ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

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СТРУКТУРА ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОГО ПОЛЯ «ЗЛО»

Аннотация. В данной статье описано лексико-семантическое поле «Зло» на материале английских прилагательных. На основе использования методов дефиниционного и контекстного анализа можно утверждать, что лексико-семантическое поле «Зло» имеет все характерные черты лексико-семантического поля: иерархическую структуру, размытые границы и специфику его элементов в каждом языке. Прилагательные лексического семантического поля «Зло» выражают характеристики человека и его эмоционального состояния: злонамеренность действий, отсутствие положительных качеств (жалость, милосердие, доброта, эмоциональная отзывчивость к чувствам других людей, понимание), способ оценки людей, явлений или обстоятельств. На основе проведенного исследования выявлена тесная связь этой области с философскими и религиозными аспектами, а также символизм ее элементов, тенденция к широкому сочетанию ее элементов с объектами, которые нетипичны для их семантики и, как результат, к получению оценочного значения.

Ключевые слова: лексико-семантическое поле, лексический и семантический вариант, ядро, периферия, зло.

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STRUCTURE OF LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC FIELD "EVIL"

Abstract. The article describes lexical semantic field "Evil" on the material of English adjectives. Using the methods of definitional and contextual analysis allows us to state that lexical semantic field "Evil" has all the characteristic features of a lexical semantic field – hierarchical structure, blurred boundaries and specificity of its elements for each language. Adjectives of lexical semantic field "Evil" express characteristics of a person and his emotional state, maliciousness of actions, absence of positive qualities (pity, mercy, kindness, sensitivity to other people's feelings, understanding), evaluation of people, phenomena or circumstances. On the basis of the conducted research close connection of this field with philosophical and religious aspects is revealed, as well as symbolism of its elements, tendency to a wide combination of its elements with objects, which are atypical for their semantics and, as a result, to obtaining evaluative meaning.

Keywords: lexical and semantic field (LSF), lexical and semantic variant, nucleus, periphery, evil.

Introduction

Despite the diverse number of approaches to the study of field theory, there is still no single definition of this concept. There are different definitions of this term: "word field", "thematic group", "conceptual field", "language field", etc. But all scientists agree that the field consists of a set of words which belong to different parts of speech united by a single meaning [1–4]. As I.A. Sternin notes, there are no clear boundaries between the fields, and the language appears to be "a continuous set of fields, passing into each other with their peripheral zones and having a multilevel character" [5, p. 17].

The relevance of the study is determined, firstly, by the role of the lexical-semantic field

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(hereinafter – LSF) "EVIL" and the lexical-semantic variants representing this meaning in the linguistic picture of the world, secondly, by the importance of providing an anthropocentric description of evaluative meanings of this field.

The objective of the research is to study and describe the structural and semantic organization of the lexical-semantic field "EVIL", recreating a fragment of the linguistic picture of the world, as well as to analyze the interaction of components within this field.

But in this research LSF is understood as a structure of the modern language, which includes lexical and semantic variants (hereinafter – LSV), which may belong to different parts of speech, but which are united by a common integrative attribute. It is worth noting that the attribute weakens as one moves from the nucleus to the periphery. The elements are connected primarily by systemic relations. The process of semantic field identification usually begins on the basis of data from dictionaries, synonymic/antonymic dictionaries, thesauruses representing the language system in the form of conceptual spheres, without analyzing the internal relations between linguistic units. Further, the composition of the field is formed and clarified by semasiological method – finding connections between meanings of words by *methods* of definitional and contextual analysis.

Lexical and Semantic Field "Evil"

The peculiarities of fields emphasized by many scholars [1; 5–6] are:

1) a lexical and semantic field is characterized by a hierarchical structure consisting of a nucleus and a periphery; nuclear elements are the most typical representatives; as one approaches the periphery, semantic links in the field weaken considerably; peripheral elements have narrow specific meanings;

the border between the nucleus and the periphery is indistinct;

2) different fields overlap, forming adjacent zones (the blurring of field boundaries is explained by the "nature" of the field as a way of reflecting reality, its variability and impermanence);

3) fields are specific in different languages.

