The concept of DEATH in modern English-speaking discourse: a linguosynergetic perspective

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The article deals with the framework of the concept DEATH as a fractal conceptual structure realized in English-speaking discourse. We focused on its logical and structural dimensions lexicalized in modern English. What is more, we built a lexical-semantic field of the name of the concept DEATH which turned out to be nonlinear, open, and capable of self-similarity in different contexts. Besides, we proposed a lingual network model of the concept DEATH. This model has a fractal arrangement on the principle of embedding one component into another. The meaning of a separate schema (identification, thing, action, comparison, and possession) of the concept DEATH contains the meanings of all other schemas, summarizing or predicting them. Hence, the lingual network of the concept DEATH is self-similar, complex, dynamic, and recursive. This paper is a contribution to the existing works on linguosynergetic analysis of verbalized concepts.

Keywords: *concept, componential analysis, fractal, frame, lexical and semantic field, basic propositional schemas, lingual network model*

> The concept of death has a use for the living, while death itself has no use for anything. All we can say about death is that it is either real or it is not real. If it is real, then the end of one's life is a simple termination… For those who think it is not real, death is a door to another life.
>
> JEFF MASON

1. Introduction

It is generally recognized that being a *homo communicans* (Michał Drożdż 2009) every person has his/her own conceptual framework of the world. This framework is made of concepts that reflect "human's knowledge of the world, the image of the world, which in turn reflects the human's vision and perception of reality" (Davydyuk & Panasenko 2016: 13). The latter is not homogeneous but is made up of universal elements. They, therefore, depend on the linguocultural world perception and are clarified by human's upbringing level, social status, religious confession, cultural belonging, personal qualities, even mood, health, and life conditions (Маслова 2005). Such world perception differences catch the eye when it comes to difficulties of understanding universal concepts (such as DEATH, LOVE, GOD), together with explicating which relevant properties of personal creative potential come out in the process of mental model construction and discourse production.

The concept of DEATH is a phenomenon that has always interested people. It is traditionally defined by scientists as a natural and inevitable final stage of an individual's existence (Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy). Such a definition might seem ideal if the

concept of DEATH were not abstract, and each individual did not understand it in his/her own way, trying to explain it.

For any scientific inquiry, the concept of DEATH represents a challenge. Needless to say that it has almost become a taboo issue in a death-denying society (Zimmerman 2007). It has been researched by scientists as one of the most important universal theosophical mental formations with abstract semantics in the conceptual spaces of different languages. Prikhodko and Uberman analyzed the concept of DEATH from the perspective of linguoculturology and structured it in the form of a frame to highlight the most important characteristics of its internal structure (Prikhodko 2017; Uberman 2018). Janus and van Ecker explored various aspects of its verbalization in order to explain its cognitive basis by language means (Janus 2014; van Ecker 2017). Bleyen et al. (2009) provided significant insight into the phenomenon of DEATH and made much effort to conceptualize it. Taking into account its pivotal role in understanding the death phenomenon as a cogent part of life it is surprising that scholars have not agreed upon a standardized way of its representation yet. So far, this issue needs serious consideration.

The aim of the present study is two-fold. First, it is an attempt to thoroughly analyze the theoretical aspects of the concept DEATH lexicalized in modern English. The second part of the study is applied in nature. It is concerned with the potential application of the concept theory in linguosynergetics and is aimed at building a lingual network model of the concept DEATH, which would enable the explanation of the death phenomenon in the English-language worldview based on linguistic facts.

2. Materials and methods

The theoretical basis of this research is stated within cognitive linguistics (Allwood 2006; De Beaugrande 2004; Dirven 2005; The Cambridge handbook of cognitive linguistics 2017), cognitive semantics (Davydyuk & Panasenko 2016; Kövecses 2017a; 2017b; 2018; Morozova 2017; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera Masegosa 2014, Zhabotynska 2018), and linguistic synergetics (Dombrovan 2018; Evans 2007; Köhler 1993; Tatsenko 2020).

In agreement with the theoretical framework and our objectives, we systematized different approaches to defining the 'concept', identified the name of the concept DEATH, analyzed lexicographic definitions of the name of the concept DEATH, distinguished its common and different lexical meanings, and gave the author's definition to the name of the concept DEATH.

Subsequently, we constructed a lexical-semantic field of the name of the concept DEATH and analyzed it from the perspective of its fractal structure. Further, we identified logical predicates of the denotative meaning of the lexeme *death*, grouped them in accordance with basic propositional schemas, built a lingual network model of the concept DEATH in modern American English-speaking discourse, and made up a conclusion about the content of the concept under study from linguosynergetic perspective.

While analyzing the semantics of the name of the concept DEATH, we used the methods of conceptual, functional, semantic, introspective, and rational analyses, together with conceptual networks construction. The latter is a comprehensive conceptual analysis methodology called "the semantics of lingual networks" (SLN) (Zhabotynska 2013). Building the networks at any conceptual level employs a universal tool – the limited set of propositions that belong to the five abstract basic frames, where the most fundamental categories of thought are arranged according to the way humans perceive things of the experiential world. These

frames – the Thing Frame, the Action Frame, the Possession Frame, the Identification Frame, and the Comparison Frame – include a limited number of most abstract propositional schemas whose type is defined by the frame they belong to (ibid.:80-88). This network model demonstrates the denotative meaning as information activated by a word in mind which is identified with the content of the analogous concept.

The material is based upon lexicographic dictionaries of various types since lexical systems in different dictionaries reflect the fragment features of the linguistic worldview, underlying the concept DEATH. To build a conceptual network of the concept DEATH with the identification of related logical predicates (associated with *death*), we analyzed 500 discourse examples (randomly selected concordances) presenting the noun *death* in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The latter contains more than 520 million words of texts from a wide range of genres (spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic) and is regularly supplemented and updated with new texts. The random sampling approach is applied to make the reconstruction of the concept DEATH maximally objective. For reasons of space, the article is narrowed down to displaying only the brightest discourse examples of the word *death*.

3. Literature overview

Currently, linguists claim that discourse production and understanding are influenced not by natural situations as such, but by their abstract representations in speakers' minds. Accordingly, there is a mental mechanism, which filters through infinite lists of features of real-life events and situations in order to sort out those relevant for ongoing communication (Morozova 2017: 256). These functional and varying versions of the world in human minds are referred to as 'cognitive models' (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera Masegosa 2014). Their nature and functions encourage a great amount of linguistic research. We can refer to many critical outlines of such variations as domains, frames, idealized cognitive models, image schemas, propositional models, and their combinations (Cienki 2007; Kövecses 2017b).

A detailed classification of the issue is made by Morozova (2017) who distinguishes 'cultural' and 'situational' cognitive models. In her perspective, cultural cognitive models are static. They are kept in the long-term memory, organizing shared knowledge of different events, things, or situations. In comparison with cultural cognitive models, situational cognitive models are considered to be dynamic. They express pertinent properties of situations and systematically organize them. Situational cognitive models are instantiations of cultural cognitive models, representing only their certain parts, but characterizing them in more detail and conjuring richer associations. Situational cognitive models are not 'prefabricated' mental entities kept in the memory: they are set up only when the need for them arises (Morozova 2017: 256-257).

