*life safety*), and safety of honor and dignity of the person (*school safety*). Social safety will be divided into several types: a) the safety of a certain group of persons (*patient safety*, *worker safety*), b) the safety of society (*social security*, *public safety*), C) the safety of people associated with various activities (*fire safety*, *airline safety*), d) the safety of the state (*UK safety concerns*, *national security risk*), e) the safety of the world (*world safety*). We have identified three of the most recurring conceptual metaphors by which the concept of SAFETY gets its actualization in the English-language media discourse: a) "safety- goal" (*to strive for safety*), b) "safety-value" (*safety first*), C) "safety- fear" (*safety fears*, *safety concerns*).

Thus, the appeal to the media discourse enables to make an adequate representation of the picture of modern language processes and phenomena. The study of the representation of the concept of SAFETY in the English-language media discourse showed that this concept occupies an important place in the life of the British and reflects the value priorities of British culture.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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