

TEXT DEFINITIONS OF CLASSIFYING TYPE

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Abstract

Purpose: This article deals with the detailed consideration of definitional periphrases of classifying type as the textual modification of generic and specific classic definition; the essence of definitional relations of such type of text definitions is revealed.

Methodology: The main method used in the article is the method of definitional analysis. The intuitive-logical, inductive-empirical, deductive-synthetic method, component analysis method and transformation method were also used. The study was based on examples from fiction, educational, popular science literature, as well as collections of quotes and aphorisms.

Result: Moreover, the detailed analysis of logical-semantic relations supplementing the definitional relations in these definitional periphrases is given. Classification relations are described especially thoroughly. The main attention is focused on revealing the types of definitional classifying predictors, on the basis of which modified text definitions are formed.

Applications: This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality: In this research, the model of Text Definitions of Classifying Type is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: *Text Definition, Definitional Periphrasis, Logical-Semantic Relations, Definitional Relations, Classification Relations, Definitional Predicate, Classifier.*

INTRODUCTION

The interest of modern studies in linguistics is mainly oriented at relations between language and culture, cross-cultural communication, cultural linguistics, and cognitive science, including cognitive linguistics, that set 'obtaining data on the mind activity' as the principal task ([Kubryakova, 2004](#)).

However, the issue of the mutual relations of language and thinking has deeper roots in the history of linguistics, originating from the studies of ancient scholars, such as Aristotle, who developed the rules for building a definition which is still referred to by numerous scientists. Therefore, traditional studies of the mutual relations of the form and content of linguistic units within the semantic syntax maintain relevantly and continue raising interest in modern linguists.

The subject matter of this article is the text definition or the definitional periphrasis. The basis of the logical-semantic structure of any text definition is formed by definitional relations based on identity, inclusion and distinction relations. In the text, these relations are modified and supplemented by other logical-semantic relations, due to the inclusion into the composition of the definitional periphrasis of the certain definitional predicate type. Such modification causes the formation of a new type of definitional periphrases. In this study, we will focus on the classifying type of text definitions.

Classification relations are one of the main relations both in logic and in linguistics, and the classification, in common sense of this word, and hold the significant place in any science because it determines a hierarchy of scientific concepts and mutual relations of the study subjects. Classification, being an integral part of the definition, is one of the basic instruments of perception and has a systemic nature due to the fact that the characteristics of the individual objects that form the classes allow understanding the essence of the class as a whole and, by classifying the concepts, allow combining them into systems ([Superanskaya, 1989](#)). A. Seshe considers the aspiration for classification as one of the human mind's natural needs, and the presence of abstract nouns of various generalization levels, as a result of this aspiration. 'By giving names to phenomena, a person ... classifies them, and many of his statements reflect this subordination of one concept to others' ([Seshe, 2003](#)).

Classification relations in definitional periphrases are based on identity and inclusion relations. They form the most widespread and typical group of definitional periphrases. In the definition sentences with the classification meaning, the most grammaticalized copula sein is used in the first turn. Iu.D. Apresyan designates the classifying meaning of a copula as, namely, copulative (along with existential and locative), the most typical for copulative verbs ([Apresyan, 1993](#)). In sentences of such type, an internal predicate acts as a textual definition predicate ([Seshe, 2003](#)), expressed by a noun, which is also referred to as the definition word.

The main objective of the study is to find the signs of the relations on the basis of which the realization of the classifying type of periphrases takes place. Symptoms should be general and adequate, i.e. have sufficient explanatory power. On the one hand, they must ensure the identity of the actualized definition model, i.e. make it possible to identify it in the text. On the other hand, to see how it differs from other textual definitions.

METHODS

The main method used in the article is the method of definitional analysis. The intuitive-logical, inductive-empirical, deductive-synthetic method, component analysis method and transformation method were also used. The study was based on examples from fiction, educational, popular science literature, as well as collections of quotes and aphorisms.

RESULTS AND ITS DISCUSSION

The degree of expressiveness of classifying relations may vary. The classification relations are the most expressed in definitional periphrasis, where common words are represented by such generalized classifiers as *die Gruppe, die Klasse*:

- *Das Prädikat ist oft eine ganze Wortgruppe: es enthält neben dem finiten Verb auch die Adverbiale (Adverbien, adverbiale Bestimmungen) und die Objekte (Wunderlich, 1988).*

The modification of the initial type of classifying relations is carried out on the basis of the verb predicates *gehören zu...*, *zählen zu...*, which form the functional (definitional) synonyms of the verb's *sein* and *klassifizieren*. The verbs *gehören zu...*, *zählen zu...* characterize the specific methods of classification actions (processes), and the classification action as such is verbalized by the verb *klassifizieren*:

- *Zu den unsystematischen Risiken zählen Arbeitslosigkeit, Armut oder schwere Erkrankungen, deren Eintritt nicht für jedes Individuum gewiss ist (Wirtschaft, 1999).*
- *Strukturbereich und Funktion der Streckformen zu klären, das bedeutet, das Prädikat – den über einen Vorgang, Zustand, Sachverhalt aussagenden Teil des Satzes - abzugrenzen und zu klassifizieren (Schmidt, 1961).*

Often, the verbs *gehören zu, zählen zu, klassifizieren*, which don't only classify but also notify of this, are expressed together with substantive classifiers: *gehört zur Gruppe, zur Klasse*.

