

AXIOLOGICAL SPECIFICITY OF THE CONCEPT “STRANGE” (AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE AMERICAN NOVEL BY GEORGE R. R. MARTIN “A DANCE WITH DRAGONS”)

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the study of explicit and implicit evaluative meanings of the concept “strange” by means of the example of some quotes from George Martin’s American novel A Dance with Dragons. The article discusses the two fundamental concepts of the axiological world picture – value and evaluation. From the perspective of axiological linguistics, everything that is valuable is reflected in the language appraisal, which depends on unstable subjective and objective value judgments. The purpose of this paper is an axiological analysis of the concept “strange” in modern English worldview, intellectual and emotional characteristics of not only a certain linguistic personality but also of society on the whole are revealed via studying the concepts. An axiological analysis of the concept “strange” in the literary work reveals evaluative connotations of the main characters, which render their value-based consideration, which, bereft of their context, can be interpreted differently. Thus, the study reveals that implicit and explicit value judgments are dependent on the subjective interpretation of the linguistic identity

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary linguistics is characterized by anthropocentric orientation. Evaluative statements are socially determined, namely, they depend on the subjective attitude of an individual to a specific situation, person, thing, phenomenon, etc. The relevance of our study lies in an increasing interest of many domestic scholars in the 20th-21st centuries (N. D. Arutyunova (2002), E. M. Wolf (2002), E. F. Serebryannikova (2008), V. I. Karasik (2002) and others) in the study of the linguistic identity, as well as in the establishment of the leading principle of anthropocentrism in a number of humanitarian disciplines (ethnolinguistics, linguistic studies, cultural linguistics, axiological linguistics, etc.). The language personality is directly connected with the linguistic world view which contains information about the surrounding reality, ingrained in both individual and group consciousness. The peculiarity of the linguistic world view lies in the language, since knowledge and human values are formed through the language. Values are manifested through evaluations of the linguistic personality, which are constantly changing depending on changes in society, the world, etc. The purpose of our study is to identify evaluative rendering of the concept “strange” in contemporary English via axiological linguistics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

89 concepts of “strange” and 173 synonyms in the novel by George Martin “A Dance with Dragons” have been analyzed.

<https://bookfrom.net/george-r-r-martin/30741-a-dance-with-dragons.html>

The article is based on a systematic axiological analysis of the concept “strange” and its synonyms in current English. Axiological analysis allows for the identification of implicit or explicit, positive, negative or neutral evaluations of a language individual, as well as values that are manifested through a person’s appraisal of a phenomenon, situation, etc. To analyze evaluative renderings of the characters’ statements in the work, the following methods are used: descriptive, contextual and conceptual.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the era of anthropocentric orientation, in which “an individual in language and language in the individual are analyzed” (Maslova 2018), special attention is paid to linguistic identity. Linguistic identity is understood as “any native speaker of one or another language, characterized on the basis of analysis of texts carried out by him/her from the point of view of using the language means in these texts to convey his/her vision of the surrounding reality” (10). People with different social status, education, nationality, etc. as well as speakers of different languages can have diverse linguistic world images.

According to the philosophical principle of anthropocentrism, man is the center and the supreme goal of the universe. This principle has led to the interaction of various human sciences that are concerned with studying the subject and his/her attitude to the reality. “Within the anthropocentric tideway there is an interaction of linguistics with axiology, a science of the values-based attitude of a person to the reality, of his/her ability to comprehend the value structure of the world and embody values in different types of human activity.” (Miroshnikov 2007).

Axiological linguistics is a modern direction in linguistics, which emerged on the basis of a special branch of philosophical knowledge, axiology (Archie J 1993, Nicholas Rescher 2004, Hugh P 2004), the theory of values, and

linguistics. The purpose of axiological linguistics study is to elicit the value of the utterance, which is expressed in the language. Fundamental concepts in axiological linguistics are evaluation and value.

