

“Intelligentsia” versus “Intellectuals” in the British English linguo-cultural community (a corpus-based study of the concepts)

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Abstract. *The paper focuses on the correlation between the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” for the British English linguo-cultural community. It presents the background on the subject from different angles of study, how the correlation between the concepts is viewed by philosophers, historians, sociologists. The purpose of the study is to research how the correlation between the two concepts is reflected in the language, by analyzing the component structures of the lexical meanings of the synonymous lexemes that name the concepts, using the method of componential analysis. The study results show that this reflection can also be viewed by investigating the contexts from the British National Corpus, by means of contrasting the sets of prepositional attributive collocates for the lexemes “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals”. The findings of the conducted corpus-based research reveal a tendency to specialized use of attributive collocates for the lexemes under study.*

Keywords – *linguistics, synonymy, concept, lexical meaning, intelligentsia, intellectuals, componential analysis, British National Corpus, corpus-based research, attributive collocates, British English linguo-cultural community.*

I. INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of works on the concept “Intelligentsia” from various points of study in different fields. There are also some works on the correlation between the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” in the philosophical, sociological and cultural aspects. But from the point of view of linguistics, very little has been done on the subject of studying such correlation.

The objective of our investigation was, on the one hand, to study the component structure of the lexical meanings of the synonymous lexemes “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” relying on dictionary definitions, and to single out differences in the set of components (semes) and the hierarchical structures of the lexical meaning of both lexemes using the method of componential analysis.

The lexical meaning of a lexeme that names a concept, to a great extent, reveals the content of this concept. But a concept is an interrelation of the lexical meaning and individual and national experience of a linguo-cultural community. The objective of our research was, on the other hand, to reveal a fragment of difference in the content of the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” for the British

English linguo-cultural community using the method of contrastive analysis, relying on the data from the British National Corpus. To our knowledge, very little has been done in this field so far.

Our hypothesis was as follows: the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” in their intensional (core) part coincide, but their extensions might vary. One can trace some differences between the concepts, analysing collocations “prepositional attribute + the lexeme naming the concept”. The attributes reveal various characteristics and features of the concept. We assume that the sets of the most frequent prepositional attributes for the lexemes under study would be different.

On the other hand, we think that the study of the component structure of the lexical meanings of the synonymous lexemes would show a difference in their seme sets and hierarchy of semes.

We believe that the significance of the research is that it could be of interest to those who study intercultural communication issues and British national identity.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The study of the concept “Intelligentsia” has been conducted from different perspectives: philosophical, sociological, historical, linguistic, and psycholinguistic. From the viewpoint of humanities, “Intelligentsia” is a social group consisting of the most educated people involved in intellectual activity, the main function of that group is to guide the society, in direct or indirect way. As a social group, “Intelligentsia” is an object of research in a separate field of studies called “intelligentovedeniye”, that is intelligentsia studies.

The concept “Intelligentsia” is considered to be a key concept in Russian culture. Yu.S. Stepanov defines it as follows: “Being aware of oneself as a member of the society responsible for its future” [19, p. 711]. It should be noted that it is one of the most important cultural concepts for the Russian-speaking community consciousness.

There are various approaches to formulating a definition of the notion “concept”. D. S. Likhachev, who elaborated the notion of Russian concept sphere (conceptosphere), pointed out that concept exists separately for every lexical meaning and it is “an algebraic expression of a lexical meaning”; in other words, concept is a result of collision between a lexical

meaning and personal and national experience [9, p. 280-287]. Yu.S. Stepanov defines the notion of concept as follows: "Concept is a major slot of culture in the mental world of an individual" [19, p. 43].

The Russian word "Intelligentsia" in lexicographic sources is translated into the English language in two ways: 1) (the) intellectuals; 2) (the) intelligentsia (with the note about the origin – Russian) [2].

Thus we come to the opposition of two concepts, "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals". Among researchers, there are three different points of view on the correlation between these two concepts. V.V. Vozilov [20] points out two approaches to the problem. According to the first approach, "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" are two different concepts; we should talk about "Russian intelligentsia", on the one hand, and "Western intellectuals", on the other hand. In other words, one can state that these two concepts stand in relation of contrastive distribution, using the terms of distributional analysis. It means that "Intelligentsia" is a purely Russian phenomenon. The two concepts do not overlap. Moreover, they are opposed to each other.

