Linguistic interviewing as a productive method of studying linguistic consciousness (pedagogical aspect)

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Abstract. The article describes some methods of linguistic interviewing that are used in research by scientists of the Russian Voronezh psycholinguistic school. An overview and analysis of such techniques as attribution of given signs to meaning, free attribution of signs to meaning, a method for supplementing a test phrase, a method for filling in a comparative construction and a method for directional commenting on word usage are presented. It is stated that the methods of linguistic interviewing allow us to build productive models of linguistic consciousness. The theoretical significance of the results obtained by using linguistic interviewing techniques lies in the acquisition of new scientific data on the real semantic structure of lexical items, which can be used in further studies of the nature and functions of linguistic units. The practical significance of the results lies in the fact that they can be used in the educational process, in business, politics, etc.

1 Introduction

Currently, an anthropocentric approach to language research has become widespread in linguistics, which has become a consequence of the increased interest of linguistic scientists in a “living” language functioning in real communications. There are numerous scientific schools in different countries of the world working within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm.

In the Russian Federation, one of the leading scientific theoretical and linguistic schools in the field of general and Russian linguistics (founder - Professor of Voronezh State University Z.D. Popov).

Within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, the linguistic sign is understood as a mental phenomenon. This circumstance predetermined the trend towards the active application of empirical methods of studying the semantics of words, which involve the interaction of the researcher with living native speakers.

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One of the central concepts that the Voronezh psycholinguistic school uses in its research is the concept of linguistic consciousness. Linguistic consciousness is a set of mental mechanisms of perception, processing, storage and generation of speech [1]. It is the linguistic consciousness that provides all speech activity. The linguistic consciousness of native speakers reflects the real semantic structure of lexical units.

Representatives of the Voronezh Psychological School are actively working on a project to study the linguistic consciousness of native Russian speakers in the North Caucasus (Ingushetia, Dagestan, etc.) as part of a state assignment. The project involves members of the Voronezh Psycholinguistic School from Voronezh State University, the Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow International University and the Said-Mahdikhon Sattorov Laboratory for Cognitive Research of Consciousness [2,3]. The project will be implemented within three years.

At the first stage (in 2024), the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study will be disclosed, a review and analysis of methods for the study of linguistic consciousness will be conducted, and the main theoretical principles of the analysis of linguistic consciousness and lexical units will be described.

2 Methods

Empirical methods of linguistic research in Russia (according to the classification of the Voronezh theoretical linguistic school) are divided into two groups: methods of linguistic interviewing and methods of linguistic experiment [4]. This article describes the methods of linguistic interviewing. Linguistic interviewing involves directly addressing native speakers with direct questions – what does this word (phrase) mean? Do these words have the same meaning? Is it possible to use this word in this context? etc. Thus, during the interview, the reflection (conscious reasoning) of native speakers regarding the content of the presented lexical units is manifested.

Interviewing is most often conducted in writing; there are also cases of conducting interviews orally or combined options (oral and written forms). Before proceeding to the description of the techniques, it should be emphasized that the material obtained in this way is only a set of "preliminary" semantic quantities with an uncertain status and position in the field organization of meaning. This applies both to the answers received during linguistic interviewing and to associative verbal reactions obtained from the results of psycholinguistic experiments.

From the preliminary semantic quantities, we can build only a simple model of linguistic consciousness, which allows us to diagnose the state, structure and dynamics of linguistic consciousness at the surface level. The procedure of semantic interpretation by methods of seminal semasiology makes it possible to reveal a picture of the deep organization of linguistic consciousness from the material obtained during the application of empirical research methods. Therefore, the answers received during the linguistic interviewing are summarized and interpreted in accordance with the set goals and objectives.

Conducting linguistic interviewing includes 5 stages:
1. Presentation of the questionnaire to the interviewees.
2. Generalization of the answers received: similar in content, but differing in form, the answers are reduced to one answer.

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3 Results and discussion

Attribution of set attributes to the meaning of a lexical unit

The essence of the method is the distribution of semantic features of the presented lexical items by the subjects.

