

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.22.2.40>**ЛЕКСИЧЕСКАЯ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ ОППОЗИЦИИ КОНЦЕПТОВ «ПРЕКРАСНОЕ – БЕЗОБРАЗНОЕ» В АНГЛИЙСКОЙ И РУССКОЙ ЯЗЫКОВЫХ КУЛЬТУРАХ**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Целью данной статьи является описание языковых средств выражения в рамках оппозиции концептов «прекрасное – безобразное» в английской языковой картине мира, а также сравнение данной вариативности с соотношением этих концептов в русском языковом сознании. Данное исследование проводилось на материале текста трагедии У. Шекспира «Ричард III», а также трёх переводов данного текста на русский язык, созданных в разные исторические периоды, что позволило сравнить интерпретацию данной концептуальной парадигмы в диахроническом отношении. В результате проведённого сравнительного анализа были установлены основные сходства и различия в англоязычном и русскоязычном восприятии и лексическом выражении концептов, входящих в структуру данной оппозиции.

**Ключевые слова:** концепт, сравнительный анализ, семантическое поле, перевод.

**LEXICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPTS OPPOSITION "BEAUTIFUL – UGLY" IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGE CULTURES**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this article is the description of language means of expression in the field of concepts opposition "beautiful – ugly" in the English language worldview, and also comparison of the given variability with ratio of these concepts in Russian language worldview. This research was carried out on the material of the text of W. Shakespeare's historical play "Richard III", and also three translations of this text into Russian, created in different historical periods, that allows us to compare the interpretation of this conceptual paradigm in diachronic relation. As a result of the comparative analysis, the main similarities and differences in the English and Russian perception and lexical expression of the concepts included in the structure of this opposition were established.

**Keywords:** concept, comparative analysis, semantic field, translation.

**Introduction**

The concepts considered in this study are main concepts for most of the world's linguistic cultures. Along with the opposition "good – evil", the opposition "beautiful – ugly" is one of the defining paradigms in the formation of modern linguistic, cultural and psychological perception of the picture of the world by a person.

In order to understand the functioning of both language and society, it is necessary to trace and understand all aspects of actualization of the meaning of the concept "beauty" not only in synchronous, but also in diachronic terms. The primary goal of this research should be the detailed consideration of the content of the concept "beauty" on the basis of the historical method of cognition, as well as the analysis of this concept by means of analytical comparison of different linguistic and cultural strata.

The main objectives of the study are as follows: 1) systematization of knowledge about English and Russian understanding of "beauty" and "ugly" concepts; 2) identification of peculiarities in usage of these concepts in Russian and English on the example of fiction texts (W. Shakespeare's play "Richard III" and its Russian translations).

Historically and etymologically, the concept as a philological term is complex and multidimensional. It is necessary to consider the formation of this term. Nowadays this term is more frequently used in scientific and fiction literature than in the 20th century. Using this term, authors try to emphasize the non-standard and inconclusive solution of issues that sometimes seemed to be solved long ago.

In Russian fiction and science literature the adjective *conceptual* is often found, but noun *concept* is extremely rare. In classical Russian philosophy (in the works of V. Solovyov, N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov, P. Florensky, V. Vernadsky, A. Losev and many others) the term *concept* is not used. This term reached its greatest popularity in Russian when it began to be used in the meaning of something other than concept itself, especially in the humanities. According to Demjankov, "concepts exist by themselves, their people reconstruct them with a certain degree of (non) confidence" [5, P. 618].

The term *concept* appeared in Russian linguistics much later than in Western languages. According to the Stanford Philosophical Encyclopedia, concepts are fragments of thinking. The article devoted to concepts also notes that the exact definition of a concept is still controversial as there are many different approaches to this term. Ontologically, there are three approaches to a concept: concept as mental representation; concept as ability; concept as a feeling. For the Western science the definition of a concept remains in many respects a terminological problem, because it is in the use of the lexeme "concept" where a met language lacuna is found.

In Western linguistics concept is considered more as a term referring to cognitive linguistics. At the same time, cognitive linguistics is not a single theory, but a set of multiple approaches to language learning. It includes cognitive grammar (R.

Langacker, L. Talmi) and constructional grammar (Ch. Fillmore, P. Kay, A. Goldberg, J. Lakoff, W. Croft, B. Bergen), cognitive semantics, which considers various aspects of human thought activity, such as the representation of knowledge and the construction of meanings. Cognitive semantics, which in turn includes the theory of conceptual metaphor (J. Lakoff, M. Johnson, R. Gibbs, M. Turner), the theory of mental spaces (B. Dunsiger, S. Coulson), the theory of conceptual integration (J. Lakoff, W. Croft, B. Bergen), as well as such an approach as cognitive lexical semantics, in which the theory of principal polysemy and the theory of lexical concepts and cognitive models (W. Evans, A. Tayler) were developed.