A meaning of a word consists of two components: the denotative component, which is the subject-conceptual information reflecting the extra-linguistic reality, and the connotative component, which expresses the speaker's attitude to the subject / phenomenon / person in the form of emotion or evaluation [5; 7; 8]. It can be assumed that emotion and evaluation are related. Emotion always implies an evaluative judgment, while evaluation often does not imply emotion. Evaluation is a person's reaction to the surrounding reality expressed in language, the correlation of the real world with the world of a person's values. Evaluation is a multicomponent structure, a modal frame, a prism through which a person interprets events and phenomena of the surrounding world [9; 10]. Depending on the nature of the evaluative attribute caused by the interaction of objective and subjective factors, two types of evaluations are distinguished: general evaluation (holistic evaluation, axiological outcome) and private evaluation [11]. General evaluation operates with categories of neutral level "good/bad", "useful/harmful", "beautiful/ugly", while private evaluation is focused on a specific component of meaning that distinguishes it from the basic nuclear meaning of a certain category. Accordingly, "EVIL", despite the fact that it belongs to the category "Bad", in this paper has a general negative meaning, it is a "point of reference" of gradability of different shades of "evil" – bad, ruinous, angry, malicious, etc., on the material of the English language.

Lexical and semantic field "EVIL" has a complex structure, the basis of which is synonymic relations, which means that the units of the field are united into synonymic groups.

Analysis of dictionary definitions has shown that the evaluative component, present in all meanings of words, changes from the center to the periphery, and since there are no clear boundaries in the language, it can be stated that some linguistic units can belong to several fields at the same time. The denotative component belongs to the center of the field, while the connotative component is in the periphery.

Lexical and semantic variants with the integral attribute "evil" occupy the central position and belong to the nucleus of the field. Analysis of dictionary definitions allowed us to identify three words with integral meaning "evil" – evil, wicked, cruel. However, a study of statistical data on the frequency of use of these words brings us to the conclusion that *evil*, being the most frequently used, occupies the central position and can be attributed to the nucleus.

In order to identify integral attributes of "EVIL" field, we should pay attention to its dictionary meaning:
- *someone who is evil deliberately does very cruel things to harm other people;*
- *something morally wrong because it harms people;*
- *very unpleasant, bad;*
- *connected with the Devil and having special powers to harm people* [12].

The concept of "EVIL" has many meanings and is used in a variety of contexts. It is often associated with evil, negativity, and moral wrongness. In English, "EVIL" can be used as an adjective, a noun or even an adverb. Some dictionaries define the meaning of *bad* synonymously with *evil*, although they are not complete synonyms. But we can conclude that *evil* implies a negative general

evaluation characteristic of this lexical and semantic group. General negative evaluation is assigned to *bad* – the basis of this category, negative evaluations.

One of the basic meanings of "EVIL" is "*bad*". For example, "an evil act", "evil intentions" or "the forces of evil". In this context, "EVIL" has a moral or ethical meaning and describes actions that are harmful to others or contrary to accepted norms and values.

However, other meanings are also possible. For example, "EVIL" can be used to describe guile, cruelty, or demonic qualities. It can also be used to describe a force or entity that opposes goodness.

In English sources, "EVIL" field is often associated with philosophical and religious aspects. Many traditions and religions view "*evil*" as the opposite of "*good*" and offer various explanations for its origin and existence. Images and symbols of evil are also widely used in English literature and culture.

The analysis of the actual material allows us to draw a conclusion regarding the combinability of the word "*evil*" (1–4). Here is an approximate list of nouns that evil can define:

1) people (family members and friends; members of different professions; people in general; criminals);

2) names of objects and phenomena (body parts; feelings; words, abstract entities and phenomena);

3) actions, words and thoughts.

