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“MOTIONS” OF GODFATHER

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The work offers joint cognitive semantic and interdiscursive approach to the religious phenomenon of baptism, particularly the prime participant of situation of baptism – godfather. The lexical unit godfather is a core of investigation according to its unique and original genesis regarding its meanings within the situation of baptism, post-baptism period, and its application in other spheres of human activity. The unit evokes structures relating to BAPTISM gestalt, the cognitive area uniting information on baptism ritual, its pre, and post stages. The latter is analyzed regarding its cognitive and situational representation through sequential frame, semantic, and definitive analysis in terms of onomasiological and semasiological interpretations. The action frame structure is selected as a “container” of organized information about events, participants, and the actions connected with situation of baptism in general and godfather in particular. The issue of opposite “motions” of meanings is translated through cognitive images of nominative unit godfather and is researched with respect to the unit’s cognitive structures evoked by its interdiscursive objectivations. The scientific platform ScienceDirect and the mass-media (cinematography) are viewed as the potential sources of overlapping discourses and are regarded as valuable interdiscursive spaces, which include various crystallizations developed by investigated nominative unit. The “motions” of godfather lexical unit are verbalized via interdiscursive explications of its meanings and are interpreted through action frame structural images. The paper includes the discussion of opposed direction “motions” demonstrated by interdiscursive crystallizations of meanings the nominative unit godfather actualizes. The investigated meanings in their turn are analyzed in terms of cognitive images constructing new situations evoked by them. Additionally, the investigation outlines the presumable linguistic and extra linguistic factors influencing the opposed “motion” processes declared. The notion of “hollywoodization” is mentioned as one having direct impact on the “motion” revealed.

Key words: baptism, action frame, gestalt, interdiscursivity, cognitive semantics.

«РУХ»: ХРЕЩЕНИЙ БАТЬКО

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У роботі запропоновано об’єднання когнітивно-семантичного та інтердискурсивного підходів до аналізу релігійного феномену хрещення, а саме до одного з головних учасників ситуації хрещення – хрещеного батька. Лексична одиниця «хрещений батько» є ядром дослідження завдяки її унікальним особливостям і первинно релігійному походженню, що підтверджується її значеннями під час і після ситуації хрещення й у процесі застосування в інших сферах людської діяльності. Ця номінативна одиниця активує структури, що належать до гештальту ХРЕЩЕННЯ, когнітивної галузі, котра об’єднує інформацію про сам ритуал хрещення, його до- та післяритуальні стадії. Останні досліджуються в межах їх когнітивної та ситуативної об’єктивації за допомогою почергового фреймового, семантичного й дефінітивного аналізу із застосуванням ономазіологічної та семасіологічної інтерпретацій. Структура акціонального фрейму обрана як «контейнер» організованої інформації про події, учасників та дії, пов’язані із ситуацією хрещення загалом і хрещеним батьком зокрема. Дослідження розкриває питання протиставлення «рухів», закодованих у значеннях лексичної одиниці «хрещений батько» і ретрансльованих за допомогою фреймових когнітивних структур. Наукова платформа ScienceDirect і засоби масової інформації (кінематографія) розглядаються як потенційні джерела накладання дискурсів і розцінюються як інтердискурсивні простори, що містять різноманітні кристалізації значень, розвинутих номінативними одиницями. «Рухи» номінативної одиниці «хрещений батько» вербалізуються шляхом інтердискурсивної об’єктивації її значень та інтерпретуються за допомогою наочних моделей акціонального фрейму. Праця містить міркування стосовно причин виникнення протилежно направлених «рухів», кристалізованих значеннями, котрі актуалізує номінативна одиниця «хрещений батько» в різних типах дискурсу. Указані значення, у свою чергу, аналізуються в термінах ілюстрації когнітивних структур, що структуруються через апельовані ними ситуації. Також дослідження окреслює ймовірні лінгвістичні й нелінгвістичні фактори, що впливають на наявність протилежних рухів, описаних вище. Поняття «голівудизація» зазначене як один із чинників, який здійснює прямий вплив на встановлені процеси «руху».

Ключові слова: хрещення, акціональний фрейм, гештальт, інтердискурсивність, когнітивна семантика.



