

Dichotomy of *good* and *evil* verbalization in modern English and Ukrainian

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Abstract. The article deals with the problem of the dichotomy of **good** and **evil** verbalization in modern English and Ukrainian. The differences between cultural and language world pictures have been considered. The comparative study of lexico-semantic groups of nouns denoting **good** and **evil** as fragments of English and Ukrainian language world pictures by means of the procedure of formalized lexical semantics' analysis has given the possibility to single out their essential qualitative and quantitative characteristics, structural semantic peculiarities, reveal their differences and similarities within the national, cultural and individually-psychological language pictures of two different nations. The lexico-semantic groups of nouns denoting **good** and **evil** in modern English and Ukrainian are of complex and multicomponential structure. Both the order and organization of the lexical stock under study are hierarchical. The latter is divided into the following groups: lexical units with the highest, middle, low degrees of polysemy and monosemantic words. The biggest part of the lexis denoting **good** and **evil** in both languages under study is characterized by the words with the low degree of polysemy. The analysis made has shown that the lexical units denoting **good** and **evil** occupy an important place within the lexical systems of the English and Ukrainian, and they are regarded as philosophical concepts of the world perception being an integral part of the humanity and human nature. Therefore, they make up the broadest and leading paradigm of valuable moral orientation, knowing no boundaries of time and space and making the formula of our thinking and world perception.

Keywords: *verbalization, dichotomy, cultural and language world pictures, the procedure of formalized lexical semantics' analysis, qualitative and quantitative characteristics*

Introduction. Language is the most significant way to preserve and form the human knowledge of the world. Representing the latter in the process of human activity, an individual fixes the results of his/her cognition in a word. The combination of this knowledge depicted in a language form is called "language intermediate world", "language model of the world", "language world picture", etc.

The basic ethical notions of **good** and **evil** play an important role in the formation of language world picture of any nation as they are the culturally-conditioned basic units possessing the existential knowledge of not only a separate language bearer but the whole community. Consequently, the problem of the dichotomy of **good** and **evil** verbalization in modern English and Ukrainian remains relevant in modern linguistics.

Recent researches and publications. A significant number of scholars paid attention to various aspects of a world picture problem as well as elements constituting it. Scholars H.V. Kolshanskiy, S.A. Vasilyev, N.I. Sukalenko, Y.D. Apresyan, V.H. Hak, A. Wierzbicka and many others in their papers analyzed the problems connected with language world picture and its presentation in different cultures. Important contribution to the problem of cultural and language world pictures' differentiation has been made by the Finnish scientist Pauli Kaikkonen and Russian scholar S.G. Ter-Minasova. The attempt to differentiate between language world picture and conceptual one has been made in major works of I.O. Holubovska, O.V. Tyshchenko, M.P. Fabian, V.M. Manakin, A.A. Luchik, M.V. Pimenova, E. Leláková, L. J. Whaley, W. Croft, J. Nichols.

The purpose of the article is to reveal the main means of the dichotomy of **good** and **evil** verbalization in two distantly related languages – English and Ukrainian.

Material and methods. The material for the investigation is represented by 411 nouns denoting **good** and 763 nouns denoting **evil** in English, along with 217 nouns denoting **good** and 498 nouns denoting **evil** in Ukrainian, selected from the most authoritative lexicographical sources: Oxford English Dictionary in 12 volumes and Dictionary of the Ukrainian language in 11 volumes correspondingly.

For the comparative study of the dichotomy of **good** and **evil** verbalization means in languages under research, the procedure of formalized lexical semantics' analysis has been used, further developed by prof. M.P. Fabian while investigating the etiquette lexis in the Ukrainian, English and Hungarian languages [2; 3]. This method allows to disclose deeply the semantics of words denoting **good** and **evil** in English and Ukrainian, uncover the correlations between the words and their meanings, single out the peculiarities of the seme stocks, make a comparative analysis of the corresponding lexico-semantic groups as fragments of English and Ukrainian language world pictures. The suggested approach is based on formal, exclusively language criterion – belonging of the words to one part of speech. The matrix method of semantic interconnections' representation between the words in the language is regarded as metalanguage for the description of **good** and **evil**, and the matrix itself – as a model of interconnections' system between the words, on the one hand, and the semantic structure of the lexis, on the other. This model fixes the semantic interconnections between words by means of columns and lines, where horizontal axe indicates the seme stock, and the vertical one – the lexical units. The sign (♦) shows the correlation existence between words and their meanings in the language [2, p. 19]. The words and their meanings' components are arranged in descending order – from the most polysemantic to monosemantic ones.