(1) *What **evil lust** of life is this so great that subdues us to live, so dreadfully distraught in perils and alarms?* [13].

(2) *However, one can also add that if there was one good god and one **evil god**, or even any other form of polytheism, the world would be in chaos and thus the order of the world would break down* [13].

(3) *It happened in an instant: him running up from the side, skidding to a stop, alarm and surprise on his face, followed by **an evil smile** as he raised his gun* [13].

(4) *You're **an evil person** with **an evil soul** and it will come back to you* [13].

Accordingly, the periphery will include words containing the basic integral component and differential features, in other words, denotative and connotative components. As an integral semantic attribute, it is *"morally bad, cruel, very unpleasant; something immoral; connected with the Devil, harmful"* [14], which corresponds to the general assessment or the basic level, the "reference point" of the gradation of the negative attribute.

When describing the periphery of the "EVIL" field, we should pay attention to the stylistic features of variants and the frequency of their use. When analyzing the structure of the "EVIL" field periphery, it is necessary to pay attention to paradigmatic and synonymous relations, evaluative components of meanings.

The object of the research is mainly adjectives. Analysis of dictionary definitions helps to categorize them into synonymic groups according to the predominant attribute.

The analysis of dictionary definitions allowed us to identify the following synonymic relations within the periphery of the field:
- angry, enraged;
- ill-natured, spiteful, merciless;
- harmful, malevolent;
- disgusting, malicious;
- fierce.

The following adjectives are grouped together with the meaning «*angry, enraged*»: *angry, acrimonious, annoyed, cross, baleful, bad-tempered, furious, irascible, irritable, nasty, rancorous, unpleasant, venomous.* Analysis of dictionary definitions shows the gradation of the attribute within the field from "slightly angry" to "extremely angry" and "full of anger or hate", and the reason for a person's angry state is assessed.

Initially, these adjectives are used to characterize a person and his emotional state, but the following examples show that adjectives

of this group can be combined with nouns that are atypical for their semantics: "look", "words", and can also be used to characterize an unpleasant divorce.

(5) *Reed traces Aaron's problems to her* ***rancorous divorce*** *and her alcoholic husband, who left before their daughter was 12* [13].

(6) *Her gang shot me* ***a nasty look*** *as Michelle led them in the opposite direction* [13].

(7) *Everywhere she went, she felt the sting of* ***venomous words*** *and* ***glares*** [13].

LSVs with the meaning «***harmful, malevolent***» include the following adjectives: *damaging, deleterious, detrimental, harmful, hurtful, malevolent, malignant, menacing, noxious, pernicious, ruinous, toxic, troublesome, vicious, wanton.* The evaluative meaning of these LSVs emphasizes malicious intent or just intent to harm someone. They indicate the presence of negative intentions and a desire to harm others: "*causing emotional pain*", "*disposed to cause harm, suffering*" [14].

(8) *I have been in situations where photos of exes cause a surprising amount of distress, namely to children recovering from* ***a toxic divorce*** [13].

(9) *He pats her on the shoulder and brushes past her, leaving her standing there with* ***a malevolent look*** *on her face* [13].

(10) *When Big George lumbers into the ring draped in terry-cloth robe, he looks more like your balding neighbor who just tumbled out of bed than* ***a menacing threat*** *to life and limb* [13].

(11) *She ordered herself to relax, but her head was beginning to ache with* ***a vicious pain*** *right at her temples* [13].

Analysis of the examples allows us to conclude that these lexical units have a wide compatibility with atypical nouns (8–11), thus, the emphasis falls on an unusually terrible headache (11) and a threatening look (9). In examples (8, 10) the focus is on a life-poisoning divorce and a threat to life.

