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**ТЕЛИЧЕСКИЕ ПРИЗНАКИ
КАК КОМПОНЕНТЫ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКОГО ЗНАЧЕНИЯ**

**TELIC FEATURES
AS COMPONENTS OF LEXICAL MEANING**

В статье выявляются типы телических компонентов в структуре лексических значений, профилируемых в процессах деривации и зафиксированных в словарных дефинициях ряда наименований естественных родов и номинальных классов в английском языке. Устанавливаются закономерности реализации функционального типа знаний в семантике производных единиц.

Ключевые слова: *телические признаки; лексическое значение; деривация; словарная дефиниция.*

The article deals with the telic features in the semantics of English nominal kind and natural kind terms profiled in derivation processes and lexicographic definitions. The results show different types of telic features profiled, their dependence on various scenarios of interaction with the object denoted.

Key words: *telic features; lexical meaning; derivation; dictionary definition.*

Telic components in the semantics of lexical units, such as the function of the object named, its built-in purpose or the “purpose that an agent has in performing an act” [1, p. 427], have become a focal point due to the role they play in the formation of compound words and various contextual word combinations [2; 3, p. 47; 4, p. 78; 5]. Multiple research papers show that the telic information is specific not only to the so-called functional classes of nouns [6, p. 60], but also to some natural kind terms like animal and plant names [7; 8].

The division into natural and nominal kinds¹ which still stirs up philosophical debate dates back to the Middle Ages and from the point of view of linguistics presupposes the difference in naming strategies and, consequently, in the meaning structure: words created for the so-called “natural” kinds reflect “the structure of the natural world rather than the interests and actions of human beings”, whereas terms for the so-called “nominal” kinds “reflect human interests” [9]. For instance, the names of metals (e.g. *zinc*, *aluminum*), plants (e.g. *camomile*, *rose*), animals (e.g. *tiger*, *opossum*) and many other nominations of the universe do reflect the natural difference between these objects: they have different genetic makeup compared to the objects classified into another group. So, they are examples of natural kind terms.

However, in a closer look this does not seem so obvious. There are words which mean kinds of animals, plants and other natural objects and materials, yet the reason for grouping them into kinds was not natural, but driven by human interests: e.g. *poultry* “birds, such as chickens, that are bred for their eggs and meat” (i.e. birds that are used by humans); *lily* “any of various plants with a large, bell-shaped flower on a long stem” (i.e. flowers of different genera that look the same to humans). This brings suchlike names to the periphery of another category – that of nominal kind terms.

Nominal kinds are mostly constituted by objects created rather than discovered (e.g. *pencil*, *clock*, *car*, *pudding*), social phenomena (e.g. *crime*, *wedding*, *child abuse*), social roles (e.g. *pilot*, *bachelor*, *prince*), etc. Their common feature is the evident presence of the telic component in their meanings which is, broadly speaking, the aim of the existence or function / presupposed behavior of the object or phenomenon. For example, the telic features in artifact terms like *pencil*, *clock* will be ‘drawing’ and ‘showing time’; for the word *wedding* – it’s ‘marrying people (changing their marital status)’; for *bachelor* – ‘having no wife (of a certain social status)’. According to I. B. Shatunovsky, the meanings of nominal kind terms are closer to designating rather than denoting type [10, p. 38–39], which means they attribute a certain feature by the mere reference to the object.

The point that we would like to prove within the present article is that telic features in the meaning of artifact and natural kind terms are versatile revealing various possible scenarios of interaction of the denoted object with the human and society and function as cause-features triggering other semantic components.

Research material and methodology

To analyze telic features as components of lexical meanings of natural and nominal kind terms, we extracted dictionary definitions, various types of derivatives and collocations from the British National Corpus for the following

¹The question becomes even more complicated with the debate whether “kinds” exist or are merely conceptual entities (see B. Ellis (2001), M. Devitt (2008)). The topic, however, is not relevant for this paper.

words: *horse*, *cat*, *dog* (names of natural kinds with an obvious “human” component in their semantics), *owl*, *fish* (names of natural objects with relatively less visible “human influence”), *sand* (a natural kind term of substance used by man elsewhere), *drum*, *cup*, *knife* (names of artifacts), *teacher*, *friend* (names of social roles), *woman* (a natural kind term in people).

