

# Linguistic Means of Description of Family Relations in the Novel “In Chancery” By J. Galsworthy

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## **Abstract**

The article is devoted to the study of the evaluative component of the meaning of lexical means used to describe relations between family members in the novel “In Chancery” by J. Galsworthy. The relevance of the study can be attributed to the lack of works devoted to this problem. As the results of our study demonstrate, the words of the lexical-semantic group “family” were mainly used to verbalize relations between members of the Forsytes family. The paper analyzes the attitude towards marriage, spouses, parents and children in the studied text. Scientific novelty of the work is the study of the ways to implement the occasional evaluative component of meaning of the aforementioned words in the text of a work of fiction. The relevance of this paper is explained by the lack of studies, which examine the lexical means of describing relations in the family, embodying a typical rich English family of the second half of the 19th century.

**Keywords:** Lexical-Semantic Group; Verbalization; Evaluation Component; Pejorative Emotiveness; Ameliorative Emotiveness.

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of the presented research is to study the ways of realization of the evaluative component of connotation of lexical units used in describing relations between members of the Forsytes family in book “In Chancery” by Galsworthy (2001). The subject of this study is the evaluative component of the meaning of the above mentioned language units. The scientific novelty of the presented work consists in a thorough study of the ways of implementing the occasional evaluative component of the meaning of words in the text under analysis. According to the results of our research, the words of the lexical-semantic group (hereinafter LSG) “family” are mainly used in this role. The relevance of this work is due to the lack of research devoted to the study of lexical means of describing relations between family

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members, embodying a typical British family of the highest class of the second half of the 19th century. The practical significance of our research is connected with the possibility of applying its results in the process of teaching such linguistic disciplines as lexicology, phraseology, stylistics, etc.

The theory of the lexical-semantic group was first developed as early as the 50s, 60s, 70s of the 20th century in the works of prominent Russian scientists (Erofeeva et al., 2018; Filin, 1957; Galsworthy, 2001; Gataullina et al., 2017). More recent works analyze the structure of LSG. In their research on lexical-semantic field “intellect”, Erofeeva et al. (2018) identify three lexical subgroups in its structure: “the presence of the mind”, “education, the totality of accumulated knowledge”, and “the level of mental development” (Goodenough, 1956). Yusupova and Tarasova (2016) describe the classification of set-expressions with the component of “clothing” in Tatar and English. They report on the existence of nine basic LSGs within their classification (Kodukov, 1955).

The first American investigations of English kinship terms were conducted using the method of componential analysis in the 1950s (Kuznetzova, 1975; Lounsbury, 1956; Merriam-webster dictionary, 2002).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the study of the notion “family”. Nogle (2019) provides semantic analysis of American English kinship terms by the method of ethnoscience. Gataullina, Salieva, and Aslanova (2017) draw our attention to the differences between the English and Russian cultures, as they found out studying English and Russian phraseological units with the components denoting family relations. Tarasova and Tarasov (2018) develop “a typology of phraseosemantic groups, the most significant of which are family relations” (Oxford living dictionaries, 2017).

## 2. Methods

The following methods were applied in order to achieve the goal of our research.

1. the method of discourse analysis – to detect the stylistic devices utilized in the contexts under study;
2. method of semantic analysis – to define the precise meaning of a linguistic unit realized in each studied discourse;
3. method of componential analysis – to comprehend different components of meaning, which a linguistic unit had within the analyzed context;
4. descriptive method – describe the process and conclusions of our research on the given level.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. *Verbalization of Family Relations in the Novel by J. Galsworthy "In Chancery"*

In the novel by Galsworthy (2001) "In Chancery", family relationships are verbalized using lexical units of the corresponding LSG, among which we distinguish the LSG of nouns (mother, father, daughter, son, etc.) and verbs (marry, be born, die, etc.) according to grammatical semes. Nouns of the LSG "family" can be divided into the following subgroups according to extra linguistic characteristics: terms of consanguinity (mother, daughter, aunt, etc.), terms of relationship by marriage (husband, wife, and others) or terms of relationship by adoption (step mother, etc.).

The analysis of the semantic structure of the nouns in the LSG "family" indicates the absence of an evaluative seme in their dictionary meaning (Oxford living dictionaries, 2017).

In a certain context, for various reasons, as well as any other units of the language, the words of the LSG "family" can realize a positive or negative connotative meaning.

#### 3.2. *Spouse Relationship Description*

The storyline of "In Chancery" is based on the relationship of Soames Forsyte and his wife Irene, who are the embodiment of Forsytes' view on marriage. The metaphor used in the title of the book is a description of the position in which both characters found themselves.

