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Ethnolinguistic and Cultural Modulations of Semantic Structure of Lexeme PEACE in the Context of Evolution of the British Linguistic World Image

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Abstract. The article presents the attempt to model the British linguistic world image of the 19th– 21st centuries applying ethnolinguistic and linguistic-cultural surveys. The paper considers the transformation of the linguistic view of the world in the context of the analysis of the semantic structure modification of the lexeme **peace** using the lexicographical sources of Britain during the last four centuries. The definitions of the lexeme under study are schematically given in the chart in the original language. Using the systemic lexicographical analysis of the linguistic view of the world the attempt is made to connect national cultural features of the English language with social ethnic peculiarities of the native speakers. The semantic structure of the word is considered through the tight connection with the hierarchy of ideas in the mental world model.

Keywords: *linguistic culturology, ethnolinguistic, linguistic world image, semantic structure of the world, definition, lexical meaning, lexeme, sememe, seme.*

The questions of language and culture interconnection, and their influence on each other have been under investigation for many years. There exist a great number of thoughts about these problems but a definite and generally accepted theory has not been invented yet. To assist scholars in finding the solution appeared new branches of Linguistics which conduct various researches of cultural and ethnic components of a language, of linguistic personality, and linguistic stereotypes. There are also discussions about differentiation between linguistic and conceptual world images. In this article an attempt to trace the development of the British linguistic world image by means of the structural semantic changes of the lexeme **peace** is made. Topicality of this research may be put as follows: in modern Linguistics there is a tendency to study language phenomena through extralinguistic factors in close connection with the mental structural society model. Speaking about the tasks it has to be mentioned that the analysis of evolution of the lexeme **peace** makes it possible to describe the peculiarities of transformation of mental, value, ethnocultural and others world models.

The first to speak about active and constructional properties of a language and its ability to influence the formation of culture, psychology, and creativity were Wilhelm von Humboldt and Johan Gottfried Herder. Humboldt's ideas continued in the works of L. Weisgerber, A. Potebnya, E. Sapir, B. Whorf, K. Vossler and others. During the last decades the question of language and culture was actively developed by A. Wierzbicka, N. Arutyunova, V. Teliya, O. Kubryakova, V. Maslova, O. Selivanova, V. Kostomarov, V. Vorobjov, M. Tolstoy and others. The semantic structure of a word is studied in detail by V. Gak, S. Katsnelson, E. Kuznetsov, Zh. Sokolovska, D. Shmelyov and others.

It is considered that the tradition of studying connections between language, thought, culture, and spiritual life begins with the works of German philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt. He wrote that person's thought and world viewing are determined by a specific language. The scholar understood language as an activity of a human spirit [3, p. 105-106]. According to Humboldt language is the external manifestation of folk spirit: a language of a nation is its spirit, and a spirit of a nation is its language. The primary element of this chain is peoples' spirit which exerts influence on a language; the stronger influence, the richer and more orderly the language development is [5, p. 405; 2, p. 147].

Humboldt's ideas were developed in the works of other famous linguists. Thus, Alexander Potebnya asserted that language does not just express ideas, it creates them. The scholar reinterpreted and complemented to the concept of the internal form of a language by Humboldt. According to Potebnya the internal form of a word is its etymological meaning the image of which is retained by speakers of a certain language [3, p. 106]. German linguist Johan Leo Weisgerber adhered to the similar idea: human language creates the world image by means of consciousness i.e. a language determines a world-view, and it allows to unite all experience of a community in the unique picture of the world [1, p. 51; 3, p. 105-106].

The representatives of American Linguistics Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf also worked on the problem of connection between language and culture. The first talked about the impossibility of reality cognition without language facilities [5, p. 406; 4, p. 107]. The second asserted that the reality perception and our consciousness are determined exactly by language [7, p. 174].

As it may be observed in all cases there arises the notion of world modeling by means of language which makes us think about the concept of linguistic world image. Zhanna Sokolovska understands linguistic world image as a totality of people's ideas about the real world which is fixed in the system of meanings of a certain language, in its lexico-semantic subsystem of the general semantic system, in the structure of encyclopedic and explanatory dictionaries, in numberless speech situations, texts of different kinds, genres, and finally in individual intercourse [6, p. 87].

