

The role of metonymic constructions in the conceptualization of emotional category fear

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This paper presents a corpus based research on the conceptualization of the emotional category FEAR, lexicalized as 'strah' in Croatian. Purpose of the research is to qualitatively describe the network of embodied domains and processes that facilitate conceptualization, simulation (Bergen 2005) and recreation (Rizzolatti 2008) of respective emotional affective experience categorized as FEAR 'strah' in Croatian, as well as to quantify metonymic and metaphoric patterns indicating the level of cognitive entrenchment of linguistic constructions (Lakoff 2008; Langacker 2008) within a cultural model (as represented in the corpus). The study indicates fundamental role of embodied metonymic constructions in the process of structuring the meaning of lexical concept FEAR by means of profiling the most relevant features of perceptions and bodily reactions induced by core affect (Barrett Feldman 2011).

The study is based on the textual corpus of 131,8 Mw. Within that corpus 14 875 instances of lemma *strah* 'fear' were retrieved, presenting a basis for pattern analysis (Stefanowitsch and Gries 2006) of metonymic and metaphoric constructions of the target domain STRAH 'FEAR'. Given the size of the corpus, the metonymic pattern analysis enabled thorough qualitative description of the embodied domains that structure the lexical concept *strah* 'fear' in Croatian language. Quantitatively, the results indicate that embodied metonymic and metaphoric constructions comprise 15,2% of the 14 875 retrieved instances of the lemma *strah*, out of which 11,47% are derived from exteroceptive, interoceptive and proprioceptive domains while the profiling of the bodily parts entail 3,8% of the identified constructions. The quantitative analysis of the profiling indicates strong connection of the concept FEAR to the proprioceptive reaction of freeze or flight, visceral pain and somatosensory experience of coldness. In terms of bodily parts, heart, eyes and bones are most frequent domains representing respectively the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person linguistic construal perspective.

The study also offers an insight in structuring the ontological status of the concept FEAR via metonymic profiling of co-occurring affective PROPRIETIES of perception and reaction and metaphoric mapping of the domain OBJECT. These cognitive processes enable further schematization of the concept FEAR in the thematic and agentive semantic roles (Talmy 2000; Langacker 2008) and their respective metaphoric constructions.

It is proposed that corpus-based studies of metonymic and metaphorical constructions, such as the presented study of the lexical concept of *fear* in Croatian language, could provide methodology and data for further studies of metonymic and metaphoric constructions of emotions and other subjective categories.

References

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