LEXICAL-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE CONCEPT "HEALTH" IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This article examines the lexical-semantic features of the concept "health" in English within the linguo-cultural approach. It analyzes the etymology, polysemy, synonymy, and collocations of the word *health* and the conceptual metaphors and idioms through which it is represented. A comparison with Uzbek shows both shared values and different emphases: personal responsibility in English and relational care in Uzbek.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidagi "health" (sog'liq) konseptining leksik-semantik xususiyatlari lingvomadaniy yondashuv asosida tahlil qilinadi. Leksemaning etimologiyasi, ko'p ma'noliligi, sinonimik qatori, birikuvchanligi hamda unga xos konseptual metafora va idiomalar o'rganiladi. Qiyosiy tahlil sog'liqni shaxsiy mas'uliyat sifatida talqin qiluvchi ingliz yondashuvi bilan o'zbek tilida aks etgan munosabatlarga yo'naltirilgan qarashlar o'rtasidagi o'xshashlik va farqlarni ko'rsatadi.

Аннотация. В статье лексико-семантические особенности концепта «health» («здоровье») рассматриваются в рамках лингвокультурного подхода. Анализируются этимология, полисемия, синонимия и сочетаемость лексемы, а также связанные с ней концептуальные метафоры и идиомы. Сопоставительный анализ выявляет сходства и различия между английской трактовкой здоровья как личной ответственности и узбекским пониманием, ориентированным на отношения и общность.

Keywords. health, concept, lexical semantics, semantic field, conceptual metaphor, idioms, linguo-cultural approach, English language, Uzbek language.

1. Introduction

In modern linguistics, concepts are understood as mental units that store culturally significant knowledge and are verbalized through lexical, phraseological,

and paremiological means. Among them, “health” holds a special position, since it is directly connected with life, the quality of existence, and social values. The way a language names, categorizes, and evaluates health reveals how its speakers understand the body, illness, and responsibility.

The English word *health* is a convenient object of analysis: it has a long history, a developed polysemous structure, a rich network of related words, and many figurative uses. The aim of this article is to describe its lexical-semantic structure, to identify the main metaphors and idioms associated with it, and to compare the English conceptualization with that of Uzbek.

2. Theoretical Foundations

The study rests on the linguo-cultural approach, which treats language as a cultural mechanism that structures and reflects cognition. Its central notion is the “linguistic picture of the world,” the culturally specific way in which speakers perceive and interpret reality. Lexical semantics supplies the tools for describing meaning: polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, collocation, and componential and field analysis. Cognitive linguistics adds the notion of conceptual metaphor, by which abstract domains are understood through concrete ones (Lakoff and Johnson). The three perspectives are combined here.

3. Etymology and Lexical-Semantic Structure of “Health”

The word goes back to Old English *hǣlth*, derived from the Germanic adjective that gave modern *whole*; it is therefore related to *heal* and *holy*. Originally, health meant wholeness and soundness of the person, combining the physical and the spiritual. Later it came to denote the bodily condition as opposed to disease, and in the twentieth century the World Health Organization’s definition of health as complete physical, mental, and social well-being strengthened its multidimensional meaning.

The lexeme is polysemous. Its main senses are: (1) the general condition of body and mind (*in good health*); (2) freedom from illness; (3) the condition of a non-human entity (*the health of the economy*); (4) the field of services aimed at

maintaining well-being (*Ministry of Health*); and (5) a ritual formula in toasts (*To your health!*). The third sense shows metaphorical extension from the human body to abstract systems.

Its synonyms include *wellness*, *well-being*, *fitness*, *vigor*, and *soundness*, which differ in emphasis: *fitness* stresses physical capacity, *vigor* energy, and *wellness* a holistic, lifestyle-related view. Its antonyms *illness*, *sickness*, and *disease* also differ: *disease* names a pathological process, *illness* the subjective experience, and *sickness* the social condition. The word is productive in derivation (*healthy*, *unhealthy*, *healthful*) and compounding (*healthcare*, *health insurance*, *health hazard*, *mental health*), which shows its institutional and commercial importance.

4. Collocations and the Semantic Field

Adjective collocates evaluate the state (*good*, *poor*, *failing* health) or identify domains (*physical*, *mental*, *public* health). Verb collocates are especially informative: people *enjoy*, *maintain*, *protect*, *improve*, *ruin*, *neglect*, and *lose* their health. These verbs treat health as something possessed and managed, and they often assign the active role to the individual.

The semantic field has a core (*health*, *healthy*, *well*, *fit*), a near periphery of illness, treatment, and care providers (*disease*, *cure*, *recovery*, *doctor*, *hospital*), and a far periphery of lifestyle and social organization (*diet*, *exercise*, *stress*, *insurance*, *prevention*). The expansion toward lifestyle and prevention is a characteristic feature of modern usage.

5. Conceptual Metaphors and Idioms

Several stable metaphors structure the English representation of health. HEALTH IS WEALTH treats it as a resource that can be invested or squandered (*invest in your health*). HEALTH IS UP, ILLNESS IS DOWN underlies *top form*, *come down with the flu*, and *fall ill*. HEALTH IS BALANCE appears in *out of sorts*. ILLNESS IS WAR appears in *fight cancer* and *battle an infection*, a metaphor that Susan Sontag criticized for placing blame on the patient. HEALTH

IS A JOURNEY appears in *on the road to recovery*, *back on one's feet*, and *on the mend*.

Idioms describe different degrees of well-being: *in the pink of health*, *a picture of health*, and *as fit as a fiddle* express vitality, while *under the weather*, *off colour*, and *at death's door* express illness. *A clean bill of health* originally referred to a certificate that a ship or person was free of infectious disease and is now used abstractly for a positive assessment; *under the weather* is of maritime origin. Proverbs reinforce the evaluation and often advise action: *Health is better than wealth*; *An apple a day keeps the doctor away*; *Prevention is better than cure*; *A sound mind in a sound body*. Health is ranked above material goods, yet it is described in the vocabulary of wealth, and the emphasis on prevention places responsibility on the individual.

6. Comparative Perspective: English and Uzbek

In Uzbek the concept is expressed mainly by *sog'liq*, *salomatlik*, and *sihat-salomatlik*, and by the adjectives *sog'* and *sog'lom*. Their social use is especially significant. Wishes such as *sog'-salomat bo'ling* and the custom of asking about the health of a person and the family (*hol-ahvol so'rash*) show that health is a constant theme of communication and a form of care and respect.

There are clear similarities. The saying *Sog'lom tanda – sog'lom aql* parallels the English *a sound mind in a sound body*, and both languages rank health above wealth. The differences lie in emphasis. English idioms and collocations construct health as an object managed by the individual through investment, protection, and prevention. Uzbek expressions more often present health in a relational frame: it is wished for others, asked about in greetings, and linked with family and community. The English concept thus foregrounds responsibility and self-care, and the Uzbek concept mutual concern and solidarity. These are tendencies rather than absolute contrasts, since both languages contain individual and collective meanings.

Conclusion

The concept “health” in English has a complex lexical-semantic structure: its etymology links it to wholeness and healing, its polysemy extends from the body to abstract systems, and its field is expanding toward lifestyle and prevention. Metaphors, idioms, and proverbs present health as a valuable resource that individuals are expected to protect. A comparison with Uzbek reveals shared values, such as the unity of body and mind and the primacy of health over wealth, together with different emphases on individual responsibility and relational care.

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