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About the conceptual core of security concept (some Bulgarian – Russian juxtapositions)

Summary

A concept is a basic unit in linguocultural studies. It is a category of mental nature and therefore its multi-dimensionality cannot be examined and presented by the means of customary units of measurement. The concept of “security” has not been the subject of extensive linguocultural studies. The present study aims to analyse numerous lexicographic sources – the basic material for the defining of the conceptual core of concepts and to identify some similarities and differences in its verbalisation in related languages such as Bulgarian and Russian.

Аннотация

Концептът е базова единица в лингвокултурологичните изследвания. Той е категория от ментално естество и поради това неговата многомерност не може да бъде изследвана и представена с помощта на обичайни мерни единици. Концептът „сигурност“ не е бил предмет на обстояни лингвокултурологични изследвания. Настоящото проучване има за цел да направи анализ на многобройни лексикографски източници – основния материал за определяне на понятийното ядро на концепта и да установи някои прилики и разлики при вербализирането му в близкородствените български и руски език.

Keywords: concept of security, conceptual core, linguoculturology, verbalisation, Bulgarian lexicographic sources, Russian lexicographic sources

Ключевые слова: концепт сигурност, понятийно ядро, лингвокултурология, вербализиране, български лексикографски източници, руски лексикографски източници

A concept is a basic yet fundamental term in the categorical apparatus of the young science linguoculturology. It is a category in the sphere of thinking and therefore impossible to be immediately observed; it is not easy to be researched as well because it is not possible to be measured using trivial units of measurement. For this purpose, unambiguous criteria for analysis are needed. They are the subject of research by linguoculturologists. Among the carefully studied literature, we did not find a comprehensive linguocultural study of the concept of security. The purpose of this study is to be the first step in analysing the linguocultural aspects of the concept of security – to identify the basic features of its conceptual core.

The term *concept* has a history going back several centuries. Researchers do not have an absolutely identical view of its essence, but they are united in the assertion that a concept is a conventional mental structure. It has a definite cognitive nature and does not exist outside of thinking. The complexity of its determination originates from the bilateral relation between language and consciousness – the categories of consciousness are realised through language categories and at the same time are determined by them; culture determines concepts. In other words, a concept is the mental projection of the elements of culture. The correspondence between language and cultural phenomena is extremely complex, i.e. language is a part of culture and at the same time an external factor for it. Language and speech are spheres in which a concept finds its objective realisation. When notion finds its verbalisation, expressed by a word or word combination, it becomes a concept. A concept contains those meanings, images and ethno-specificity in the individual's perceptions he/she relies on in his/her experience, drawing from the treasury of the collective knowledge [1: 531–532].

Russian linguoculturologist V. Karasik outlines three components in the structure of the linguocultural concept as a multidimensional entity: a conceptual, figurative and value component [2: 3]. The conceptual essence of the linguistic concept is the foundation of its structure. It is mainly related to its lexicographic description, the analysis of its keyword semantics, its derivatives, contextual synonyms and antonyms as a part of its paradigm.

It is well known that a number of concepts related to important for human well-being and survival of individuals or a social group essence that occupy the central place in human consciousness – such as *time, water, home, love, family, world, truth, life, death*, etc. have been considered as constants. Notions such as those listed are at the base of every individual's picture of the world, and therefore occupy the central position in the human consciousness. That is why they represent “universal human notions” of the picture of the world of many peoples. These are concepts that have special cultural values and which exist for a constant or very long period of time. Such concepts are called constants by the Russian academician Stepanov [3]. In our view, the security concept can be rightly associated with the conceptual constants.

Security is a concept related to important existential aspects of both an individual's life and the one of a group. For this reason, it is one of the most commonly used and commented concepts; its use is becoming more and more prevalent in our times. "Security is a fundamental concept in the theories of social relations, without which it is impossible to build their basic constructions" [4]. It is therefore inexplicable why in a number of Bulgarian dictionaries from the beginning of the 20th century, the notion of security related to such an important indicator of the individual's or social group's existential minimum has not been regarded (with minor exceptions). There are also not numerous cases of the description of the term in lexicographical issues from the beginning of the 21st century either.

The lexeme *security* (Bg. *сигурност*) and others from its paradigmatic row such as *safety*, *danger* and *risk* (Bg. *безопасност*, *опасност*, *риск*) are not included in the Old Bulgarian Dictionary [5], which presents the vocabulary of the classical Old Bulgarian sources that came to us either in originals (epigraphic sources) or by transcripts from the 10th–11th century. The dictionary reflects the idea that the Old Bulgarian language is the language of the Bulgarian nationality of the 9th–11th centuries – a living, rich and fast developing language that has reached astonishing perfection at the dawn of its creation.

