

USE OF ANTONYMS IN ENGLISH PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

Summary. The article deals with the study of antonyms used in English proverbs and sayings. A comprehensive analysis of antonymic relations, proposed in our work, is carried out at lexical, morphological, syntactical and cultural level. Antonyms are classified according to the semantic criterion (gradual, complementary, converse and vector ones). Depending on a part of speech it has been found out that antonyms within English paroemiae are expressed by adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs, pronouns. Besides, antonymic relations are considered within certain topical sets of proverbs and sayings. The lexical categories of antonyms used in paroemiae have been identified (a value of quality, opposite coordinates, time, quantity). Stable syntactic models of the folk statements under consideration are studied. Their functions are highlighted. The role of antonyms in proverbs and sayings is emphasized.

Keywords: linguistics, antonyms, proverbs and sayings, paroemia, lexicology, morphology, syntax.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ АНТОНІМІВ У АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ ПРИСЛІВ'ЯХ ТА ПРИКАЗКАХ

Анотація. У статті досліджуються особливості використання антонімів у англійських прислів'ях та приказках. Подається визначення антонімії як парадигматичного явища, що спостерігається у різножанрових текстах. Цілісний аналіз антонімічних відношень здійснюється на лексичному, морфологічному, синтаксичному і культурологічному рівнях. Запропоновано класифікацію антонімів, що вживаються в англійських пареміях, за семантичним критерієм, згідно з яким їх поділено на градуальні, комплементарні, векторні та конверсиви. У межах градуальних виявлено використання якісних прикметників та прислівників. Комплементарні антоніми представлені прикметниками, що виражають абсолютну якість та іменниками з абстрактним і конкретним значенням. Серед конверсивів переважають іменники на позначення взаємозалежності, суміжності, зворотних зв'язків тощо. Векторні антоніми презентують фразові дієслова, що виражають протилежні дії, явища, характеристики і т. ін. З'ясовано, що залежно від частини мовної приналежності антонімами в англійських пареміях виступають прикметники, іменники, дієслова, прислівники, займенники. Також антонімічні відношення розглядаються в межах певних тематичних груп прислів'їв та приказок (видимість, сутність; вік; сподівання; ризик; родинні стосунки; упертість; байдужість, безвідповідальність; сила, слабкість). Визначено лексичні категорії антонімів, що вживаються в англійських пареміях (міра якості, протилежні позиції, час, кількість). Крім того увага авторів фокусується на типових синтаксичних моделях народних висловлювань з антонімічними зв'язками, серед яких виділяються прості речення, складні структури із з'єднувальними словами і без, умовні і наказові речення. Висвітлюються функції синтаксичних конструкцій, у межах яких функціонують антоніми. Наголошується на тому, що використання протилежних за значенням слів надають висловлюванню стислості, природності, допомагають виразити ідею чітко і лаконічно. Встановлюється роль антонімів у англійських прислів'ях та приказках як експресивної, перцептивної, культурологічної рефлексії.

Ключові слова: лінгвістика, антонім, прислів'я, приказка, паремія, лексикологія, морфологія, синтаксис.

The statement of the problem. It is well known that national mentality is manifested in people's everyday life, customs, history and culture, which are the basis of folk art. In our opinion, folklore is that kind of material that helps researchers not only to investigate some moral and ethical values of people, their life experience, world perception, but it is a huge platform for comprehensive study of the language.

The problem of antonymic relations in English proverbs and sayings, chosen for the consideration in our scientific paper, has not been raised yet at the scientific level. Investigation of antonyms is of great importance for linguistic science, as they are a significant part of language vocabulary, make it more expressive and multivarious, as well as influence communicational culture and speech pattern. We think that the system analysis of antonyms used in English proverbs and sayings will contribute to further research not only in the field of linguistics and literature, but psycho-, ethno-linguistics and even some pedagogical issues.

The analysis of the latest research and publications. It should be mentioned that the problems of antonymy are not new in linguistics at present time. Some Ukrainian scientists are interested in them. Starovoitova O.V. [6] has been considered the peculiarities of interaction between synonyms and antonyms in the English language. Antonymic relations were the object of the research by Biian N.R. [1] where the scholar investigated the English terms of tourism. Foreign researchers paid their attention to the problem of phraseological antonymy (Varfolomeeva N.S. [3]), the origin of this phenomenon and its specific features (Fernald J.Ch. [11]), grammar antonymy in modern English (Boeva N.B. [2]), a linguistic study of the given type of semantic relations in English texts (Chunming Gao and Qianzhen Zheng [10]), etc.

The problem of proverbs and sayings was a focus of Ukrainian linguists. Orlovska O.V. [5] compared English and Ukrainian paroemiae. The structure of English proverbs was studied by

Ovsianko O. [4]. Taranenka L. [7] analyzed the text of English proverbs in terms of their genre characteristics and functional features. The Belorussian scientist A. Prokopchik [12] investigated English proverbs and peculiarities of their translation into Russian.

