

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.24.4.28>**ТЕКСТОВОЕ СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОЕ ПОЛЕ ПЕРСОНАЖА КОРОЛЯ АРТУРА**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Статья посвящена изучению образа короля Артура в средневековой литературе. Основу анализа составили произведения Гальфрида Монмутского, Роберта Васа, Кретьена де Труа и Томаса Мэлори. Целью работы является построение текстового семантического поля художественного персонажа. Лексические единицы для построения текстового семантического поля были отобраны методом сплошной выборки и проанализированы методом компонентного анализа. Было выявлено, что текстовое ядро семантического поля художественного образа составляют следующие микрополя: «Authority», «Worship», «Justice», «Anger», «Advice», «War», «Love (for his knights)», «Generosity» и «Knight». В периферию текстового семантического поля входят микрополя: «Courtesy», «Clemency», «Guarantee», «Rush» (n), «Sage» (adj), «Ruiner».

**Ключевые слова:** король Артур, художественный образ, текстовое семантическое поле.

**TEXT SEMANTIC FIELD OF THE IMAGE OF KING ARTHUR**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The article studies the image of King Arthur in medieval literature. The works of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Robert Wace, Chrétien de Troyes, and Thomas Malory are the basis of the current research. The research has its purpose to construct a text semantic field of the artistic figure. In order to construct this field, lexemes, first, were selected by the continuous sampling method, second, were analysed by the componential analysis method. 'Authority', 'Worship', 'Justice', 'Anger', 'Advice', 'War', 'Love (for his knights)', 'Generosity', and 'Knight' are the micro-fields forming the core of the studied text semantic field. The micro-fields forming the periphery are the following: 'Courtesy', 'Clemency', 'Guarantee', 'Rush' (n), 'Sage' (adj), 'Ruiner'.

**Keywords:** King Arthur, artistic figure, text semantic field.

**Introduction**

The image of King Arthur is rather popular and frequently exploited in books, films, and series. Each writer or film director has their own vision of the renowned king and presents his image in various ways. However, we suggest the image of King Arthur having a certain set of constant and permanent characteristics regardless of the image exploitation by different authors. The purpose of the current research is to define these characteristics and construct a text semantic field of the King Arthur image.

'History of the Kings of Britain' by Geoffrey of Monmouth [7], a fragment of 'Roman de Brut' by Robert Wace [12], 'Erec and Enide' [6, P. 67-216] and 'The Knight of the Cart (Lancelot)' [6, P. 360-512] by Chrétien de Troyes, 'Le Morte D'Arthur' by Thomas Malory [10], [11] were chosen as the material for the research.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100-1155) is the first author to have introduced the plot about King Arthur into European literature. It is thanks to him the storyline has become one of the most popular themes [8, P. 253]. In Geoffrey's pseudo-historic book (finished in 1138), it is told about the conception of Arthur as the result of an adulterous union between Uther Pendragon and duchess Yegerne. Geoffrey depicted Arthur as a conqueror of many realms who possessed Caliburn (future Excalibur). He married to Guanhumara (future Guinevere) and was betrayed by his nephew Mordred, who previously had usurped Arthur's kingdom. Finally, in the battle at Calamn, Arthur was mortally wounded by Mordred and was taken to Avalon to heal his wounds. In about 1155, Robert Wace translated 'History of the Kings of Britain' into Anglo-French poetry adding details about the round table. In the late 12th-century in Chrétien de Troyes poems, the image of Arthur was moved to the background, and knights of the round table become central figures of narration. Finally, Thomas Malory in the book 'Le Morte D'Arthur' (ca 1470) attempted to compile all stories about King Arthur in one: from his conception to his end [8, P.39-40].

**Methods**

The set of characteristics is structured according to the semantic field's principle. L.A. Novikov defines semantic field as a hierarchically structured group of lexemes united by an invariant meaning. Semantic field (SF) is the biggest structure reflecting a certain conceptual sphere [2, P. 8]. Structure and semantics of text semantic field (TSF) depend on context [2, P. 9].

We can define two zones in TSF: the core and the periphery. The core zone consists of the elements that most accurately characterise a keyword. These are essential, vivid, and permanent features that appear most frequently in the text [4].

The criteria to choose core elements are the following: frequency, ideological and artistic importance, aesthetic function, and semantic content of lexemes [3, P.124].

