COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SEMANTIC OF LEXICAL UNITS DENOTING “AGE” IN ENGLISH, RUSSIAN AND GERMAN LANGUAGES

АЛИБОЕВА НИГИНА АЛИШЕРОВНА
Магистрант ТерГУ, УЗБЕКИСТАН

ALIBOYEVA NIGINA ALISHEROVNA
Master of TerSU, UZBEKISTAN

Comparative analysis is an inductive investigative approach based on the distinctive elements in a language. The meaning of a given word or set of words is best understood as the contribution that word or phrase can make to the meaning or function of the whole sentence or linguistic utterance where that word or phrase occurs.[1] The meaning of a given word is governed not only by the external object or idea that particular word is supposed to refer to, but also by the use of that particular word or phrase in a particular way, in a particular context, and to a particular effect.

Comparative analysis is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities. Comparative analysis can be carried out at three linguistic levels: phonology, grammar (morphology and syntax) and lexis. Comparative analysis is applied to reveal the features of sameness and difference in the lexical meaning and the semantic structure of correlated words in different languages.

As I’ve analyzed the lexical units denoting “age” in comparative aspect, first, we should mention its definition in general into three languages and then we can look up some words around it or some phrases which denoting “age”.

We know that in English nouns can be used as verbs, but sometimes with some changes as connecting by prepositions or adjectives or adverbs or nouns. As a noun, “age” has the following meanings:

“Age” — 1) the number of years that a person has lived or thing has existed, e.g. *He left school at the age of 18. She needs to find more friends of her own age. When I was your age I was already married.*

2) a particular period of history, e.g. *middle age. 15 is an awkward age. He died of old age.*

3) a particular period of history, e.g. *the nuclear age, the age of the computer, bronze age, iron age, new age, stone age.*

4) the state of being old, e.g. *Fine wine improves with age. The jacket was showing signs of age. The wisdom that comes with age.*

5) in plural form “ages” in informal — a very long time, e.g. *I waited for ages. It’ll probably take ages to find a parking space. Carlos left ages ago. It’s been ages since we’ve seen them.*

Above we have analyzed the lexical unit denoting “age” as a noun, besides we can use this word as a verb:

1) to become older, e.g. *As he aged, his memory got worse. The population is aging (=more people are living longer).*

2) to make sb/sth look, feel or seem older, e.g. *The shock has aged her enormously. Exposure to the sun ages the skin. These photos have been artificially aged.*

3) to develop in flavor over a period of time; to allow sth to do this, e.g. *The chees is left to age for at least a year. The wine is aged in oak casks.*

As we must investigate the lexical units denoting “age” by semantic-stylistic way, certainly we should be careful with some idioms, which may be used with “age”. The followings are idioms by “age”:

1) be/act your age, to behave in a way that is suitable for sb of your age and not as though you were much younger, e.g. *Isn’t it time you started acting your age?*

2) when a person comes of age, they reach the age when they have an adult’s legal rights and responsibilities, e.g. *The money will go to the children when they come of age.*

3) if sth comes of age, it reaches the stage of development at which people accept and value it, e.g. *It was the year that concern for the environment really came of age.*[2]

In Russian language, the word “age” is translated as *возраст:*

Возраст — age, *одного возраста* — the same age; *предельный возраст* — age-limit; *выйти из возраста* — be over age; *н а возрасте* — of age, *возрастной* — means the word “age” as an attributive.[3]

In Russisch — Deutsches Worterbuch (Russian — German dictionary) the word *возраст* is translated as *Alter,* and *Lebensalter* means *о людях одного года рождения; ребёнок школьного возраста — ein schulpflichtiges Kind; призывной возраст — Einberufungsalter; одного возраста — gleichalt(e)rig; люди разного возраста — Menschen verschiedener Alters/stufen.*

So, words with direct meaning that name various objects, phenomena, properties, actions, i.e. lexical units denoting everyday objects found in almost all spheres of human activity make up a stylistically neutral layer of language vocabulary. We believe that such comparative studies must be promoted, because it may lead to a more meticulous and cognitive approach to studying and teaching the semantic nature of languages.

Used literature:

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