ACTUALIZATION OF THE LEXEMES “MASTER”, “MASTERICA” IN SPEECH AS A REFLECTION OF MODERN REALITIES

Changing realities of modern life, the emergence of new professions, concepts steadily leads to the search for appropriate nominations. As a rule, for these purposes, the language borrows a new word or updates a long-known one. It is natural to assume that the actualization of an already existing lexeme will introduce a number of changes both at the level of semantics of an already established concept and at the syntagmatic features of lexemes, which may be due to the requirements for the nomination of modern realities, as well as axiological components included in these “requirements”. This article presents the results of a psycholinguistic experiment aimed at identifying the modern perception of the lexemes master, mistress, as well as their activation within a given context. In order to determine the modern seminal composition, the authors compare the semes presented in the key explanatory dictionaries of the Russian language with the semes identified during the experiment. Based on the results obtained, the authors come to the conclusion that the change in modern realities, the popularization of feminitives lead to a certain transformation of the seminal structure of lexemes.

Keywords: Russian language changes, actualization of lexemes, native Russian vocabulary, semantics, transformation of traditional semantics.

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АКТУАЛИЗАЦИЯ ЛЕКСЕМ «МАСТЕР», «МАСТЕРИЦА» В РЕЧИ КАК ОТРАЖЕНИЕ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ РЕАЛИЙ

Изменение реалий современной жизни, появление новых профессий, понятий неуклонно ведет к поиску соответствующих номинаций. Как правило, в данных целях язык заимствует новое слово или же актуализирует давно известное. Естественно предположить, что актуализация уже существующей лексемы привнесет ряд изменений как на уровне семантики уже устоявшегося понятия, так и на синтагматических особенностях лексем, что может быть обусловлено требованиями к номинации современных реалий, а также включенными в состав данных «требова-ний» аксиологическими составляющими. В данной статье представлены результаты психолингвистического эксперимента, направленного на выявление современного восприятия лексем «мастер», «мастерица»,
a также их активизацию в рамках заданного контекста. С целью определения современного семного состава авторы проводят сопоставление сем, представленных в ключевых толковых словарях русского языка, с семами, выявленными в ходе эксперимента. В результате анализа полученных результатов авторы приходят к выводу о том, что изменение современных реалий, популяризация феминитивов приводят к определенной трансформации семной структуры лексем.

Ключевые слова: изменения в современном русском языке, актуализация лексем, исконно русская лексика, семантика, трансформация традиционной семантики.

**Introduction**

Linguistics of the last decades is focused mainly on the activity approach to the problem of meaning, which consists of the meaning interpretation as a process, where the meanings itself is taken as internal formations. As A. A. Leontiev wrote, “… the psychological structure of meaning is, first of all, a system of differential signs of meaning correlated with various types of word relationships in the process of real speech activity, a system of semantic components considered not as an abstract linguistic concept, but in the dynamics of communications, in the entirety of the linguistic, psychological and social conditionality of the word” [Leontiev 1971:11]. Moreover, due to the activation of Internet communication, changes in extralinguistic factors of the communication process itself, quite serious changes began to appear in the vocabulary of the Russian language [Skorikova, Orlov 2018; Radbil 2014].

In this regard, the process of updating a number of native Russian lexemes seems to be rather attractive. One of the most interesting questions is the problem of young people appealing to the native Russian lexemes and the modern internal organization of actualized words. In this paper, we attempt to trace the transformations of the seminal organization of the lexemes master, masteritsa (craftswoman), as well as to identify the causes of their new appearance.

**Methods**

Today the scientific exploration starts with the choosing of the scientific method. Traditionally, three most popular methods of collecting language material are introspection, observation and experiment. Each linguistic direction has its own methods in its arsenal, however, for a comprehensive analysis of linguistic phenomena and obtaining valid data in modern linguistics, there should be used a combination of different ap-
proaches. The experiment is currently the leading principle of language exploring and a reliable basis for proving the validity of the revealed patterns. For a reliable evidence base, “it is recommended to use different experimental techniques and then compare the obtained data. It is useful to correlate the results of experiments with conclusions obtained not only experimentally” [Sakharny 1989: 89].

Among the various techniques used in experimental semantics most pointed out are reconstruction or modeling of some real forms of speech–thinking activity, which allows us to identify various aspects of the functioning and organization of meaning. Any psycholinguistic method include a link in the search for meanings semantically related to the subject, and highlight these connections in the form of a matrix of semantic distances, semantic fields, semantic spaces, etc.

Along with modeling and observation, there is a fairly wide range of experimental methods in modern psycholinguistics. Modern psycholinguists conducts experiments both using the “pencil and paper” method and also more technological installations, including the method of registering eye movements. Also, such methods and methods of presenting stimulus material are actively used, such as the task of lexical solution, priming, reading with self-regulation of speed, the method of acting out scenes, the method of repeating words, the method of detecting phonemes, the method of naming by drawing, rapid sequential visual presentation and many others [Fedorova 2020].

One of the most popular methods of collecting empirical data today is an associative experiment used to model an associative field. As a result of the reaction to a certain stimulus, a way of actualizing the psychological meaning of a word as an object of an individual’s conscience. A measure of the semantic connection of a pair of objects in an associative experiment is the similarity of the distributions of their associations. “By exploring such methods, one can imagine not only the integrative ‘mechanism’ of the dynamics of meaning, but also identify at least some psycholinguistic principles of changing the semantics of language in the spontaneous speech activity of members of society” [Pishchalnikova 2019: 5–6].

