

POLYFUNCTIONALITY OF ENGLISH QUANTITATIVE WORDS

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The article in question considers the functioning of quantitative units, their language and speech aspects. The introduction is focused on the most significant items of the reports – definition of numerals, words of weight and measure, aims, methods of investigation, empiric materials applied, evolution modifications and perspectives of further study.

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The analysis of empiric material proves that polyfunctionality of the subject is at work with nominative and communicative functions. By dictionary definitions the quantitative words embody the exact numbers/measures. At the speech level quantitative assessment radically changes: there come exact, approximate and zero markers of quantifications. This scientific novelty is unfortunately not included into the academic process.

The metatag *quantity* refers to units which verbalize the results of cognition through semes (number, measure). The allonyms of this type objectivize the arrangement of two groups – number paradigm and measure paradigm.

The words do not only nominate things and allow communications, but they are also involved into the investigation process, they enable solving the mysteries of language and its inherent properties of systematic arrangement. The latter is implied by comparison, the comparison – by convergence and divergence, convergence and divergence make systems; the ways of their reconstructions are eternal in cognition.

The logic category of quantity is made available due to the analysis of the cognitive nature of the linguistic units which make quantification work alongside with other semiotic signs. It is generally known that quantity does not exist independently, singly. It is an inherent property of real and imaginative worlds. The cognition of quantity results in some gains of the scientific picture of the world.

Counting as a mechanism of cognition works with linguo-creative thinking (Shvachko, 2008, p. 124). The

denominal tendency is traced in the constant modifications and semantic deviations. This is verified by the cycles of their evolution: ($N_1 \rightarrow \text{Num} \rightarrow N_2$): five \rightarrow fiver (\$5), six \rightarrow sixer (a team), million – millionaire, millionaireism.

The process of lexicalization is objectivized by emergence of set-expressions with numerals. Numeric components yield to nominal ones, quality comes forward: “forty winks”, “as thick as two thieves”, “seven wonders”, “two dogs over one bone”. Numerals may be dropped or substituted, the quantitative zero constituents do not influence the general message: “to make two (both) ends meet”, “saying and doing are two (different) ways”, “as drunk as (seven) lords”, “as cross as (two) dogs over a (one) bone”; “as like as (two) peas”.

The numeric words are bifunctional as they are used in the type of the examples above, and in abstract counting of the type “two times two is four”, “four divided by two is two”. The numeric features are verbalized by monolexical and polylexical units. Phraseological ones do not stand apart, they express quantity (in our case: number) – explicitly and implicitly. Empiric material objectivizes the existence of the paradigmatic cluster – language quantity field. The latter is bicedentred; numeric and measure units constitute its major sectors. Numeric words (numerals) major in it, for they are used with discrete things directly and with indiscrete ones – as a team with measure units: “two apples”, “three trees”; “two pounds of sugar”, “three bushels of coal”.

Quasi-words are used not only in the English language: “hickory”, “dickory”, “dick” (kid’s song). The Celtic units

“hevera” (8), “devera” (9), “dick” (10) are used in the cowboys’ slang (Litvin 2005, p. 203). The archaic units have the tendency to vanish. Nominal property comes forth in words made by conversion: a thousand people \rightarrow thousands. Bisemy of numerals, i.e., their quantitative and non-quantitative meanings, works time and again on their diachronic vectors: “two or three”; “two upon ten”; “to be in two minds”; “when two Sundays come together”.

The category of quantity refers to different areas: it has logical, linguistic and mathematic characteristics. Until now the dual number is implied by two eyes, two legs, left-right side of body, two hands, two arms, moon and sun, sunrise and sunset, day and night. Thus entity and duality have gone their way together but apart from times immemorial. “Duality” as the prominent Ukrainian scholar notes “is associated with matriarchy yielding to patriarchy” (Tarantetz, 1999, p. 17). The notion of three is closely correlated with mythology. Slavonic people symbolized three by cycles the god of the Sun implying morning, afternoon and night. In folk-tales there existed three-headed snakes, three kingdoms, three urgent problems, three sons, three efforts and the like. Cognition is slow in its progress. The number of “four” repeated the evolution of 1, 2, 3 numbers. The Tripol agriculture was four-measure oriented due to the pressing urgency of land measuring. Four components are anthropologically oriented: ahead, behind, left, right; cross image; four-faced god ruling the Universe. Each succeeding number was firstly perceived in terms of “many”: “two heads are better than one”; “four eyes see better than two”; “two is

company, three is none”.

