Anti-concept. Opposition. Antonym. Linguistic Overview

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Abstract. The article gives a brief overview of the three basic terms of the present-days linguistics – anti-concept – opposition – antonym – which have become disputative within the recent decades of scientific research. Taking into account the logical, philosophical and cultural background the authors offer the new look at the problem of their differentiation. Thus, antonyms are traditionally viewed as the same parts of speech always based on rigid logical opposition, while anti-concepts are considered to also include the logical opposition, as well as to be formed as a result of unusual, illogical, avant-garde, unconventional opposition arising in the context.

Keywords: antinomies, opposition(s), conceptual oppositions, oppositional concepts, conceptual dichotomies, binary concepts, binary oppositions.

Introduction. Over the past decades cognitive linguistics and conceptology have achieved considerable results in the study of different concepts as units of human knowledge representation. Exhausting the possibilities of studying single concepts, linguistics faces the challenge of finding new methods in learning the ways of cognition as a language-mediated process as well as a means of representing and accumulating knowledge about the surrounding world in the human mind through concepts. Thus, there is a need to systematize the acquired knowledge about concepts, their structuring, typologization and other. One way to systematize knowledge about concepts is to research their antipodes – *a n t i-c o n c e p t s* [11; 28; 41].

The review of recent publications on the subject has proved the fact that "anti-concept" has become an interdisciplinary term widely used in humanities which reflects oppositional types of thinking as an intrinsic feature of human mind, while "antonym" remains a purely linguistic term.

Anti-concept in Art and Literature. The problem of defining the concept and understanding its essence is relevant for various fields of humanitarian knowledge. To understand the idea of anti-concept we consider it quite beneficial to analyze this phenomenon in the field of art and literature. Although the term "anti-concept" in art and literature remains within the competence of art critics and literary critics, our primary intention is to find out at least its general nature in the foreground of the paradigm in the scientific concern of linguistics.

Generally accepted in the art sphere is the presence of a certain concept, tradition, genres, the existence of styles and trends: symbolism, modernism, futurism, surrealism, etc., wherein each of these directions is characterized by the established norms, forms and canons, in other words, by its conceptual significance. Being created in such a framework, the artistic image is a concept in itself. On the other hand, art is a freedom realm that implies blurred boundaries, the desire for contrasts, the destruction of stereotypes (let's remember S. Dali and O. Wilde, for instance).

The existence of contrasts is quite important either in the art field or elsewhere – be it done with educational purposes or be it meant for the cultivation of aesthetic values – because any work of art is sure to have both emotional and informative content. Value itself is the key word of art and culture; its essence is embodied as a phenomenon of culture, and thus there is a need to form axiological phenomenology in this field [8, p. 139]. Culture adheres to a hierarchy of values, norms and traditions, but some cultural actions are associated with non-traditional forms and tend to be avant-garde [ibid, p.134], unrecognized, unusual presentations contrary to traditions or frames. Unconventionality is a certain reaction to something established; it is secondary to tradition [ibid, p. 134–135]. Regarding this, the anti-concept in art can be considered as a shift of priorities in the presentation of artistic images, blurring the criteria of a certain socio-cultural locus, straying from norms, presence of values and anti-values [ibid, p.137-138] and, moreover, the deviation in the perception of objective reality by the artist, the conflict of the latter with the world.

A. Ocheretiansky [8] establishes his own gradation of CONCEPT – NON-CONCEPT (mass-market concept, e.g. *Graffiti* or *Body Art*) – POST-CONCEPT (when the creative will of the author prevails over the content – ANTI-CONCEPT (which involves reconsideration, reorienting, re-coding of one's own or somebody's intention). So, the anti-concept in art is an anomaly, a deviance in the postulation of a work of art, which has no full value and aesthetic right in a certain chronotopos, although it is likely to become a phenomenon of art in the forthcoming era, in another historical period (after V. Grachiov, A. Ocheretiansky).

Similarly, the anti-concept in literature is being referred to as a subculture, a trend, or a direction that does not meet the standards and is beyond the limits of literary criticism and cognitive poetics [15], or (according to Yu. Stepanov) anti-concept is something that can't be conceptualized, or it is correlated with a certain image characterized by the presence of contrasting categories that cause disproportion, asymmetry, disharmony in a work of art [15; 41]. However, the understanding of the anti-concept within the humanities is somewhat unified.