In East-European linguistics, cognitive models are known as 'concepts' (Маслова 2004; Попова & Стернин 2007; Приходько 2017; Prihodko & Prykhodchenko 2018). Concepts are rather broad mental entities, which form the worldview image and have rational, abstract, emotional, personal, and other aspects, embracing cognitive models of all ranks (primary-, low-, and high-level). They include the features of both cultural and situational cognitive models, as we cannot utterly distinguish between socially shared knowledge and its instantiations in discourse production or personal mental models (Tatsenko 2020: 395).

Therefore, a concept is a dynamic cognitive model integrating both socially shared and personal knowledge.

The recent taxonomy of concepts as broad conceptual entities is given by Davydyuk & Panasenko (2016) who divide them into several sorts by the type of knowledge, content, and the degree of abstraction: 1) specific sensory image (the image of a particular object or phenomenon in our knowledge); 2) notion (generalized sensory images of different objects and phenomena); 3) scheme (mental conception of an object or phenomenon, which has a spacecharacter contour); 4) concept (a concept that holds the most common, essential features of an object or phenomenon, its objectively constructed logical characteristics); 5) prototype (categorical concept, which gives an idea of the typical member of a certain category); 6) propositional structure (model of specific areas of our experience, in which elements (arguments and basic predicate, linking these arguments) are distinguished, their characteristics are submitted and links between them are pointed out); 7) frame (multi-concept, which is a "package" of information, knowledge about stereotypical situation); 8) scenario or scripts (dynamic frame which is a sequence of steps, episodes extended in time); 9) gestalt (conceptual structure, complete image that combines the sensual and rational components in their unity and integrity) (ibid.: 10).

Identified with information activated by a word in human cognition, the concept can be reflected by matrix and network models arranged through domains as wide background contexts (Croft & Cruse 2004; Zhabotynska 2009). The difference between matrix and network models lies in the fact that the former unfolds solely the domains nomenclature while the latter reconstructs specific propositional links between them (Zhabotynska 2013).

The matrix model is commonly demonstrated by the componential analysis of word definitions (as activators of conceptual information accumulated in the human mind). In particular, integral and differential semes make a structurally organized group of domains (which are divided into basic and non-basic ones) revealing the whole concept within the analyzed word (Langacker 2008). The network model demonstrates the denotative meaning as information initiated by a word in mind which is identified with the content of the analogous concept. For this purpose, we can use a universal methodology of conceptual analysis "the semantics of lingual networks" (SLN) developed by Zhabotynska (2013: 59-61). It is generated by abstract propositional schemas of five basic frames traced in the meanings and forms of language units functioning in discourse.

This viewpoint is consistent with synergetics as a special kind of theoretical system modelling, which is concerned with the treatment of spontaneous rise and development of systems and structures (Köhler 1993: 41). Köhler (ibid.) claims that, like other self-organizing systems, language is characterized by cooperative and competitive processes which, together with the external forces of biology, psychology, physics, etc., make the dynamics of the system. This field of academic research promoted the advances of linguistic synergetics as a new interdisciplinary approach to language and discourse subdivided into text synergetics, discourse synergetics, idiolect synergetics, etc. (Dombrovan 2018: 29). The main task of linguistic synergetics is to reveal, describe, and explain the mechanism of the inner dynamic structure of a language using research principles of synergetics as a paradigm of complexity (ibid.: 32). Cognitive linguistic synergetics that describes how language interacts with cognitive models and their self-organizing properties is added to this list (Tatsenko 2020).

The synergetics perspective postulates that all the systems possess a fundamental feature – fractality. The term 'fractal' (from the Latin adjective *fractus* – 'broken' or 'fragmented' and the Latin verb *frangere* – 'to break', 'to create irregular fragments') was

introduced into science by Benoit Mandelbrot, the creator of the fractal geometry of nature, to denote a family of self-similar (scaling) shapes (Mandelbrot 1982). The main feature of fractals is their self-similarity (scaling), i.e. when a part is structurally similar to the whole or exhibits invariance (Dombrovan 2018: 37). In other words, the fractal is a structure consisting of parts that resemble the whole in some sense.

Invariant nature (fundamental property of geometric regularity) characterizes many structures of the material world. It is a special form of symmetry with its integrity fragments being structurally similar. Fractal dimension gives a very compact way of describing objects and processes. Fractal is a transitional quasi-stable condition of a system, characterized by chaotic and unstable nature, which gradually evolves into a stable orderly whole. This network formation exists among self-similar objects and endlessly repeats itself at different levels (Tatsenko 2016: 79). Using fractal ideas, we are trying to answer the question of how the informative system of thought can be structured being the basis of linguistic signs of different levels (from words to texts). It is assumed that the basic Thing Frame ("SB/STH is THAT MANY-quantity", "SB/STH is SUCH-quality", "SB/STH exists SO-mode of being", "SB/STH is (exists) THERE-place", "SB/STH exists THEN-time") has fractal properties, together with the complex pattern where the Thing Frame is integrated into the Identification and the Possession Frames (ibid.: 81). What is more, fractality is manifested at the level of content and at the level of its presentation. In the first case, the idea is repeated, and in the second one – the form of its presentation.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. *Componential analysis of the name of the concept DEATH*

We propose the idea that a concept has interconnected dimensions: logical, identifying, and structural (Tatsenko 2020). The logical dimension should be scrutinized by way of semantic analysis that is used in structural semantics and based on vocabulary definitions through the differentiation of semes (the units of meaning). It is equated to the meaning activated by a word in mind and can be visualized through the matrix concept model. The latter is arranged via domains as broad background contexts giving the shades of conceptual meaning. The matrix concept model is gained through the methodology of componential analysis of the lexical and semantic field of the name of the concept. The latter is a lexical item, which most fully and adequately conveys its meaning and is a dominant of a synonymic row.

Determining the dominant of a synonymic row is viewed as follows: we need to analyze the synonymic rows representing the concept DEATH in different dictionaries of synonyms and highlight the word that is semantically simple, stylistically neutral, lexically compatible, and, as a consequence, the most commonly used.