If we take into account the fact that vocabulary plays a significant role in the construction of the linguistic world image because lexicalization of a notion proves its special value, meaning, importance for a certain culture, then it is possible to consider an explanatory dictionary to be the best source of such lexemes.

An explanatory dictionary can be treated as a cultural object which represents and forms the culture of a nation, and simultaneously it can be a linguistic product which accumulates the results of research of all branches of Linguistics; it is a difficult multilevel and many-sided creation which reflects the system of a unique national linguistic consciousness of a concrete epoch [8, p. 117].

In this article the attempt to describe the development of British linguistic world image using the method of component analysis of dictionary definitions is made. For

this purpose the interpretations of the lexeme under study are given in the table which as a design tool allows to present semantic structure of a word. For further explanations it is necessary to introduce the notions of “lexeme”,

“sememe”, “seme”. A lexeme is a polysemous word; sememe is a separate meaning of lexeme; seme is an elementary component of meaning [6, p. 66-68; 7, p. 85-86; 8, p. 89].

Table 1.

Peace			
	1768, 1792	1828	1909
1	respite from war	respite from war	freedom from, cessation of war or hostilities; that condition of a nation or community in which it is not at war with another
2	quiet from suits or disturbance	quiet from disturbance	a ratification or treaty of peace between two powers previously at war
3	rest from any commotion	rest from any commotion	freedom from civil commotion and disorder; public order and security
4	stillness from riots or tumults	stillness from riots or tumults	freedom from disturbance or perturbation; quiet, tranquility, undisturbed state
5	reconciliation of differences	reconciliation of differences	freedom from quarrels or dissension between individuals; state of friendliness; concord, amity
6	a state not hostile	a state not hostile	freedom from mental or spiritual disturbance or conflict arising from passion, sense of guilt; calmness
7	quiet; rest; content; freedom from terror; heavenly rest	content; freedom from terror; heavenly rest;	absence of noise, movement, or activity; stillness, quiet; inertness
8	silence; suppression of the thoughts	silence; suppression of the thoughts	
9		law general security and quiet which the king warrants to his subjects, and of which he therefore avenges the violation	
			freedom from disturbance; tranquility; mental or emotional calm
			state or period in which there is no war or a war has ended
			a treaty agreeing peace between warring states
			the state of being free from civil disorder
			the state of being free from dissension
			ceremonial handshake or kiss exchanged during a service in some Churches symbolizing Christian love and unity

The following explanatory dictionaries were used during the analysis: *A Dictionary of The English Language in which the Words are deduced from their Originals, explained in their Different Meanings* (1768, 1792), *A Dictionary of The English Language* (1828), *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles. Vol. VII. O– P* (1909), *Oxford Dictionaries* (Internet source).

During the 18th – 20th centuries the common meaning for the dictionaries of the noted period is found on the first position. The analyzed lexeme is explained as an antonym to the lexeme **war**, it is interpreted as time when there is no war or it has ended. To illustrate this statements the examples from dictionary entries are given: *In vain ... Walpole battled ... against the cry for war ... He stood alone in his desire for peace* [9]; *The Straits were to be open to warships in time of peace* [13]. Probably the fact that this meaning is on the first position points out to certain world tendencies and historical events such as wars of the British Empire for its colonies, domination position in world waters, rebellions inside the Empire, World War I and II.

The similar semantic colouring has the fourth meaning in the dictionaries of the 18th – 19th centuries, but in this case the level of society organization is specified, the point is in the separate country or community which can be assumed from the definition in *NEDP* in which the component ‘civil’ is found. That is why it is possible to assert that the lexeme **peace** represents also the inner state of a certain society in which there is no civil disorder, conflicts etc.: *Peace is that harmony in the state that health is in the body* [9]; *Contention leads to war, and war is the antithesis of civil peace* [13]. Probably for the British public life is characterized by order and relative

rest, that is why this meaning is not marked by dynamic changes, and it does not leave the 3rd–4th positions of the presented dictionaries.

The third position of *NEDHP* is also worth of notice. Here the lexeme under study is defined as a document which testifies a peaceful agreement between belligerent forces. In this meaning the element of the third definition in dictionaries of the 18th – 19th centuries is present explicitly namely the seme ‘reconciliation’. This thought may be supported by the example from the dictionary entry: *Finally, in 1842, the Chinese were forced to agree to an ignominious peace under the Treaty of Nanking* [13]. It can be said that the lexeme **peace** is used to denote a concrete object in particular peaceful agreement. And the fact that this meaning is on top positions of the semantic vertical proves its importance and significant role in both social and everyday life of the British.