The initial list of semantic features is compiled on the basis of frequency dictionaries or combinability dictionaries and consists of units with which the studied lexical item can potentially be combined.

We will demonstrate the application of the method of attribution of given signs to the value based on the material of our analysis of the semantics of the lexical items "a student" and "a professor".

The subjects were 8 students of the Derbent Social and Pedagogical Institute.

The interview was conducted in writing in a lecture hall.

The list of potential semes consisted of adjectives that are able to combine with the studied lexical items and are the most frequent in the Russian language.

Before the interview, the subjects received two forms, each of which initially indicated a lexical item ("a professor", "a student"), and then a table with a list of its potential families was given.

The list consisted of 80 adjectives for the lexical item "a student" and 120 adjectives for the lexical item "a professor", arranged alphabetically in 5 columns.

The following briefing was conducted: "Read the table with the list of signs. Put a "+" sign in front of each line with the indicated sign, if you think that this sign is characteristic of a typical professor (a student). Please do not use the "+" sign too often."

The professor: "experience 0.91, famous 0.82, smart 0.79, important 0.76, prominent 0.71, rich 0.71, cheerful 0.50, lively 0.29, combative 0.15, fast 0.15, poor 0.12."

Student: "lively 0.91, fast 0.82, cheerful 0.80, combative 0.71, smart 0.71, experienced 0.71, poor 0.62, famous 0.12, prominent 0.12, rich 0.09, important 0.06."

The data obtained are clearly consistent with the ideas of linguists about the composition and structure of the periphery of the meanings of lexical units. Also noteworthy is the evaluative nature of the selected semes, which indicates a high proportion of the connotative component in the studied lexical items. This means that the actualization of the peripheral components of their values determines their evaluability.

The method of attributing features to a value allows you to get quite interesting results with high brightness indices. At the same time, this technique is quite time-consuming to apply due to the fact that for each lexical item under study it is necessary to compile a separate list of semantic features.

Free attribution of attributes to a value
The technique of free attribution of features consists in highlighting the features typical for the denotation of the word under study. The subjects fill out forms in which leading questions are formulated according to the following structure: What does X do? (typical behavior); What does X look like? (typical appearance), etc., where X is the denotation of the meaning of the lexical unit under study. This technique is similar to a directed associative experiment, but differs in that the subject should not give the first word that came to mind (as in an associative experiment), but highlight a typical feature characteristic of the denotation of the word under study.

The semantics of the lexical items "a philosopher" and "a professor" were analyzed by the method of free attribution of signs to meaning. The subjects were 8 students of the Derbent Social and Pedagogical Institute. The interview was conducted in writing in a lecture hall. The following briefing was conducted: "We are exploring the typical ideas of people about professions. We ask you to answer the question, what are the typical features of a philosopher and a professor?"

The processing of the interview results consisted in summing up the same answers, as well as generalizing answers similar in content and calculating the brightness indices of each of the marked features. The results of data processing and interpretation are presented in the form of a table (Table 1).

The signs are shown in the table in descending order of their brightness indices.

Table 1. The results of processing and interpreting the responses obtained by the method of free attribution of attributes to the value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical item /Questions</th>
<th>What does it look like?</th>
<th>What does it do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A philosopher</td>
<td>Neat 0.25</td>
<td>Rejection of answers – 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elegant 0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uninteresting 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thick 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serious 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rejection of answers – 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A professor</td>
<td>High 0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smart 0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modest 0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet 0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wise 0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strict 0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elegant 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thin 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nimble 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calm 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociable 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaches 0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shows off his intelligence 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The method of completing the test phrase
The method of completing the test phrase involves the subjects filling in incomplete verbal constructions with the studied lexical items (i.e., the subjects must independently reproduce a deliberately deformed structure).

The standard instruction has the following wording:

We ask you to add any words to this phrase so that you end up with a complete sentence.

Using this technique, the semantics of the lexical item "a boy" was investigated. 9 students of the Derbent Social and Pedagogical College of both sexes of different specialities took part in the interview. The subjects were presented with two blank constructions: "A boy, and ...", "If he was a boy ...". When processing the results, meaningfully similar answers were generalized, and the brightness indices of each seme were calculated.

