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Lexical semantics of the nouns denoting “honour” in English and Ukrainian

Лексична семантика іменників на позначення “honour” в англійській та українській мовах

Summary. *The article aims at analysing the lexical semantics of English and Ukrainian lexemes denoting “honour”. The analysed samples are divided into the groups of polysemantic lexemes, lexical units with the middle degree of polysemy and monosemantic units.*

The common features of the polysemantic lexical units denoting “honour” in English and Ukrainian are the indication to respect, esteem, reverence, attention, heed or consideration given to a thing or a person, adoration, praise, thoughtfulness for other people, kindness, care or concern for something, etc. The lexical semantics of Ukrainian polysemantic words is characterized by distinctive features that define “honour” as consent, permission, baptizing someone by saying a prayer; glory, glorification, gift, etc. English polysemantic words manifest the individual traits that define the actualized phenomenon as a pleasure to recognize positive qualities of a person, the feeling of being grateful for something, etc.

The lexemes with the middle degree of polysemy reveal the following common semantic features: polite behaviour that shows respect for other people, public praise and reward for somebody’s work or actions, etc. The individual semantic features of English lexemes describe “honour” as a nonverbal means of an indication of approval or recognition; a positive opinion of somebody. The Ukrainian lexemes reveal the following differentiating semantic feature defining “honour” as exaggerated praise, flattery, etc.

The monosemantic lexemes manifest the following common semantic features: great respect and admiration; a good opinion of somebody, the act of showing a lot of respect for a person, honour and praise given to somebody because of their achievements, insincere praise. The individual semantic features of English lexemes include the words interpreting “honour” as a speech or piece of writing praising somebody, an extravagantly approving appraisal or review, while Ukrainian language units reveal the following differentiating semantic feature defining “honour” as a prize or other mark of recognition given in honour of achievement and a person who likes paying compliments.

Key words: *lexical semantics, polysemantic lexeme, middle degree of polysemy, monosemantic lexeme, common feature, differential feature.*

Анотація. Метою статті є аналіз лексичної семантики англійських та українських іменників, що позначають “*honour*”. Досліджувані вибірки в обох мовах були поділені на групи полісемантичних лексем, слів із середнім ступенем полісемії та моносемантичних мовних одиниць.

Спільними рисами полісемантичних лексичних одиниць, що позначають “*honour*” в англійській та українській мовах, є вказівка на повагу, пошану, благоговіння, увагу, турботу, виявлену до людини, особливостей етикетної поведінки. Лексична семантика українських полісемантичних слів характеризується відмінними ознаками, що визначають “*honour*” як згоду, дозвіл; хрещення будь-кого з проголошенням молитви; славу, прославлення, дар. Англійські полісемантичні слова виявляють диференційні риси, що визначають актуалізоване явище як задоволення від визнання позитивних якостей особи, відчуття подяки за щось тощо.

Лексеми із середнім ступенем полісемії мають такі спільні семантичні ознаки, як: ввічлива поведінка, що демонструє повагу до інших людей, публічна похвала та нагорода за чіюсь роботу чи дії тощо. Індивідуальні семантичні ознаки англійських лексем тлумачать поняття “*honour*” як невербальний засіб вираження схвалення або визнання; позитивну думку про особу. Українські лексеми виявляють диференційну семантичну ознаку, що визначає досліджуване поняття як перебільшену похвалу, лестощі тощо.

Моносемантичні лексеми відрізняються такими спільними семантичними ознаками, як: велика повага та захоплення; висока думка про особу; прояв великої поваги до людини; шана і похвала, що висловлюється особі за її досягнення, а також нещира похвала. Індивідуальні семантичні ознаки англійських лексем включають слова, що інтерпретують “*honour*” як похвальну письмову або усну промову, надмірно схвальну оцінку або відгук, тоді як українські мовні одиниці маніфестують диференційну семантичну ознаку, що визначає досліджуване поняття як приз або інший прояв визнання за досягнення, а також людину, яка схильна робити компліменти.

Ключові слова: лексична семантика, полісемантична лексема, середній ступінь полісемії, моносемантична лексема, спільна ознака, диференційна ознака.

Introduction. The metaphorical description of language as a mirror of culture [5, p. 8] implies that language units of different levels reflect and interpret the features of ethnic worldview, national cultural values and mentality of the linguistic and cultural community speaking a language. Considering this viewpoint, it is also necessary to take into account the fact that the specificity of culture finds different forms of its manifestation in diverse language units, and the units of different language levels have varying degrees of cultural sensitivity. Undoubtedly, the greatest degree of cultural sensitivity belongs to the lexicon of a language and its phraseological fund [6, p. 21].