The specificity of an individual’s reaction, according to scientists, is determined by the specifics of his image of the world and the motives of activity that are formed under the influence of culture. That is, thanks to the results of the associative experiment, it is possible to obtain an empirical basis for the indirect study of culture, since “an associative thesaurus is both a way of fixing the language ability of a native speaker, <…> and a base for establishing the universal and individual in his organization” [Ibid.].
In this case, the stimulus word is especially important, triggering the mechanism of identification of the perceived word, and the reactions received indicate the degree of significance of the signs and the relevance of the corresponding connections in the lexicon of the personality. At the same time, the choice of the association strategy occurs unconsciously, and, consequently, the verbal associations obtained do not depend on the context, but are essentially related to the meaning. The analysis of quantitative data, parameterization of the research results allows us to observe shifts in the linguistic meanings of stimulus words caused primarily by extralinguistic factors.

Working with the stimulus word, we offered respondents two levels of perception: the first task involved the inclusion of direct associations (Who is the master? Who is a craftswoman?); the second question assumed the inclusion of these tokens in a certain context (make up three sentences with the proposed words).

Results

In the psychosemantic experiment we conducted the lexemes master and masteritsa, that were offered as a stimulus for interpretation. The mentioned words were taken as conceptual words, they exist in a system of multiple interpretations, “at the same time, their interpretative field can both expand and narrow over time” [Bragina 2014: 53]. Since the meaning of the word reflects both its individual perception and traditional common-language representations, experimental data makes it possible to identify the semantic components that appear as constants and as variables in the structure of the meaning of a word, as well as to observe associative reactions in the modern linguistic picture of the world [Yerofeyeva, Solovyov, Bayrasheva 2020].

The conducted associative experiment allowed us to determine, firstly, that the modern semantic organization of each of the analyzed lexemes. So, the word master, according to the experiment, first of all actualizes in the minds of respondents the idea of “professionalism” (66%). It should be noted that the semantic item “professionalism” receives a certain differentiation: here, firstly, we should talk about the master as a person who deftly, skillfully performs a certain type of activity (30%); secondly, as a person of a certain profession (36%). Note that dictionaries [Ushakov 1966, Dal 2002, Efremova 2000] do not record the connection of the master token with any particular profession, but only indicate the qualifications of the employee, his competence, whereas respondents directly associate the master token with the following professions: carpenter, plumber,
mechanic, electrician, locksmith, painter, master kitchen installation, pottery master, factory worker. As we can see, all of these professions assume the presence of a real result of activity. In addition, we have noted the options of the master of eyelashes, the master of manicure.

The perception of the *master* token as a highly qualified teacher reveals quite rarely (11%).

It is noteworthy that 14% of the reactions received represented the *master* token as a comprehensive positive assessment of a person: he is a jack of all trades. This expression quite clearly emphasizes the abilities of the described object and at the same time retains a purely positive assessment. While 9% of the recorded reactions presented the *master* token as a means of light irony over a person’s failures: he is a master of getting into trouble, failures.

If we talk about professionalism as the skillful possession of a certain skill, then some additions also appear here: dexterity and professionalism (according to dictionaries) begin to be accompanied by the following characteristics: confidence, hard work, luck, many years of experience, doing work on time and without complaints, talent. The most interesting of the listed signs for us is the characteristic: without errors and complaints. We believe that such characteristics have become quite popular due to the fairly widespread system of reviews of hired employees (in this case, we mean reviews of the works of masters, putting down ratings, fixing on shortcomings).

The analysis of the results of the psycholinguistic experiment in the field of perception of the *masteritsa* lexeme also led us to certain conclusions. Let’s start with the fact that this token itself is represented differently in dictionaries. So, in the dictionary of the Living Great Russian language, it does not stand out as an independent dictionary entry. In D.N. Ushakov’s dictionary, token *masteritsa* (craftswoman) is interpreted as “1. A worker in a sewing or hat workshop; 2. A qualified worker, female.” [Ushakov 1996]. As we can see, this token is characterized by binding to a certain type of professional activity. The results of the experiment made it possible to establish that the modern perception of the *masteritsa* token also has a binding in a certain profession (craft): tattoo artist, weaver, seamstress, manicurist, make-up artist, needlewoman, artist, hairdresser. 59% of the answers concerned precisely the definition of a profession, while 31% of the answers revealed this “dexterity of doing something”, as a part of the experiment.

**Discussions**

The obtained results quite clearly indicate that the gender component of the token has declined, while the scope of professions correlatations
with the *master* token has expanded. Note that in this case, the *master* token is actualized as a component of the profession name.

Moreover, the combination Master of sports was mentioned quite actively, which may indicate, in our opinion, a fairly active usage of this phrase, as well as the popularity of professional sports in our country in recent years.

We also found that the *masteritsa* token can be used as a neutral way of naming an employee (10%), in such cases the token does not contain any evaluation, but becomes a kind of common name for a female employee: This craftswoman does not work today (*Eta masteritsa segodnya ne rabotaet*). This fact allows us to say that due to the actualization of feminitives in the last decade, a number of words capable of realizing “axiological potential” lose this ability within the framework of professional discourse.

### Conclusion

The shifts in the associative field of the words *master* and *masteritsa* are obvious today, despite their attribution to the mental lexicon, and are associated with changes in some areas of human activity. Extralinguistic factors significantly affect the semantic potential of these lexemes and are reflected not only in the denotative, but also in the connotative parts of their lexical meaning. Not only the loss or withdrawal to the periphery of human activity of many crafts and methods of manual labor, but also the emergence of new ones (manicure, tattoos, etc.) affect the construction of the associative field of the lexemes proposed for analysis. The actualization of feminitives as ways of naming female representatives of professions had a significant impact on the change in the seminal composition of lexemes. The stages of the research include the systematization of lexicographic data sources and their comparison with the data of psychosemantic and associative experiments, and the practical results of such research may be the refinement and expansion of dictionary data, bringing them closer to the real idea of the totality of features characterizing the studied object of reality.

### References


