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"Friend": Analyzing linguistic representation and modeling the category (Based on Russian and American media texts on the armed conflict in Syria)

Abstract

The article attempts to describe the lexical representation of the semantic category "friend" by means of the noun in media texts covering the armed conflict in Syria, 2015–2016. An analysis of Russian and American texts revealed 1163 and 864 nouns, respectively, which were distributed across 10 lexical and semantic groups. Based on the results obtained, an author's model of the "friend" category has been constructed and its actualizations in the Russian and American corpus of texts have been compared. The "friend" is a subject (the "nomination" LSG) that has certain characteristics (the LSGs of "form and structure", "quality and attributes" and "opposition") and for certain reasons (the "motivation" LSG) acts in a certain way (the LSGs of "activity", "interaction with an ally / self" and "interaction with a 'foe'") with a certain result (the "external consequences of the activity" and "internal consequences of the activity" LSGs). The national specificity of the "friend" category lies in different actualization of the meanings expressed by the nouns representing the LSGs. The content explication of the Russian category is directed inwards, emphasizing its substantive aspects, while the content of the American one is explicated outwards with the descriptive aspects being emphasized. When at contact, the Russian "friend" is focused on empathy, while the American one pays more attention to the ways of organized interaction. Also the Russian one attaches more importance to preventing the activities of the "foe", i.e. proactively defending themselves, allies and values from harm.

Keywords: "friend", noun, model, comparison, information warfare, armed conflict, Syria.