Thus, the words keep history of civilization fresh and open for those people who are not reluctant to get to know it. The explicit markers of the standard units have been lost with numerals. Contemporary numerals present names of abstract quantitative meaning, the proof of their old background is verified by the study of primeval language numerals (1), quantity units of later construction (2), reconstruction of old forms (3), semantic tendencies of relative words (4), their combinability and collocation (5), word-building potentiality (6) and anthropomorphic factors (7).

Just like people, words have their own life stories, sagas of ups and downs. People come and go. Words may stay longer. They are open to modifications – both in their outer and inner structures. By numeric words we mean numerals, their lexical parallel units semantizing “number” – relating to quantitative features of discrete things: “six children”, “a dozen books”, “a couple of people”, “dialogue”, “millionaire”, “two universities”. The liguco-cognitive story of numerals should not be closed until it is continued by the succeeding moments in their diachronic evolution:

(i) they go back to concrete referents;

(ii) with times they come to function as absolute terms;

(iii) determinologized quantitative words lose their quantitative meaning and become aligned with synonyms, antonyms and stylistic devices;

(iv) they are the working components of phraseological units;

(v) they are known for polyfunctionality (nominative, cognitive, word-building power);

(vi) they are flexible in their semantic deviation (substance → quantity → quality → zero charge);

(vii) they possess the epidigmatic function.

Epidigmatic function is objectivized in particular by emergence of numerals.

Both numerals and denumerals (words made of numeral morphemes) are contextually determined; cognition is being reflected by exact definite and indefinite marking. The derivative units of secondary nature join different parts of speech. The denumeral nouns,

adjectives, adverbs come to the forefront. Syntactical denumeral units yield to them. Denumerals keep their “parents” alive. Moreover, they serve as the ground for further evolution, when by conversion they stimulate the life of notional, lexically charged words. Thus, this factor makes the cyclic way of quantitative units vivid. Among the denumeral units every fourth belongs to the syntactical functional words, the status of which is not identified until they are syntactically treated. A proverb says “use soft words but hard facts”. The linguistic analysis of denumerals verifies the status of notional and functional units. In our experiment: 1085 examples are notional denumerals, 315 – syntactical formants (in the cluster of 1400 experimented units analyzed in the English literary texts (Shvachko 2008, p. 21)).

The “lust for life” of such denumerals like “once”, “twins”, “teeners”, “millionaire”, “fortnight” is obvious. The lexeme “one” has great history for it belongs not only to the “family of numeral” but it also “eyewitnessed” many stages of the English word building. “One” has etymological parallels in the domains of articles, pronouns, nouns and syntactical forms: “once”, “only”, “alone”, “none”, “anyone”, “someone”, “oner (to be the first/a oner at smth)”, “oneness”, “only if”, “when only”. The above derivative words look homonymous but they are functionally identified on the syntagmatic level. For example: “Abby hoped this line would make her plan seem the only sensible option” (Kelly, 2003, p. 265). “Only if you help me it will be easier to settle” (Cookson, 2001, p. 76). “Because only he can move Jess from the grief toward happiness” (Sparks, 2012, p. 42). “She wrote not only the text but also selected illustrations” (Steel, 1991, p. 190). “Only then did she realize that her father loved her with all his heart” (Gree, 2002, p. 154).

The linguistic analysis proves that the words with common semes undergo common modifications. The quantitative words undergo the process of evolution and involution. The denumerals mirror syncretism of their predecessors (numerals), initial bisemy. The secondary constructions keep memories of “parents”, developing their modifications. At the

syntagmatic level the numerals verbalize exact, approximate, and indefinite quantity – numerals in collocations: “by two”, “in two ways”; “for about two hours”, “a bird or two”; “nine (twenty winks)”; “as cross as (two) dogs over one bone”; the denumerals work likewise in nominative units: “once”, “alone”, “fourfold”, “someone”, “fortnight”, “oncer” (brother), “oncer” (church visitor).

Numerals and words of weight and measure in language make a terminological group which verbalizes the quantitative properties of countable and uncountable things exactly. Numerals fulfill the measuring function of words. They count measure units and allow quantification. Cf.: (three tons) of sugar, (two yards) of silk. The analyzed subgroups make major centers of lexico-semantic field of quantity. The divergence of these groups is in the choice of determined units – discrete and indiscrete.

