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Binary opposition «friend – foe» in Chinese fiction (Based on chengyu)

Abstract

The present article analyzes the actualization of the «friend – foe» opposition expressed in Chinese chengyu found in fiction. In connection with this, the notions of «discourse» and «types of discourse» are explored, and the border between «friend» and «foe» in phraseological semantics is determined. This study aims to identify semantic modules within which the Chinese chengyu actualize the «friend – foe» opposition. Targeted sampling was used to select 450 Chinese chengyu as the material for the study, the criterion for selection was the «friend – foe» opposition inherent in their nature. The total of 1200 tokens containing chengyu were taken from Chinese fiction represented in the Chinese Language Corpus of Peking University and the Corpus of Modern Chinese Language. As a result, 11 semantic modules were identified and described (GENDER, PLACE OF RESIDENCE, AGE, EDUCATION, PERSONAL QUALITIES, HUMAN BEHAVIOR, HUMAN FEELINGS, OCCUPATION, FAMILY STATUS, SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, RELATIONSHIP), common features specifying each module were demonstrated. The axiological assessment inherent in the described modules is verbalized in most of them through antonymic relations, marking «friend» as good, and «foe» as bad, provided that only one of the members of the opposition is realized in chengyu.

Keywords: chengyu, Chinese language, opposition «friend – foe», discourse, semantic module, antonymic markers