The Multistatutory Nature of the Adjective "Right" in Adjectival English Lexicon

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This article provides an outline on an adjective in modern English language, and in particular, the multistatus lexical item "right", which carries different meanings in different variants of combinatorics. The authors analyse the combinations used with the adjectival lexical item "right" and identify categories that determine the semantic content of each given statement. The need for a detailed study of this lexical item is caused by the necessity for a general theoretical understanding of its multi-categorial nature, identification and description of the mechanism that determines the change in categorial and functional statuses, the characteristics of this item at the formal-syntactic, semantic and conceptual levels and the criteria for the formation of its categorial meanings within the context, where it can be used. However, currently in most cases individual functional-semantic features of poly-status lexemes are studied without due regard to other categorial statuses.

Key words: *English adjective, polysemy, lexical item "right", multistatus lexical item, multistatus lexeme, eurysemy, multistatutory.*

Introduction

This linguistic study is devoted to identifying and studying the functional and semantic features of the polystatus lexical item *"right"* in modern English, determining its essential characteristics showing new categorical and functional statuses in this lexical unit.

Polystatus lexemes in linguistics are usually those lexemes that exhibit the feature of grammatical status diversification, i.e. changing the context of use and the semantics of the sentence in which they are used determines the change in their lexical and grammatical characteristics while maintaining their semantic identity. Accordingly, lexeme *"right"* is

characterised by great semantic variability, important diverse functional meanings and contextual conditionality.

Methods

We determine the methods of analysis in accordance with the purpose of the study, theoretical and practical concept and type of information being analysed. Here we used various types of analysis: contextual analysis (the influence of other words on the lexical unit "right" in a specific context); semantic analysis (the study of the semantic structure and designation of the basic semes of the analysed lexical units); distributional analysis (identification of the set of contexts, in which the lexical unit "right" appears) and syntax analysis (the study of syntactic structures containing the lexical unit "right").

Results and Discussion

In modern English the lexeme "right" has a polystatus character, developed in its multifunctionality, which supposes the presence of various categorical statuses. The lexical item *"right"* can be added to the list of the most popular 10 polysemantic words in which meanings are easily confused. The word *"right"* is used in sentences as an adjective, adverb, noun and even a verb.

The analysis of lexical definitions shows that the semantic structure of the lexical item *"right"* is characterised by the presence of the hyperseme "right" direction, which can be used to describe only inanimate objects, for example:
o   *Sure enough, the Trailor truck that had crossed the bridge was slowing down and making a right turn onto Pont des Saints-Peres (Brown, 2003).*
In the given lexical-semantic variation the lexical item *"right"* acts as an attribute related to a noun, being an adjective, performing an attributive function and naming a feature of the word being defined (right hand, right side, right turn).

o   *He thought he might have cracked his ribs on the right side (Connelly, 2002).*

In the example given above the main point is the denotative component of the adjective meaning. The attribute doesn't act as an independent part of speech, it is a part of a larger linguistic unit that is the attributive phrase. Thus, the lexical item acquires the status of an attribute.

o   *Ignoring the guy, I clamped my hand down on her right arm and turned to drag her back to the couch (Weisberger, 2003).*

As you can see, the main attributive object related to this lexical item *"right"* is inanimate. Thus, it is possible to define a syntactic construction where *"right"* acquires the status of an attribute with the hyperseme "right" direction: *Adjective (right) + Noun (inanimate object)*.

Let's take a closer look at the semantic structure of the lexical item *"right"* that is typified by the presence of a hyperseme "true, proper, correct":

o   *"No, that's the right number," Sophie interjected quickly... (Brown, 2003).*
In the given lexical-semantic variation the attributive function of adjective is in evidence, acting as attribute related to noun. It presents the object feature (right time, right direction, right number). Adjectives express the denotative component. They perform an identifying, communicative function. It is arguable that the lexical item acquires the status of an attribute.

o   *It didn't appear that she was on the right track. (Weisberger, 2003).*
Based on the foregoing, we can define a syntactic construction with the hyperseme "suitable, proper, correct, as it should be" in the attribute status, which looks like *Adjective (right) + Noun (inanimate object)*.

The following definitions that we study are typified by the animated subject correctness hyperseme and the options when he is right in his judgment or statement. This hyperseme is associated with the mental sphere of a person:

o   *"You were right to keep it off the air (Connelly, 2002).*

The adjective acts as a defining part of the sentence related to the verb "to be" and performing a predicative function.

The adjective is associated with the word significate but not with its denotation, that is, the significant component of the adjective meaning is highlighted. Thus, lexeme *"right"* has the status of a predicative and the syntactic construction with the seme given above will look as follows: *Noun/Pronoun + to be + Adjective (right)*.

