"Blame" Concept in Phraseology: Cognitive-Semantic Aspect (Based on the French Language)

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ABSTRACT

Phraseology is one of the basic and most important objects of study in cognitive linguistics. The article deals with verbal fixed phrases in their correlation with the cognitive structure of knowledge – a concept. The used definitional analysis method to identify the basic notions of the conceptual content of the concept of blame and basic representative lexical units of the analyzed concept. They also applied component analysis method to identify the semantic features of French phraseological units, containing the concept of blame, as well as to analyze the relatedness of phraseological units to the studied concept. The methods revealed that basic understanding of the "blame" concept demonstrates the direct relationship of this concept with the action. Therefore, it is presented mainly in verbal phrase ologisms. Based on the used methods, the researchers identified a set of basic representative lexical units of the analyzed concept: a reprimand, reproach, criticism, disapproval. Component analysis of verbal phraseological units (204 units) within the concept of blame made it possible to identify the lexical sets, reflecting the denotative situation and denotative cause of the blame process: "Body Parts", "Food", "Flora and fauna", "Household units".

Introduction

At present, the subject of study of cognitive linguistics are mental units: a conceptual worldview, conceptual categories, concepts, frames, etc. (Rey, 2003). Many researchers now recognize that the most effective method of studying the principles of knowledge organization in the language system is to refer to the notion of a concept (Babushkin, 2001; Vorkachev, 2003; Zalavina & Shorohova, 2016). Concept is verbalized, denoted by a word, otherwise its existence is impossible. The term "concept" is quite widespread, but still has no clear interpretation among researchers: concept is "a global thought-unit, a quantum of

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structured knowledge" (Popova & Sternin, 2007). Concept is an object of the "Perfect" scope, which has a name and reflects the cultural idea of the human of the "Reality" scope (Guiraud, 1969; Godard & Wierzbicka, 2010). Concept is a culturally marked verbalized meaning, expressed in a number of language occurrences, forming the appropriate lexical-semantic paradigm (Vorkachev, 2003). L'idée que nous avons de quelque chose, de sa façon d'être dans la monde (perfect essence, formed in a human mind) (Yarovaya (ed.), 2002). Having analyzed the given definition of the term "concept", we will work with following definition: concept is a memory unit, a quantum of knowledge, which concentrates and crystallizes cognitive experience of a person (Zalavina & Shorohova, 2016).

Particularly interesting is the vocabulary of cognitive studies, namely the scope of cognitive semantics, reflected in the lexical and phraseological units of language. The problem of understanding language units – fixed phrases – as structures, representing knowledge, remains relevant. Fixed phrase can perform the role of standards, cultural and national stereotypes of worldview, point to their symbolic character and act as linguistic bearers of cultural signs (Forrester, 1996). Phraseological units should be understood not literally, but figuratively due to the known to the native speakers language concepts behind them (Goodenough, 1982).

Researches of French phraseological body are distinguished by the presence of nationally marked material and various possibilities of its study. Local and French linguists consider fixed phrases in the study and development of general theoretical and specific problems of French phraseology: fixed phrase interpretation, the role of semantic factors in the formation of phraseology, national identity of phraseology, fixed phrases as concepts of different types etc. (Babushkin, 2001; Piirainen, 2007; Rat; 1999).

For M. Rat a fixed phrase is "expression, façon de parler" (2007). For J. Maruzen a fixed phrase is "locution phraséologique" – "the union of several words, forming a certain kind of lexical unit" (Maruzo, 2004). Detailed interpretation of the essence of phraseological units and its characteristic features are presented by P. Guiraud: "an expression, consisting of several words, forming a syntactic and lexical unity"; unity of form and meaning (unité de forme et de sens), deviation from the grammatical and lexical rules (écart de la norme grammaticale ou lexicale), special metaphorical meaning (valeurs métaphoriques particulières) (Delbecque (ed.), 2002).