The idea of an anti-concept in linguistic retrospective. One of the axioms developed by modern linguists is the conclusion that the speech-and-thinking activity of an individual as a result of his existential being and a tool for developing concepts reflecting the phenomena of the outside world is realized within the clear boundaries of logical antinomies with their inevitably accepted contradictions [19, p. 88], therefore, there's no study of the ways and mechanisms of the formation, preservation and actualization of the information accumulated in anti-concepts that is left behind the scholars' attention.

Recently, the anti-concept has been tending to acquire

the status of one of the basic concepts of linguo-conceptology and cognitive linguistics, the task of which is the study of language as a means of obtaining, preserving, processing knowledge, exploring the ways of conceptualizing and categorizing the objective reality and the internal reflexive experience of a human being [40, p. 365].

At the present stage of the science development language is not only considered an absorbent of individual human knowledge but also of the cultural heritage of the entire nation. The units of knowledge representation in the mind of an individual are concepts and anti-concepts, which, obeying the laws of logics, become the subject to unification, but are still inherent in each representative of a particular ethnic group. It is obviously the linguists who set themselves the task of exploring the norms of unification and the rules of structuralization for concepts and anti-concepts [5**;** 10; 23; 36; 41].

Anti-concept and its equivalents in the latest scientific research. While concepts as somewhat isolated units of the cognitive structures of the human brain were thoroughly investigated by scholars, anti-concepts meanwhile remain a scarcely studied phenomenon of the modern linguistics – so they should be studied systematically, in pairs, because they help to realize the universal philosophical laws of dialectics revealing the contrastive perception of the world.

In linguistic science there have already been some attempts to generalize, to systematize such concepts as LIFE and DEATH [4], JOY and SORROW [13], GLORY and DISGRACE [38], for instance, though the mentioned antonymic pairs have hardly ever been called anti-concepts.

For the nomination of oppositional phenomena of the objective reality, linguists have used such terms as ***antinomies*** [37, p. 575], ***opposition(s)*** [39, p. 133], ***conceptual oppositions*** or ***oppositional concepts*** [34], ***conceptual dichotomies*** [32], ***binary oppositions*** or ***binary concepts*** [1; 38; 41, p. 20]. The terms *binary oppositions* or *binary concepts* are predominantly used, because it is believed that they render the genetic basis of the units of thinking and their ability to structure the elements of the surrounding world by the nature of their parity / oddity and multiple-vector axiological loading [18, p. 5], however, in our opinion, these taxonomies do not express the priority or cultural significance of any of the components of the logical dyad, nor their value distinction. Binary concepts are considered to contain an ethical component and are characterized by a specific interaction of integrative and differential features, retaining the positive and negative shades of meaning, and therefore function within a specific linguo-cultural ethical field in which they acquire binarism; and the basis for their opposition is the socio-evaluative component [ibid, p. 12-13].

Undoubtedly, binary oppositions are inherent in most languages; they are at the heart of the linguistic picture of the world, have a universal character and play an important role in the world cognition, because a human being cannot fully perceive this world, which is being compensated by the binary complementation of the views onto it. In this regard, we consider it significant not to avoid the nominations existing in linguistics, but at the same time we do not deny the possibility of naming such pairs as ***binary unities*** (or pairs) to denote their complementarity, the presence of integrative features in them, not only the differential features which, for example, is implied in the taxonomy *binary oppositions*. As a consequence, we consider it necessary to view anti-concepts in pairs, because only their pairwise study will allow us to trace the capacity of each member of such opposition unity, to explore their integrative and differential features, to find out the significance of each concept of a binary pair for the cultural community.

In order to avoid terminological incorrectness in the nomination of the phenomenon under study, we suggest naming a positively-marked member of the opposition ***"prior concept"*** (*prior* – first, foremost, more important) as the main primary concept, against which its antipode appears as a negatively marked ***"concept-sequencer"*** (*sequent* – next; consequent) or ***"anti-concept"*** (in the terminology of Yu. Stepanov, S. Vorkachiov, A. Prykhodko and others). In this case, it is reasonable to call the ***"prior concept"*** and its ***"anti-concept"***, which together form a complementary semantic unity, not only an opposition, but also complementatives (or complementary constituents) of a binary pair [11, p. 28-29].

The term "anti-concept" has recently been introduced into linguistics and it is fully opened for thorough scientific study. Analyzing the internal form of this term, we can see that the taxonomy itself reflects the logical category of contrast / opposition [23; 25; 28], which determines the scientific approach to the study of anti-concepts.

