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Concepts and Their Semantic Analysis: The Case of „Intelligentsia“

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Abstract

Cognitive linguistics determines that the world is presented and reflected in our consciousness as definite structures and describes how this knowledge is verbally represented. Language is used not only for communicative purposes, but at the same time, it stores the information gathered by a definite speech community. Knowledge, experience and the results of cognition gained by a human being are presented as the so-called concepts. The object of this article is to describe one concept, which is “intelligentsia.” The method applied in the study is that of “the semic analysis” that dissects the meaning of a word or text into fundamental components of meaning called semes. There has been applied contextualization as a type of semiotic analysis, when the meaning of a concept can change depending on the context in which the sign appears. The cognitive approach used in the study assigns a special role to the human factor in the process of perception of the concepts. The article is the first and general part of the semantic research on the term “intelligentsia”. The results of the study show the main and often mutually exclusive characteristics of the concept “intelligentsia” and the completely different contexts of its application. In modern Georgian society, this term has acquired more negative implications (or peripheral or core semes) when used by politicians and has been used mainly as a positive concept when used by non-politicians. This concept represents some basic humane features of a human being and should be widely applied by modern societies. As for future research, the evolution of "intelligentsia" in modern

societies, considering the impact of globalization, digital media, and shifting academic and cultural paradigms, is of interest.

Keywords: Intelligentsia, semic analysis, nuclear seme, peripheral seme

Introduction

The cognitive approach to language emphasizes the comprehension of language as a dynamic system, at the center of which there is the linguistic personality, for which linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge form a single whole. The cognitive approach assigns a special role to the human factor in the process of perception, in the formation of understanding, description and expression of external reality. Cognitive linguistics determines how the world is represented and reflected in our consciousness in the form of certain structures of knowledge and describes how this knowledge is represented linguistically. Language is not used only for communicative purposes, but also serves as a repository of information accumulated by the "linguistic persons"; the knowledge acquired by a person, the results of his creativity and cognition, are presented in the form of the so-called concepts.

The object of this article is to describe one of such concepts. This concept is intelligentsia (intellectuals). Intelligentsia originates from the Latin word (*intellego*), which means "perception, feeling, cognition, understanding, thinking, clarification". Its author is believed to be Cicero. The word "intelligentsia" contains such psychological concepts as "understanding, cognitive power, ability to perceive, concept, representation, perception, sensory cognition, art". Thomas Aquinas uses this word in "*Summa Theologiae*" and it means "the cognitive action of the mind". He also notes that when translated from Arabic, intelligence is called "angels, because such substances always think actually" (Part 1, 79, p. 10).

Karol Libelt famously employed *inteligencja* in his 1844 work *O miłości ojczyzny* ("On the Love of the Fatherland"): "Here we speak only of the so-called intelligentsia of the nation. They are all those who, having received more careful and extensive education in higher schools and institutes, stand at the head of the nation - as scholars, officials, teachers, clergy, industrialists - who lead it by virtue of their higher enlightenment." These passages emphasize the intelligentsia's role in national enlightenment, culture, and moral education. V. Veresaev's article "On Kachalov": "Our Russian intelligentsia, so outstanding that it gave foreign languages the specific word intelligentsia (in the transcription of the Russian word)..." (Veresaev V. V. On Kachalov // "Lit. gazeta" 1945, No. 7 from February 10). в статье В. Вересаева «О Качалове»: «Наша русская

The concept of "intelligentsia" is quite rarely used in different languages. As a rule, the concept of "intellectuals" refers to a person engaged

in intellectual activity. As noted in the encyclopedia, the basis for the separation of such a group is the division of labor between people engaged in mental and physical labor. The intelligentsia, as a social group, is characterized in different ways, and therefore its characteristics and role in society are not unambiguously established. An intellectual is a person with a highly developed mind and analytical thinking, a representative of mental labor.

The application of this concept in various academic fields

In sociology, the “intellectual,” unlike the “erudite,” is considered to be a creative social subject who is constantly engaged in the process of abstracting information about the truth and morality. The intellectual creates and develops ideas, defines cultural norms and values for the rest of the society. According to Professor José Aranguren, the intellectual says that everything we have is not what it should be. That is why the intellectual is a nonconformist, an “outsider,” a rebel. Thus, the intellectual represents the “conscience of the nation,” the independent and progressive voice of a minority in society.

It is known that until the 18th century, any literate person was considered an intellectual, in English (a man of letters). From the end of the 18th century, the number of literate people increased significantly in Europe, and this term (a man of letters) already referred to a person close to literature - critics, journalists. The term "intellectual" has been widely used since the end of the 19th century, when a group of writers and scientists held a demonstration against the actions of the French government in the Dreyfus case.

