

SEMANTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VERBS OF SENSORY PERCEPTION IN SERBIAN AND ROMANIAN

Summary

The subject of the study is the semantic description of the lexical-semantic field of verbs of sensory perception in Serbian and Romanian.

The Introduction sets out the purpose of examining the domain of perception verbs, presents the subject of the study, its basic tasks, and shows the importance of sensory perception in linguistics and other disciplines. The aim of the study is to define the similarities and differences in the semantics of the verbs of sensory perception, based on a description of the entire semantic field of these verbs in Serbian and Romanian. The study presents a complement to the research previously conducted on these problems in linguistics by exploring verbs of olfactory, gustative and tactile perception, which have not been analyzed sufficiently or at all in Serbian and Romanian.

The basic tasks of the study are: a) isolating the semantic components of verbs of sensory perception in Serbian and Romanian, b) determining translation equivalents on a syntagmatic plan, c) discovering connections between the semantic field of sensory, purely physical perception, and other semantic fields, and in regard to this, the determination of similarities and differences, d) describing minimal lexical and syntactic context conditions necessary for expressing a particular meaning.

In Serbian linguistics, this semantic field is investigated more than in Romanian, but both in Serbian and Romanian papers and studies, the emphasis is placed on verbs of visual or auditory perception. Verbs expressing other modalities of perception usually receive just a mention. In Romanian, there is a monograph dedicated to verbs of all sensory modalities, i.e. all types of perception, while in Serbian there are none. There are also papers that tackle the problem of contrasting this semantic field in different languages, taking into consideration the polysemy of the verbs from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. All existing papers take into consideration only basic verbs of sensory perception, i.e. the most prototypical ones. The semantic field of Serbian and Romanian verbs of sensory perception has never been the subject of contrastive research.

The analysis of the referential meaning in this study is based on the theory of semantic fields and componential analysis, which implies the decomposition of the semantic content of the lexical unit into smaller elements, which are usually called semantic features, semantic markers, semes, semantic components, etc. The semantic components are useful for understanding translation equivalents, synonyms, antonyms, etc., and they are very useful in the construction of the lexicographic definitions. The componential analysis conducted in this study incorporates the delimitation of semantic features from the definition of lexical units, but also considers their behaviour within a wider context, taking into consideration the view that the meaning of a word cannot be analyzed out of context.

The semantic derivation is presented in the last chapter. With verbs of sensory perception, a semantic transfer of meaning into the abstract domain can be observed, which is very important for exploring the human conceptualization of the world. The semantic transfer from one domain into another is not accidental, but it occurs systematically and it is based in the body, but also culturally determined. Verbs of visual perception are connected to the abstract sphere of cognition and verbs of auditory perception are considered to be linked to the aspects of communication in human life. Verbs of gustatory perception are linked mostly to personal likes and dislikes, with the domain of experience and enjoyment, taking into consideration that the sense of taste is subjective, which can also be said about the olfactory and tactile sense. Verbs of olfactory perception are connected to the conceptualization of negative features. Verbs of tactile perception are linked to emotions. With regard to this, it will be shown that the verbs of the last three modalities mentioned can give us more material for understanding how humans conceptualize the world. It will be shown that verbs of gustatory, olfactory and tactile perception are also to some extent linked to cognition.