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THE PROBLEM OF CATEGORIZATION IN COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This article provides information about principles of categorization in Linguistics and three types of categorization in Linguistics. Furthermore, this article describes notional and functional-semantic categories in Comparative Linguistics.

Key words: categorization, classical categorization, conceptual clustering, prototype theory, notional, grammatical, functional-semantic categories.

ПРОБЛЕМА КАТЕГОРИЗАЦИИ В СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНОМ ЛИНГВИСТИКЕ

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АННОТАЦИЯ

В этой статье представлена информация о принципах категоризации в лингвистике и трех типах категоризации в лингвистике. Кроме того, в статье описаны смысловые и функционально-семантические категории в сравнительном языкознании.

Ключевые слова: категоризация, классическая категоризация, концептуальная кластеризация, теория прототипов, смысловые, грамматические, функционально-семантические категории

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ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada tilshunoslikda kategorizatsiya tamoyillari va qiyosiy tilshunoslikda kategorizatsiyalashning uch turi haqida yoritilgan. Bundan tashqari, qiyosiy tilshunoslikning muhim qismi sanalgan tushuncha va funksional-semantik kategoriyalar haqida ham to'xtalib o'tilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: kategorizatsiya, klassik kategorizatsiya, konseptual klasterlash, prototip nazariyasi, tushuncha, grammatik, funksional-semantik kategoriyalar.

INTRODUCTION

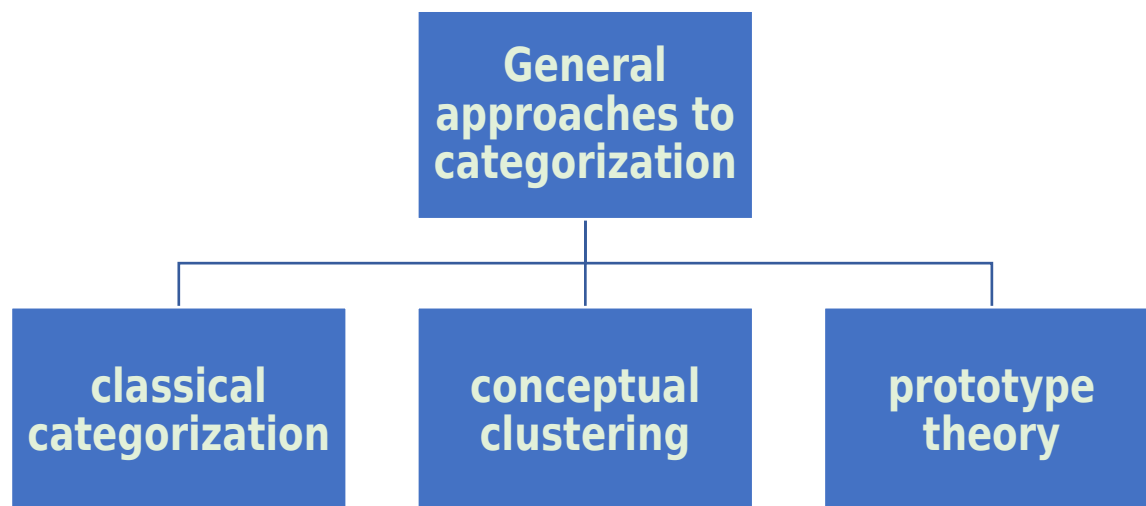
First let's discuss what Comparative Linguistics studies, what is its subject matter, then we'll turn to the historical background of the subject.

Many linguists define subject matter of Comparative Linguistics as a science which studies all types of languages in comparison. The term of categorization is considered as one of the main spheres of Comparative Linguistics. Categorization is the process in which ideas and objects are, differentiated and understood.

Categorization implies that objects are grouped into categories, usually for some specific purpose. Ideally, a category illuminates a relationship between the subjects and objects of knowledge. Categorization is fundamental in language, prediction, inference, decision making and in all kinds of environmental interaction [Cruse, 1990].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are many categorization theories and techniques. In a broader historical view, however, three general approaches to categorization may be identified:



Classical categorization comes to us first from Plato, who, in his Statesman dialogue, introduces the approach of grouping objects based in their similar properties.

This approach was further explored and systematized by Aristotle in his Categories treatise, where he analyzes the differences between classes and objects. Aristotle also applied intensively the classical categorization scheme in his approach to the classification of living beings (which uses the technique of applying successive narrowing questions such as “Is it an animal or vegetable?”, “How many feet does it have?”, “Does it have fur or feathers?”, “Can it fly?”), establishing this way the basis for natural taxonomy.

