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THE POSITION OF PARADIGMATIC LEXICAL RELATIONS IN UNIVERSITY LITERATURE FOR TEACHING METHODOLOGY FOR THE SERBIAN LANGUAGE[*]

МЕСТО ПАРАДИГМАТИЧЕСКИХ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ В УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ ПО МЕТОДИКЕ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ СЕРБСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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The paper examines the position of paradigmatic lexical relations in the primary university teaching methodology literature for Serbian as a mother tongue. The aim of the paper is to portray the status of lexicological topics in general teaching methodology, their correlation with curricula, limitations of traditional literature and directions for their future development.

Keywords: lexicology; teaching methodology; Serbian language; university literature.

Настоящая работа исследует место парадигматических лексических отношений в основной университетской литературе по методике преподавания сербского как родного языка. Цель работы – показать статус лексикологических тем в общей методике преподавания, их взаимосвязь с программами обучения, недостатки традиционной литературы и возможные направления ее развития в будущем.

Ключевые слова: лексикология; методика преподавания; сербский язык; университетская литература.

1. Reflection about words, their meanings and relationships they develop represents an aspect of becoming familiar with the functioning of a lexical system and language in general. On the other hand, it deeply motivates acquisition of new forms, meanings and (new) word usage according to the style and communicative needs thus enriching vocabulary, developing language culture and improving learner communicative competence. Understanding these relations in a mother tongue can facilitate lexis learning of a foreign language.

2. However, current curricula for primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Serbia leave little space for teaching lexicology only within the subject field of *Language Culture* [2, p. 99]. Paradigmatic lexical relations appear in curricula of junior grades in primary schools, while they are for the first time terminologically introduced (synonymy, antonymy, homonymy)[9] in senior grades. In secondary school, as a separate discipline lexicology is studied in the third grade. From primary to secondary school students deal with specific lexicological topics at the level of basic paradigmatic relations such as antonymy, synonymy, homonymy and polysemy which with its mechanisms represents one of the most important ways of organizing lexical system, while paronymy is introduced only as a concept.[10]

3. Since we are dealing with very important categories and relations which, as described, enhance students' language skills but also introduce students to the basics of lexicology, they have to get the place they deserve in the teaching process. To what extent students will learn about them depends exclusively on teachers' engagement. This paper will show how future teachers of the Serbian Language and Literature in the undergraduate studies are presented with the processing of this field. In other words, we will examine the main teaching methodology literature and observe how and to what extent it deals with paradigmatic lexical relations.

4. At the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade undergraduate students of the teaching profile (teachers-to-be) of the *Serbian Language and Literature* and *Serbian Literature and Language* take four obligatory one-term teaching methodology courses, *Teaching Methodology of the Serbian Language* being one of them. In addition to following lectures and exer-

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[9] One should not ignore the fact that as of the first grade of primary school pupils are getting accustomed to understanding these relations which is manifested in exercises in *Bukvar (Serbian Alphabet book)* where pupils should connect or write words that have the same or opposite meaning.

[10] Curricula are available at the Institute for the Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia website: https://zuov.gov.rs/nastavni-planovi-i-programi/.

cises, students prepare this exam by reading obligatory coursebooks, the following three monographs:

– Milija Nikolić, *Teaching Methodology of the Serbian Language and Literature*;

– Pavle Ivić, *Serbian Language and Literature in Teaching Theory and Practice*;

– Simeon Marinković, *Creative Teaching Methods of the Serbian Language and Literature*.

In Milija Nikolić's *Teaching Methodology* concepts related to paradigmatic lexical relations are covered in several lexico-semantic exercises offered in the chapter of the same name. All these exercises are aimed at enriching students' vocabulary in lexical fields of human and object features, emotions and description of actions and situations.

Following the same principle, though at a smaller scale, P. Ilić also includes lexical exercises narrowly defining their function as "preparing learners to write essays" [3, p. 561]. Within the chapter entitled *Writing Culture*, Simeon Marinković offers 41 lexical exercises, two of which directly refer to paradigmatic relations – synonymy and antonymy [4, p. 114-120].

