

Basic Theses of the Conceptual Integration's Theory

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ABSTRACT

The basic theses of the conceptual integration's theory are examined. Contemporary occasional word-formation is analyzed as a result of conceptual integration.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, conceptual integration, conceptual blends, occasionalism (nonce word), occasional word-formation.

Introduction

Interestingly that being the most dynamic phenomenon of the secondary nomination, formation of nonce words (occasionalisms) is the evidence of the derivational processes, which are constantly proceeding in any language. Although derivatives under consideration are located “at the norm border”, their analysis seems to be very significant: it allows deeper comprehension of the derivational potential of certain language units as well as the cognitive processes, lying in the basis of word-formative motivation. In our opinion, conceptual integration is one of such processes. It is generally known that this logical operation belongs to logical semantics and is analyzed by this paradigm. Conceptual integration takes place every time, when a new contextual notion is formed from a mixture of two mental spaces in a human subconsciousness. It becomes the object of the linguistic interest, including this article, because of language conceptualization as an enrichment of notions' semantics by features, which are borrowed from the semantics of language indices, which lexicalize these notions. It means that a notion is immersed into the language and culture as part of it. Thereupon one wants to notice that by dint of contemporary occasional word-formation a tendency of creation and expansion of conceptual blends (mental results of conceptual integration) is the evidence of a language creation's liberation on the whole and effective advance of individual creation into the national language.

Undoubtedly, intense coverage and study of all this is needed, part of which is represented in the given article. To begin with, it is important to give the definitions of nonce words and occasional wordformation, which are relevant for this very article. So we suppose that occasional word-formation represents a process of nontrivial nominative units' creation, when these new words influence the recipients by their structure,

semantics, emotional, cognitive and pragmatic potential. In other words occasionalism is a word or word combination, which has never existed before, which appears and is displayed in the speech with its constant novelty in the course of time and outside the conditions of the birth, which possesses a form and a meaning and expresses a definite notion. At the time of the birth any occasionalism is characterized by the appearance in a concrete communicative situation, by the occasional creation and lack of broad (frequency) situational functioning.

Examples of Nonce Words

Here are some examples of nonce words, which have recently appeared in the communicative space of the contemporary English language: denim breaker — a person who breaks in a pair of jeans for someone else to wear, glanceability (glance + ability) — a quality that enables something to be read or understood with just a glance, shaleionaire (shale + millionaire) — a person who owns land that sits over a shale deposit and has become rich by leasing that land to a company that extracts natural gas from the shale. It goes without saying that the investigation of contemporary occasionalisms is not an exception from the list of the problems carried out by cognitive linguistics. Taking into account the basic theses of the conceptual integration's theory (or the theory of blending), developed by G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, it is conceived to analyze such new formations and describe their mental correlates — conceptual blends. To our mind, this theory is described in detail in the authentic scientific work of its authors and in the works of Russian scholars T.G. Skrebtsova and L.P. Kovalchuk. Having analyzed all these papers, one would like to make their short review. The theory of conceptual integration dates back to the middle of 90-s of the previous century. It is considered to be one of the current trends of the American cognitive linguistics, which continues the development of G. Fauconnier's theory of mental spaces.

According to his scientific views mental spaces are models of discourse comprehension, they can be connected with each other via various types of relations (analogical and metaphorical projection, metonymical transfer, bond of function and meaning, etc.). Having examined mental spaces' types of interaction, G. Fauconnier has been successful in the further development of his conception and its transformation into a more wide-ranging project — the theory of conceptual integration, which he continues to develop together with an American specialist in the study of literature M. Turner. Conceptual integration is defined by G. Fauconnier and M. Turner as a basic cognitive operation, lied in the basis of human ability to reason, to conclude, to evaluate, to make decisions, to invent, etc. It has a distinct structure, which includes input and generic spaces as well as blended spaces or blends (conceptual). In brief the essence of conceptual integration is the following: the structures of input mental spaces are projected onto a new constructible mental space — a conceptual blend, which represents an entire, compact and easily remembered construct. Strictly speaking, conceptual blends are not identical to any of input spaces and are not reduced to the sum of their elements. Any conceptual blend adopts only a structure's part from an input space and is formed for the comprehension of a concrete situation or context.