The methodology of the research presupposes the analysis of various dictionary definitions of the studied units in search for markers of functional or telic type of information: expressions *used as / for*; *kept as / for*; active verbs denoting social function or nouns stating the ascribed role rather than inborn characteristics, etc. The second stage of the research is the semantic analysis of the derived words and expressions including collocations and idiomatic expressions which are based on the metaphoric or metonymic shifts from the source meanings and have telic features profiled in these processes.

Results: lexicographic profile

The lexicographic profiles of the nouns under consideration revealed that telic information is present in the majority of definitions, excluding animal names *owl*, *fish*, and a person nomination *woman* (table 1).

Table 1

The types of telic features in lexicographic definitions of the nouns studied

Lexical items	Types of telic features	
<i>horse</i>	General telic features	attachment to human
	Specific telic features	pull things; be ridden on
<i>cat</i>	General telic features	attachment to human
	Specific telic features	catch rodents; be a pet
<i>dog</i>	General telic features	attachment to human
	Specific telic features	hunt animals; guard things; be a pet
<i>sand</i>	Specific telic features	used in mortar, glass, abrasives, etc.
<i>drum</i>	General telic features	produce sound
	Specific telic features	beaten with the hands or with some implement
<i>cup</i>	General telic features	container
	Specific telic features	for drinking water / liquids
<i>knife</i>	Specific telic features	cut, spread food with; be a weapon
<i>teacher</i>	Specific telic features	instruct others
<i>friend</i>	General telic features	attachment to another human
	Specific telic features	affection / esteem

Some of the definitions include both general and specific information about the function performed, e.g. domestic animal terms *horse*, *cat*, *dog* have the general telic feature ‘attachment to human’ (i.e. domestication) as well as more specific roles, such as catching rodents or being a pet for *cat*.

The distinction into general and specific telic information in artifact terms *drum* and *cup* is also preserved: the main function is accompanied by specific details. For example, in the definition of *drum* “a **percussion instrument** consisting of a hollow shell or cylinder with a drumhead stretched over one or both ends that **is beaten with the hands or with some implement (such as a stick or wire brush)**” (MD) the main function is ‘produce sound’ (percussion instrument) and the specific details – how exactly the sound is produced (is beaten with the hands or with some implement (such as a stick or wire brush)). The word *cup*, in its turn, has a general telic component ‘container’ in its definitions (cf. *cup* “an open usually bowl-shaped drinking **vessel**” (MD)) profiled by the classifier *vessel*, and a specific component of aim ‘for drinking’.

To some extent general and specific telic features may be observed in the lexicographic profile of the word *friend* because the main social role of ‘attachment to another human being’ is specified by referring to the kind of attachment – by positive feelings towards one another, e.g. *friend* “one attached to another by affection or esteem” (MD).

Results: derivational profile

As the results show, derivational and lexicographic profiles of the nouns under consideration do not always coincide (table 2).

Table 2

The telic features of the studied nouns profiled in derivation

Lexical items	Profiled telic features	Examples of derivatives, collocations, idioms
<i>horse</i>	pull things	<i>horse</i> “lifting tackle”; <i>to horse</i> “to move by brute force”
	be ridden on	<i>horse</i> “a frame or device, usually with four legs, used for supporting or holding”; <i>to horse</i> “to put or be put on horseback”
	be a commodity	<i>horse trade</i> “negotiation accompanied by shrewd bargaining and reciprocal concessions”
	be a bet in races	<i>trial horse</i> “one set up as an opponent for a champion in trial competitions or workouts”
<i>dog</i>	attachment to human	<i>love me, love my dog</i> “if you love someone, you must accept everything about them, even their faults”
	guard things	<i>watchdog</i> “one who serves as a guardian or protector against waste, loss, or illegal practices”; <i>keep a dog and bark oneself</i> “pay someone to work for you and then do the work yourself”
	hunt animals	<i>to dog</i> “to hunt, track, or follow (someone) like a hound”

