THE THEORY OF PROTOTYPE

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Annotation: *This article is concerned with understanding and using the prototype theory of generalities in cognitive linguistics. Particularly, it focuses on the understanding and incomprehension by the votaries, its primary use, and extended use in the field. To assess the prototype's life and part in cognitive linguistics a group of named literature from cognitive psychology primarily Rosch, 1967; Smith, and Medin, 1981; Cohen and Murphy, 1984; Murphy and Medin, 1985; Komatsu, 1992; Murphy, 2002.*

Keywords: *Prototype, cognitive linguistic, cognitive science.*

Introduction

Cognitive linguistics - the foremost widespread (especially in Europe) name of the direction of linguistic research which developed in the second half of the 1970th years and having further considerable number of followers. The term designates by cognitive linguistics the direction in linguistics which investigates problems of a ratio of language and consciousness, a language role in conceptualization and categorizations.

What is the theory of prototype? Prototype theory is a theory of categorization in cognitive science, particularly in psychology and cognitive linguistics, in which there is a graded degree of belonging to a conceptual category, and some members are more central than others. It emerged in 1971 with the work of psychologist Eleanor Rosch, and it has been described as a "Copernican revolution" in the theory of categorization for its departure from the traditional Aristotelian categories.

The prototype of a category can be understood in lay terms by the object or member of a class most often associated with that class. The prototype is the center of the class, with all other members moving progressively further from the prototype, which leads to the gradation of categories. Every member of the class is not equally central in human cognition. As in the example of furniture above, couch is more central than wardrobe. Contrary to the classical view, prototypes and gradations lead to an understanding of category membership not as an all-or-nothing approach, but as more of a web of interlocking categories which overlap.

Not everything fits perfectly in a category. Categories are defined by an intersection of properties that make up their members. Members that have all of the properties are the prototype members. Those that contain some, but not all, of the properties are less prototypical.

Accordingly, the members of a category can be graded according to their typicality. A "good" example is only rated as such by virtue of its features. Defining a prototype as the bundle of typical features of a category, we can thus imagine birds as 'creatures that are covered with feathers, have two wings and two legs, and the majority of which can fly'. Therefore, a penguin is a less "good" bird, as it lacks some of the typical features, such as the ability to fly. Features themselves can also be more or less typical, for instance, 'twittering' is less normal and specific to winged creatures than 'flying'.

In the linguistics circle, prototype due to the historical accident, i.e., matching in time with the development of cognitive linguistics in the mid 1980s, and the 1970's publications of Rosch and her colleagues exclusive use of a language category- noun, was mystfied to cover or said to cover large area of the discipline. However, two major drawbacks have been mentioned as early as 1990s. First, on the technical practical side, prototype model in linguistics lacks methodological principles and procedures of data gathering and interpreting. Except studies on prepositions, there is no clear replicable procedure or technical guide to test its applicability on a new data. On the other hand, prototype model is considered as 'a catchall theoretical device' (Geeraerts, 1989; Wierzbicka, 1990; Hilferty, 1997; Grzega, 2003). Just to cite some, prototype model has been unjustly enlarged or too effusively used as an explanation before all relevant aspects (Grzega, 2003). The notion prototype should not be turned into a catchall theoretical construct (Hilferty, 1997). Wierzbicka (1990) dramatically narrates the 'prototype save' attitude of the believers. She states that, in semantics, the actual usage of words is too messy, too unpredictable to be accounted for by definitions. But fortunately, semanticists don't have to worry about it any longer: they can now deploy the notion of prototype for all residues and unsolved problems. She, instead, suggests the usefulness of the prototype model as a specifc, probably powerful analytical tool, and not as 'a universal thought-saving device'. In other words it is a useful tool for semantic description but not a useful fullfledged semantic theory by its own. It has been observed in cognitive psychology literature that prototype model has no inbuilt mechanism to handle relations and strength or weight of features or combinations.

Eventhough there has been strong criticisms of the adherents misuse and sloppiness and weaknesses of the prototype model, it is observed as a very

productive descriptive device for word classes especially for nouns in cognitive psychology and prepositions in cognitive linguistics.

Conclusion. The prototype is considered to be "a catchall theoretical device" instead of an analytical tool. Like in cognitive psychology prototype model is primarily used for the study of lexical semantics specifically nouns and prepositions of Indo-European languages, and Unlike in cognitive psychology, the prototype has exhibited an extended use and application in phonology, syntax, and diachronic lexical semantics.

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