

The Level of Concept Awareness “Greed” and the Level of Moral Competence Teens

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Abstract

Objectives: To represent the idea of level of concept awareness and the level of moral competence; to develop methodology of revealing the level of concept awareness and the level of moral competence; to elaborate the correspondences table to determine the concepts substitution while comprehending the concept or evaluating somebody's action. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** Component analysis was employed to define the definitions semes and the semes in respondents' answers to be being compared; questionnaire method was used to receive data to be studied; lexical analysis was used to establish the compliance of the dictionary definition to the concepts obtained in the teens' responses; method of quantification was used to calculate the levels of concept awareness and moral competence; method of data interpretation was employed while using elaborated unique scale interest of three levels: high -100%-75%, average – 74%-35% and low – 34%-1% and discussing the received data accordingly to the correspondence table. **Findings:** The calculated data of the teens' levels showed the average level of concept awareness - 47, 71% which reflects the individual's ability to define moral concept “greed” approximately to the dictionary definition, and reveal the person's inability to identify the concept relatively to other synonymous concepts. The average level of moral competence - 63, 08% shows the person's ability to evaluate somebody's action or behavior accordingly to synonymous moral concept “greed”. In some teens' answers the concept “greed” was substituted for synonyms. To reveal the mechanism of substitution the correspondences table was created where definition semes in linguistic dictionaries; explanation of analogical feelings\emotions in Psychology; manifestation of feelings\emotions in the action are represented. Suggested view and approach to calculating the levels of awareness and moral competence are absolutely new in Psycholinguistics and Cognitive Linguistics and give the opportunity to analyze the depth of concept comprehending in every day's mind. The elaborated methodology has never been developed in Psycholinguistics and in Cognitive Linguistics so far. **Application/Improvements:** The methodology elaborated can be used in Psycholinguistics and in Cognitive Linguistics to analyze the structure of person's lexical volume and to estimate the levels of moral competence and concept awareness and to reveal the concepts substitution in every day's mind.

Keywords: The Level of Concept Awareness and the Level of Moral Competence.

1. Introduction

The feeling of greed is manifested in humans in an early childhood, when the child does not want to share the candy or to give up his toy. The adult who has developed this feeling is not aware where there is greed, avarice or stinginess. Substitution of concepts “avarice” or “stinginess” for the

concept “greed” helps to give an excuse for unwillingness in supporting those in needs.

2. Aim

This work is to develop the method of revealing of the level of concept awareness and the level of moral

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individual's competence. Awareness of moral concepts entails such recoding the whole structure of conceptual knowledge, which is based on reassessment of life values.

3. The Purpose

This research is to present the method of identifying the levels of awareness of moral concepts and moral competence on the example of concept analysis of "greed" on received adolescents' materials survey in educational institutions.

The level of moral awareness is getting to be evident in the individual's ability to explain the concept closely to the dictionary definition. The level of moral competence is the individual's ability to assess someone's action accordingly to the similar moral concept.

However, the explanation of moral concepts in linguistic dictionaries can often be given as synonyms, which do not allow differentiating them, and this problem leads to the necessity of identifying semantic differential signs of concepts in the psychological interpretation of similar concepts.

4. Aims of the Research

- To identify the basic semes of the dictionary definition "greed";
- To carry out a survey of pupils in educational institutions on the concept "greed" and to reveal semes of concept in the received data;
- To calculate the level of awareness and the level of moral competence of students respectively to developed mathematical formula and percentage scale;
- To create the correspondences table and to establish the adequacy of the data provided by students to the nominated concept from the point of view of Linguistics and Psychology.

5. Description of the Study

The study was carried out accordingly to developed algorithm based on the survey of senior students (grades 10 and 11) in educational institutions: school № 9, and school № 16 in the city of Voronezh. The total number of surveyed teenagers of senior classes was 65 people.

Step 1: On the first step of the study the interpretations of the definition "greed" in dictionaries were written

out and the component analysis with the purpose of revealing the basic semes were implemented. So, in the Explanatory dictionary by D. N. Ushakov the concept "greed" is explained as: "1. Greed is the desire to satisfy excessive, insatiable wish. 2. Avarice, covetousness"¹. In the dictionary by T. F. Efremova the same concept "greed" is explained as follows: "1. the desire to satisfy the excessive, insatiable desire; avarice. 2. Stinginess, covetousness"². Similar interpretation of the concept "greed" is in the dictionary by S. I. Ozhegov "1. Avarice, covetousness. 2. Excessive desire to satisfy the wish"³. In the result of component analysis the main semes of the dictionary definition "greed" were identified, they are: avarice, the desire to satisfy an excessive wishes, stinginess, covetousness.

Step 2: On the next stage of research there was a questionnaire survey of students in educational institutions. Adolescents answered two questions: 1. what do you mean by "greed"? 2. Describe a situation when you have shown greed.

The first question of the questionnaire was designed to obtain data the processing of which allows to determine the level of awareness of the concept. The responses to the second question, give the opportunity to set the level of pupils' moral competence.

