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CONTEXTUAL AND LEXICAL SYNONYMY: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study delves into the intricate relationship between contextual and lexical synonymy, exploring their role in shaping meaning and communication. Contextual synonymy, a dynamic linguistic phenomenon, arises from the interplay of words within specific contexts. As words are embedded in particular linguistic environments, their meanings can shift and evolve, leading to the emergence of contextual synonyms. This flexibility allows for nuanced expression and enables speakers and writers to adapt their language to specific communicative goals.

Lexical synonymy refers to the semantic similarity of words within a language system. Lexical synonyms often form sets of words that share a core meaning but differ in terms of stylistic value, emotional connotation, or frequency of use. These variations contribute to the richness and diversity of language, enabling speakers and writers to express subtle shades of meaning and create stylistic effects.

Understanding the interplay between contextual and lexical synonymy is crucial for various fields, including linguistics and translation studies. By examining the factors that influence the choice of synonyms and the impact of context on meaning, researchers can gain insights into the cognitive processes underlying language use. Thus, this study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of language's complex nature and synonymy's role in shaping human thought and expression.

Keywords: contextual synonymy, lexical synonymy, linguistic surroundings, semantics, Ukrainian Literature, English Literature.

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ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ЗАСАДИ КОНТЕКСТУАЛЬНОЇ ТА ЛЕКСИЧНОЇ СИНОНІМІЇ

Дослідження заглиблюється в складні взаємозв'язки між контекстуальною та лексичною синонімією, досліджуючи їхню роль у формуванні значення та комунікації. Контекстуальна синонімія, як динамічне мовне явище, виникає внаслідок взаємодії слів у конкретних контекстах. Коли слова функціонують в певному мовному середовищі, їхні значення можуть змінюватися й розвиватися, що призводить до появи контекстуальних синонімів. Ця гнучкість дозволяє досягти більшої виразності та надає можливість мовцям і авторам адаптувати свою мову відповідно до конкретних комунікативних цілей.

Лексична синонімія стосується семантичної подібності слів у мовній системі. Лексичні синоніми часто утворюють набори слів, що поділяють ядро значення, але відрізняються за стилістичною цінністю, емоційною конотацією або частотою вживання. Ці відмінності збагачують і урізноманітнюють мову, дозволяючи мовцям і авторам висловлювати тонкі відтінки значення та створювати стилістичні ефекти.

Розуміння взаємодії між контекстуальною та лексичною синонімією є надзвичайно важливим для різних галузей, зокрема лінгвістики та перекладознавства. Дослідження факторів, які впливають на вибір синонімів, та вплив контексту на значення, дозволяє отримати уявлення про когнітивні процеси, що лежать в основі мовного вживання.

Ключові слова: контекстуальна синонімія, лексична синонімія, лінгвістичне оточення, семантика, українська література, англійська література.

Introduction. In the contemporary globalised world, where communication transcends borders, translation has become an indispensable facet of intercultural communication. English, as the lingua franca, makes the translation of English prose of paramount importance. A particularly challenging aspect of this process is the precise definition and application of synonyms. Both contextual and lexical synonymy are crucial for rendering accurate and comprehensible translations (Chaiuk, 2020; Sinha & Michalcea, 2009). Consequently, a systematic exploration of the functioning of these linguistic phenomena in English prose translation is warranted.

Traditionally, the study of synonyms has primarily focused on vocabulary development, often neglecting their syntactic and grammatical characteristics. Synonyms constitute a specific type of semantic relationship within the overall semantic field. They form a structured system rather than a random collection of words. The problem of synonymy is considered one of the most fundamental issues in linguistic semantics, lacking a universally accepted solution, yet it has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention (Bilousova & Diachuk, 2023).

Given the growing interest in the study of synonymy, specific categories within the semantic field acquire not only theoretical but also practical significance. By investigating this issue, it becomes possible to clarify the direction of language development, the means and methods of replacing various linguistic categories, and to facilitate access to a diverse range of expressive linguistic means, presenting them as a system.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Various aspects and specifics of contextual and lexical synonymy in translation have been the subject of research by numerous domestic and foreign scholars, including V. Vasylenko, N. Golikova, G. Grimashevich, T. Hulenko, O. Stepanova, A. Yarova, and others (Bilousova & Diachuk, 2023).

Following this goal, the following research **objectives** have been formulated: to define the concepts and features of contextual and lexical synonymy and to outline the influence of cultural factors on the perception and use of synonyms in language.