The presence of lexeme *"right"* in the sentence can express the correctness of an action, it can be acceptable, agreeable, suitable or proper:When implementing given lexical meaning, an adjective can perform both an attributive function as well as a predicative one.

o   *She paused dramatically, searching for the right words (Weisberger, 2003).*

In the attribute status the lexical item *"right"* carries the following syntactic construction:

Adjective (right) + Noun.

o   *I have given her every opportunity to do the right thing (Brown, 2003).*

In the status of a predicate the lexical item *"right"* has the syntactic construction *Noun + to be + Adjective (right)*, where the significative component of the adjective meaning is clearly discernible. Exemplified by the lexical-semantic variations we can find confirmation of the theory that is postposition is inherent to predicative adjectives.

o   *The words were right, but it was clear to both of us that my mind was already a million miles away (Weisberger, 2003).*

The meaning of the lexeme *"right"* may be representative of a hyperseme that is directly related to the process of describing a person who is considered socially important, that is the meaning of "right = wholesome or important people, right company":

o   *Is Fache having second thoughts that Langdon is the right man? (Brown, 2003).*

The adjective *"right"* acts as a defining part of the sentence, performing an attributive or predicative function in a sentence. It can assume both a postposition and a preposition. Basically, animated nouns act as objects and subjects in any of the fore cited functions, therefore we can determine thematic characteristics of the participants in the communicative situation. In cases where the adjective performs a predicative function, we may note that the object and the object feature are thought separately. The syntactic constructions will look as follows: *Adjective (right) + Noun (animate object)/Pronoun* or *Noun (animate object) / Pronoun + Adjective (right).*

Sometimes in a certain context the lexeme *"right"* acquires the meanings of "fair", "correct for moral reasons" and can be expressed as an adjectival structural type *right + infinitive, right + that*:

o   *It is only **right** that men and women should be paid the same for doing the same work.*

In the given lexical-semantic variations the construction *It + to be + Adjective (Right)* is very common, which demonstrates the predicative status of the adjective with the hyperseme "correct for moral reasons". It expresses a conceivable object feature or subject feature.
The semantic structure of the lexeme "right" is also typified by the presence of its hyperseme "healthy", "properly functioning, sound":

o   *Something isn't quite **right** with the brakes on your bike.*

An adjective in this meaning often has predicative nature, that is, it acts in the status of a predicate, approaching verbal units as pointed out above. In British colloquial vocabulary the word *"right"* sometimes has the meaning of a "completed, finished" action, usually precedes the noun, that is, it acts in the status of attribute and has a negative connotation, increasing the meaning of the whole sentence:

o   *You made a **right** mess in the flat!*

Considering the adverb *"right"*, it should be noted that the hyperseme "right" direction is one of the most often used connotative units. In such cases we are talking about giving directions

o   *"This way," Fache said, turning sharply right and setting out through a series of interconnected galleries. (Brown, 2003).*

Here the adverb *"right"* has no suffix and looks completely similar to the adjective *"right"*. That adverb can be classified as a adjuncts of local value.

The lexeme *"right"* acts as an adverb, that is adverbial modifier, being a link between significant parts of the sentence. That adverb functions as a limiting adverbial modifier for the whole sentence.

The considered adverb can be a synonym for the lexeme "exactly", representing the hyperseme "definitely", "accurate", "just", "just in time", "just like", for example:

o   *She smiled at the line and put her hand out but Bosch was right in the middle of tying one of the boots (Connelly, 2002).*

First and foremost it is to be noted that there is a low degree of co-occurrence range of the adverb "right" with various parts of speech with the meaning "exactly". It can always be found in the combination with prepositions and adverbs of place or time. Since the adverb enters the structure of the sentence and its syntagmantics, we can univocally assert that this lexeme acts as a limiting adverbial modifier for another adverbial modifier, that is, an adjunct of local value.

o   *"Of course. But you'll feel right at home — it'll be just like senior year all over again." (Weisberger, 2003).*

Due to the fact that the subject can be animate or inanimate with these lexical item *"right"*, we can form the following lexical-semantic structure:

Noun + Verb + Adverb (right) + Adverb.

o   *Emily gave me the thumbs-up right before she scribbled something and exclaimed, "Merci, oh yes, thank you, I mean, merci" over and over again. "Miranda, I have the number right here. Would you like me to connect you now?" (Weisberger, 2003).*

The adverb "right" is also used in the sentence to strengthen the semantic meaning of the whole statement, acting as an intensifier of the amplifiers category disposing the modifiable adjective or verb in the top positions of the quality intensity scale:

o   *The Truth is right before your eyes, Robert (Brown, 2000).*

Based on the example, it is worth pointing out that the adverb *"right"* enters the structure of the examined sentences and their syntagmatics, and mostly *"right"* is present in the combination with verbs and adverbs of place, thereby the adjunct status of local value is emphasised.

o   *"Stop right there!" he cried as I began pulling newspapers out of their wire racks by the register (Weisberger, 2003).*

