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A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF GRADONYMY IN ENGLISH: SEMANTIC AND STYLISTIC FEATURES

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Abstract: This article examines gradonymy as a semantic phenomenon in the English language. Gradonyms represent lexical units that express different degrees of a common quality, action, or state. The study focuses on the semantic relationships among gradonymic words and their stylistic functions in communication. The analysis demonstrates how gradonymy enriches vocabulary and improves the precision of expression in both spoken and written English.

Keywords: gradonymy, semantics, lexical relations, stylistics, English vocabulary.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается градонимия как семантическое явление в английском языке. Градонимы представляют собой лексические единицы, выражающие различные степени общего качества, действия или состояния. Исследование сосредоточено на семантических отношениях между градонимическими словами, а также на их стилистических функциях в процессе коммуникации. Анализ показывает, что градонимия способствует обогащению словарного запаса и повышает точность выражения мысли как в устной, так и в письменной речи.

Ключевые слова: градонимия, семантика, лексические отношения, стилистика, словарный состав английского языка.

Introduction. Language serves as the primary means of human communication, and vocabulary is one of its most significant components. Words within a language are interconnected through various semantic relationships such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and gradonymy. Among these relationships, gradonymy occupies a special position because it represents different degrees of the same concept. Gradonymy refers to lexical units that denote a gradual increase or decrease in the intensity of a particular quality, state, action, or emotion. For example, the words *warm*, *hot*, and *boiling* express the same semantic notion of temperature but differ in degree. Such relationships allow speakers to communicate nuanced meanings more effectively. The study of gradonymy is important because it contributes to understanding how lexical meanings are organized and how speakers express subtle differences in communication. The vocabulary system of every language contains words that are semantically connected. One important lexical-semantic relationship is gradonymy. Gradonymy refers to a sequence of words expressing increasing or decreasing intensity of the same notion. For example, the words *warm, hot,* and *boiling* belong to the same gradonymic chain because they represent different degrees of temperature. In modern linguistics, the study of lexical relations helps scholars understand how meanings are organized within a language. Gradonymy occupies a special place among semantic relations because it highlights the gradual transition between concepts.

Gradonymy is one of the important lexical-semantic relations studied in lexical semantics. Lexical semantics focuses on the meanings of words and the relationships among them within a language system. Alongside synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and polysemy, gradonymy helps explain how words are organized according to degrees of meaning.

In linguistics, gradonymy refers to a semantic relationship between lexical units that express different degrees or intensities of the same characteristic, quality, state, or action. The words belonging to a gradonymic chain share a common semantic component but vary in strength or intensity.

For example:

- *cold → cool → warm → hot → boiling*
- *like → love → adore*
- *small → medium → large → huge*

In each sequence, the words represent gradual stages of the same concept rather than entirely different meanings.

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Lexical semantics investigates how meanings are structured and interconnected in the mental lexicon. Gradonymy contributes to this field by demonstrating that many concepts are not absolute but exist on a semantic scale. Human cognition naturally categorizes experiences according to degrees, and language reflects this perception through gradonymic relations.

According to lexical semantic theory, words may be organized into **semantic fields**, where each lexical item occupies a particular position within a continuum of meaning. Gradonymic words create hierarchical structures that allow language users to differentiate fine shades of meaning.

Each word describes the same emotional state but at a different intensity level.

- *Cold → Cool → Warm → Hot*
- *Like → Love → Adore*
- *Good → Excellent → Outstanding*

In these examples, each lexical item possesses a stronger or weaker degree of meaning than the previous one.

Unlike synonyms, gradonyms are not interchangeable in all contexts because they indicate different intensities. Similarly, they differ from antonyms, which express opposite meanings rather than degrees of the same meaning.

Gradonymic relations are based on semantic gradation. The primary features include:

1. Degree of Intensity. Each word in a gradonymic sequence expresses a particular level of intensity.

- *Tired*
- *Exhausted*
- *Exhausted to death*

These words share a common semantic feature but differ in strength.

2. Hierarchical Structure. Gradonyms are organized according to a hierarchy. The sequence may progress from weak to strong or vice versa.

- *Whisper*
- *Talk*
- *Shout*

The intensity of vocal expression increases gradually.

3. Semantic Continuity. Gradonymic words form a continuum of meaning. The transition between units is smooth rather than abrupt.

- *Small*
- *Medium*
- *Large*
- *Huge*

Each word represents a step within the same conceptual scale.

Gradonymy contributes significantly to stylistic expression.

Expressiveness. Writers use gradonymic chains to create emphasis and emotional impact.Example:
"He was worried, frightened, and finally terrified."

The gradual increase in intensity heightens emotional effect.

Persuasion. In speeches and advertisements, gradonymic structures make messages more convincing.Example:

"This program is useful, effective, and revolutionary."

Artistic Effect. Literary authors frequently employ gradonymy to create dramatic progression and vivid imagery. Gradonymic expressions help readers perceive changes in emotions, actions, and descriptions more clearly.

Conclusion. Gradonymy is an important lexical-semantic phenomenon that reflects varying degrees of meaning within a conceptual field. Its semantic characteristics include intensity, hierarchy, and continuity. Moreover, gradonymy serves essential stylistic functions by increasing expressiveness,

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persuasion, and artistic impact. Therefore, the study of gradonymy contributes to a deeper understanding of English vocabulary and communication.

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