The time to fill out the forms was limited to 15 minutes. The results of data processing and interpretation are presented in the form of a table (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brightness index</th>
<th>The boy, not…</th>
<th>Brightness index</th>
<th>If he was a boy…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The results of processing and interpreting the responses received by the method of completing the test phrase.

The semes are given in the table in descending order of their brightness indices (semes with brightness indices of at least 0.22 are given).

This technique also makes it possible to identify mainly peripheral semes, but at the same time having significance (relevance) for native speakers.

The method of filling in the comparative structure

The method of filling in the comparative structure has some similarities with the method of supplementing the test structure.

The method consists in the fact that the subjects fill in the comparative constructions presented to them, choosing sequentially such lexical items that could be the basis for the required comparison.

The method of filling in the comparative construction allows us to identify a group of lexical items, in the meaning of which the semantic component under study would be clearly expressed.

Using this technique, adjectives such as "high", "low", "strong", "weak" and "thick" were studied. The subjects were 8 students of the Derbent Social and Pedagogical Institute of both sexes and different specialties. The interview was conducted in writing in the lecture hall of the Social and Pedagogical Institute. The subjects were given forms with the following instructions: "We ask you to fill in the gaps in the comparative phrases given: As high as... as low as... as strong as... as weak as... as fat as...".

The processing of the interview results also involved calculating the brightness indices of each of the marked features.
The following results were obtained (the signs are given in Table 3 in descending order of their brightness indices; semes with brightness indices of at least 0.3 are indicated).

Table 3. The results of processing and interpreting the responses obtained by the method of filling in the comparative structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As tall as…</th>
<th>As low as…</th>
<th>As thick as…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amir</td>
<td>Amir</td>
<td>Amir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tree</td>
<td>Amir</td>
<td>Dad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A column</td>
<td>A basket</td>
<td>A watermelon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A baske</td>
<td>A person</td>
<td>A rabbit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tall</td>
<td>A dwarf</td>
<td>A child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A poplar</td>
<td>A baske</td>
<td>A child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person</td>
<td>A baske</td>
<td>A girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A thick</td>
<td>A baske</td>
<td>A mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A thick</td>
<td>A baske</td>
<td>An elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A thick</td>
<td>A baske</td>
<td>A tomato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that "the circle of words identified for each feature should be considered as a set of units in the meanings of which this feature is vivid, and the word itself acts as a standard of this feature in the language" [4,5].

Attention is also drawn to the use of specific names as answers (Zaira, Amir, Aziz).

This suggests that specific persons (proper names) can also act as a standard for these signs.

The method of directed comment on word usage

The essence of the technique is that the subjects are presented with a list of the studied lexical units, which are introduced into the test phrase. After that, the interviewer asks the subject to give a semantic comment on the resulting meaning.

The technique of directional commenting on word usage allows us to identify which semantic components of the studied lexical item are actualized in the process of its use in the linguistic consciousness of native speakers.

This technique investigated the semantics of the words "a tank", "a rocket", "a commissar", "a partisan".

The subjects were 10 students of the Derbent Social and Pedagogical College of both sexes and different specialties.

The interview was conducted in writing in the lecture hall of the Social and Pedagogical College.

The subjects were given forms with a test phrase, a list of the studied words and instructions: "We ask you to fill in the gap in the given phrase "__, not a girl" with words from the given list. Please comment on the meanings of the received phrases."

The list consisted of the studied lexical items – "a tank", "a rocket", "a commissar", "a partisan".

The number of responses was not limited.

The time to fill out the forms was limited to 15 minutes.

The answers, similar in content, were generalized, the received semes were ranked by the brightness index.

The results obtained are shown in Table 4.

Semes are listed in the table in descending order of their brightness indices; semes with brightness indices of at least 0.2 are indicated.
4 Conclusion

Linguistic interviewing techniques make it possible to obtain semes with sufficiently high brightness indices, which helps to clearly model the field organization of meaning (center and periphery) as a reflection of the state and dynamics of the linguistic consciousness of native speakers.

A detailed review and description of linguistic interviewing techniques are presented in [5].

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