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Semantic Analysis of Meanings in Psycholinguistics

This short chapter is an appendix to the book on which this issue is based. The excerpt is from the study "Semantic Study of Stereotypes of Nonnormal Gender Role Behavior," by N.G. Ianova. This example offers characteristics of the semantic analysis of meaning carried out in the authors' project. The meaning of the word "princess" is analyzed in the example.

We will analyze potential meanings of words based on an extract from a psycholinguistic study.[1]

The object of the study will be the word "princess." The first substantive aspect of this word is the conventional one and is given in the dictionaries: "The title of a nonruling member of a royal or ruling house, or the person who holds such title." This is the formal meaning of the word.

A specific mentality, however, with its stable spectrum of pressing needs and living conditions, forms its own predispositional interpretations of this word, which are meaningful precisely for these conditions. This aspect includes not only the propositional and connotative component but also the inadequately recognized conceptual content that follows not from the dictionary definition but from the general, customary situations and conditions in which the given mentality exists, which naturally supplement its use and which do not have to be expressly specified in communications.[2] For example, the phrase, "Here comes the six," will be understood in completely different ways by those who are used to constantly waiting for

Table 1

Lexical Meanings of the Word "Princess" in Various States of Young People's Mentality in Russia

Sememes	States					
	Integral	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Not a princess–Princess	*0.622*	*0.951*	*0.824*	*0.720*	*0.753*	*0.751*
Not a queen–Queen	**0.884**	**0.963**	*0.481*	**-0.540**	–0.227	**0.056**
Not a coquette–Coquette	0.022	0.133	–0.212	0.181	–0.260	0.764
Not a goddess–Goddess	0.346	**0.865**	**0.892**	0.686	0.618	-0.558
Not a doll–Doll	–0.002	0.073	0.043	**0.821**	**0.916**	0.268
Not a lady–Lady	0.146	**0.500**	**0.546**	–0.115	0.025	*0.405*
Not a noblewoman–Noblewoman	*0.460*	0.138	0.292	0.200	0.234	0.05

a bus at a stop, sitting at a card table in a casino, or living in a criminal milieu.

Semantic analysis categories have dispositional constructs that reveal the interpretation of an object by the mentality being studied and, therefore, may be regarded as sememes that define various significates of the word. The different states (S) of the object are variants of interpretations (see Table 1).

We now consider the first five most probable semantic interpretations and the integral one (incorporating all states):

The integral state (based on thirteen states): *Queen* (0.88), *noblewoman* (0.46)

1. *Queen* (0.96), *goddess* (0.87), *lady* (0.50).
2. *Goddess* (0.89), *lady* (0.55), *queen* (0.48).
3. *Doll* (0.82), *goddess* (0.69), *not a queen* (0.54).
4. *Doll* (0.92), *goddess* (0.62).
5. *Coquette* (0.76), *not a goddess* (0.56), *lady* (0.40).

In the first significate, which is a superposition of all the states, the greatest weight is carried by the archseme *queen* (0.88), which reflects a hyponymic relationship of the "mother–daughter" type and is, in essence, an intension. The semantic marker *noblewoman* (0.46) is a taxonomy indicating affiliation with the class of the ruling elite. This meaning is the closest to the dictionary meaning, but still does not match it exactly. This significate is based not on the title but on the kinship (daughter of the queen) and proximity to power.

The second significate, in addition to the intension *queen* (0.96), includes the connotation *goddess* (0.87), which essentially is a proposition that expresses a degree of reverence, and the hyperonym *lady* (0.50). In effect, the meaning of the word is conveyed by the syntagma: "a *queen's* daughter, a *lady* (according to breeding and behavior) who is realistically unattainable (a celestial being), demands

reverence and has charisma."

The third significate is hyperaccentuated by the connotation *goddess* (0.89) and includes the hyperonym *lady* (0.55) and the intension *queen* (0.48).

The fourth significate has a completely different structure and in effect is a trope (*not a queen's daughter*—0.54). In this case the greatest emphasis is on the semantic markers *doll* (0.82) and *goddess* (0.69), which express an evaluative proposition (an idol that may be worshipped but does not have autonomous power, that is, it may either be placed on or removed from a pedestal). There is here an implicit reference to whoever put the idol on the pedestal and created the conditions for deification, which is clarified by the seme *not a queen* (*not a queen's daughter*). The naming of this meaning stems from a man's desire to experience love for perfection. If this is not objectively accessible, then it is realized on a subjective level by changing the proposition toward the object of love (a personal one or, if there are enough resources, that of a segment of society).

The fifth significate also defines a trope, which means "a deified, nonautonomous, toy idol." Unlike the previous one, it does not have a positive or negative relation to the intension. In this mentality, any denotation, a person of the female gender, may be called a princess if the namer has the relevant proposition (deification, worship).

The sixth significate is identified as a formal (*not a goddess*—0.56) compliment to a *coquette* (0.76) during a "refined" flirtation (*lady*—0.40).