Research Methods. The method of documentation made it possible to identify key sources by using academic databases and finding relevant research papers, books, and articles. Literature analysis allowed us to evaluate the existing research critically and identify key theories, methodologies, and findings. Information synthesis facilitated the organisation of the information into a coherent narrative, highlighting the main arguments and debates. The methods of theoretical framework rendered it possible to develop a conceptual framework i.e. define key concepts and theories that will guide our research, analyse the theoretical implications and critically evaluate theories i.e. assess the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical perspectives. Discourse analysis enabled us to examine how language is used to construct social and cultural meanings and analyse power relations and ideological structures embedded in language.

The outline of the main research material. Synonymy, a linguistic phenomenon characterised by the coexistence of multiple words with similar meanings, is a hallmark of developed languages. Its universality and the communicative functions it serves have made it a subject of extensive linguistic inquiry (Basok, 2006; Iablonska-Yusyk, 2016; Kosmeda, 2000). The complex interplay between semantic identity and difference, as well as the contextual factors influencing the choice of synonyms, have contributed to a diverse range of perspectives on synonymic relations. The study of synonymy is essential for understanding the intricate structure of a language lexicon and the nuanced ways in which language is used. The research on synonymy is a crucial aspect of lexicology, as it aids in understanding how language functions and how humans use language to communicate. Synonyms can exhibit varying degrees of semantic proximity, depending on context and usage. Contemporary linguistic research has provided a robust theoretical framework for investigating synonymic relationships, particularly in languages with complex lexical systems (Cap & Dynel, 2017; Kazymir, 2022; Semak, 2020).

When discussing synonymy, it is customary to distinguish between linguistic and speech-based synonymy. The traditional distinction between linguistic and speech-based synonymy posits that linguistic synonymy is confined to the relationships between the fixed forms of language, i.e. words as recorded in dictionaries, while speech-based synonymy emerges in the creative use of language in speech. While this distinction is useful for certain purposes, it can oversimplify the complex nature of synonymy. By focusing primarily on the creative aspects of language, it often overlooks the systemic patterns underlying the use of synonyms.

Synonymy is fundamentally rooted in human cognition and the need to express nuances of meaning (Kazymir, 2022; Prykhodko, 2014). The appearance of new synonyms is not merely a product of linguistic evolution but rather a response to the speaker's desire to convey specific concepts or emotions. Therefore, synonym sets are motivated by extralinguistic factors and reflect the speaker's intention to choose words that best suit their communicative goals.

The classification of synonyms often distinguishes between lexical and contextual synonyms. Lexical synonyms are those that are equivalent within a language system, while contextual synonyms arise from the interplay of words within specific linguistic environments. Absolute synonyms possess nearly identical meanings, whereas partial synonyms exhibit degrees of semantic, stylistic, or connotative overlap. This classification, however, is not static, as the meanings of synonyms can shift and evolve over time and across different contexts.

Synonyms in both Ukrainian and English are utilised for a variety of rhetorical purposes, including enhancing the force of an expression, providing greater precision to a concept, avoiding repetition and preventing monotony. Our research highlights the significance of synonyms in literary discourse, where they are often used to elucidate obscure or unfamiliar terms. This technique involves clarifying the meaning of an unknown word by providing a synonymous or near-synonymous equivalent.

Contextual synonymy highlights the dynamic nature of meaning, as words can acquire synonymous relationships within specific contexts, even if their core meanings differ. This phenomenon underscores the importance of context in shaping the semantic interpretation of words, demonstrating that meaning is not fixed but rather emerges from the interplay between words and their surrounding linguistic environment (Bilousova & Diachuk, 2023; Kazymir, 2022; Semak, 2020). Contextual synonyms are linked semantically through their compatibility, functional similarity, and syntactic and paradigmatic relationships. These relationships can be analyzed in terms of their functional similarity and their position within syntagmatic and paradigmatic structures. A contextual synonym series, such as "*the rats = rodents, nuisance tenants,*" highlights the potential for multiple synonyms to express a single concept from different perspectives. While the extension of such a series is limited, the primary synonym provides a semantic anchor, guiding the interpretation of other synonyms within the series. Contextual synonymy plays a crucial role in conveying subtle nuances of meaning, including emotional and attitudinal dimensions (Cap & Dynel, 2017; Iablonska-Yusyk, 2016). The same word can evoke a wide range of associations depending on the linguistic environment in which it is embedded. Stylistic devices such as irony and sarcasm exploit this phenomenon by creating a mismatch between the literal meaning of a word and its intended interpretation, thereby producing a desired emotional or cognitive effect.

Contextual synonymy constitutes a crucial element of language, empowering speakers to articulate their thoughts and ideas with greater precision and nuance. The employment of contextual synonyms aids in preventing repetition, enhancing stylistic quality, and optimising communicative effectiveness. Nevertheless, the effective use of contextual synonyms hinges on an understanding of their relative nature and their dependence on context. Misuse can result in misinterpretation and distorted meaning (Basok, 2006; Sinha & Michalcea, 2009).

