

The notion of epitaph in epigraphy and linguistics

Nataliya Prystay

Applied Linguistics Department, Lviv Polytechnic National University, S. Bandery Str., 12, Lviv, 79013, UKRAINE,
E-mail: nataliya_prystay@hotmail.com

Abstract – Epitaph as a specific discourse type is being studied. Typology of epigraphic inscriptions and classification of epitaphs are being suggested.

Key words – epitaph, discourse, epigraphy, linguistics

I. Introduction

Epigraphy (from the Greek: ἔπιγραφή, epigraphē, "inscription") is the study of inscriptions or epigraphs engraved into stone or other durable materials, or cast in metal, the science of classifying them as to cultural context and date, elucidating them and assessing what conclusions can be deduced from them. According to the purpose of the inscriptions the following types can be singled out: abecedarium, chronogram, epitaph on a headstone, ex libris, hero stone, history of Latin, Indian inscriptions, copper plate inscriptions, memento mori, monumental inscription, ogham inscription, runestone, stoichedon [4].

So epigraphy as a science is closely connected with the study of epitaphs.

The term "epitaph" means the inscription upon a monument of a selected verse or quotation which expresses in language of graceful and meaningful phrase some thought or sentiment significantly applicable to the individual or family for whom the monument is erected.

Probably the earliest surviving epitaphs are those written on ancient Egyptian sarcophagi and coffins. Ancient Greek examples are often of literary interest. In Elizabethan times epitaphs began to assume a more literary character. [7].

The discourse of the epitaphs ("on the gravestone" in ancient Greek) describes the special aspect of human's life – its mortality. The social stipulation of construction of such a discourse is passing of life and accordingly our striving a) to retain the memory about an individual; b) to express our attitude to him/her; c) to put into words our attitude of life and death [2].

This type of discourse is represented by prosaic and poetic texts which are characterized by different stylistic colouring (oratorical, emotionally expressive, and humorous) and assessed modality. The last one is connected with such peculiarity of human's consciousness as human's worries about his relation to the world around and himself, e. g. in English:
Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take,
But by the moments that take our breath away.

There are many different kinds of epitaphs. It would be difficult to place them in categories but over the years the epitaphs that have been written could be included in one or more of the following types: religious, including quotes from the scriptures, secular literature and prayers either from scripture or other sources, inspirational, faith in immortality, patriotic, salutary, consolation, historical, love, sorrow

According to G. G. Pocheptsov's classification epitaph as a specific discourse type belongs to religious discourse. Religious discourse is based on transmission of vital ethical information for society and person. The feature of this type of discourse is unconventional understanding of a word, i.e. word isn't a symbol but a thing or a notion itself. A peculiar feature of these discourse type texts is their transcendentality especially magic one [1]. This helps us to have an individual cognition and representation of the world.

The clearest and easiest way to personalize a monument is to carve an epitaph that tells something about a person's life.

Monuments are for the living and they fail in their purpose if they do not inspire reverence, faith and hope. An inspiring epitaph, carved in stone, will carry its message down through the ages; and fulfils the true mission of a memorial. The all too prevalent practice of omitting epitaphs and using only names and dates robs that monument of much of its individuality and leaves it barren of that sentiment it is intended to express and perpetuate.

An epitaph can be:

1. An expression of tribute to the deceased.
2. A personal open message to the deceased.
3. A message back from the grave.
4. A message of comfort, faith or hope [5].

II. Classification of epitaphs

A good epitaph is considered to be one that is memorable, or at least make one think. A wry trick of many successful epitaphs is to "speak" to the reader and warn him/her about his/her own mortality; another is a request of the reader to get off their resting place, as often it would require the reader to stand on the ground above the coffin to read the inscription.

In this research I present the classifications of the epitaphs and as an object I have chosen epitaphs, devoted to William Shakespeare. The first one is written on the memorial in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey:

The Cloud capt Tow'rs,
The Gorgeous Palaces,
The solemn Temples,
The Great Globe itself,
Yea, all which it Inherit,
Shall Dissolve,
And like the baseless Fabrick of a Vision
Leave not a wreck behind.
The Tempest (IV.i.152) [9]

The second epitaph is from Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon, England, where W. Shakespeare was buried:

Good friend for Jesus sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here!

Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

The first classification is according to the feature of the “addressing”:

- a) address the deceased to alive people;
 - b) alive people to the deceased;
 - c) maxims without an address.
- ✓ information about the dead person
 - ✓ thoughts of life and death.

Considering this feature the first epitaph belongs to maxims without an address, subdivision: thoughts of life and death. While the second one reflects address the deceased to alive people.

The second classification is according to its genre:

According to the definition of the epitaph, given by The New Encyclopedia Britannica [3], it is an inscription in verse or prose on a tomb. That is the reason for us to distinguish this kind of classification:

1. poetical epitaphs
 - written in a form of verse
2. prosaic epitaphs
 - written in a form of prosaic expression

Taking into account this feature, the first epitaph belongs to prosaic epitaphs and the second to poetical.

The third classification is according to its structure.

In this classification the Epitaph is divided into two groups:

- simple epitaphs (expressed by a single word or word combination)
- complex epitaphs (expressed by a single sentence or by several sentences).

Both epitaphs in this case are complex.

The fourth classification is according to stylistic colouring. The following types of the epitaphs can be singled out:

- a. humorous
- b. neutral
- c. elevated

Considering this feature these epitaphs belong to neutral.

III. Importance of epitaphs

Once they walked among us, laughing, yelling, whispering and keeping watch. We knew them. We spoke to them. We took them by the hand. We loved them. They were our friends, our families, our heroes. Now, in the crumbled earth, they are our memories, remaining in this world if not visible to it. They wait for us along their shaded avenues; secluded as only urban dwellers can know seclusion among the many, within the perplexing grids laid out by those in whose care the remembrance of their history - of their existence - we have entrusted our dead [6].

Dead people keep silence. Their innumerable army does not arise from the graves and does not shout about social injustice and demands nothing. But nevertheless, this army is a great political and moral power of all our life and the fate of the alive depends on its voice, maybe for many

future generations. Dead people do not exist for people, who are spiritually blind and deaf, for those, who do not remember the past and do not predict the future and it is no use reminding them about the power and the influence of dead people. But those, who are able to see and hear, who realise the present time not as self-sufficient, separated from the past period of time, but as fleeting moment of life saturated with the past and responsible for the future, know that dead people did not die, they are alive. Whatever is their fate there, beyond this world, they live in our souls, in subconscious depth of huge personal folk soul. They appeal to morality, kindness, faith to Motherland. It is evident that dead people will not resurrect due to hymns to their honour. But memory about them is an essential thing for all and everybody [10].

People are alive until we remember them, until we think about them, until we love them. In every country, in every culture there are people, who made this culture and country. We have to remember them, to know the place of their eternal peace and to respect their names.

Benjamin Franklin once said, “Show me your cemeteries and I will tell you what kind of people you have.” This quote applies to cemeteries all over the world. There is truly no comparing of cultures as they all are tied together in their views of respect for the dead. Some are more elaborate and dutiful than others.

All in all, it is out of respect and remembrance that we should learn more about our dead. There is much to learn about heritage and customs of those that lived before us. Preservation of cemeteries is one part of our history that needs some serious attention and what can be learned from reading epitaphs and understanding symbolisms that were used on headstones is one small step towards this goal [8].

Conclusion

If we consider epitaphs viewed from the focus of communicative linguistics we will see them in light of discourse belongings. So, epitaph as a specific discourse type with its main categories and contextual implication relating to a particular context (situations, events or information) helps us to understand it, and to provide a flexible, open-ended view of discourse. Researching the epitaphs as the type of discourse may enrich our understanding of some aspects of communicative linguistics as they present a dialogue between the deceased and alive, as well as contrastive linguistics as they reflect national-language peculiarities of transferring “eternal values” and present peculiar representation of the nation’s culture, its spirituality. Besides, research in this field enables us to consider a man through anthropocentric paradigm which presupposes the primary role of man in linguistic studies. It has made a certain impact on discourse research, as discourse analysis is aimed at the research of the text from the point of view of environment.

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Застосування онтологічної семантики у зіставленні документів

Наталія Рябова, Ганна Козопольська, Катерина Дяденко

Кафедра штучного інтелекту, Харківський національний університет радіоелектроніки, УКРАЇНА, м. Харків, просп.Леніна, 14, e-mail: ryabova@rambler.ru, kozopoljanskaja@rambler.ru, adyadenko@mail.ru

The problem of semantic comparison of text documents is considered. Ontological approach to conceptual indexing of texts, semantic similarity discovering and corresponded simple algorithms are described.

