come from linguistics alone, but requires drawing on tools and methods from other cognitive paradigm disciplines.

Our research supports the hypothesis that concepts, underlying different senses of a polysemous word, have a flexible structure. Immutable conceptual attributes play a crucial role of maintaining the integrity of the conceptual structure however, they play a less important role for the development of polysemy, since they have a poorer inferential potential. They impose constraints on the development of new meanings.

Concepts verbalized by different meanings of a polysemous word should be explored from the point of view of their mutable attributes. Mutable attributes tend to have a richer inferential potential thus resulting in a higher probability of developing a new sense of the polysemous word. They correlate with the inferential subframe in the qualia structure.

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CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION OF EVENT- REFERENTIAL AMBIGUITY

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ABSTRACT

Ambiguity is inherent to everyday human communication. It implies that there are two distinct senses assigned to one acoustic form. This research aims to contribute to an integrated interdisciplinary theory of ambiguity as a cognitive phenomenon and identify conceptual mechanisms underlying it. To this end, a variety of empirical and theoretical research methods, including referential analysis (understood in a broader sense as referring to a particular cognitive context used for disambiguation) are employed for the analysis of texts central to modern political discourse. We argue that unlike polysemy, which remains unconscious for participants of communication, ambiguity, its presence and effects are consciously perceived. We posit that intended ambiguity occurs when the speaker intentionally does not follow the logic of priming. Each sense of a polysemous word is primed differently. It results in conceptual and pragmatic effects dependent on the parameters of the cognitive context. Each polysemous word is associated with a set of dynamic cognitive contexts forming a complex multi-dimensional mental representation, which could potentially capture and store a significant amount of conceptual information, referring to any number of conceptual domains that are relevant to the identification and inferencing a particular sense of the word. We prove that event-referential ambiguity can be viewed as a means of manipulation of human consciousness and behaviour.

Keywords: polysemy, ambiguity, threat, conceptual, priming

INTRODUCTION

Often described as a problem, a "disease of language" [4] ambiguity is inherent in everyday communication and has been in the focus of linguistic research during the last decades. Traditionally, researchers distinguish several types of ambiguity, which are briefly described below.

Lexical ambiguity occurs when ambiguous senses are either a result of polysemy (for instance, words having a metonymic or a metaphoric sense extension), or a result of homonymy. There are lexical units, which are intrinsically ambiguous: a classical example of this type of ambiguity is the English noun *bank,* which is polysemous (a financial institution and a building) and has a homonym – *a river bank*.

Syntactic (structural) ambiguity develops from an ambiguous structure of an utterance, for instance, in the famous statement - "Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our

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people, and neither do we" – George Bush virtually suggests that his administration is forever thinking up ways of harming the US and its people, which obviously is not the case [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3541706.stm]. Suffice it to say, that this type of ambiguity is a frequent occurrence and is in most cases unintended.

Structural ambiguity has an intriguing subtype often referred to as *scope ambiguity*. This is a type of ambiguity distinguished from structural ambiguity through its single surface syntactic structure. Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet's example for this subcategory is *someone loves everyone* [2]. This sentence can either mean 'Everyone is loved by (at least) one person,' or 'There is a person and this person loves everyone.' Note that in the former case *someone* may denote several different individuals, whereas it is only one single individual in the latter case [http://www.glottopedia.org/index.php/Ambiguity,_Polysemy_and_Vagueness]. We will refer to this case of ambiguity later in connection with the process of ad hoc categorisation.

Another type of ambiguity is a morphological one when one part of speech can be used instead of another. In the phrase, *ambiguity matters* 'matters' can morphologically be interpreted as a plural noun or a verb.

Transformational ambiguity, introduced by J.Lyons [6] and reflected on by N.Chomsky [3], is a type of ambiguity that exists, in most cases, only out of context, for instance, 'the shooting of the hunters' [3].

Other researchers distinguish between language ambiguity and speech ambiguity [1, 10]. Speech ambiguity occurs as a result of undetermined character of some parameters. Language ambiguity is the capacity of a word or phrase to have distinct senses, i.e. the property of linguistic units, whereas speech ambiguity is the realisation of this property in an utterance [9].

Ambiguity is closely related to vagueness, which is sometimes referred to as generality or lack of specification [5]. There have been numerous attempts to distinguish polysemy, ambiguity and vagueness. However, there is no evidence that the proposed tests give reliable results, since participants of the tests largely rely on their individual perception [ibid].

Facing the puzzle of lexical ambiguity, recipients have two options. They can disambiguate polysemous words, but they also have an option of exploiting polysemy and ambiguity for conversational profit, and this is in spite of the fact that keeping multiple meanings in mind has some cognitive cost [7].

The article presents the authors' reflection on various types of event-referential ambiguity as well as conceptual mechanisms underlying them.