1. Introduction

The 21 century is time of speed and digital power over everyone, consequently motion is everywhere, moreover it is the norm of life. While tendency is being transparent in human activities and language stops being an exception. Loads of information elicited in the global network construct interdiscursive reality by a single click of a computer mouse. As the result, modern time information, perceived through lexical units, gets stored in the form of cognitive structures faster than ever before. In fact, the process is nothing else but an extreme expanding of already existing concepts or gestalts that upbuilds the cognitive worldview by crystallization of additional meanings to the notions recorded by the mentioned cognitive entities. It is **hypothesized** that gestalts being media for meaning-surface form correlation (Lakoff 1981, p. 354) get continuously extended and complicated in terms of limitless branching creating new opportunities for already existing notions. The aim of the study is to explicate the characteristics gained via interdiscursive realization of “godfather” lexical unit. The **objectives** of the work are: 1) to elaborate the cognitive-semantic situational representation of GODFATHER; 2) to illustrate the motion in cognitive area through building up of interdiscursive connections; 3) to explore the brightest tendencies of interdiscursive realization of GODFATHER. The basic methods of investigation overrun the composition of onomasiological and semasiological investigation platforms. The onomasiological principle relies upon prior situational representation of a phenomenon switching to its cognitive and semantic image (Croft, 2004). Whereas semasiological approach presupposes the elements of semantic analysis with respect to the situational realization. Also, contextual and discourse analyses are among the methods applied in the paper.

Religion and related phenomena can hardly lose their popularity since religion possesses the characteristics of social regulator (Cipriani, 2002). There is a number of modern interdisciplinary studies related to religion offered by sociologists, economics, law, anthropology, psychology. Linguistic studies of ritual, conducted by cross-disciplinary scientists R.N. McCauley and E.Th. Lawson and a discourse researcher A.C. Cipriani (Cipriani, 2002) address verbal aspect of ritual, thus its participants such as godfather still remain uncovered.

2. Cognitive-semantic image of GODFATHER

The religious discourse can be characterized as one of the most rigid in terms of flexibility and alterations since it is strictly regulated by

norms/canons and undermined by Holy Writ. But the rigidity of religious discourse can be argued based on the example of ritual of baptism analysis. The growth of 'BAPTISM' gestalt can serve as an example. Gestalt 'BAPTISM' is represented through the situation of the religious ritual under the same name. Being a situationally preconditioned it is enclosed by the action frame (Zhabotynska, 2010) scheme due to the fact that it is applied for description of dynamic events and presupposes the particular participants' set. The dynamics arises from strict sequence of procedures necessary for both a candidate for baptism and a godparents (godfather/ godmother) to undergo in order for the first to be accepted as a true member of a religious group. The number of participants is preconditioned by the church canons and should include at least four people (Kuhrt 1987): a priest, a godfather, godmother, and a candidate for baptism. The frame serving a situation of baptism is: WHO Agent (a priest) – ACTS (baptizes) – WHO Patient (a candidate for baptism). The participants of 'baptism' situation in their turn get further represented via cognitive structures describing AGENTS, ACTIONS, PATIENT. All three are viewed as subordinate (sub frames) groups belonging to superior frame 'BAPTISM'. The attention of the paper is focused specifically on sub frame group AGENTS that introduces the persons who perform actions towards a candidate during baptism ritual. The first example: action sub frame 'Priest': WHO (a person) – ACTS (immerses into/sprinkles with water) – PATIENT (a candidate for baptism). The above mentioned cognitive structures contain the knowledge on the situation of baptism, but they are not to be entitled as evoked frames when it comes to mentioning of lexical units under the same name. Since evoked frame structure is based on the previous knowledge on the situation (Fillmore, 1982: 20), the lexical unit *godfather* is to evoke the action frame 'Godfather' or 'Godmother' – WHO (a person) – ACTS (a – acts on behalf of a candidate for baptism; b – is responsible for Christian conduct of a future member of the Christ's church) -- PATIENT (a candidate for baptism) who specifically pertains to BAPTISM gestalt referring to person appointed by God to help the new Christian grow in the knowledge and love of God, and in their responsibilities as members of the Church. By contrast, action frame 'Priest' has larger scope of functioning and thus owns the possibility to be evoked with gestalts like MARRIAGE, FUNERALS, and other which include the performance of person acting in the name of God (a priest). Consequently,

action frame 'Priest' does not primarily activate 'BAPTISM' gestalt. Thus, during the situation of baptism godfather as one of its basic participants, primarily pertaining to gestalt BAPTISM (that is undermined by the content of action frame under the same name) undertakes the responsibilities: to teach, to support, to accompany in faith and Christian life his godchild (Dunaievskia, 2015: 29–32). These obligations have been postulated by Christian Church for centuries and as the result are the part of worldview of every baptized person. Moreover, the previously mentioned functions of godfather in respect to his godchild are supposed to facilitate and support the steady progression or "motion" of a newly baptized towards Christian life. The motion is launched by the ritual of baptism and has a life-long effect. The latter can be depicted through the following figure (figure 1).

