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**“A CHRISTMAS CAROL” BY CHARLES DICKENS
IN THE LIGHT OF ETHIC LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY**

SUMMARY. The present paper introduces a new branch inside linguistic ecology — ethic linguistic ecology applying it to the analysis of Ch. Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol”.

KEY WORDS. Ethic linguistic ecology, conceptual sphere, basic concepts.

The present article introduces a new trend in Linguistic Ecology, in addition to the two worked out by Russian linguists: 1) the study of the problem of dying out the languages of less numerous populations of people due to restrictions of ecological environment and hence to conditions of their lives and 2) the problem of precautions against entering negative influence of low language (slang, jargonisms, etc) into the system of the language [1]. The new trend introduced as one more part of Linguistic Ecology may be termed **Ethic Linguistic Ecology**. It integrates the basic notions of ecology, ethics and linguistics. Its appearance was predetermined by the opinion of acad. D.S. Lychachyov, who expressed his deep regret concerning the fact that the notion of **ethic ecology** was not even mentioned in our science although it is unique and vitally important in the life of Man.

Our Russian scholar V. Kozin also broadened the horizons of ecology by increasing its sphere by adding intellectual and social layers, to biological one [2]. What is more, the appearance of Ethic Linguistic Ecology is vitally important for spiritual lives of people and, especially, for the education of children, the new generation of XXI century, the state of which, unfortunately, leaves much to be desired.

Sorrows must be expressed, as well, about the state of many TV programmes with the atmosphere of violence, cruelty, degradation.

Ethic Linguistic Ecology borrows from ethics the nomenclature of positive moral notions and principles, which are reconstructed, in a new way, from the perspectives of **ecology**, in its broader representation, and **modern linguistics**.

The integrated discipline employs the notions of concept, conceptual sphere (концептосфера — the term of acad. Lychachyov) and uses contemporary methods of linguistic investigation: discourse and text analysis, conceptual approach (including conceptual deixis, conceptual generation, metaphors, blending, etc) plus more traditional methods: e.g. componential analysis.

The corpus of Ethic Linguistic Ecology is constituted by approximately 50 basic ethic concepts. Among them are “faith”, “hope”, “love”, “kindness”, “truth”, “soul”, “home”, “harmony”, “wisdom”, “tolerance”, “justice” etc. The embodiment of them, the “core” or the container of all positive concepts is the kernel concept (linguistic construct): “soul”.

The first stage of analysis presupposes the study of the above mentioned concepts in the system of the language using their definitions in special dictionaries.

The second stage includes discourse and textual realization of concepts in literary texts of the best humanistic writers of present and past outlining a certain ethic ideal. Such approach will, in its own way (modest as it looks), outline the road of possible escape from the crisis of modern social-ethic situation in the direction of reincarnation of lost ethic ideals, respect to linguocultural heritage of nation, to speech culture itself.

The turn to positive ideals, notions, is vital for harmonization of the ecology of soul.

The present paper shows one example of illustrating how the main ideas and technique of the above outlined Ethic Linguistic Ecology may be applied to discourse and textual analysis of the book by Charles Dickens "A Christmas Carol" in prose written in 1843 [3]. The book was written in answer to the special wish of the ruling classes of that time who were frightened by the serious danger of protests coming from the poor people deprived of any human rights. When first published the novel received almost universal appraisal. "A Christmas Carol" presents kind of a lesson to people: how on the eve of Christmas a cruel greedy man finally turns out into good, kind and loving one due to his deep reflection on remembering the happy days when he was a child. Dickens calls the rich for kindness and benevolence. In R.L. Stevenson's opinion the book was so good: "What a jolly thing it is for a man to have, written books like this and just filled people's hearts with pity".

The book presents as the main idea the two opposing concepts "the evil (greed)" and "kindness", choosing the latter as the ideal for man's loving relationships. We also put the concept "kindness" in the centre of our analysis.

The first stage of analysis, as stated above, is the place of the concept in the system of the language. The lexeme "kindness" gets different definitions in the system of Russian and English languages according to the data of corresponding dictionaries. The main meanings (integral semes) in Russian are "all positive, good, opposing to the evil" (1), a kind act (2) personal belongings, property (3). In English dictionaries the 3^d meaning finds no expression. In English the basic integral meaning is more pragmatic: a kind act, behavior [4]. "Personal belongings" find no expression, however, in "Christmas Carol", but just this meaning is vitally important for the main character at the beginning of the story with some slight change: actually it is greed not for personal belongings but for money.

