



Lexical categorization of language units of the sphere «clothes» in the English language

VOLHA MURASHKA
VIKTORIYA PASENKA

Department of Intercultural Communications
Minsk State Linguistic University, Minsk
Republic of Belarus

Abstract:

Scientists have always had interest in peculiarities of the human mind. However, the role of the language in organizing and storing information in our mind is still unclear. A lot of disciplines are aimed at studying perception, reflection of the reality and principles of information transforming.

The peculiarities of perception and reflection of information may be analyzed by means of the characteristics of lexical categorization. Lexical categorization is a process of referring an object or a phenomenon to a certain class or a subject group. That is why studying the process of categorization on the example of different subject groups, including the sphere «clothes» may help to understand the peculiarities of perception and reflection of information, specific to English culture.

Nowadays cognitive science cannot explain which types of knowledge define lexical units of the same semantic sphere and define similarities and differences of these units. However, the answer to these questions may be found through the research of different subject groups including the group «clothes».

The principles of nomination of human ideas and conceptions have not been fundamentally researched yet. In order to understand perception of native speakers of a certain fragment of the world it is necessary to study the principles of nomination of units of different subject groups, including the group «clothes».

The research is aimed at identifying the main principles of categorization by means of studying morphological, structural,

semantic and syntactic peculiarities of lexical units of the group «clothes» in the English language.

The research has been done using the comparative, word-formative and quantitative methods. The main ways of word formation, which are described in this research, are considered to be group classification indicators, which define lexical subject classes with different characteristics. The main ways of word formation, analyzed in the research, confirm current tendencies of word formation of the English language.

Key words: lexical categorization, categorical characteristics, classification, nomination process, primary and secondary motivation.

The main criteria of lexical-thematic classes of the sphere «clothes» in the English language

We wear clothes both for protecting ourselves from bad weather and for expressing our ideas, thoughts and views. It is difficult to imagine today's life without different items of clothes. People depend on clothing to a large extent, which explains wide spread occurrence of using words of the sphere «clothes» in everyday life.

The development of our society and increase of the influence of fashion tendencies determined creation of new pieces of clothes, designs and fabric peculiarities. Items of clothes can tell us about national, religious or cultural identity. Thus, the main functions of clothes are protective, informational, and aesthetic.

Nowadays, vocabulary of the group «clothes» is an open system which stays in the process of its development. The system is characterized by a great variety of its units and increase of their informational and cultural significance.

The vocabulary of the English language related to the group «clothes» is characterized by a great number of identifiers, which are used for nomination of new items of clothes. The diversity of identifiers explains constant appearance of new words related to the sphere «clothes».

During the process of interpretation of the reality we relate its separate fragments to certain categories, making emphasis on peculiarities of these categories.

When we relate phenomena to different classes we structure the reality and find out similarities and differences. J. Lakoff states that the main principle of classification is the sphere of a person's experience, which defines certain classification categories in his mind during the process of reality analyzing (Lakoff 1988, 36).

Group classification characteristics of the sphere «clothes» (material, presence /absence of a detail, form, purpose, etc.) condition lexical-thematic classes of this sphere with different criteria. In this research there have been determined the classes with the following characteristics: gender, age, purpose, belonging to a certain season, certain style, peculiarities of sewing, name of a part of the body on which an item is worn.

According to gender characteristics clothes may be divided into male and female. For example, most dresses belong to female clothes. Such words as *blouse, bra, corset, tights, leggings, peignoir* belong to female clothes as well. Male clothes include *bow-tie, long underwear, tails, tuxedo*. However, most types of shorts and trousers may belong to both groups, which may be explained by the spread of unisex style.

In connection with fashion tendencies to wear baggy and comfortable clothes there has recently appeared a group of lexical units which include the word *boyfriend*: *boyfriend jeans, boyfriend T-shirt*. These items of clothes have been created for women, but their design is similar to male clothes.

Besides, gender peculiarities may be seen in combinations with the words *female, girls`, women`s, male, men`s, maternity: female trousers, maternity T-shirt, women`s short, etc.*

Special attention should be paid to the group of skirts. Skirts usually belong to female clothes. However, there exists

male skirt *kilt*, which is worn in Scotland. Thus, some items of clothes may belong to different gender groups in different cultures, which may be explained by cultural peculiarities.

In accordance with age there may be the following groups:

- baby clothes: *bib, bonnet*;
- teenager clothes: *leggings, miniskirt, shorts*;
- clothes for middle-aged people: *blouse, maxiskirt, pullover*;
- clothes for elderly people: *cardigan, sheath dress, shawl*.