According to the second approach, the concept "Intelligentsia" is not a purely Russian phenomenon. Other nations may have their own "Intelligentsia" as a specific social group. In other words, one can state that these two concepts stand in relation of free variation, using the terms of distributional analysis. The concepts "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" coincide, one can talk about "European intelligentsia" or "European intellectuals" without any difference in meaning. V. V. Vozilov refers to the prominent work of K. Mannheim: "In any society there are social groups, with their main role to interpret the world for that society. We call these groups "intelligentsia" [13, p. 15].

Some researchers support a third approach to the correlation between the concepts "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals". According to E.V. Ishimskaya [8], these are interviewing categories, as, from historical and cultural perspective, Russian intelligentsia and Western intellectuals are in a dialogue. The author relies on the dialogical conception elaborated by M.M. Bakhtin [3] and on the semiotic conception worked out by Yu.M. Lotman [11]. M.M. Bakhtin, explaining his dialogical idea, points out that "...an actual meaning does not belong to a single meaning but it does belong to the two meanings that have got together" [3, p. 333].

E.V. Ishimskaya comes to the conclusion that the concept "Intelligentsia" is a cultural and symbolic phenomenon, whereas the concept "Intellectuals" is characterized by civilizational and rational dominant [8].

Thus one can state that the two concepts stand in relation of complementary distribution, using the terms of distributional analysis, as they complement each other and together they make up the concept of World intelligentsia:

Russian intelligentsia + Western intellectuals = World intelligentsia.

Summing up, from the viewpoint of humanitarians, the correlation between the concepts "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" can be of three kinds: 1) the concepts are opposed to each other; they do not overlap in their content; 2) the concepts are interchangeable; they are 'free variants' of the same idea; 3) the concepts complement each other; taken together, they represent a "whole" concept of Intelligentsia.

Recently, the concept "Intelligentsia" has been investigated by a number of scholars, among them we should mention the works by I.G. Ovchinnikova [16] (cultural content of the concept "Intelligentsia" in different sub-cultures of the Russian linguo-cultural community in terms of psycholinguistics); T.B. Agapova [1] (concept analysis of Intelligentsia's consciousness in terms of culture studies); N.V. Savelyeva [18] (study of the semantic field "Intelligentsia" in terms of lexicographic study); I.V. Rydakova [17] (study of Intelligentsia as a social phenomenon in terms of philosophy and sociology). The concept has been studied mostly as an element of Russian speaking community consciousness. But very little has been done in terms of investigating the concept in relation to British national identity from linguistic point of view. We have not come across any works on the concept "Intelligentsia" as a component of British English speaking community consciousness. It is of interest to us to find out if there is any difference between the concepts "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" for a British English native speaker. One could discover connections between the semantic fields "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" as a fragment of the mental lexicon of a native speaker. By mental lexicon we mean "a complex system that reflects in a linguistic form the process of structuring by an individual the world around" [4, p. 39]. We decided to use the British National Corpus as a data resource for our investigation.

III. METHOD

The research was organized as follows. To test our hypothesis, we used a combination of two methods: the method of componential analysis and the method of corpus-based research.

We started our research by using componential method. 1. We analyzed dictionary entries for lexemes "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" in a number of ideographic English dictionaries. 2. We compared the definitions of the lexemes and singled out components of meaning (= semes) for both lexemes. 3. We compared the sets of semes. 4. We compared the hierarchical structures of the lexical meaning of both lexemes.

Now we came to use the CORPUS-based method in our research.

The content of a concept belonging to a culture can be traced in the lexical meaning of words that denote the concept. Our aim was to study any differences between the two concepts. On the one hand, we investigated the componential structure of the two lexical meanings in order to state similarities and differences. On the other hand, we could improve our research by means of a method that is characterized by objectivity and representative sampling.

We used the British National corpus (BNC) [5] as our data source. This part of the research was organized as follows:

Step 1: In the BNC we used the option “Compare Word 1 (W1) and Word 2 (W2)”. In Slot for W1 we inserted “Intelligentsia”, in slot for W2 we typed “Intellectuals”.

Now we wanted to find out the most frequent prepositional attributive collocates for W1 and W2.

Step 2: We set the size of the context window to 1 (left word).

Step 3: After processing, we got a table with some results: 1) with collocates occurring in the slot before W1 and W2; 2) the ratio (overall) for W1 and W2:

“Intelligentsia” (0, 39)

“Intellectuals” (2, 58)

Consequently, $W1/W2=2, 58:0, 39=6, 6$.

It means that W2 (Intellectuals) is 6, 6 times more frequently used than W1 (Intelligentsia) in the British National Corpus.

Step 4: Now we worked with the collocates and extracted for further analysis prepositional attributive collocates for W1 and W2 (i.e. adjectives and nouns acting as attributes in the context).