The following LSVs are grouped with the meaning *"**ill-natured, spiteful**"*: *callous, cold-hearted, evil-minded, hard-hearted, heartless, inhuman, merciless, pitiless, spiteful, vengeful.* These adjectives are grouped by the attribute of the absence of human qualities – pity, mercy, kindness, sensitivity to the feelings of other people, understanding: "*without sympathy or feeling for other people*", "*not caring at all about other people's feelings*", "*lacking any human qualities*" [14]. Accordingly, they are used to characterize a person, his actions or words. However, the range of the use of these adjectives is so wide that they acquire evaluative meaning when they are used with atypical objects for their semantics (12, 14, 15).

(12) *He was so desperate for revenge that he wanted nothing but to inflict* ***merciless pain*** [13].

(13) *Why, oh, why did* ***spiteful words*** *keep slipping from her mouth? She wasn't usually such a harpy, but arguing made it easier to conceal her fear* [13].

(14) *I can't remember, but* ***the heartless destruction of Mark and Lexie's relationships*** *few seasons ago finally did me in* [13].

(15) *The guilty can not hide any longer, nor escape* ***the vengeful wrath*** *of the cosmic order!* [13].

Let us consider a group of LSVs with the meaning *"**malicious, disgusting**"*. This group includes the following variants: *abhorrent, aggressive, amoral, despicable, disgusting, dissolute, corrupt, foul, immoral, iniquitous, malicious, mischievous, nauseating, nefarious, obscene, repugnant, repulsive, revolting, turpitude, unethical, unholy, vile, villainous.* In this case, a person's immoral behavior is assessed, causing a feeling of hostility or disgust, which is confirmed by dictionary definitions and examples. However, even within the group there is a gradation from *"slightly bad"* to *"very immoral behavior"* or *"unpleasant, causing a feeling of disgust"*, *"extremely unpleasant"*.

(16) *In this country, we believe questioning the morals and honesty of a woman after she's sought help for an alleged violent and **despicable act** perpetrated upon her person – is a rather **despicable thing to do*** [13].

(17) *Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, **malicious behavior**, and gossip* [13].

(18) *It's hard to imagine **a more repulsive civic culture** than dumbed-down delusional arrogance* [13].

These LSVs are usually used to describe something that causes anxiety or displeasure due to its sinister, immoral, depraved or vicious nature. Regarding the range of use, these adjectives characterize human behavior (16, 17), his habits, smell, color, food, cruelty and even culture (18).

The following LSVs are united with the attribute «*fierce*». Cruelty is a human feeling that does not know pity, regret, or sympathy. This is the ability to cause suffering to people or animals, but cruelty can be verbal, consisting of expressing a negative attitude in verbal form: threats, insults, gossip. It can be expressed by non-verbal means: gestures, facial expressions, voice intonation. Cruelty can also be associated with violence or aggression, the physical expression of anger, angry emotional state, or the manifestation of a violent nature through actions that cause physical and/or emotional pain. This group consists of the following LSVs: *acidulous, aggressive, astringent, barbarous, barbed, brutal, catty, censorious, faultfinding, ferocious, fierce, insinuating, masochistic, snide, vicious, violent.*

(19) *There was **an acidulous resentment** in the tone of her answer that indicated that she wanted her husband to send me away* [13].

(20) *She didn't reply – she merely smiled that **insinuating smile*** [14].

(21) ***The vicious vile attacks** against the few Hollywood types who dared to come out for Romney is telling* [13].

Conclusion

The lexical and semantic field is a complex hierarchically organized structure consisting of lexical and semantic variants related to different parts of speech, but in this article, only adjectives were considered, united by an integral semantic characteristic, which is "morally bad, cruel, or very unpleasant" for LSF "EVIL". The field is divided into a nucleus and a periphery. The lexical and semantic field "EVIL" is associated with the concepts of evil and negativity. It includes lexical units connected by various semantic relationships.

In addition, the LSF "EVIL" has a strong evaluative negative component, which makes it special within the framework of communication in English. In this article, the evaluation is understood as an individual reaction to the surrounding reality, which is correlated by comparing the realities of the world with a specific set of values. Thus, a person interprets reality by passing it through himself. The study of this LSF made it possible to see the distinctive features of this concept in a cultural context.

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