#### Method and discussion

One of the main tasks of our research is to compare the concepts of beauty in Russian and in English on the basis of conceptual, figurative, and value aspects.

If we consider the concept of beauty as a semantic field, then its conceptual center will be the meaning of beauty as a certain property of an object or a phenomenon of reality that brings aesthetic pleasure to the beholder. A slightly farther meaning from the centre can be considered the meaning of beauty as a characteristic of an attractive human appearance. Finally, at the periphery of this field is the meaning of beauty as an interjection expressing "satisfaction or pleasure in something" [7, P. 253].

Based on data from such English dictionaries as "Chambers's 21 Century Dictionary", "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary", and "The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language" [11], [12], [13], we conclude that for the English concept of beauty. The central values will be: what gives aesthetic pleasure through the senses (eyes, ear); a perfect specimen, representative of something; beauty as a characteristic of human appearance. At the periphery are the meanings of an approving expressive exclamation ("you beauty!"), an unusual and vivid example of something and a distinguishing and useful feature or quality of something (The project will require very little work to start up; that's the beauty of it [12]).

It is extremely interesting that in the English-speaking world there are two different terms for male and female beauty - *beautiful* (about a woman) and *handsome* (about a man). N.D. Arutyunova notes this fact, including the example of other European languages [4].

The figurative meaning of the Russian term *krasota* (beauty) is extremely extensive, so we will highlight only some of the most characteristic metaphors concerning beauty in the Russian linguistic environment. In order to reveal more fully the conceptual meaning of the chosen concept, we should also refer to synonymic dictionaries. In them we find the following words denoting the concept "beauty": 1) the property of beautiful, as well as beautiful appearance, in general something beautiful <...> *krasa* coincides in its meaning with the word *krasota* (beauty), but in modern language it is used mainly in poetic speech [8]; beautiful; 2) *krasa*, *prigozhest'*, *schastlivaya vneshnost'*; *prelesti*, *krasy*; *zhivopisnost'*; *lepota* (beauty, adjacency, happy appearance; charm, beauty; pictorial beauty; mildness) 3) *krasivost'*; 4) *krasivyj* (beautiful); 5) *horosho* (good) [6]. In the above synonyms we can observe the contrast between external and internal beauty (e.g., in Aleksandrova's dictionary [6] the third meaning of "beauty" is given with the external notation, while in Eugenieva's dictionary [9] at the very beginning of the dictionary article there is a notation of somebody's beauty, external). There is also differentiation by attributes: "poetic - commonly used", the first group of meanings includes synonyms: *krasa*, *prigozhest'*; "obsolete - modern", respectively: *krasy*; *lepota*. As associated words with the concept of "beauty" in the dictionaries of synonyms are presented following units: *milovidnost'*, *horoshen'kij*, *ocharovatel'nyj*, *privlekatel'nyj* (sweetness, pretty, charming, and attractive). In the interpretation of these lexemes we find the following features: *smazlivost'* (pretty-boy, the only negative colored word with a notation), *prelestnyj*, *plenitel'nyj*, *charuyushchij*, *obol'stitel'nyj*, *obvorozhitel'nyj*, *pokoryayushchij* (charming, captivating, charming, seductive, conquering", "alluring, seductive, tempting; supernatural power is emphasized).

According to Word Associations Network the associative field of the concept beauty includes the following units: *graceful*, *lovely*, *exquisite*, *serene*, *picturesque*, *adorned*, *gorgeous*, *charming*, *elegant*, *harmonious*, *majestic*, *delightful*, *radiant*, *handsome*, *sublime*, *splendid*, *magnificent*, *witty*, *shining*, *gracious*, *delicate*, *fascinating*, *stunning* etc. Beautiful is described as "the qualities that give pleasure to the senses", "delighting the senses or exciting intellectual or emotional admiration". A whole class of words inside the semantic field of this concept is described as "pleasing in appearance especially by reason of conformity to ideals of form and proportion"; this class is represented by following words: *fine-looking*, *good-looking*, *better-looking*, *well-favored*.

Just as in the Russian associative series, in English there is semantics of power, in such lexemes as *stunning* (strikingly beautiful, attractive) и *ravishing* (stunningly beautiful).