According to R. M. Yakushina (2003), “evaluation is the attitude of native speakers to the object, due to the recognition or non-recognition of its value in terms of consistency or inconsistency of its qualities with certain value criteria.” Serebrennikova (2008) understands value as “the mental content of objects and phenomena of the world and consciousness, in which their properties and signs are reflected, and which are considered independently of the subject (s) who created this content”.

The concepts of evaluation and value should be distinguished, as they have different meanings. According to I.V. Chekulay (2006), “value is a qualification idea of people, living beings, things, natural and social phenomena and the like, and evaluation is a reflection of value in the forms of explication of human knowledge, and above all, in the form of linguistic units, including phraseological units.”

Evaluation directly depends on the speaker, he/she puts a subjective opinion into it, and also expresses an appraisive attitude to what is happening. Value is objective, universal for most people, which is determined through the mental activity of a person.

Axiological linguistics is aimed at the study, description and identification of values (Krzeszowski 1990, Martin, J.R 2005) which are expressed in concepts. Concept is a central notion of various disciplines of the humanities: philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, linguistics, etc. There is no exact generally accepted definition of the notion of concept; in our study, we consider this term from the point of view of cognitive linguistics. Concept as a linguocognitive phenomenon is “a unit of mental or psychic resources of our consciousness and of the information structure that reflects human knowledge and experience; an operational substantive unit of memory, mental lexicon, conceptual system and language of the brain (*lingua mentalis*), of the whole view of the world reflected in the human psyche” (Kubryakova 1996).

The concept “strange” is understood as a mental formation, an idea of someone or something that is conspicuous in society, in a person, or in his/her behavior, this lexeme can be either positive or negative.

The word strange is widely used in English, the synonyms of which abound: weird, odd, unusual, mysteries, queer, curious, bizarre, extraordinary, wonderful, rare, funny, remarkable, fantastic, astonishing, peculiar, eccentric (Collins 2015), etc. We will analyze one of the most used lexeme “strange” in the work by G. R. R. Martin from the perspective of axiological linguistics.

A Dance with Dragons is the fourth novel of the saga A Song of Ice and Fire by the American writer, George R. R. Martin, written in the genre of epic fantasy. The main storyline of this novel is not only the struggle for the Iron Throne, but also power for the North.

Example 1. “Strange spices scented the chilly autumn wind, and he could hear faint cries drifting over the wall from the streets beyond”.

In this example, the concept “strange” has an obvious positive evaluation for the protagonist, Tyrion. He is accustomed to an idle life. Money, wine and girls are an integral part of his existence, but he is greatly saddened by his father’s feeling of intense dislike of him, who cannot stand his own son. He does not accept the betrayal of his father and kills him. In order to save his life, Tyrion is sent to terra incognita, put in a wooden barrel on a ship. Tyrion was in a barrel for some time and contaminated it with his feces, urine and vomit, so he quickly wanted to complete an unpleasant journey. After such trials of life, fresh air

filled with a sweet odor is a treat for Tyrion's senses.

Example 2. "The walls would have shamed any proper castle, and the ornamental iron spikes along the top looked strangely naked without heads to adorn them".

On the one hand, the presented concept "strangely" has a pronounced derogatory connotation, since when reading this quote, modern people will be horrified by savagery and cruelty. However, for residents of those times, this, unfortunately, was a common thing. On the other hand, Tyrion finds himself in a city where slavery has finally been abolished, and people are no longer cut off their heads for no reason, therefore, in this situation, the concept "strangely" carries a positive evaluation.

Example 3. "In the woofs of Westeros or a gown of Myrish lace, Your Radiance shall forever remain a stranger amongst us, a grotesque outlander, a barbarian conqueror".

Daenerys, the mother of dragons, captured Meereen, she freed all the cities from slavery that stood in her way to the Iron Throne. But many were against it, especially the rich gentlemen who were deprived of free labor, but also some slaves who did not know what to do with their freedom, for they could not imagine their life without a master, despite the unbearable conditions of existence. In this sentence the concept "stranger" expresses an explicit negative evaluation, as it shows the attitude of privileged residents of the city towards Daenerys, she will never be a real ruler for them, despite her good deeds.

