

THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY IN OSCAR WILDE'S "THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY"

NATIA ASATIANI

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

KHATUNA TSIKLARI

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

LELA VERBI

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

ABSTRACT

Any lingual item can be considered in two different dimensions. These dimensions integrate conceptual and semantic spheres. Semantic knowledge is a special type of conceptual knowledge. Different aspects of the concept are lexicalized through this type of knowledge. Any language is a synthesis of man and the world. Therefore, contemporary linguistics maintains its internal connection with previous paradigms of linguistics. From this point of view, the internal connection of the modern linguistic paradigm with the systemic-semiotic paradigm of language is particularly significant. The article is devoted to the study of the conceptual sphere integrated into a literary text. The subject of study is the verbal representation of the concept of "Beauty" in O. Wilde's novel "The Picture of Dorian Grey."

While analyzing the conceptual continuum of a literary text, the markers of the conceptual sphere of the novel were considered; the basic concept in the novel was highlighted; lexical units representing the concept were identified and analyzed.

Keywords: beauty, conceptual sphere, conceptual analysis, semantic analysis, frame semantics, the knowledge representation structures

Introduction

The perception of beauty is variable in time and space. Its markers and criteria are determined by the specifics of the environment, culture, history, stereotypes, norms and standards of beauty.

The relevance of the research is conditioned by the significance of the study of concepts in cognitive linguistics, as well as by the enduring interest in the work of O. Wilde.

The term “concept” has been used for a long time by scientists who work in the field of cognitive linguistics. However, the content and structure of the concept have not yet acquired an unambiguous interpretation. Moreover, linguists to this day disagree on the definition of the term “concept,” the methodology for describing its structure, the typology of concepts (good” and “evil,” “beauty,” “life” and “death,” “freedom,” “will”,”, “creativity,” “love,” “crime” and “art”). Differences in the understanding of the concept are explained by the fact that this term is considered at the junction of a number of disciplines, each applying it for its own purposes. The concept is “a unit of memory, mental lexicon, conceptual system and language of the brain,” “an operational meaningful unit of thought or a quantum of the structured knowledge.”

Methodology

Recently, the cognitive approach to the study of the text associated with the knowledge representation structures has become increasingly widespread. The vector of the analysis has been directed at the problem of conceptualization of the world and the study of concepts from the point of view of cognitivism.

Considering linguistic phenomena in a broad cognitive context has set scientists the task of creating new knowledge representation structures.

The concept “Beauty” has not yet been subjected to a comprehensive linguistic analysis on the example of the novel “The Picture of Dorian Grey”. As a result of the analysis of the frame organization of the concept “Beauty” was identified. Having considered the verbal realization of the concept “Beauty” in the analyzed novel, the dominant frames were identified.

At the first stage of the research, we analyzed definitions from dictionaries in order to identify the core of the concept, as well as its peripheral markers. While analyzing the structure of the concept, we processed the text by constructing the semantic frame - “a package of knowledge describing typical and non-typical markers” in

order to determine the etymology of the concept “beauty” as well as to identify the verbalizers of the concept in the novel.

In order to determine the place of the concept “Beauty” in the linguistic worldview of the English language, we analyzed the dictionary definitions of the concept.

The Dictionary of the English Language names the following meanings for beauty: 1) a delightful quality associated with harmony of form or color, excellence of craftsmanship, truthfulness, originality, or another property; 2) a quality or feature that is most effective, gratifying, or telling; 3) an outstanding or conspicuous example; 4) beautiful people - wealthy, prominent people, especially in international society.

The Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary displays the following meanings of the word beauty: 1) the beauties of something are its qualities and features (nature); 2) beauty is used of things and people that are involved in make-up and treatments that are considered to make people look beautiful. (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary, 2001)

The MacMillan English Dictionary gives the following definitions of beauty: 1) the beauties of something - the features of something that are beautiful to look at; 2) mainly journalism a beautiful woman; 3) a quality that something has that gives you pleasure; 4) (informal) something that you think is very good or a good example of its type; 5) the beauty of something - the advantage or good quality that something has. (MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, 2002)

Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary gives the following definitions of the concept under consideration: 1) a quantum characteristic that accounts for the existence of the upsiion particle; 2) beautiful people - wealthy or famous people whose lifestyle is usually expensive and well-publicized. (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 2001)

The analysis of the dictionary definitions revealed that the essential components of beauty are “pleasing and impressive qualities”, “beautiful person, especially woman”, “pleasing personal appearance”, “beautiful people”.