The notion of security (as well as the words from the paradigmatic row mentioned above – *safety*, *danger*, *risk*, *protection*) is missing in Nayden Gerov's Dictionary [6] – a dictionary of mixed type (spoken, dialectal, translational and synonymous) having historical significance for the Bulgarian language culture. In the issued in the same decade „Encyclopaedic Dictionary“ (1905) the lexeme *security* (Bg. *Сигурност*, meaning – «confidence, fidelity, provide for») is included as a derivative of *сигурен* – “*sure*” (lat. – „confident, true”); another derivative of the latter word is mentioned as well – *сигурно* (“certainly, ..”) [7].

One of the key features of the conceptual core of a concept is derived from the corresponding vocabulary in the explanatory dictionaries illustrating each word along with all its meanings, grammatical and stylistic notes. The Academic Dictionary of the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language in three volumes (1954–1959) considers security not as a basic concept, but as a derivative of the adjective *сигурен* (“*sure*”: 1. Who does not doubt anything; *confident*, *convinced*. 2. Who can be relied on, who deserves trust; *reliable*. 3. Who is not endangered by any danger or failure. 4. Who shows firmness, confidence, unwaveringness. 5. Which will inevitably become, will happen; *inevitable*, *inescapable*. The meanings of the represented in the dictionary adverb *сигурно* (“surely, certainly”) have close semantics: 1. Firm, confident, unwavering. 2. Undoubtedly, doubtless. 3. Perhaps, probably [8, vol. 3], but they do not contain any seme¹ correlating with such meanings as “*safety*, *being defended*” (Bg. “*безопасност*, *защитеност*”).

¹ *Seme* – in linguistics, the minimum unit of the content plan, representing an elementary lexical or grammatical meaning.// The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 3rd Edition (1970–1979).

The largest and most representative Academic Contemporary Explanatory Dictionary of Bulgarian Language has not published the volume containing words beginning with the letter *C* yet. The Explanatory Dictionary (1973) considers the lexeme *сигурност* (“security”) as a „quality of security, confidence, positivity“ (as in 8, vol.3) but as a second meaning it is pointed there „absence, eliminating danger of any kind, safety“ (Bg. „липса, отстраняване на всякаква опасност, безопасност“) [9, p. 920]. This second meaning of the lexeme is represented with a slight difference in the fourth edition of this dictionary «lack of danger; safety» (Bg. „липса на опасност; безопасност“) [10, p. 881].

At the end of the 1980s, along with the synonymous meanings as „positivity, be definite, be confident“, the notion of security was also noted with synonyms such as „safety, security“ and „guarantee, pledge“ (Bg. „безопасност, защитеност“, „гарантия, залог“) [11]. This is a step forward in the lexicographic description of the concept, having in mind that the Dictionary of Synonyms issued almost a decade earlier does not include concepts of the synonymous row *security-safety* at all (Bg. *сигурност – безопасност*) [12].

Here, the question about the «roots» of the two given in some lexicographical sources as synonymous notions *сигурност* и *безопасност* (“*security* and *safety*”) arises. Both (as well as the notion *being defended*, bg. “защитеност“) are not included as stand-alone lexemes in the Bulgarian Etymology Dictionary [13]. Semantically closest to the first of the commented lexemes is *сигур* (“sure”) that has a remark showing that the word is an adjective belonging to the colloquial discourse: «No doubt, positively, indeed; perhaps « (Bg. без съмнение, положително, наистина; може би, навярно) and that it has derivatives *сигурен* – “sure” (true, trustworthy, confident, positive – Bg. верен, надежден; уверен, положителен “) and *сигурност* – “security” (with derivatives “insure, insurer, insurance”). The semantic tracking of these derivatives does not represent a seme within the concept of security, equivalent to “safety, protected” (Bg. „безопасност, защитеност“). On the other hand, the dictionary presents the etymology of the two lexemes used in the literary language *сигурен* и *сигурност* (*sure, confident* and *security*: from ital. *Sicuro* < lat. *Securus* “*sure, confident; safety*” through the mediation of the Balkan Romance languages (Rom. *Sigur*, newGr *Σιγούρα* – “*sure, confident*“) [13, p. 638], which, although in part, contain the seme *safety*.