Thus, from all the above, we can conclude that the semantic fields of the concepts of beauty in Russian and in English, there are many overlaps and differences not only in partial coincidence in some meanings, but also in full conformity in such a metaphor as "beauty is power" or "beauty is truth". Moreover, in both Russian and English, the use of beauty metaphors is dual semantics and has not only positive but also negative connotations, for example, in S. J. Nadson poem beauty is called "terrible power" [24], and in J. G. Byron we find "fatal gift of beauty" [23].

And finally, having analyzed the development of the concept of "beauty" on the basis of the conceptual, figurative and value aspects in English and Russian, we came to the conclusion that the semantic fields of the concepts of beauty in the Russian and in English, there are many overlaps and sometimes full matches.

The concept "ugly" can be considered from two perspectives. A narrow approach to its consideration can be considered the understanding of "ugly" only as "not beautiful", opposite to the beautiful, its denial. A broader approach, on the other hand, implies that the concept of "ugly" is viewed as an independent and no less important linguistic and cultural dominant. However, even with a broad understanding, first of all the concept of "ugly" as well as the concept of "beautiful" manifests itself in links with the concept of "beauty".

As well as being a "beautiful" aesthetic category, "ugly" as a term is widely used in literature studies. The Terminological Dictionary Thesaurus on Literary Studies edited by N. Rusova provides such an interpretation of the "ugly": "an aesthetic category opposite to the beautiful; it serves to define and evaluate ugly-sided objects and phenomena of reality that violate the

notion of beauty" [10, P. 32]. Indeed, this definition can be considered exhaustive, because it takes into account the main feature of the "ugly" in our view - its ability to disrupt the notion of beauty.

The value of Russian lexemes *bezobraznyj*, *urodlivyj*, *nekrasivyj* (ugly, unsightly, *not beautiful*) is less voluminous than the volume of semantic units considered above, therefore as a source of classification we used Russian associative thesaurus and Russian comparative associative dictionary [19], [20], in which the following associative groups are presented: *nekrasivyj* – *strashnyj*, *urod*, *strannyj*, *krivoj*, *neopryatnyj*, *plohoj*, *nervnyj*; *urod* – *nekrasivyj*, *strashnyj*, *neschastnyj*, *bezobraznyj*, *gorbatyj*, *durak*, *uzhasnyj*, *gryaznyj*, *idiot*, *koryavyj*, *kosoj*, *mrachnyj* (ugly - ugly, terrible, strange, crooked, untidy, bad, nervous; ugly - terrible, unhappy, ugly, humpty, foolish, horrible, dirty, idiot, oblique, gloomy) etc.

According to Word Associations Network the associative field of the concept of "beauty" includes the following units: *deformed*, *squat*, *hateful*, *hideous*, *disgusting*, *grotesque*, *handsome*, *clumsy*, *beautiful*, *wrinkled*, *homely*, *mottled*, *vulgar*, *dirty*, *scarred*, *hairy*, *disagreeable*, *gaunt*, *brute*, *vicious*, *filthy*, *distorted*, *coarse*, *shaggy*, *frightening*, *tempered*, *twisted*, *crooked*, *horrid*, *ghastly*, *sullen*, *venomous*, *sickly*, *brutal*, *stupid*, *awkward*, *shabby*, *nasty*, *pretty*, *bald*, *diseased*, *vile*, *cowardly*, *monstrous*, *skinny* etc. Ugly is described as "displeasing to the senses", "inclined to anger or bad feelings with overtones of menace", "morally reprehensible", "provoking horror", "distorted and unnatural in shape or size, abnormal and hideous" etc.

Both intersections and differences in synonyms in the Russian and English language picture of the world are interesting. For example, in Russian dictionaries of synonyms there is no moral assessment, while for English there is a whole subgroup of words with the meaning "morally reprehensible", which includes the following units: *despicable*, *unworthy*, *vile*, *worthless*, *wretched* and *evil*. The closest associative meaning in Russian is the unit *nekrasivyj* and its synonyms *neblagovidnyj*, *nechistoplotnyj* (disreputable, untidy but, as emphasized in Alexandrova's dictionary [6], it is used only in relation to a person's act or behavior).

### Results

The choice of the text of Shakespeare's historical play to analyze the transformation of the concepts of "beautiful - the" on Russian language cultural basis is not accidental. W. Shakespeare is a classic of English and world drama, a recognized innovator of literature. His works have been translated into all major world languages and his plays have been staged in the largest theatres on the planet. Naturally, the translations of his works into Russian are linguistically peculiar and rich. With all the above, it would be logical to turn to the texts of the tragedy "Hamlet" - the most famous play by Shakespeare. However, due to the diversity and exhaustive number of studies devoted to this tragedy, as well as on the grounds that the historical chronicle of "Richard III" is longer and more intense in its vocabulary, we chose it, as well as translations of Anna Radlova (published in 1957) [18], Alexander Druzhinin (published in 2002) [17] and Boris Leitin (published in 1994) [16].

