

On the Question of Determining Word-Formation Type and Word-Formation Meaning

Elmuratova S.A.

Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Azhiniyaz, Nukus, Uzbekistan
Ph.D., sayora__1981@mail.ru

Allamuratova G.J

Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Azhiniyaz, Nukus, Uzbekistan
Ph.D., docent, gulsanem69@mail.ru

ABSTRACT: The work explores the extensively studied unit of classification in derived words - the derivational type. Various definitions of word-formation types by different authors are provided. Detailed descriptions are given regarding the identification of word-formative meaning by certain derivatologists. The identification of both general and specific word-formation meanings, characteristic of numerous derivatological studies during the last decades of the twentieth century, raises questions about the hierarchy of word-formation meaning. It prompts inquiries into the presence of word-formation meanings of varying degrees of abstraction and generality within the Russian language's word-formation system. This inquiry is interconnected with the "total" and "difference" approaches to word-formation meaning that have emerged in Russian derivatology. The first approach encompasses the semantics of the generating base in the definition of DM, wherein word-formation meaning is construed as a cumulative semantic sum of the generating base and its derivatives. Conversely, the second approach regards word-formation meaning as a recurring semantic distinction between generators and derivatives.

KEYWORD: Word formation, word-formation type, word-formation meaning, derivatology, word-formation category, derived word, unit

Introduction

In contemporary Russian linguistics, the autonomy of the word-formation domain, in addition to phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic domains, is widely acknowledged. However, as noted by Sh. Abdullaeva, "the delayed recognition of word formation as a linguistic level on par with morphology and vocabulary has impacted the development of its specific characteristics, structure, and the interrelations of its fundamental components. The exploration of word formation as linguistic level

primarily focused on categorizing word-formation types, with an in-depth analysis provided in the “Grammar of Modern Russian Literary Language” [1, 15-16].

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the analytical approach, focused on "from the form of an affix to its meaning," prevailed in derivatology. However, this dominance left numerous critical areas insufficiently explored. These areas encompassed understanding the generation of derivative words, the impact of grammatical categories on derivative word formation, and, notably, the core concept of word-formation meaning (WFM). Furthermore, systems for organizing word-formation meanings—referred to as word-formation categories (WFC)—were also in need of further clarification [1, 15-16].

The issue of determining the fundamental unit within the word-formation system remains intricate and subject to ongoing debate. Among derivatologists, there exists a division where the primary unit of word formation is acknowledged as either a derivative word (E.A. Zemskaya) or a word-formation type (A.N. Tikhonov). We contend that designating the PS as the basic unit of word formation doesn't adequately capture certain inherent properties of the word-formation tier, particularly its heightened level of abstraction compared to the lexical tier. This abstraction gives rise to the direction of word formation. Hence, we find the approach put forth by A.N. Tikhonov more reasonable in terms of identifying the fundamental unit of the word-formation system. According to this perspective, the primary focus of word formation is on the derivative word, with the word formation type (WFT) acting as the principal unit within the word formation system, fulfilling a critical systematizing function [2, 3]. According to the "Grammar of the Modern Literary Russian Language," it asserts with utmost certainty that the primary unit for classifying the word-formation system is the word-formation type. This type represents a formal semantic framework for word construction, abstracted from particular lexical units and marked by common features:

- a) A formal indicator that discerns motivated words from their motivating counterparts.
- b) Parts of speech of motivating words.
- c) The semantic relationship between the motivated word and the motivating one (word-formation meaning).

As an illustration, verbs such *прыгнуть, свистнуть, толкнуть, чихнуть*, and others are categorized under the same word-formation type due to the following:

- a) Sharing a common formal indicator - the suffix **-ну(ть)** ...
- b) Being motivated by verbs (*прыгать, свистеть, толкать, чихать*).
- c) Signifying the action performed once, corresponding to the motivating verb, aligning with the meaning "to perform an action once," as termed by the motivating verb [3, 39].

