FUNCTIONAL SEMANTIC FIELD OF “PRAISE” IN W. SHAKESPEARE’S DISCOURSE

The article deals with elucidation of peculiarities of functioning of the semantic field of “Praise” in the discourse of W. Shakespeare’s works. The author’s comedies, tragedies, and sonnets have been analyzed and an attempt has been made to reveal characteristics of lexemes denoting ‘Praise’ in W. Shakespeare’s discourse.

Key words: functional-semantic field (FSF), micro-field, nucleus, periphery, text, discourse.

Functional approach to language studies presupposes investigation of language facts and phenomena in the process of their functioning with the aim of elucidation functional semantic paradigms, systemic organization of vocabulary and establishing the law-governed nature of lexical fields functioning in language system.
The field principle conception of the system organization of linguistic facts is fairly considered to be one of the most significant achievements of the XX century linguistics. The concept of “field” traces back to the definition of language as the system, representing the complex mechanism, which was theoretically substantiated by I. O. Baudouin de Courtenay and F. de Saussure. Scholars of different generations, national schools and directions, interpret the term “field” differently; this fact reveals different approaches to the problem development, rather than the differences of fundamental theoretical character.

The presented article is carried out in the framework of Semasiology and Discourse Analysis elaborated by such scholars as I.V. Arnold [1], R.S. Ginzburg [11], V.V. Levytsky [3], G.S. Shchur [5], J.R. Firth [10], H.P. Grice [12], G.N. Leech [13], S.C. Levinson [14].

The objective of the article is to elucidate the problem of functioning of the semantic field of “Praise” in W. Shakespeare’s comedies, tragedies, and sonnets.

The set objective presupposes the necessity to solve the following tasks:
1) to elucidate text/discourse concepts;
2) to define the notion of a functional semantic field;
3) to reveal peculiarities of lexemes denoting ‘praise’ in W. Shakespeare’s discourse.

Constituents of the semantic field of ‘Praise’ occupy an important place in the lexical system of the English language. These lexemes serve as markers of pragmatic attitude of the speaker to the addressee. That is why, elucidation of peculiarities of functioning of the semantic field of “Praise” in the discourse of W. Shakespeare’s works presents the scientific novelty of the research.

Since its introduction to modern science the term ‘discourse’ has taken various, sometimes very broad, meanings. In order to specify which of the numerous senses is analyzed in the presented article it has to be defined. Originally the word ‘discourse’ comes from Latin ‘discursus’ which denoted ‘conversation, speech’. Thus understood, however, discourse refers to too wide an area of human life, therefore only discourse from the vantage point of linguistics, and especially applied linguistics, is taken into consideration here.
There is no agreement among linguists as to the use of the term discourse: some scholars use it in reference to texts, while others claim it denotes speech which is illustrated by the following definition: “Discourse: a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative [8, p. 25]. On the other hand, D. Davidson, being aware of differences between kinds of discourses indicates the unity of communicative intentions as a vital element of each of them. The scholar suggests that the term ‘text’ refers to the linguistic product, while ‘discourse’ implies the entire dynamics of the processes [9, p. 81]. Novels, as well as short conversations or groans might be equally rightfully named discourses.

Seven criteria which have to be fulfilled to qualify either a written or a spoken text as a discourse have been suggested by R. de Beaugrande [7]. These include:

- Cohesion – grammatical relationship between parts of a sentence essential for its interpretation;
- Coherence – the order of statements relates one another by sense;
- Intentionality – the message has to be conveyed deliberately and consciously;
- Acceptability – indicates that the communicative product needs to be satisfactory in that the audience approves it;
- Informativeness – some new information has to be included in the discourse;
- Situationality – circumstances in which the remark is made are important;
- Intertextuality – reference to the world outside the text or the interpreters’ schemata.

Nowadays, however, not all of the above mentioned criteria are perceived as equally important in discourse studies, therefore some of them are valid only in certain methods of the research [6, p. 76].

Ferdinand de Saussure divided the broad meaning of language into langue, which is understood as a system that enables people to speak as they do, and parole – a particular set of produced statements. Following this division discourse relates more to parole, for it always occurs in time and is internally characterized by successively
developing expressions in which the meaning of the latter is influenced by the former, while langue is abstract. To list some additional traits: discourse is always produced by somebody whose identity, as well as the identity of the interpreter, is significant for the proper understanding of the message. On the other hand, langue is impersonal. Furthermore, discourse always happens in either physical, or linguistic context and within a meaningful fixed time, whereas langue does not refer to anything. Consequently, only discourse may convey messages thanks to langue which is its framework. It is in this sense that we use the term ‘discourse’ is this article.