According to our study, the most frequent epithet with a meaning that falls within the field of the concept *beautiful* in the original text of Shakespeare's play "Richard III" was the word *fair* and its derivatives, such as the comparative degree *fairer*. This word has a wide range of meanings, the main one being, according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary [21]; the meaning "marked by justice, honesty, and freedom from bias", while the meaning "very pleasing to look at" is on the periphery. But if we turn to the English etymological dictionaries [13], we will find that for the Old English it is "beautiful, lovely, and pleasant" that is the central meaning, and for Shakespeare's time it was directly related to the description of human appearance. We find confirmation of this in the text of the play:

*We speak no treason, man; — we say the king  
Is wise and virtuous; and his noble queen  
Well struck in years, **fair**, and not jealous;—  
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,  
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue*

– This adjective obviously serves to describe both the external and moral qualities of the Queen, but in translations it is not always possible to convey this:

- |                                                                                       |                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) ...Korol', chto koroleva blagorodna,<br>Pochtenna, horosha i ne revniva; (Radlova) | 1) ...King, that the Queen is noble,<br>Mathetic, good and not jealous.            |
| 2) Chto koroleva vovse ne stara,<br>Mila, dobra i horosha soboyu... (Druzhinin)       | 2) That the queen isn't old at all,<br>Sweet, kind and good-looking...             |
| 3) Chto nasha koroleva ne revniva,<br>V rascvete let i horosha soboj; (Leitin)        | 3) That our queen is not jealous,<br>In the heyday of the years, and looking good; |

The use of this adjective to describe the appearance is also found in another passage of the play:

*You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth.  
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.*

Here again, in translations it is difficult to single out one meaning chosen by the authors, however, the main ones stand out - nice and beautiful:

- 1) *U vas ostalas' doch' - Elizaveta:*  
*Ona krasiva, carstvenna, mila. (Radlova)*
- 2) *Imeesh' ty ditya - Elizavetu;*  
*Ona mila, prekrasna i krotka,*  
*Kak sleduet device carskoj krovi. (Druzhinin)*
- 3) *U vas ostalas' doch' Elizaveta.*  
*Ona skromna, prekrasna i lyubezna. (Lejtin)*

- 1) *You still have a daughter, Elizabeth:*  
*She is beautiful, regal, sweet.*
- 2) *You have a child, Elizabeth;*  
*She is sweet and beautiful and gentle,*  
*As the girl of the king's blood should be.*
- 3) *You still have a daughter, Elizabeth.*  
*She is humble, beautiful and kind*

In addition, the use of *fair* in other, less obvious values, which can be attributed to the periphery of the semantic field of the concept *beauty*, is also frequent. For example, in such combinations as *fair well-spoken days* (in translations: *bol'tlivyj pyshnyj vek; prazdnyh dnei zabavy* (a talkative pompous age; festive days of fun); *fair sun* (in translations the word "sun" - *solnce* - is replaced by translators for "day"); *fair humility* (in translations: *smirennost'; chelovechnost'* (humility; humanity), etc. From this we can conclude that *fair* is a word with rich semantics, which allows using it with such frequency.

Of the vocabulary units that belong to the concept *ugly* field by their semantics, the word *plain* is the most frequent in Shakespeare's text. Just like *fair*, it has a wide and ambiguous range of meanings, which, according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary "free from all additions or embellishments, free from added matter" [21] can hardly be attributed to negative semantics. Even closer to the periphery, we do not find the necessary meanings that directly match in the context of a play with the concept *ugly*. However, Collins dictionary [22] gives the following definition: "If you describe someone as plain, you think they look ordinary and not at all beautiful". Thus, we can conclude that in relation to a person and especially his or her appearance, this adjective is used primarily in a negative way, while in relation to actions or opinions this adjective tends to a neutral-positive connotation.