In compliance with a purpose there may be:

- everyday clothes: *blouse, coat, dress, jacket, jeans, trousers, T-shirt*;
- job-related clothes: *medical clothing*;
- sports clothes: *anorak, tracksuit trousers*;
- uniform: *camouflage, khaki pants, sailor suit, uniform*.

Nowadays, there is a tendency of using job-related clothes in our everyday's life. For example, different sorts of *lumberjack style shirts* and *shoes* are very popular among the youth. Besides, items of sports clothes are also used in everyday's life.

As for seasons, clothes may be classified into summer clothes (*chinos, linen suit, summer dress, shorts, skirt, T-shirt*); winter clothes (*sheepskin coat, fur coat, fur waistcoat, winter coat, winter jacket*), autumn-spring clothes (*autumn coat, autumn jacket, trench coat*).

There is also a group of clothes related to religious topic. As a rule, such words have been borrowed from other languages. When borrowed, the words may change their form on phonetic or morphological level (*chasuble* – from the Latin word *casuala*; *chador* – from the Persian word *chaddar*, *hijab* – from the Arabic word *hajaba*).

What concerns styles, there may be determined the following groups: classic clothes (*bolero, cardigan, little black*

jacket), folk style clothes (*anorak, sari, tunic, poncho*), avant-garde style clothes (*balloon skirt, jodhpurs*), romantic style clothes (*tulip skirt*), sports style clothes (*Bermuda shorts, hoodie jacket, leggings, plus-fours, riding breeches, shorts*).

The results of the factual material of the research have also determined a group of underwear: *bustier, body string, body shorts, bustier dress, corsage*.

The way of sewing clothes defines the following groups:

- *draped clothes (mantila, pelerine, scarf, shawl, and tippet)*;

- *clothes, which is put on over one's head (poncho, sweater, tunic)*;

- *clothes with a zip or buttons (blouse, dressing gown, fur coat, jacket, overcoat)*;

- *sewed clothes (dress, skirt, trousers, T-shirt)*.

There is a group of hybrid clothes, composed of two items of clothes: *skirt-shorts, smoking dress, shirtdress, tunic-blouse*.

To sum up, the results of the research prove that classification is usually based on a person's experience. The above-mentioned lexical thematic groups of clothes confirm J.Lakoff's idea, that cognitive classification characteristic may be presented by one differential characteristic (characteristics of gender, age, way of sewing, style) or by a few differential characteristics. For example, different items of clothes may be worn in different seasons of the year depending on the climate. Thus, words may belong to different subgroups of the group «season». Such characteristics are specific for the national sphere of concepts and may differ from culture to culture. Besides, different units of clothes may belong to different gender groups, which may be explained by both a person's experience and his cultural identity.

The main types of lexical nomination of the words of the group «clothes»

Correlations between a language and our reality, connection between words and perception of the reality have always been in the sphere of linguists' interest, especially in the context of cognitive linguistics.

R. Jackendoff admits that linguistic view of the world is considered to be a projected world which is reflected with the language (Jackendoff 1978, 60).

When we perceive the reality, we strive to store information and the results of the experience in our mind. Specialists of the cognitive science admit that the process of lexical nomination plays a very important role in it, as nomination reflects a person's cognitive background.

The main types of lexical nomination in the English language are presented in the form of borrowings and new words.

Borrowings are considered to be an effective way of word-formation of the vocabulary of the sphere «clothes». The process of globalization has brought a number of borrowings in English: *anorak* and *parka* – from the Eskimo language, *bolero jacket* and *gaucho pants* – from the Spanish language, *kimono* – from the Japan language, *khaki* – from the Hindi language, *djellaba* – from the Arabic language, *sarong* – from the Indonesian language. These borrowings have completely saved their form and meaning in the English language.

Another type of lexical nomination is creation of new words. In the process of research there have been selected words, which have been created by means of morphological derivation.

There have been identified the following models of word formation:

VERB+SUFFIX **ER** – *bodyshaper, jumper, sweater, windbreaker, windcheater*;

NOUN+S – bottoms, *boxers, corduroys, khakis, trunks*;

ADJECTIVE+S – baggies, *briefs, tights*;

COMBINATION OF TWO FORMS – *bedgown, housecoat, necktie, nightshirt, nightdress, outerwear, raincoat, sundress, tracksuit*;

VERB+OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH – *wraparound, button-down dress, cut-off shorts, burnout hoodie*;

NOUN+PREPOSITION – *overcoat, underwear*.