Having analyzed synonymic rows of the concept DEATH in five dictionaries under study, we concluded that they are almost identical qualitatively, quantitatively, and structurally. **Synonyms**: *death, afterlife, annihilation, bereavement, casualty, cessation, curtains, darkness, decease, demise, departure, destruction, dissolution, downfall, dying, end, ending, eradication, euthanasia, exit, expiration, extermination, extinction, fatality, finis, finish, grave, heaven, loss, mortality, necrosis, obliteration, oblivion, paradise, parting, passing, quietus, release, repose, ruin, ruination, silence, sleep, termination, tomb, eternal rest, grim reaper, passing over* (Thesaurus.com); **Synonyms**: *death, demise, doom, rest, decease, dying,*

curtains, fate, expiration, destruction, cessation, end, finale (Synonymy online: English synonym dictionary); **Synonyms**: *death, dying, demise, bereavement, end, passing, release, loss, departure, curtains, cessation, expiration, decease, quietus* (Collins free online dictionary and thesaurus); **Synonyms**: *death, departure, demise, decease, dissolution, mortality, fall, failure, termination, cessation, expiration, release, exit* (Complete dictionary of synonyms and antonyms); **Synonyms**: *death, decease, demise, dying, end, passing, passing away, passing on, loss of life, expiry, expiration, departure from life, final exit, eternal rest, end, finish, cessation, termination, extinction, extinguishing, collapse, ruin, ruination, destruction, extermination, eradication, annihilation, obliteration, extirpation* (Lexico Oxford dictionary).

Further, we identified the same lexemes in each of the synonymic rows and assumed that the generalized synonymic row of the concept DEATH has the following form: ***death*** (absolute)*, **decease*** (absolute, formal, archaic), ***demise*** (absolute, formal), ***dying*** (stylistic), ***cessation*** (contextual, formal), ***end*** (contextual), and ***expiration*** (contextual). As we can see from the synonymic row, there are absolute synonyms of the lexeme *death* (***decease*** = a person's death, ***demise*** = a person's death), which could be viewed as dominants but the formal style of their usage makes this impossible. It is obvious that the dominant and at the same time the name of the concept DEATH is the lexeme *death* as stylistically neutral, semantically simple, and endowed with the most generalized meaning in the synonymic row.

In what follows, with the help of componential analysis, we analyzed the content of the lexeme *death* in various English dictionaries: explanatory, encyclopedic, synonymic, etymological, and thesauri. We hold the view that such dictionaries present the linguistic essence of verbal representation of the concept.

The componential analysis of a significative meaning of the word *death* in different dictionaries allows us to distinguish the semes of the name of the concept DEATH:

1) Old English dea "total cessation of life, act or fact of dying, state of being dead; cause of death", from Proto-Germanic * dauthuz, from verbal stem * dau-, which is perhaps from PIE root * dheu- "to die", with Proto-Germanic * -thuz suffix indicating "act, process, condition" (Online etymology dictionary);

2) the cessation of all vital functions of the body (Medical dictionary);

3) the permanent cessation of physical and mental processes in an organism (APA dictionary of psychology);

4) the degeneration or disintegration of a biological cell (APA dictionary of psychology);

5) the state of being dead (= of no longer living) (TransLegal dictionary);

6) the permanent cessation of all biological functions that sustain a living organism (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia);

7) the irreversible cessation of all vital functions especially as indicated by permanent stoppage of the heart, respiration, and brain activity, the end of life (Merriam-Webster Dictionary);

8) the act of ceasing to exist (Merriam-Webster Dictionary);

9) something that is the cause of one's ultimate failure or loss of life (Merriam-Webster Dictionary);

10) an occasion when someone dies (Maccmillan dictionary);

11) the time when something ends or the fact that it ends (Maccmillan dictionary);

12) the end of the life of a person or animal (Longman dictionary of contemporary English online);

13) a particular case when someone dies (Longman dictionary of contemporary English online);

14) end of life (Thesaurus.com.).

According to the results of the definition analysis, we have singled out common and differential semes of the lexical meaning of the word *death*, as exhibited in Table 1.

Table 1. Common and differential semes of the lexical meaning of the word *death*

Different semes	**Common semes** (subdivided into synonymous groups with the 'archiseme' featured in every cluster)		
	'way of death'	**'object of death'**	**'specific clarification of object'**
total	cessation (5)	organism	biological functions
permanent	end (5)	biological cell	vital functions
irreversible	being dead (3)	life/living	heartbeat/brain
ultimate	die (2)	one/someone	activity/breathing
state	stoppage	person	heart/respiration/brain activity
act	failure/loss	animal	physical/mental processes
fact	degeneration/	↓	↓
cause	disintegration	organism	biological functions
occasion	↓		
time	cessation		

The componential analysis of the name of the concept DEATH has proved that lexicographers give a systematic definition of the lexeme *death* with minimization of features that are part of the word. They interpret the word *death* as *an irreversible, final action or state in which all life functions of an organism cease, cessation of physical and mental processes, disintegration of a biological cell, end of life, non-existence, and loss of life for certain reasons or cases in time*. We have narrowed the meaning of the word with the help of componential analysis by limiting the semantic features of the lexeme *death*. As a result, in our author's interpretation, the name of the concept DEATH has the following conceptual basis: *total permanent irreversible ultimate cessation of organism's biological functions due to some cause or occasion in time*.

4.2. The lexical-semantic field of the concept DEATH

According to the method of conceptual analysis, the next stage of our study consists of building lexical and semantic field, further LSF, of the name of the concept DEATH. We have compiled the lists of synonyms for each of the significant meanings of the lexeme *death* with their subsequent reduction into a matrix. Let us consider it on the example of the differential seme *total*. We have identified the same lexemes in each of the synonymic rows of diversified lexicographic sources and have assumed that the generalized synonymic row of the lexeme *total* has the following form: *absolute, full, unconditional*. In this manner, having analyzed the significant lexical meaning of the word *death*, we obtained a list of synonyms that consists of 26 lexemes.

The next step is to build a matrix and analyze it by the method of semantic factors to obtain the number of seme coincidences. Let us consider it on the example of the lexeme *absolute*. Its definitions "not qualified or diminished in any way; total", "existing in reality or

as a matter of fact" have two coincidences with the significant meaning of the lexeme *death.* It should be noted that not every LSF presented in explanatory dictionaries is conceptual and marked by linguistic and cultural peculiarities, and, therefore, has a serious significance for representing the concept. More details are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Matrix of lexical and semantic variants based on lexicographic data

Synonyms \ Semes	total	permanent	irreversible	ultimate	state	act	fact	cessation	organism	biological function	cause	occasion	time
absolute	+			+		+	+						
full													
unconditional													
enduring		+											
lasting													+
conclusion						+					+		
closure					+	+							
closing						+							
end					+	+	+	+					+
ending								+					
finish													
finishing													
irrevocable			+										
last													+
final				+									
living					+	+	+		+				
animal									+				
creature													
being										+			
reality					+		+						
time													
moment													+
purpose													
use													
event												+	
reason											+		

Having systematized the data of the table based on quantitative indicators we assume that the most numerous lexemes make the core of LSF. The received data give us grounds to conclude that LSF of the name of the concept DEATH is as follows in Figure 1.

