The article is devoted to some formats and contexts of using the word "cunt" as an anthrop metaphors within the corpora approach. The metaphor gradation takes place in the framework of a binary opposition "We/Ours" - "They/Others", in which target groups referrals are presented in a negative/positive way. The anthrop metaphor "cunt" is hypothesized to appear as a result of its emotive meaning's reconsideration.

**Keywords:** inductive, metaphorizing meaning, negative/positive connotations, binary opposition We/Ours - They/Others.
It is interesting to note that only in sample (3) the negative connotation of the word «cunt» is connected with an improper sexual conduct (You're all a bunch of perverts). In the other examples, it refers to deeds and behavior, which are linked with non-sexual spheres of life: trust – sample (1), loyalty – sample (2), conspiracy – sample (4).

The analysis has also revealed a number of contexts, which illustrate non-prototypical positive meanings of the lexeme «cunt». For instance, it is used in the speech acts of affection (5), asking for information (6), friendly greeting (7) and others.

(5) Oh Christ, I love you, cunt, she said [HTS W_fict_prose]
(6) Oh, cunt, how are ya? – Good, mate! [KCU S_conv]
(7) Haven’t seen you for ages, ya cunt! [KCU S_conv]

We believe that the gradation of cunt metaphors takes place in the framework of a binary opposition «We/ours» – «They/Others» where the nomination referents (people) are represented negatively or positively depending on the zone they belong to. The preference zone of metaphor «cunt» is «They/Others» (samples 1-4). As a result of the shift to the opposite zone of «We/ours» this word gains positive connotations (samples 5-7).

A singular format of the metaphor «cunt» is also common in narrative constructions where this lexeme can refer to both females and males.

(8) She's a cunt. She's like poison, man. You don't want to know her [FIC BK:GetawayBlues]
(9) What is your estimation of him? [KPR]
(10) I like to have a laugh, and my friends used to say, «Oh, you're just a cunt, man»! [CDG W_pop_lore]

No sexual implication can be traced in samples (8) – (10). In the first two contexts «cunt» refers to a person (female – sample 8, male – sample 9), the speaker thoroughly dislikes. In sample (8) some arguments are given to support the speakers estimation (She's like poison, man. You don't want to know her). From sample (9), it is not clear why the referent deserves to be called «cunt».

In sample (10) metaphor «cunt» used humorously in a circle of close friends. The contextual units «I like to have a laugh, and my friends used to say» focus the attention on the positive part of the statement, and prototypical negative meaning of the word «cunt» weakens considerably.

The analysis has revealed that, besides being used singularly, metaphor «cunt» can also form attributive word combinations, in which it functions as a key word and can be modified either by left hand (Adj + N, Part I + N) or right hand attributes (N + Prep + N). Prepositional and postpositional adjuncts modify the key word’s meanings by clarifying, complementing, changing or strengthening its semantic content. They can be classified in accordance with such conceptual and qualifying markers as:

1. Age/Size: little cunt, old cunt
2. Appearance: fat cunt, ugly cunt
3. Cognitive abilities: silly cunt, stupid cunt, ignorant cunt, witless cunt
4. Character and behavior traits: snobish cunt, cheeky cunt, shameless cunt, nasty cunt, lying cunt, patronizing cunt, teasing cunt
5. Physical and mental conditions: dozy cunt, dopey cunt, mad cunt
6. Estimations: fucking cunt, complete cunt, real cunt, total cunt

The majority of adjuncts convey the most relevant, from the speaker’s point of view, information about his/her interlocutor or a third person. A number of attributes (fucking, real, complete, etc.) highlight the emotional component (mostly negative) rather than clarify a referent’s characteristics.

(11) Andy, you're a fucking cunt! [KPR S_conv]
(12) But every once in awhile... you can be a real cunt, They smile at each other [FIC Mov:KillBill]

In sample (11) the adjective «fucking» intensifies the speaker’s negative emotions without clarifying what they are caused by. The negative connotation of the expression «real cunt» in sample (12) is neutralized under the influence of the verb «smile» and the context modality becomes positive.

Adjectives «old» and «little» can get additional evaluative meanings when they form word combinations with metaphor «cunt».

(13) How are you, old cunt? [FNU W_fict_prose]
(14) He’s the most snobbish little cunt I’ve ever known [KD6 S_conv]

Adjective «old» used in sample (13) underlines the long-term friendship between speakers and under its influence, the word «cunt» becomes a form of friendly greeting. In sample (14) adjective «little» gets the nuance of disparaging attitude and intensifies the negative connotation of the key word.

One more common construction with the metaphor «cunt» is N + Prep + N (cunt of a woman, cunt of a policeman, cunt of a son, etc.). It is used to express the speaker’s negative emotions (indignation, frustration, fury, etc.) caused by another person’s behavior or deeds, for example, the neglect of one’s duties (sample 15).

(15) The animals' legs had become afflicted with fungus. That cunt of a son of his should have let them out and fed them in the light of day [FIC Triquarterly]

According to some researchers [3; 4], an extremely negative meaning of «cunt» (emotive) is strongly connected with its negative referential meaning. As we can judge from the samples analyzed above, very few of them reveal sexual implication and are connected with sexual behavior. Moreover, the metaphor «cunt» refers almost equally to both females and males.

What we want to point out is the fact that the metaphorical meaning of «cunt» as «a woman regarded sexually» is being reconsidered once again, and the negative connotations grounded on a female improper sexual behavior are transferred to negative deeds and behavior attributed to the representatives of the zone «They/Others» who are regarded in the terms of stupidity, disloyalty, dishonesty, treason, irresponsibility, annoyance, spitefulness, intolerance, etc.

In the opposite zone of «We/Ours» metaphor «cunt» is used humorously as a form of friendly greeting and can signal about close/affectionate relations between the speakers. The physical intimacy of «cunt» (referential) is somehow transmitted to social intimacy, and in this way it becomes a term of endearment between close friends.

As for further researches in this field, we think that the meaning and functioning of the adjective «cutting» and the verbs «to cunt» and «to cunt off» should be given a deeper semantic and sociolinguistic exploration and analysis. We also suggest that the lexeme «cunt» be studied and analyzed in relation to and comparison with other swearwords.

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