After studying some nomination mechanisms in some Slavic languages, it is interesting to note the similarity in the verbalisation of the notion of security among the Bulgarian language and another South Slavic language – the Croatian: *sigurnosti*, as well as the seme “without misfortune” contained in this notion in two other South Slavic languages – Serbian and Macedonian: *безбедност* (safety/security; *literally* “without misfortune”) – semantically close to “safety/safeness”. The same seme “without danger/ misfortune is explicitly set in the Russian lexeme *безопасность* (“safety”). Here comes the reasonable question arising from the

centuries-old cultural exchange between the two Slavic peoples, having for its base the Cyrillo-Methodian language: which semes the conceptual core of the lexemes in the two languages include: *сигурност* (security) and its partly synonym *безопасност* (“safety”) in the Bulgarian language and the lexeme *безопасность* in Russian (having in mind that there is not such a lexeme as „сигурност“ in Russian despite the genetic kinship of the two languages).

For this purpose, we need to trace the semantics of the Bulgarian concept of safety (*безопасност*). Some of the first and complete data on the meaning of this lexeme (represented as an abstract noun from *безопасен* – “safe”) are presented in the Academic edition of the Dictionary of the Bulgarian Literary Language, edited in the middle of the last century: «safe – 1. Who is not in danger; *protected*. 2. Who does not pose any danger to someone or something, *harmless*” [8, vol.1, p.46]. A half century later, in the explanatory dictionary the meaning „lack of danger; being defended, security”) (Bg. “липса на опасност; *защитеност, сигурност*”) [10, p. 52] is presented, which puts the concepts of safety and security (Bg. *безопасност* и *сигурност*) in close synonymous relations.

The analytical overview of the definitions gives us the reason to conclude that in Bulgarian safety (*безопасност*) is related to «being defended (not posed to danger); security and harmless». Here in the foreground the meaning of a situation /person who is harmless or not posed to any danger stands out (Bg. eg. *безопасни храни, безопасни условия за живот, безопасност (=Б.) на труда, Б. на работното място, Б. на автомобила, Б. на машините, Б. на движението, Б. на пътниците, Б. на пациентите, Б. на ядрените централи, Б. на ски пистата* etc.)². Bulgarian notion “*сигурност*” (security) includes semes such as “confidence, definitiveness, reliability,” “positivity,” “safety,” “being defended,” “guaranty” (Bg. „*увереност, категоричност, надеждност*“, „*положителност*“, „*безопасност*“, „*защитеност*“, „*гаранция*“: Bg. eg. *сигурен отговор, сигурен отпор, сигурни взаимоотношения, национална сигурност (С.), международна С., енергийна С., информационна С., социална С., сигурна защита, С. на спирачната система*)³.

Does the availability of one only lexeme (*безопасность* – “safety”) in Russian⁴ mean that it is solely used in cases where the two above mentioned lexemes are used in the Bulgarian language? The precise translation of the Bulgarian word combinations with the basic word *безопасен/безопасност* indicates that in each of the above mentioned cases, they can be translated into Russian using the lexeme *безопасность*: «*безопасные пищевые продукты, безопасные условия*

² in En.: safe food, safe living conditions, occupational safety, vehicle safety, machine safety, traffic safety, passengers’ safety, patients’ safety, safety of nuclear power plants, safety on the ski slopes.

³ in En.: reliable answer, strong repulse, secure relationships, national security, international security, energy security, information security, social security, sure protection, active safety.

⁴ in contrast to Bulgarian where there are two lexemes – *безопасност, сигурност*.

проживания, безопасность (=Б.) труда, Б. на рабочем месте, Б. автомобиля, Б. машин, Б. дорожного движения, Б. пассажиров, Б. пациента, Б. атомных электростанций, Б. лыжных трасс“. This is not the case, however, with the translation of the other Bulgarian phrases having as a basic word the lexemes *сигурност/ сигурен*: „уверенный ответ, надежный отпор, надежные взаимоотношения, национальная безопасность, международная безопасность, энергетическая безопасность, информационная безопасность, социальная защита, надежная защита, надежность тормозной системы“. Obviously, in such cases, in parallel to the conformity *сигурност (Bg.) – безопасность (Ru)*, another Russian lexeme stands out at the semantic background: *надежность* (which is not the only translation option in these cases because of the inherent in each language collocation of words, which is associated with purely grammatical phenomena such as morphology and syntax, as well with the semantic framework of creating and using a combination of different words in the context of a given meaning. The latter plays a particular role.). And here another question comes into being: how do *безопасность/ надежность* relate?

The review of the widely used Russian explanatory dictionaries presents the following semes of the lexeme *безопасность*: «lack of threat to danger [14,15]; protection from danger» [14]; «Lack of danger; prevention of danger» [16]. The electronic Russian synonymy dictionaries present «harmlessness» as the first synonymous seme (of a medical or chemical product); semes „not being dangerous“, „being defended“, „security“, „sustainability“ follow afterwards [17].