Figure 1: LSF of the name of the concept DEATH
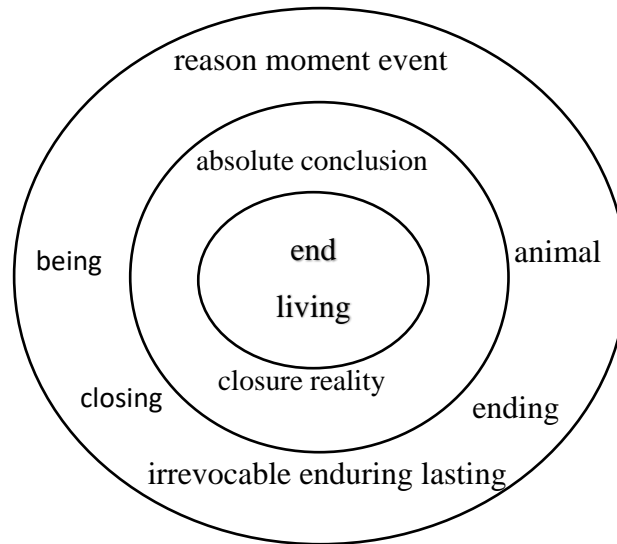
The core is **end** and **living**. The peri-nuclear zone includes **absolute, conclusion, closure,** and **reality**. The periphery consists of **being, animal, reason, moment, event, irrevocable, enduring, lasting, closing,** and **ending**.

As we can see, English speakers associate the name of the concept DEATH with the end of existence. In our opinion, the lexeme interpretation in the perinuclear and peripheral zones should be carried out with caution to avoid giving them a subjective and evaluative connotative meaning. Thus, according to lexicographic sources, the conceptual basis of the name of the concept DEATH has the following meaning: *the end of living* associated with *absolute conclusion* and *closure of reality* which concerns any *being* or *animal* and is accompanied with such attributes of *reason, event,* and *moment* as *irrevocable, enduring, last, final, ending,* and *closing*.

The next stage of our research is to demonstrate the fractal structure of LSF of the concept DEATH, that is, its nonlinearity, openness, and capability of self-similarity in different contexts (Tatsenko 2018: 182). The analysis of common semes in the definitions of the word *death* indicates different microfields for the common LSF, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: LSF of the name of the concept DEATH

reason of cessation of organism's biological functions	something that is the cause of one's ultimate failure or loss of life (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); an occasion when someone dies; the time when something ends or the fact that it ends (Maccmillan dictionary); the end of the life of a person or animal; a particular case when someone dies (Longman dictionary); the end of life (Thesaurus.com).

consequence of cessation of organism's biological functions	Old English dea "total cessation of life, act or fact of dying, state of being dead; cause of death", from Proto-Germanic *dauthuz, from verbal stem *dau-, which is perhaps from PIE root *dheu- "to die", with Proto-Germanic *-thuz suffix indicating "act, process, condition" (Online etymology dictionary); the <u>degeneration or disintegration</u> of a biological cell (APA dictionary of psychology); the state of being <u>dead</u> (= of no longer living); (TransLegal dictionary); the act of <u>ceasing to exist</u> (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).
attributives of cessation of organism's biological functions	the cessation of <u>all vital</u> functions of the body including the heartbeat, brain activity (including the brain stem), and breathing (Medical dictionary); the <u>permanent</u> cessation of physical and mental processes in an organism (APA dictionary of psychology); the <u>permanent</u> cessation of all <u>biological functions</u> that sustain a living <u>organism</u> (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia); the <u>irreversible cessation of all vital functions especially as indicated by a permanent stoppage of the heart, respiration, and brain activity</u>, the end of life (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

The next stage is to analyze the content of the lexemes *reason, consequence,* and *attributive* in various English dictionaries.

Reason: 1) a fact or situation which explains why it happens or what causes it to happen, 2) evidence for your belief or a definite cause of your feelings (Collins free online dictionary and thesaurus); 3) the thing that makes something intelligible, 4) the power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking especially in an orderly rational way (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); 5) a cause, explanation or justification for an action or event (Oxford learner's dictionary).

Consequence: 1) the result or effect of something (Collins free online dictionary and thesaurus); 2) a conclusion derived through logic, 3) following from a set of conditions, 4) social importance (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); 5) unwelcome or unpleasant result or effect, 6) importance or relevance, 7) social distinction (Oxford learner's dictionary); 8) a bad result (Cambridge dictionary).

Attributive: 1) relative to an understood domain, 2) modifying a noun (Collins free online dictionary and thesaurus); 3) from Latin *attribute* "add to" (Oxford learner's dictionary).

Now we can state that the componential analysis of the significant meaning of the lexeme *death* (the meaning of its microfields: lexemes *reason, consequence, attributive* with the separation of several semes of their LSFs) clearly illustrates the fractal structure of LSF of the name of the concept DEATH, as shown in Figure 2. The latter manifests that the form and the meaning of the concept DEATH repeat themselves at different LSFs: 1) *explanation, justification, comprehending* = something that is the <u>cause</u> of one's ultimate failure or loss of life; an <u>occasion</u> when someone <u>dies</u>; the <u>time</u> when something <u>ends</u> or the <u>fact</u> that it <u>ends</u>, etc.; 2) *bad, unwelcome, unpleasant result; social importance* = total <u>cessation of life</u>, state of being <u>dead</u>; the <u>degeneration or disintegration</u> of a biological cell; the act of <u>ceasing to exist</u>, etc.; 3) *modifying, adding, relative* = the <u>permanent</u> cessation of physical and mental processes in an organism; the <u>irreversible</u> <u>cessation of all vital functions especially as indicated by a permanent stoppage of the heart, respiration, and brain activity</u>, the end of life.

Following the fractal theory by Mendelson and Blumenthal (2002), we explain the complexity and dynamism of fractal structure by its belonging to synergetic systems. It means that fractal itself doesn't need any extra space, it is organized and exists due to self-movement. Consequently, it is a self-organized system that can be entered and evolved at any point.

You may argue that every point doesn't clearly repeat itself and for some people, the concept of DEATH can be different from the original table. But, in a linguosynergetic perspective, a part isn't an exact copy of the whole. On the other hand, each part is a source of eternal variants of the realization of the concept under discussion. In other words, running across any part of the concept DEATH, the vast English-speaking majority of people will mentally reconstruct the whole concept according to the model below (fully or partially).