The ninth position in the dictionary of 1828 may be viewed in the same context. Here is found the phrase “*the king’s peace*”. In this case the matter is the peace and rest of citizens which are warranted by a king, i.e. country’s safety is guarded by law. It has to be noted that even if this word combination is found in other dictionaries it does not occupy separate positions and it is mentioned only within the limits of previous meanings.

The sixth definition of the first two dictionaries has much in common with the definitions considered above. In *NEDHP* this meaning is specified: the lexeme **peace** is used to denote friendship between people; the same interpretation is present on the fifth position of contemporary dictionary. This explanation may be supported by the following examples: *They truly were in dire straights, and the offer of peace was very tempting* [13]. As it can be

seen amity and concord in relationships are not a priority for the British as this meaning of the lexeme under study is on the last positions in the dictionaries.

The first meaning of the lexeme **peace** in the contemporary dictionary is worth of special attention as it appeared as a result of amalgamation of several semantic components. It can be asserted that the third, seventh, and eighth positions in dictionaries of the 18th – 19th centuries move up to the fourth, seventh, and sixth positions of *NEDHP* respectively. We may come to this conclusion after examining basic semes: ‘disturbance’, ‘noise’, ‘calmness’, ‘rest’. The same semantic components are found on the first position in the contemporary dictionary. In this case the dynamics of the meaning represents the evolution of ideas, opinions, views of the British; personal calmness and comfort gradually got the priority and occupied the leading positions in interpretation of the notion **peace**.

The sixth position in the dictionary *Oxford Dictionaries* presents the lexeme **peace** in the narrow use for denoting the ceremonies of the Christian church. The same explanation is found in *NEDHP* but in the context of the fourth meaning. Though this usage has isolated but judging from the last position in the dictionary it has not gained the considerable value. Maybe it can be explained by the fact that Britain has gradually moved to more secular lifestyle, however the essential sense of the notion **peace** is clearly observed here for example the wish of concord, tranquillity, rest etc.

Having analyzed the meaning of the lexeme under study it is possible to single out its main semes: ‘freedom from’ ‘war’ and ‘hostility’, ‘order’, ‘agreement’, ‘friendship’, ‘amity’, ‘rest’, ‘tranquility’, ‘quiet’. As a conclusion it may be noted that the interpretation of the lexeme **peace** by the British has changed a little during the last four centuries. At first it was perceived as the opposite state to war but today they put on the first place their own emotional and mental calm and stability. These changes probably represent the fact that a person has become a centre of interest and individual comfort has gained greater role, maybe it can be connected with that the social sense of this lexeme has stepped back for the British.

Thus, lexicographic products enable us to trace the development and transformation of definitions. Any changes, the loss of existing meanings and acquisition of new ones, or their expansion illustrate changes in people’s mentality, in their world perception and world viewing. Changes inside the semantic structure of lexemes carry information about a culture, a way of life of a separate nation, its knowledge and achievements. The results of this research give the opportunity to express the idea about the important and great role of lexicographic products in the development and functioning of a national language. Having looked at an explanatory dictionary as a code of knowledge, treasury of nation’s achievements and as a “container” of information about all spheres of life it can be considered as a reliable source for studying the linguistic world images.

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eace

Матияш И. М. Этнолингвокультурные модуляции семантической структуры лексемы PEACE в контексте эволюции британской языковой картины мира.

Аннотация. В статье осуществляется попытка смоделировать британскую языковую картину мира XVIII – XIX веков с применением лингвокультурологических и этнолингвистических изысканий, также рассматривается трансформация языковой картины мира в контексте анализа модификаций семантической структуры лексемы **peace** на лексикографическом материале Британии последних четырёх веков. Схематически подано в форме таблицы дефиниции анализируемой лексемы на языке оригинала. Используя системно-лексикографический анализ языковой картины мира, осуществляется попытка связать национально-культурные особенности английского языка с социально-этническими особенностями носителей языка. Семантическая структура слова представлена в тесной взаимосвязи с аксиологической иерархией ментальной модели мира.

Ключевые слова: лингвокультурология, этнолингвистика, языковая картина мира, семантическая структура слова, лексическое значение слова, дефиниция, лексема, семема, сема.