Anti-concept in the term system of linguo-conceptology and cognitive linguistics. Human cognition, having absorbed the dual nature of dialectics, is always mediated by language, because a human being, learning the outside world, thinks in concepts and keeps the received information and knowledge in his mind. According to V. Karasik, the core of the linguistic reflection of the world is represented by logical categories [17, p. 118], and it is the concept as "a logically constructed core idea without imagery" [35, p. 18] that forms the basis of knowledge. If the language is one of the ways of cognition, the way of categorization and generalization of what is learned is concepts and anti-concepts that, from the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, do not only condense in themselves the knowledge about denotatum and significatum but also accumulate the cultural and national experience of a speaker.

Although the term "anti-concept" is quite new in the apparatus of cognitive linguistics, the modern science already has some ideas about it. According to the achievements of some scholars, anti-concept is considered to be either *a type of a concept* [28, p. 151] or *a denial of a certain concept*, which is established as an independent phenomenon of a particular culture and is regarded as a particular isolate [41, p. 20–23].

One cannot disagree with the latter hypothesis, because the taxonomy itself contains the prospect of a polar understanding of its essence. If we analyze the ontology of a human being, we can state that the perception of the world is often reduced to certain oppositions, which are ultimately objectified and fixed in the human mind due to anti-concepts that are hypothetically likely to gain the status of being independent.

The problem of anti-concepts is studied by V. Novodranova who explores the ways of their verbalization in the medical terminology of the Russian language, where prefixation turns out to be the most productive

mechanism in creating their correspondences at the language level [28, p. 150]. The main focus of the author of this scientific exploration is the differentiation of concepts and anti-concepts on such a principle when an anti-concept as a negative element, opposed to a certain positive concept, is not verbalized by linguistic means and, consequently, has no language equivalent. Considering this, firstly, we trace the principle of opposition in the structure of anti-concepts as well as the existence of a certain polarity, and, secondly, we see some asymmetry in their nomination, the presence of "lacunae" between correlative pairs of anti-concepts. However, studying the lacunarity of linguistic nominators of anti-concepts and their semantic asymmetry [ibid, p. 151], the researcher blatantly ignores the fact that anti-concepts and their names are units of different levels.

Yu. Stepanov examines the anti-concept, on the one hand, in the system of civilization, on the other hand – in the aspect of logical analysis of a language, involving the principles of semiotics. According to this view, an anti-concept is a "form of disagreement with the content of a concept", whereas the concept itself is only a form of expression of some content [41, p.21-22]. The term "anti-concept" is interpreted here as a concept opposed to another concept, but the scholar emphasizes that it is not the taxonomy itself, but something else that is gaining significance in linguistics. The author of this theory connects anti-concepts with the socio-cultural heritage of the nation, seeing the cause of the "linguistic excitement" around them in the desire of a native speaker to oppose something constant and conventional to something new, unusual or unknown. So it is about shifting the emphasis in the semantic content of the established language oppositions, about a new vision of objects in the surrounding world, about the new ways of conceptualizing knowledge of the world in a language.

According to the conclusions of E. Gureyeva [10], anti-concepts are mental units reflecting a broader opposition than antonyms, because with the development of a particular field of knowledge, the content of a concept may change and, as a result of it, an anti-concept may emerge, which, in its turn, is not always directly opposed to the concept and thus reveals the complex nature of opposition underlying the spring-up of anti-concepts.

Assuming the discretization of concepts from the perspective of axiological semantics [36, p. 100], A. Prykhodko views anti-concepts as negatively marked but considerably significant units of a linguo-culture. According to S. Vorkachiov [5, p. 53], the source of anti-concepts evolution is the dialectical development of society and the presence of categorical contradictions in it, which are invariably reflected in the language of an ethnic group.

There is also an opinion that anti-concept is not an oppositional but a modified version of a concept while in some other opinions CONCEPT and ANTI-CONCEPT are considered to be complementary parts that form an oppositional unity [10; 11; 20].

Anti-concept from the standpoint of linguocultural studies and cognitive poetics. Descrying the deep national and cultural content in concepts and anti-concepts, linguists view the latter from linguo-cultural positions [5; 8; 15] which testifies to the integrative nature of the present-day scientific research and the complex intricate essence of the object. Due to this,

within the frame of linguo-cultural studies they distinguish the so called logical-linguistic (conceptual) approach that comes down to the description of concepts existing in a certain culture which are revealed in different text material of various spheres of communication [ibid, p. 261]. Anti-concepts are being considered here either as the dominant significant anti-phenomenon of culture [5; 36; 41] or as the antipode of certain cultural artefacts or as contrasting archetypal images [9].