Figure 2: The fractal model of LSF of the concept DEATH
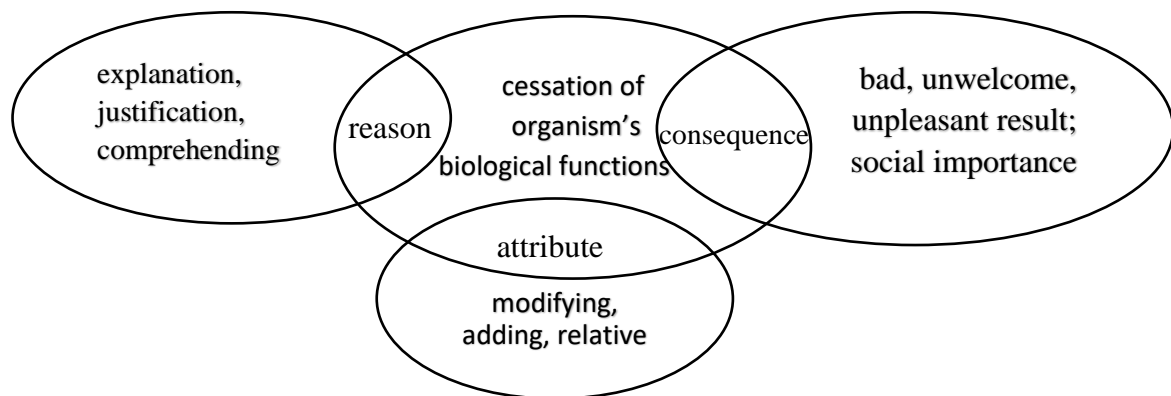
The fractal structure of the LSF of the concept DEATH allows us to analyze its functioning in English literary discourse that is the representation and instantiation of its semantic components. We have selected three stories of different literary periods and genres – "Hop Frog" by Edgar Allan Poe (1849), "The School" by Donald Barthelme (1981), and "Paper Menagerie" by Ken Liu (2011) – which are considered outstanding in terms of the presence of death themes. The results of this research stage are presented in Tables 4-6 and Figures 3-5.

Table 4: LSF of the concept DEATH in the story "Hop Frog" by Edgar Allan Poe

reason of becoming corpses, mass	Owing to the high combustibility of both the flax and the tar to which it adhered, the dwarf had scarcely made an end of his brief speech before the work of <u>vengeance</u> was complete (Poe: 8).
consequences of becoming corpses, mass	...who gazed at them from below, <u>horror-stricken</u>, and <u>without the power</u> to render them the slightest assistance(Poe: 8).
attributive of corpses, mass	The eight corpses swung in their chains, a <u>fetid, blackened, hideous</u>, and <u>indistinguishable</u> mass(Poe: 9).

Figure 3: The fractal model of LSF of the concept DEATH in the story "Hop Frog" by Edgar Allan Poe
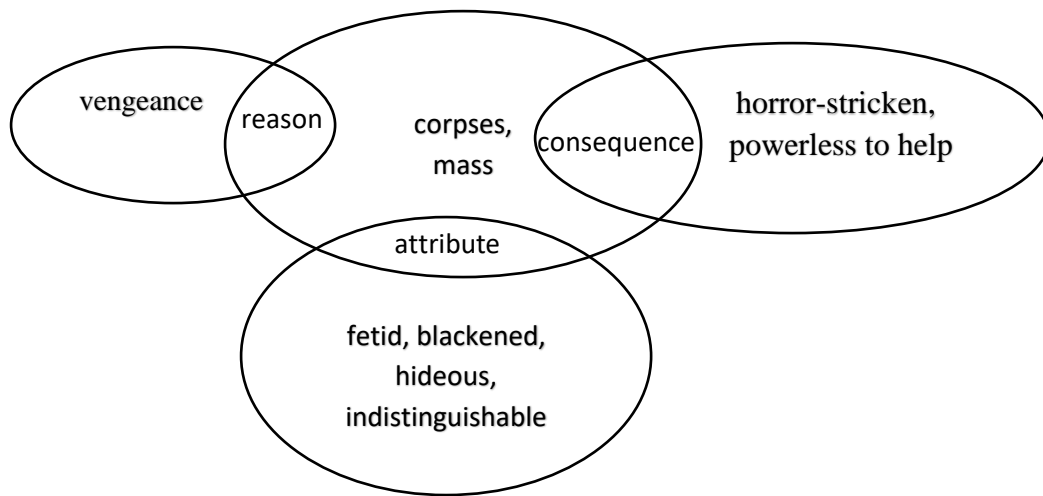

Table 5: LSF of the concept DEATH in the story "The School" by Donald Barthelme

reason of a person's absence	There's a court case coming out of that, the parents are claiming that the beams were poorly stacked (Barthelme:1).
consequences of a person's absence	The tragedy occurred when Matthew Wein and Tony Mavrogordo were playing over where they're excavating for the new federal office building (Barthelme:1).
attributive of a person's absence	It's been a strange year (Barthelme:1).

Figure 4: The fractal model of LSF of the concept DEATH in the story "The School" by Donald Barthelme
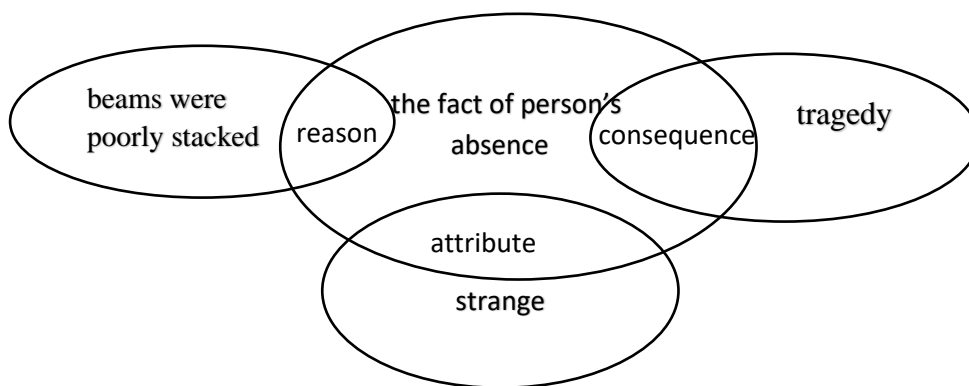
Table 6: LSF of the concept DEATH in the story "Paper Menagerie" by Ken Liu

reason of a person's absence	... <u>cancer</u> had spread far beyond the limits of surgery (Liu: 1).
consequences of a person's absence	I reached out to touch her hand because I thought that was what I was supposed to do. I <u>was relieved</u>. I was already thinking about the flight back, and the bright California sunshine (Liu: 1). "I don't know anything about the Chinese calendar," I said. "Just <u>rest,</u> Mom (Liu: 1)." She died when my plane was somewhere over Nevada (Liu: 1).
attributive of a person's absence	Her voice was very <u>weak...</u> (Liu: 1). Why won't you talk to me, son? The pain makes it <u>hard</u> to write (Liu: 1).

