



STRUCTURAL-SEMANTIC MODELING OF THE LEXICO-SEMANTIC FIELD OF ENVY IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

Rustamova Tamila Andreevna

Assistant Lecturer, Department of English Philology Andijan Branch of Kokand University, Andijan, 170100, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The linguistic representation of emotions constitutes an important area of research in modern linguistics due to its close relationship with cognition, culture, and communication. The present study investigates the structural and semantic organization of the lexico-semantic field of the negative emotion envy in contemporary English. The analysis is based on the field approach combined with corpus-based frequency analysis using data from the Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE). The results demonstrate that the lexico-semantic field of envy forms a hierarchical structure consisting of a core, a perinuclear zone, and a peripheral zone. The core is represented by the lexeme envy, while the perinuclear zone includes lexical units that directly express or intensify the emotional state. Peripheral elements demonstrate weaker semantic connections and often reflect social, behavioral, or evaluative aspects related to the experience of envy. The findings confirm that the field approach combined with corpus linguistics provides an effective methodological framework for analyzing the internal organization of emotional vocabulary in English.

KEYWORDS: Lexico-semantic field, emotional vocabulary, envy, corpus linguistics, lexical semantics.

INTRODUCTION

The study of emotional vocabulary occupies an important place in contemporary linguistics because emotions represent fundamental components of human cognitive and communicative experience. Emotional concepts are encoded in language through complex networks of lexical units that reflect both universal and culturally specific patterns of emotional expression (Wierzbicka, 1999).

Within lexical semantics, one of the most productive frameworks for studying vocabulary organization is the theory of lexico-semantic fields, which considers lexical units as elements of a structured semantic system united by a common conceptual feature (Apresyan, 1995; Cruse, 1986). According to this approach, lexical items within a field are organized hierarchically around a central concept that forms the semantic core of the field.

Research in cognitive linguistics has shown that emotions are conceptualized through structured semantic networks that reflect underlying cognitive models. Kövecses (2000) emphasizes that emotional concepts are expressed through interconnected lexical and metaphorical structures that reveal how emotional experience is conceptualized in language. Despite extensive research on emotional vocabulary, the internal lexical organization of specific emotional domains has not been sufficiently investigated using corpus-based methods. In

particular, the structural composition of the lexico-semantic field of envy has received limited attention in linguistic studies.

The emotion envy represents a socially oriented emotional state associated with comparison, competition, and perceived inequality. Unlike other negative emotions such as anger or fear, envy is strongly connected with interpersonal evaluation and social interaction.

Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the structural and semantic organization of the lexico-semantic field of envy in contemporary English.

The objectives of the research are:

- to identify the core, perinuclear, and peripheral components of the lexico-semantic field of envy;
- to analyze the semantic relationships between lexical units within the field;
- to demonstrate the role of corpus frequency in determining the hierarchical organization of emotional vocabulary.

Materials and Methods

The empirical material for the present study was obtained from the Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE), which contains approximately 1.9 billion words from twenty English-speaking countries (Davies, 2013). The corpus provides large-scale data on contemporary English usage and allows researchers to examine lexical frequency and distribution across different varieties of the language.

The research methodology combines several complementary approaches, including frequency-statistical analysis of corpus data, the field approach to lexical semantics, and morphological and semantic analysis of lexical units. These methods make it possible to identify the internal organization of lexical items representing emotional states and to determine their structural relationships within the field.

The primary criterion for assigning lexical units to specific zones of the field is their absolute frequency in the GloWbE corpus, which reflects the conceptual prominence of lexical items in representing particular emotional states. However, frequency alone is not sufficient to determine the hierarchical status of lexical units. Therefore, several qualitative parameters were also taken into account, including the degree of semantic generalization, the level of emotive specialization, and the contextual dependence of lexical meaning.

Based on the combination of these quantitative and qualitative criteria, the lexico-semantic field of envy was modeled as a hierarchical structure consisting of three zones: the core, the perinuclear zone, and the peripheral zone.