The second stage of analysis implies the necessity to show individual author's interpretation of concepts. The opposition of the Evil — Kindness is realized by Ch. Dickens from the start with the help of objective — pragmatic construction of the text. The book under study consists of five thematically organized chapters: Marley's Ghost (I), The first of the Three Spirits (II), The second of the Three Spirits (III), The third Spirit (IV), The End of It. Narrative development of the content leads logically to gradual progression of the main character in the direction of improvement of his life.

The main character of "A Christmas Carol" Scrooge is shown in Ch. I as an old greedy miser, owner of the firm. Dickens uses all black colours describing his portrayal: Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone. Scrooge! a squeezing,

wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrewdly his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days, and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often 'came down' handsomely, and Scrooge never did [3; 8].

Dickens uses here special **negative vocabulary, epithets**: squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, covetous, as well as **similies and metaphors**: sharp as flint, to be a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone. Original author's cognitive metaphor is used, the model for it is: **the Evil is cold**: cold, frosty, low temperature about him; iced his office and didn't thaw. Scrooge is very rude to his nephew who is trying to invite him to come to Christmas celebration. He refuses his clerk to let him leave earlier to celebrate Christmas Eve, refuses sharply to help the poor.

Returning to his home and cold (gloomy, old, low, dreary) fire and having a rest, all of a sudden, to his horror, he saw the apparition of his dead business partner Marley's Ghost. It predicts the terrible future: in after-death existence of Scrooge, as kind of punishment for his sins. It advises to Scrooge to mend up his way of life while Scrooge still can.

Since that moment, by and by, metamorphosis in Scrooge's life begins. In the following three chapters three Ghosts, by and by, transport Scrooge into three microworlds: his Past, Present and (probable) Future.

In the course of these shifts Scrooge recollects the times when in his childhood he was different: kind, open-hearted, able to enjoy Christmas with his relatives and friends. We shall adduce one textual example from Scrooge's past about the celebration of Christmas in his master's house when he was apprenticed there: During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, **enjoyed everything**, and underwent the **strangest agitation**. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear [3; 13].

The atmosphere of merriment, jokes, dances reminds Scrooge about his joy and happiness: he comes to realize the difference between emotional evaluative states of mind: happiness — unhappiness: really, his former master "has the power to render us **happy** or **unhappy**, to **make our service light or burdensome**; a **pleasure** or a **toil**. Say that his power lies in **words** and **looks**; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The **happiness** he gives, is quite as great **as if it cost a fortune** [3; 13].

The second and third Ghosts transport Scrooge to the Present and Future (Scrooge's death) when nobody comes to his funeral and grave. Seeing simple people, so poor, but kind to each other, Scrooge reevaluates his own life and begins to change: "He **softened more and more**; and thought that if he could have

listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the **kindness of life** for his **own happiness** with his own hands ... [3; 48].

Scrooge decided to mend his way of life. He turns into a good-hearted kind man, full of benevolence, able to perform good acts to people. He comes to his nephew's Christmas party: **“Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, wonderful happiness!”** Scrooge changes his attitude to his clerk even raises his miserable salary: **“A merry Christmas, Bob!”** said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. **“A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you, for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!”** [3; 76].

The end of the story shows a “new” Scrooge. In his description Dickens uses seven times the adjective good, summarizing Scrooge's kind actions: “Scrooge **was better than his word**. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became **as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world**” [3; 76].

Summing everything up, we can assume that, first of all, the origin of Ethic Linguistic Ecology was predetermined by the situation of the notion of ecology itself, as well as by opinions of scholars of different sciences: linguists, sociologists worrying about unfavourable state of social-cultural atmosphere of modern society. Secondly, traditional componential analysis of ethic concepts, based only on the data of definitions from different dictionaries, appears to be insufficient. Only integrated approach based on discourse, cognitive and textual analysis leads to deeper penetration into many-layered structure of ethic concepts. And, third, the study of realization of concepts in texts of the best examples of literature not only adds much to the extension of their content but can contribute greatly to the reincarnation of ethic ideals lost as we made an attempt to show in our article.

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