Figure 5: The fractal model of LSF of the concept DEATH in the story "Paper Menagerie" by Ken Liu
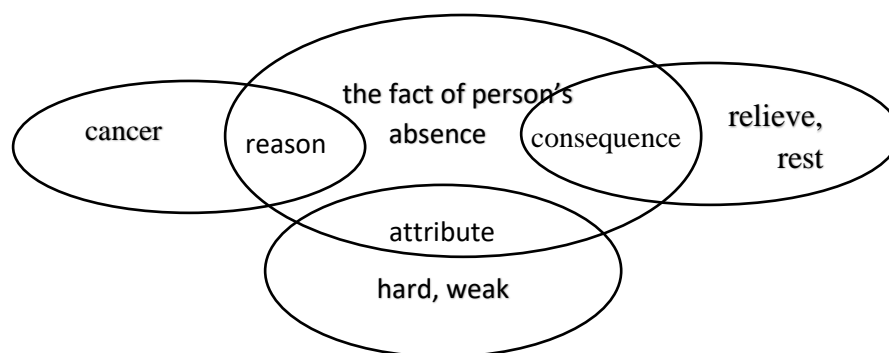
Having analyzed the stories, we noticed that the fractal structure of LSF of the concept DEATH is manifested at the level of content (repeated theme) and the level of its reflection (a repeated form of information presentation). In other words, in all three stories, we observe the implementation of LSF of the concept DEATH: we can clearly identify the causes of death, its symptoms, and analyze the consequences for others even in case they are implicit. Thus, the fractal semantic structure groups possible meanings around a semantic invariant: keeps the possible meanings of one concept within certain discursive integrity.

From our perspective, the model of LSF fully reflects the logical dimension of the concept DEATH. The functioning of its structural dimension in discourse should be analyzed through the methodology of "the semantics of lingual networks" (SLN) developed by Zhabotynska (2013; 2018; 2020) for conceptual analysis of linguistic meanings.

Conceptual structures that arrange the meanings of linguistic expressions are constituted by basic propositional schemas (BPS), which represent the most abstract conceptual categories and their relations. The BPSs are thematically grouped into five types: Being, Action, Possession, Identification, and Comparison Schemas (Frames) (Zhabotynska & Plakhotniuk 2020: 96-97).

Being Schemas include the quantitative (X is THAT MANY-Qn), qualitative (X is SUCH-Ql), locative (X exist THERE / LC-locative), temporative (X exists THEN / TM-temporative), and mode of being (X exists SO / MD-mode) schemas.

Action Schemas comprise the state / process (AG-agent acts), contact (AG-agent acts upon PT-patient / AF-affected), and causation (CR-causer makes FT-factitive) schemas.

Possession Schemas are represented by the part-whole (WH-whole has PR-part), inclusive (CR-container has CT-content / CT-content has CR-container), and ownership (OW-owner has OD-owned / OD-owned has OW-owner) schemas.

Identification Schemas are particularized as the classification (ID-identified = individual or kind is CL-classifier = kind or type), characterization (ID-identified = individual is CH-characterizer), and personification (ID-identified = individual is PS-personifier = a proper name) schemas. In English, CL is manifested with the indefinite article, and CH – with the definite article.

Comparison Schemas include the identity / metamorphosis (CV-comparative is [as] MS-correlate = another category of the same entity), similarity / analogy (CV-comparative is as AN-correlate = an entity from the same category), and likeness / metaphor (CV-comparative is as if MT-correlate = an entity from a different category) schemas (ibid.).

The BPSs may get an extension with additional argument roles: SC-circumstant (attendant, aid, counter-agent, instrument, mediator, means, and mode), ST-stimulus (cause and goal), PQ-prerequisite (condition and concession), RC-recipient (addresser, benefactor, and malefactor), LC-locative, and TM-temporative. The BPSs integrate into an operational network employed in processing information about the objects of the experienced world. The number of BPSs is limited but arranged in various configurations, they structure an unlimited number of conceptual networks (ibid.).

4.3. Lingual network model of the concept DEATH

Following SLN methodology, we have analyzed the usage examples of the lexeme *death* in the texts presented by the computer database of COCA. Having identified the logical predicates related to the concept DEATH, we grouped them according to the basic propositional schemas (frames), as shown in Tables 7-11. In brackets, we mention the number of repetitions of the lexeme *death,* which we ran across within 500 randomly selected discourse examples in COCA. Below the tables, we justify our division by giving expanding examples of the lexeme *death* in the context. A COCA concordance context number where a propositional schema has been detected is given in round brackets.

Table 7: The thing frame

The thing frame, according to which the same essence (someone, something) is characterized by its quantitative, qualitative, existential, locative, and temporal parameters.				
quantitative being schema "DEATH is THAT MANY = quantity"	**qualitative being schema** "DEATH is SUCH = quality"	**locative being schema** "DEATH is THERE = location"	**temporative being schema** "DEATH is THEN = time"	**mode of existence schema** "DEATH is SO = mode of being"

death rates (4), first death, one death, death toll, enough death, millions death, more death, record of death, stacks of death, death episode, death row.	wrongful death (5), slow death (4), sudden death (3), terrible death (3), it's just death (3), violent death (2), impenetrable death, brutal death, horrific death, cruel death, unexpected death, occasional death, tragic death, paralyzing death, painful death, shameless death, painless death, immediate death, condemned death, normal death, death is pure.	cell death (6), death in the family (5), death on the way, beyond death, death is everywhere, through death, place of death.	after death (5), till death (5), at the point of death/at the time of death (4), near death (3), before death (3), in death (3), since death (2), date of death (2), upon death (2), day of death, time of death, at death, proximity of death.	life after death (5) death is a process, death is death, a border of death, manner of death.

(1) a. Quantitative being schema is clearly shown in the following examples: *If you are serious about reducing **death rates**, and increasing health rates, you should take a look at the infant (COCA). Keeping a **record of death** is healthy (COCA).*

b. Qualitative being schema is vividly displayed in the following examples: *You may be able to sue for **a wrongful death** (COCA). She realized that maybe **death** was **impenetrable** (COCA).*

c. Locative being schema is brightly given in the following examples: *There is more sadness and **death on the way** (COCA). When I was **at the point of death**, you touched me (COCA).*

d. Temporative being schema can be found in the following examples: *Liberty German's cell phone about **the time of** her **death** is a suspect in 'Delphi's double homicide investigation (COCA). **A near death** experience doesn't make someone (COCA).*

e. Mode of existence schema is proven in the following examples: *I shouldn't have even brought it up. **Death is death**. It doesn't matter how you go. But you do (COCA). There are people who believe in life after death but always wonder what that life will have in store for us (COCA).*

Table 8: The action frame

The action frame, according to which several things are connected by doer/doing roles		
state/process schema *"SB/STH-agent acts"*	**contact schema** *"AG-death acts upon PT-patient/AF-affected"*	**causative schema** *"CR-causer makes FT-death"*

to put to death (13), to scare to death (5), to beat to death (5), to cause death (5), to freeze to death (5), to lead to death (4), to torture to death (3), to bleed to death (3), to shoot to death (3), to fear death (2), to drink to death (2), to give death (2), to stone to death (2), to stab to death (2), to jump to death (2), to see death (2), to strangle to death, to be sentenced to death, to result in death, to suck death, to screw death, to confirm death, to bring death, to struggle to death, to submit to death, to sentence to death, to smurf to death, to fake death, to fall to death, to result in death, confrontation with death, to protect from death, wish for death, to hate death, to succumb to death, to avenge death, to revenge for death, to chill to death, to target to death, to choose death, to film death, to be bored to death, to avoid death, not to shun death, to cheat death, to miss to death, to resemble death, to reveal death, to flourish to death, to dime to death, to tax to death, to revive from death, to defy death, to threaten death, to savage to death.	to be afraid of death (5), to be responsible for death (5), universal death (3), neonatal death, stillborn death, death to mafia, to lament death, death to Israel, to feel death knocking, to carry death to the cities, death to all, death to business, to reconcile in death, death grip.	death penalty (25), death sentence (10), cause of death (6), torture and death (2), rape and death, death of self-cuts, punishment is death, burden of intelligent life is death, method of death, death by love, death by jamaharon, death to be an insult, death blow, death by degidration, death by ghast, relationship between vaccination and death, to be impacted by death, death and destruction, severe illnesses near death, disease and death, cancer death, death cat, injury and death.

