

## ФИЛОЛОГИЯ

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### К ВОПРОСУ ОБ ОСОБЕННОСТЯХ СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОЙ СТРУКТУРЫ СУЩЕСТВИТЕЛЬНЫХ ЛИЦА В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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**Аннотация.** Вопрос о типах семантических структур и принципах их внутренней организации, а также о том, строятся ли семантические структуры слов, принадлежащих к разным лексико-семантическим группам, одинаково все еще представляется актуальным. Типы семантических структур и принципы их внутренней организации требует дополнительного рассмотрения в современной лингвистике. В данной статье предпринята попытка ответить на эти вопросы и рассмотреть особенности семантической структуры слова с точки зрения его связи с группой, в которую входят типологически сходные слова. Поскольку такая постановка проблемы связывает понятие семантической структуры слова с понятием семантической или лексико-семантической группы (ЛСГ), далее мы сосредоточимся не только на вопросе о принципах организации семантических структур, но и попытаемся выявить общие основы строения семантической структуры слова.

**Ключевые слова:** семантика, лексико-семантические варианты, дериваты, частотность.

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## PHILOLOGY

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Original article

### On semantic structure peculiarities of person nominating nouns in modern English

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**Abstract.** The question of the types of semantic structures themselves and the principles of their internal organization, as well as whether the semantic structures of words belonging to different semantic groupings are built in the same way or not, still urgent. The issue of the semantic structures' types and the principles of the internal organization of the former still remains disputable in the modern linguistics. This article attempts to answer these questions and consider the features of the semantic structure of a word from the point of view of its connection with the group that includes words of the same type in this sense. Since such a statement of the problem connects the concept of the semantic structure of a word with the concept of a semantic or lexico-semantic group (LSG), next we will focus not only on the question of the principles of the organization of semantic structures, but also try to show the general foundations of the organization of the studied group of words.

**Key words:** semantics, lexico-semantic group, lexico-semantic variants, derivatives, frequency.

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#### *Introduction*

Defined within the framework of the hierarchy of connections formed by individual meanings of a polysemous word, and revealed through the identification and concretization of individual types of lexical meanings, the concept of the semantic structure of a word has been described up to

the present time either through the enumeration of the status features of the word, or through the establishment of semantic features of the nominative meaning of the word [15; 12]. However, the question of the types of semantic structures themselves and the principles of their internal organization, as well as whether the semantic structures of words belonging to different semantic groupings are built in the same way or not, still urgent. However, the issue of the semantic structures' types and the principles of the internal organization of the former still remains disputable in the modern linguistics. From the practical and theoretical perspectives, the question whether the semantic structures of words belonging to different semantic groupings are built in the same way or not does not leave the researchers indifferent.

Once proposed by R.S. Ginzburg, the idea that certain linguistic characteristics may coincide in words united by a common semantic component has been confirmed in a number of studies. However, the focus of these works was on the relationship between the referential attribution of words and their combinable features [2; 3], the relationship between the thematic attribution of a word and the types of semantic connections of words [9], the relationship between the thematic attribution of a word and the type of figurative meaning [5]. In line with this research trend, the work on the designations of a person has also been carried out, examining the paradigmatic and syntagmatic properties of the members of this group [8]. We suppose that the parameters by which the author establishes the common features of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic properties of the members of the grouping, united by a common extralinguistic relationship, undoubtedly contribute to the comprehensive study of such an important subsystem of the language as LSG [1]. Our research, however, poses other tasks and is aimed at studying the features of the semantic structure of words belonging to the same grouping.

The analysis showed that the description of the semantics of a word considered as part of a certain LSG allows identify regular features, signs peculiar to the semantic structures of words of this grouping, as well as the main patterns in the nature of the connection of individual lexico-semantic variants (LSV) in the semantic structure of these words. The identification of such common features and their juxtaposition with those of members of other groupings will contribute both to the verification of types of semantic structures of words and to the identification of common structural properties of various LSG(s), but at this stage we will consider only one side of the problem – the organization of semantic structures in words united by the presence of the same meaning (person) [14].

Since this study focuses on the study of the structural and semantic features of words, it seems important to dwell on the definition of the very concept of the semantic structure of a word. The concept of the semantic structure of a word, first put forward by V.V. Vinogradov, as a set of its lexical meanings and grammatical forms, has been well developed. Without further elaborating on the various interpretations of this concept, we note that in this paper the semantic structure of a word is considered as such a set of LSV, the core of which is the main first meaning fixed in the dictionary. It, in turn, is studied in terms of a concentric theory, which allows us to trace the interaction of various layers in its heterogeneous content, presenting the latter as a set of one of the nuclear categorial features of a person, signs of semantic grouping (gender and age, relational feature, etc.) [6], of individual meaning. The image of the structure turns out to be concentric due to the fact that several shells are sequentially allocated in the meanings of the word (from the core), corresponding to transitions from the most abstract (categorial) meaning to the individual meaning of the word [10].

