

Natalia G. MOISEIENKO,

PhD, Candidate of Science in Philology, Associate Professor, lecturer at the Department of English Grammar, Odessa National I. I. Mechnikov University, 24/26 Francuzskij blvd., Odessa, 65058, Ukraine;
tel.: +38 093 4388839; +38 067 1087618; e-mail: natalymoiswx@gmail.com;
ORCID ID: orcid.org/0000-0002-8465-5519

CATEGORICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH NOUN FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PROTOTYPE THEORY

Summary. The *object* of the study of this article is the formation of the prototypical categories in human mind and analysis of the process of development of prototypical grammatical categories. The *subject* of our investigation is prototypical characteristics of the English nouns. Its *purpose* is to try to find adequate criteria for prototypical classification of nouns in Modern English. *Methodologically* our research is based upon the laws of cognition, on the theory of the logico-grammatical dynamics (O. A. Zhaborjuk), on such psychological categories as conceptual category, prototype. The descriptive analysis and comparison were used. The *findings* of our work include principles of prototypical classification of nouns in Modern English. *Practical value* of our research consists in possibility of acquiring its results in the course of teaching English as a foreign language and in possibility of their use in fundamental cognitive investigations of the parts of speech of the English language. *Results* of our work are: human way of expressing the thought is based on the structure of predication, verbal expression of the constituents of this structure is subconsciously morphologically and syntactically connected with prototypical concepts created in human mentality and language in the process of evolution. Thus, the definitions of the parts of speech have to include all their prototypical characteristics: semantic and formal. The prototypical semantics of the English noun is substantiality. Basic prototypical formal characteristics of the noun are: case, ability to be determined by the definite article and to be combined with a preposition; syntactically it functions as a subject, predicative and attributive modifier of other nouns.

Key words: noun, concept, prototype, part of speech, substantiality, category, mentality.

Problem justification. Many a scientist investigated peculiarities of functioning of the English nouns in speech, but still there is no common point of view on their categorial characteristics, they are usually defined differently by the representatives of different scientific trends due to the differences in general principles they use to classify words into the Parts of Speech [1; 2; 5; 7–13; 19–2; 24; 25; 27; 28; 33]. With prescriptivists the leading criterion was form, which they treated as morphological and syntactic characteristics of a word, and they united noun and adjective into one group [17, p. 15–28]. Non-structural descriptivists spoke about three principles of classification: form, meaning and function. Though, each separate representative of this trend understood those principles differently and gave preference either to form or to function, usually completely neglecting meaning. With them the noun was either a member of a «noun-words group» (together with noun-pronoun, noun-numeral, infinitive, gerund) or belonged to the group of «substantives» (words which function as nouns) [15; 16; 19]. Structuralists classified words according to their position in a sentence, but the slots for nouns in their substitution frames could be taken by other parts of speech, which means that the criteria for parts of speech division are not sufficient [9]. Transformational generative grammarians did not concern themselves with classification problems at all. That is why they did not work out any distinct approach to the definition of the noun [12]. In post-structural linguistics parts of speech are discriminated on the basis of three criteria: semantic, formal and functional. Though, the scientists differ in their evaluation of the role of

the each of them, which leads to diversity of the points of view on the categorial peculiarities of the noun [2; 4; 5; 7; 10; 24; 25; 33]. Contemporary linguistics understands parts of speech as discourse-cognitive classes, taking into consideration psychological and anthropological peculiarities of the process of cognition. The theory considers each element within a certain class to be a «variant» of its ideal representative (prototype) [1; 8]. In our opinion such approach can give possibility to find the solution of the problem of parts of speech definition in general and to define basic semantic and formal prototypical characteristics of the English noun, though the work in this direction is far from being finished. There is still no unique understanding of the notion «prototype» itself, prototypical descriptions of parts of speech are not systemic, the sufficient prototypical classification of the nouns have not been worked out. The **topicality** of our work is explained by the above mentioned facts. Its **object** is the formation of the prototypical categories in human mind. The **subject** of our investigation is prototypical characteristics of the English nouns. The **purpose** of our work is to try to find adequate criteria for prototypical classification of nouns in Modern English.