According to the American researcher A. Rand, the term "anti-concept" denoting "intellectual decadence" [42] appears to replace or erase the term "concept" commonly used and originally established in the community due to the polarization of social views. Sharing the author's viewpoint [ibid] we consider that the offered taxonomy "anti-concept" (largely due to the prefix *anti-*) implies something bad, unwanted, undesirable, socially destructive which is caused by irreconcilability or conflict in the society.

In such a case, the emergence of anti-concept is the result of humiliation, suppression or ousting of primary fundamental principles and ideas [ibid]. Against this background, it becomes obvious that a concept may lose its cultural significance but, instead, its anti-concept will, on the contrary, become meaningful.

Social phenomena of this kind are usually reflected in speech and literary works, which has led linguists to the study of textual artistic concepts [14; 21] and anti-concepts [2; 10; 28] within the ***cognitive-poetic paradigm*** [6]. The necessity to analyze the text concepts as the basis of meta-images is explained, according to O.M. Kaganovska [14], by the general trends to study the belles-lettres texts semantics which results in finding a means of expressing the concept as a concentrate of the author's worldview and explication of meta-images of an artistic piece of work [14, p. 21-24].

Within the cognitive poetic paradigm they differentiate between the artistic concepts and the belles-lettres texts concepts [ibid] which render the conceptual priorities of the author [29] and characterize both individual author's picture of the world and socially conditioned cultural dominants [5; 17; 36] established in the society at a certain time interim. Anti-concept is viewed here as an anti-stereotype or an anti-tradition of a certain epoch [15; 41], an anti-character, anti-hero [12] or anti-human [2].

The goal. In spite of the existing linguistic exploration on these issues our main task is to determine the essence of an anti-concept, to study its structural peculiarities and to define what distinguishes it among other taxonomies of oppositional realities using the descriptive and analytical **methods**.

Discussion and results.

Methodological basis to define anti-concept as a linguistic phenomenon. First off, to define anti-concept as a linguistic phenomenon, we offer to overview the general methodological basis which helps to study the essence of opposition as it is. Second, we aim at analyzing the cognitive linguistic scientific achievements concerning the main conceptual problems including those which reveal the nature of opposition.

It's no denying the fact the general methodological basis to define anti-concept is philosophy. The origins of opposition theory date back to the philosophical concepts of the ancient world and are reflected in one of the fundamental

laws of dialectics formulated by G. Hegel [7].

In addition to philosophy, which outcomes are ubiquitously used in humanities, the studies of anti-concept should also be based on scientific achievements of Logics and Psychology whereas in order to have a complete idea of what an anti-concept is we should perceive that semi-conscious or unconscious psychological mechanism which regulates the linguo-mental processes of cognition and forms the conceptual spheres of human consciousness.

Opposition from philosophical perspectives. Opposition is commonly known to be one of the main forms of thinking thus it has been studied from the point of view of Philosophy, Logics, Linguistics etc. The basis of any comparison is the principle of opposition i.e. juxtaposition of similar or diverse objects due to the detection of their differential or contrasting features.

Opposition (in other terms – juxtaposition, contrariety, contrast) is considered [1; 7; 5] to be the central category of Philosophy since the way of human thinking presupposes the ability to divide the objective world into rational and irrational, material and spiritual etc., thus philosophical understanding of the world implies the presence of scientific and mundane worldview – so the dual perception of the world is embedded in its very nature.

Juxtaposition of objects and phenomena of the objective reality is characteristic of any national culture representatives, because, if to mention the dialectic laws of "unity and struggle of opposites" and "negation of negation" it can be stated that contrastive perception of the world belongs to the basic postulates of Philosophy and should be considered, first off, from the philosophical standpoint.

On the other hand, philosophy as a form of worldview was preceded by mythological consciousness with its inherent syncretism when any kind of bifurcation / splitting was still viewed as a whole. Though opposites ever existed, within the frame of mythological perception it has always been problematic to separate the natural from the symbolic, the real from the fantastic, the available from the desired, the spiritual from the physical, the human from the non-human, the bad from the good which – as scientists believe [31, c. 27] – is not typical of other forms of consciousness. This thought can be argued, of course, since, for example, Plato's "eidos" philosophy about indivisible essence of things has pervaded many spheres of life [33]. Such integrity pattern exists in linguistics too, when opposites are viewed as constituents of a whole [11].

