

PHILOLOGY

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To the question of number function in the works of English fiction literature

It is considered the semantics and functions of the words with the meanings of numbers in the works of the XIV-XVII century authors in English literature. The most recurrent are the words with the semantics from one to twelve. Most widely used are the lexemes with the meanings of 'one', 'two', 'three'. The use and function of these lexemes is connected with the intentions and authors' individual perceptions. Every singular numerical lexeme does not correspond one singular symbolical meaning. Thus, the lexeme with the numerical meaning of 'seven' carries individual symbolical meanings. Langland implies 'slyness', Chaucer and Malory – 'isolation', Spenser and Bunyan – 'sufferings', Marlowe – 'sins', Milton – 'completion'. The lexeme with the numerical meaning of 'one' symbolizes God and is widely used by the authors of the XIV-XVII cc. But in the epoch of the spread of the humanistic ideas when the Man was in the center of attention, the lexeme implies different meanings. It symbolizes 'strength', 'bravery', 'singularity' and 'loneliness'. The lexeme with the meaning of 'four', the symbol of 'firmness' and 'steadiness' gains the meaning of 'avidity'. The lexeme with the numerical meaning of 'six' symbolizes the 'man' and 'soul'. But the authors then speak of vices. Numbers as symbols were used to create and describe the characters of the books. Numerical symbols embodied by lexemes are the units of the text. They take up an important part in the culture of the people. They are the source of information, they reflect the world outlook, social formation, ideology of the epoch and the life course of the author.

Key words: lexeme, pragmalinguistics, semantic component, semantics, medieval thinking, frequency of occurrence, numerical symbolism, philosophical, symbolical implication, intention, numeric function, humanistic ideas.

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