Numerous ‘field’ theories generally interpret ‘field’ as a single-level formation, including units of any level (lexical, word-formation, syntactical). However, nowadays the tendency to consider ‘field’ as a combined structure consisting of the units of different levels is becoming rather topical. This tendency was further developed in the approach which tends to regard the field as a split-level formation and which is substantiated in the theory of functional-semantic field.

The advantage of functional-system approach is preeminently in the fact, that it enables to investigate linguistic phenomena not only from the point of their inner structure, but in the sphere of its functioning, connections with the environment. Such approach gives the opportunity to study language in its concrete realization, in action, as well as to research the means of transporting extralinguistic phenomena and situations. Functional-system approach suits natural facilities of conversation as well, when different linguistic means are used in their inextricable connection.

Functional-semantic field (further FSF) may be defined as a concrete linguistic bilateral unity; its plane of content includes certain semantic elements [2, p.566]. According to O. V. Bondarko, a certain semantic category, representing semantic invariant, uniting dissimilar language means and stipulating their correlation, lies in the basis of each functional-semantic field [2]. The term ‘field’ is borrowed from Physics and through Psychology, Biology and Sociology introduced into Linguistics, semasiology, in particular, by J. Trier [17].

FSF is a specifically organized totality of language units and speech phenomena of different levels. These language units and speech phenomena are united by some common elementary meaning
which forms the basis of the functional semantic category. As long as modeling of FSF is not just a result of simple re-distribution of language system means on the basis of their static functions, but is oriented at the sphere of speech, the notion of ‘FSF’ involves contextual and situational functions of language units as well as implicit meanings [4, p. 652].

FSF has a specific structure: within the limits of the field some micro-fields are singled out. These micro-fields are varieties of some invariant meaning and consist of the centre (nucleus, dominant) and periphery. In Functional Grammar two types of FSF are singled out: mono-centrical, that has as its center a grammatical category, which is the most characteristic feature of the field possessing some formal markers, standardized by the language (FSF of aspectuality, temporality, modality, comparativity, personality, etc.) and poly-centrical, that are based on the totality of language means and do not form a unified homogeneous system of forms (quantity, aim, condition, possessiveness, taxis, etc.). Poly-centrical FSF have diffused and compact structure. The former is characterized by some multitude of weakly connected or isolated heterogeneous components and vague borderline between the centre and the periphery. The latter has distinct centers and close connection between the constituents [4, p. 652].

The issue of characteristic features of the nucleus and the periphery is quite debatable in Functional Grammar. Some scholars suggest such features of the dominant as its systemic usage and monosemantism; others treat the centre as a sphere of the most complete and explicit realization of a certain meaning, claiming that the dominant should possess certain expressiveness, regularity of expression, be stylistically neutral and have the smallest level of dependence on the conditions of the context. The sphere of periphery is characterized by weakened meaning: it is irregular in form, implicit, and non-systemic [4, p. 652].

The notion ‘praise’ forms the corresponding semantic concept or semantic field which embraces the following verbs (the data are retrieved from Roget’s 21st Century Thesaurus) [16]:
Commend, praise, laud, compliment, applaud, clap, cheer, acclaim, encore, eulogize, boost, root for, cry up, puff, extol, magnify, glorify, exalt, sing the praises of;
Commendatory, complimentary, laudatory, panegyric, eulogistic, lavish of praise, uncritical;
Approved, praised, popular, in good odor, in high esteem, in favour, in high favour;
To give thanks, say grace, bless, praise, laud, glorify, magnify, sing praises [16, p. 412].

Another lexicographical source – Oxford Compact Thesaurus [15] – provides such constituents of the semantic field of ‘praise’:
Praise – commend, express admiration for, applaud, pay tribute to, speak highly of, eulogize, compliment, congratulate, sing the praises of, rave about, go into raptures about, heap praises on, wax lyrical about, make much of, pat on the back, take one’s hat off to, lionize, admire, admire, hail.
Glorify, honour, exalt, adore, pay tribute to, give thanks to, venerate, reverence,
Approval, acclaim, admiration, approbation, acclamation, plaudits, congratulations, commendation;
Tribute, accolade, compliment, a pat on the back, eulogy, panegyric, give praise to God, honor, thanks, glory, worship, devotion, adoration, reverence [15, p. 598].