The concept of the opposite is found in the works of ancient philosophers: Heraclitus of Ephesus with his doctrine of the change – the author of the aphorism "everything flows and nothing stands still" – who tried to determine the direction of the world cycle from opposite to opposite, and in his "logos" as a means of uniting the opposites in the world [31, p. 68]; in Pythagorean numerical ratios of the harmonic structure of the cosmos; in Plato's concept about the contraposition of the flesh and the spirit; in Zeno's paradoxes about the impossibility of movement; in the opinions of Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus dwelling upon the volatility of being and the denial of its constancy [37, c. 62]; in Kant's antinomies [ibid, c.575]; in Hegel's ideas and in laws of dialectics [ibid, c. 578]; in the principles of *yin – yang* correlation in the Chinese philosophy.

The contrastive perception of the world is truly inherent to the representatives of any culture: in our daily life we all deal with a huge amount of opposites that can be grouped thematically, for example:

1) spatio-temporal opposition which is verbalized in a language by means of such lexemes as *East – West, winter – summer, earth – space, left – right, beginning – end, +20°C / –20°C, antiquity – contemporaneity, 333 B.C. – 333 A.D.* etc;

2) biological opposition: *birth – death, youth – senility*; with anatomic opposition included (gender differences, too): *man – woman, girl – boy, king – queen* and the like;

3) religious-mythological opposition: *god – devil, paradise – hell, body – soul* etc.;

4) emotionally-sensual sphere: *joy – sorrow, love – hatred* etc;

5) social sphere oppositions: *the rich – the poor, palace – hut, prince – pauper* and the list can be continued.

Thus, human cognition has incorporated the <u>dual nature of dialectics</u>. Cognizing the world, the thinking being makes a choice between the so-called "poles": between the good and the bad, the joy and the sorrow, the love and the hatred, and more. As a result of this choice, human's consciousness, mentality, morality as well as psychic and emotional core of a personality are formed. The mechanism of cognition, and therefore the means of the personality evolution, is human language, while concepts and anti-concepts are only a way of generalizing and categorizing the cognizable.

Opposition in linguistics. Types of opposition. The idea of opposition has not lost its topicality, thus the principle of opposition remains pivotal for many scientific models and outlooks.

From the linguistic retrospective the study of opposition is associated with Prague structuralists (and namely with N. Trubetskoi) who formulated the mechanism of opposition the members of which confront each other due to the presence of common features called the "basis of opposition" [30]. Oppositions of any kind have a universal logical basis and therefore, according to T.V. Pastushenko [ibid], are easily extrapolated onto any other field of study. The idea of language units opposition has further developed in the field of grammar. The theory of grammatical opposition has borrowed several key theses of N. Trubetskoy [ibid], and namely: the classification principle of relations between the members of the opposition, the marked / non-marked member of the opposition, of their correlations, as well as the phenomenon of the opposition neutralization, their division into privative, gradual, equipollent.

Further application of the opposition theory is found in the field of lexicology. A detailed classification of lexical oppositions was developed by M. Nikitin [26]. The essence of oppositional relations between lexical units is seen in the contrast of their features, and like in the previous statement, the precondition for the lexical meanings opposition is viewed in the so-called "basis of opposition" [30] too – which is a common generic feature that forms the base of aspectual characteristics. According to the scientist [26], oppositional features should have a common basis, be homogeneous and incompatible. The latter two characteristics are necessary for the formation of the opposition, but surely in combination with the first – because incompatible homogeneous features (such as *green – red*, for instance) are simply different / contrasting, but not opposite [ibid].

Studying the lexical level opposition represented by the phenomenon of antonymy, linguists-lexicologists considered it necessary to purify languages from natural and accidental opposites, to find a unified scheme of linguistic oppositions, enshrined in the norms of vocabulary and based on the experience of not only individual groups but the whole language community [27, p. 8; 25] and to prove the systematic nature of this phenomenon. At the same time there already exists a scheme where the knowledge of antonymy is unified and systematized.

Antonymy as a language category, by L. Novikov [27, p. 87-89], is based on four types of opposition: *contrary* – when there is a likelihood of a middle term between the extreme members of the opposition (young – middle-aged – old); *contradictory* – when the opposition is represented by only two members of the paradigm, which excludes the existence of the middle member (dead – alive); *vector opposition* – where antonyms express opposite direction actions (to leave – to arrive); and *convertible* – if the antonyms indicate the actions opposite to the participants of the situation (to win – to lose). Seeing identity in the two last types, T. Lavrentieva adds *contrastive* opposition, represented by any contrast of the elements which are viewed as a whole [23].