Main body. Language is generally defined as a system of signs based on a conceptual system that is relatively unique for each culture. "People are said to belong in the same culture to the extent that the set of their shared cultural representations is large" [5, p. 51]. Each speech community is identified by a variety of dominant cultural models that provide certain assumptions and outlooks of the world. As cultural models are parts of persons' cognitive resources, they influence world views and behaviours, as well as how they interpret and react to others' behaviour. In her work "Culturally speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory" Helen Spencer-Oatey draws the analogy between cultures and epidemics, also provides an intuitive account of the observation that

all members of a culture do not share all, and exactly the same cultural representations. "Just as an epidemic does not affect all individuals in an area to the same extent (typically, some people are more seriously afflicted by the disease than others), we should not expect all members of a culture to share all cultural representations" [5, p. 51]. As a result, in the process of world perception collective cultural models are internalized and privatized by individuals through their own experience and developed into private mental models. Istvan Kecskés supports this point of view, drawing attention to the fact that "like lexical items, cultural patterns (often expressed in different communicative styles) code prior experience and encounters, i.e. relatively standard cultural behavior models and expectations that are activated in a given situational context. In the course of interaction, these existing models are modified and blended with situationally emergent new elements" [7, p. 87]. The Australian scholar Anna Wierzbicka throws light on the problem of interconnection between human cognitive activity and manner of its representation: "ways of thinking that are widely shared in a society become enshrined in ways of speaking. Ways of speaking change as the underlying ways of thinking change" [11, p. 22]. Therefore, the linguists support the idea that the language we speak largely determines our way of thinking, as distinct from merely expressing it.

We differentiate between cultural and language world pictures which are interconnected and refer to the real world surrounding the individual. The Russian scholar S.G. Ter-Minasova defines cultural world picture as "an image of the world refracted in human consciousness, i.e. human outlook, created as a result of his/her physical experience and spiritual activity" [1, p. 46]. It differs from nation to nation and is influenced by a variety of factors (geographical position, climate, natural conditions, history, social organization of the society, beliefs, traditions, and way of life). Language picture of the world, in its turn, reflects reality directly through cultural world picture. The latter is more extensive, wider and richer than the former one. Moreover, cultural world picture is primary in respect to language world picture, but only language verbalizes the culture, preserves and transmits the knowledge of the world from generation to generation. It is capable of describing anything available in cultural world picture. Language world picture isn't considered to be a mirror representation of the world but some form of world interpretation that is common to some separate individuals differing from each other, and regarded as a dynamic phenomenon being constantly specified. Our conceptual system indicated as language world picture image depends on physical and cultural experience and is inseparably interconnected with it. "Words are given meaning by being attached to the things represented via the "ideas" which represent them. The introduction of words greatly facilitates the combination of ideas into a responsible picture" [6, p. 17]. Consequently, world picture is revealed in ideas and notions, with a language being its substantial element.

The lexical stock of English denoting **good** (411 words) is divided into four groups according to their degree of polysemy whereas Ukrainian lexical units are less in number (217 nouns) and make up five groups. The first group of English nouns denoting **good** contains 84 lexical units (20,4 % of the total amount of our language materi-

al) semantics of which includes 58-20 meanings. In Ukrainian there are only 14 nouns represented by 14-10 meanings that constitute the first group (6,5 %). They are characterized by *the highest degree of polysemy*. These nouns characterize **good** as the highest moral value (*truth, freedom, dignity; воля, честь*), events and circumstances bringing enjoyment of life (*gratification, entertainment, joy, mirth, pleasure, satisfaction; щастя*), a good attitude to people (*affection, care, devotion, support; любов, милість, ласка*), person's position and its recognition (*regard, honour, respect, pride, consideration, glory, credit; увага, слава*), possessions obtained during person's life (*wealth, thing, device, stock, estate, stuff, property, commodity, effect; скарб, розкиш, пожиток*). Lexical units *spirit, ghost, heaven, дух* represent symbolic associations connected with the person's religious life. The distinctive characteristics of the most polysemantic English nouns are the representation of a process/deed having positive results (*service, turn, favour, charity*), happy fate or successful chance (*fortune, lot, venture, advance, adventure, triumph*), a norm of social behaviour (*propriety, civility, morality, courage, gallantry*). Several lexemes indicate positive human traits of character (*heart, delicacy, jollity, honesty, kindness, gentility, charm, grace, virtue*) and person's feelings and emotions (*love, passion, pity*). **Good** is also treated as something that makes human life pleasant and comfortable (*comfort, ease, easement, convenience, relief, security*), benefit or profit (*boot, return, interest, advantage, gift, odds, privilege, gratuity*).