(2) a. State/process schema is brightly shown in the following examples: *Zwingli turned against them and had them **put to death** (COCA). They are about **to cause the death** of millions (COCA).*

   b. Contact schema can be seen in the following examples: *Are you **afraid of death**? Yeah. Me too. There is no way out of it (COCA). Anything happens to me, and already I'm **feeling death knocking** at my door (COCA).*

   c. Causative schema is demonstrated in the following examples: *There are a lot of people who want to expand the **death penalty** to include drug dealers (COCA). They were all about **torture and death** (COCA).*

Table 9: The possession frame

The possession frame according to which SB/STH has/possesses SB/STH.		
part-whole schema *"SB/STH-whole has STH-death"*	**inclusion schema** *"SB/STH-death has STHcontent"/* *"STH-death has STH-container"*	**ownership schema** *"SB/STH-death has SB/STH-owned"/* *"SB/STH-death has SB/STH-owner"*

smb's death (79), death of smb (29), animal death (2).	cause of death (8), threat of death (6), risk of death (4), fear of death (2), pain of death (2), anticipation of death, death throes, dread after death, chill of death, death wails, death is aspiration.	death certificate (2), death club, death of privacy, death post, reality of death, death stimulus, death benefit, death scene/ death site, Bible's teaching of death, death rituals, proof of death, culture of death, face of death, smell of death, death rays, heart of death.

(3) a. Part-whole schema is demonstrated in the following examples: *Don't let **Terry's death** be in vain (COCA). The **death of Fahmi** was particularly hard for his mother (COCA).*

 b. Inclusion schema can be justified in the following examples: *But even a proximate **cause of death** is worth trying hard to avoid (COCA). Societal change may help explain the emergent **risk of death** for women with depression (COCA).*

 c. Ownership schema can be proven in the following examples: *He said don't look into **the face of death** (COCA). They all smell **the scent of death** on the Federation (COCA).*

Table 10: The identification frame

The identification frame,		
according to which permanent thing characteristics acquire temporal impermanent ones.		
personification schema "SB/STH-death is STH-personifier (proper name)"	**classification schema** "SB/STH-death is SB/STH-classifier"	**characterization schema** "SB/STH-death is SB/STH-characterizer"
Red Death, Minister of Death, Death Valley, son of Death Eater, Death Eater, Death Spiral, Doctor Death, the Duke of Death, Death Star.	glorification of death, glory in the death, universal theme of death, downtown is death, death threat maker.	life and/or death (14), birth and death (5), death and judgement, death and inequities, pain and suffering and death and grief and anger.

(4) a. Personification schema is displayed in the following examples: *'The Mask of the **Red Death**,' do you remember that (COCA). Maybe?...the **Son of Death Eater**. He shuddered, thinking of those minions of Voldemort (COCA).*

 b. Classification schema can be seen in the following examples: *I even made a party for it, **downtown is death**, long live downtown (COCA). Exaggerated sadomasochism. The fetishism of deadly weapons. **The glorification of death**. It's a slow attempt to escape a self-inflicted life (COCA).*

 c. Characterization schema is traced in the following examples: *Atwater continues to explore the great mysteries surrounding **life and death** (COCA). So much **pain and suffering and death and grief and anger**, so much had happened (COCA).*
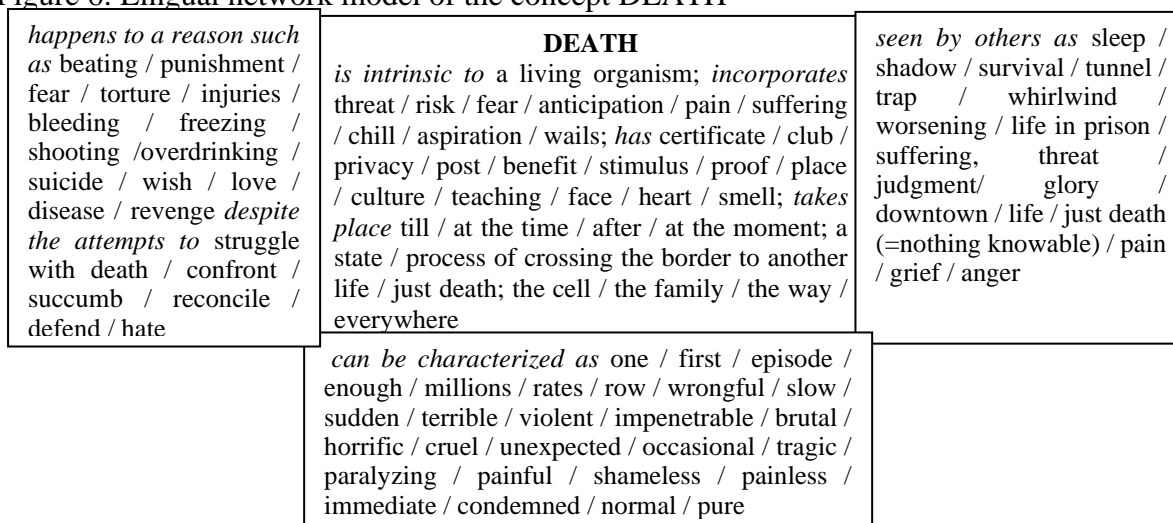
Table 11: The comparison frame

The comparison frame,		
which is formed by links of identity, similarity, and likeness.		
identity schema	**similarity schema**	**likeness schema**

"SB/STH-death is (as) SB/STH-correlate" **metamorphosis**	"STH-death is as SB/STH-correlate" **analogy**	"SB/STH is as if SB/STH" **metaphor**
worsening or death, life in prison or death, harm or death, sufferings and death.	shadow of death (3), survival of death (3), death trap.	sleep of death (2)/slumber in death, tunnel of death, whirlwind of death.

