

## THE LEXICAL TRACE OF THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY

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Haviger, J., Havigerová, J. M., & Loudová, I. (2014). *Lexikální stopa pojmu rodina. Využití analýzy sítí, frekvenční analýzy a otevřeného kódování pro výzkum implicitních teorií rodiny. [The Lexical Trace of the Concept of Family. The Use of Network Analysis, Frequency Analysis and Open Coding for the Research of Implicit Family Theories]*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus.

The family as a primary group undoubtedly belongs among abundantly frequent concepts but few deal with its lexical trace (see the name of the submitted study). Although the concept of family is widely used both in conventional and professional literature, the survey results on pupils of primary school have pointed out other possibilities of research which undoubtedly lie on the historical (i.e. vertical) axis, but also in synchronic comparison between related languages. Such an approach can very well play a positive role in the present multicultural reality. In this respect, the monograph addresses the current needs of not only communication, but also understanding of different cultures. The goal which the presented monograph deals with is, according to the authors (a mathematician, a psychologist and a linguist-pedagogue) "to reconstruct and analyse current lexical traces of the term family" (p. 9). The authors develop and operationalize the goal into partial research questions, which may be summarized into these three: Which unique terms are used by the respondents when describing the phenomenon of family? In what ways do the terms group when entered into a network diagram? Which concepts are central to the description of the category of family? Based on the theoretical and research material, they discuss and interpret the current implicit conception of family.

Before the research itself, the authors present a summary of current knowledge of the phenomenon of family. Contrary to usual expectations, they also expand the theoretical knowledge with the etymology of the term family. Based on lexical analysis of the meanings, professional definitions, synonyms and professional contexts of the term family, the authors of the publication extract (on page 34) 12 theoretically anticipated fundamental attributes of this concept, dividing them into two groups: internal attributes (they capture the internal essence and determine the characteristics of the clusters/formation called family) and external attributes (they reflect the relationship of a family clusters to the units of higher order, such as community, society and culture). From this page on, the reader is immersed in the theoretical background of implicit theories and the theory of prototypes which the authors encompass as the theoretical base of the research study.

In the chapter entitled "Modus", the authors describe six predominantly original methods which they have long been using for research of implicit theories. This publication presents the results

obtained by the method of free testimony (short essay). The research collection consisted of testimonies obtained from respondents from among students of pedagogy and teachers in practice. From this point, the reader is immersed in the current of research that is carried out with scientific thoroughness. Using an exemplary application of the principle of method triangulation, the authors present the process and the results of three different types of analyses.

From the first moment, the reader may capture a change in the concept of the research, as in this publication, unlike a vast majority of research in the field of pedagogy and psychology, the basic analysis unit of the research is the word. This also corresponds with the unusual method of data processing in which the authors first carry out the lemmatization, disambiguation and filtering of synsemantic words. The result of this process is not 229 testimonies, but 2,517 lemmas which are further analyzed in three different procedures. Frequency analysis brings to the reader an overview of the most used words and phrases in a breakdown by word-classes, each of which brings a unique perspective on the phenomenon of the family from the perspective of the respondents. For example, the verbs by their nature represent the activities and actions implicitly associated with the phenomenon of the family. The most frequently detected verbs are: help, create, live, support, include, educate, unite, help, share. The subsequent analysis suggests that the verb lexical trace highlights emotional attribute since the actions most strongly represented by verbs are connected with experiencing (e.g. love, trust, feeling safe, relying on each other, bonding people through love, giving love, needing love, supporting, helping to emotionally cope, growing up pleasantly, needing someone). Text network analysis provides a completely original perspective on lexical data and implicit theories hidden in them. The authors work with networks generated for individual word-classes and their combinations. They work with professional concepts of graph theory (like network vertex, network edge, the average network level, network density, network modularity, etc.) and these formal characteristics provide them with a framework to reveal other properties of the implicit concept of family. For example, page 60 states: "The structure of words occurring together with more respondents was generated by using the modularity for the analysis of clusters of words that appear together with multiple respondents. The first notion trace identified is a group of nouns whose prototypes are the words child, parent, mother, father, household. The concept of the family is associated with attributes of reproduction, structure and location. From the functional perspective, it is mostly connected with biological reproduction."

Furthermore, the authors present the process and results of the categorization of the statements using open coding. Ten unique codes were detected which represent the implicit perception of family.

What is therefore the current prevailing implicit conception of family? Based on the results obtained, the authors conclude that the current implicit theories of family (of teachers) relate to the following attributes: humanity – a family consists of people; nuclearity – the core of a family is formed by the mother, father and child; genocentricity – genetic relatedness is at the forefront as they usually are genetic relatives of the child; pedocentrism – the central member and a sine qua non condition for the designation of a group as a family is the existence of a child as the family is almost as a rule fundamentally defined in terms of the child (e.g. family includes such persons which are viewed as its members and recognize the child, which stands at the centre of the group); egocentrism – a family is defined relative to the ego (e.g., as "my relatives"), the definition reflects own experience (in what grouping I grew up, who was presented under the topic of family in our home) and own wishes



(I'd like to have a family like this), which especially mirrors the medialized contents; interdependence – a family consists of people who are connected to each other through close mutual relations; territoriality – a family is a coexistence of people taking place within a limited space, to which a strong emotional relationship develops over time (a home, a place where individuals like to return), this area is usually the property of one or more members of the family (room, apartment, house, garden), or it can extend to larger territorial units where the mutually shared space is situated (village, natural site, region, country); presentness (the presence and the presenting of) – we perceive as family members those who physically are in the family, or who are presented (e.g., when we are in connection with them via information technology, letters, photos, personal items, representative symbols). These eight attributes form, according to the authors, the eight-dimensional area (grid), which directs the thoughts on the family in the observed teachers. In the terminology of George Kelly (1953), it is the eight personal constructs that represent the eight main characteristics of a family which underpin the definition and evaluation of the families of our contemporaries.

The submitted publication, as previously stated, deals with one of the current topics of the life of the society, with the discourse about the current family, its essence, transformations and other aspects of its existence. The core benefit of the monograph, apart from the presentation of serious factual research findings, also lies in the original multidisciplinary take on research. Overall, the publication can be appreciated as distinctive and novel, providing a scientifically thorough and creative insight into our thinking about what is and what is not a family. The publication is a source of valuable knowledge for practitioners of pedagogy, psychology and other social science disciplines and also an inspiration for the students of doctoral studies in these areas.

Of course, the reader will be most interested in graphic representations of the selected context (see the following figure). Here, it is somewhat shown that by a relatively small representation that corresponds to the size of the pages in the publication, the picture is somewhat difficult to understand. But this really is the only significant error which can be easily overlooked in this case. For illustration, yet another picture is given, namely Figure 2 The Concept of Lexical Trace of the Concept of Family.

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