Step 5: We made a top list of the most frequent attributive collocates (with Frequency number > 5) for W1 and W2 received in the current study.

Step 6: Finally, after doing semantic grouping of attributive collocates in each list, we compared the received results and came to some conclusions.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our hypothesis was as follows: the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” in their intensional (core) part coincide, but their extensions might vary. The prepositional attributes reveal various characteristics and features of the concept. We assumed that the sets of the most frequent prepositional attributes for the lexemes under study would be different. We also thought that the study of the component structure of the lexical meanings of the synonymous lexemes would show some difference in their seme sets and hierarchy of semes.

Step 1: we analyzed the dictionary entries for the lexeme “Intelligentsia”.

1. **The intelligentsia** in a country or community are the most educated people there, especially those interested in the arts, philosophy, and politics.

Synonyms: intellectuals, etc.[7].

2. **The intelligentsia** – very educated people in a society, especially those interested in the arts and politics [6, p. 751].

3. **Intelligentsia, the** – the people in a society who are the best educated and the most interested in art, science, literature, etc. at an advanced level [12, p. 747].

4. **(The) intelligentsia** – a group of intelligent and well-educated people who guide or try to guide the political, artistic, or social development of their society [14].

We analyzed now the dictionary entries presented above and singled out the components (semes) of meaning. We observed a similar hyperseme (categorical seme) in each definition – [WELL-EDUCATED PEOPLE] (with variations: “the most educated people”, “very educated people”, “the best educated people”). The hyperseme includes a number of hyposemes (subcategorical semes): [INTELLIGENT], [ACTIVE IN ART], [ACTIVE IN POLITICS], [ACTIVE IN SCIENCE], [SOCIALY ACTIVE].

Thus we came to the hyper-hyposemic hierarchical structure of the lexical meaning of the lexeme “Intelligentsia”.

Step 2: we analyzed the dictionary entries for the lexeme “Intellectual(s)”.

1. **Intellectual** (noun) – a very educated person whose interests are studying and other activities that involve careful thinking and mental effort [6, p. 751].

2. **Intellectual** (noun) – an intelligent well-educated person who spends time thinking about complicated ideas and discussing them [10, p. 846].

3. **Intellectual** (noun) – a person who possesses or has pretensions of strong intellectual interests or superiority. **Intellectuals** (plural).

Synonyms: intelligentsia, etc. [15].

4. **Intellectual** (noun) – someone who spends a lot of time studying and thinking about complicated ideas [7].

We analyzed now the dictionary entries presented above and singled out the components (semes) of meaning. We observed a similar hyperseme (categorical seme) in definitions № 1 and № 2 – [WELL-EDUCATED PERSON]. We assumed that in definitions № 3 and № 4 the same hyperseme is implied. The hyperseme includes a number of hyposemes (subcategorical semes): [INTELLIGENT], [INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY]. The latter is comprised of some subhyposemes: [MENTAL EFFORT], [CAREFUL THINKING], [STUDYING], [DISCUSSING IDEAS].

Thus we came to the hyper-hypo-subhyposemic hierarchical structure of the lexical meaning of the lexeme “Intellectual(s)”.

Step 3: we compared the sets of components and the hierarchical structures of the lexical meanings of the lexemes “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectual(s)”. We concluded that the synonymy of the two lexemes is based on that the hyperseme and some hyposemes in their componential structures are the same: [WELL-EDUCATED PEOPLE] (the hyperseme); [INTELLIGENT], [INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY] (hyposemes). But we see that the hierarchical structure of the lexical meaning of the lexeme “Intellectual(s)” is more complicated in comparison with the componential structure of the lexeme “Intelligentsia”.

The findings of the research suggest that our hypothesis has been confirmed. As to the sets of components and hierarchy of semes for both lexemes, we have singled out differences in the seme sets for each lexeme and their hierarchical structure: for the lexeme “Intelligentsia” – the hyper seme + 5 hyposemes (Fig. 1); for the lexeme “Intellectuals” – the hyperseme + 2 hyposemes + 4 subhyposemes (Fig. 2).

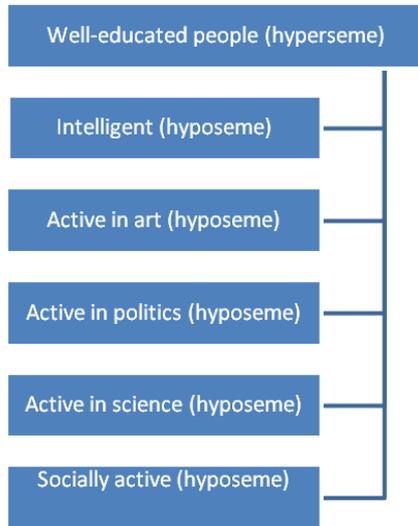


Fig.1. The hyper-hyposemic hierarchical structure of the lexical meaning of the lexeme “Intelligentsia”.

