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THE CONCEPT OF MONUMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE: TOWARD A LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract. *This article delves into the lexical and semantic analysis of the concept MONUMENT, with a focus on its historical and cultural significance within various linguistic traditions. By employing componential analysis, the study reveals both common and differential semes associated with the lexeme "monument", highlighting its multifaceted roles as a physical structure, a symbol of memory, and a marker of historical and cultural identity. Common semes such as "remembrance", statue", "tombstone", and "historic significance" underscore the unifying aspects of the concept MONUMENT, while differential semes, including "boundary marker", "lasting evidence", "written tribute", and "exceptional example", reveal the diverse and multifaceted roles that monuments play in different contexts. Tracing the etymological evolution of the term "monument" from its Latin roots, the research demonstrates how the concept extends beyond its material form to encompass deeper cultural meanings related to commemoration, boundary marking, and exemplary achievements. The study underscores the dynamic nature of monuments, emphasizing their importance not only as cultural artifacts but also as symbolic embodiments of collective memory and identity. In light of ongoing global conflicts and natural disasters, this research also emphasizes the critical need for the preservation of monuments, which are vital to maintaining cultural heritage. Prospective areas for future study include the cross-cultural analysis of the concept MONUMENT and its evolving role in contemporary geopolitical contexts.*

Keywords*: concept, componential analysis, lexical analysis, monument, semantic analysis, seme.*

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КОНЦЕПТ MONUMENT В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ: ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

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Анотація. *У статті здійснено лексико-семантичний аналіз концепту MONUMENT, з акцентом на його історичне та культурне значення в різних лінгвістичних традиціях. Використовуючи компонентний аналіз, дослідження виявляє як спільні, так і диференційні семи, пов'язані з лексемою "monument", підкреслюючи її багатогранні ролі як фізичної споруди, символу пам'яті та маркера історичної й культурної ідентичності. Такі спільні семи, як "remembrance", "statue", "tombstone" та "historic significance" демонструють об'єднувальні аспекти концепту MONUMENT, тоді як диференційні семи, зокрема "boundary marker", "lasting evidence", "written tribute" та "exceptional example", розкривають різноманітні та багатофункціональні ролі пам'ятників у різних контекстах. Відстежуючи етимологічну еволюцію терміна "monument" від його латинських коренів, дослідження демонструє, як концепт виходить за межі матеріальної форми, охоплюючи глибші культурні значення, пов'язані з вшануванням пам'яті, маркуванням кордонів і видатними досягненнями. Дослідження підкреслює динамічну природу пам'ятників, наголошуючи на їхній важливості не лише як культурних артефактів, але й як символічних уособлень колективної пам'яті та ідентичності. У світлі сучасних глобальних конфліктів і природних катастроф ця робота також акцентує увагу на критичній необхідності збереження пам'ятників, які є ключовими для підтримання культурної спадщини. Перспективні напрями для майбутніх досліджень включають міжкультурний аналіз концепту MONUMENT та його еволюційної ролі в сучасних геополітичних контекстах.*

Ключові слова: *концепт, компонентний аналіз, лексичний аналіз, пам'ятник, семантичний аналіз, сема.*

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Introduction

The study of monuments has so far remained rather marginal within the humanities and social sciences. However, there have been a significant number of studies focusing on different aspects of monuments (Bellentani, Panico, 2016, p. 30). In the realm of languages, the concept *MONUMENT* transcends its definition as an architectural structure embodying history and memory. It also serves as a rich subject for lexical and semantic exploration. For researchers in both linguistic and cultural studies, the concept *MONUMENT* offers a vast field of analysis, revealing deeper connections between language, culture, and memory. This study focuses on examining the lexical and semantic dimensions of the concept *MONUMENT*, with particular emphasis on its historical and cultural significance within various linguistic traditions. By exploring this concept, we can uncover its role in shaping cultural and historical contexts while also gaining deeper insight into the worldview of people from different cultures and eras.