<i>cat</i>	-	
<i>owl</i>	-	
<i>fish</i>	be a difficult catch	<i>to fish</i> “to seek something by roundabout means”; “to engage in a search by groping or feeling”
	be a food	<i>never fry a fish till it’s caught; bigger fish to fry</i> “more important matters to deal with”; <i>a different kettle of fish</i>
<i>sand</i>	be a grinding material	<i>sandpaper</i> “a strong paper coated with sand for smoothing and polishing”; <i>to sand</i> “to smooth or dress by grinding or rubbing with an abrasive (such as sandpaper)”
<i>drum</i>	produce sound	<i>drum</i> “a thin membrane that closes externally the cavity of the middle ear and functions in the mechanical reception of sound waves and in their transmission to the site of sensory reception”
	produce intensive sound	<i>to drum</i> “to study intensely before an exam”; “to force (something) to be learned by (someone) by repeating it over and over again”
	produce sound to draw attention	<i>to drum</i> “to summon by or as if by beating a drum”; <i>to drum out</i> “to expel or dismiss in disgrace”
<i>cup</i>	container	<i>cup</i> “the hole (or metal container in the hole) on a golf green”; <i>to cup</i> “to place in or as if in a cup”
<i>knife</i>	be a weapon	<i>to knife</i> “to injure someone with a knife”
	cut, spread food with	<i>to knife</i> “to cut, mark, or spread with a knife”; <i>knifelike</i> “cutting or able to cut as if with a knife”
	cut precisely	<i>knifelike</i> “having or demonstrating ability to recognize or draw fine distinctions”
	cut painfully	<i>knifelike</i> “painful as if caused by a sharp instrument”
<i>teacher</i>	instruct others	<i>teacher</i> “a personified concept that teaches”; <i>experience is the best teacher</i>
<i>friend</i>	help	<i>miner’s friend</i> “the Davy safety lamp”
	attachment to another human	<i>midwife’s friend</i> “ineffective contraceptive pill”
<i>woman</i>	do housework	<i>woman</i> “a human female who does housework”; <i>the old woman is picking her geese</i> “it is snowing”
	help	<i>body woman</i> “a female personal assistant to a political candidate or politician”

Animal terms

Among the names of domestic animals, it’s only in *horse* and *dog* that we see the correlation of telic features in lexicographic definitions and derivation, which allows making a conclusion about a greater role of telic information in the semantics of these terms compared to the term *cat*.

As for the types of telic features which coincide in definitions and derivation, they are mostly specific rather than general. For instance, for the word *horse* in examples (1), (2) it’s the specific feature ‘pull things’ profiled, and in (3), (4) – the specific feature ‘be ridden on’:

- (1) *horse* “**lifting** tackle” (Multitran),
- (2) *to horse* “to **move** by brute force” (MD),
- (3) *to horse* “to put or be put **on** horseback” (FD),
- (4) *horse* “a frame or device, usually with four legs, used for **supporting** or holding” (FD) (be ridden on → be used as a support for something put on its top).

The context (2) illustrates simultaneous realization of the function ‘pull things’ and the manner in which the function is performed (brute force).

The only derivative profiling the general feature ‘attachment to human’ is the proverbial phrase *love me, love my dog* “if you love someone, you must accept everything about them, even their faults” (FD), based on the feature of close connection between the dog and its owner (human).

The derivation analysis revealed other specific telic features in the semantics of *horse* not fixed in the dictionaries: ‘be a commodity’ and ‘be a bet in races’. The derivative (5) is based on a common practice in the past to buy and sell horses, and the example (6) – on the practice of placing a bet on horses in horse races:

(5) *horse trade* “negotiation accompanied by shrewd bargaining and reciprocal concessions” (MD),

(6) *trial horse* “one set up as an opponent for a champion in trial competitions or workouts” (MD).

The animal terms *fish* and *owl* that lacked the profiled telic components in the lexicographic profiles, differ in their derivational activity. The term *fish* demonstrates high telic potential revealing the specific features related to the scenarios of their use: intricate catch (often with bare hands), methods of cooking (frying):

(7) *to fish* “to seek something **by roundabout means**” (difficulty in catching),

(8) *to fish* “to engage in a search **by groping or feeling**” (using hands, not eyes),

(9) *bigger fish to fry* “more important matters to deal with”.

The name *owl*, on the contrary, lacks telic potential in both lexicographic and derivational profiles.

Material and artifact terms

The substance term *sand* shows correlation of telic features in its dictionary definitions and derivation: derivatives (10), (11) are based on the function of sand as a rusty covering for polishing or grinding:

(10) *sandpaper* “a strong paper coated with sand **for smoothing and polishing**” (MD),

(11) *to sand* “to smooth or dress by **grinding or rubbing with an abrasive** (such as sandpaper)” (MD).