In definitional periphrases with the general classification meaning, classifying words may be represented by words uniting the objects being classified into groups, classes, etc., which separate, distinguish, and classify objects, without characterizing their properties in any way (e.g., in distinction from generic-specific relations, where the inclusion into the closest generic term takes place). These are words with the most generalized lexical meaning. The most generalized are words that have meanings with small-feature content, but with a wide volume, due to which they take part in the interpretation of the largest amount of other words (Boykova, 1989). These are meta signs representing the 'means of intra-language classification, serving the goals of the language itself in the sphere of lexis and are intended to provide its existence as a system' (Superanskaya, 1989).

A. V. Superanskaya refers to relations established as the result of such paraphrasing as to quasi-generic-specific (Superanskaya, 1989), because the determinandum, i.e. the specific term, is brought not to the closest generic term but to the term of common categories. These names of discursive categories differentiate the classifying type of text definitions already from the other side.

Often, the following words are used in this role: *alles, nichts; der Typ, die Art; das Beispiel; die Form, das Modell; der Teil, die Einheit, das Element; das System, die Gesamtheit, die Mehrheit, die Struktur; der Begriff, das Konzept, das Wort, die Bezeichnung, der Name; das Instrument, das Mittel; das Verhältnis, die Relation; die Ursache, die Folge; der Ausdruck; die Methode; die Größe; das Symbol; die Eigenschaft, das Merkmal; die Tätigkeit; der Ort; die Zeit; das Phänomen; das Grad, das Maß; der Prozess, der Vorgang; der Zustand; die Summe; die Zahl; das Ergebnis, das Resultat; die Differenz; die Möglichkeit, die Fähigkeit; das Wesen, der Kern; die Aufgabe, das Ziel, das Problem etc.*

Acting as predicators, these words differentiate general classification relations and, in numerous cases, definitional periphrases acquire various 'logic' shades.

In addition, the role of the definitional predicate *sein* in combination with these predicators consists in extracting the definition of semes incorporated into the definiendum meaning structure. The incorporation phenomenon is inherent in numerous linguistic phenomena (Heidolph, 1981). It covers definitional periphrases as well. The brightest examples of the definition of incorporated semes are analytical type definitions, e.g. *Helfen bedeutet Hilfe leisten*. By their structure, they do not represent a classical determination through the closest genus and specific difference which fixes and describes the basic integral and differential features of a concept. The analytical type of definitions can be roughly compared with the component analysis of the word meaning, i.e. decomposition of the word meaning into simpler, elementary components (Krongauz, 2001).

Let us consider the aforementioned types of classifiers in detail.

Classifiers may be represented by such common words as *der Typ, die Art*:

- *Die AG ist ein starrer Organisationstyp (Einführung in die Fachsprache der Betriebswirtschaft, 1989, 210).*
- *Die Superklugheit ist eine der verächtlichsten Arten von Unklugheit (Eine ganze Milchstraße von Einfällen, 1974, 304).*

In such definitional periphrasis, *typification relations* are established, and we observe the generalization process when the specific term is brought to a separate type or kind. The result of differentiation of definitional relations becomes the shift of the sentence main (definitional) function towards the typed meaning which becomes dominating.

Classifiers performing the *concretization function* may be words of type *die Einheit, der Teil, der Anteil, der Bestandteil, das Element, die Komponente, der Zweig, das Stück*. This definitional periphrasis represents another classification type in comparison with the generalizing one because it is characterized by the concept narrowing:

- *Die letzte Komponente der Rentenformel schließlich ist der Steigerungssatz* ([Lampert, 1985](#)).
- *Der Name ist ein Stück des Seins und der Seele* ([Der neue Zitatenschatz, 2001, 124](#)).

In this case, definitional relations are transformed into *classifying partial relations*. In the case of text definitions with partial relations, the name always correlates with the classifier (*Bestandteil, Einheit*) which is singular, specific, and the concept more generally in relation to it may be expressed by the determination, including the genitive one (*der Gesamtkalkulation aller Strategien*).

