

CHARACTER NOMINATIONS IN ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

(НОМИНАЦИИ ХАРАКТЕРОВ В
ОНТОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ)

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Features of character nominations

- a significant part of meaning is shaped by personal experience;
- their meaning often includes an evaluative component (of greater weight in more peripheral nominations, e.g. *mily* 'nice', *dobry* 'kind', *iskrenny* 'sincere');
- they are often culture-specific

J. Pinto de Lima (1994) Exploring the concept of paradigm
in lexical semantics: an experiment on Portuguese and
German evaluative words

honesto (Port.)

Relevant moral rule:

“Do not keep for yourself, or do not get hold of, that
which does not belong to you”.

ehrlich (Germ.)

Relevant moral rule:

“Always tell the truth about your own behaviour, even if
this may bring you some disadvantage”

Features of character nominations:

- fuzziness of elements constituting their meaning;
- this group of words consists mostly of rows of near-synonyms:
 - they often demonstrate family resemblance (L.Wittgenstein) – every two synonyms in a row have features in common, but no word has all of the features represented together;
 - they are matched with another row of near-synonyms with a different set of distinctive parameters in a different language.

WordNet (Candidness group)

Sincere

- **S:** (adj) **sincere** (open and genuine; not deceitful) *"he was a good man, decent and sincere"; "felt sincere regret that they were leaving"; "sincere friendship"*
- **S:** (adj) **earnest**, **sincere**, **solemn** (characterized by a firm and humorless belief in the validity of your opinions) *"both sides were deeply in earnest, even passionate"; "an entirely sincere and cruel tyrant"; "a film with a solemn social message"*

Frank

- **S:** (adj) **blunt**, **candid**, **forthright**, **frank**, **free-spoken**, **outspoken**, **plainspoken**, **point-blank**, **straight-from-the-shoulder** (characterized by directness in manner or speech; without subtlety or evasion) *"I gave them my candid opinion"; "tell me what you think--and you may just as well be frank"; "it is possible to be outspoken without being rude";*

Candid

- **S:** (adj) **candid**, **open**, **heart-to-heart** (openly straightforward and direct without reserve or secretiveness) *"his candid eyes"; "an open and trusting nature"*

FrameNet (Candidness)

Definition: This frame contains adjectives and nouns that describe the truth or sincerity of communication. These words, analogously to behavior-evaluating words, can apply either to Speakers or to the Messages they produce. They can occur with *about*-PPs expressing Topic.

- Message Message is the communicative content whose truth or sincerity is at issue. This FE does not normally co-occur with the other FEs in this frame. When it does occur, it is normally the External Argument of a predicative use of the TARGET word, or the modified Nominal Head in a prenominal use.
 - Evelyn made some CANDID remarks.
 - Evelyn's remarks were CANDID.

FrameNet (Candidness)

- **Speaker** The Speaker produces the Message, the truth or sincerity of which is at issue. It is normally expressed as the External Argument of predicative uses of the TARGET word, or as the Nominal Head of prenominal uses.
 - *Evelyn was CANDID about the party*
 - *Evelyn is a CANDID person*
- **Topic** The Topic is the subject matter to which the Message pertains. It often occurs without the Message FE in predicative uses of the TARGET word. It is normally expressed as a PP Complement headed by "about".
 - *Evelyn was CANDID about the party*

Behaviour pattern (Yu.Martemianov, G.Dorofeyev)

- a generalised implicative scheme establishing an association between the initial typical situation and the stereotyped behavioural response of a person with this trait of character;
(e.g. for *otkrovenny* ('a frank, candid person')
'when it is not necessary to mention a fact about oneself or say what one is thinking or feeling' -> 'would say something about oneself which puts one at a disadvantage')
- + prototypical ('best') examples of real-life situations and specific behaviour in them
(e.g. *otkrovenny* would say that he or she often acts carelessly)

What is suggested:

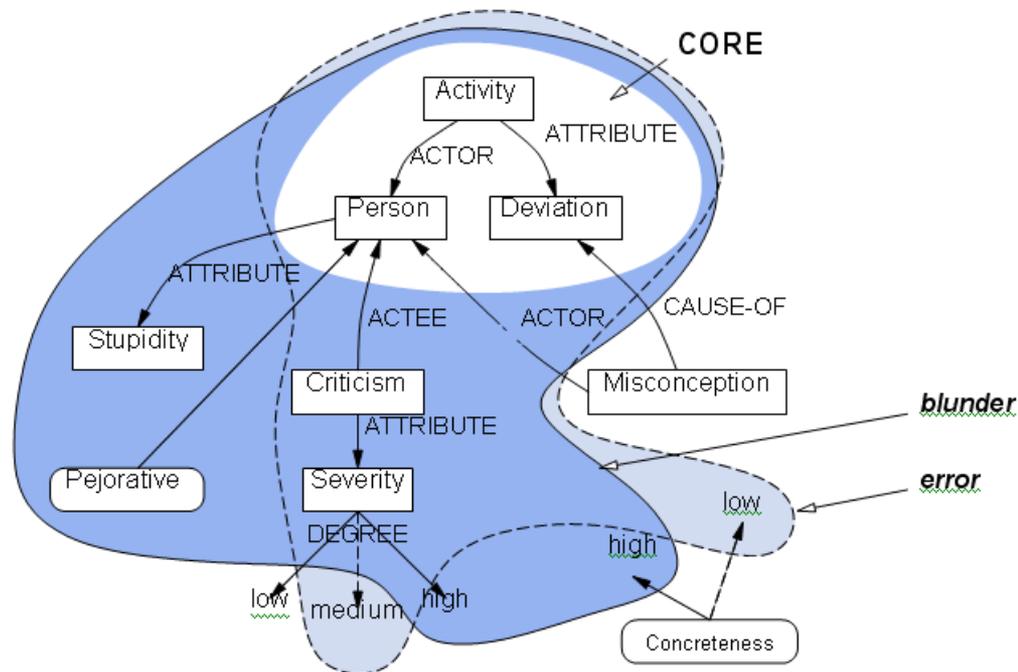
- Character nominations in the ontology should be related to actions (not attributes, or abstract qualities);
- Typical situations and their best examples should be accounted for in the ontology;
- A typical situation can be represented as a list of statements about the general state of affairs related to a possessor of the character trait.

How can this be done?

- precondition and effect ontological properties (MikroKosmos);
- an additional level of representation (Edmonds, Hirst, 2000):
 - conceptual-semantic
 - subconceptual / stylistic
 - syntactic-semantic

Edmonds P., Hirst G. (2000) Reconciling fine-grained knowledge and coarse-grained ontologies in representation of near-synonyms

- The core denotation and some of the peripheral concepts of the cluster of *error* nouns. The two shaded regions show the concepts (and attitudes and styles) that can be conveyed by the words *error* and *blunder* in relation to each other.



Candidness group in Russian:

iskrenny 'sincere'

otkrovenny 'frank, candid'

otkryty 'open'

pryamoi 'straightforward'

pryamolineyny 'straightforward'

- *The aims of comparing were:*
 - *to see what part of meaning is shared by all characteristics (may be ontologised in a concept/concepts)*
 - *to check if distinctions between these near-synonyms can be formulated in terms of features of typical situations.*

Candidness group in Russian: the main action and topic

	<i>iskrenny</i> 'sincere'	<i>otkrovenny</i> 'frank, candid'	<i>otkryty</i> 'open'	<i>pryamoi</i> 'straight- forward'	<i>pryamolineyny</i> 'straight- forward'
X informs Y of Z	+	+	+	+	+
Z corresponds to the real state of things	+	+	+	+	+
(Topic)	information Z is about what X feels and thinks	Z is any negative information about X	Z is any informa tion about X	Z is any information	Z is any information

Candidness group in Russian: shared features

	There is nothing which makes X act this way;	X does not intend to get any personal benefit;	People usually do not tell such things to other people;	X wants Y to know Z
<i>iskrenny</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>otkrovenny</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>otkryty</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>pryamoi</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>pryamolineyny</i>	+	+	+	+

Candidness group in Russian: differences

	There is a behaviour rule which prohibits telling such things to other people	X is aware that he or she is violating a behaviour rule by acting this way	X is aware that he is violating a common-sense rule by acting this way	if Y knows Z, it may lead to negative consequences to X	if Y knows Z, it may lead to negative consequences to other people
<i>iskrenny</i>	-	-	+	(+)	(+)
<i>otkrovenny</i>	-	-	+	+	(+)
<i>otkryty</i>	-	-	+	+	?
<i>pryamoi</i>	+	+	-	+	+
<i>pryamolineyny</i>	+	+	-	(+)	+

Thank you!