The basic material presentation. According to sign systems theory the physical world is reflected in human psyche due to the ability of the brain to get sensor input and possibility to build symbolic structures in the memory, denoting objects of the outer world and their relations. Both abstract and concrete notions can be represented in human mind by certain patterns of neuron activity [8; 22; 26].

It means that in the process of the objective reality cognition a human mind creates groups of mental constructs, corresponding to certain concepts, which are the products of categorization, they are arranged in our memory taxonomically, the basic level of this taxonomical structure is formed by the prototypical concepts — prototypes.

Prototype is understood by modern scientists rather differently. L. V. Barsuk and G. N. Kolodkina think it is a real representative of a category which is the best one because it possesses the greatest number of properties common for the majority of the members of the category [3, p. 35; 14, p. 59]. For R. L. Solso, prototype is an abstraction, a set of stimuli, constituted by a totality of common forms structured according to one and the same pattern [26, p. 96]. In his turn I. E. Vysokov experimentally proved that the prototype reflects a totality of basic and more fundamental effects in the system of the knowledge presentation, one of which is the effect of the categorial dominance [30, p. 77]. H. Rosh states that the basic level of categorization is the most important level for human categorization because it is the most inclusive and thus most informative level [8, p. 143]. Here belong prototypical members of the category [ibidem, p. 145]. According to H. Rosh's investigations they were found to exhibit a large number of attributes common to many members in the category, while less prototypical members were found to exhibit fewer attributes common to other members of the category [ibidem, p. 147].

In psychology category is understood as a totality of objects and phenomena of the objective world, their analogues in our conscience are concepts [22, p. 53]. In grammar category can be seen as expression of certain grammatical meaning by means of a corresponding grammatical forms paradigm. Grammatical meaning is the result of the process of generalization of mental concepts reflecting certain fragments of objective reality and their lingual presentation in thinking and speech. Grammatical (categorical) meaning is common to all members of the grammatical category, that is why we can consider it to be prototypical meaning.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned facts we can conclude that establishing of prototypical categorial characteristics of the English noun must start with the analysis of its prototypical semantics and corresponding prototypical grammar forms paradigm. Grammarians define the semantics of the noun in different ways. Thus, E. S. Legget states that the noun points to «a person, a place or a thing» [16, p. 34]. Some other scientists think that the noun is associated with objects [17, p. 45; 25, p. 101]. D. Biber et al. write that nouns commonly refer to concrete entities, such as people and things in the external world (e. g. book, girl), but they may also denote qualities and states (e. g. freedom, friendship) [4, p. 43]. The definitions mentioned above try to connect the part of speech under analysis with certain phenomena of the objective world, but they do not explain such cases as «examination», «concert», these words point neither to a person, a place, a thing (even in philosophical understanding as «an independently existing part of the objective world»), nor to an object. They also cannot be completely associated with qualities and states [20, p. 197].

H. Leech et al. say that nouns typically are associated with physical phenomena: people, objects, places, substances etc. It is evident that nouns point not only to concrete things and phenomena but also to abstract concepts which are not connected with anything tangible in our reality [15, p. 122].

In this case the question arises about prototypical in categorial semantics of the noun. For A. V. Scherba it is «thingness», «substantiveness» [24, p. 78]. This point of view is shared by many grammarians, for example N. F. Irten'eva [11, p. 103], A. I. Smirnickij [25, p. 74], M. Y. Blokh [5, p. 22], T. A. Barabash [2, p. 111]. L. M. Volkova mentions that the noun possesses the grammatical meaning of thingness, substantiality [29, p. 37]. In her turn I. O. Alexeyeva explains the categorial meaning of the noun as «substance» or «thingness» [1, p. 103]. In I. K. Kharitonov's point of view the noun possesses the general implicit lexico-grammatical meaning of «thingness (substance)» in the wide sense of the word [13, p. 37].