Detailed theoretical foundations of French phraseology are presented in the works by A. Rey, in which the scientist recognizes the leading role of semantic factors in the formation and development of phraseology, and considers "semantic transfer" (transfert sémantique) to be the most important criterion. Particularly interesting is A. Rey's idea of unpredictability of phraseological meanings, of the topical problem of its semantic modelability: fixed phrase is a integral unmotivated linguistic sign, random to its components, and completely unpredictable (Rat, 1999). In our study, we share the opinion of A. Rey concerning semantic shifts and consider it as an important aspect in the formation of the phraseological semantics, verbalizing the "blame" concept. Phraseology in the language is understood as a separate unit, characterized by full or partial semantic transformation of components, integrity during the nomination in component separation that reflect the linguistic worldview of a certain national language.

The possibility of varying semantics of a phraseologism is an important principle, A.P. Babushkin based his research on in considering fixed phrases as concepts of different types. While all fixed phrases have a "picture" character, among them one can distinguish mental images ("in one's birthday suit"), concepts, schemes ("Procrustean bed"), concept frames ("Augean stables"), script concepts. Phraseological script concepts are mainly considered as verbal fixed phrases in which semes of action, movement or status are objectified. For example, "to ride someone" (ruthlessly exploit vulnerable people), "to take one's sweet time" (to delay something), "to be henpecked" (to be in full, unquestioning obedience) (Babushkin, 2001). Verbal idioms and fixed phrases can be reversed in a script. Script is a sequence of scenes in time; they are actual frames that unfold in time and space as a sequence of separate episodes, stages, items. In phraseology these are stereotypical episodes with marks of movement, development, state expressed through verbal fixed phrases. The function of verbal phraseological units, verbalizing the "blame" concept is not only reflected in a part of reality, but also in using its name to figuratively denote any action, aimed at another subjectively meaningful object. Such complex denotation of a verbal fixed phrase, verbalizing the concept of blame, is reflected both in the semantics of a verb and in the semantics of an action object, allowing our paper to consider verbal idioms of the analyzed concept as a script concept: donner un savon à qqn. – bring somebody to task (literally give the soap); donner de la férule à qqn. - to criticize someone, pick one to pieces (literally hit with a ruler); mettre/réduire qqn. en poussière/en poudre - criticize someone, pick one to pieces (literally reduce to dust); jeter la pierre à qqn. - give someone a tongue-lashing (literally throw a stone); accomoder qqn. à la sauce piquante - mock someone (literally fill with hot sauce) and many others.

Structuring knowledge representation in phraseological units is based on their mechanisms of meaning, on the need for an understanding of the plan of phraseological units. Semantic structure, allocated in the content of a phraseological unit is regarded as a dual body: material (a combination of lexical units) and ideal (sememes). Sememe, in turn, contains basic units of meaning – semes, i.e. has a structure. The hypothesis, stating that the value of each language unit is made up of semantic components, is the basis for component analysis method – "method of investigating the content aspect of meaningful language units, aiming at breaking the meaning into the smallest semantic components" (Telia, 2004).

Semantic structure of verbal phraseological units is the structural organization of the semes that make up the meaning of a certain meaningful unit. In our study, we adhere to the concept of semes as a result of dividing the maning of verbal phraseological units into the smallest units of the content plane, which at the semantic level corresponds to a differential semantic feature.

While developing a phraseological unit typology, scientists M.M. Kopylenko and Z.D. Popova (2010) believe that types of phraseological units vary "depending on the type of sememes, denoted by lexical units, belonging to this combination". They identify 5 types of sememes, expressed by a lexical unit. According to the symbolism, developed by these authors, these are D_1, D2, C_1, C_2, C_3, where D is a denotative sememe and C is a connotative sememe (idiomatic shift). The authors believe that idiomaticity (semantic shift of lexical units in a combination) is the most important property, allowing us to differentiate phraseological combinations

and identify their types. The phraseological "matrix", developed by the scientists, shows the tendency of phraseological combinations, starting from the free word combinations to the irreducible to a meaning components of phraseology, to express a single idea, equal to the content plane.

To date, scientists give the following seme typology:

1) grammeme/classeme – general categorical seme with grammatical meaning, characterizing words, belonging to a particular part of speech (objectivity, distinctive features, processes, etc.).

2) subcategorial semes – lexico-grammatical semes: lexico-grammatical verb classes (categories of aspect, time, person, number, mood, voice);

3) hyperseme/archiseme denoting objects classes (plants, colour, verbs of motion, etc.);

4) hyposemes that indicate distinctive features of a subject or a verb and distinguish objects of the same class;

5) connotative semes, having a rational and stylistic (attitudinal, emotive and expressive) character;

6) potential (probability) semes, fuond in a particular text.