1) Synonymy. It is presented on the example of analysis of *Danga*, a short story by Radoje Domanović, Serbian realist writer, whose characters are described by students as *sycophants* or *toadies*, "however, in our language there are many conditional *synonyms* for the present character and behaviour" [5, p. 758], so the teacher will ask students to recall them (*spineless person*, *croucher*, *reptile*, *lickspittle*, *crawler*, *yes-man*, *coward*...). Then, to portray another literary character they will together find words with the similar meaning for a lexeme *smart* (*clever*, *wise*, *intellectual*, *reasonable*, *intelligent*, *astute*, *vivacious*, *witty*, *resourceful*, *shrewd*…), emphasizing differences that exist among some of the aforementioned synonyms. Here, though in the footnote, the author emphasizes the possibility of using a dictionary *Synonyms and Related Words of the Serbo-Croatian Language* by Miodrag Lalević, which teachers can use as a resource for more examples. In another exercise students are asked to describe the movement of water by using different verbs (*flows*, *leaks*, *wets*, *drips*, *trickles*, *splashes*, *squirts*, *pours*, *springs*, *spills*…), ways of walking (*crawls*, *staggers*, *steps*, *goes*, *walks*, *travels*, *stamps*, *marches*…), while exercises in which students would describe other types of activities are suggested. In the context of paradigmatic lexical relations P. Ilić offers only a model of practising synonymy where one should list different verbs which refer to raining (*falls*, *drizzles*, *sprinkles*…) or human walking. He especially emphasizes that it is more useful "after finding the synonyms [...] to ask students to use the appropriate ones to de-

scribe a certain type of human walking" [3, p. 563]. In *Creative Teaching Methods* by S. Marinković one finds an exercise referring to searching "as many synonyms" for words: *beautiful* (*charming*, *stunning*, *good-looking*, *nice*), *goes* (*walks*, *runs*, *goes on foot*, *stamps*, *travels*) and *hill* (*slope*, *hillock*, *mound*, *mount…*) [4, p. 116-117].

COMMENTARY. We can note that there are not any theoretical observations of synonymy which would direct a teacher, and we will see that they will not appear with the remaining paradigmatic relations in the analyzed literature. As well as synonym groups, nominal, verbal and adjectival antonyms are isolated in the examples although there are no explicit designations. Moreover, the difference between absolute and relative, true and contextual synonyms is not made, therefore in the representative examples students' attention is not drawn to the relationship between synonymy and polysemy as well as the relationship between lexical synonymy and "the aspect of sameness realized in context [by different types of words or linguistic units of different order] which we consider quasi-synonymy" [1, p. 249]. Dictionaries can be of great importance for practising synonymy. They should be mentioned in the main text of a teaching methodology coursebook rather than in a footnote. In doing so, in addition to the aforementioned Lalević's dictionary, *The Dictionary of Synonyms* by Pavle Ćosić should be added to the list with the possibility and ways of using general, descriptive and associative dictionaries. Dictionaries represent a rich resource of examples to the teacher, simultaneously leading students to consider synonyms an important lexicological category.

2) Antonymy. In Nikolić's coursebook under the subheading *Words of Opposite Meaning (Antonyms)* there is an exercise in which students write antonyms to the given words: *freedom*, *truth*, *dream*, *virtue*, *love*, *past*; *to come*, *to save*, *to find*, *to be silent*, *to build*, *to remember*; *cold*, *short*, *soft*, *wet*, *wide*, *heavy*; *neat*, *a lot of*, *long ago*, *forward*, *downwards*, *above*… Namely, it is pointed out how students are asked to find words of the opposite meaning while learning about word classes – nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions – "which abound in antonymic pairs". Furthermore, it is stated that it is good to occasionally ask students to use antonymic pairs in sentences so that they would realize that they "expressed themselves in opposite sentences or contrasts (antithesis)" [5, p. 764-765]. Within other lexical exercises and while explaining the meaning of some words, the author points out that at that point students can be offered words of opposite meaning (for ex. while explaining the meaning of *subtleness*, one should provide its antonyms – *obtrusiveness* or *blatanc*y which students are familiar with and will help them in discovering the meaning of the word referring to the contrastive concept). At the end of the book in the Appendix, the author de-

scribes the possibility of explaining words by listing their synonyms [5, p. 935]. In P. Ilić's monograph there are not any special exercises referring to antonymy, while Marinković gives only one exercise based on writing words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) of opposite meaning [4, p. 116].

COMMENTARY. Lexical exercises which require students to find words of opposite meaning contain examples which necessitate a teacher's explanation and problematization of antonymic relations. Students are expected to write a word *lie* as a word with opposite meaning to the word *truth*, but another option is a word *untruth* which is actually its true antonym. What should one write as an antonym of the word *past – present* or *future*? Or of the adjective *cold – warm* or *hot*? What is the antonym of the verb *to be silent*[11] – *to speak* or *to talk*? These issues point to the necessity of explaining complex antonymic relations and making a difference between true and relational antonyms. A structural difference between antonyms with identical roots and antonyms with different roots (*truth–untruth/lie)* should be outlined. Then, at least in secondary schools and only in examples one should present contrasting of meanings within the same polysemantic structure (enantiosemy) (*cleave* can mean "to cut apart" or "to bind together"), pragmatic antonyms conditioned by cultural, historical beliefs and representations *angel–devil*, *soul–body*, *heaven–earth*), which will open the door to the correlation with cultural knowledge [1, p. 267-271]. The author of this coursebook emphasizes that by using antonyms in context students identify opposite sentences or antithesis. This aim does not seem favourable enough. Namely, it is very important to focus one's attention on the context which provides contrasting the meanings of lexemes and to cite such examples, with which language abounds, so, by following the features of the functional approach, this is one of the important teaching tasks within the topic of antonymy.

