

SEMANTICAL AND GRAMMATICAL PECULIARITIES OF BINOMIAL EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH

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Binomial expressions are a sequence of two or more words or phrases (*high and low; here, there and everywhere*) [1]. They are object of grammatical and semantic study of Ukrainian and foreign linguists who state that in modern English binomial expressions are found in unspecialized and specialized language and consist of elements belonging to the same category. We have studied the suggested binomial expressions classifications with the purpose of their development.

Most analyzed expressions are expressed by words which don't only belong to the same part of speech (notional or functional) but also to the same subgroup of a certain part of speech: *bed and breakfast* (*common nouns in the Common case Singular*); *safe and sound* (*qualitative adjectives in the positive degree*); *more or less* (*qualitative adverbs in the comparative degree*); *two or three* (*cardinal numerals*); *this and that* (*demonstrative pronouns in Singular*). Not numerous are examples containing words of different parts of speech: *a word or two* (*a noun + a numeral*), *up and doing* (*an adverb + the present participle*), *up and Adam* (*an adverb + a noun*). Few are either expression made of words of different subgroups of the same part of speech: *this, that and the other* (*two demonstrative and one detaching pronouns*). The constituent parts of some binomials are phrases (*win the horse or lose the saddle, too little and too late*) or words and phrases (*three cheers and a tiger, all legs and neck*).

Binomials can be formed in several ways: (1) with a coordinating conjunction connecting two elements (*top and bottom, alive or dead; neither rhyme nor reason*) or the third element with the second one (*blood, sweat and tears*); (2) with prepositions: *year after year, year by year, word for word, wheels within wheels*.

The elements of binomial groupings are characterized by different types of semantic relationships:

- synonymous (between the words and phrases having the same, or nearly the same, meaning): *certain and sure, bits and pieces, faults and flaws, flotsam or jetsam*;
- antonymous (between the words and phrases having the opposite meaning): *far and near, win or lose, up and down, by right or wrong, big head and little wit*;

- associative relations are found between the words denoting things, which are connected because they happen together or one thing causes the other: *food and drink, flesh and bone, by fire and sword, by birth and breeding, shoot and kill*;

- the semantic relations between the words characterized by a common concept, i.e. words belonging to the same semantic field (SF): *by night and day* (the SF of time), *by land and by the sea* (the SF of surface of Earth), *black and blue* (the SF of colours); *butter and eggs* (the SF of food); *the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker* (the SF of professions), *the father and the mother of the row* (the SF of kinship terms).

Binomial pairs can be based on the repetition of their elements (*bit by bit, burning for burning, foot to foot, blow after blow*) or on the alliteration (*live and learn*).

Most binomials are irreversible, i.e. they occur in one order. Inverting them, e.g., saying *swim or sink* instead of *sink or swim* gives a completely different emphasis, usually indicating that they are to be taken literally, or sometimes humorously, rather than figuratively.

A binomial grouping of words is used either as an idiom or a collocation. When it is an idiom, it has a figurative meaning that is comprehended in regard to a common use of that expression that is separate from the literal meaning or definition of the words of which it is made: *at sixes and sevens* (*in confusion, not well-organized*). When it is a collocation, it is a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance: *verse and tune, urban and rural*. With idioms, the meaning is completely non-compositional. Collocations are mostly compositional as their structural patterns can be productively used for the creation of new pairs though grammatical and semantic anomalies (e.g., the absence of determiners), make them non-compositional.

Studying binomial expressions is important as they don't only make a considerable part of English vocabulary but also reflect the ability of human beings' wit to unite, compare and oppose ideas about things, phenomena and events of reality.

References

1. Medvedeva L.M. and Daineko V.V. English-Ukrainian Dictionary of Binomial Expressions. – reiv: Ukrainian Encyclopedia Publishers, 1994.- 254 p.