# COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS AND THE STUDY OF MEANING

**Onyshchak Halyna**

Candidate of Philological

Sciences, Associate Professor

**Popovych Yevheniia**

Lecturer

State University «Uzhhorod National University»

Uzhhorod, Ukraine

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the issues of meaning as they are "integral and essential to understanding what people do and why" [1, p. 201]. Although the meaning is "a dangerously amorphous word" [2, p. 64], different linguistic theories have somewhat similar ideas of how the meaning of a lexeme may be described. The primary feature of the meaning is the relation of reference between a word and the entity it denotes. In this respect, if we think of reality as a space of entities and events, language so to speak draws lines within that space [3, p. 52].

Every word in the language contains a unique set of semantic features, which are lexicalized differently in different languages. Th. R. Hoffman claims that "languages differ quite a lot in lexical structure, and because this is not easily perceived, it is one of the hardest parts of a language to learn well" [4, p. 25]. However, it is still possible to see how certain formal aspects of languages can be explained as the result of adaptation to the social environment.

Componential analysis is fast becoming a key instrument in semantic studies, providing both "a descriptive model for semantic content" [3, p. 91] and "neat explanations for some sense relations" [5, p. 125]. It was developed in the 2nd half of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s by European and American linguists. Evolving in anthropological linguistics as a means of studying kinship terms and

relations between them, componential analysis has proved it usefulness in many spheres of linguistic research on meaning.

The method in question is based on the assumption that meanings can be described on the basis of "a restricted set of conceptual building blocks" [3, p. 91], "the "givens" of the semantic system which cannot be broken down further by semantic analysis" [6, p. 155]. Many terms have been used in linguistics to indicate the lexical meaning components: "semantic feature", "semantic multiplier/component", "differential semantic element", "semantic prime", "semantic atom", "content figure", "noema", "generalized seme" etc. These units are considered very important in the process of lexico-semantic system description as its holistic analysis undergoes two stages: from the form to the content and, vice versa, from the content to the form.

**For the successful application of componential analysis the following principles must be taken into consideration:**

1) lexis presents a system and, therefore, lexico-semantic variants of the same denonative reference are in the relationship of contrast;

2) the oppositions between lexico-semantic variants make it possible to single out the common and differential semantic components;

3) dictionary definitions of lexico-semantic variants serve the valid source of information on word semantics;

4) the comparison of lexico-semantic variants in order to disclose their common and distinctive features should precede the descriptive analysis of dictionary definitions;

5) each semantic component corresponds to some key words or word combinations in the dictionary definitions.

The noun *good* in English represented in Oxford English Dictionary in 20 volumes has been chosen as the object of our analysis, as it indicates the basic moral and cultural value that shapes the way we perceive the world and makes it possible to reveal the essential semantic features of its verbalization. In the process of analysing the word's first and second meanings (*That which is good; Whatever is good in itself,*

*or beneficial in effect; The good portion, side, or aspect (of anything)*), the semes '*that which*', '*whatever is good or beneficial*', '*the good portion*', '*the good side*' and '*the good aspect*' can be singled out. The next two dictionary definitions (*The well-being, profit, or benefit (of a person, community, or thing); The resulting advantage, benefit, or profit of anything*) contain the semes referring to key concepts associated with *good*: '*well-being*', '*profit*', '*benefit*', and '*advantage*'. Since the noun under study is found in great many phases (*to do good*; *think good of*; *to do any good*; *to the good*; *to come to good* etc.), it is essential to use a seme '*in phrases*' to stand for all of them.

The dictionary definitions that follow (*A particular thing that is good; Something, whether material or immaterial, which it is an advantage to attain or possess; a desirable end or object; A good quality, virtue, grace; A good action; Property or possessions; now in more restricted sense, movable property; Money; pl. Live stock*) provide a numerous set of semes that denote different notions of person's everyday and social life: '*a thing*', '*something which*', '*a desirable end or object*', '*a good quality*', '*virtue*', '*grace*', '*a good action*', '*property or possessions*', '*money*' and '*in plural*'.

The proposed methodology is workable not only in the realm of one language, but appears to be promising while comparing both related and non-related languages. It serves an effective tool for disclosing peculiar shades of meanings and the most frequently used semes that constitute the speaker's language world picture.

The results of componential analysis are widely used in translation studies, since such a deep and thorough analysis of word meanings makes it possible to realize the essence of the notion verbalized in the language and the logics of its language bearers.

# REFERENCES

1. Goddard C., Wierzbicka A. Words and Meanings: Lexical Semantics across Domains, Languages and Cultures. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, – 2014. – 314 p.

2. Szabó Z. G., Thomason R. H. Philosophy of Language. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, – 2019. – 327 p.

3. Geeraerts D. Theories of Lexical Semantics. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, – 2010. – 341 p.

4. Hoffman Th. R. Realms of Meaning: An Introduction to Semantics. – New York/London: Routledge Taylor and Francis group, – 2013. – 339 p.

5. Kroeger P. R. Analyzing Meaning: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics. – Berlin: Language Science Press, - 2019. – 482 p.

6. Brinton L. J., Brinton D. M. The Linguistic Structure of Modern English. – Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, – 2010. – 426 p.

7. Oxford English Dictionary in 20 volumes on CD-ROM (v. 4.0). 2nd ed. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, – 2009.