Phrase lexicalization or lexical-syntactic derivation is another type of word formation (*bib-and-brace, button-through-dress, hooded button and zip front sweater*).

Another type of word formation is lexical-semantic derivation. The most common ways of lexical-semantic derivation are: 1. metaphor or transfer of the meaning, based on similarities of features (*bottoms, broomstick skirt, carrot pants, pencil-skirt, sheath dress, bell-shaped skirt*), 2. metonymy or transfer of the meaning regarding different types of connection between the notions. The most common models of metonymy are based on the transfer of the meaning from the material on the article (*cords, corduroys, gingham, jeans, tweeds*), from the place on the article (*bermudas, bikini, capris, guernsey, panama, ulster*), from characteristics on the article (*soaker; tights, windbreaker, windcheater*), from the action on the article (*bodyshaper, neck-tie, pullover*), from a person on the article (*bloomers, cardigan*).

To sum up, it is important to point out that English names of articles are characterized by both types of lexical nomination: borrowings and creation of new words (Leshcheva 2001, 77). The process of globalization and influence of different cultures on the English culture is reflected on the vocabulary of the English language including the sphere «clothes». According to the results of the research the ways of lexical-semantic and lexical-syntactic derivation are used more seldom than affixation and combination. Thus, the research confirms the tendencies of word formation in the English language, mainly

the fact that the most common ways of word formation are affixation and word combination.

Categorial characteristics of nomination of lexical units of the sphere «clothes»

The vocabulary of the English language includes names of pieces of clothes, appeared as a result of the primary nomination. Such names appeared long ago and are not perceived by native speakers as derived. Besides, there are a number of lexical units in the English language, the names of which are considered to be motivated.

Primary motivation is characterized by no rethinking process. It has a structure of a word form and a referent. Secondary motivation is creation of a new name on the base of an existing one. Secondary motivation includes a word form, a referent and association and occurs more often than primary motivation.

Secondary nomination is stipulated by semantics and includes elements of the word meanings, which underlay its formation. The most noticeable characteristics are called motivated identifiers.

Non-motivated units cannot be explained relying on the meaning of their compounds. For example, the meaning of such words as *dress, jacket, shirt, skirt, suit, trousers* can be explained only by means of etymological analysis.

Motivated units are characterized by catchy characteristics: *flared jeans, high waist evening trousers, maxi dress, midi dress, pencil skirt, petite dress, pleated skirt, printed top, waist skirt, wide leg trousers*.

As a rule, nomination is based on one of the two basic characteristics: function or appearance. As far as appearance is concerned, the most common motivated indicators are material, form, color, etc.

The factual material has showed that a number of articles of clothes have been nominated due to their resemblance with another subject regarding their form: *bell-bottoms; broomstick skirt; carrot pants; mushroom (type of a hat); pencil-skirt; sheath dress*. Some names have an element - *shaped*, which highlights the resemblance (*bell-shaped skirt*).

The process of nomination of the words by means of the identifier «form» is characterized by a narrow (*baggies, slacks*) or a wide form (*skinny jeans*), a size (*skinny fit jeans, skinny jeans, standard fit jeans, twill slim fit khakis, two-pocket slim fit shirt*), length (*double-breasted hip-length jacket, briefs, cropped trousers, cut-off knit shorts, knee-high stockings*), professional identity (*bomber jacket, military shirt*), sports activities (*baseball jacket, baseball shirt, boxer shorts, boxers, golf shirt, polo shirt*). Most of these words have lost their initial meaning and are used now not only in a professional sphere, but also in everyday life.

The identifier «location», which also underlies the process of nomination, can be connected with the place of origin of the article of clothes (*bikini, capris, Guernsey, Hawaiian shirt, Henley shirt, Jersey drawing top, Norkfolk jacket, panama hat, ulster*) and the place where the article of clothing is to be worn (*beach suit, cocktail dress, golf shirt, house dress, house coat, wedding gown*).

There is a group of articles of clothes, the names of which derived from the names of English universities (*Eton cap, Eton jacket*).

The group with the identifier «quality» includes lexical units, the qualities of which are connected with peculiarities of putting on pieces of clothes (*easy fit jeans, pullover, skintight suit, tights*), functional characteristics (*soaker, windbreaker, windcheater*), ways of wearing (*dress shirt, tie-front T-shirt*).