As a result of the analysis of the beauty lexeme, we identified general and special semes. General semes, being the integral markers of the concept, constitute its core. These include the components of the meaning presented in most English dictionaries:

Beauty

Pleasing and impressive qualities (property of the beautiful)	Beautiful person, especially woman (beautiful appearance)	Beautiful places (beautiful places)	Fine example of its kind (something very good, impressive, amazing)
---	---	-------------------------------------	---

Due to the fact that other semes are used in narrower contexts, they constitute the periphery of the concept. We identified the following differential markers presented in the English lexicographic sources: 1) pleasing personal appearance (due to cosmetics, make-up and special treatment); 2) beautiful people.

Since the main purpose of the research is to trace the verbalizers of this lexeme in the novel of O. Wilde “The Picture of Dorian Grey”, we conducted the component analysis of the concept “Beauty”.

The Longman Dictionary contains a number of synonyms for beauty. Synonyms for the word beautiful, according to this dictionary, are pretty, handsome, good-looking, attractive, gorgeous, stunning. Next, we identified the semantic components of the concept “Beauty”: “appearance”, very attractive, pleasant, enjoyable, happy, nice, friendly, polite, feeling, good, satisfied, lovely, charming, sweet, adorable, like, correct, social, emotion, happiness, high, standard, quality, right, true, gentle, love, to enjoy, suitable, formal, level, acceptable, attitude, careful, morally, opinion, romantic.

The realization of the set goal required implementing the following research stages:

1) Identification of lexical units denoting “beauty”;

2) Identification of the passages in which the concept “Beauty” is objectivated.

As a result of the componential analysis, we found out that the lexeme of “Beauty” consists of 36 components. Having considered the concept of “Beauty” from the point of view of structural semantics and identifying its (core and peripheral) components, we directed the vector of the research on the frame semantics. In the concept “Beauty” we have identified the following semantic frames:

Beauty

Beautiful Things	Beautiful People	Beautiful Feelings	Appearance
------------------	------------------	--------------------	------------

The verbalizers of the constructed semantic frames reflect the specifics of the author’s perception of the concept “Beauty”.

Results and Discussion

The conceptual sphere of the novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray” is exceptionally rich and diverse: the concepts “good” and “evil”, “beauty”, “life” and “death”, “freedom”, “will”, “creativity”, “love”, “crime” and “art” constitute the conceptual sphere of Oscar Wilde’s novel.

Beauty”, since the hero’s desire to preserve it at any cost, led to the moral decay of his personality.

In the British worldview, the external and internal beauty is inseparable. The British believe that outer beauty should be indicative of inner beauty, but they also recognize that appearances can be deceptive.

Being a concept with an evaluative component, the concept “Beauty” implies the opposition: beautiful - ugly. The words with a positive aesthetic evaluation in English literary texts coincide with their dictionary definitions. General evaluative and aesthetic positive qualifications of objects overlap, more precisely, words denoting “Beauty” express a general positive assessment, and general evaluative words in specific contexts express an aesthetic assessment.

Beauty is a formal manifestation of nature in which the beautiful things are being attached the significance that is attracted by the visual sensors. It was Plato who stated that “if we denominate beauty what gives us pleasure, or rather, not every kind of pleasure, but only those which can be reached by sight and hearing, in which ways could we defend ourselves? [...] Beauty, dear friend, is what delights us through the eyes and the ears”. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry Wotton says that Beauty “needs no explanation” and “it is one of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or springtime, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty.”

The Picture of Dorian Gray begins with a preface in which the author talks about art, its significance and practical benefits, as well as about the creators of art. Wilde says that: “The artist is the creator of beautiful things”. He believes that people who find and appreciate beauty are beautiful themselves. An artist can be called a wonderful person, as he is able not only to see, but also to create beauty. People who cannot see beauty are ugly: “Those who find ugly words in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors”.