Definitional periphrases of classifiable type may be differentiated on the basis of *formalization relations*. The generic word *dies Form* itself names and characterizes this classification type as the formalization:

- *Dichtung ist eine Form der Liebe* ([DUDEN. Zitate und Aussprüche, 1998, 863](#)).

Definitional periphrases with the *exemplification meaning*, when the generic word is expressed by the word *das Beispiel, das Muster, das Vorbild*, are adjacent to these definitions:

- *Die Mode ist ein bezeichnendes Beispiel dafür* ([Moderne Kurzprosa, 1978, 110](#)).

This type of definitional periphrases can be compared to a 'subject' definition-illustration when the determination is given as an example.

Classification can involve *systematization, structuring*. Such a definition informs of systemic, structural relations between the determinandum and the determinans, a means of ordering, and indicates that the definiendum is an element of a system, structure, population, etc. Classifiers can be represented by common words *das System, die Gesamtheit, die Mehrheit, der Komplex, die Sammlung, die Struktur, die Menge*:

- *Forschungs- und Technologiepolitik ist die Gesamtheit aller staatlichen Maßnahmen, die darauf zielen, ...* ([Wirtschaft, 1999](#)).

The relations of *maximal generalization* and *total inclusion* are implemented when using the word with the maximally generalized meaning *alles* as the main classifier. Here, logical inclusion relations belonging to the definitional periphrasis relational structure, 'come to the surface' and fix the attention on the main content of the definitional statement proposal. E.g.:

- *Paradox ist alles, was zugleich gut und groß ist* ([Eine ganze Milchstraße von Einfällen, 1974, 304](#)).

The common word *alles* (in distinction from predicators-meta names) does not orientate at the specific definiendum seme, does not 'extract' it but fully includes it, and mediates the relation in this role, i.e., acts as a predictor.

The relation opposite in its value is explicated by the predictor *nichts*, the main contents of which is in denial of belonging of the term being defined to the class of subjects through which it should be defined; by this, the *exclusion relations* are actualized. E.g.:

- *Die Literatur ist nichts, aber sie dient der Therapie*.

Differentiation of classifying-type text definitions can be carried out on the basis of *relational relations*. Predicators of relational relations are common words *das Verhältnis, die Relation, die Beziehung*:

- *Eine Metallwährung ist eine feste Relation zwischen der im Umlauf befindlichen Geldmenge und einer vorhandenen Menge eines Metalls* ([Wirtschaft, 1999](#)).

As the result of inclusion of relational predictors into the definitional periphrasis structure, determination is performed through the comparison of two terms expressed by differentia specifica *der im Umlauf befindlichen Geldmenge* and *einer vorhandenen Menge eines Metalls*.

The relations formed by the predicators *der Prozess, der Vorgang, die Tätigkeit, die Aktivität*, etc., actualize the actional seme as the determinandum. The definition of the determinandum common meaning (*Inflation, Arbeit* – see examples below) is reduced to the definition of one (actional) seme, in relation to which the classifiers *Prozess, Tätigkeit* become the closest generic terms (*gens proximus*). The determinandum reduction decreases the definition analyticity degree. E.g.:

- *Arbeit ist im Prinzip menschliche Tätigkeit zur Befriedigung fremder Bedürfnisse* ([Wirtschaft, 1999](#)).

Characterization relations may be built over the classifying relations and represent their modifiers in case if the words *die Eigenschaft, das Merkmal, das Anzeichen, die Besonderheit, die Eigentümlichkeit* are the predicators. The predicator actualizes the attribute *seme* in the determinandum and correlates with its explication in the *differentia specifica*. The correlation is implemented not through the inclusion into the generic term (*gens proximus*) but through the meta designation. This is a sort of the meta definition (together with the meta definitions through the 'thing', 'relation'). Determinations through the respective closest gender (specific names, properties, relations of the thing) will be the included ('object') definitions in relation to them. E.g.:

- *Stil“ ist eines der charakteristischen **Merkmale** von Literatur* ([Mayorov, 1996](#)).

Intellectual sphere nominations may be the classifiers representing the names of unifying concepts. The following large group of nominations characterizing various intellectual activity types may be distinguished:

- Generalizations (*das Resultat, das Ergebnis, das Produkt*);
- *Der Ausbeutungsgewinn, der dem Unternehmer zufließt, ist **das Ergebnis** einer bestimmten Marktform in Verbindung mit gewinnmaximierendem Verhalten...* ([Lampert, 1985](#)).
- Operations related to setting and solving cognitive tasks (*die Aufgabe, das Ziel, der Zweck, das Problem*):
- **Ziel** der Lohnpolitik einer Unternehmung ist die Steigerung der Arbeitsproduktivität.
- Methods of solving the cognitive tasks (*die Methode, das Prinzip, das Verfahren*):
- **Wichtiges Prinzip** für die Bestimmung des Lohnes ist, dass der Lohn gerecht sein muss.
- Characteristics of relations established between the determinandum and the distinction (*differentia specifica*) (*die Differenz, der Unterschied, die Gleichheit, die Identität*):
- *In der Erfolgsrechnung eines Betriebs ist **die Differenz** zwischen Ertrag und Aufwand einer Periode der Gewinn bzw. Verlust.*

Definitional periphrases with the distinction meta predictor can be considered as one of characteristic variants.