Since the concept of blame is associated with an action and is mainly verbalized through verbal phraseological units, the body of verbal phraseological units is determined by the presence in its semantic structure of categorical seme "action" or "procedure", a common semantic distinctive feature of "negative evaluation of an object" and an integrated seme "process of expressing negative attitude".

Thus, the object of study are verbal idioms, containing the concept of blame. The subject of research is the study of specific national characteristics of denotative class of an object of a phraseological verb, verbalizing the concept of blame in the French language.

The topicality of this study is determined by the theoretical and practical problems of modern linguistics, focused on the questions, related to the study of mental structures of consciousness – concepts, with the study of phraseology as bearers of extralinguistic knowledge, verbalization of the concept in a language phraseological fund.

Scientific novelty lies within the fact that the paper for the first time carries out a systematic study of French verbal phraseological units in their correlation with the cognitive knowledge structure – a concept, reveals the essential features of conceptual content of blame in the French language, analyzes the denotative class of a French phraseological unit verb object of the studied concept as a part of the national worldview.

Aim of the Study

The purpose is to study the content and the specificity of denotative aspect of semantics of verbal phraseological units, verbalizing the concept of blame in the French language.

Research questions

How to identify a basic understanding of the conceptual content of the "blame" concept in the French language?

How to identify a set of basic semantic features, present in the meaning structure of verbal phraseological units, containing the concept of blame in the French language?

Method

The study is based on the entries of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries (phraseological, explanatory, encyclopedic), in which, using the method of continuous sampling, we selected verbal idioms with a negative evaluation: these are French fixed phrases with the blame reference. Blame is a type of negative evaluation of human activities and behavior, a negative attitude to the situation, created by people. The differentiation "bad" in an act or in a situation, being "blamed", is expressed in a scaling operation of being and depends on the individual qualities of people from different situations, in which they fall.

In determining the interpretation of the "blame" concept, as one aspect of a negative evaluation, we used the traditional method of definitional analysis. Analysis of dictionary definitions, which is one way to identify the seme, was formed as a kind of component analysis. Vocabulary interpretations, containing a set of semantic components of lexical meaning, found a theoretical justification in the works of foreign and local scientists.

Data, Analysis, and Results

Analysis of the dictionary definitions of the concept of blame – the name of the studied concept – allows us to determine the basic concept semes of its conceptual content. The comparison of the results of dictionary definitions, describing the same concept of "blame", was conducted based on dictionaries of the French language by Petit Robert, Petit Larousse Illustré, Hachette:

1) Blâme – 1. Opinion défavorable, jugement de désapprobation sur qqn. ou qqch. V. Anathème, animadversion, censure, condamnation, critique, désapprobation, grief, objurgation, réprimande, reprobation, reproche. 2. Spécialt. Sanction disciplinaire consistant à reprouver officiellement les agissement ou l'attitude d'un fonctionnaire. Donner, recevoir un blâme - p. 189 (Blame - 1. A disapproving opinion, judgment of anyone or anything. Censorship, condemnation, censure, criticism, disapproval, reprimand, reproach. 2. A disciplinary sanction, expressed by disapproval, official misdeed condemnation of employee behavior. To bring, to get the blame).

2) Blâme – 1. Sanction disciplinaire, réprimande. 2. Jugement défavorable que l'on porte sur le comportement ou les paroles de qqn. Une attitude qui mérite le blâme – p. 138 (Blame – 1. A disciplinary sanction, censure. 2. Disapproval, judgment, condemnation of behavior or any statements. Behavior that is reprehensible).

3) Blâme – 1. Jugement défavorable. Encourir le blâme des honnêtes gens. 2. Réprimande officielle faisant partie de la gamme des sanctions scolaires, administratives etc. Un blâme du conseil de discipline – p. 201 (Blame – 1. Judgment. Be subject to censure by decent, honest people. 2. An official reprimand, which is part of school, administrative penalties, etc. Disciplinary Board Censure).

According to the dictionaries, we determined the total differential semantic sign of negative evaluation, so blame is presented as a negative evaluation of

human actions or behavior; to disapprove, regard negatively to some activities; to blame – to express some disapproval, condemn, criticize, make reproaches to smb. for smth., to reprimand smb.