However, the category of thingness, substantiveness, substantiality is a conceptual category and does not correspond to any concrete thing. In this respect V. M. Zhirmunskij, explained that when speaking about noun pointing to a thing, one must keep in mind that thingness is understood as a philosophical, logical category [33, p. 28]. At the same time D. Katz declares that a lot of nouns are not connected with the notion thingness or substantiality (truth, pain). In his opinion such nouns have nothing in common in their semantics [12, p. 224]. Concerning this statement we would like to mention that no word points directly to anything in the outer world. Each component of an utterance, of a sentence is a sign, a denotement, a name of a fragment of thought of a speaker, which only indirectly reflects a certain fragment of the objective world including the speaker.

Thus, the noun is associated with certain concept in the conscience of a language user and through it is correlated with objects and phenomena of the objective world.

Now we will compare the overt forms of the nouns *boy* and *concert*:

boy, boys, boy's; the boy, about the boy;

the boy was (the boys were) good; we saw this boy (object);

concert, concerts, concert's; the concert, about the concert; concert was (the concerts were) interesting; we liked this concert (object).

As far as we can see their overt forms are similar, conceptually the noun «boy» is associated with a substance, though the noun «concert» conceptually does not point to a substance it is treated in speech as if it did. It means that the representatives of the language community perceive it as having substantivity qualities. I. O. Alexeyeva explains that «thingness» is a grammatical meaning that permits names of abstract notions, actions and qualities to function in the same way with names of objects and living beings [1, p. 32]. I. K. Kharitonov says that the noun denotes things, objects and abstract notions presented as substance [13, p. 28]. Everything mentioned above leads to the conclusion that human mentality categorizes phenomena of the objective world in accordance with certain scheme which corresponds to predication structure in our thinking and speech. As soon as this structure has strict places for its members pointing to matter (substances) and their attributes (characteristics of its existence in time and space), then grammatical units occupying these positions will semantically and formally correspond to prototypical representatives of the parts of speech with the help of which the members of the predication structure are verbally expressed.

Speaking about the development of human thinking, language and speech, O. A. Zhaborjuk states that concepts and notions as units of thinking appear in the human conscience as a result of processing of the impressions taken from the outer world on the basis of predication (the construct of thought) and predicativeness (perceiving with senses and emotions) [31, p. 7]. Gradually the associative connections between the objective phenomena are polished, they start to reflect nature more accurately, coming closer to its essence. There appear conditions for formation of such general concepts as being, substantivity, quality, property, etc. [32, p. 11]. This directs structuring of the natural language — words subconsciously are distributed between conceptual groups, getting certain morphological shape, parts of speech are conceived [ibidem].

Conclusions. As far as we can see human way of expressing the thought is based on the structure of predication, verbal expression of the constituents of this structure is subconsciously morphologically and syntactically connected with prototypical concepts created in human mentality and language in the process of evolution. That is why the scientific definitions of the parts of speech have to include all their prototypical characteristics: semantic and formal (morphological and syntactic).

From here it follows that the prototypical (categorial, grammatical) semantics of the English noun is substantiality. Unlike pronouns the nouns are associated with specified substances or notions which are presented as substances in our conscious [18, p. 43]. We understand substantiality as a prototypical mental category which reflects in our mind all possible instances of manifestation of matter in surrounding world.

Coming from the statement that prototypical elements «exhibit a large number of attributes common to many members in the category», then the common attributes must be distinguishing in establishing the prototypical grammatical forms paradigm. Concerning the noun, the results of our analysis showed that the most common categorial morphological and syntactic characteristics of the noun are: case, ability to be determined by the definite article and to be combined with a preposition; syntactically it functions as a subject, predicative and attributive modifier of other nouns [17, p. 54; 18, p. 43].