The relevance of this study is reflected in several key aspects. Firstly, the lexeme *monument* presents a fascinating topic for discussion from both historical and cultural perspectives. It is crucial to recognize that our understanding of history is directly linked to the extent of information processed in this field. Let us not forget that knowledge itself is shaped by four essential functions: cognition, communication, information, and memory (Kulišić, Tuđman, 2009, p. 130). Knowledge is a dynamic tool, continuously evolving in

response to changing situations and circumstances. Our understanding of the lexeme *monument* is significantly influenced by the approach and depth of our study. Secondly, the preservation and protection of monuments, as vital elements of cultural heritage, are of particular importance – especially in the context of ongoing military conflicts around the world. The modern world, rife with wars and natural disasters, poses a grave threat to the survival of historical and cultural monuments. Military conflicts, particularly the Russian-Ukrainian war, result in the destruction and damage of these monuments, causing profound harm not only to the physical landscape but also to the cultural identity of the people (Pawłowska et al., 2023, P. 18). Thirdly, the semantic dimension of the concept *MONUMENT* may captivate a broad audience, as it reveals the foundational model underlying the meaning of this noun.

Research Materials and Methods

The challenge of directly observing mental processes and the fact that they can only be verified through the study of natural byproducts of thought – chiefly language – underscores the importance of modeling verbalized entities. This approach serves as one of the primary methods for scientifically representing higher cognitive realities, as thinking itself revolves around the creation and use of models.

In scientific knowledge, a model is understood as an object that corresponds to or resembles the original, and it is used in theory development when direct study of the object is not feasible. It serves as a material analogue for existing or ideal entities. A cognitive model, in particular, is a mental construct – an idea formed through inferences based on observations. Notably, a model stands in contrast to the original, acting as a material or conceptual representation that reflects certain aspects, principles, and structures of the original entity.

The modeling process refers to the creation of an idealized mental or symbolic image that mirrors the original, though often in a simplified form. What makes this approach unique is that it models speech phenomena in conjunction with the conceptual structures linked to the linguistic units being studied. The constructive modeling approach aligns perfectly with the primary objective of cognitive linguistics – not to build a formal system where theorems are proven but to deepen our understanding of the cognitive foundations of language (Newman, 1996, p. 12). Unlike hypotheses, which have the generalizing force of laws, models are designed to structure the theoretical framework that guides the researcher's goal. They aim to restore the cognitive balance between explicit scientific knowledge and reality, organizing the mental sphere in a symbolic manner.

The name that consistently identifies a concept serves as a linguistic sign, most fully and accurately conveying its essence while aligning with the dominant term in its synonymous group. The lexical meaning of the noun *monument*, as the name of the concept, acts as its attractor, drawing all potential meanings associated with it. In other words, the attractor encapsulates the most essential information and core meanings, organizing and shaping the surrounding interpretations. To fully capture the complexity and dynamism of the concept *MONUMENT*, it is essential to model it by analyzing the lexical meaning and etymology of its name. This approach is grounded in the widely accepted notion that the meaning of a linguistic expression is equivalent to the concept it represents.

The most effective way to analyze the lexical meaning of a concept's name is through the methodology of componential analysis of its lexical and semantic field, a method widely used in structural semantics (Tatsenko, 2020; Tatsenko, Molhamova, 2021; Tatsenko, Molhamova, Otroshchenko, 2023). This approach involves breaking down dictionary definitions to isolate semes, or components of the lexeme's meaning. Lexical and semantic analysis – focused on the system of meanings, including concepts and conceptual models – is a key method for cognitive modeling of the consciousness of individuals engaged in discursive activity. The componential analysis of a significative meaning of the word *monument* allows analysing the semes in different vocabulary definitions and in the definitions of leading scientists.

Discussion

The word *monument* originates from the Latin word *monumentum*, which means "a memorial, a reminder, or something that serves to remind". The root of this word is derived from the verb *monere*, meaning "to remind" or "to warn". The Latin suffix *-mentum* used to indicate an instrument or medium, in this case, a physical reminder. The word came into Old French as *monument* before being adopted into Middle English around the 13th century with the meaning of a structure built to commemorate a person or event (OED). The Online Etymology Dictionary (Etymonline) defines the term *monument* as follows: "a sepulcher", originating from Old French *monument*, meaning "grave, tomb, monument", and from the Latin *monumentum*, signifying a memorial structure, statue, votive offering, or tomb.