Less frequent and less used lexis constitutes the periphery of TSF. Hence, as core elements we are taking permanent and constant characteristics presented in the chosen literary works defining the image of King Arthur. Peripheral elements are non-permanent and non-frequent characteristics, they are not important for the plot development.

TSF is actually a set of micro-fields. The basic micro-field element is a lexico-semantic group (LSG). A shared archiseme is a reasonable basis to unite lexemes into an LSG [2, P. 11].

In this paper, the componential analysis method applied to the analysis of a lexico-semantic word variant helps to define each LSG. The analysed words are selected with continuous sampling, and the componential analysis is proceeded by the step-by-step identification method of dictionary definitions [1, P.453].

## Results

The core of the TSF consists of the micro-fields presented below. LSG representing these micro-fields displayed in parenthesis.

1. Authority (to allow, to appoint, to command, a commander, an order, to rule, a ruler)
2. Worship (homage, to revere, reverence, worthy)
3. Justice (fairness, justified)
4. Anger (to aggravate, anger, to get revenge from)
5. Advice (a committee, a guidance, to recommend)
6. War (to attack, to battle, to be victorious, a blockade, to conquer, to encircle, a fight, an exploit, to kill, slaying, to take by storm, a win, a winner)
7. Love for his knights (to acclaim, to adore, to cry, fondness, to weep)
8. Generosity (to award, generosity, to present)
9. Knight (a knight)

Periphery of the text semantic field.

1. Courtesy (courtesy, courteous, to greet, manner)
2. Clemency (clemency, to excuse, forgiveness)
3. Guarantee (to promise, a promise)
4. Rush (n) (to rush, swiftness)
5. Sage (sage, understanding)
6. Ruiner (to plunder, to ruin)

## Conclusion

One of the key characteristics of King Arthur is that he is a representative of **Authority**. We cannot but mention that in pre-Geoffrey tales Arthur was depicted only as a martial leader without any allusion to having power. The tradition to picture Arthur as a king firstly appears in 'History of the Kings of Britain' (Geoffrey of Monmouth) since the author aimed to legitimise the Plantagenet Dynasty from the cultural approach with the image of King Arthur as an instrument. Author's emphasis on **Worship** to the king can be explained from the same perspective [5].

Arthur becomes very vile and angry (**Anger**) when justice is denied. For example, he gets ferocious when an unfair murder takes place in his kingdom (ex. the episode about Balin who has killed the Lady of the Lake) or his comrades killed by enemies. Moreover, Arthur is ready to condemn his wife to be burnt at a stake to fulfill justice.

All taken works show Arthur as a person who is eager to heed pieces of **Advice**. This peculiarity can be explained regarding Geoffrey's plot. Arthur had to become a king at a young age, and it was vitally necessary for him to get help from more experienced people when it came to solving national issues. Lately, the king takes advice from his knights. In 'Le Morte D'Arthur' Merlin functions as the king's adviser before the magician's death.

The micro-field **War** is widely represented. All the works contain information about Arthur's conquests. For instance, the king successfully conquered Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. Also, the fight with Mordred is always described in detail. The authors always highlight Arthur's **Love to his knights**. Having spent much time in battles, the king and his knights become true friends. Arthur's **Generosity** is a way to demonstrate homage to the knights. His generosity at the same time is a thoughtful political movement. Awarding the knights with lands and titles, he allocates his power to the comrades and thus maintains peace in the kingdom. King Arthur manifests himself as a **Knight**. He is an armoured warrior on a horseback, which corresponds to the dictionary definition [9].

**Courtesy** is a part of the semantic field peripheral zone. This feature is attributed to a knight, but in Arthur's case it makes no essential contribution to the narration, in latter work this characteristic is the fruit of courtly literature. **Clemency**, **Guarantee** (keeping promises), **Rush** (regarding movement during military campaigns), **Sage**, **Ruiner** (in Wace's work, the author highlighted his willingness to destruct enemies' realms). These characteristics are less frequent (not represented in all literary works) and are aimed to embellish and expand the image of King Arthur according to the author's intense.

In conclusion, the image of Arthur created by Geoffrey of Monmouth is the very basis of further works, and other authors minimally transformed the image only adding less important details.

## Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

## Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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