The concept of blame is a type of extremely negative evaluation of human activities and behavior, expressed in condemnation, disapproval, reproach, criticism, reprimand, mockery, abuse. The term "blame" (blâme) is the most neutral term and a common identifier in synonymous number of concept words with negative evaluation of disapproval as a reprimand (réprimande), a reproach (reproche), criticism (critique), curse (injure), mockery (moquerie). Still, term "blame" has every reason to be considered as the name of a concept, as it is emotionally coloured, not expressive, has a semantic "clarity", which gives the opportunity to see it as a part of the concept, which is capable of differentiating in a particular speech situation. The concept of "blame" is expressed by verbal phraseology, which can be considered as a "script concept".

Putting together the semantic structures of the French verbal phraseological units, representing the concept of censure (204 units), we note their characteristic similar and distinctive semantic features. Verbal fixed phrases, containing the concept of blame, have a verbal component in their composition and are characterized by a categorical seme "action" or "process". Fixed phrases are grouped together based on a common semantic distinctive feature "negative evaluation of an object", which is included in the semantic structure of the verbal phraseological units and is an archiseme in a seme hierarchy. Seme "negative assessment of an object", in turn, relies on the seme "restore order", "active influence of a subject on an object": le couler bas – coll. scold smb, ruin someone's reputation; injurier qqn.; donner sur les doigts à qqn. – to reprimand anyone; réprimander qqn.; faire des gorges chaudes – openly scoff at anyone, se moquer de qqn.; donner les étrivières à qqn. - o criticize someone, critiquer qqn.; chercher des pouilles à qqn. – to reproach someone, reprocher qqn. etc. Verbal fixed phrases, united based on an integrated seme "negative evaluation expression process", differ in the process a subject influencing an object: laver la tête à qqn. – make a reprimand (réprimander fortement), jeter à qqn. quelque chose au nez – to blame someone (reprocher vivement), tirer à boulets rouges sur qqn. – vehemently criticizing someone (critiquer qqn. aves une certaine violence), chercher les poux dans la tête à qqn. – to blame someone (reprocher qqn), secouer les puces à qqn. – coll. thrash, scold somebody, literally shake the fleas onto someone, donner du fil à retordre à qqn. – berate anybody, literally to give a twist to thread etc.

The study of the denotative sphere of French verbal phraseology, objectifying the concept of blame, showed that French verbal fixed phrases focus on specific subject areas, objects of reality and an integrated thematic denotative component unity. Component analysis of verbal phraseological units (204 units) of the "blame" reference allowed to identify four lexical sets, reflecting both denotative situation and denotative cause of the "blaming" process, "Household Items" (81 units), "Body Parts" (39 units), "Food" (28 units), "Flora and Fauna" (10 units). The quantitative parameter of a lexical set indicates the importance degree of a phenomenon of extra-linguistic reality. Denotation, not included in these lexical sets, but making up a common denotative class verb object fund, are not less significant for denotative sphere of the blame concept. Most often, they are relevant to the denotation, associated with ethno-linguistic determinants of

native culture and history of the French people. The imagery of verbal phraseological units is not always explicit and requires a certain interpretation of fixed phrases, as mental units of the knowledge, encoded in them. These include verbal phraseological units related to military affairs, hunting, crafts, etc.: tirer à boulets rouges sur qqn. - to criticize someone (literally bombard with red-hot cannon balls); faire des gorges chaudes - openly laugh at someone (literally devour the still warm meat of a wounded beast or fowl.); donner du fil à retordre – berate someone (literally give someone to twist a thread) etc. Verbal phraseological units, expressed by the concept of blame, are distributed into lexical sets and reproduce the language worldview in its separate fragments. Quantitative parameters of a lexical set indicate the degree of importance of a phenomenon of extra-linguistic reality.

