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**УПОТРЕБЛЕНИЕ ИНВЕКТИВОВ В ФУНКЦИИ АНТРОПНЫХ МЕТАФОР (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ЛЕКСЕМЫ "CUNT")**

*Аннотация*

*Статья посвящена анализу контекстов и форматов функционирования лексемы "cunt" в функции аноропной метафоры с позиции корпусного подхода. Градация метафрических образов происходит в рамках бинарной оппозиции "Свой- Чужой" с использованием стратегий негативной/позитивной репрезентации представителей целевых групп. Выдвигается гипотеза возникновения анторпной метафоры "cunt" как результат повторного переосмысления ее вторичной номинации.*

**Ключевые слова:** инвектив, метафорическое значение, отрицательные/положительные коннотации, бинарная оппозиция Свой - Чужой.

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**INVECTIVES AS ANTHROP METAPHORS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE LEXEME "CUNT")**

*Abstract*

*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 referents 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:** invective, metaphoric meaning, negative/positive connotations, binary oppsition We/Ours - They/Others.

«Cunt» is undoubtedly considered to be the most offensive word in English speaking countries. Its meanings and usage have been explored by rather a small number of scholars, such as M. Gressor, G. Greer (in their studies the meaning of «cunt» is considered from the feminist point of view) [3;4]; K. Allan and K. Burridge (their works are mostly devoted to the difference in meaning and usage between «cunt» and its less offensive and neutral synonyms) [1]; J. Sanders and W. Robinson, D. Cameron (their studies are aimed at determining «male» and «female» explications in the usage of «cunt») [7;2]; A. Montagu (her research is devoted to the emotive meanings of «cunt») [6] and some others.

As far as we are concerned, the most productive research in this field has been done by A. Kidman who thoroughly analyzes both referential and emotive meanings of «cunt» and the structure «cunt of a….» in a great variety of contexts used by Australian speakers [5].

In this work we would like to make an attempt to analyze the word «cunt» as an anthrop metaphor, to define formats and contexts of its usage in both prototypical (negative) and non-prototypical (positive) meanings.

We would like to start with a definitional analysis of the word «cunt» in accordance with the lexicosemantic variants given in the following dictionaries: Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Collins English Dictionary, Macmillan Dictionary and Urbandictionary. For the sake of simplification we will further use the shortened forms of the above-mentioned dictionaries' names: Cambridge for Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, American Heritage for American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Merriam for Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Collins for Collins English Dictionary, Macmillan for Macmillan Dictionary and Urban for Urbandictionary.

Let us consider the lexicosemantic variants (LSV) of the word «cunt» as given in Cambrige.

LSV1 nominates the literal meaning of «cunt» which is «vagina». This meaning is marked as «offensive».

According to LSV2, «cunt» is an offensive word for a very unpleasant or stupid person. It is interesting to note that «cunt» in this meaning can refer to people of both genders (person) who raise speaker's negative emotions (unpleasant or stupid).

Now we would like to reflect on the peculiarities of the «cunt» lexicosemantic variants presented in the other dictionaries. As far as the literal meaning (LSV1) is concerned, it is marked as «extremely offensive» in Macmillan and «obscene» in Merriam, but not regarded as such in American Heritage (the female genital organs) and Collins (the female genitals).

According to Collins, «cunt» can be used to describe «a mean or obnoxious person» and to Macmillan «somebody you consider unpleasant or annoying». In American Heritage «cunt» is defined as «a disparaging term for a person one dislikes». It is not clear

whether this kind of attitude has any objective grounds or not which suggests that the lexeme «cunt» could be used as a means of offence and/or verbal abuse. In Urban some negative features of a person referred to as «cunt» are listed. It can nominate a spiteful, nasty, mean, despicable, evil, worthless individual, both male and female.

The dictionaries Merriam, American Heritage and Collins reveal one more meaning of the word «cunt» absent in the other dictionaries: a woman (disparaging and offensive) — Merriam; a disparaging term for a woman (offensive) – American Heritage; a woman considered sexually (offensive) – Collins. The interesting thing about these meanings is that only in American Heritage a woman called «cunt» is seen from the sexual point of view. According to Merriam and Collins «cunt» is not necessarily a female regarded sexually. In all the three dictionaries this LSV is marked as «offensive» or/and «disparaging», but in Collins and Merriam it is further from the literal meaning (a vagina) than in American Heritage.

As a result of the conducted LSV analysis we find it necessary to highlight the following points. First, the literal meaning of «cunt» as a «vagina» is not always offensive. Second, the figurative usage of this word as an «unpleasant person» seems to have lost the gender aspect and can be directed at both males and females equally. Third, the meaning «woman» does not always carry out sexual connotations.

Now we would like to analyze the peculiarities of using the lexeme «cunt» in some real speech situations. The samples to be considered have been taken from British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The total number of examples we have speculated upon is 486 samples (BNC – 206; COCA – 280), in which «cunt» is used in its both literal and figurative meanings. The sample analysis reveals two major types of contexts for these words. It can be used as a form of address and form narrative constructions, both singularly and as a part of attributive word combinations where it functions either as a key word.

According to the experimental material, a singular format of the word «cunt» is almost equally common in both forms of address (32 samples) and narrative constructions (39 samples). As a form of address, it conveys mostly negative connotations and can be frequently found in such speech acts as indignation (1), warning (2), blame (3), threat (4), etc.

(1) You can have a look then if you don't believe me, cunt [KCU S_conv ]

(2) Don't you fucking start, Colley, you cunt; you let me down too, remember? [FP6 W_fict_prose ]

(3) And it's all your fault, you cunt. You're all a bunch of perverts [FIC NewEnglandRev ]

(4) If she finds out we're down here I'm gon na break your ass. Anything she does to me, I'm gon na do to you, cunt [FIC FantasySciFi ]

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?

He's a cunt, said Stella [FNU W_fict_prose ]

(10) I like to have a laugh, and my friends used to say, «Oh, you're just a cunt, man» [CD6 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: snobbish cunt, cheeky cunt, shameless cunt, nasty cunt, lying cut, 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 «cunting» 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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