The Polish philosopher Bronisław Trentowski coined the term *inteligencja* in the late 18th to early 19th century, describing the university-educated class expected to lead Poland morally and politically. This term marked the beginning of conceptualizing the intelligentsia as a distinct class of uncompromising intellectual and moral leadership.

The Object of the Study

The concept of “intelligentsia”

The concept of "intelligentsia", like almost all other concepts, can be considered from two different angles: sociologists believe that the intelligentsia is a social group of people who are professionally engaged in mental work and the spread of culture. In addition, the “intelligentsia” is considered to be people who are considered the moral standard of society. The mass use of the concept of "intelligentsia" began in Russia in the 1860s, and therefore, it began to be used in the Georgian language as well. The journalist P.D. Boborykin is considered to be the first to introduce this term in Russia.

He argued that this term had a special meaning and defined the “intelligentsia” as a group of people with high mental and ethical culture, and not as representatives of mental labor. He added that in Russia, the “intelligentsia” is a moral-ethical phenomenon and therefore includes representatives of various professional groups or political movements, who also have a common spiritual and moral basis. With this additional acquired meaning, this word returned to the West and was established in Georgian with this meaning as well.

It should be noted that if this word had not appeared, someone must have created it, because its content is of paramount importance for both society and the individual. Being “intelligent” is the ultimate goal, which, in our opinion, should be the pinnacle and goal of any person's personal growth. It should also be noted that there are many other definitions of “intelligentsia”. It is especially unbearable for people of an authoritarian and patriarchal nature:

“The intelligentsia is the scum of the society” - Adolf Hitler; “The intelligentsia is the most uneducated stratum of the society” - Mao Zedong; “I do not believe in our intelligentsia - hypocritical, fake, hysterical, immature, lazy people... While they are students, they are good and honest people, our hope... But as soon as students start walking on their own... our hope immediately evaporates... And they appeared to be owners of country houses, not-so-rich officials and thievish engineers” - Anton Chekhov. “The Georgian ‘intelligentsia’? Who are they? They are always there where the money and power are” - Vazha Pshavela.

However, there are many other radically different opinions: "A nation that does not value “intelligentsia” is doomed to destruction" Professor Andrei Likhachev.

There are various applications of the term “intelligentsia”

The method of analysis

The method used in the study is the "semic analysis (componential)", referring to the semiotic method of breaking down the meaning of words and texts into minimal semantic units called semes. The purpose of the above method is to achieve a deeper understanding of different terminology and concepts by examining the semantic structure of words. The method of semiotic analysis of various signs (words, images, etc.) associated with a concept to uncover the underlying meanings.

There has been applied contextualization as a type of semiotic analysis, when the meaning of a concept can change depending on the context in which the sign appears. For example, a symbol might have different meanings in different cultural or historical contexts. The empirical material analyzed for the present study has been taken from various scholarly papers of famous writers, speeches by politicians, statesmen, leaders of the national liberation

movement of Georgia of the 19th-21st century, published in different newspapers.

The Analysis of the Concept

Now let's analyze the meaning of the concept of "intelligentsia" (intelligence), which represents the information that a separate word carries as a linguistic unit; the mental content that any utterance produces in the consciousness of the speaker of the language. The separate meaning of a word is a sememe, and the material side of the word is a lexeme. It is known that the meaning of a word is heterogeneous and consists of various components. There are two largest components of the meaning - one carries information about reality that exists outside the word, and the second component reflects the direct linguistic properties of the word. The first component is the lexical meaning of the word, and the second is a structural-linguistic one. Each sememe consists of smaller semantic components - semes. In linguistics, this idea originates from L. Elmslev's "Figures", and the author of the term "seme" is the Czech linguist Skalicka. Each sememe has denotative, connotative and functional semes. The method of semantic analysis involves describing meaning, as a set of semes, through the concept of seme. Semes are components of meaning, but not all components of meaning are semes. There are lexical, grammatical, denotative, connotative, and functional components. Thus, semantic analysis is the separation of semes from a word, and its meaning is described as a set of semes. As a rule, the meaning is described based on dictionary data, which often leads to inaccuracies, since in traditional explanatory dictionaries, authors often do not use semantic analysis - that is, meanings are explained without using the concept of seme and their differentiation is not carried out on the basis of semantic differences. Seme analysis can be carried out on the basis of dictionary definitions; semes can be separated from these definitions through logical analysis, and also by identifying the properties that generate meaning based on the researcher's experience. Semantic analysis can also be based on the separation of semes from the same word having different meanings in texts. The seme method of describing meaning is a basic concept of semasiology - the science of describing the meanings of words through their semantic composition. Identifying the semes that make up a sememe also allows us to understand the mechanism of the development of the polysemy of words.