EVENT-REFERENTIAL AMBIGUITY

Before embarking on the analysis proper of event-referential ambiguity, it is necessary to define the phenomenon. If referential ambiguity as a type is a reference of one acoustic form to two or more properties in a given context, then *event-referential ambiguity is either a possible reference to two or more events in one context or several possible interpretations of one single event depending on the point of view.*

We hold that the former may result from the poverty of the stimulus while the latter occurs due to a variety of reasons, ranging from conceptual, semantic (polysemy proper) to pragmatic ones (prevalence of individual pragmatic factors over others in the process of disambiguation).

When generating an utterance, the speaker chooses words according to his/her communicative and pragmatic intention. Polysemy, as it may seem, is a problem for the recipient, since he/she has to adequately infer the intended sense of a polysemous word in a given context. In everyday discourse, both the speaker and the listener are unaware of the presence of polysemy. They do not realize the complexity of the structure of polysemous words and the entire scope of conceptual information encoded by them. The identification of the meaning of a polysemous word occurs so effortlessly that polysemy is perceived as monosemy [8].

Ambiguity is a different case. There are several types of event-referential ambiguity having different conceptual mechanisms. Firstly, we will look into the intended *vs* unintended event-referential ambiguity and then focus on a specific type of ambiguity when non-ambiguous elements constitute an ambiguous utterance.

Intended event-referential ambiguity means that the speaker is purposefully evasive and deliberately uses an ambiguous word having several meanings to achieve a specific pragmatic effect when referring to an event: "We must all hang together, or assuredly we will all hang separately" [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Benjamin_Franklin]. Our analysis has shown that in such cases, both the speaker and the listener are fully aware of ambiguity; they are *conscious* of the multiplicity of existing interpretations. There are numerous examples of this type of ambiguity for instance in "Doubletalk: The Language, Code, and Jargon of a Presidential Election", containing a detailed analysis of this and other types of intended ambiguity used for pragmatic purposes in political discourse [https://www.ft.com/content/f11cd644-5562-11e6-9664-e0bdc13c3bef].

Intended event-referential ambiguity leads either to the activation of two unrelated concepts, and hence, two conceptual categories and to disambiguation between them (homonymy), or it results in the activation of several conceptual domains which are parts of a complex mental representation of a polysemous word (polysemy).

Most words in natural languages are polysemous. We may assume that every word is represented in a complex mental model associated with it. The complex mental representation is a result of perception, decoding, processing of various types of information directly and indirectly, relating to the polysemous word. This complex mental representation is a combination of cognitive contexts, which store various types of information on all types of situations of their usage, real or potential participants, their actions, the sequence of these actions, etc. [8]. We argue that cognitive contexts activated by an acoustic form are key elements of disambiguation; they tend to perform the function of a conceptual prime. Each sense of a polysemantic word is primed differently. Let us consider the following example to support this argument.

The dictionary entry of the noun *threat* describes the following senses: 1. something that is a source of danger; 2. a warning that something unpleasant is imminent; 3. declaration of an intention or a determination to inflict harm on another. 4. a person who inspires fear or dread [WordNet3.1]. Search examples from iWEB and BNC Corpora demonstrate the use of the noun in its different senses being primed in a different way:

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1. "While a central bank-backed digital currency could *pose a disruptive threat* to current bank operations, Citi views this as an improbable "long-tail" risk" [https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/].
2. The Premier's success in his role as President of the European Community came as America *prepared to carry out threats* of trade sanctions on EC imports [https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/].
3. Few managers *admit that boredom is a threat* to the job but equally few would deny that being part of a pilot scheme or of being part of a trial run of new development can carry with it some air of excitement [https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/].
4. A hazard is a threat which, given a set of circumstances, may become translated into a realized event - a physical situation with a potential for human injury, damage to property, damage to the environment, or some combination of these' [https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/].

Two different primes in Examples (1) and (2) – *pose* a disruptive threat and *prepared to carry out* threats - facilitate the process of disambiguation between the two senses of the noun: something that is a source of danger (1) and a warning that something unpleasant is imminent (2).

Examples (3) and (4), though showing a similar conceptual structure – 'something is a source of danger….' - demonstrate a striking difference in the scope and character of conceptual information encoded by one acoustic form. 'Threat' in Example 3 may imply negligence, indifference, poor performance, whereas in Example 4 it explicitly defines threat as a potential human injury, damage to property, damage to the environment.

The ambiguity described above brings about the need to reflect on a dynamic character of categorization. Event-referential ambiguity can result in *ad hoc* categorization, a conceptual operation of grouping concepts based on a seemingly random set of attributes. To illustrate it, we use an example, which is the acme of the art of ambiguity in political discourse.

Donald Rumsfeld, replying to the question about the probability of Iran's possession of nuclear weapons famously said: "Reports that say that something has not happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are *known knowns*; there are things we know we know. We also know there are *known unknowns*; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also *unknown unknowns* – the ones we do not know we do not know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult one." [Rumsfeld, 2002]. In this example, ambiguity is taken to its extreme in its function of a manipulation tool since the recipient may find it difficult to infer what exactly the speaker means or implies.