The lexicon of a language is a kind of “map” which reflects the features of geography and landscape, climate and activities of people belonging to a particular nation, and, as a consequence, the importance of certain

concepts and their place in the axiological worldview, which is a component of the conceptual worldview. The lexis registers not only the past but also the present of the language and culture, instantly responding to the need to name new phenomena or give secondary nominations to the old ones. The significance of a certain concept and the phenomenon of a certain culture behind it determines its “lexical procreation”, i.e., the presence of numerous denotations of it in the language [8]. The notion of *honour* belongs to such culturally significant concepts both in English and Ukrainian which is manifested in numerous vocabulary units nominating this semantic domain.

The study aims to scientifically substantiate the method for a contrastive analysis of the semantics of nouns denoting *honour*, as well as to reveal their differentiating and common semantic features in the English and Ukrainian languages.

Methodology. The language lexicon performs a nominative function naming through words and phrases the results of our cognition of the world, and the means of nomination is a word (lexeme) – the main unit of the lexical level of language, considered in the totality of its forms and meanings and is a bilateral entity with form and content, or meaning, relations between which are characterized by a significant degree of flexibility: the same form can convey different meanings (homonymy), the same meaning can be conveyed by different words (synonymy), the same form can be used to express several meanings (polysemy). The lexicon of a language, as we have already noted, is the most dynamic part of the language system, as it is constantly replenished with new units, while old units go out of everyday use. The specificity of culture has various forms of manifestation in the lexicon of language. It is reflected in the fact that the naming of the same phenomena in different languages may be based on different features, which is associated with the conditions of ethnic populations, the type of their activity, climatic and geographical conditions, etc. The insight into this cultural specificity in various languages is gained by employing contrastive analysis.

The comparison of languages is as old as the study of languages themselves. It may have begun immediately after the Babylonian mixture, when, according to a biblical myth, a unified language was replaced by linguistic diversity. Contrastive typology as an independent branch of linguistics is characterized by an interdisciplinary nature, since the typological comparison is based on the knowledge from general language theory, phonetics, lexicology and grammar of the languages under study, as well as the knowledge from such disciplines as ethnolinguistics and linguoculturology. Research in the field of typology also relies on new approaches

to the study of language, and new scientific paradigms. The leading paradigm of contemporary linguistic theory today is the anthropocentric paradigm, in the context of which language is studied from an anthropocentric perspective, from the standpoint of the human factor, and linguistics itself actively cooperates with all the sciences whose object is a person, his/her history, culture, and psychology, etc.

The traditions existing in contrastive linguistics, as well as the tasks set in the article and the specificity of the material of the study have led to the need to use a set of methods of modern lexicography focused on comparing the data of the Ukrainian and English languages. The samples for such a comparison were collected with the help of definitional and component analysis of lexicographic sources. The study of the systemic and structural organization of the lexical-semantic group *honour* in the modern Ukrainian and English languages is performed using the method of formalized analysis of lexical semantics, which is based on an integral synthesis of linguistic and structural-mathematical methods.

In order to determine the sample of lexemes denoting *honour* in the compared languages, we have analysed the meanings of the key lexemes *honour* in English and *уага* in Ukrainian.

The polysemantic lexeme *honour* denotes showing respect for others which is obvious in the meaning “respect, esteem, reverence”. Other meanings include: “deferential esteem felt or shown”, “exalted rank, position, dignity, distinction”, “something conferred or done as a token of respect or distinction”; “a mark or manifestation of high regard”; “a position or title of rank, a degree of nobility, a dignity”. In the plural form, the noun also denotes “special rank or distinction conferred by a university, college, or school upon an outstanding student” [7]. The analysed noun reveals a high degree of polysemy due to the combinability of the lexeme with words belonging to different parts of speech, for example: *in honour of, upon one's honour, to do honour to, code or law of honours, a guard of honour, guest of honour, a mark of honour, etc.*

On the basis of the outlined semantic features of the lexeme *honour*, English words denoting this notion have been selected from the thesaurus of the English language. In the process of the research, we have formed a sample of the lexemes: *acclaim, acclamation, accolade, account, admiration, adoration, adulation, aggrandizement, apotheosis, applause, appreciation, approval, attention, celebration, cheer, commendation, confidence, consideration, courtesy, credit, deference, dignity, distinction, eminence, encomium, esteem, eulogy, faith, fame, favour, felicitation, flattery, glory, homage, kudos, laudation, laurels, nod, obeisance, ovation, praise, prestige, rave, recognition, regard, reputation, respect, reverence, tribute, veneration, etc.*