Let's consider the verbalizers of the semantic frame "Beautiful things". The mentioned frame integrates the language units, with the help of which beautiful things are described. Beautiful things are more expensive than ordinary ones; the high price provides them with exclusivity and inaccessibility. Only wealthy people have enough money to acquire them, therefore rich people are beautiful due to the possession of beautiful things. The author compares beautiful sins with beautiful things: "Beautiful sins, like beautiful things, are the privilege of the rich". A cigarette is a wonderful item because it can give pleasure: "A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite". Lord Henry notes that a person with a vision of beauty opens up the ability to see it: "... in his soul who sought for her there had been awakened that wonderful vision to which alone are wonderful things revealed; ... as though they were themselves patterns of some other and more perfect form" (Wilde, 2011).

Lord Henry considers Dorian an excellent study material, able to entertain him: "He would be a wonderful study". The author uses such a stylistic device as a comparison. The novel is compared to the Persian carpet, which is known for its extraordinary beauty and rarity: "I should like to write a novel certainly, a novel that would be as lovely as a Persian carpet and as unreal". Lord Henry calls medieval art charming: "mediaeval art is charming".

Thus, we have identified in the text the following lexical units that objectivate the semantic frame "Beautiful things": beautiful, rich, perfect, pleasure, exquisite, wonderful, lovely.

According to Oscar Wilde, the ability to see beauty generates cultured people: "Those who find beautiful words in beautiful things are the cultivated; they are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only beauty". The mentioned idea molds the semantic frame "Beautiful people".

Lord Henry had the ability to speak beautifully and charm listeners: "He was brilliant, fantastic, irresponsible." Here is another example: "No one talks as wonderfully as you do. Mr. Erskine makes me forget you and all your wrong, fascinating, poisonous, delightful theories". People admired his way of reasoning: "A delightful theory! Good-bye, Lord Henry, you are quite delightful and dreadfully demoralizing". The Lord had a special relationship with beautiful people: "I never interfere with what charming people do". Duchess Harley has a pleasant appearance and character perhaps that is why she is loved by everyone who knew her: "... a lady of admirable good-nature and good temper much liked by everyone who knew her". The elderly but charming and cultured Mr. Erskine "who had fallen, however, into bad habits of silence", is also a

pleasant person: "... an old gentleman of considerable charm and culture".

The protagonist of the novel is described using evaluative adjectives: a young man of extraordinary personal beauty; a wonderful young man; he was good-looking; he was very earnest and had a beautiful nature; he must be a good-looking chap. "He is very good-looking, assented Lord Henry; He was a marvelous type".

Here are a few more examples illustrating the beauty of the protagonist of the novel: "And how charming he had been at dinner the night before, as with startled eyes and lips parted in frightened pleasure he had sat opposite to him at the club, the red candle shades staining to a richer rose the wakening wonder of his face." Using an epithet, the author emphasizes the beauty of youth: "Grace was his, and the white purity of boyhood, and beauty such as old Greek marbles kept for us" (Wilde, 2011). In *Dorian*, people see the ideal of beauty, and some the ideal of a person: "Charming boy; And how did Lady Brandon describe this wonderful young man? Oh, my beautiful love! As a rule, he is charming to me ". The author uses an allusion that reflects the strength of Sybil's feelings: Prince Charming. To express the beauty of Dorian's mother, the author uses the epithet: "A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad passion"; superlative adjective: "And his mother was very beautiful? - Margaret Devereux was one of the loveliest creatures I ever saw, Harry"; intensifying seme: an extraordinarily beautiful girl. When describing Dorian's beloved, the author used comparative adjectives: "Oh, she is better than good - she is beautiful, she had never seemed to me more exquisite"; metaphor: "Her hair clustered round her face like dark leaves round a pale rose". The beauty of a young girl cannot be overshadowed even by shabby men's clothes: "When she came on in her boy's clothes, she was perfectly wonderful. She had all the delicate grace". Dorian himself loves and considers her beautiful: "Dorian says she is beautiful...; I loved you because you were marvelous "(Wilde, 2011). To reflect the tenderness and fragility of Sybil, the author compares her to a white daffodil: shook like a white narcissus.