Thus, a seme is a component of meaning that reflects the distinctive feature of the denotation of a word (object, event, process) and that can differentiate the meaning of a word. When comparing semantically similar words, common semes in the compared words are always distinguished, which are called integral semes. Those semes that distinguish the meanings of the compared words are called differential semes. When distinguishing such types

of integral and differential semes, we can present meanings as a set of meanings by contrasting them. The more integral semes there are in the words being compared, the more similar these words are in meaning, and conversely, the more differential semes they have, the more different meanings they have. These micro-components, or semes, are distinguished not only in the denotative, but also in the connotative macro-components.

The semes in the structure of the denotative macro-component of meaning are of various types. The main types of semes are nuclear and peripheral semes. The nuclear sense is the main and most essential for meaning. Nuclear sememes denote: a) permanent properties of the object b) indispensable properties of the object, without which this object loses its qualitative affiliation and the ability to perform its functions, c) those properties that distinguish this object or event from other objects or events. For example, in the word "house", the nuclear seme is a building, while the peripheral semes can be: multistorey building, hut, comfortable building, etc. Nuclear semes are the basis for distinguishing lexical groups. According to these semes, words form paradigms, synonymous rows, lexical-semantic and thematic groups. Peripheral semes are very important features, they are actualized in speech, create the expressiveness of the word and serve as the basis for many figurative meanings. Some linguists distinguish between the core seme and the archi-seme. The archi-seme is the most general, abstract seme of the meaning of a word, on the basis of which this object belongs to a particular class, while the differential semes reflect the individual properties of the object and specify the archi-seme.

It should be noted here that the concept of differential seme is used in linguistics with a double meaning: when comparing the meanings of words, differential semes are called semantically differentiating semes; while when describing the meaning of a single word, differential seme has a broader meaning - it is the seme that specifies the archi-seme, distinguishes this word from all other lexical units with the same archi-seme.

Semic analysis of the meaning or semic description involves the use of the method of componential analysis - this means the separation of differential and integral semes in the meaning of a word by comparing pairs of words within a group of lexical units of similar meaning. They distinguish between minimal and full componential analysis. During minimal componential analysis, the meanings of words within a small group of semantically similar words are separated. Often, dictionaries are not even used and the analysis of meanings is done intuitively, although the use of dictionaries is not excluded. During a full componential analysis of meaning, an attempt is made to reveal all the components of the meanings of the words being compared, and large groups of lexical units are involved - synonymous rows, lexical-semantic groups, and fields. During full componential analysis, the main integral semes

of meanings are described in detail and comparable words are differentiated according to differential semes.

Various volumes of word meanings are described. Lexicographers describe the meaning in terms of a small number of basic semantic components. However, as a result of analyzing the meanings of words in a context, semes that are not included in dictionaries as lexical meanings are revealed. The meanings revealed by psycholinguistic experiments are often much more voluminous and profound than dictionary meanings. Therefore, many researchers distinguish (from the terminological point of view) between the meanings given in explanatory dictionaries and the meanings that exist in the consciousness of the speaker of the language. Lexicographers describe the systemic meanings given in dictionaries in accordance with the principles of reductionism, that is, the minimization of the characteristics included in the meaning. Lexicographic meaning is the creation of lexicographers and represents the minimum of core-semantic properties subjectively determined by them, which constitutes the lexical definition. Users of dictionaries rely a priori on the fact that a word exists in this particular language with exactly this semantic scope, and any speaker of the language uses this particular word with exactly this scope. The importance of explanatory dictionaries is incomparable; another of their purposes is to "lead" the reader to the meaning of the word. But in addition, the meaning of a lexical item cannot be reduced only to the definition given in the dictionary. Many semantic components of a word are not recorded in the dictionary definition, but regularly appear in various contexts or in the literary text in which the word is used.

Lexicologists and lexicographers recognize that words may have additional shades of meaning and various "potential" semantic components or "semantic associations" that are not included in the dictionary definition. A.A. Leontiev distinguished the psycholinguistic or psychologically real meaning of a word (Leontiev, 1969). He believed that the psycholinguistic meaning of a word is the sum of all semantic components associated with this acoustic image in the consciousness of the speaker of the language; this meaning includes the set of all semantic properties, both core and peripheral.

Psycholinguistic and communicative meanings

Psycholinguistic meaning can be structured on the basis of the field principle. In psycholinguistic meaning, core and peripheral semes are also distinguished, but the number of psycholinguistic meanings is always much greater than the definitions given in explanatory dictionaries, and the distribution of core and peripheral meanings is often completely different. The meaning of a word can also be described by generalizing the observed contexts in which a given word is used - this is called communicative meaning in the literature. So, we can have the following types of description of a lexical item:

lexicographic, psycholinguistic and communicative meanings. Lexicographic meaning is the generalized meaning of the definitions given in traditional explanatory dictionaries; psycholinguistic meaning is the meaning obtained as a result of generalizing the results of psycholinguistic experiments. Communicative meaning is the generalization of the set of semes realized in the observed contexts of the word use.