In order to determine the lexemes denoting *honour* in Ukrainian, we have analysed the meanings of the lexeme *шана* which is defined as follows: «1. до кого-чого і без додатка. Почуття поваги, що ґрунтується на визнанні великих чеснот, суспільної ваги або позитивних якостей кого-, чого-небудь; пошана; Шанобливе ставлення до когось, чогось; Зовнішній вияв почуття поваги до кого-, чого-небудь; почесні. 2. Те саме, що частування» [1]. The semantics of honour is also revealed in the set expressions with the noun *шана*: *віддавати (віддати і т. ін.) шану; віддавати (віддати) останню шану; складати (скласти) останню шану; у (в) шані; у шані бути (жити і т. ін.); честь і шана; шани здобути (зажити і т. ін.); шану мати.*

Based on the outlined semantic features of the lexeme *шана*, Ukrainian words denoting *honour* have been selected from the thesaurus of the Ukrainian language. In the process of the research, we have formed the sample of the following lexemes: *благоговіння, благословення, вдячність, ввічливість, визнання, відзнака, вітання, вшанування, данина, дифірамби, захват, захоплення, звеличення, зглядь, комплімент, компліментник, лаври, лестощі, мадригал, нагорода, обожнювання, овації, оплески, панегірик, пієтет, поклін, преклоніння, признание, прихильність, повага, поважання, поклін, поклоніння, похвала, похваляння, пошана, пошанівок, престиж, респект, слава, схвалення, схиляння, увага, хвала, хвальба, частування, честь, шанування, шляхетність, etc.*

According to the number of their meanings, the lexemes have been classified into polysemantic lexemes, lexemes with the middle degree of polysemy and monosemantic lexemes. For the convenience of analysis, they have been subdivided into three main groups: words with the highest degree of polysemy characterized by seven or more meanings, words with the middle degree of polysemy having from two to six meanings and monosemantic words.

In order to study semantic characteristics of the lexical units under research, the procedure of formalized lexical semantic analysis has been used [2; 3; 4]. This method allows to explicitly reveal the semantics of the nouns denoting *honour* in English and Ukrainian ascertaining the correlations between the words and their meanings, singling out the peculiarities of their seme composition. According to their occurrence in words, semes in English and Ukrainian lexemes denoting *honour* have been classified into polyfunctional, semes with the middle degree of functionality and monofunctional semes.

Results and Discussions. The words denoting *honour* in the Ukrainian and English languages are characterized by universal (common properties, human genetic code) and individual (predetermined by a national

mentality specific to a particular language) features. In this connection, the comparison of the semantic space of the nouns in the contrasted languages has revealed the general human universals and national peculiarities of the world reflection in a person's linguistic consciousness and presented peculiarities of the systematic and structural organization of vocabulary denoting *honour* in the Ukrainian and English languages in their quantitative and qualitative correlations. The quantitative lexical and seme composition of nouns are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Lexical and seme composition of nouns denoting *honour* in English and Ukrainian

<i>Language sample</i>	English		Ukrainian	
	total number	percentage	total number	percentage
Lexemes:	50	100	50	100
Polysemantic	12	24	13	26
With the middle degree of polysemy	17	34	20	40
Monosemantic	21	42	17	34
Semes:	36	100	42	100
Polyfunctional	9	25	7	16,6
With the middle degree of functionality	16	44,4	19	41,4
Monofunctional	11	30,6	16	17

Two samples of lexemes designating *honour* in modern Ukrainian and English is represented in the study by the same number of units (50 lexemes) and is characterized by varying degrees of polysemy – from words with the highest degree of polysemy to monosemantic language units. As the data of Table 1 show, the lexemes with the middle degree of polysemy constitute the largest group of the language material Ukrainian (20 lexemes in Ukrainian). English monosemantic units are represented by 21 lexemes in English and constitute the largest group under study. Thus, the qualitative parameters of Ukrainian and English lexemes denoting *honour* may be considered as a differentiating feature in the contrasted languages.

Considering the quantitative characteristic of semes, it should be noted that Ukrainian lexemes are represented by a significantly bigger number of distinguished semes which constitute 42 units, while English words are characterized by 36 semes. However, the subdivision of the semes into polyfunctional, with the middle degree of functionality and monofunctional semes shows a similar tendency in both languages. Thus,

English and Ukrainian semantic space of honour is mainly characterized by semes with the middle degree of functionality, while polyfunctional semes are the least representative.

The common features of the polysemantic lexical units belonging to the lexico-semantic group *honour* in English and Ukrainian are the indication to respect, esteem, reverence; deferential regard or esteem felt or shown towards a person or thing; attention, heed or consideration given to a thing a person; adoration, praise; thoughtfulness for other people, kindness; care or concern for something, which are evident in such Ukrainian and English words as *honour*; *regard*, *respect*, *consideration*, *вшанування*, *признання*, *увага*, *шанування*, *шана*.