By the number of verbal phraseological units dominates the lexical set of "Household Items" (81 un.). This lexical set includes two subsets: household items (40 un.) and the domestics (41 un.). Lexical subset, including specific household items, consists of the following denotations: earth, water, stone, waste ground, glass, fire, carpet, screw, soap, a sieve, a wig comb, etc. The subset of "domestics" includes more abstract denotation: clout, shame, a lesson, a quarrel, punch, guard, slap, attack, etc.: donner une perruque à qqn. – scold someone, set the heat (literally give a wig.); donner un savon à qqn. – make a reprimand to someone (literally give a soap); tenir qqn. sur le tapis - to criticize someone (literally hold on the carpet); tourner la vis à qqn. – berate anyone (literally screw in); tendre du feu pour qqn. – to criticize someone (literally give fire) etc. An analysis of denotation of the verb object of "Household Items" set revealed that the most common denotations are from the subset "Domestics". These are such denotations, as clout, shame, lesson, quarrel, strike, prayer, scene, dirt, which are found in phraseological units of this lexical subset from 6 to 4 times.

On the second position by the number of verbal phraseological units is the lexical set of "Body Parts" (39 un.). This lexical set reflects such denotations of verb objects, as head, face, nose, ears, fingers, hand, back, eyes, rib, foot, teeth: laver la tête à qqn. – to reprimand someone (literally wash your hair), jeter à la tête de qqn. – to blame someone (literally throw smth. in someone else's head); montrer qqn. au doigt – openly scoff at anyone (literally point a finger); donner à qqn. sur les ongles – to reprimand someone (literally hit smb's fingers); déchirer qqn. à belles dents – to criticize someone (literally tear with teeth); faire un pied de nez – laugh at someone (literally show the nose) etc. The analysis of the "Body Parts" lexical set denotation verb object revealed that the denotations of "head" (8 units) and "eyes" (6 units) are used most commonly. Denotation of the verb object of "ears", "arms", "feet" can be met 3 times and denotations of "fingers", "nails", "nose" - 2 times. Such denotation of verb object as "back", "tooth", "rib", "fist", "cheek", "throat", "face", "language", "skin" made up one unit each.

The third position by the number of verbal phraseological units takes the lexical set of "Food" (28 un.). This lexical set includes verbal phraseological units with denotations sauce, soup, casserole, bread, onion, sugar, apple, pear: accomoder qqn. à la sauce piquante – mock someone (literally fill with hot sauce); arranger/assaisonner qqn. aux petits oignons – berate someone (literally spice with onion), tremper une soupe à qqn. – berate someone (literally fill with soup); jeter des pommes cuites – laugh at someone (literally throw baked apples); flanquer un pain (sur la gueule) à qqn. – to reprimand someone (literally throw a

piece of bread into someone else.) etc. The analysis of denotation of the verb object revealed that the most frequent denotations are sauce, bread, salad, sugar. Their frequency varies from 2 to 4 units. Such denotations of verb object as soup, onion, apple, pear, pudding, egg, fat were represented by one unit each.

The lexical set "Flora and fauna" by the number of verbal phraseological units occupies the last, fourth place (10 un.). This lexical set includes verbal phraseological units with denotations fish, flea, louse, horse, monkey, alder, grass: chercher des puces à qqn. – thoroughly criticize someone (literally look for fleas); chercher les poux à la tête de qqn. – to blame someone (literally look for lice on the head); faire qqn. avaler le goujon – to reprimand someone (literally make smb swallow a gudgeon); écrire une lettre de cheval – to reprimand someone (literally write a horse (abusive) letter); couper l`herbe sous le pied de qqn – blame someone (literally cut the grass under smb's feet), etc. The analysis of denotation of the verb object revealed that the most common denotation is louse - 3 units. Such denotations of verb object as fish, fleas, horse, monkey, gillyflower, grass, alder are presented by a single unit each.

It should be noted that all lexical sets have a diversity of denotations. High frequency of use isobserved in such denotations, as head (8 un.), eyes (6 un.), to hit (6 un.), a scene (6 un.) slap (5 un.), prayer (4 un.), row (4 un.), sauce (4 un.). The frequency of the remaining denotations (flea, monkey, gudgeon, grass, alder, etc.) varies from 1 to 3 units, which does not diminish their value in the reflection of the national worldview as a whole. The results can be used by researchers studying the problem of phraseology, cognitive semantics, cultural linguistics in different languages.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the definitional analysis method, the concept of blame has such representative lexical units, as "disapproval", "reproach", "criticism", integrated into stereotypical situations and scenarios of this concept. They are also present in the meanings of verbal phraseological units, selected by definitional analysis of their entries. Within the analysis of the dominant representative lexical unit composition, the blame concept was supplemented with the following units: curse, mockery. Lexical units "disapproval", "reproach", "criticism", "curse" and "mockery" are parts of dictionary definitions of verbal fixed phrases and have a semantic connection with the subject of a blame situation and contain an integral seme "negative evaluation expression process".