3) Homonymy. Even though it is not explicitly covered in M. Nikolić's *Teaching Methodology*, there are sentences, within lexico-semantic exercises, which will show students the role of stress as a semantically distinguishing marker, such as: Tell me if you bathed in the river.[12] (Serbian: *Хајде рѐци јеси ли се купао у рѐци*). It is stated that such exercises can be used for emphasizing differences in meaning of words that have the same written form

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[11] In Serbian it is a single lexeme form: *ćutati*.

[12] This is a translation of the Serbian sentence (in brackets) which contains homonyms. Those are the verb *reći* whose English equivalent is *to tell*, and the noun *reka* whose English equivalent is *river*. The vocative mood of the Serbian verb is "reći–reci" with falling intonation, while its homonym is the locative case of the noun "reka–reci" with the rising intonation.

(homographs), in addition to being simultaneously orthoepic, accentual, grammatical (morphological, syntactic). Ilić [3, p. 561] and Marinković [4, p. 142] provide sentences with the similar structure within phonological, i.e. intonation exercises.

COMMENTARY. None of the teaching methodology coursebooks isolate homonymy as a lexical relation. The type of homonyms – homographs – can be found only in several synthetic exercises (orthoepic, phonological, accentual, semantic) with all authors, however, examples that contain true homonyms (for example *a book* (an object to read) and *to book* (to make a reservation)), and also homomorphs (work – work<u>er</u>, strong – strong<u>er</u>) cannot be found in these exercises. Through different exercises, it is important to focus students' attention on this formal relation between words which are not semantically related, and as such are found under different headwords in dictionaries. Students can confirm that meanings are not related by using translation equivalents in foreign languages they learn.

4) Paronymy. In Nikolić's *Teaching Methodology* in the chapter about lexico-semantic exercises one can find a subheading *Meanings of Words of Similar Form*. It focuses on pairs of words with the same root and similar written form, to which students wrongly assign similar meanings due to formal matches. There one can find around fifteen pairs of words such as *affect–effect, industrial–industrious, artful–artistic, economic–economical*, which should be used in a context so that one could identify the differences in meaning [5, p. 765]. Another two authors neither mention this relation nor give exercises that could illustrate it.

COMMENTARY. The overview of curricula shows that paronymy is not taught as a lexical category in primary or secondary school. However, the main methodology coursebook [3] brings forward these pairs of lexemes, which lowers or bypasses their interference in context, enhances the right usage of words and cultivates language culture. In that sense, we think that this relation should be included both in curricula and teaching methodology and school literature at least in a form of creative exercises and as a possibility to create a school dictionary of paronyms.

5. Concluding remarks. The analysis of teaching methodology literature for the Serbian language as a mother tongue points to several facts. 1) Lexicology has a marginal position in it – it is exclusively based on arbitrarily created lexico-semantic exercises, so paradigmatic relations appear indirectly and with the aim of advancing vocabulary. 2) What is missing is a theoretical approach to lexical relations as a metalanguage directed towards teachers which can be a reliable indicator for teaching lexicology. 3) This literature does not inform students about the status of lexicology in curricula. Bearing in mind the fact that there are no theoretical indicators, students do

not receive information on when and to what extent these relations are processed. 4) The exercises that are offered have a similar structure in these monographs and they are at the primary school level as regards complexity. Therefore, teaching lexicology in secondary school arises as a separate issue. 5) The approach to paradigmatic relations among words is simplified [1, p. 252] as they are observed in a complex interrelationship of their meanings. Moreover, the approach is also unbalanced: the majority of models of exercises cover synonymy and antonymy, there are indications of homonymy and paronymy in some exercises, while hyponymy, as a very important organizational mechanism of both lexical and conceptual systems, does not appear anywhere. 6) One can identify a functional-communicative approach in the offered exercises whose aim is to develop lexical refinement and to enrich an array of expressive possibilities through correlation with teaching literature and language culture. However, highlighting basic concepts in lexicology as a universal science about words and their relationships is missing.

Hence, future contemporary teaching methodology literature should establish a better correlation with curricula, present lexicology more from a linguistic perspective, explain and define methodology of the teaching approach in primary and secondary schools, thus establish a firmer relationship with lexicography and the advantages of using dictionaries in teaching practice.

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