The second group is presented by 110 English nouns possessing 19-12 meanings (26,8 %) and 24 Ukrainian nouns with 9-7 meanings (11,1 %) – *the middle degree of polysemy*. Within this group **good** is manifested as actions performed for the sake of others (*blessing, chivalry, exploit, help, assistance, feat, merit, boon, courtesy, mercy, alms, amends; норада, добро*) and human feelings (*sympathy, concern; ymixa*). The nouns *accident, luck, opportunity, event, contingency, case, fate, destiny, doom, chance, hap, victory, win, success, чудо* reveal the influence of certain actions or states on realization of **good**. The latter describes social reality, i. e. the achievement of higher rank in society and life (*eminence, praise, reputation, estimation, fame, superiority, reverence; шана, повага, гонор, гордість*), and material values (*store, possessions, utility, revenue, fund, benefit, profit; плюс, золото, благо, багатство, затишок, статок*).

The English regard **good** as the unity of conditions and states (*felicity, weal, welfare, peace, glee, exaltation, amusement, health, delight, zeal, gaiety, warmth, beauty, bliss, rapture*), traits of person's character (*wisdom, fairness, candidness, tenderness, heart, nerve, confidence, fineness, generosity, magnanimity, benevolence, modesty*), types of human interaction (*friendship, trust*). Ukrainian nouns with middle degree of polysemy indicate the attitude towards a person (*пристрассть, захват, закохання, страсть, симпатія*) and physical characteristics that enhance it (*принада, краса*).

In English the third group is made up of 211 polysemantic nouns possessing 11-2 meanings (51,3 % of the lexical stock). The relations between them are characterized by *the low degree of polysemy*. In Ukrainian the units with the low degree of polysemy constitute two groups – 46 nouns having 6-5 meanings (21,2%) and 82 nouns with 4-2 meanings

(37,7 %). These groups comprise a great number of lexical units indicating personal achievements (*accomplishment, advancement, furtherance, achievement, acquirement, attainment, prize, gain; успіх, здобуток, звершення, перемога, успіх, удача, триумф, відзнака, виграш, досягнення*) and material sustenance (*well-being, assets, proceed, plenty, treasure, affluence, commonwealth, belonging, luxury, chattel, merchandise, content, earning, abundance, prosperity, capital, movable, riches, earning, fond; кошти, маєток, достаток, користь, перевага, майно, гроші, ужиток, манаття, добробут*). Nouns denoting human qualities (*comeliness, amity, amiableness, amicability, hospitality, gentleness, nobleness, purity, gracefulness, cheerfulness, sincerity; сміливість, люб'язність, ніжність, мужність, доброта, благородство, хоробрість, чесність, відважність, доброчесність, вихованість, людяність, м'якосердя*) and deeds (*aid, backing, benefaction, rescue, prowess, philanthropy; послуга, поміч, допомога, милосердя, подвиг, благодіяння*) are also quite numerous. English nouns of this group indicate a person as the doer of a positive action (*good-doer, aider, benefactor, friend, comforter*) whereas Ukrainian ones – people who deserve a good action (*насія, нащадок*). Lexical units *angel, demon, God, saint, sky, paradise, omen, nirvana, Бог, нірвана, ангел, німб, Едем* denote the outlook based on the true faith in God. In this case, **good** is considered as a religious constituent of English as well as Ukrainian bearers' consciousness. The distinctive features of the Ukrainian nouns manifest social evaluation of human activity resulting in favourable attitude (*похвала, прихильність, шаноба, приязнь, визнання, пошана, поважання, гуманізм*) and description of events regardless of person's desires and expectations but influenced by objective conditions (*випадок, талан, доля, фортуна, надія, жереб, диво, фатум, авантюра*).

Six English monosemantic words (1,5 %) form a separate group, characterizing a good divinity or genius (*agathodemon*), good fortune (*good hap*), the feeling of great pleasure or satisfaction (*delighting*), person's traits of character (*pleasantness, cordiality, leniency*), interest or advantage (*behalf*), and property (*common good, goods*). The last group of Ukrainian language material is represented by 51 monosemantic noun (23,5 %). These units characterize **good** as a versatile phenomenon and denote different realms of the objective world: material values (*заможність, винагорода, власність, дохід (дохід)*), advantage (*вигода, користь, корисливість*), moral qualities (*чистота, моральність, оптимізм, звага*), relationships between people (*закоханість, респект, дружба, пощада, любовта, альтруїзм, вдячність, пестощі*), beneficial actions (*героїзм, відвага, взаємодопомога, благодійність, милостиня*), and unforeseen events (*везіння, куш, вичуди*).