Presently, the word-formation type stands as the most extensively studied unit for classifying derived words. While there may be slight variations in the definitions of this term among different authors, a comparative analysis reveals these nuanced differences. For instance,

- 1) "The word-formation type can be defined as a diagram or formula outlining the structure of derived words. It is distinguished by the convergence of three key elements:
 - a) The part of speech of the stem generating the word.
 - b) The semantic relationship existing between derivatives and generators.

c) The formal relationship between derivatives and generators, specifically the uniformity in the word formation method and word-formation means (formant). For instance, in affix derivatives, this uniformity is seen in the identity of the affix" [4, 292].

2) "The word-formation type is essentially a blueprint for creating words within a specific part of speech, extracted from specific lexical entities. It is marked by:

a) The shared part of speech of the directly motivating words.

b) A formant that remains consistent both in material and semantic aspects..." [5, 135].

The depiction of the word-formation type (WFT) closely aligns with the comprehension of the essence of word-formation meaning (WFM). However, there are notable divergences among various derivatologists, resulting in varied interpretations of the word-formation type. It's worth noting that in the ST description found in 'Grammar-70,' the indicator of the generality of word-formation meaning (not precisely termed) is positioned in the third position. The provided definition succinctly embodies the analytical approach utilized in describing both word formation and morphology, as outlined in 'Grammar-70' and 'Grammar-80.' This approach, known as 'from the form of expression to the meaning,' is evident here, wherein the analysis begins with the formant, specifically the suffix *-нуть*. The word-formation type (WFT) is primarily identified and distinguished from other types by this formant, in this instance, the suffix. Notably, word-formation meaning (WFM) emerges as only the third component in the definition of WFT.

However, the concept of word-formation meaning (WFM) denoting 'singleness' can manifest not only through distinct formants but also through various methods. For instance, consider the words *толкнуть, пихнуть, свистнуть / схамить, съязвить, сжульничать* (suffixal method) alongside 'be rude,' 'sarcastic,' 'cheat' (prefixal and prefix-suffixal methods). Similar variability in expressing WFM can be observed in nominal word formation. For example, WFM denoting 'togetherness' (komitativnost) in Russian can be conveyed through three formants and three methods: prefixal, prefix-suffixal, and complex-suffixal (e.g., *соавтор, сокурсник, сопалатник; однополчанин, одноклассник*) [6, 20]. It is worth noting that 'Grammar-70' and 'Grammar-80' do not address the possibility of expressing the same WFM in diverse ways or across different parts of speech.

Methodology: The distinction between the word-formation and lexical tiers should be initially delineated as follows: the word-formation tier primarily encompasses the mechanisms of language responsible for generating lexical units. This aligns with the renowned perspective of L.V. Shcherba, who regarded word formation as an integral part of grammar. He eloquently stated, "One of the primary domains of grammar involves the rules governing word formation—essentially, how new words are created. The process of constructing existing words pertains to the realm of dictionaries, wherein not only the word's divisibility is elucidated, but also its composition, if still discernible and impactful in speech" [7, 51].

The instruction appears highly significant. L.V. Shcherba highlights that a derived word (DW) "can be a powerful factor in speech." This process involves integrating the derived word into both speech and text—a language game intricately linked to the pragmatics of word formation and the innovative creation of new words using existing patterns.

Later on, these two issues outlined by L.V. Shcherba were construed as the primary and secondary objectives of derivatology. The duty of delineating the structure of words was accomplished through dedicated morphemic and word-formation dictionaries.

In "Grammar-70," the concept of word-formation meaning is elucidated within the introductory section of the "Word Formation" chapter. The definition posits that word-formation meaning is the intrinsic meaning encompassed within the word as a whole—distinct from individual word forms or a series of word forms. This meaning is formally conveyed through intra-word linguistic elements present in certain words associated with the respective part of speech. This meaning holds an intermediary position, situated between lexical meaning, which pertains to a specific word or group of words (sans intra-word formal expression common to the group), and grammatical categorical meaning expressed across all words of a given part of speech [3, 7].