Unsolved problems under consideration.

Hence, paroemiae and antonyms are the object of study in a diverse linguistic context. In spite of such a range of research the question concerning the peculiarities of antonyms in paroemiae has not been investigated yet, which determines the urgency of our research.

The **object** of our work is such paroemia units as proverbs and sayings in the English language. The **subject** is antonyms used in English paroemiae. The **goal** of the article is to study the specific features of antonyms in the given kind of folk statements.

The main part. It should be mentioned that some English proverbs and sayings consist of two symmetrical parts, in which certain phenomena are compared or contrasted:

Better glorious death than a shameful life.

Better wear out than rust out.

The bird is created for flight and the man is for work.

A separate group of English paroemiae is presented by those that include antonyms expressing the opposite orientation of actions, properties, qualities, names, etc:

The *full* ear rotates to the ground, and the *empty* hinges up.

More haste, *less* speed.

Success has many fathers, while *failure* is an orphan.

This group is a focus of our consideration.

A comprehensive analysis of antonyms in English proverbs and sayings, proposed in our work, is carried out in the following directions: lexical, morphological, syntactical and cultural, which will help to identify the peculiarities of paroemiae at the linguistic and mental levels. As Vorkachev said, "Language, culture and ethnics are inextricably connected and form the essence of the personality – the place of physical, spiritual and social conjunction" [4, p. 71].

Antonyms have been the subject of a thorough linguistic analysis for a long time. At the present stage, antonymy research is characterized by the fact that it is considered as a paradigmatic phenomenon, and the connection of antonymy with synonymy and polysemy is studied in detail. In addition, there is a tendency to study antonymic relations in specific speech usage in texts of different genres.

We consider antonyms as words with opposite lexical meanings, which are combined with a certain common factor: high – low (height), thick – thin (state), cheerful – sad (mood).

According to the semantic criterion we have distinguished the following groups of antonyms: gradual, contractual, complementary, converse and vector.

Gradual antonyms comprise sets of lexical items within which intermediate opposition can

be observed (*hot* – warm – cool – *cold*). They express a qualitative opposite, and therefore, this group is often presented by antonyms expressed by qualitative adjectives, as well as adverbs derived from qualitative adjectives (with qualitative or temporal meanings):

Better *late* than *never*.

Cold hands, *warm* heart.

Promise *little*, but do *much*.

Complementary antonyms do not involve intermediate elements. They express the opposition of two aspects belonging to one gender (life – death, mother – father, etc.). This group mainly includes:

a) adjectives expressing absolute quality, or adjectives contrasted with the pronoun:

A *full* belly does not understand an *empty* one.

The *full* ear rotates to the ground, and the *empty* hinges up.

b) nouns with abstract and specific meanings:

Happiness runs, and *misfortune* lies.

Success has many fathers, while *failure* is an orphan.

Converse antonymy is also observed in English paroemiae. This type of semantic relations is characterized by interdependence, adjacency, casual links between the elements, their reversal relationships.

Ask a silly *question* and you'll get a silly *answer*.

Best *defense* is *offense*.

The *exception* which proves the *rule*.

Vector antonyms determine two opposite actions, phenomena, characteristics, directions, etc. They are presented in English proverbs and sayings as well and are mostly expressed by literal phrasal verbs:

If you *lie down* with dogs, you will *get up* with fleas.

What *goes up* must *come down*.

Depending on a part of speech we have distinguished the following groups of antonyms in the structure of proverbs and sayings:

1. Antonyms expressed by adjectives (in positive and superlative degree):

Hope for *the best*, but prepare for *the worst*.

A *civil* denial is better than a *rude* grant.

A *clean* fast is better than a *dirty* breakfast.

This is the largest group, which can be explained by the fact that in proverbs and sayings certain statements are often based on the opposition of certain characteristics.

2. Antonyms presented by nouns. It should be mentioned that abstract names are normally used within this group:

Keep your *friends* close and your *enemies* closer.

A bad *compromise* is better than a good *lawsuit*.

A *friend's* frown is better than a *foe's* smile.

3. Antonyms expressed by verbs:

It's better to *give* than to *receive*.

Easy *come* easy *go*.

Never *put off* until tomorrow what you can *do* today.

If it ain't *broke*, don't *fix* it.

You *win* some, you *lose* some.

4. Antonyms – adverbs. Adverbs of adjective origin are often present in this group:

Better *late* than *never*.

More haste, *less* speed.

5. Antonyms – pronouns. The opposition ‘defining pronoun and negative one’ is dominant in this category:

Jack of *all* trades and master of *none*.

Everybody’s business is *nobody’s* business.