In the present work, the analysis of semantic structures of words is carried out on the basis of frequency that the nouns with the meaning of a person show within the dictionary context. The spectrum of nouns was selected from the frequency dictionaries [16; 13]. When comparing the nouns selected from the first two thousand frequency words of the English language for each of the dictionaries, only those units that were present in at least two sources were included into the list. As a result, nouns from the general list of frequency words formed a group of 530 units. 52 units (10%) were nouns nominating a person and it is these nouns that are to be analyzed in this paper.

### *Discussion*

The designations of a person in the noun system usually occupy an important place. Language, being a product of human thinking and cognition, is aimed at reflecting objective reality, and therefore the vocabulary of language finds its indirect expression of human knowledge about the world around us, in particular, knowledge about man as a certain biological and social entity [4]. In the noun system, the names of a person form a separate LSG. Such a group turned out to be easily distinguished, since all its members were identified by the presence of the person identifier contained explicitly or implicitly in the dictionary definitions of the corresponding nouns. A study of the latter showed that the person identifier (less often, human being), which combines an indication of undifferentiated signs of gender and age common to the entire group, occurs explicitly only once, and mainly in definitions of derived nouns denoting occupation or profession, as well as a person as a carrier of a trait or property, it also occurs in the group of nouns denoting personal and some other types of relationships [11]. In other cases, the role of identifiers in dictionary definitions is performed by words “man”, “woman”. It means that when describing a person, one of the opposite signs (male/female) is specified. In the same cases, when these features included in a certain set of semantic components are not essential and therefore turn out to be neutralized, the person identifier is presented in the definition in an explicit form / it is clear that in all cases, the person identifier can be replaced by a combination of a man or a woman who... etc.

In the course of a more detailed analysis, other common semantic features were identified, which served as the basis for dividing this class of nouns into smaller groupings. In the hierarchy of general semantic features, according to the degree of generalization, they follow categorical features, starting with the division from the attribute "animated state" into "person" and "non-person". Further, the sign "person" subordinates, on the one hand, biological signs "gender or age", as well as "family relations"), and on the other – social (social status, social hierarchy, a sign reflecting personal, etc. types of relationships, profession or occupation, a sign indicating a person as a carrier of a certain property). At the top of this hierarchy of features is the classification of the entire LSG of nouns with the meaning of a person, 6 groups of nouns are distinguished here, respectively.

The most numerous names in this classification were those identified by gender/age and family hierarchy. This is due to the fact that when selecting a unit, we proceeded from the criterion of frequency (and as a result, exemplary nouns came here first). A special description of these groups of frequent nouns turned out to be necessary, since the study of their structural organization helps to identify the initial principle of the construction of the entire LSG, and the analysis of the semantic structure of the members of these subgroups helps to shed light on the structural and semantic characteristics of other LSG members. In particular, 10 units out of the analyzed 52 personal designations (all the former are included in subgroups identified by gender/age, family hierarchy) act as identifiers in the definitions of other frequent as well as non-frequent nouns.

These groups are also interesting because a characteristic feature of their structural organization is the juxtaposition of the members of the grouping according to one or more characteristics, which is clearly demonstrated by a group of person nominations based on signs of gender or age. All members of this group are in a kind of antonymic and hyperonymic relations.

The relations between the members of the group develop into the following oppositions: on the one hand, they stand out two antonymic pairs “man – woman, boy – girl”, opposed according to one of the main characteristics, namely: on the basis of gender. On the other hand, we observe a kind of antonymic relations in the “man – boy, woman – girl” pairs, based on the juxtaposition of age signs with unchanged generic (male) female, at the top of the scheme there is a word – group identifier forming hyperlexemic rows: person – man – boy – child – baby, person – woman – girl – child – baby.

But different age periods are fixed, and each time there is a kind of narrowing of semantics; since the sign of age relevant from the point of view of hyperonymy, implicitly contained in

person, is made more concrete/ explicit in the definitions of hyponyms, and in the words baby and child it is reduced to an undifferentiated (by gender) designation of the infant and children's age.

It is noteworthy that for frequent nouns within the framework of the LSG we are considering, such types of communication as hypero-hyponymy and antonymy are more characteristic. However, when going beyond the material limited by the frequency criterion, this position changes, and a number of synonymous pairs may be eliminated in the group (cf.: person and adult, woman and female, baby and infant). Broader opportunities also appear for the representation of antonymic connections, for example, in the juxtaposition of signs of supremacy and subordination (cf.; queen – vassal), personal relationships (cf.: friend. – enemy).