Lexical synonymy, characterised by the semantic interchangeability of words, is a cornerstone of any language's lexicon. Its manifestation varies across languages and linguistic levels. Synonyms play a pivotal role in stylistic variation, allowing for textual diversity, tonal shifts, and emotional modulation. Moreover, they contribute to clarity and coherence by preventing repetition (Cap & Dynel, 2017; Sinha & Michalcea, 2009). Lexical synonymy, while characterized by semantic similarity, is often marked by subtle differences in meaning and usage. This is evident in pairs like "freedom" and "liberty." The frequency of synonyms can fluctuate across different contexts and domains. Synonymy is a dynamic feature of language that reflects its ongoing evolution. Its study is essential for understanding both the structure and the cultural implications of language. Semantic analysis provides a valuable tool for investigating the nuances of meaning associated with synonyms, and such investigations can offer insights into cultural and cognitive processes.

Thus, synonymy forms a semantic network centred around a dominant word. This dominant word functions as a reference point for other words with similar meanings. Synonyms, while sharing a common semantic core, exhibit variations in their usage and connotations. These variations can be influenced by contextual factors or may be inherent to the words themselves.

Cultural factors significantly influence the use of synonyms in both spoken and written language, particularly evident in lexical synonymy. Such cultural influences can manifest in various ways. For instance, certain cultures may have specific words with narrow meanings that are employed more frequently than their synonyms. These words often have roots in the culture's religion, traditions, or history. Additionally, cultural differences can impact the extent to which synonyms are used. In some cultures, there may be more traditional approaches to language use, favouring a single word with a more established and recognized meaning over its synonyms.

Synonymy is primarily a phenomenon associated with literary texts. Consequently, the phenomenon of synonymy is fully revealed in the literature of various cultures. In Ukrainian literature, one can observe the extensive use of synonyms. This can be attributed to the tradition of the Ukrainian language, which places great importance on a rich lexicon. Ukrainian writers employ synonyms to enhance the precision and depth of understanding. Conversely, in English literature, synonyms are used less frequently, but this does not diminish their significance. The English language possesses a smaller lexicon compared to Ukrainian, thus authors utilise synonyms to introduce variety into their style or to draw the reader's attention to particular details.

Conclusions and directions for further research. A comparison of synonymy usage in Ukrainian and English reveals the following (Table 1)

Table 1

Contrasting Patterns of Synonym Use in Ukrainian and English Literature

Criterion	Ukrainian Literature	English Literature
Cultural and Historical Factors	Rich cultural and historical influences shape synonym usage. Ukrainian poets therefore often employ numerous synonyms to convey poetic imagery.	Cultural and historical factors also play a significant role. Thus, British literature frequently incorporates Latinate terms.
Style and Manner of Writing	Ukrainian literature tends towards a rich lexicon and stylistic devices, influencing synonym use.	English literature, too, exhibits a wide range of styles and lexical choices. American literature, for instance, often includes dialects and slang.
Phonetics and Grammar	Ukrainian has distinct phonetic and grammatical systems affecting synonym selection. Ukrainian, for example, heavily utilizes prefixes and suffixes.	English grammar and phonetics also influence synonym choice. For instance, different verb tenses are used to express time and aspect.
Context	Synonym choice in Ukrainian literature varies based on context, such as academic or poetic works.	English authors similarly adapt their synonym usage to different contexts, such as academic articles or fiction.
Semantic Nuances	Ukrainian synonyms often carry distinct semantic nuances, as seen in words like "divchyna" (girl), "divchynka" (young girl), and "panna" (young lady).	English synonyms also exhibit subtle semantic differences, such as "teenager," "adolescent," and "youth."

A comparative analysis reveals that the use of synonyms in Ukrainian and English literature exhibits distinct patterns. Ukrainian authors frequently utilize synonyms to heighten emotional resonance, while English authors often employ them for stylistic variety and to avoid repetition.

Conclusion. Synonymy represents a semantic-synonymic field of words that are identical or similar in meaning, centered around a dominant word. This dominant word is typically the most frequently used, stylistically neutral, less expressive, and syntactically less fixed. The primary types of synonymy include lexical, stylistic, and contextual. Lexical synonymy pertains to the mutual relationships between words that share a common meaning, indicating that certain words can be used interchangeably in various contexts. Contextual synonymy, on the other hand, refers to the relationships between words that may be used as synonyms within a specific context but not in others. In literary discourse, contextual synonyms are more prevalent and are employed to create vivid imagery and convey the author's worldview and individual style.

Further research aims to study the peculiarities mentioned above utilising the English prose and its Ukrainian equivalent through the gender aspect.

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