The verbalization of this semantic frame emphasizes the extraordinary beauty of the protagonist. His beauty "lies on the surface", it is obvious and is noted more than once by other heroes of the novel. This frame is verbalized by adjectives with a positive connotation, comparative and superlative adjectives, intensifying semes, epithets, comparisons, allusion, metaphor using the following lexical units: beautiful, cultivated, the elect, beauty, brilliant, fantastic, charmed, charming, charm and culture, wonder, wonderful, wonderfully, smile, fascinating, delightful, marvelous, purity, old Greek marbles, love, lovely, Prince Charming, exquisite, rose, white narcissus, admirable, good- nature, good- looking , good, extraordinary.

In Oscar Wilde's novel "The Portrait of Dorian Gray", beauty is the driving force in the lives of the three main characters: Dorian, Basil and Sir Henry.

This novel embodies the relationship between beauty and morality. Dorian Gray's life is dominated by physical attraction. His beauty lies in his youth. Dorian's perception of beauty allows him to love. He believes that because of his beauty, he can achieve whatever he wants regardless of the consequences and still be loved by his friends. He uses his beauty to soften his evil deeds. Dorian said, «I don't want to know anything about her. I like other people's scandals, but I'm not interested in my own. For Dorian, youth and beauty are the most precious things. Beauty is the most important thing in his life.» He then saw the image of him painted by Basil reflecting his sins and this changed his view. «I hope it's not about me. I'm tired tonight. I want to be someone else,» Dorian said. Dorian's moral beauty lies in his own portrait. The portrait imitated his life. Eventually he realized that beauty would not help him escape from his evil deeds.

Oscar Wilde's novel "The Portrait of Dorian Gray" is a story of moral corruption through aesthetic beauty. In this novel, Basil Hallward gave young Dorian Gray a portrait of himself. After speaking with Sir Henry Wotton, Dorian expressed a wish to change his life forever. Dorian's love of physical beauty and his carefree lifestyle destroy the lives of everyone he comes into contact with. It is the physical obsessions that destroy the lives of all the characters in this novel.

Conclusion

The analysis of the specifics of the verbal representation of the concept "Beauty" in O. Wilde's novel "The Picture of Dorian Grey" revealed the existence of exceptionally rich nominative continuum of the concept "Beauty". The mentioned continuum is marked by contradictoriness manifesting the variety in the perception of the phenomenon of beauty.

Contradictoriness of the rich nominative continuum of the concept "Beauty" is objectivated in the integration of the contradictory concepts "good" and "evil", "life" and "death" in the conceptual sphere of the concept.

As a result of the componential analysis of the lexeme of "Beauty" in the text of Oscar Wilde's novel "The Picture of Dorian Grey" the targeted components were identified. The mentioned components vary in their status, in other words, some of them are core, while others being peripheral.

As a result of the conceptual analysis 4 semantic frames (Beautiful Things;

Beautiful People; Beautiful Feelings; Appearance) were constructed.

The analysis revealed that in Oscar Wilde's novel "The Picture of Dorian Grey" the semantic frame "Beautiful people" is most clearly represented, since it reflects the deep essence of the concept "Beauty".

The analysis revealed that the perception of beauty and the doctrine of taste reflect the dynamics of the development of humanity.

The contradictoriness of the verbalizers of the concept "Beauty" helps the reader to trace the process of the moral decay of the hero's personality, the transformation of the hero from an innocent and talented young man into a vicious monster.

REFERENCES

Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary. (2001) HarperCollins Publishers.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. (2003). Pearson ESL.

Liebman, S. W. (1999). Character Design in The Picture of Dorian Gray/S. W. Liebman // Studies in the Novel.

MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners. (2002). Palgrave Macmillan.

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. (2001). Merriam-Webster.

Roget's International Thesaurus. (1992). The New Thesaurus. Fifth Edition. HarperCollins.

Wilde Oscar. (2011). *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wordsworth Editions.