For the first time in Shakespeare's text the word *plain* meets in Richard Gloucester's address to George Clarence: *Simple, plain Clarence!* The main meanings underlined in the translations of this fragment – *Prostak moj Klarens!; Doverchivyy prostak!; Proshchaj, glupec!* (Simple is my Clarence!; Trustful simple!; Goodbye, fool!) - both the words *simple* and *plain* are very close and relate to the same semantic plan, with the only exception that the word "simple" traditionally in the English-speaking environment is devoid of negative coloring and cannot be attributed by us to this concept. But also *plain* is not an unambiguously negative epithet, for example, in the combination "*I took him for the plainest harmless creature*" in the fifth scene of the third act it has the obviously opposite positive coloring, the confirmation of which we find in the translations:

- 1) *Schital ego nevinnejshim sozdan'em (Radlova)*
- 2) *Ego schital ya krotkim sushchestvom (Druzhinin)*
- 3) *Ya dumal, bezobidnee, chem on,*  
*Net cheloveka v hristianskom mire (Lejtin)*

- 1) *I thought he was the most innocent creature*
- 2) *I thought he was a humble creature*
- 3) *I thought that more harmless than him,*  
*There is no man in the Christian world*

The lexical core of the concepts "beautiful" and "ugly" consists of such words as "beautiful" and "ugly" respectively. And the second of them is used in the text of the play much more often than the first, or rather its derivative - *beauteous*, which occurs only about three times (translation by A. Radlova):

- 1) *The king, that calls your beauteous daughter wife – Korol', muzh docheri prekrasnoj vashej – The King, husband of your beautiful daughter's*
- 2) *I tender not thy beauteous princely daughter! – Prekrasnuyu i carstvennuyu doch'! – Beautiful and royal daughter!*
- 3) *You having lands, and bless'd with beauteous wives, – U vas zemlya, krasivy vashi zheny – You have land, your wives are beautiful*

It should be noted that in the translations, except for the above, this word and its meaning in 1 and 3 examples is omitted. As for the lexeme *ugly*, it is much more frequent in the work, used in its basic meaning:

*If ever he have child, abortive be it,*  
*Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,*  
*Whose ugly and unnatural aspect*  
*May fright the hopeful mother at the view*

- 1) *A esli u nego ditya roditsya,*  
*Pust' budet nedonosok i urod,*  
*CHtob vidom bezobraznym i uzhasnym*  
*Mat', polnuyu nadezhd, on porazil (Radlova)*
- 2) *Pust' - esli syn roditsya u nego -*  
*Roditsya on ne v srok i bezobrazen,*  
*CHtob vid ego chudovishchnyj i gusnyj,*  
*Rodnuyu mat' soboyu ispagal! (Druzhinin)*
- 3) *I esli u nego ditya roditsya, Puskaj ono ubogim nedonoskom,*  
*Nasleduya otcovskij strashnyj rok.*  
*Poyavitsya na svet, razbiv nadezhdy,*  
*Rodnuyu mat' urodstvom uzhasnuv! (Lejtin)*

- 1) *And if he has a baby,*  
*Let there be a bastard and a freak,*  
*To make it look ugly and horrible.*  
*A mother full of hope, he struck.*
- 2) *Let - if he has a son -*  
*He's not born on time and he's ugly,*  
*To make it look monstrous and disgusting,*  
*His own mother to be scared of him!*
- 3) *And if he has a baby,*  
*Let it be a miserable bastard,*  
*Inheriting my father's scary fate.*  
*Will come into the world, breaking hope,*  
*His own mother to be terrified of ugliness!*

*What sights of ugly death within my eyes!*

- 1) *Kak merzok vid urodlivyh smertej!* (Radlova)  
2) *Kak omerzitel'ny viden'ya smerti!* (Lejtin)

- 1) *How disgusting is the sight of ugly deaths*  
2) *How disgusting are the visions of death*

Also such lexical units used in the text as handsome (beautiful, statuesque), lovely (attractive, sweet) and monstrous (monstrous, ugly), ominous (sinister, threatening) can be considered close to the center of the semantic fields of the concepts "beautiful" and "ugly", respectively, but their use is not so frequent and, being within the framework of the main semantic meanings of these words, is of no particular interest.

#### Conclusion

A multifaceted analysis of Shakespeare's drama "Richard III" as well as of its Russian texts allowed us to reveal similar and different variants of vocabulary usage related to the concepts of "beautiful" and "ugly" in Russian and English. Besides, since we chose translations published in different historical periods for the analysis, thanks to the diachronic method we analyzed the differences in historical frequency of use of certain epithets for the translation of lexicon W. Shakespeare. This allowed us to determine the peculiarities of perception by the modern Russian-speaking consciousness of the picture of the world, traditional for the European, English language worldview, as well as methods of linguistic adaptation of this picture on the example of translations of lexical units included in the semantic field of concepts "beautiful" – "ugly".

Special attention should be given to the discrepancies between synonymous constructions, the difference in perception of external and internal beauty and ugliness, which are due to the development of Russian and English culture, as well as differences in historical periods when the historical play by William Shakespeare was created and Russian translations, which are shared by more than four centuries.

#### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

#### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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