Step 3: On step 3 of the study, the results of the survey were processed with lexical, quantitative methods, and the method of component analysis to identify semes coinciding with the semes of the dictionary definition. To answer the first question students wrote: "greed is the feeling when you don't want to give something to another person; it is the unwillingness to share something with other people; the feeling when a person can give something, but does not want; when I feel sorry to give something away; the desire to satisfy some wish; the feeling when a person thinks that he has something not enough; greed is the feeling when you don't need the thing it's the same let it be at home". In the process of component analysis the following semes were identified, which coincided with the semes of the dictionary definition, and here the quantitative indicators are given as well: stinginess – 19; the desire to satisfy some wish – 12.

The second question “Describe a situation when you showed greed” had the goal in getting the answers, the analysis of which would determine the level of students’ moral competence relatively the notion “greed”. It was necessary to identify the semes in the received data which coincided with the semes of the dictionary definition. Teenagers wrote: “if this thing is very valuable to me, I can be stingy; in my childhood I didn’t want to share my favorite toy; it was a pity to give away my favorite dress which was hanging on the hanger the whole year and I never wore it; it was a pity to give LEGO to my cousin, I played with it a lot in childhood and have found it difficult to give him; sharing of sweets; to give something back; when you pay for something; a debt of money in large sizes; can not share; it is a pity to give up what means a lot to me”.

Component analysis of students’ answers allowed identifying only one seme stinginess with the quantitative index 41 of the 65 students’ answers that coincided with the seme of the dictionary definition.

Step 4: Then the quantitative indicators of the level of awareness of moral concepts and the level of moral competence of adolescents accordingly to the mathematical formula and a percentage scale were calculated. First, the data obtained on the first issue was calculated, then - on the second question.

The mathematical formula at the initial stage was the following:

$$y_i = \frac{z_i * 100\%}{x}$$

where x - the total number of surveyed students (e.g., adolescents were 65);

z_i - the number of students in the answers of which the semes, relevant to the semes of the dictionary definition were revealed (for example, the seme of the dictionary definition stinginess was found in the responses to the first issue in 19 cases);

All semes of the dictionary definitions avarice, the desire to satisfy an excessive wishes, stinginess, covetousness are accepted for 100%;

y_i - the percentage expression of the semes in the students’ responses which match the semes of the dictionary definition. The result is as following: $(19*100)/65 = 29,24\%$.

Then we perform the same calculation of each seme in students’ answers, which is coincided with the seme of the dictionary definition and sum up the interests received.

We get $\Sigma y_i = y_1 + y_2 + y_3 + \dots + y_n$, where the sum of the number of matching semes in the interests.

The formula given to one common mind is:

$$\sum y_i = \sum \left(\frac{z_i * 100\%}{x} \right)$$

Then we hold the count for each of the semes, i.e. *stinginess* = 19; *the desire to satisfy some wish* = 12.

We get the following sums in digital form:

$$(19*100)/65 = 29,24\%, \quad (12*100)/65 = 18,47\%.$$

Then we sum up the resulting percent of each semes $29,24\% + 18,47\% = 47,71\%$.

The resulting percentage shows the level of moral awareness of the concept. The analysis of the responses to the second question helps to identify only one seme stinginess, which coincided with the seme of the dictionary definition, with the quantitative. Accordingly to the given formula above, the calculation of moral students’ competence is equal to **63,08%**.

Step 5: To determine the level of awareness of moral concept and the level of moral competence it is necessary to correlate the percentages obtained on Step 4 with the levels specified in a percentage scale, which is given below in scale of Table 1.

Calculated results of identifying the level of awareness of the concept in a mathematical formula on Step 4 is equal to 47,71%, the interest correlates to the average level, which is interpreted in the following way: the individual has a close idea of the moral concept “greed”, but can’t identify it relatively to other synonymous concepts. Answers to the second question allowed us to calculate the level of students’ moral competence which was equal to 63,08% and also belongs to the average level, the interpretation of it says that the individual may evaluate somebody’s action or behavior accordingly to synonymous moral concepts. Thus, average levels of awareness and moral competence show that students differ the concept “greed” almost in all answers, but in some cases the concept “greed” was substituted for synonyms.

However, the explanation of moral concepts in linguistic dictionaries can often be explained by synonyms not allowing differentiating them, and this problem leads to the necessity of identifying semantic differential tokens.

Table 1. Scale to define the level of awareness and the level of moral competence

Levels of awareness and competence	% expression of the level	Interpretation of the level of awareness of moral concept	Interpretation of the level of moral competence
high	100%-75%	The individual has a clear vision on the moral notion, may give the explanation of the definition, closely the dictionary definition.	One can evaluate somebody's action or behavior, respectively a moral concept.
average	74%-35%	The individual has a close view to moral concept, but can't identify it relatively other synonymous concepts.	One can evaluate somebody's action or behavior, respectively synonymous moral concepts.
low	34%-1%	The individual is not aware of moral concept, he replaces the moral concept by other concepts.	One is unable to assess somebody's action or behavior accordingly to this or synonymous concepts.