Let us now consider the term-concept “intelligentsia” and its three different meanings. Let us conduct its componential analysis and identify the core and peripheral semes in these three different meanings. This term is particularly interesting to analyze, because there are few concepts in languages that can have such radically different or contradictory meanings.

Table 1: Dictionary Meanings

Intelligentsia	Explanatory Dictionary
	<p>Intelligentsia Explanatory Dictionary Intelligentsia [lat. Intelligentia, via Russian language] A social stratum consisting of workers engaged in mental labor, collectively known as intellectuals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intellectuals who form an artistic, social, or political vanguard or elite 2. Very educated people in a society, especially those interested in the arts and in politics

The only dictionary definition given is in the Georgian Explanatory Dictionary and Merriam-Webster's Explanatory Dictionary of the English Language. It is a very meager meaning that does not at all reflect the positive qualities acquired by this term in its denotative meaning, nor the negative connotative qualities that it has acquired throughout its existence.

Table 2: Psycholinguistic and Communicative Meanings

Intelligentsia	Psycholinguistic meaning	Communicative meaning
	An educated, cultured, respectable part of the society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An educated, advanced layer of society and the set of all contexts related to this meaning or 2. A group of people who only care about their own well-being and who will sell their homeland for privileges - and the set of contexts related to this meaning.

Intelligentsia - core semantics: an educated, decent person. Peripheral semantics: a good specialist, humble, privileged, arrogant.

There can also be traced the semantic evolution of this concept through the centuries. The source of its modern applications is basically Georgian newspapers.

Period	Dominant Semes	
19 th and 20 th centuries (Russia, Poland, Georgia)	[+Moral], [+Cultural], [+National]	Intelligentsia seen as national guides, guardians of ethics
Early 20th century Georgia	[+Political], [+Oppositional]	Merged with revolutionary activism
Soviet Era	[-Oppositional], [+Bureaucratic]	Became institutionalized
Post-Soviet	[+Alienated], [+Elitist]	Sometimes criticized as detached, ineffective ("The intelligentsia has lost touch with the people")
Modern Usage by the 21 st century political elite in Georgia	[+Intellectual], [+Elite], [+Detached]	Used ironically or pejoratively ("liberal intelligentsia"); (liberal intelligentsia or "red intelligentsia» are traitors and slaves" – according to some Georgian politicians).

This is the first general part of the semantic study related to the term "intelligentsia", which briefly shows its main and often mutually exclusive characteristics and the completely different contexts of its use.

Conclusion

The meaning of the word in linguistic descriptions occurs to different extents. Lexicographers describe meaning with a small number of basic semantic components. But the analysis of word meanings in contexts reveals semantics that are not included in dictionaries as a lexical meaning. The meaning revealed by psycholinguistic experiments is often much more extensive and profound than the dictionary meaning. Many scholars, therefore, terminologically distinguish between the meanings given in explanatory dictionaries and the meanings that exist in the consciousness of the language users. Lexicographers write the systemic meanings given in dictionaries in accordance with the principles of reductionism or minimization of meaningful features.

Lexicologists and lexicographers acknowledge that words may have additional connotations of meaning and various "potential" semantic components or "semantic associations" that are not included in the lexical definition.

The psycholinguistic meaning of a word is the sum of all the semantic components associated with this particular sound in a language. It covers a combination of all semantic properties, both nuclear and peripheral semes. Psycholinguistic meaning can be structured based on the field principle.

Nuclear and peripheral semantics are also distinguished in the psycholinguistic sense, but the number of psycholinguistic meanings is always

much greater than the definitions given in the explanatory dictionaries. The distribution of nuclear and peripheral senses is also often quite different.

The term “intelligentsia” and its three different meanings are also considered in the present article. The componential analysis has been conducted, and nuclear and peripheral senses have been distinguished in the above three different meanings. This term is particularly interesting to be analyzed because there are few concepts in languages that may have such radically different or contradictory meanings. Using componential analysis, this study dissects the concept into core components such as intellectualism, cultural influence, social status, and political engagement. The analysis further examines how these components intersect with social and historical contexts, particularly in Eastern European, Georgian, and post-Soviet environments, where the term has strong historical roots. The main conclusion is as follows: in modern Georgian society, this term has acquired more negative implications (or peripheral or core senses) when used by politicians and has been used mainly as a positive concept when used by non-politicians. This concept represents some basic humane features of a human being and should be widely applied by modern societies. As for future research, the evolution of “intelligentsia” in modern societies, considering the impact of globalization, digital media, and shifting academic and cultural paradigms, is of interest. By identifying the essential features that define “intelligentsia,” this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of its role in contemporary discourse and its implications for social and cultural hierarchies.

The above article is the first and general part of the semantic research on the term “intelligentsia”, which briefly shows its main and often mutually exclusive characteristics and the completely different contexts of its application.

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