The artifact terms *drum* and *knife* are very active in profiling telic features in derivation. As for the *knife*, it reveals both the features relevant for definitions (be a weapon; cut, spread food with) and new telic features, specifying the manner (12) and result (13) of the common scenario of its use:

(12) *knifelike* “having or demonstrating ability to recognize or draw **fine** distinctions” (MD),

(13) *knifelike* “**painful** as if **caused by** a sharp instrument” (MD).

As for *drum*, the derivation shows telic features both correlating with and resulting from the ones in its lexicographic profile. The additional features profiled are typologically the same as in *knife* – the manner (14), (15) and the result (16), (17) of the common scenario of its use:

(14) *to drum* “to study **intensely** before an exam” (MD),

(15) *to drum* “to force (something) to be learned by (someone) by repeating it **over and over again**” (MD),

(16) *to drum* “to **summon** by or as if by beating a drum” (FD),

(17) *to drum out* “to expel or dismiss **in disgrace**” (FD).

The result profiled in (16) is viewed as positive (to drum so as to summon people), whereas in (17) it is obviously negative (to drum so as to vocalize disgrace).

The artifact term *cup* as a base for derivation reveals correlation with the general telic feature ‘container’ profiled in its definitions: e.g. *cup* “the hole (or metal **container** in the hole) on a golf green”.

Names of people

It’s an interesting point that no matter how relational / nominal the meanings of the studied terms of people are (*woman* being the least relational), the derivational analysis shows their high potential in profiling telic information. The meaning of the word *teacher* as a base of derivation focuses on its specific telic feature ‘instruct others’: e.g. *teacher* “a personified concept that teaches” (FD); *experience is the best teacher* (proverb). The derivatives of *friend* are based both on general telic information – attachment to another human (18) and new specific telic features – help (19):

(18) *midwife’s friend* “ineffective contraceptive pill” (Multitran),

(19) *miner’s friend* “the Davy safety lamp” (FD).

The general feature ‘attachment to another human’ is realized in (18) with the help of possessive case with the correlating grammatical meaning.

The word *woman*, which does not have any functional features mentioned in its definitions, displays its telic potential in derivation revealing the commonly ascribed social roles of a housewife (20), (21) or a helper (22):

(20) *woman* “a human female who **does housework**” (FD),

(21) *the old woman is picking her geese* “it is snowing” (FD),

(22) *body woman* “a female personal **assistant** to a political candidate or politician” (MD).

The results of the study revealed that telic features are not uniform and represent not only the function attributed by the people to the object or phenomenon named, but may refer to other circumstances, such as **the manner** in which the function is performed – examples (2), (7), (8), (12), (14), (15) – or **the result / effect** produced by the use of the object – examples (13), (16), (17).

Telic features may be profiled at various levels of generalization. Specific features present a more detailed view on how and where the object is used, or on the actions supposed to be performed by the named agent. Derivatives may be formed on the basis of either **general** – examples (1), (2), (3), (18) – or **specific telic features** – examples (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (12), (13) etc. In some cases, the derived units are formed on the basis of a feature triggered by any of them: e.g. the practice of riding horses results in the formation of a semantic derivative (4) which profiles any type of physical support, not only provided for the horse rider.

Telic features may be **classified into three groups**: 1) relating to the main function, 2) accompanying the main function, 3) relating to the by-function. The first group is constituted by the majority of the examples: e.g. hunting, guarding function for dogs; cutting and spreading function in *knife*; instructing people in *teacher* etc. The features accompanying the main function include various specific circumstances of the use: manner, result, evaluation. The features in the third group profile the function or the behavior of the object or phenomenon which is not specified by default: e.g. the function of a commodity or a betting bet in *horse*; the function of a helper in *woman*.

The profiling of telic features in derivation goes beyond the natural / nominal kind distinction making some **natural kind terms exhibit their telic potential**: e.g. *horse*, *dog*, *fish*, *sand*, *woman*. The limits of telic potential for animal names are the distance of an animal from the human's basic needs (cf. *cat*, *owl* with no telic potential in derivation). As for names of people representing natural kinds, there seems to be no limits in telic features being profiled in derivation, which is, however, to be proved on a wider material.

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