In fact it has its own new meaning. As the theory says, there is an interspatial display between input spaces, which connects similar elements and a generic space. The last one consists of elements common for both input spaces in a definite moment of conceptual integration's development. These two constituents form the part of a conceptual blend. Of course, conceptual integration is more often expressed at the language level, where it is necessary to talk about dual and genetically difficult nature of this process. At the mental level the semantic formation, acquired as a result of the conceptual integration, represents a conceptual blend. Meantime its verbal representation can be introduced by contemporary occasional lexical blends (procaffinating (procrastinating + caffeine) — delaying or postponing something until one has had one or more cups of coffee, occasional word combinations (white privilege — the alleged advantages of having lighter colored skin in a diverse society, occasional word contractions (newwavejunior (new + wave + junior) — the name of the song contest “New Wave” for children, which annually takes place in Jurmala) and compound nonce words (Ebolaphobia (Ebola + phobia) — a strong and irrational fear of the Ebola virus.

So from this viewpoint these semantic formations turn out to be senses. The communicative space of the contemporary Russian language also abounds in various occasional nominations, which illustrate the theory of conceptual integration in action. Let us have a look at two of them, recently found in the popular Russian social network “VKontakte” — Dzhigurdashka (Nikita Dzhigurda + Cheburashka) and Snegurda (Snegurochka + Nikita Dzhigurda). From conceptual integration's viewpoint the mental correlates of these occasionalisms are conceptual blends. It can be explained by the following: when a new occasional nomination appears, a projection of two input spaces takes place. In the first case one observes a projection of the spaces N. Dzhigurda and Cheburashka, in the second — the spaces Snegurochka and N. Dzhigurda. Newly formed conceptual blends adopt some structure's elements of each space: graphic representation of the famous Russian actor's face is adopted from the space N. Dzhigurda, whereas graphic representation of the body's rest part is adopted from the spaces Cheburashka and Snegurochka. As a result features “Dzhigurdashka” and “Snegurda” appear, and they do not exist in any input spaces. It is represented to us that the basis of such nonce words is revealed besides conceptual integration via the deliberate game on contrast of two input spaces N. Dzhigurda and Snegurochka, N. Dzhigurda and Cheburashka.

These two input spaces turn out to be contrasting as far as their essences reflect the social perception of N. Dzhigurda, on the one hand, and Snegurochka and Cheburashka, on the other. Moreover these input spaces can be described as diametrically opposed to each other. The famous Russian actor N. Dzhigurda is regarded rather negatively by the majority of Russian linguoculture's representatives: a person, who uses substandard vocabulary, including public environment and TV screen; an actor, whose work is estimated as unworthy imitation of V.V. Vysotsky's creativity; a person with a doubtful popularity, which he has gained after having put the clips, showing the birth of his children from Marina Anisina, in the internet, etc. Diametrically opposed

qualities (kindness and love to the environment; purity of the speech; popularity among children and adults, etc.) are typical of Father Frost's famous granddaughter Snegurochka and a well-known, all favourite character of children's cartoons Cheburashka.

Proceeding from it, one can state that our actual material, a certain part of which has been mentioned in the given article, allows specifying the list of the theory conceptual integration's basic theses a bit and adding the following to it: the amount of contemporary occasionalisms containing in the basis of their mental correlates (conceptual blends) the game on the contrast can be considerably expanded in the process of further scientific researches: frenemy (friend + enemy), mimbo (male + bimbo), adorai (ad + o + rai), blagopodlost (blago + podlost), dumrak (dumayushchy + durak), merzoblagostny (merzost + blagostny), nelyubvizhu (nenavizhu + lyublyu), strakhoradost (strakh + o + radost), smertezhizn (smert + e+ zhizn), starodezh (staraya + molodezh), vdokhnovennaya poshlost, volkozayts (volk + o + zayts), vzroslyshi (vzroslye + malyshi), Zlobro (Zlo + Dobro), etc. By the way the recipient of these nonce words has to possess a certain set of cognitive competence's components, necessary for the comprehension of such new nominations.

Conclusion

To sum it up, one has to say that nowadays wordformation is becoming more and more occasional, when a nonce word is considered to be its basic unit. Apart from that such word-formation is still one of the sources of enrichment of the English and Russian languages' lexical subsystems and their communicative spaces. In addition to that some occasional nominations turn out to be the result of conceptual integration. It means that a set of complicated mental operations takes place, which is united in the theory of G. Fauconnier and M. Turner under the term "conceptual integration". Furthermore it leads to a mixture of two mental spaces in the human subconsciousness, and a new occasional nomination of compressive character appears as a result of it. Moreover mental correlates of such occasionalisms represent conceptual blends, which are possible to be regarded as new contextual notions. All mentioned above is certainly valuable for contemporary linguistic researches, and that is why its further analysis is included into the perspective of our scientific research.

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