The semes of the lexeme *надежность* can be generalised to: «reliability, solidity; well-working system (*надежность механизмов*) [14,15,18], «trustworthy» [14, 15, 16, 17, 18], «ensuring the achievement of the goals; Faithful (*надежное средство*) [15, 16, 18]. This semantic differentiation justifies the use of such word combinations as „надежные взаимоотношения, надежный отпор, надежная защита, надежность тормозной системы“. The conclusion concerning the interrelation of the lexemes *надежность/безопасность* is that *безопасность* includes circumstances that lack any danger – lack of danger or protection against a possible danger (coming from outside), as well as health-related situations/products regarding them as harmless. On the other hand, *надежность* is associated with impeccability and reliability of mechanisms and systems, as well as with stability /trustfulness in interpersonal and social relationships. This means that if the collocations allow both terms to be used for a car *надежность автомобиля* and *безопасность автомобиля*, the semantics of these word formations will matter different things: in the first case it will concern the active safety (type and reliability of the braking system), the stability of the car as you enter a bend, the stability of the car on a slippery road, etc. In the latter case the meaning is connected with the driver's and other people's safety, for example it is about the availability or non-availability of airbags, about the equipment of the car with new or old tires,

the warning autonomous function for adaptive braking to prevent the collision with the moving car in front or with an unexpectedly appeared pedestrian.

The extensive study of the conceptual core of a concept is impossible to be presented within a single article. It is necessary numerous lexicographical and other linguistic materials to be excerpted and thoroughly studied. It ought a comparative study of sources from the everyday discourse and different professional sources to be done (such as documents and word formations from the literary language among genetically related languages and those which are not) that are in constant touch and interaction, because they undergo the effect of reversing semantic impact. This is what we have tried to do in the present study, analyzing the conceptual differences in the concept *security* in the two genetically related languages – Bulgarian and Russian. In the case of non-genetically related languages, such as Bulgarian and English, it is important to trace the semantics of the respective lexemes both in the literary language and in the specialised linguistic practice, the latter imposing a strong imprint on the specialised uses from English to Bulgarian due to the fact that English (as well Russian, of course) is the language of mediation in the numerous cases of intercultural communication and a basis for harmonizing documents.

The insufficient for this purpose regulated volume of the article implies a further study focusing on the specialised uses of the concept of security (*сигурност*) in Bulgarian and Russian and its correlations with the lexemes *security* / *safety* in English.

The present study provides the basis for the following conclusions:

- The concept of security being associated with human well-being and personal security, occupies the central position in the mind of man and is one of the conceptual constants in the language picture of each social/ ethnic group.
- The analytical study of the lexicographic sources gives us the reason to conclude that in the Bulgarian language the concept of security (*сигурност*) has a semi-binary core and includes the subconcepts of proper security and safety (*собствено сигурност* and *безопасност*). The subconcepts of its close-to-core zone and close remote periphery can be determined by analyzing additional empirical material.
- The Bulgarian subconcept *безопасност* (“safety”) is determined by two semes: “harmlessness” and “not being exposed to any danger”.
- The Bulgarian subconcept *собствено сигурност* (“proper security”) includes the following semes: “confidence, definitiveness, reliability,” “positivity,” “safety,” “being defended,” “guaranty”.
- The extensive study of the verbalisation of the Bulgarian metaconcept *сигурност* (“security”) through the means of Russian language indicates that there is a full compliance with the expression of the Bulgarian subconcept *безопасност* (“safety”) by the Russian lexeme *безопасность* (“safety”).

However, the Bulgarian word combinations with the base word *сигурност/ сигурен* (“security / sure”) are presented unequivocally in Russian – along with the lexeme *безопасность* (“safety”), the security concept is represented at a high frequency by another Russian lexeme – *надежность* (“reliability”) (in single cases by some other collocations that are not representative).

- The study of the usage of the Russian lexemes *надежность/безопасность* (“reliability/ safety”) indicates that “safety” verbalises non-hazardous circumstances as well as health-related situations/products as harmless (covering the conceptual core of the Bulgarian subconcept *безопасност* – “safety”). The lexeme „надежность“(„reliability“) is connected with the impeccable and stable functioning of the mechanisms and systems, as well as with the stability/ trustfulness in the interpersonal / social relations (semes covering the conceptual core of the Bulgarian subconcept *собствено сигурност* – “proper security”).

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