Despite the detailed nature of this definition, we find that the essential features of WFM are somewhat obscured, and its core essence and purpose remain undefined. The definition fails to distinguish WFM distinctly. Moreover, the grammatical meaning of noun gender also aligns with this definition, as it resides not within individual word forms but within the entire word. Therefore, the authors of "Grammar-70" should consider clarifying and providing a reservation, pointing out that the word-formation meanings of a given part of speech, unlike specific grammatical meanings, do not typically align into series that relate to opposition within a single category encompassing all words of that part of speech". Indeed, just as grammatical meanings like masculine and other genders encompass the entire class of nouns, forming the grammatical category of gender, and similarly, the meanings of perfect and imperfect forms constitute the grammatical category of verb aspect, word-formation meanings operate within a parallel linguistic framework. They encompass the entire word, not limited to specific word forms, aligning with the broader context of linguistic categorization [3, 37].

In "Russian Grammar," WFM is elaborated upon within the section "Basic Concepts of Word Formation," particularly in relation to the definition of ST. It is characterized as "a general meaning that sets apart all motivated words of a specific type from their motivating ones" [5, 135], once again underlining its connection to the concept of DT. The differentiation between WFM and morphological categorical meanings is established using the same criteria as outlined in "Grammar-70."

When analyzing E.A. Zemskaya's early works and examining the approach of certain derivatologists regarding the isolation of DM, it becomes apparent that DM emerges from the intricate interplay between generators and derivatives. The impression is that DM is derived from the semantic relationship between these generators and derivatives. As Zemskaya and others put it, "By establishing the semantic relationship between generators and derivatives, we consequently define the word-formation meaning of this type." Consequently, the word-formation (derivative) meaning is a shared characteristic among derivatives of this type.

When identifying word-formation meaning, it is crucial to abstract from the specific lexical meaning of a particular word and instead focus on identifying shared characteristics among a group of words reflected in their structure. This involves understanding the semantics of both the generating base and the formant [4, 293-294]. However, this approach leaves room for uncertainty regarding the criteria used to compile "empirical" word-forming pairs and series that possess homonymous formants. For

instance, pairs like *лёд – льдина, макаронны – макаронина, железо – железина* (DM "singularity"), *дом – домина, кусок – кусина, собаки – собачина* (DM "magnification"), *рыжий – рыжина, глубокий – глубина, широкий – ширина* (DM "abstract non-procedural sign") pose a challenge in terms of determining the criteria for categorizing them within the word-formation framework.

Moreover, within this approach, DM is closely "linked" to a specific word-formation type (WFT) and consequently to the method of word formation. However, this linkage does not align with the intricate asymmetrical relationship between form and meaning observed in the affixes within the Russian language.

Results. As a result, the explanation of the essence of word-formation meaning seems to be supplanted by the procedure for delineating word-formation types. Consequently, DM itself remains somewhat enigmatic, seemingly connecting series of generators and derivatives, or in the terms of "Grammar-70" and "Grammar-80," the motivating and motivated elements, without a clear elucidation of the underlying rationale.

In the reference dictionary "Basic Concepts of Word Formation Terms" by V.N. Nemchenko, the author defines word-formation meaning as "the overarching meaning of derived words, determined through the semantic connection of these derived words with their derivatives and conveyed using a word-formation formant." In essence, this definition reiterates the "procedural" understanding of DM. The other definitions presented by various authors (E.A. Zemskoy, V.V. Lopatina, B.N. Golovina, etc.) can be viewed as variations or modifications of this fundamental procedural definition [8, 150-151].

Following this, the mentioned dictionary-reference book delves into the various categories of DM, including intracategorical, intratype, modification, mutation, non-transpositional, general, particular, transpositional, syntagmatic, and connective word-formation meanings [8, 150-151].

The abundance of terms for different types of DM can be partially attributed to the synonymous nature of some of these categories. For instance, "Word-formation meaning is non-transpositional" aligns with "The same as the derivational meaning of derived words - general," illustrating the synonymy between non-transpositional and general derivational meaning. Similarly, "The word-formation meaning is syntagmatic" corresponds to "The same as the derivational meaning of derived words - connective," highlighting the synonymous relationship between syntagmatic and connective derivational meanings [8, 150-152].