Irene, who agreed to this marriage without love, was "in chancery" from the very beginning, and her situation was getting worse every day. Soames was at first very happy to own this "beauty", but he later found out that he could not buy Irene's love. However, Soames did not lose hope, and even twelve years after Irene had disappeared from his life, he repeated, "Irene's my wife, my legal wife". This expresses his true Forsyte attitude towards his spouse as his property. The word "wife", which has no evaluative connotation in its dictionary meaning, acquires positive connotation in this context with the help of the words "my", "legal" in the sense that they mean to Soames who used them. Special mention should be made of the combination of the words "wife" and "waste", which are used when talking about money or time. In this context, the implementation of the occasional meaning of the word "wife" is also observed under the influence of the metaphor. Similar attitude to his wife is noticed by the reader in Soames' thoughts on marrying Annette: "for what else had he married her but to have a lawful heir?". Unlike previous contexts, in this context a negative attitude towards the wife is expressed. Linguistically, this is reflected in the realization of the pejorative connotation of the phrase "married her", where the pronoun "her" replaces the word "wife", and with the help of inversion,

which best emphasizes that the goal of Soames marrying Annette was nothing but the birth of his rightful heir.

Judging by the work “In Chancery”, we can assume that the woman’s opinion about her husband did not matter much for the Forsyte family. The reader finds only a negative opinion of Winfried, the daughter of James Forsyte, about her husband. Despite that, she “grieves” about the loss of her husband, who ran away from her, and she has a “lonely aching heart”. The word “bereave”, meaning, “be deprived of a close relation or friend through their death”, is endowed with negative connotation in its dictionary meaning (Romney, 1957). This word, as well as the epithets “sore” and “lonely”, negatively assess that deed of Winifred’s husband, while emphasizing that she needs her husband.

For Forsytes, family and marriage are an integral part of their decent position in society. This is reflected in the attitude of the young Val to the divorce of his parents. He calls it “beastly divorce”, worrying, above all, that his friends will find out about it. For the same reason, Val’s mother would like the court hearing on their divorce to take place at the beginning of his summer vacation, so that by the beginning of the new semester the children could forget about it. The negative connotation is present in the dictionary meaning of the word “divorce” – “the legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body” – is reinforced in the analyzed context by an epithet “beastly”, which has negative emotiveness (Tarasova & Tarasov, 2018).

### ***3.3. Description of the Attitude of the Younger Generation to the Older One***

In forming a family, in addition to relations between spouses, relations between the generations are of the equal importance, which is primarily manifested in the way children treat their parents. Analyzing the attitudes of children to their parents in the Forsyte families described in this work, we emphasize the fact that the younger generation experience mainly positive feelings towards their fathers.

The reader can observe the great respect and pride young Jolyon Forsyte has for his grandfathers and great-grandfathers, shown in the story he tells to his children and his great-nephew. Starting his story about their great-great-grandfather, who was an agricultural worker, he says, “We may suppose him thick and sturdy, standing for England as it was before the Industrial Era began”. The metaphor “thick” and the epithet “sturdy” - “strong enough to withstand rough work or treatment”, characterized by ameliorative emotiveness, contribute to the positive connotation of the word “great-great-grandad” in this context (Ufimtzeva, 2016).

The story about the great-grandfather of the children, Jolyon, begins with the words: “...better known as Superior Dosset Forsyte built houses representing the England of Napoleon’s wars”. In the analyzed context, the word “great-grandad” realizes positive emotiveness under the influence of the word “superior”, endowed with a similar characteristic of this component of connotation in its dictionary

meaning. He calls his father, the eldest of six sons, the third Jolyon, "... tea merchant, head of the company, one of the smartest people who ever lived in England". "He was just and tenacious, tender and young at heart," he adds about his father. The vivid epithets "the soundest", "just", "tenacious", "tender" and "young", which have positive connotation in their dictionary meanings, contribute to the realization of such an emotiveness of the word "grandfather" in this context (Yusupova & Tarasova, 2016).