"The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" (Elizabeth, 2006) provides a critical insight into how the meaning of *monument* has changed over time. During the Middle Ages, the term primarily referred to burial sites rather than structures commemorating an event or individual. An example of this shift is the Great Fire of London Monument, erected in London to honor the devastating fire of 1666. The monument serves as a reminder of this pivotal moment in the city's history. Each year, many visitors climb its steps to reflect on the event, viewing a city that once burned but has since risen from the ashes. The sculpture not only commemorates the event but also symbolizes rebirth and renewal. By examining the history of the landmark, we gain a deeper understanding of how the term *monument* evolves from merely representing the past to becoming a witness to cultural transformations and shifts.

It should be added that the root of the word *monument* comes from the Proto-Indo-European term *men-*, meaning "to think" (Calvert, 1985). This root encompasses various dimensions of thought, such as *wisdom*, *memory*, and *consciousness*. This connection highlights how the word *monument* aligns with its root, reinforcing the link between monuments and the act of remembrance, which is intrinsic to memory. The root *men-* imbues the word with elements of thought, reminding us that monuments not only commemorate the past but also engage with societal consciousness and history. As such, the concept MONUMENT extends beyond physical structures, embodying processes of learning, reflection, and understanding of the world.

Therefore, the meaning of the word *monument* has evolved over time, reflecting shifts in societal values, cultural norms, and historical contexts. Nowadays, the term *monument* conveys the notion of a reminder, typically commemorating a specific event or individual.

Research Results

The most effective way to describe the semantic aspect of lexical units, such as the noun *monument*, is through componential analysis. This method involves breaking down the meaning of a word into basic semantic components, known as semes. Semes allow us to distinguish or connect words based on their meanings. A lexeme semantic structure represents the relationship between its various semantic elements as an integrated whole. Each seme reflects the understanding of language speakers, shaped by the linguistic environment that influences every individual. The componential analysis of the lexeme *monument* enables a more comprehensive understanding of its meaning and usage by examining its semantic structure across various dictionary definitions and interpretations provided by prominent scholars (with key semes emphasized):

1) a) "a structure, such as a building or sculpture, erected as a memorial"; b) "an inscribed marker placed at a grave; a tombstone"; c) "something venerated for its enduring historic significance or association with a notable past person or thing: *the architectural monuments of ancient Rome; traditions that are monuments to an earlier era*"; d) "an object, such as a post or stone, fixed in the ground so as to mark a boundary or position" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language);

2) a) “an outstanding enduring achievement: a translation that is a monument of scholarship”; b) “an exceptional example: *“Thousands of them wrote texts, some of them monuments of dullness”* (Robert L. Heilbroner)” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language);

3) “a monument is a statue or a building that helps us to remember someone or something. Many cities have monuments to people who fought in wars” (Berube, 2013);

4) a) “something erected in memory of a person, event, etc., as a building, pillar, or statue: *the Washington Monument*”; b) “any building, megalith, etc., surviving from a past age, and regarded as of historical or archaeological importance”; c) “any enduring evidence or notable example of something: *a monument to human ingenuity*”; d) “an exemplar, model, or personification of some abstract quality, especially when considered to be beyond question: *a monument of middle-class respectability*”; e) “an area or a site of interest to the public for its historical significance, great natural beauty, etc., preserved and maintained by a government”; f) “a written tribute to a person, especially a posthumous one”; g) “an object, as a stone shaft, set in the ground to mark the boundaries of real estate or to mark a survey station”; h) “a person considered as a heroic figure or of heroic proportions: *He became a monument in his lifetime*”; i) “a tomb; sepulcher”; j) “a statue” (Dictionary.com);