Example 4. "Having a steward fetch and serve for him still felt strange; not long ago, it would have been him fetching breakfast for Lord Commander Mormont".

Jon Snow went to the wall, in severe conditions, to protect the people from white walkers. When he was elected commander in Chief, he gained not only new powers, but also good living conditions in the North, therefore in the above quote the lexeme "strange" expresses the hidden positive feelings of one of the main characters to the circumstances.

Example 5. "Is it so strange that I should wish to do some good before my days are done, to help a sweet young girl regain her birthright?".

In this quote the concept "strange" has a negative evaluation, the master of Pentos is surprised why Tyrion does not understand his reason for helping Daenerys to conquer the throne that belongs to her by birth. However, this lexeme acquires a contrary meaning when viewed from the standpoint of Tyrion, who does not share the opinion with Illyrio. Daenerys is the daughter of a mad king, she is no longer a young girl, she has three dragons that burn people alive by only one order from their "mother", who ruthlessly kills wealthy gentlemen.

Example 6. "It had been twelve days since the elk had collapsed for the third and final time, since Coldhands had knelt beside it in the snowbank and murmured a blessing in some strange tongue as he slit its throat".

The main characters are all weird in their companion, they don't know why he helps them and whether they can trust to him. Therefore, in the presented quote the concept "strange" has both implicit positive and negative evaluative properties. On the one hand, Coldhands helped Bran, but it was still unknown for what reason, for what or for whom, with good intents or evil, he did it. George Martin, perhaps in the next book will reveal the origin of the hero, then we can understand what kind of connotation this concept represents in this context.

Example 7. "It was a woman's voice, high and sweet, with a strange music in it like none that he had ever heard and a sadness that he thought might break

his heart”.

In the presented quote the concept “strange” has both positive and negative meanings, which is dependent on the position of the main character to consider this lexeme. This voice belongs to the child of the forest, one of the representatives of creatures who lived in the time of dragons long before the appearance of people. Bran felt that these creatures were no threat and came to help him. However, these creatures themselves are in need of help, their voices are filled with unbearable sadness. Children of the forest are special creatures, forest dwellers, but unfortunately, they are few to live on due to white walkers and andals.

The concept “strange” is a value in terms of language content, considered as an example of some quotes from the novel by George Martin *A Dance with Dragons*. The specifics of the worldview and thinking of the linguistic personality is reflected by means of the concept, so the study of any concept is of value to identify the features of the linguistic view of the world. Thus, according to R. Hartman, “a thing has value to the extent that it fills the concept with content” (Hartman 1973).

From the examples analyzed above, through the prism of axiological linguistics, we have come to the conclusions that the concept “strange” expresses:

1. an explicit negative or positive evaluation (depending on whose position of the main characters one is to adhere to);
2. an explicit positive evaluation;
3. an implicit positive evaluation
4. a negative one;
5. an implicit negative or positive evaluation (depending on whose position of the main characters one is to adhere to);

CONCLUSION

The axiological analysis of the concept “strange” shows that the presented lexeme is not comprehended in the framework of the idea of normality and acquires a positive or negative meaning based on a concrete situation. The literary work exposes the connection of the three components – evaluation, value and context. Evaluation depends on a person, since it is people who create it, so each situation is considered from the subjective point of view of the main characters. The values, characteristic of a certain protagonist, are reflected in a certain context; outside it, they can acquire opposite meanings.

The importance of axiology in linguistics has been raised, since axiological analysis reveals the value preferences of a language individual, that are rendered in value judgments, and their changes in the cultural and historical process of the language being studied in a certain era. Certainly, one should continue the investigation in this direction in order to identify explicit, implicit, positive, negative evaluations via axiological analysis of various concepts presented in other modern-day works to systematize the knowledge obtained as a result of the study.

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