(5) a. Identity schema (metamorphosis) is vivid in the following examples: *Moreover, rape is fraught with the possibility of bodily* **harm or death** *of the victim (COCA). When they reject His* **suffering and death** *they reject Him (COCA).*

   b. Similarity schema (analogy) is brightly presented in the following examples: *Though I walk through the valley of the* **shadow of death**, *I will fear no evil (COCA). Spike Walker has crafted a devastating, white-knuckle tale of* **survival and death** *in the unforgiving Alaskan waters (COCA).*

   c. Likeness schema (metaphor) is represented in the following examples: *You sweep men away in the* **sleep of death** *(COCA). But despite* **the whirlwind of death**, *war also brought out our courage and our loyalty (COCA).*

Further, we built a lingual network model of the concept DEATH based on the conducted research, as exhibited in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Lingual network model of the concept DEATH

happens to a reason such as beating / punishment / fear / torture / injuries / bleeding / freezing / shooting /overdrinking / suicide / wish / love / disease / revenge *despite the attempts to* struggle with death / confront / succumb / reconcile / defend / hate	**DEATH** *is intrinsic to* a living organism; *incorporates* threat / risk / fear / anticipation / pain / suffering / chill / aspiration / wails; *has* certificate / club / privacy / post / benefit / stimulus / proof / place / culture / teaching / face / heart / smell; *takes place* till / at the time / after / at the moment; a state / process of crossing the border to another life / just death; the cell / the family / the way / everywhere	*seen by others as* sleep / shadow / survival / tunnel / trap / whirlwind / worsening / life in prison / suffering, threat / judgment/ glory / downtown / life / just death (=nothing knowable) / pain / grief / anger

can be characterized as one / first / episode / enough / millions / rates / row / wrongful / slow / sudden / terrible / violent / impenetrable / brutal / horrific / cruel / unexpected / occasional / tragic / paralyzing / painful / shameless / painless / immediate / condemned / normal / pure

By analyzing the structural dimension of the concept DEATH, we have come to a conclusion about its functioning in modern American English-speaking discourse. In summary, DEATH can be *one / first / episode / enough / millions / rates / row* which is always *wrongful / slow / sudden / terrible / violent / impenetrable / brutal / horrific / cruel / unexpected / occasional / tragic / paralyzing / painful / shameless / painless / immediate / condemned / normal / pure* seen as *sleep / shadow / survival / tunnel / trap / whirlwind / worsening / life in prison / suffering* which occurs *till / at the time / after / at the moment* as a *state / process of crossing the border to another life / just death*. DEATH takes place in *the cell / in the family / on the way / everywhere* to *a living organism* and has such causes as *beating / punishment / fear / torture /*

injuries / bleeding / freezing / shooting / overdrinking / suicide / wish / love / disease / revenge in spite of attempts to *struggle with death / confront / succumb / reconcile / defend / hate*. DEATH incorporates *threat / risk / fear / anticipation / pain / suffering / chill / aspiration / wails* and can possess *certificate / club / privacy / post / benefit / stimulus / proof / place / culture / teaching / face / heart / smell*. All in all, DEATH is a *threat / judgment / glory / downtown / life / just death (= nothing knowable) / pain / grief / anger.*

Under the influence of linguosynergetics ideas, we believe that "the unity of all substructures placed in the conceptual network is ensured by the telescopic organization on the principle of embedding one component into another" (Tatsenko 2018:268). Our extensive research reveals that the meaning of a separate schema (identification, thing, action, comparison, possession) of the concept DEATH contains the meanings of all other schemas, summarizing or predicting them. According to any of the schemas, it is possible to restore the entire network conceptual structure from its components. In other words, the above model is based on the phenomenon of fractality – a semantic and schematic self-similarity having such characteristics as complexity and dynamism.

5. Conclusions

Within the framework of the concept DEATH as a fractal conceptual structure realized in English-speaking discourse, we analyzed its several substructures: logical and structural dimensions. They fix certain facets of its functioning, its lingual instantiations as an important universal theosophical mental formation with abstract semantics.

The logical dimension is scrutinized by way of semantic analysis that is based on vocabulary definitions through the differentiation of semes. The latter is gained through the methodology of componential analysis of the LSF of the name of the concept. It has proved that lexicographers interpret the word *death* as an irreversible, final action or state in which all life functions of an organism cease, cessation of physical and mental processes, disintegration of a biological cell, end of life, non-existence, and loss of life for certain reasons or cases in time. Having narrowed down the meaning of the word *death* by limiting its semantic features, we concluded that the name of the concept DEATH has the following conceptual basis: *total permanent irreversible ultimate cessation of organism's biological functions due to some cause or occasion in time.*

The LSF of the concept DEATH has a fractal nature, that is, it is nonlinear, open, and capable of self-similarity in different contexts. The fractal structure is manifested at the level of content (repeated theme) and the level of its reflection (a repeated form of information presentation). We concluded that a fractal semantic structure of LSF of the concept DEATH groups possible meanings around a semantic invariant, that is, keeps them within certain discursive integrity.

The functioning of the structural dimension of the concept DEATH in discourse has been analyzed through SLN methodology that is used for the conceptual analysis of linguistic meanings. According to this methodology, we have arranged the meanings of the concept DEATH by basic propositional schemas (being, action, possession, identification, and comparison) representing the most abstract conceptual categories and their relations.

The lingual network model of the concept DEATH shows that it can be *one / first / episode / enough / millions / rates / row* which is always *wrongful / slow / sudden / terrible / violent / impenetrable / brutal / horrific / cruel / unexpected / occasional / tragic / paralyzing*

/ painful / shameless / painless / immediate / condemned / normal / pure seen as *sleep / shadow / survival / tunnel / trap / whirlwind / worsening / life in prison / suffering* which occurs *till / at the time / after / at the moment* as a *state / process of crossing the border to another life / just death*. Further, DEATH takes place in *the cell / in the family / on the way / everywhere* to *a living organism* and has such causes as *beating / punishment / fear / torture / injuries / bleeding / freezing / shooting / overdrinking / suicide / wish / love / disease / revenge* in spite of attempts to *struggle with death / confront / succumb / reconcile / defend / hate*. Moreover, DEATH incorporates *threat / risk / fear / anticipation / pain / suffering / chill / aspiration / wails* and can possess *certificate / club / privacy / post / benefit / stimulus / proof / place / culture / teaching / face / heart / smell*. Predominantly, DEATH is a *threat / judgment / glory / downtown / life / just death (= nothing knowable) / pain / grief / anger.*

The unity of this conceptual network is ensured by the fractal arrangement on the principle of embedding one component into another. The meaning of a separate schema (identification, thing, action, comparison, possession) of the concept DEATH contains the meanings of all other schemas, summarizing or predicting them. According to any of the schemas, it is possible to restore the entire network conceptual structure from its components. In other words, the lingual network of the concept DEATH is self-similar, complex, dynamic, and recursive.

Our future research will include the analysis of the identifying dimension of the concept DEATH as a non-rational conceptualization, which is carried out through the formation of its concrete and visual representations based on conceptual metaphor.

Abbreviations

BPS basic propositional schemas
COCA Corpus of Contemporary American English
LSF lexical and semantic field
SLN semantics of lingual networks

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