5) a) “a burial vault”; b) “a written legal document or record”; c) “a lasting evidence, reminder, or example of someone or something notable or great”; d) “a distinguished person”; e) “a memorial stone or a building erected in remembrance of a person or event”; f) “an identifying mark”; g) “a carved statue”; h) “a boundary or position marker (such as a stone)”; i) “a written tribute” (Merriam-Webster: America’s Most Trusted Dictionary);

6) a) “an obelisk, statue, building, etc, erected in commemoration of a person or event or in celebration of something”; b) “a notable building or site, esp. one preserved as public property”; c) “a tomb or tombstone”; d) “a literary or artistic work regarded as commemorative of its creator or a particular period”; e) “a boundary marker”; f) “an exceptional example”; g) “an obsolete word for statue” (Collins. Free online dictionary, thesaurus and reference materials);

7) “that which brings to mind, a remembrancer, memorial, monument” (Perseus digital library).

The definition analysis has revealed both common and differential semes in the lexical meanings associated with the concept MONUMENT. The common semes include notions such as *“remembrance”, “tombstone”, “post or stone”, “statue”, “notable building or site”,* and *“historic significance”*. On the other hand, the differential semes encompass terms like *“boundary marker”, “lasting evidence”, “exceptional example”, “written legal document or record”, “written tribute to a person”, “megalith”,* and *“burial vault”*. While the common semes create a unifying thread across all definitions, the differential semes highlight the diverse and multifaceted roles and forms that monuments can take. Broadly speaking, a monument is defined as a physical object or structure serving a variety of functions, most notably its memorial and historical significance, the marking of boundaries or locations, and its role in honoring outstanding people for their achievements.

Drawing upon the findings of the conducted analysis, we propose the following definition of the concept *MONUMENT: A physical structure, such as a building, statue, or marker, erected in memory of a person, event, or significant historical moment. It serves as a lasting tribute, preserving the legacy of notable individuals or achievements and often reflecting cultural, historical, or artistic importance. Monuments may also function as boundary markers, tombstones, or objects of public interest due to their historical significance or exceptional craftsmanship. Additionally, they can symbolize enduring evidence or exemplary achievements, commemorating both tangible and abstract qualities of human endeavor.*

Conclusions and Prospects

The present study has illuminated the complex and multifaceted nature of the concept MONUMENT, revealing its significance across linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts. Through componential analysis, we identified the common and differential semes that shape the lexeme's meaning, underscoring its role as both a physical structure and a symbolic entity. Monuments serve not only as markers of memory and history but also as instruments of cultural identity, reflecting societal values, achievements, and the collective consciousness of past and present civilizations.

Our analysis has shown that the lexeme *monument* encapsulates both tangible and abstract qualities, highlighting its function as a memorial, a boundary marker, an exemplar of human ingenuity, and a testament to significant events or figures. This duality, spanning material and symbolic dimensions, contributes to the enduring relevance of monuments in shaping cultural heritage and historical memory. Moreover, the etymological evolution of the word *monument* reflects broader shifts in societal attitudes toward memory, history, and commemoration, pointing to the dynamic interplay between language, thought, and culture.

In terms of future research, several promising avenues warrant exploration. First, a deeper investigation into the cultural specificities of how different societies conceptualize monuments could offer further insight into their symbolic and functional variations across linguistic traditions. Second, examining the role of monuments in contemporary geopolitical contexts – particularly in areas affected by conflict or environmental degradation – would shed light on how these structures influence national identity, collective memory, and cultural resilience.

Additionally, interdisciplinary studies incorporating archaeology, anthropology, and digital humanities could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how monuments are perceived, preserved, and transformed in modern societies. The integration of digital modeling technologies could also enhance the study of monuments by offering new ways to visualize their historical significance and engage broader audiences in their preservation.

In conclusion, the study of monuments extends far beyond their physical presence, offering a rich tapestry of linguistic, cultural, and historical meaning. By continuing to explore this concept through a multidisciplinary lens, we can deepen our understanding of how monuments shape and are shaped by the societies that create and sustain them, ensuring their relevance for future generations.

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