Some definitions indeed present a circular logic, such as: "The word-formation meaning is modification. The word-formation meaning of derived words belonging to modification word-formation types, i.e., containing modification affixes." This definition doesn't clarify the distinction between modification value and other types of DM, like mutational or transpositional. Moreover, it appears to tie DM to specific WFTs and affixes, implying dependence, whereas in reality, certain WFTs and affixes (formants) should be viewed as the means to express particular DMs, not the other way around.

Discussion. Indeed, it is valuable to emphasize R.S. Manucharyan's concept of intertype word-formation meaning, which is defined as the word-formation meaning specific to derived words across various word-formation types and models [9, 186]. This definition prompts a crucial consideration regarding the relative independence of DM from the means of implementation. It also opens the door to

questioning the potential implementation of the same type of DM in different parts of speech, highlighting the flexibility and adaptability of DM across linguistic domains..

The delineation between general and particular word-formation meanings, as observed in various derivatological studies during the later decades of the twentieth century, prompts an inquiry into the hierarchy of DM. It leads us to question whether the word-formation system of the Russian language incorporates DM with varying degrees of abstraction and generality. Understanding the hierarchy and levels of abstraction within DM is essential for comprehending the intricacies of word formation and its role in shaping the linguistic worldview. The question at hand is intricately tied to the "total" and "difference" approaches concerning word-formation meaning, which have emerged within Russian derivatology. In the "total" approach, the definition of DM incorporates the semantics of the generating base (and in a broader sense, the generating base). Thus, DM is perceived as a cumulative semantic sum derived from the combination of generating and derivative semantics. Conversely, the "difference" approach regards DM as a recurring semantic disparity distinguishing the generators from their derivatives. These divergent perspectives contribute to a more nuanced understanding of DM and its role in word formation [10, 279-280].

Indeed, the summary approach, assuming the presence of relative adjectives in the ranks, appears to be fundamentally flawed and unacceptable for accurately identifying the essence of DM: *сосновый, липовый, дубовый, березовый / тигровый, слоновый, моржовый, китовый*. The notion of private SZ being solely dependent on the semantics of the generating base (specifically, phytonyms and zoonyms) and subsequently consolidating into a general DM such as "relation to the subject," as proposed by some researchers, does not align with the true nature of DM. This perspective doesn't accurately represent DM, which frequently transcends and doesn't confine itself to lexical-grammatical categories; instead, it often operates at a higher level, encompassing and influencing these categories.

Conclusion. The differential interpretation of DM aligns better with its abstract and generalized nature, setting apart word-formative meaning from lexical meaning. However, even under this interpretation, DM appears to be influenced by the lexical semantics of the derived word, seemingly linked to specific morphemic structures and word-formation types.

Regrettably, the majority of DM definitions fail to adequately depict its intrinsic nature and fundamental distinctions from lexical and grammatical meanings. Instead, they primarily emphasize the intermediate nature of DM in relation to lexical and grammatical meanings, focusing on factors like degree of abstraction and generality. However, as you rightly point out, even this intermediate positioning of DM warrants further scrutiny and questioning. Understanding DM in its entirety necessitates a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of its properties and relationships within the linguistic framework.

In our perspective, comprehending and accurately describing the essence of DM, as well as delineating their various types, necessitates extending beyond the confines of the word-formation system and delving into a broader typology of meanings. This approach has been effectively implemented in the works of E.S. Kubryakova. It is through her works that the conceptual nature of word-formation meaning is revealed, providing valuable insights into the structure and function of DM. By adopting a broader

typological approach, we can unravel the intricate aspects of DM and enhance our understanding of their significance within the realm of linguistics.

Indeed, a lack of sufficient attention to the essence of word-formation meaning and the unique characteristics of the word-formation tier has led to a superficial description of word-formation categories. A thorough exploration and understanding of word-formation meaning are essential for a deeper and more accurate analysis of word-formation processes and their associated categories. By delving into the intricacies of DM and the fundamental nature of word-formation meaning, we can develop a more profound comprehension of how language forms new words and conveys meanings through these processes.

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