The classical Aristotelian view claims that categories are discrete entities characterized by a set of properties which are shared by their members. In analytic philosophy, these properties are assumed to establish the conditions which are both necessary and sufficient conditions to capture meaning.

According to the classical view, categories should be clearly defined, mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. This way, any entity of the given classification universe belongs unequivocally to one, and only one, of the proposed categories.

The process of categorization that is used on the basis of Prototype theory. *Prototype theories*, investigated by Eleanor Rosch [1978], have given some reason to suppose that many natural lexical category structures are graded, i.e., they have prototypical members that are considered to be “better fit” the category than other examples. For instance, robins are generally viewed as better examples of the category “bird” than, say, penguins. If this view of category structure is the case, then categories can be understood to have central and peripheral members, and not just be evaluated in terms of members and non-members.

RESULTS

As a result of this research, categorization on grammatical level is analyzed as a problem of categorization. The first categories, which have been revealed in ancient times, were the grammatical categories, such as category of part of speech, sentence, case, tense, mood, etc. For example, Panini used the special meta-language investigating the connection of syntax and semantics in Sanskrit’s system of language. Protagor and Aristotle revealed the category of gender in nouns.

Grammatical categories are mostly used for investigation and further description of grammatical system of concrete language. To explain the term “grammatical categories”, Russian linguists give the following definition, “The general notions of grammar, which determine the type of language and express their essences in accordance with laws and rules of words’ affixation, connection of words with each other in phrases and sentences, are called grammatical categories”.

DISCUSSION

It is discussed that each grammatical category is the unity of grammatical meaning (the abstract meaning of relationships, which reflect reality) and grammatical form (the ways which reflect the grammatical meaning, such as

affixation, intonation, accent, repetition, etc.). According to A.A.Reformatskiy [1967], the number of grammatical forms and grammatical meanings are limited in each language.

The grammatical forms of different languages are mostly individual and typical for one language, while the grammatical meanings of different languages possess usually some common features. So, linguists began to investigate how these common grammatical meanings are reflected in different languages.

This approach towards the comparison (from form to meaning) of different languages can be used for typological investigation. However, from the typological point of view, the comparison with the help of grammatical categories is defective due to the following reasons. First, this is one – level limited comparison. The grammatical categories are mostly based on the units from morphological level of language hierarchy though a lot of languages have no morpheme (Chinese, etc.) but they reflect the grammatical meanings with the help of word-order, intonation, etc.

Second, the investigation of grammatical categories is limited within the definite lexical grammatical category. For example, the category of number is studied separately on each category of words (noun) though it is typical for different lexical-grammatical categories of words (verb, pronoun, etc).

Besides that, notional categories, based on the study's approach "from meaning to form", are conditioned by typological variety of ways to reflect definite notions. The appearance of this term is connected with O. Jespersen [1958] and I.I. Meschaninov [1945]. According to Jespersen, notional categories are universal, "non-language" categories which exist in all cultures but have various ways of reflection in different languages. In this case, grammatical categories are only the consequences of reflection these notional categories in language. For example, there is a notional category of sex, that's why there exists the grammatical category of gender.

As a result, this category reflects on morphological level in some languages or on lexical level and in the semantic meaning of words in the others.

In general, notional categories are more appropriate than grammatical categories for typological investigation of languages. However, nowadays the notional categories are still investigated and there is no so much factual information about investigation of these categories in systems of foreign languages.

Moreover, functional-semantic categories, connected with the description of language system on different levels, were revealed by A.V. Bondarenko [1971], who writes that functional-semantic categories can be applied in comparative investigation of the languages. These categories consist of two plans: a) plan of content (is identified with the meaning of morphological categories, such as mood, voice, tense of the verb, etc.); b) plan of expression (means of different levels and aspects of the language, such as morphological, syntactical, lexical, etc.)

CONCLUSION

As above said, the process of identifying and comprehending concepts and events is called categorization. The term "categorization" suggests that ideas are

grouped together according to shared characteristics and typically for a particular objective.

Thus, the reasons of grammatical categories' limitation mentioned above (one level morphological investigation and isolation within one lexical-grammatical category) made linguists reveal new ways of linguistic categorization. There appeared notional categories, functional-semantic categories and others.

It is known that every discipline has its own techniques and methodologies, and comparative linguistics is no exception.

Overall, each language possesses various resources to express different categorial meanings. They are being analyzed by linguists for many years. There is no doubt that the problem of categorization in Comparative Linguistics will be more discussed by many linguists in the future.

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