The analysis of this text shows that there are at least three conceptual categories involved - the category of known knowns, known unknowns and unknown unknowns. The boundaries of these categories are fuzzy and their membership is dynamic and unstable. They can include an endless variation of members depending on a conceptual prime preceding the utterance. Different primes activate different senses and refer to different events. In the original context, there were two semantic primes - Iraq and

weapons - both activating a scenario, in which the category of *known knowns* is a variety of threats the speaker and the hearer are aware of, for instance, a possible confrontation, a conflict, tension, etc. The category of *known unknowns* is a variety of threats the speaker and the recipient are aware of, but cannot relate to this particular situation, for instance, another kind of hard or soft threat that is *not* part of the cognitive context of the analysed situation, but potentially might still affect it. The category of the *unknown unknowns* are potential threats or potential risks that the speaker and the hearer neither have any knowledge of the analysed cognitive context and, consequently, cannot relate them to it. It is the latter category, *the unknown unknows*, that presents an interesting case since even being primed in the same way, it only 'reserves' a conceptual category space leaving its membership open to conceptual suggestions. We hold that such cases are examples of scope ambiguity, which is closer on the gradient scale to vagueness, since the scope of conceptual information activated by primes is big, non-homogenous and changeable depending on the presented stimuli.

Furthermore, different hearers have different inferences from the same text, since conceptual categories are known to be fruits of individual perception. Concepts and categories are formed on the basis of the previous individual experience and subjective ideas of the value scale formed during earlier life. If the hearer has had no previous knowledge or experience of the cognitive context, (which definitely might be the case), then event-referential ambiguity loses its intended effect, resulting in a failure in communication.

There is another interesting type of event-referential ambiguity when none of the elements taken separately requires complex disambiguation whereas perceived as a sentence they refer to a clearly ambiguous event, for instance: "Police beat rioters with batons [http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/history-colonial-building.ph]. This sentence can be interpreted in two ways: either police beat rioters with their batons in response to previous violence, or rioters had batons and the police had to defend themselves. This type of ambiguity is not a rare occurrence, as it may seem. A slightly changed example from Kenneth Bach is a good illustration of this statement: "Perot knows more men who are richer than Trump" [http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/ambguity.html]. This is an example of unintended ambiguity, which can be interpreted as either 'Perot knows more men who are richer', or 'he knows *more than Trump does*'. In cases similar to the ones mentioned above, individual semantic (conceptual) primes do not seem to have a strong disambiguation effect. This type of ambiguity requires an extensive cognitive context and activates background knowledge, putting both working and long-term memory to work.

CONCLUSION

Event-referential ambiguity is an inherent property of political discourse. One of the many kinds of ambiguity in language and speech, event-referential ambiguity is a possible reference to two or more events in one context or several possible interpretations of one single event depending on the point of view. Simultaneous existence of two or more interpretations may occur due to various reasons. Event-referential ambiguity may be generated by separate words (polysemy and homonymy), ambiguous morphological and syntactic structures. It may occur due to the poverty of

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conceptual stimuli, or appear as ambiguity of the whole sentence or text as is the case of scope and transformational ambiguity.

Cognitive contexts acting as conceptual primes facilitate the process of disambiguation. Polysemous words, being one of the main sources of ambiguity, are associated with a set of dynamic cognitive contexts that store a significant amount of conceptual information, referring to any number of conceptual domains that are relevant to the identification of a particular sense of the word and, consequently, lead to disambiguation.

Research into polysemy and ambiguity should combine a variety of traditional linguistic and novel cognitive and psycholinguistic approaches for a deeper understanding of their sources, functions and mechanisms. It also brings about the necessity to reflect on event-referential ambiguity as a threat of manipulation in political discourse.

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CONCEPTUALIZATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN V. VON HUMBOLDT'S WORKS ON LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

The article attempts to conceptualize the verbal-conceptual apparatus of intercultural communication on the basis of the works of the outstanding German linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt. Some of the works in full translation for the first time saw the light in Russian in the collection published for the 250th anniversary of the great linguist. The main attention is paid to the spiritual component of V. von Humboldt's researches, as many factors that ensure the success of intercultural communication as the interaction of carriers of different mentalities are due to the specifics of the historically formed spiritual sphere.

Emphasizing the special importance of the concept of" spirit "and derivative phrases" spiritual force"," spirit of the people"," language as the activity of the spirit "in the works" on the difference of the structure of human languages and its impact on the spiritual development of mankind"," Fragments of the monograph about the Basques "Introduction to the General study of language" and other authors justify the presence in them of the concepts of language mentality, as well as the time context, as the most important categories of the theory of intercultural communication.

The article actualizes the works of von Humboldt on linguistics, the ideas of which were developed in the works of linguists of the second half of the twentieth century in the theory of intercultural communication and cognitive linguistics.

Keywords: intercultural communication, linguistics, W. von Humboldt, mentality, context

INTRODUCTION

The outstanding German linguist and statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt has left a vast scientific heritage. In his writings, long before intercultural communication had developed into a separate field of knowledge, many questions were raised that later became fundamental to it. V. von Humboldt had a great influence on the development of linguistics and entered the history of science as the Creator of the concept of General linguistics and the founder of the first in Europe Department of comparative linguistics.

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