Due to this, the seems actualized by these predicators as the determined are included in the respective intellectual activity type. In relation to the determinandum common meaning, they are meta names (predicators) connected with it (the meaning) only via the *seme* being actualized.

One of the modifiers of the classifying type of definitional periphrases is the meta name of *essential meaning*. The essential attribute (or the proper attribute) was distinguished by Porfirius, commented by Boethius back in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages as one of the five main categories 'required for precise determination of the definition'. These are such names as *das Wesen, der Kern, die Wurzel; die Basis, die Grundlage*, etc. As mentioned above, the semantically differentiated predicator (common name, meta name) in the position of the closest generic concept, in distinction from the latter, does not include the determinandum as a species concept (which is typical for common classical definition), but is orientated at some attribute (*seme*) of the definiendum, 'extracts' it, includes it as a specific attribute already, i.e., becomes the closest generic concept in relation to it. In this sense, the predicator (meta name) revealing (actualizing) the determinandum essential attribute (*seme*), although being a meta name, does not only reflect it, does not only 'announce' it, but somewhat intrudes into the definition process as such because of indicating at the exact determinandum essence. E.g.:

- *Menschenliebe ist **das Wesen** der Sittlichkeit, Menschenkenntis **das Wesen** der Weisheit.*
- *Das Subsidiaritätsprinzip ist **die Grundlage** jeder Selbstverwaltung* ([Lampert, 1985](#)).

In combination with the verb *ausmachen*, the predicator expressing the ontological meaning is joined with the definition even to a higher extent because this verb meaning in the given context is also close to the meaning of a definitional existential copula: *ist* → *besteht (aus)* → *macht aus*. E.g.:

- *Gleichheit ist immer der Probestein der Gerechtigkeit, und beide **machen das Wesen** der Freiheit.*

The classifying type definitional periphrases reveal *quantitative relations* which (like qualitative relations) are absolutely directly related to the classification idea, and the differentiation is performed on their basis. By the way, the category of quantity is also one of 10 main categories of Aristotle, indicating at the size of a thing, i.e., it reflects some certain properties. The main classifying concepts explicating this type of relations are such words as *die Summe, die Anzahl; die Zahl, die Größe, der Grad, das Maß*:

- *Lebenserfahrung ist **die Summe** der Fehler, die man glücklicherweise macht.*
- *Der Preis ist ... eine objektive **Größe**, die sich aufgrund von Knappheitsverhältnissen herausbildet*
- *Die qualitative fertigungstechnische Elastizität ist nach Riebel dabei definiert als **das Maß**, in welchem sich ein Betriebsmittel an Änderungen in der Art und Güte von Erzeugnissen anpassen läßt.*

Differentiation of the definitional predicate (copula) by its functional synonyms (*definieren, kann als... verstanden werden, etc.*) complicates the definitional relations, increases their rank of abstraction: relations formed by modified predicates become inclusive: they include relations formed by predicates: the identity '*Elastizität=Maß*' is not only established as a functional relation but is announced as a definition, i.e., it includes it.

The cases of forming classification relations on the basis of the *tautological* predicates appear to be interesting:

- *Güte, die auf Gegenwart rechnet, ist nicht Güte.*

This type of definitional statements belongs to tautological identity sentences.

Tautological relations distinguished by us as modifiers of a classifying type of definitional periphrases do not always find acceptance in logic and lexicography due to the fact that one of the requirements to definitions formation is the rule of prohibition for a vicious circle in the definition, i.e. definition through the unknown. The main factor for forming this requirement is the aspiration to maximal clarity and accuracy in the construction of dictionary definitions. This type of text definition forms the opposite (from a logical-semantic point of view) to the type described above with an essential predicate (meta name, orienting to the essence of the definiendum meaning). The definiendum tautological repeat transforms it into a predicate, mediating the connection with the distinction without complicating by an additional lexical meaning, i.e. it is used in a purely relational function.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, the considered types of definitional periphrases are formed on the basis of classifying relations and are modified in the text based on the meanings actualized by predicates with the unifying lexical meaning, meta names. This type of textual definition is the most widespread and is presented mainly in the scientific discourse, along with educational and general-audience texts. Further study of definitional periphrases is seen as possible from the perspective of analyzing other types of logical-semantic relations, on the basis of which the definitional relations are modified: characterization relations, identification relations, existence relations, etc.

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