Results and Discussion

The corpus analysis demonstrates that the lexico-semantic field of envy represents a hierarchically organized lexical system centered around the dominant lexeme envy, which forms the core of the field. This lexical unit functions as the primary nomination of the emotional state and directly denotes the feeling of resentment or dissatisfaction caused by another person's advantages or possessions.

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the lexeme envy refers to "the feeling of wanting something that someone else has" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2014). This definition highlights the central semantic component of the concept, which involves comparison and perceived inequality between individuals.



The perinuclear zone of the field includes lexical units that maintain a direct semantic connection with the core concept while specifying particular aspects of the emotional experience. These include the nouns jealousy and insecurity, the verb resent, and the adjectives jealous and envious. These lexical units represent closely related emotional states and attitudes associated with social comparison and dissatisfaction with one's own position.

The peripheral zone of the field contains lexical units with weaker semantic connections to the core concept and broader contextual meanings. These include the nouns competition, rivalry, malice, and grudge; the verbs compare, begrudge, and covet; the adjectives petty, malicious, spiteful, and covetous; as well as the adverbs jealously, begrudgingly, and enviously. These lexical items often describe behavioral or evaluative aspects associated with envy rather than the emotional state itself.

An interesting observation concerns the lexical unit competition, which demonstrates a very high frequency in corpus data but is classified as a peripheral element. This classification can be explained by the fact that competition refers primarily to a social or institutional process rather than an emotional state. Although competition may serve as a trigger for envy, it does not directly denote the emotion itself.

Similarly, the verb compare represents a cognitive mechanism that can lead to the emergence of envy but does not express the emotional experience directly. Therefore, it occupies a peripheral position within the field.

The analysis demonstrates that the hierarchical structure of the lexico-semantic field of envy is determined not only by frequency indicators but also by semantic specialization and conceptual relevance. Lexical items in the perinuclear zone directly represent emotional reactions associated with envy, whereas peripheral elements reflect social behaviors, evaluations, or cognitive processes related to the experience of this emotion.

Conclusions

The present study has examined the structural and semantic organization of the lexico-semantic field of the negative emotion envy in contemporary English using corpus-based frequency analysis combined with the field approach to lexical semantics.

The analysis demonstrates that the lexico-semantic field of envy exhibits a clear hierarchical structure consisting of a core, a perinuclear zone, and a peripheral zone. The core of the field is represented by the dominant lexeme envy, which functions as the primary nomination of the emotional state and possesses the highest degree of semantic generalization.

The perinuclear zone includes lexical units that maintain a direct semantic connection with the core concept and represent closely related emotional attitudes such as jealousy or resentment. In contrast, the peripheral zone consists of lexical units with broader meanings that reflect behavioral, evaluative, or cognitive aspects associated with the experience of envy.

The findings confirm that the hierarchical organization of emotional vocabulary cannot be determined solely by corpus frequency. Instead, the classification of lexical units within the field depends on a combination of quantitative frequency indicators and qualitative semantic criteria such as emotive specialization and conceptual relevance.

Overall, the results support the methodological effectiveness of combining corpus linguistics with the field approach for investigating the internal organization of emotional vocabulary. This approach allows researchers to reveal structural relationships between lexical units and

contributes to a deeper understanding of how emotional experience is conceptualized and expressed in language.

Future research may expand the scope of analysis by examining other emotional domains and by conducting cross-linguistic comparisons that would make it possible to explore cultural differences in the linguistic representation of emotions.

References

1. Apresyan, Y.D. (1995). Selected works. Vol. 1: Lexical semantics. Moscow: Languages of Russian Culture.
2. Cruse, D.A. (1986). Lexical semantics. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
3. Davies, M. (2013). Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE). Retrieved from <https://www.english-corpora.org/glowbe/>
4. Ekman, P. (1992). An argument for basic emotions. *Cognition & Emotion*, 6(3–4), 169–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699939208411068>
5. Geeraerts, D. (2010). Theories of lexical semantics. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
6. Kövecses, Z. (2000). Metaphor and emotion: Language, culture, and body in human feeling. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
7. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. (2014). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.
8. Parrott, W.G. (2001). Emotions in social psychology: Essential readings. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
9. Wierzbicka, A. (1999). Emotions across languages and cultures: Diversity and universals. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