The idea of opposition occupies a prominent place in stylistics: it forms the basis of stylistic differentiation of the lexicon, of the division into the logical and emotional-evaluative, figurative and direct meaning, gives the basis for functional styles differentiation and more. Later there also appeared the theoretical rationale for communicative oppositions*: theme – rheme, the known – the new, the listener – the speaker* [30].

The principle of opposition is used in cognitive linguistics as well where the structure of a concept is viewed through the opposition of its core and periphery. The same structure is ascribed to conceptual sphere. Synthetism and holism of the most important cognitive theories haven't yet been able to completely outstrip the analytical principle of opposition because its firmness and stoicism to even the thinking styles speaks for the fact of its "convenience" for the human mind as well as its universality for many cultural and language formations /communities. [ibid].

Opposition as one of the main principles of the world perception – together with the formation of the language consciousness – is not only naturally stipulated but more predisposed by neurophysiological factors. Here ensues the universality of opposition as a tool of knowledge. At the same time it's obvious it's not only the objectivity itself but also the need of a man to juxtapose things that explains the fact that many researchers have noticed: opposition is never absolute [10;30].

Opposition thus becomes universal in the systematic description of linguistic phenomena. At any level of a language its units are organized as elements within their own subsystems and the overall general system of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations (by F. de Saussure). However, the cognitive trend prevailing in modern linguistics [30] offers a new synthetic approach to the study of linguistic phenomena and, to some extent, questions and doubts the objectivity of only analytical or purely logical juxtaposition.

Opposition as the logical basis of anti-concepts. To understand the linguistic nature of anti-

concepts we should, first off, take into account the general scientific methodology for the study of opposites as such in the objective world as well as in language in particular. Summarizing the material in the previous paragraphs, we can conclude that the dichotomy "concept – anti-concept" is a mental model of the dialectical development of the society, which is stipulated not by the structure of the world, but by the dual nature of thinking, physiological features of brain functioning, the ability to analyze and synthesize, psychological peculiarities of a person: his sensuality, emotionality, empathy, etc., as well as social factors cultivated in the ethno-cultural environment.

Undoubtedly, opposition is the logical basis of anti-concepts, because, from the point of view of dialectics, any object or phenomenon of reality is a contradictory essence, the driving force of existence of which is "unity" and "struggle". However, the concepts of several scientists do not reject the opportunity to consider opposites as *complementary phenomena* [27, p. 37; 2], which is a transformation of E. Kant's views [16], who believed that opposites emerge as a result of understanding something as a whole. Thus, it is possible to consider opposites (which are represented by concepts / anti-concepts in the mind of man and by antonyms in the language) as a whole, as a unity divided into poles, which delineates the boundaries of manifestation of a certain quality and indicates the indissoluble connection of opposites in each manifestation of their essence [27, p. 37]. Taking into account all this it can be assumed that concepts / anti-concepts are complementary phenomena in modern linguistics, because they hypothetically constitute two poles of a whole.

Therefore, the understanding of an anti-concept in modern linguistics can be reduced to three following positions, when it is defined as: 1) a type or variety of a concept; 2) an independent item separated from the concept; 3) a complementary component of a certain whole.

In the first case between a concept and its anti-concept we observe the dialectical relations of a **PART** and a **WHOLE**, which are sometimes also interpreted as the relations between something that contains and what is contained, and where a certain interaction is seen [22, p. 7] like, for example, EARTH and SPACE.

In the second case between a concept and its anti-concept we observe a certain polarity and distance, which confirms the existence of the philosophical category of **CONTRARITY** like PARADISE and HELL or GOD and DEVIL, for instance, even though all oppositions are never absolute: it is generally believed within the religious outlook that it's the God who created the universe, and it's the Devil who, being an arrant sinner, had to leave the God's realm. Thus, the boundaries of this opposition are not clearly cut because the GOD concept can be viewed in this case as a container of its anti-concept DEVIL, just like in the first illustration.

In the third case a concept and its anti-concept are hypothetically the constituents of a certain imaginary indivisible holistic entity – thus they are viewed as **COMPLEMENTARY PARTS** of a whole. In this case WEALTH and POVERTY can be treated as two sides of a mega-concept WELFARE which presupposes all the material values often unfairly distributed between the members of the society.