As to the corpus-based part of the research, we have discovered a tendency to use different sets of attributive collocates for Word 1 (“Intelligentsia”) and Word 2 (“Intellectuals”) relying on the British National Corpus contexts.

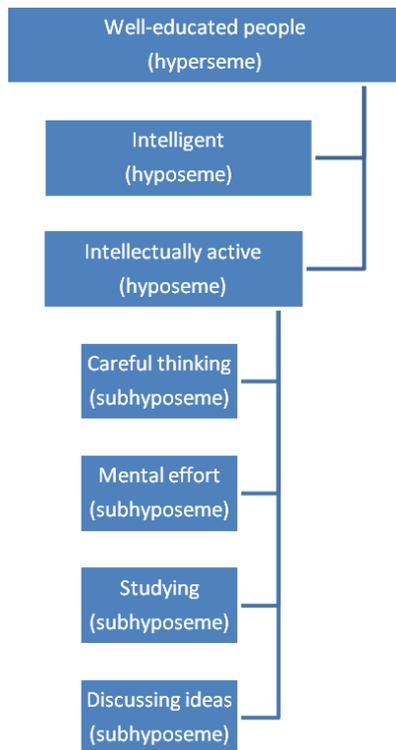


Fig.2. The hyper-hypo-subhyposemic hierarchical structure of the lexical meaning of the lexeme “Intellectuals”

The top frequent prepositional attributive collocates for Word 1 (“Intelligentsia”) are *revolutionary* (with Frequency number 40), *liberal* (10), *Russian* (6), *radical* (6) (Fig. 3).

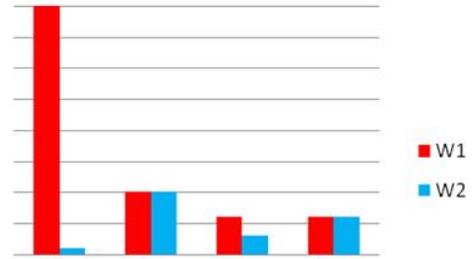


Fig.3. The top list of the most frequent prepositional attributive collocates for Word 1 (“Intelligentsia”)

The top frequent prepositional attributive collocates for Word 2 (“Intellectuals”) are *young* (32), *leading* (15), *religious* (10), *liberal* (10), *Greek* (8), *prominent* (8), *middle class* (8), *national* (7), *Chinese* (7), *Western* (6), *British* (6), *American* (6), *radical* (6) (Fig. 4).

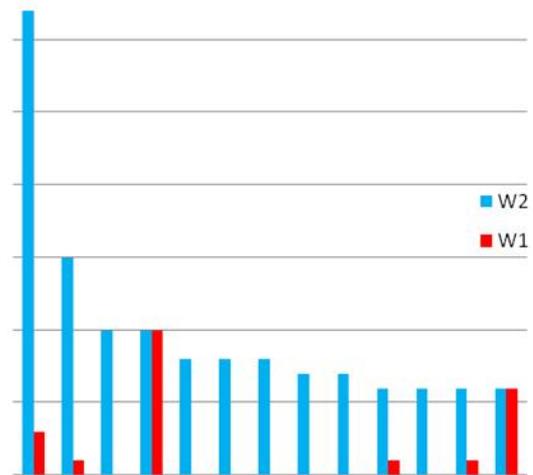


Fig.4. The top list of the most frequent prepositional attributive collocates for Word 2 (“Intellectuals”)

The comparison results indicate that in the British English linguo-cultural community there is a tendency to differentiate the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” by associating the concept “Intelligentsia” with Russian history and culture and the concept “Intellectuals” with Western (national, British, American) world.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The research results demonstrate that in the British English linguo-cultural community there is a tendency to differentiate the concepts “Intelligentsia” and “Intellectuals” by associating the concept “Intelligentsia” with Russian history and culture and the concept “Intellectuals” with Western (national, British, American) world.

The significance of our research is in possible implication of the research findings into University settings: they could be used in academic process with students whose major is “Intercultural communication studies” when referring to British national identity.

We admit the study's limitations: our findings rely on the British National Corpus. In other corpora of English, the results might vary.

Further research is seen as investigating the concepts "Intelligentsia" and "Intellectuals" in terms of psycholinguistics: by means of free associative experiment.

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