Besides, we have found antonymic relations within certain topical sets of English proverbs and sayings, that is:

a) visibility and essence: A *black* hen lays a *white* egg. The *smallest* axe may fell the *hugest* oak.

b) age: An *old* dog will learn no *new* tricks.

c) hope, expectation: An hour in the *morning* is worth two in the *evening*.

d) risk: Either to *win* the horse or *lose* the saddle.

e) family relationships: The *black* crow thinks her own birds *white*.

f) stubbornness: A *wise* man changes his mind, a *fool* never will.

g) indifference, irresponsibility: *Everybody’s* business is *nobody’s* business.

h) strength-weakness: *Little* strokes fell *great* oaks.

In our opinion, antonyms in any given topical set of paroemiae make such a contrast that helps to emphasize people’s evaluation of objective phenomenon of reality, national mentality, spirit and character, customs and morals, beliefs and superstitions, etc.

Linguist Shmelev D.M. says: “The most complete opposition of words is regarded as antonymy. Antonymic words can be recognized, which are contrasted with the most general and meaningful semantic sign, and are at the extreme points of the corresponding lexical-semantic paradigm” [8, p. 335].

Consequently, the antonymic pairs combine words that necessarily have three characteristics: 1) incompatible signs, 2) homogeneous signs, 3) dichotomy (the ability to divide into two parts) of a common genetic sign.

Taking into account these features, antonyms include words with various semantic meanings. We have identified the following lexical categories of antonyms in the structure of English proverbs and sayings:

1) a value of quality: *Big* fish eat *little* fish. Don’t get *mad*, get *even*.

2) opposite coordinates: A good *beginning* makes a good *ending*. If you *lie down* with dogs, you will *get up* with fleas. What goes *up* must come *down*.

3) time: Better *late* than *never*. An hour in the *morning* is worth two in the *evening*. An *old* dog will learn no *new* tricks.

4) quantity: *Everybody’s* business is *nobody’s* business. Jack of *all* trades, master of *none*.

Paroemiae with opposites secure stable syntactic models. Also, in English such paroemiae are productively presented by:

– simple sentences: *Little* strokes fell *great* oaks. A *civil* denial is better than a *rude* grant.

– impersonal: Better *late* than *never*. It’s better to *give* than to *receive*.

– complex sentences with linking words and without them: Hope for *the best*, but prepare for

the worst. *Happiness* runs, and *misfortune* lies. *Success* has many fathers, while *failure* is an orphan. You *win* some, you *lose* some.

– conditionals: If you *lie down* with dogs, you will *get up* with fleas.

– imperatives: Easy *come* easy *go*.

It is necessary to say that these models perform certain functions. Simple sentences, impersonal and imperatives make the statement condensed and natural, complex and conditional structures emphasize the contrast and help to express the idea clearer.

Some scientists indicate that antonymy has “supernatural” quality: “Opposite in meaning words possess a unique property. For example, simultaneous proximity and remoteness of antonyms from each other. Meaning of antonymic pairs intuitively seems as much detached as possible. And there is some kind of supernatural power, which unites two words with opposite meaning. Philosophers and scientists indicate on ability of things to manifest opposite abilities; and many people noted that there was a fine line between love and hate, genius and craziness” [10, p. 197]. That is, every antonymic pair, describing one essence, demonstrate its ambivalent character, which permeated objective reality. We can say that opposite as notion is one of characteristic manifestation of nature addiction human mind and underlie various phenomena in everyday life, scientific knowledge, philosophical construction, ethics, aesthetics, religion, etc.

Conclusions. The analysis of English paroemiae reveals the structural, grammatical and semantic features of the antonymic paradigm of the folk text. In addition, the analysis of paroemiae of the English language makes it possible to reveal the specifics of the national character, especially the value perception of reality, as the best way to give an exhaustive description of the phenomena of reality is to compare. Having analyzed English proverbs and sayings, in particular the antonymic relations in them, we can highlight several features of the English: they are rational, hardworking, freedom-loving, independent, discreet, careful and prudent people. The brightest contrast values are expressed by lexical antonyms.

Thus, antonyms in English paroemiae help to describe contrasts, which make up people’s life, national customs, traditions, history, culture, in the most expressive and clearest way. Antonyms in English proverbs and sayings serve to confirm the purpose of the paroemiae to transfer the experience of the people accumulated over the centuries, their spiritual values, and world perception.

Consequently, the use of antonyms and paroemiae in the language makes it more expressive, richer, more contrasting, enables to focus on certain phenomena and distinguish them.

The analysis of English paroemiae shows how diverse can be the structure of the antonymic paradigm, which goes beyond the ordinary, common language applications for the realization of didactic goals (as learning the vocabulary by remembering antonymic pairs facilitate learning of the language) and the study of national culture.

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