Consequently, relying on the general scientific principles, one cannot deny the fact that the essential feature of

anti-concepts is the obligatory presence of a certain opposition, which is the basis of their nature.

Reflecting in their minds the objects and phenomena of the outside world, people resort to such thinking operations as comparison or juxtaposition and subconsciously single out either common or distinct features in things they see grouping them according to the degree of similarity or difference. However, any comparison is known to be relative because each individual imposes his or her own subjective experience onto the situation of perception, and therefore, there must be some theoretical basis for determining objectivity. In our case, it IS an opposition based on logical contradiction as a philosophical category, to which the evaluative component is added.

Considering the subjective experience of the speakers, it should be noted that any comparison as a thinking operation – though being reduced to a particular pattern – has no clear boundaries and is always subjectively colored. It is a well-known fact that everything in the world is relative, and the criterion of our perception is the comparison, the evaluation of the denotatum and its correlation with the opposite, the determination of a certain polarity, that is, a series of mental operations, mediated by concepts and anti-concepts. All this forms the basis of cognition.

Axiological component of anti-concepts. Man's attitude to the world is not limited to cognition as a logical partition of reality – we don't only learn the world, we also evaluate it as good or bad, just or unjust, right or wrong. A man is seldom just an observer, more often he is an evaluating recipient, considering the events and phenomena through the prism of his own personal world perception scale represented by his own system of virtues, that is, an *axiological scale*, formed throughout his life by social and spiritual factors. Such dual understanding of the world is reflected in the human mind and condensed in the cultural community through a system of anti-concepts.

The truthfulness or falseness of the utterance often depends on the situation of communication – just likewise every concept reveals itself in the context. While analyzing the conceptual spheres GOOD and EVIL, for example, which might have implicit actualization in the text, we face the problem: with the absence of the definition or the matrix to outline the semantic boundaries of the GOOD concept we have to compare it with the concept of EVIL. Due to this opposition in the paradigm, each of the compared concepts retains its invariance.

Thus, any thinking operation is logic-driven. However, this raises the question whether our thinking (especially artistic) always comes down to logics and whether it is limited only by logical laws.

Cognizing the world every person perceives everything around through the prism of his own subjective opinion applying his own experience, worldview, empathy, value system. Axiological scale of the objective reality is inseparable from our worldview, and the *axiological component* is an integral part of anti-concepts.

At the same time the principle of opposition is embedded in the existence of another linguistic universality – antonymy. Taking it into account, we consider it expedient to elucidate the question of the difference between antonyms and anti-concepts, to discern their differential features and to trace the terminological boundaries of these two ideas.

Anti-concept v/s antonym: terminological boundaries. As it was previously mentioned, the fundamental feature of an anti-concept existence is the presence of a certain opposition, which is the basis of its nature. However, in linguistics, there already exists a kind of opposition when a certain word / concept can be offered its antonym (while the logical basis of antonymy is opposition, too). Here arises the question either about the existence of two taxonomies – "antonym" and "anti-concept" or about the distance (difference) of these phenomena.

To find the answer to this question, we certainly need to analyze the achievements in the field of lexicology, namely antonymy, and to possibly extrapolate these achievements onto the field of cognitive science, for the "concept – anti-concept" dichotomy must be, first off, related to the epistemological aspect of the language.

Antonymy as a linguistic phenomenon is determined by the general laws of human thinking and the ability of our consciousness towards polar perception of extra-linguistic realities, but since language is a certain mediator between cognition and consciousness, it is language units (as units of the semiotic system) that bear the conventional meaning – so antonyms just denote the opposite phenomena of the objective world on the language level (after E. Miller, M. Nikitin, L. Novikov and others). Studying linguistic ways of expressing opposites, L. Novikov also emphasizes that the logical and philosophical aspect of the study of antonyms reveals its causes, embedded in the very nature of human thinking [27, p. 37].

Antonymy is one of the manifestations of systemic relationships in vocabulary. Although the lexical system of language is considered to be the most susceptible to the change and the influence of extra-linguistic factors, it reflects the results of linguistic changes of a historical and cultural nature. However, such historical changes are not always fixed in the dictionary: a word can either acquire or lose one of its meanings which subsequently retains on the periphery, although the external form of the lexical unit often remains unchanged Therefore, here comes another question: where the significant or insignificant shades in the meanings of words are fixed and how they are stored in the cultural and ethnic community before being registered in lexicographic sources.