Ключові слова – text meaning representation, semantic comparison, conceptual indexing, ontological concept

I. Вступ

Однією із задач, які підвищують ефективність видобування і обробки знань з текстових джерел, є організація семантичного простору документів на основі їх смислової схожості. При цьому семантично схожі документи відносяться до одного смислового поля, яке може відповідати одному чи більш концептам онтології, що формалізує семантичну модель предметної області (ПрО). Таким чином, онтологія ПрО розглядається як структура знань, що специфікує терміни, їх властивості і відносини між ними для надання можливості сумісного повторного використання знань у Web-системах. Зручним видом представлення онтології є графова модель, яка відображає структурні і семантичні відносини між концептами і термінами. Пов'язавши змістовну складову (контент) документа з термінами онтології, ми отримуємо розширене, концептуальне представлення текстового документа (ТД). З'єднання «документ - онтологія» може бути виконано на основі статистичного аналізу документів з подальшим відсиланням виявлених термінів до концептів онтології. В результаті такого концептуального індексування документи набувають розширеного уявлення, на основі якого можна ефективніше здійснювати їх семантичне зіставлення, а також смисловий пошук. Таким чином, замість семантичного зіставлення самих документів з'являється можливість їх порівняння на більш високому рівні абстракції, з відсиланням до концептів онтології, вирішивши тим самим проблеми омонімії і синонімії в текстових джерелах [1].

II. Постановка задачі

Розробити модель, а також алгоритми концептуального індексування документів на основі онтології ПрО та їх семантичного порівняння.

III. Вирішення задачі

Модель концептуального розширення ТД будемо представляти у вигляді графа. Формальна модель

онтології O також може бути представлена у вигляді направлено поміченого графа $G = (V, E)$, де вершини та ребра співвідносяться з кінцевими множинами концептів C та відносин R онтології $O=G(C, R)$. Мітка v вершини V задається функцією $\tau(v)$, яка відображає вершину v у відповідний елемент множини C , $\tau:V \rightarrow C$. Мітка дуги e з множини E задається функцією $\rho(e)$, яка відображає дугу e в елемент множини R . Множина C включає терміни та концепти онтології ПрО, а множина R – відносини, визначені на множині C , наприклад такі як « екземпляром класу» (instance_of), «є підмножиною» (subset_of), «є властивістю» (attribute_of), «є членом групи» (member_of_group). Таким чином, граф $G(C,R)$ може бути інтерпретований як онтологія. У такому графі представлені найбільш важливі для формування специфікації онтології відношення, перш за все відношення гіпонімії (is_a relation), які використовуються у всіх онтологіях. Це транзитивне та несиметричне відношення визначає ієрархічну структуру на множині термінів і концептів онтології, де властивості одиниць вищого рівня ієрархії успадковуються всіма нащадками. Підмножину відносин гіпонімії позначимо R_H , якщо $(a,b) \in R_H$, то b є більш загальним концептом, ніж a . Визначимо підонтологію так, як і підграф: $O_I = G_I(C, R)$ є підонтологія онтології $O = G(C, R)$ (визначається $O_I \subseteq O$), якщо $G_I(C, R)$ є підграф графа $O = G(C, R)$.

Розглянемо алгоритм концептуального індексування тексту на основі онтології ПрО. В результаті застосування алгоритму до ТД отримаємо його уявлення у вигляді підонтології заданої онтології. На вході алгоритму: релевантний ПрО текст t , що підлягає аналізу, і графове представлення онтології $O = G(C, R)$, де $G = (V, E)$. На виході алгоритму: підонтологія $O' = G'(C, R)$, де $G' = (V', E')$. Загальний опис алгоритму концептуального індексування (видобування підонтології з ТД) включає такі кроки:

1. генеруємо з тексту t список L термінів, найбільш релевантних ПрО;
2. виділяємо підмножину V' усіх вершин із множини V , помічених як елементи списку L : $V' = \{v | v \in V \ \& \ \tau(v) \in L\}$;
3. встановлюємо зв'язки між усіма вершинами a та $b \in V'$, які напряду зв'язані в онтології O : if $a, b \in V'$ and $(a, b) \in E$ then $(a, b) \in E'$;