The group of lexis denoting **evil** in modern English is made up of 763 nouns which are characterized by different degrees of polysemy. Lexical units denoting **evil** in Ukrainian are less in number (498). The first group of English nouns denoting **evil** contains 61 lexical unit (8% of the total amount of our language material) semantics of which includes 42-20 meanings. In Ukrainian it is represented by 74 nouns possessing 14-10 meanings (14,9 %). They are characterized by *the highest degree of polysemy*. The common feature of English and Ukrainian most polysemantic lexical units is the indication of emotions and feelings (*rage, pas-*

sion, interest, pride, grief, resentment, outrage, shame, strain, confusion, apprehension, stress, pity; печаль, жалюці, тривога, зневага, сором, скорбота, жаль, туга, журба, стид), anything that causes harm, mischief, calamity, distress (*trouble, villainy, wrong, mischief, loss, death, ruin, spoil; шкода, клонім, біда, горе, збитки, зло, смерть, скін, кінець*), a bad deed, wrongdoing or crime (*fault, error, offence, corruption, breach, trick; кривда, обман, облуда, посміх, пересуд*), tragic event, unknown fate (*turn, countenance, adventure, fortune, venture, lot; трагедія, доля, талан*). The incorporating feature of the analyzed words is the reflection of religious and philosophical ideas as to the essence of **evil** (*spirit, ghost, Devil; дух, хрест, змій, чорт, мара, примара, заляття*). Lexical semantics of Ukrainian most polysemantic units denoting **evil** reveals distinctive features of nominating the phenomena of social life (*бій, сварка, удар, варварство, боротьба, чвари, колотнеча, сум'яття, нелад, хаос, незгода*) and indicating socially accepted evaluation of human activity (*ниха, зверхність, слава, гонор, гординя, гордість, марнолюбство*).

The second group contains 203 English nouns with 19-11 meanings (26,6%) and 119 Ukrainian ones possessing 5-4 meanings (23,9%). The words with *the middle degree of polysemy* in both languages indicate notions of individual's everyday life and activity, social actions and deeds, attitude towards others (*need, scarcity, necessity, poverty, inconvenience, success, stain, fame, censure, failure, slander, strife, feat, fraud, fight, cheat, abuse, violence, torture, war, battle, discord, tyranny, attack, terror, persecution, plunder, iniquity, depravation, disorder, malice, trial, scrape, danger, vice, woe, wile, mess, opposition, objection, difficulty, hardship, perplexity, penalty, prejudice; хитрощі, блуд, брехня, нужда, нездолення, убогство, крах, руїна, каторга, гніт, скандал, замах, протест, суперечка, переполох, заколот, сварки, занепад, інтрига, підступ, рабство, неволя*), emotions and feelings that reflect one's attitude towards **evil** (*reproach, reproof, envy, sorrow, ruth, shock, pain, alarm, fear, jealousy, wrath, fury, displeasure, suffering, guilt, horror, abomination, sufferance, awe, contention, disgust, torment, remorse, discomfort, distress, sadness, anger, embarrassment, burden; злість, страх, сум, недовіра, збудження, жалість, лют, смуток, хвилювання, вина, образа*), something bad, unforeseen, that happens to a person (*accident, contingency, case, destiny, fate, doom, chance, event, luck, casualty, fatality, hap, tragedy; фатум, навождення, загроза, лихо, халепа, терни, тягар, нещастя, напасть, прикрість, кара, катастрофа, знегоди, труднощі*), personified and metaphoric images having to do with human spiritual world (*hell, doom, providence, curse; гріх, порок, тьма, кров, каламуть, гаспид, анафема, дідько, сатана, біс, диявол, нечисть*). Besides common features, words with middle degree of polysemy have certain subtle semantic discrepancies in each language: in English – negative moral qualities (*foulness, lowness, meanness, vanity, nastiness, wantonness, insolence, roughness, fierceness, unkindness, cruelty, evilness, bestiality, vileness*), person's physical state (*disease, injury, illness, wound, cholera*), in Ukrainian – indication of the subjects (*насія, номвора, ворог*).