The containers of such information are usually not the WORDS as formalized units of the semiotic system, but the CONCEPTS as the repositories of individual and cultural-national human experience and the units of knowledge representation. The emphasis should be made here not only on the principle of opposition, which reflects the polar relation between the realities of life but also on correlation of antonyms (formal units embodying contrasting relations in a language as a semiotic system), anti-concepts (operative structural units of mind and consciousness) and opposing objects and phenomena of objective reality.

Antonymy is a merely linguistic category and above all it's a lexical phenomenon, whereas anti-concept is a unit of conceptual-abstract level characterized by duality which is foreordained by dualistic nature of our thinking (let's, for instance, remember opposite logical operations of *analysis* and *synthesis*, *induction* and *deduction* etc.). So, human thinking works in such a way that, on the basis of associative connections, one operational unit (which reflects something positive) provokes the emergence of the second one

(filled with negative significance), or vice versa. According to another hypothesis, it is inherent in a person to perceive opposites as a unity bifurcated into complementary components, the reconstruction of which occurs in the brain instantly and instinctively, under the conditions of perception of at least one of the constituents of this unity. To investigate this complex mechanism is the task of cognitive science today.

In our everyday world perception, man deals with innumerable number of opposites, which is evidenced by the variety of antonyms existing in a language. At the same time not all of them are cultural concepts. An illustration of contrary phenomena can be the spatial universals of polarity or dimension, for instance, which are verbally expressed in the language as well as represented in the human mind by a system of binary oppositions like *north – south*, *east – west*, *left – right*, *up – down* etc. But trivial, purely logical oppositions can become culturally significant concepts / anti-concepts only if they acquire an associative-evaluative component, that is a so-called "linguo-cultural trail" (after Ch. Bally, A. Leontiev, A. Wierzbicka). So, the culturally marked concept UP signifying a certain social growth, success, achievement has positive connotation in the English-speaking environment, while its negatively marked counterpart DOWN (rendering somebody's movement downwards or stay in a low position) is associated with decline, stagnation, degradation, and, thus, bears the negative shade of meaning.

In science, linguistics in particular, there are many examples of contrasting relations, for example: *active – passive* voice of verbs, *archaisms – neologisms* in lexicology, *form* and *content* in philosophy, etc., although in the first two examples the offered pairs are antonyms, but the last two lexical units are not.

Scientific oppositions and antinomies are usually based on clear and strict logical principles and are formed within the scientific worldview, while the opposites of the mundane worldview do not always obey the laws of logic: for example, *Winter* and *Spring* oppositions, which are not considered to be antonyms, can become contextual oppositions (after O. Wilde) when, containing the figurative com-

ponent, they symbolically denote cold, sadness, pessimism v/s warmth, vigor, optimism. Obviously, there's no polarity in them which, on the contrary, is an intrinsic feature of logical oppositions on which antonymy is based.

While **antonyms** are words of the same part of speech with an opposite meaning, **anti-concept** is a broader notion. The nature of an anti-concept does include the logical opposition, but some anti-concepts can be formed as a result of unusual, illogical, avant-garde, unconventional oppositions, too, and we consequently offer to consider them as *stereotypical* (LIFE – DEATH, WEALTH – POVERTY, BEAUTY – UGLINESS) with explicit contrast and *occasional* (WINTER – SPRING, WATER – FIRE and the like) in which opposition is conveyed implicitly [11, p. 48-49].

Conclusions. Generalizing the mentioned facts, we define anti-concept as follows: anti-concept is a complementary component of a binary mental image that is formed as a result of a conscious or semi-conscious juxtaposition of opposite / contrasting objects or phenomena of the world. Anti-concept is an oppositional concept-*sequencer* that emerges against the background of a certain *prior* concept; it is a component of a binary thinking conglomerate, based on contrast, which takes part in the formation of an individual picture of the world, reflecting the dual nature of the dialectics of cognition, and is a container of polar information about the referent(s) presented as a whole in the human knowledge system. Anti-concept is mostly a negatively marked constituent of a binary pair, which forms a complementary semantic unity with a positively marked *prior* concept. Hence, antonyms and anti-concepts are neither linguistic synonyms, nor a dyad; they are not two taxonomies of the same phenomenon. The main, fundamental difference between them is that the former represent only the language level, predominantly subordinate to the laws of logics, and the latter exist at the conceptual-abstract level, reflecting in the human mind what contrasts or exists in opposition in the objective world, usually including the linguo-cultural axiological component.

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