

# The Use of Connotations with a Specific Subject Meaning on the Example of the Lexeme «Dog»

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**Abstract:** The names of animals are associated with history, ethnography and thinking of people, since the outer world and its internal interpretation are the factors that give rise to the linguistic picture of the world of any national language, as far as the natural environment is also an important part of the linguistic picture of the outer world. Consequently, the study of the connotation of the word "dog" is of interest in both nominative and communicative respects, as it has additional meanings. When determining the meaning of a word, a certain notion is used. At the same time a word can have a different meaning, which has nothing to do with the scientific definition. In particular, it can not only denote a phenomenon or thing, but also serves as an evaluative notion; helps a person express his feelings or his attitude to the surrounding reality. Given all of this, national features of society and of a particular individual, emotiveness, evaluative component, expression, social status of a group or individual play an important role.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The image of a dog in modern Russian culture is perceived in two ways. On the one hand, the lexeme «dog» has a positive connotation: «dog's loyalty», «a dog is a friend of man». Moreover, there is a common Russian phraseological unit «*zazhivaet kak na sobake*», meaning that an injury or wound heals very quickly, without any complications. The derivative verb «*nasobachit'sya*» also has a positive connotation with the meaning «to get the hang of something, to get used to something». But on the other hand, the dog personifies meanness, difficulty and unbearable situation («life of a dog», «*holod sobachij*» in the meaning of «freezing cold»).

## 2 MATERIALS AND METODS

There has been carried out a comparative analysis of the word "dog" in comparison with the dictionary meanings of the Big Academic Dictionary, the Explanatory Dictionary, as well as the data of the information and reference system - National Corpus of the Russian Language.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Taking into consideration the widespread phenomenon of connotation in various fields of scientific knowledge, it is unthinkable to speak about the lexical meaning of a word without its additional meanings; therefore it is necessary to study phraseological units with the meaning «dog» in order to understand which properties of the lexeme are relevant for the speaker of a particular language

### 1.2 Research Questions

To compare the direct meaning of the lexeme «dog» and to characterize its connotative meaning?

To exemplify by the lexeme «dog» why certain peoples have formed worldview positions associated with this lexeme?

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

As a rule, when forming the so-called active-type dictionaries, scientific information is not used, therefore it is so important to exemplify not only the direct meaning of the word "dog", but to explain the connotative one.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In different cultures dog was perceived differently, it had different functions in the mythological system. In every culture the image of the dog was not unambiguous. Our culture has been influenced by both Eastern and Western cultures. In the East the mythological role of dog was embodied in both positive and negative images. In particular, according to Chinese folk legends, it follows that dog personifies more than one symbol. First of all, a dog can symbolize the spirit of an ancestor, a famous folk hero, as well as a being that connects several dimensions; very often a dog is a constant companion of a personage; sometimes a dog can even represent a negative monster.

Let's turn to European culture. Ancient Greek culture is considered to be the source and fundament of Western culture. Homer's works the «Iliad» and «Odyssey» are the most recognized monuments of ancient Greek culture. In his work «The Deciphered Iliad» Lev Klein claims that dog was one of the animal species that was assigned a corpse-eating role. In the «Iliad» there are repeated descriptions of the death of a person followed by the process of eating remains by dogs (Klein, 2014)

In those times it did not make dogs a dirty animal, on the contrary, it put them above the rest, since people tried to protect themselves from infection and this way of burial was believed to be normal. The dead bodies of the poor were eaten by public dogs, whereas wealthy citizens raised personal dogs for this occasion. The process of eating remains by dogs was replaced by burning the bodies but the situation when the dead bodies were torn apart by dogs was not believed to be normal anymore and was described as a disgrace to a man. Consequently, there was a reconsideration of the significance of dog in the cultural paradigm in ancient Greece. If we turn to J. Cooper's «Encyclopedia of Symbols», we will find out that the significance of this animal in different cultures is very different (Cooper, 1995)

For a Russian person, the most relevant associations are those of Christian and ancient Greece culture - the cradle of European culture. According to J. Cooper, among Christians dog signifies «allegiance, devotion, fidelity». In the role of a flock guardian dog personifies «the Good Shepherd, bishop, or preacher».

It should be noted that apparently it refers to Catholics. There was a different attitude towards dogs in ancient Greece: in the Greek language the word «dog» was referred to a derogatory term supposing arrogance and adulation. Thus, the controversial

attitude towards dog finds confirmation in various sources; this fact is also confirmed by the scientists who studied them.