Despite the difference in quantity (Ukrainian 193 (38,8%) and English 480 (62,9 %)) lexical units with the

low degree of polysemy have much in common: denote the person who commits a wrongdoing or crime (*fiend, enemy, foe, sinner; враг*), actions opposite to the existing social and moral rules and laws (*misdoing, trickery, adultery, burglary, suicide, misdeed, betrayal, manslaughter, assassination, killing, hoax, conflict, collision, misanthropy; злочин, капость, самовбивство, самогубство, вибрик, наклеп, помста, підлабунництво, огріх, розпуста, безчестя, віроломство, зрада, злодіяння, проступок, злочинство, грабіж, розбій, вбивство, кримінал, безчинство, здириство, мізантропія, крадіжка, хамство*), behavioural forms and characteristics (*cruelness, egotism, ferocity, abominableness, loathing, mistrust, hostility, aggression; нахабність, жорстокість, грубість, неввічливість, озлобленість, презирство, ненависть, лицемірство, засоромлення, зухвалість, підлість, знуцання, неприязнь*), person's emotional sphere (*hate, panic, frustration, anguish; невдоволення, афронт, жах, досада, розпука, відчай, паніка, переляк, антипатія, мука, гнів, обурення, докір, розчарування, збентеження, неспокій, боязнь*), actions of social character (*disturbance, destruction, dispute, terrorism, provocation, combat, assault, punishment, revolt, rebellion, vengeance, slavery, revenge, debate, problem, drawback; війна, міжусобиця, сутичка, конфлікт, садизм, заворушення, бійка*), religious and philosophical notions (*monster, sin, darkness, demon, omen, cancer, guile, bug, Satan, irreligion, doomsday, hoodoo, atheism, goblin; некло, прокляття, гроза, шайтан, іпод*). The peculiarity of the nouns with low degree of polysemy lies in the wide usage of words denoting negative traits of character (*barbarity, weakness, badness, frailty, intolerance, vainglory, rudeness, baseness, savagery, impudence, greediness*), the obstacles to perform good actions (*evil, misery, plight, wickedness, vexation, affliction, ill will, sickness, malady, contumely, jeopardy, hurt, hazard, risk, damage, harm, impediment, obstacle*), unforeseen circumstances and events (*incident, catastrophe, mischance, disaster*). As a result, the semantic structure of nouns with the low degree of polysemy denoting **evil** in both languages is conditioned by social environment that substantially influences person's life and activity.

Ukrainian is rich in monosemantic units denoting **evil** and quantitatively exceeds the number of words in English (119 nouns in Ukrainian and 19 in English). The group of lexical units in English characterizes **evil** as an evil spirit (*Nick*), a person who performs evil actions (*evil-doer, bad-mash*), or who is morally shallow (*vile*), unsuccessful end of something (*non-success*), bad influence on someone

(*mal-influence*), actions against the law (*damagement, evil-doing, arson, bribing, pettifoggery, mal-government, mismanagement, defaulting*), pain (*ache*), disease (*scrofula*), damage (*harmfulness*), anger, rage or violence (*savageness, ire*), wrong beliefs or view points (*misjudgement, misfaith*), an ugly action consisting in damaging of the like (*cannibalism*). The semantics of the nouns in both English and Ukrainian comprises the reflection of various notions of objective reality that prove the influence of extra-linguistic factors on the formation of their lexical meanings.

Conclusions. The **good** and **evil** dichotomy is one of the criteria of world perception, cognition and a constituent part of a system of values. In terms of the language world picture it is the marker of evaluation, the contents and essence of which may be adjusted in accordance with ethnocultural regularities and social stereotypes. The conducted research helped to reveal the fixed aesthetic evaluations and qualitative characteristics of the object in language community members' consciousness, and correlate them with human existence within society.

In the language world picture of English and Ukrainian the generally accepted knowledge of **good** is revealed, first of all, as a moral category, valuable moral quality, a characteristic of an individual or a social group, as well as the norm of behaviour, the deviation from which causes censure in the system of social evaluation. If the English language world picture treats **good** from its interpreting as the highest spiritual value to more concrete notions connected with personal comfort and welfare, then the Ukrainian language world picture describes it through general ideas about a person, his/her inner world and moral qualities that help achieve results both in social life and relations with others.

In English and Ukrainian **evil** is associated with conscious and deliberate evil deeds and actions which are aimed at causing trouble, harm, mischief; humiliation of personal dignity, hostility, animosity, violence; that which causes pain, torture, distress, brings disappointment and contradicts moral laws and positive deeds.

The dynamics of changes happening in society affects the system of moral and ethical values, the basic categories of which are **good** and **evil**. Consequently, the latter are universal cultural phenomena, possessing a variety of psychological, social and spiritual characteristics, however, people of different cultures share basic concepts but view them from different angles and perspectives, making language bearers behave in a manner one may consider irrational or even in direct contradiction to what one holds sacred.

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