The sensitive and attentive attitude of children towards their fathers, shown by adult sons, is worth admiration. We must mention a vivid description of these feelings experienced by Soames to his dying father "... a passionate vehemence of anger against Nature, cruel, inexorable Nature, kneeling on the chest of that wisp of a body, slowly pressing out the breath, pressing out the life of the being who was dearest to him in the world". The epithet 'passionate' strengthens the pejorative emotiveness of the word "anger", used in the context under consideration to express Soames's negative feelings towards Nature, which takes his father away. The same feelings are expressed by the epithets "cruel" and "inexorable", which refer to the Nature as well. Negative connotations if these words are revealed in their dictionary meanings. Metaphor "Nature, kneeling on the chest of that wisp of a body..." with its vivid imagery also contributes to the realization of the occasionally negative emotiveness of the word "Nature". In this context, it is used to refer to the natural forces that take Soames's old father into another world and express the son's love for his father. As a result, the word "father" from the LSG "family" (or its synonym) is replaced by the metonymy "that wisp of a body" in the analyzed sentence, which indirectly contributes to its positive emotiveness.

Warm feelings and attentive attitude to their ancestors are expressed by the grandchildren of the Forsytes in their thoughts about their grandfathers. For example, Val feels the solitude of his grandparents, "the loneliness of his grandparents, now that all their four children were flown, reached the boy's spirit". In the above context, the negative connotation of the word "loneliness" is part of the metaphor "loneliness reached the boy's spirit", which shows how much he cared for the people he loved. Such a stylistic tool contributes to the realization of the positive connotation of the word "grandparents".

As for the negative attitudes towards the fathers, in the novel "In Chancery", they are observed only in Dartie's family, who is James Forsyte's son-in-law. However, they are caused by the inappropriate behavior of the father, who is completely financially dependent on his wife and father-in-law. Montague Dartie's behavior disgraces his children. One need only to remember what his adult son, Val, felt after his friend called his father "a bounder" - "It was his father! He could have sunk into the crimson carpet". The author calls this "the bitterest experience a young man can go through". Influenced by the apparent negative evaluation of the coarse

informal word “bounder”, as well as the vivid metaphor “could have sunk into the crimson carpet” and the epithet “the bitterest”, the word “father” also gains negative connotation in this context.

The Forsytes are a patriarchal family, therefore the author intentionally pays little attention to how the wives characterize their husbands. The description of the attitude of the younger generation to the older one is also practically reduced to describing their attitude towards their fathers and grandfathers. However, female Forsytes are also portrayed as quite strong personalities. Accordingly, the reader can observe the attitudes of children towards their mothers in the novel mainly from the descriptions Winfried Dartie’s (nee Forsyte) children’s attitudes towards their mother. Val believes that she copes with difficulties better than men (“put up with things so much better than men”). The aforementioned phrase, denoting the positive characteristics of Val’s mother, undoubtedly contributes to the realization of the positive emotiveness of the word “mother”. Moreover, the children want to support their mother. “All right, mother, we’ll back you up,” says Val. In this sentence, the positive emotiveness in the meaning of the word “mother” arises under the influence of “back up”, which is a phrasal verb with positive connotation.

#### **4. Summary**

In the novel by “In Chancery”, family relationships are verbalized with the help of lexical units of the abovementioned LSG. Among these lexical units, we differentiate LSG of nouns and LSG of verbs, according to grammatical semes.

The storyline of the novel is based on the relationship of Soames Forsyte and his wife Irene, who personify Forsytes’ views on marriage. Irene loathes her husband, while Soames treats his wives as his property. Furthermore, for Forsytes, family and marriage are an essential part of their decent position in society and divorce is frowned upon. The analysis of Forsyte children’s attitudes to their parents we conclude that the younger generation have mainly the positive feelings towards their fathers and grandfathers.

#### **5. Conclusions**

The outcomes of this study suggest that the words of the LSG “family” are mainly used for the verbalization of relationships in the Forsyte family, although in some of the abovementioned contexts they are replaced by pronouns or certain stylistic means. A careful study of the relationship between spouses in the Forsyte family allows us to conclude that men in this family treat their wives as their property. This is expressed in the bestowing upon words used to designate a given family member the meaning of “property”, as well as occasional ameliorative connotation. In the absence of this meaning, words that verbalize the notion “wife” in the analyzed

examples do not realize positive emotiveness. The occurrence of occasional positive or negative connotation of the words of the LSG “family” is facilitated by lexical units having a corresponding connotation in their dictionary meaning or such stylistic means as epithets, metaphors, inversion, etc.

The realization of the occasional ameliorative emotiveness of the words denoting male family members of the older generation expresses the positive feelings of the younger generation in many contexts in the analyzed work. From a linguistic point of view, words with positive connotation observed in their vocabulary meaning, or vivid epithets and metaphors, also endowed with positive connotation, contribute to this. We must also highlight the use of lexical units, which reinforce the negative connotative meaning of the words denoting phenomena that have a negative impact on the health and quality of life of parents, which ultimately leads to the realization of a positive emotiveness of the words of the LSG “family” in certain contexts.

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