Now we will consider the modern times semantic content of the words denoting dogs. Let's start with the fact that all the words denoting a given animal, including the most neutral ones - *mutt, dog, puppy*, as well as *female dog, male dog* - can be used as a metaphor with a negative connotation in relation to a person: firstly, dog (figuratively) - with some disregard for a person who is unduly eager for protecting the interests of someone, serving someone, something; secondly, about an evil, cruel, bad person and so on (Ozhegov, 1993). *Dog* - firstly, it is about a person who provokes indignation, who deserves to be despised for his behavior, actions; secondly, it is a swear word; thirdly, a watchdog, a service dog, etc.; fourthly, it is about a person who zealously serves the reactionary forces of society, etc. *Puppy* (colloquial) - about a young, inexperienced person. *Male* (colloquial, abusive) - about a healthy, lascivious man. *Female dog* (colloquial) is used as a swear word (usually in relation to a woman). The word *mongrel* has a neutral meaning: a small dog, usually a non-pedigree dog. (Big encyclopedic dictionary, 1998, 1999, 2002)

Nevertheless, it is the Russian word «shavka» (mongrel) that serves as a reason why zoorealists use the Russian slang words «shavlo, shavkal» (mongrel+jackal) and «shanus» (a combination of the names of two famous stray dogs *Shanya* and *Bonus*) when naming stray dogs. Really huge sums of money were raised for their treatment. As a result, the word «shanus» began to be used to refer to the collective image of stray non-pedigree dogs, found by volunteers; the dogs the money is raised for. This word has negative and disdainful connotative meaning.

Those who advocate for euthanizing or any other way of getting rid of these creatures use a big number of specific lexemes and phrases when speaking about dogs: «*BS*» (stray dogs), «*blohovoz*» (a compound word formed from the combination *carries fleas*, the semantics - dirty and contagious), «*mehovoy chesanizm*» (a modified sentry mechanism, semantics - the presence of diseases, parasites, contagiousness), «*blochozavr*» (a compound word, a modified dinosaur and fleas), «*sobanya*» (sarcastically). The existing words in the language are not bypassed by the attention of zoorealists, for a example, the word «*kabyzdoh*» for denoting a domestic dog, referring it to a pitiable, unsightly animal, mainly a dog or a horse.

On the other hand, radical animal rights activists have different names for the same animal. There are not so many of them and they are most likely connected with the desire to alleviate the negative effect from the words naming the dogs; we found that it is clearly present in the semantics of these lexemes when working with the material from dictionaries. For example, these are the words «pesel, sobaken» which refer to aggressive dogs: *only yesterday I saw someone's or nobody's dog running around, an absolutely calm*. «sobaken». Very often the words for naming people can be used for naming dogs: *child (puppy), boy, girl, baby, guy*.

There are really hot discussions on the Internet about who is right in their attitude to stray (and domestic) dogs; the language of the opinions is quite expressive. It is not difficult to determine the position of this or that author. For example, this advertisement:

*Timokha is looking for the parents. The puppy is 6 months old. Very affectionate and obedient baby. Doesn't damage anything at home. It will be a real beauty when it is grown up. Treated against parasites. Learning to walk outside. Even now displays protective qualities. Would suit a flat or a private house (not on a chain). The baby is waiting for his mum and dad. Get yourself a plush friend and you won't regret it! (National corpus of the Russian language, 2021).*

As can be seen in the above example of the advertisement, the dog is named by the lexeme peculiar for naming a person (baby). The prospective owners are expected to become the parents (looking for the parents). Special attention is given to the beauty of the animal (it will be a real beauty when it is grown up, to its cleanliness and safety and even usefulness (doesn't damage, treated against parasites, protective qualities). The dog is given a human name *Timokha*; it is attributed some human qualities (affectionate and obedient). Finally, it turns to be a lovely toy (plush friend).

In contrast to this position, the author of the following example draws our attention to the other side of these creatures and their supporters; thereby, he uses different vocabulary:

*It will be a good idea for «zoobaby» (animal rights activists) to take all the «shavki» (mongrels) home and not to shift the responsibility for «shavlo» (mongrel+jackal) to the people around. Why do they demand to build shelters AT OUR EXPENSE for keeping the dogs for life, whereas there are people who are in need of this money more than dogs? Or probably there are no problems in medicine, the level of life, pensions? уах? It is a kind of cancer. It is a*

*pity that this cancer is not «sterilized» in order to prevent further reproduction.*

*P.S. If a dog is outside not wearing a muzzle, without a leash or an owner – you have the right to kill it for self-defense, because it is an wild animal that tried to attack you, am I right? (National corpus of the Russian language, 2021.)*

Here the dogs are named by the words with negative connotation (*shavki, shavlo*). The radical animal rights activists are also judged negatively (*zoobaby*). The given position can be explained by the fact that ideological enemies equate man with animal. The author notes the tendency of the opponents to anthropomorphise animals. Special attention is given to the danger to others; the author emphasizes that an animal is not a part of the society (wild) and it is dangerous for people (tried to attack you). Here we can speak about a tactic to humiliate, diminish the status of the opponent. The author also uses a tactic «friend-foe», when he is together with the readers (at our expense).

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the value worldview in the language is reconstructed in the form of interrelated value judgments, correlated with legal, religious, moral codes, commonly approved judgments of common sense, typical folklore and famous literary plots. The system of moral values and ethical norms of the conflicting parties differ radically, in the linguistic expression it is focused on the meaning of the lexeme «dog» (Tripolskaya, 1999).

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