In the literary discourse of W. Shakespeare’s sonnets we come across many instances of usage of lexemes, that belong to the semantic field of ‘Praise’. For example:
• A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted,
  Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman’s gentle heart, but not acquainted
  With shifting change, as is false women’s fashion (Sonnet #20);
• More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
  But sweet, or colour it had stol’n from thee (Sonnet #99);
• There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
  Than both your poets can in praise devise (Sonnet #83).

The dominant lexemes praising the beloved person are: love, goddess, sweet, lovely, beauty, fair, glorious, gentle. Thus, the intensity of praise in sonnets is measured by the degree of love and devotion of the speaker to
the addressee. As the aforementioned examples show, the functional semantic field of “Praise” is expressed by a number of lexemes possessing the same components which are included into the sememe “Praise”. The core of the functional semantic field “Praise” is represented by the lexemes “love”, “beauty”, “gentle”, “tender”, “sweet”. The periphery of the functional semantic field of “Praise” is represented by “fair”, “thriftless”, “gracious”.

The lexemes, that belong to the semantic field of ‘Praise’, are also of great importance in W. Shakespeare’s tragedies. For example:

- My noble uncle, do you know the cause? (Romeo and Juliet, p. 5);
- He bears him like a portly gentleman; And, to say truth, Verona brags of him To be a virtuous and well-govern’d youth (Romeo and Juliet, p. 19);
- Pretty soul! she durst not lie Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy (A Midsummer Night’s Dream, p. 19).

According to the results of our research, tragedies are characterized by the usage of such lexemes denoting ‘praise’: a most lovely gentleman-like man; a right good mark-man; she is rich in beauty; I am a pretty piece of flesh. ‘Praise’ is very often present in the forms of address: pretty soul; good Lysander; lover dear; lady dear; good Peter Quince; sweet lady; my gracious duke; bright angel; good Mercutio; dear saint; good pilgrim.

Of special interest is a developed praise (covering four lines) in W. Shakespeare’s tragedy “Romeo and Juliet”:

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars, As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night (Romeo and Juliet, p. 32).

Peculiarities of vocabulary denoting ‘praise’ are determined by the relations between the communicants. W. Shakespeare’s tragedies are characterized by the usage of lexemes that form the functional semantic field of “Praise” and denote the virtues of the characters; the most frequently used lexemes are: “dear”, “good”, “virtuous”, “fair”, “worthy”.

89
The periphery of the functional semantic field of “Praise” is represented by the following lexemes: “lovely”, “sweet”, “wise”, “gracious”, “bright”.

Semantic field of ‘Praise’ is represented in a somewhat different way in W. Shakespeare’s comedies. For example:

- News, my good lord, from Rome (Comedy of Errors, act I, p. I);
- O, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work; which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel (Comedy of Errors, act I, p. 9);
- Happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony! Do bravely, horse! (Comedy of Errors, act I, p. 16);
- Good fortune, worthy soldier; and farewell (Comedy of Errors, act II, p. 45).

The most frequently used lexemes of ‘Praise’ in W. Shakespeare’s comedies are: an absolute master; these great fellows; good service; an honest man; a blessed lottery to him; the best of men; justest men, etc. It should be noted that most lexemes of ‘Praise’ are realized in the position of form of address: a noble Lepidus; worthy soldier; my good lord; noble captain; gracious madam; good Enobarbus; my honourable friend; worthy Mecaenas; noble friends; my good Alexas; good friend; gracious madam; most noble Caesar; my precious queen; good Isis; my good lord, etc.

The organizing axis of praise in comedies is the social status of participants of poetic communication.

Functional semantic field of “Praise” in comedies is represented by the lexemes that include the semantic characteristics both of sonnets and tragedies; thus, we have traced the ample usage of lexemes of high assessment and elevation such as “sweet”, “love”, “dear”, “beauty”, “fair”, as well as those determining human qualities and virtues: “good”, “virtuous”, “gracious”.

Thus, the constituents of functional semantic field of ‘Praise’ are determined by the genre of the literary work: “beloved” is the object of ‘praise’ in sonnets; in tragedies and comedies ‘praise’ is viewed in connection with the social status of the communicants. Many lexemes denoting ‘praise’ are used in the function of forms of address.
Further research in this field may be carried out in connection with peculiarities of translation of the lexemes denoting 'praise' from the English language into Ukrainian.

**Bibliography**