

Tatiana. S. Paderina

Irkutsk Scientific Center of Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy

jana-pad@mail.ru

Sociolinguistic aspects of “friend – foe” opposition (Based on modern German fiction)

Abstract

The article studies the language means of manifesting the “friend – foe” sociolinguistic opposition in modern German literature. The analysis was carried out on the material of works describing German Unification period in November 1989, namely the ones by such famous writers as Gunter Grass (“Mein Jahrhundert”), Wladimir Kaminer (“Vaters Rat”, “Russen in Berlin”), Katrin Schmidt (“Brief zur Nacht”) and some others. Continuous sampling was used to select the token for the study. Lexical-semantic analysis of the chosen tokens was performed to determine the “friend – foe” opposition from the viewpoint of Germans who were living in Germany at that period as well as to describe the relationship between the FRG and the GDR residents as the citizens of one native country and their attitude to the immigrants living in Germany during the Reunification period. As a result, it was found that the opposition is expressed by such grammatical means as personal and possessive pronouns, Subjunctive Mood and by such figures of speech as epithets, similies, metaphors and metonymies as well as by lexical units with the particular meaning. The obtained results can contribute to further studies of the “friend – foe” opposition in the language picture of different ethnic groups, particularly German and Russian, as well as the ways to represent the opposition in the bilingual mind.

Keywords: binary oppositions, “friend – foe”, language awareness, German studies, cross-cultural German studies, grammatical means, figures of speech, lexical meaning

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