Basic understanding of the conceptual content of blame demonstrates that this concept is directly related to the action, so it is predominantly represented in verbal phraseological units. The semantic structure of verbal phraseological units includes categorical semes "action" and "motion". The formal expression of this seme is through assigning verbal phraseological units of one part of speech – verb: passer qqn. par le tamis - criticize smb. (literally to sift through a sieve); jeter la pierre à qqn. – to blame smb. (literally to throw a stone); accommoder qqn. à sauce – mock, make fun of smb. (literally fill with hot sauce); laver la tête à qqn. – to reprimand smb. (literally wash the hair), donner de la férule à qqn. – to reprimand smb. (literally to hit with a ruler), etc. In these processes should be at least two members.

To identify the semantic features of French phraseological units of the analyzed concept, we used the component analysis method, the purpose of which

is to break a word into "elementary meaningful units" – the semantic components or semes. After the founders of the method of identifying elements that make up the lexical meaning, American ethnolinguist W. Goodenough (1982), it became known as the component analysis (Godard & Wierzbicka, 1982). They formulated the basics of the component method.

Since the value of each unit consists of a set of semantic features, one of the basic approaches of word meaning components allocation is a dictionary definition method. Component analysis on dictionary definitions essentially was based on the logically established operation of defining terms. Typical stages of such definition – indicating the nearest kind or class to which the object refers, and determining the differences, i.e. features that distinguish the defined object from all other objects of the same class (Arnold, 2011).

Cognition, from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, is a process of creation and transformation of concepts, so the most important object of study in cognitive linguistics is a concept. We understand concept as a discrete unit of the collective consciousness, which reflects subjects and objects of the real or ideal world, and is stored in the memory of the national language in the form of the known, verbally labeled substrate. In modern linguistics dominates the scientific interest in studying concept verbalization based on phraseology, which is considered by linguists as specific ways of understanding the language representation of the worldview by a certain ethnic group. The concept of blame, verbalized by verbal phraseological units in the French language, can be seen as a special type of idiomatic concepts. Basic concepts of representation of blame demonstrate a direct relationship of this concept with the action and, therefore, it appears mainly in verbal phraseological units.

Since the main component in the composition of verbal phraseological unit is a verb, the selection of phraseology, verbalizing the concept of blame, was made according to the presence in entries of the categorical seme "action/process", total differential seme "negative evaluation" and an integrated seme "negative evaluation expression process".

Implications and Recommendations

Phraseological research material shows that the perception, conceptualization of the phenomenon of blame by French ethnic group is related to the people's value ideas of right and wrong, of good and bad, which are formed with the accepted social and cultural stereotypes of the ethnic group. Blame is a type of negative evaluation, aimed at the characterization of human actions or behavior, negative attitude to a situation created by people. Differentiation of "bad" in an act or in a "blame" situation, depends on the individual qualities of the people who evaluate and from different situations in which these people may find themselves.

Every verbal phraseological unit, containing the concept of blame in the French language, is a certain layer of knowledge. This knowledge is included in the cultural component of phraseology meaning and presents extra-linguistic and ethno-linguistic factors. The analysis of denotative class of phraseological unit verb object showed that the French in the "blaming" process use their denotations, reflecting specificity of the blame concept as a component of the national worldview. Within the verbal phraseological units, representing the concept of blame, denotative class verb object is represented by 4 main lexical sets, reflecting

denotative situation and denotative cause of the "blame" process: "Household Items", "Body Parts", "Food", "Flora and Fauna". Verbal fixed phrases, distributed by lexical sets, reproduce the linguistic worldview in its separate fragments. The analysis showed that the denotative class verb object is even more versatile. It reflects the material, spiritual and cultural aspects of the national worldview. As research perspectives can be considered a comparative analysis of linguoculturological semantics and pragmatics of verbal phraseological units, verbalizing the concept of blame in different languages. This would identify both universal and distinctive features of the analyzed concept and language worldview as a whole.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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