In conclusion, we assume that numeric words and their secondary denumeral formations are polyaspected, polyfunctional and polymodal units. They are highly prolific, prosperous and perspective considering the further investigation in modus of Language Speech and Speech activities. Numerals are marked by syncretism, simultaneous actualization of two semes – “substance” and “quantity”. With time “substance” yields to quantity, and the analyzed words convert into genuine terms. Then there works the divergence in speech modus (in contrast to language modus). Both groups are open to shifts: from exact quantity to approximate and zero quantity. The cyclic evolution of investigated units is vivid in the process of lexicalization and gramaticalization on their epidigmatic vectors.

The vistas of this paper is in identification of conjunction between the obtained results and those to come in future which is indispensable in order to deepen the theory of systematic arrangement of language and its semantic groups on the one hand; in order to widen the scientific world picture on the other hand. Constructive dialogues and discussions are badly needed to solve the problems of the lacunar entropic nature. Practical value of gains obtained

awaits the application in the educational process.

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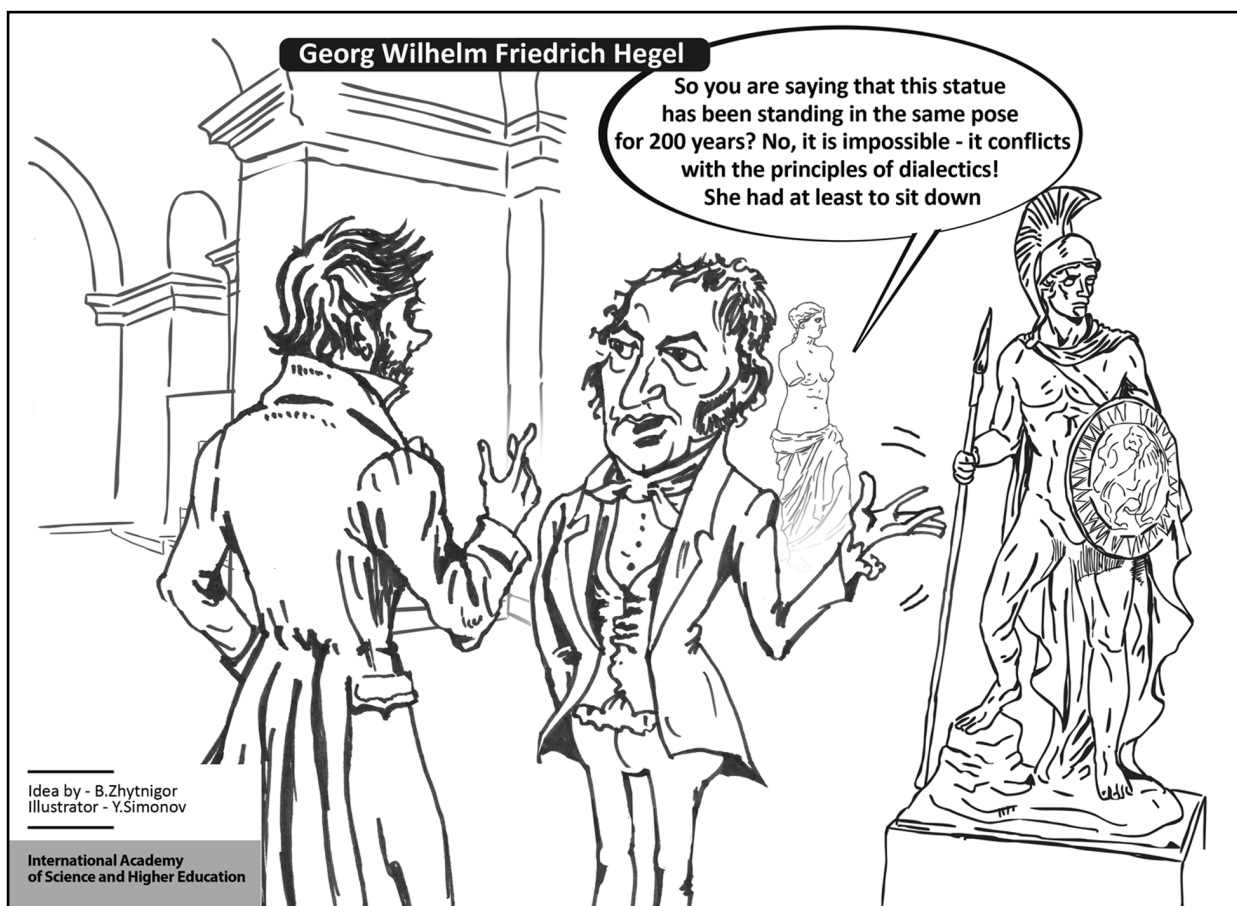
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