The identifier «purpose of usage» may be seen in the following examples: *ankle performance sport socks, bike shorts, diving suit, fleece sweatpants, riding jacket, sleeper, smoking*

jacket, sportswear, sundress, tracksuit, walking coat, yoga pants. This identifier is close to the identifier «location» and in some examples it is difficult to differentiate: *cocktail dress, dinner jacket, wedding gown.*

We may see the identifier «material» in the following cases: *angora sweater, burnout hoodie, burnout tank, chambray shirt, cotton dress, denim shirt, duffle coat, feather cloak, flannel nightgown, flannel shirt, fleece jacket, fleece sweatpants, jeans skirt, jeans jacket, satin jacket, satin pajama, seersucker shirt, tweed jacket, twill shirt, twill slim fit khakis.*

The identifier «name of a part of the body» may be seen in the following cases: *ankle performance sport socks, high-necked dress, leggings.*

The identifier «relation to the action» has been found in 2 examples: *body shaper, nek-tie.*

In the course of the research it has been found out that nomination may be connected with a detail (*beaded T, bouble-breasted hip-length jacket, button-down shirt, cargo shorts, cropped trousers, cargo skirt, checked cardigan, checked shirt, coin-pocket shorts, colorblock jacket, contrast-collar shirt, dot-and-stripe slim fit shirt, double-layer green shorts, double-layer hoodie, double-layer knit shorts, embellished stripe tank, faded denim shorts, feather cloak, high-necked dress, hooded button and zip front sweater, houndstooth shirt, Jersey drawing top, knee-high stocking, pinstripe blazer, pleated skirt, polka dot tie, scoopneck T, stripe shirt, suspender skirt, tail coat, two-piece dress, two-pocket shirt, two-pocket slim fit shirt, two-toned V-neck sweater, V-neck T-shirt, zip hoodie*) lack of the detail (*collarless jacket, sleeveless shirt*), presence of one detail and lack of another detail (*draped sleeveless top*). We regard a color, an illustration, a pattern, and peculiarities of sewing as details in the research.

The tendency of unisex style has conditioned the fact that there have been found very few examples, named by

means of the identifier «gender» (*boyfriend jeans, maternity dress*).

There is a group of words of the sphere «clothes», deprived from proper names. For example, a type of trousers *bloomers* became popular due to a famous American writer Amelia Bloomer. The name of a jacket *cardigan* deprived from the name of lord Cardigan. The name of *Eisenhower jacket* appeared thanks to the name of a great general Dwight Eisenhower, *Mao jacket* - due to the name of Mao Zedong, *Nehru jacket* - due to the name of Jawaharlal Nehru. During the research we found the name of shorts *Daisy Duke shorts*, deprived from the name of a famous character of TV series Daisy Duke.

To sum up, the research confirms the ideas of O. Ryabko (2003), who states that all the identifiers may be divided into parametric and pragmatic. Parametric identifiers are connected with the appearance of the clothes. In our research we relate such identifiers as material, presence/absence of a detail, form, and length to parametric identifiers. Pragmatic nomination is connected with practical needs of people to the reality. The following identifiers are considered to be pragmatic: purpose, location, relation to the action, proper names using.

Conclusion

For many centuries a lot of attention has been paid to the human mind and to the role of our language in organizing and storing knowledge. The research is aimed at studying the principles of categorization, particularly group classification identifiers of lexical units of the group «clothes».

The analysis of the factual material has shown that creation of new words is usually based on the name which already exists in the language. It means that secondary nomination happens more often than primary. The nomination of 30% of all the units which have been selected during

analyses is connected with the appearance of an article of clothing (material, form, length, presence/lack of a detail).

Most of new names of articles of clothing have been formed by means of morphological derivation (52% of all the selected words). Most of them have derived from verbs, adjectives and nouns, which is a specific feature of the English language in general.

The peculiarities of categorization of English lexical units of the sphere «clothes» helps to look at the system of the English language from the point of view of native speakers. The identifiers which have been mentioned in the research reflect such aspects of English culture as tendencies to comfort in everyday life and unisex style. Besides, the diversity of identifiers of nomination explains constant appearing of neologisms of the sphere «clothes» in the vocabulary of the English language.

The results of this research may be used for categorization of other lexical-thematic groups of the English language.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Hornby, Albert Sidney. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, George. 1988. "Classifiers as a Reflection of Mind: The Experiential, Imaginative, and Ecological Aspects." *New in foreign linguistics* 23: 12-51.

Leshcheva, Ludmila. 2001. "Words in the English language" Academy of public administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus. 76-79.

Ryabko, O.P. "Complex-structural floronims in the English language: cognitive-frame and motivation-nomination interpretation."

Jackendoff, Ray. 1978. "The Relation between Form, Meaning, and Thought." *Linguistic Theory and Psychological Reality* 56-64.