The lexical semantics of Ukrainian polysemantic words denoting *honour* is characterized by distinctive features that define this notion as consent, permission; baptizing someone by saying a prayer; glory, glorification; gift (*благословення*), bow, greeting showing your gratitude to anyone, congratulations expressing verbally or in writing your respect for a person (*поклін*, *поклоніння*), great internal exaltation, excitement; fervor; increased interest, passionate desire, passion for something; admiration (*захват*).

English polysemantic words denoting *honour* manifest the individual traits that define this phenomenon as a pleasure that a person feels when he/she recognizes and enjoys the good qualities of somebody, the feeling of being grateful for something (*appreciation*), approval or support for somebody (*favour*), a highly praiseworthy asset (*glory*), the respect and honour associated with an important position (*dignity*).

English and Ukrainian lexemes with the middle degree of polysemy reveal the following common semantic features: polite behaviour that shows respect for other people (*courtesy*, *пошана*, *пошанівок*, *ввічливість*), public praise and reward for somebody's work or actions (*recognition*, *визнання*, *вітання*), speech or piece of writing praising somebody (*eulogy*, *cheer*, *praise*, *мадригал*, *панегірик*), etc.

The individual semantic features of English lexemes include the words characterizing *honour* as a nonverbal means of an indication of approval or recognition (*nod*), and the feeling that somebody/something is good or acceptable; a positive opinion of somebody/something (*approval*).

The Ukrainian lexemes denoting *honour* reveal the following differentiating semantic feature defining this phenomenon as exaggerated praise, flattery (*дуфірамб*). It is also worth noting that Ukrainian lexemes with the middle degree of polysemy manifest the semantic features referring them to other spheres of human activities (toll, impost, tax – *данина*).

English and Ukrainian monosemantic lexemes manifest the following common semantic features: great respect and admiration; a good opinion

of somebody (*esteem, песект, ніетет*), the act of showing a lot of respect for somebody (*veneration, благоговіння*), the noise made by a group of people clapping their hands and sometimes shouting to show their approval or enjoyment (*applause, ovation, овації, оплески*), honour and praise given to somebody because of something that they have achieved (*laurels, лаври*), praise that is not sincere, especially in order to obtain something from somebody (*flattery, лестощі*).

The individual semantic features of English lexemes include the words characterizing *honour* as a speech or piece of writing praising somebody/something (*panegyric*), an extravagantly approving appraisal or review (*rave*), while Ukrainian lexemes denoting *honour* reveal the following differentiating semantic feature defining this semantic space as a prize or other mark of recognition given in honour of an achievement (*нагорода*) and a person who likes paying compliments (*компліментник*).

Conclusions. The study has manifested that the nouns denoting *honour* occupy an essential place within the lexical systems of the English and Ukrainian languages, and are considered to be fundamental notions and an intrinsic part of humanity and human culture.

Contrastive analysis of lexical semantics of nouns belonging to the lexico-semantic group *honour* in the Ukrainian and English languages allowed us to comprehensively describe the structure of their lexical meanings, identify the degree of their semantic affinity, reveal the nature of semantic functionality. The research determines the place and role of each lexical unit in the semantic space of the languages under study, to single out their most essential characteristics, the relationship between the studied words and their meanings, to identify the types of relations between them, and to reveal semantic regularities of forming lexical fragments denoting *honour* in the languages under study.

The lexical-semantic groups of nouns denoting *honour* in modern English and Ukrainian are characterized by a complex and multi-element structure. The analysed samples are divided into the following groups: polysemantic lexemes, lexical units with the middle degrees of polysemy and monosemantic units. The study manifests that the main part of the vocabulary denoting *honour* in the contrasted languages constitutes the words with the middle degree of polysemy.

The formal features used in determining the contrasted lexical-semantic groups contain both common and differential features of the studied notion, defining the nature of *honour*, its place in the Ukrainian and English language worldviews, the ways of its manifestation, and the means of implementation, etc. The common properties of lexical units denoting *honour* in Ukrainian and English include the availability of polysemy and synonymy; direct and indirect links between words; semantics of verbal

and non-verbal expression of *honour* by the words in the contrasted languages; the subdivision of polysemantic words into groups according to the degree of polysemy; the presence of monosemantic lexemes; the subdivision of semes into groups according to the degree of functionality into polyfunctional and monofunctional ones.

The differential characteristics of nouns denoting *honour* in English and Ukrainian include quantitatively different semantic and seme composition of the analysed lexemes in the contrasted languages; the individual nature of semantics in English and Ukrainian lexemes; the varying qualitative features of semes in the composition of nouns in both languages. Thus, we can conclude that the features of a nation's culture and mentality may find different ways of their representation in the lexicon of a language.

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