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МОЙСЕЄНКО Наталія Григорівна,

кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри граматики англійської мови Одеського національного університету імені І. І. Мечникова; Французький бульвар, 24/26, Одеса, 65058, Україна;
тел.: +38 093 4388839; +38 067 1087618; e-mail: natalymoiswx@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8465-5519

ЧАСТИНОМОВНІ ОЗНАКИ АНГЛІЙСЬКОГО ІМЕННИКА У СВІТЛІ ТЕОРІЇ ПРОТОТИПІВ

Анотація. *Об'єктом* цього дослідження є процес формування прототипічних категорій у людській свідомості та закономірності розвитку прототипічних граматичних категорій. *Предметом* наукової розвідки є прототипічні характеристики англійських іменників. *Мета* роботи зводена до визначення адекватних критеріїв щодо створення прототипічної класифікації іменників у сучасній англійській мові. *Методологічно* це дослідження базується на законах пізнання, на таких психологічних категоріях як концептуальна категорія, прототип, на теорії логіко-граматичної динаміки (О. А. Жаборюк). Було застосовано методи дескриптивного аналізу та зіставлення. *Результати* роботи пропонують принципи побудови прототипічної класифікації англійських іменників. *Практичне значення* дослідження полягає у можливості використати її висновки у процесі викладання англійської мови як іноземної, а також у разі проведення фундаментальних когнітивних досліджень частин мови в англістиці. *Висновки* наукової розвідки полягають у визнанні наступних положень: людська думка структурована як предикація, вербалізація конститuentів такої структури підсвідомо пов'язана із прототипічними категоріями людського мислення та мовлення, що розвинулись у процесі ево-

люції, отже, визначення частин мови має базуватися на прототипічних семантичних і формальних характеристиках. Прототипічна семантика іменника — субстанціональність, базові прототипічні формальні характеристики — відмінки, здібність сполучатись із означеним артиклем, прийменником, синтаксично функціонувати як підмет, додаток, предикатив, атрибутивний модифікатор інших іменників.

Ключові слова: іменник, концепт, прототип, частина мови, субстанціональність, категорія, ментальність.

МОЙСЕЕНКО Наталия Григорьевна,

кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры грамматики английского языка Одесского национального университета имени И. И. Мечникова; Французский бульвар, 24/26, г. Одесса, 65058, Украина;
тел.: +38 093 4388839, +38 067 1087618; e-mail: natalymoiswx@gmail.com;
ORCID ID: orcid.org/0000-0002-8465-5519

ЧАСТЕРЕЧНЫЕ ПРИЗНАКИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ИМЕНИ СУЩЕСТВИТЕЛЬНОГО В СВЕТЕ ТЕОРИИ ПРОТОТИПОВ

Аннотация. *Объект* данного исследования — процесс формирования прототипических категорий в человеческом сознании и закономерности развития прототипических грамматических категорий. *Предмет* нашего исследования составляют прототипические характеристики английских существительных. *Цель* работы сводится к определению адекватных критериев создания прототипической классификации существительных. *Методологически* данное исследование основывается на законах познания, на таких психологических категориях как концептуальная категория, прототип, на теории логико-грамматической динамики (Е. А. Жаборюк). Были применены методы дескриптивного анализа и сопоставления. *Результатами* исследования является выделение принципов построения прототипической классификации английских существительных. *Практическое значение* работы заключается в возможности использовать её выводы в ходе преподавания английского языка как иностранного, а также при проведении фундаментальных когнитивных исследований частей речи в английском языке. *Выводы* научной работы сводятся к следующим положениям. Человеческая мысль структурирована как предикация. Вербализация конститuentов такой структуры подсознательно связана с прототипическими категориями человеческого мышления и речи, которые развились в ходе эволюции. Следовательно, определение частей речи должно основываться на прототипических семантических и формальных характеристиках языковых единиц. Прототипическая семантика имени существительного — субстанциональность, базовые прототипические формальные характеристики — падеж, способность сочетаться с определённым артиклем, предлогом, синтаксически функционировать как подлежащее, дополнение, предикатив, атрибутивный модификатор других существительных.

Ключевые слова: имя существительное, концепт, прототип, часть речи, субстанциональность, категория, ментальность.