To reveal the mechanism of students' mental activity of substitution of one concept for another is necessary to create the correspondences table, where, on the one hand, the principal senses of the studied concepts and senses of synonymous notions must be submitted, on the other hand, the description of analogical feelings/emotions in Psychology should be given.

Such a representation of the moral concept and its equivalent in the form of feelings will provide an opportunity to establish the very kind of feelings being described by the respondents, and the way of replacing the concept with another.

Step 6. At this study stage the correspondences Table 2 has been developed and results obtained are discussed according to the adolescents' answers in correspondence with the linguistic interpretation of the dictionary definition "greed" and the analogical feelings explanation in Psychology.

6. Discussion of the Correspondences

Identified average levels of awareness of the concept and moral competence showed that adolescents almost in all cases relate this concept with a dictionary definition and can appreciate someone's action, respectively, the concept "greed" or synonymous concepts. They wrote: "greed is the feeling when you don't want to give something to another person; it is the unwillingness to share something with

other people; when it is hard to part with some things; when it is a pity to give something to somebody; when the person does not want to share his material or non-material value". Among the students' responses there was some where adolescents indicated their unwillingness to share if they don't like the person who should be given something.

In Psychology, the reason of greed is often explained by the fear to lose something useful and necessary. In some students' answers there was the loss fear indication. In three cases there were answers including the description of avarice feeling. Students wrote: "that feeling when a person thinks he has not enough things. He thinks he needs more than he has something now; the person believes that he has few things; when he wants to have excesses." We can assume that these adolescents have a high material security and they have already felt avarice, when they have not got satisfaction with acquiring things. The substitution of the concept "greed" may occur on the basis of some "avarice", which is included in the dictionary definition explanation and comprehended by students.

Another synonymous notion "stinginess" is most clearly reflected in the students' answers where they have demonstrated such feelings as: "I try save wherever it is possible; I can't or don't want to give away what I don't need absolutely; the feeling when I am sure the thing will be useful only for me; even if I don't need this thing, let it be at home; I don't lend, I'm afraid that somebody will not give my money back". Thus, adolescents are familiar with the feeling of stinginess, which is characterized in the way like the person tries not to give away things he

Table 2. The table of correspondences of the studied concept and its synonyms in Linguistics and Psychology

Definition semes in linguistic dictionaries	Explanation of analogical feelings/emotion in Psychology	Manifestation of feelings/ emotions in the action
Greed - avarice, the desire to satisfy an excessive wishes, stinginess, covetousness ¹⁻³ .	Greed – unwillingness to share something, often supported by the fear of loosing something very important, valuable, you need strongly; it is hard to leave something; it is painful attachment to things. Greed often goes with selfishness and with an inability to love, to share feelings ⁴⁻⁶ .	In childhood the children don't want to share toys, at school they don't lend a ruler or a notebook, then they don't treat each other with candies etc. Adults don't lend money or don't share the information ⁴⁻⁶ .
Avarice - greed, the passionate desire to acquire something more and more ¹⁻³ .	Avarice – the desire to get as much as possible, while having all of necessary. Avarice may go with stinginess ⁴⁻⁶ .	Children as usual haven't developed the avarice in themselves, it appears in adult life. Leaders' avarice, which pay themselves million bonuses. Avarice manifests in the action of acquiring things, which are not necessity, but they are excesses ^{1,5,6} .
Stinginess – extra thrift, dislike of spending money ¹⁻³ .	Stinginess – the desire to spend as little as possible, while having all of the excesses ⁴⁻⁶ .	When wealthy persons spend less than it is necessary to eat and dress well or to support their social or physical state ⁴⁻⁶ .

already has. Accordingly to the linguistic interpretation of the notion “greed”, we can accept that Teens realize the feelings of greed. However, accordingly to the psychological explanation of the same feeling and close feelings of stinginess and avarice, the Teens substitute the concept of greed for the concept of stinginess.

7. Conclusion

The results of the survey allowed making the conclusion that modern teenagers are not sufficiently aware of their feelings and explaining analogical moral concepts as synonymous concepts. The average levels of awareness of the concept “greed” and moral competence in adolescents' mind were established. This result shows, on the one hand, that students comprehend the moral concept only within the linguistic interpretation of the definition and not differentiate the synonymous concepts; on the other hand, the intellectual teenagers' activity is simplified to the level of operation with a single concept. Linguistic dictionaries, unfortunately, do not give the idea differentiated about the range of the semantic tokens of moral concepts, the experienced by the individual as emotions and feelings. However, when the Teens finished the schools, they are considered to be the morally-formed individuals, ready for independent life and able to take responsibility for their actions. From

this point of view, there is a need to teach teenagers the awareness of moral concepts and equivalent feelings and emotions. It can be assumed that such training will be a stepping stone to literacy of some other level than the correct spelling of words.

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