In general, the signs of gender and age turn out to be basic and serve as the basis for the structural organization of the entire LSG. As the study showed, this group is organized mainly by the opposition of hierarchical, biological, as well as social characteristics. These relations, so typical for the subgroup we have considered, are also observed in the entire group of nouns with the meaning of "persons". Thus, the basic nature of the scheme we have considered allows us to extrapolate it to other particular subgroups and create a more complex grid of relationships, when each element of the system is, in turn, an independent system according to its own set of relationships.

For example, nouns located at the points of intersection establish hyperhyponymic connections with members of other subgroups of names of a person by means of generalization and specializations. The meanings of such nouns include a minimal set of semantic features that are integral in nature, which, together with a number of other relevant features, contain potential opportunities for semantic development (cf.: man – masters man – father, etc.).

On the other hand, in the group of names reflecting family relations, the sign of the family hierarchy together with the basic signs of gender and age allows us to establish oppositions, on the one hand, on the basis of gender (cf.: husband – wife), on the other – on the basis of generation and family hierarchy (cf.: mother – daughter)" In a group formed on the basis of the sign of "social hierarchies, the constant signs of "gender" and "age" turn out to be combined (they are explicated either when there are special designations of male and female, such as,) for example; in queen – king, or when the man/woman or male/female component acts as an identifier, human being (cf: masters: f. a man who has others working for him or under him. At the same time, the leading, group-forming feature turns out to be irrelevant for constructing the oppositions described by us and reveals the possibilities of semantic opposition when expanding the list of words under study. Signs of a social (less often, biological) hierarchy in this group indicate two types of interpersonal relations: 1) when indicating primacy and subordination (cf. master – chief); 2) the relationship of the part to the whole (member). It is equally important to study the semantic relations in the studied grouping and to establish the features of the semantic structures of the LSG members themselves. The analysis of the organization of the structures of the studied words showed that there is a clear parallelism between the structure of LSG and the community of components constituting the semantic structures of the studied nouns. Although this similarity is not complete, it is still regular, and it is most pronounced in the group of simple nouns.

So, in a group containing indications of age, derived values, usually associated with nominative relations of generalization and specialization, can express kinship relations (girl – daughter), specify occupation (maid – servant, male – servant).

Nouns expressing the idea of primacy have a related meaning in one of the LSG, denoting knowledge (Commander in Chief, Officer in Charge, Bachelor of Science). Names combined on the basis of "social status" act as a form of address (sir, miss), and in a group expressing personal and other types of relationships, derived meanings are distinguished indicating belonging to a group (cf.: passengers: 1) member of a team who does no effective work; guests. 2) a person not a regular member of a cast who appears on a program); belonging to the same class or type (cf.: fellow; 3) be of the same kind class; friend; 4) one that is of the same nation or group),

A compact grouping of derived names stands out, the structural and semantic organization of which, as is known, has a fundamentally different, dubious nature. All derivatives in our study were included in that subclass of nouns that is united by the meaning of a profession or occupation and which is motivated by some property or feature (cf.: actor, criminal). In other groupings, derived words are either absent altogether or are represented by isolated cases. There are 10 derived names among the selected units, which accounted for 17% of the total number of nouns; 6 of them are in the group designating a person as a carrier of a certain property or trait. It should be noted that the distribution of simple and derived words in our group is inversely proportional to what is observed in the language system as a whole, where derivatives clearly predominate among the designations of a person.

The dependence of the derivative on the motivating word and at the same time its ability to act as an independent unit of nomination determines the specifics of its semantic nature [7]. The fact that motivating words in our material belong to different lexical and grammatical categories (cf.: strange adj. – stranger n., crime n. – criminal n., to act v. – actor n.), as well as the fact that the sphere of motivation includes different LSG, determines the lack of parallelism in the structure of semantic structures of words, peculiar to simple names.

#### *Conclusion*

Thus, the analysis of the structural organization of the studied LSG allows us to conclude that the members of the grouping unite not only due to the presence of a common identifier in the definitions of words, but also reveal the same type of semantic relationships, which are especially pronounced in the juxtaposition or unification of well-defined semantic features. In addition, it is important to emphasize that the presence of similar components constituting the semantic structures of the studied words is observed in opposable antonymic or hyper-hyponymic pairs, which indicates a well-known dependence of the structure of semantic structures of words on the hierarchical organization of the LSG itself. The presence of regular parallelism in the semantic organization of the names of "persons" creates opportunities for a deeper study of the structural and semantic features of both frequent and non-frequent nouns.

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