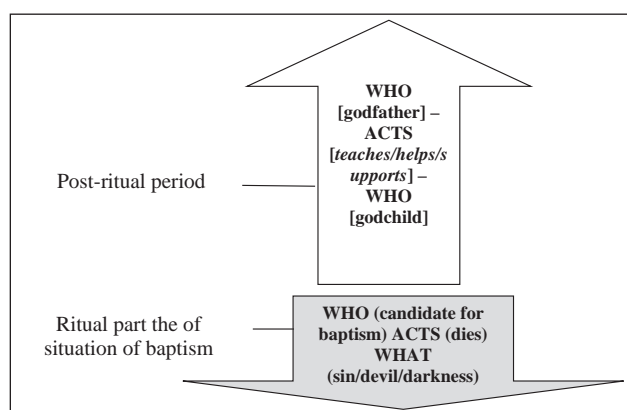


Fig. 1. Motions depicted by action frames “Candidate for Baptism” and “Godfather”

Figure 1 describes two opposite types of motions based on semasiological interpretation of the action frames' structures. The first type is dark-coloured and takes place during the ritual of baptism. This motion is strictly directed downwards that symbolizes the death for original sin. The second type of motion is caused by the ritual of baptism, continues through the whole life of a newly baptised and is secured by a godfather or godmother.

3. GODFATHER through the prism of interdiscursivity

The further investigation of GODFATHER motion requires the expanding of the discursive edges that means entering interdiscursive space (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 2010; Jianguo, 2011). The latter, being treated as the scope where various types of discourses overlap and coexist, is a potential 'manufacturer' that launches previously undetected meanings of lexemes

stemming from definite kind of discourse they are supposed to originally belong to. *ScienceDirect* platform, particularly the articles in open access (preferably year 2018) and mass-media (cinematography) scope are selected to illustrate the examples of a areas with characteristics of intersecting numerous discourses and, as the result, they can be utilized as the interdiscursive areas.

The lexical unit *godfather* within *ScienceDirect* platform is applied in four works. The meanings, the lexeme under investigation is used with, are:

Ecology Discourse: 1) **A very powerful person:** “*The godfather is a very high-level person with limited involvement, but who is very powerful (such as a CEO)*”. This example of usage evokes the action frame: WHO (godfather) -- ACTS (enjoys power over) – WHO (people/employees); 2) **High level person:** “... *the 'godfather' of innovation*”. The meaning evokes the action frame: WHO (godfather) – ACTS (holds) – WHAT (high position).

Transport Discourse: 3) **An initiator and founder** in: “... *the Saudi Vision 2030 was presented by the godfather of the vision Prince Mohammed bin Salman ...*”

Medical Discourse: **An initiator and founder** “*The chemist Alexander Shulgin, is sometimes called the 'godfather of psychedelics'!*...”

Political/HR Discourses: **An initiator and founder** “*Echoing the godfather of PR, Edward Bernays ...*” The meanings the lexical unit *godfather* is used in extracts of transport, medical, political, and HR discourse evoke action frame: WHO (godfather) – ACTS (founds/establishes/launches) – WHAT (method/institution/settlement/trend/project).

Concerning the results obtained from interdiscursive environment created by Ecology, Transport, Medical, Political and HR Discourses fixed in *ScienceDirect* platform, three meanings of *godfather* were elicited. The point that all of them differ from those meaning gained by the same lexical unit in Religious Discourse implies the fact that they all are quite atypical for BAPTISM gestalt. The first cognitive structure is: WHO (a person) – ACTS (has/enjoys) – WHAT (power); the second one is described as: WHO (a person) – ACTS (holds) – WHAT (high position); the third one WHO (a person) – ACTS (initiates/founds) – WHAT (method, science branch, institution etc.). These situations, actions, and their participants have nothing in common with baptism ritual, support, and Christian education of a godchild. To add more, the application of nominative unit *godfather* with the meaning of a very powerful

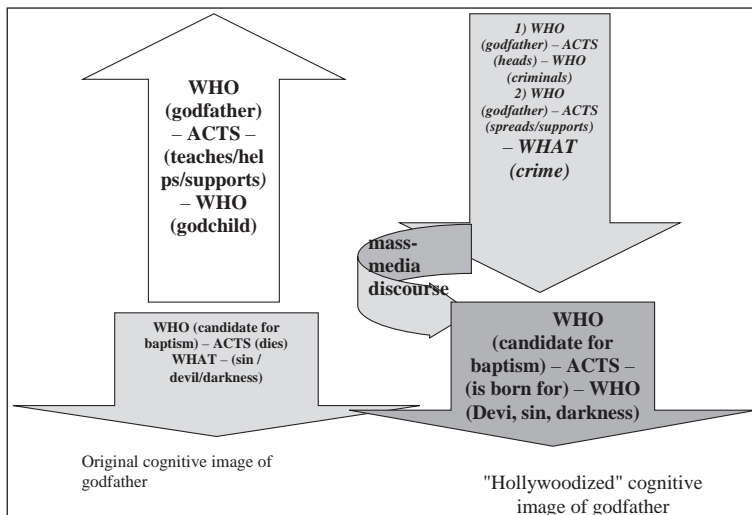


Fig. 2. "Twisted" motions of godfather

person and high level person in fragment from Ecological Discourse illustrates the tendency of already **functioning as a branch term**. The latter postulates the rigid position of lexical unit *godfather* to become multidisciplinary term.

To add more, the mass media, being the one of the most effective scopes for interdiscursive space, offers the fourth meaning explicated by the lexical unit *godfather*:

Political Discourse

A person with criminal background / mafia boss: "The man once dubbed the *Godfather* of Kremlin had become a shadow of his former self" (*The Sunday Times*, 2015). The meaning evokes the action frames: 1) WHO (godfather) – ACTS (heads) – WHO (criminals) or 2) WHO (godfather) – ACTS (spreads/supports) – WHAT (crime). The frame corresponds the situation opposite to that evoked by frame WHO (godfather) – ACTS (teaches/helps / supports) – WHO (godchild). These two polar processes can be depicted through the following figure (figure 2).

Figure 2 depicts the processes explicated by the spread of nominative unit *godfather* into Discourse of Cinematography and the consequences of the lexeme being "hollywoodized" or "adapting (a story or series of events) so as to conform to the supposed norms of a typical Hollywood film, especially in respect of being unrealistically glamorous, exciting, or simplistic". The latter refers to the process of using the original godfather's role performed during the ritual of baptism and continued throughout his life as the "container" or "skeleton" for enclosing the negative characteristics, causing diverse effect totally opposed to that created by baptism ritual. Furthermore, two contrasting

frame structures have been launched due to interdiscursive usage of the nominative unit *godfather*. The polarity of meanings developed by nominative unit *godfather* in Discourses of Religion and Cinematography is becoming more and more popular among EFL (English as Foreign Language) users due to the authentic English version of F.F. Coppola Trilogy "The Godfather", moreover, nominative unit *godfather* is becoming admired by gamers and alcohol consumers due to "The Godfather" video game and a cocktail "The Godfather", which have been accelerating popularity since 1970s. These facts point at the universal tendency of English vocabulary corpus to possess the feature of crystallizing

meanings often quite different or even not peculiar to those primary ones and the religious sphere as an appealing to sacral and spiritual issues is not an exclusion. The latter can be supported based on the example of *godfather* nominative unit online definitions review (figure 3).

Only 31% of researched 29 definitions retrieved from online open access platform *One Look Dictionary Search* of nominative unit *godfather* don't explicate those altered by "The Godfather" characteristics of a person as *one with criminal past; having criminal record; referring to a criminal word; connected with crime and mafia circles* etc. The remaining 79% (definitions marked with red colour) contain the traits of "The Godfather" main character.

4. Conclusions

To sum it up, the fact that the lexis primarily circulating within one type of discourse is able to expand the scope of its cognitive area fixed in definite gestalt gives the opportunity to view the process of continuous motion of the cognitive worldview using cyberspace, interdiscursive environment, semantic abilities of lexis as the effective "vehicles" for conquering new territories. The process is rather transparent and vast. Due to some extra linguistic factors (e.g. Hollywood industry) the processes of motion in different or even opposed directions are developed. The latter are so forceful that even the conflict of values (illustrated by opposed traits reflected by cognitive images from figure 2) cannot prevent them from development and gaining success and popularity. Since the process turns to be fixed by dictionaries, the aiding factors of *godfather's* motion are prioritized among the options for future research directions, owing



Fig. 3. One Look Dictionary Search Results on godfather lexeme

to the fact that the lexeme's future total loss of connection with Religious Discourse appears to be quite a presumable outcome.

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