It can also be observed the thematic characteristics of participants in these contexts, although animate and inanimate nouns were encountered as objects related to the lexeme under study. Based on the research findings of the lexeme *"right"* we may note that we are faced with the adjunct status of the adverb *"right"* while intensifying the semantic meaning of the lexical-semantic variations.

o   *Right out of college and working at Runway (Weisberger, 2003).*

In the case of the expression *"right now"* depending on the time when the described verbs are used, it can have the meanings "immediately", "this minute", "at present", "at the moment", etc., for example:

o   *Just listen calmly. You are in danger right now (Brown, 2003).*

Here the adverb *"right"* completely enters the structure of the sentence and its syntagmatics, thus is ranked as an adjunct. It acts as an "as a limiting adverbial modifier for another

adverbial modifier" (right now), emphasising the time index. In accordance with this, we can relate the lexeme *"right"* in the adjunct status to a subcategory of adjuncts expressing time.

It is important to note that when implementing this hyperseme "right now", the structure does not tend to use any particular grammar tense form, but quite often used with the imperative mood, thereby interpreting the degree of intensification. The main subject can be animate or inanimate.

o   *Yes, it's confirmed. I'll fax it right now. OK (Weisberger, 2003).*

"Right away" is a synonym phrase with *"right now"*, but it is seldom encountered in fiction and, as a rule, performs the hyperseme "right now", "immediately", "at once", "instantly":

o   *The title had the desired effect. "Right away, ma'am. Let me get a detective on the line for you." (Brown, 2003).*

Quite often the adverb *"right"* combined with *"away"* acquires the status of a conjunct, since it is not included in the sentence structure, performing only a linking function that indicates continuity with respect to the previous statement, expressing agreement with the speaker, as illustrated above.

o   *I need your help right away (Brown, 2003).*

Given adverb *"right"* represents the organising element in the lexical-semantic version.

But you can still find the adverb *"right"* in the combination with *"away"* and in the status of an adjunct, since it is a part of the sentence and acts as an adverbial modifier for a verb or other adverb.

o   *I should probably get started right away." (Weisberger, 2003).*

The lexical item *"right"* is often used as an interrogative confirming word in the meaning "Isn't it?", "Is it?":

o   *You're calling her cell phone, right? (Brown, 2003).*

In the given lexical-semantic variations the lexeme *"right"* demonstrates a divulsion in denotation and a loss from the sentence syntagmatics. It is not a part of the sentence as it relates to the sentence as a whole, expressing an assessment of what is being narrated, that is, it is not separable from the whole sentence at the semantic level.

On the basis of the analysis it can be argued that in this meaning the lexical item *"right"* acquires the status of a disjunct, namely a disjunct expressing the speaker's remark or opinion regarding the statement content.

An outstanding feature of the lexeme *"right"* in the status of a disjunction is its postposition at the end of the sentence.

Sometimes *"right"* is used in headlines as part of the title of the position or rank of specific people, such as bishops and some members of parliament:

o   *The **Right** Honourable Diane Abbott, MP...*

Finally, we will consider the use of the lexeme *"right"* as a noun.

"Right" frequently denote political parties or people who favour traditional opinions regarding low taxes, develop ideas that property and industry should be privately owned:

o   *The **right** was in* power *after 1979.*
o   *These people are certainly on the **right**.*

The lexeme *"right"* in these variations is capable of acting in the syntactic functions inherent in the noun - in the function of the subject or object. Lexical items in these cases are used with definite article.

Thus, lexical items *"right"* can acquire the status of subject or object, depending on the position in the sentence.

In cases when a person can rely on fair, morally acceptable or legal treatment, *"right"* acquires the hyperseme "law" and is expressed as a noun:

o   *Another company might wonder what gave you the right to take a cab to work in the first place... (Weisberger, 2003).*

In the given lexical-semantic variations the lexemes *"right"* are used with definite or indefinite article and act in the syntactic functions inherent in the noun. Therefore it can be argued that the lexemes under study acquire the status of subject or object.

o   *What gave her the right to talk to me, to anyone, like that? (Weisberger, 2003).*
o   *What it hadn't yet done was convince me that any of this gave her a right to treat people the way she did (Weisberger, 2003).*

The lexical item *"right"* can often be found in the sentence as an exclamation. It is used to express agreement with someone's opinion or to confirm that the listener understood the meaning of what was said:

Given lexeme acquires the status of a conjunct, since it is not included in the structure of the sentence, performing only a linking function, which indicates continuity with respect to the previous statement, expressing compliance with the speaker as shown above.

o   *I bit back the urge to say something nasty. "Right," I said. "Right." (Weisberger, 2003).*

Sometimes the lexeme *"right"* is used as an introductory word when you want a group of people to notice you:

o   **Right***, everyone. Could you all* *stop* *talking**, and then we'll* *begin*.

We assume that in this position the lexeme *"right"* acquires the disjunct status, since it is not included in the sentence structure and falls out of its syntagmatics.

Also *"right"* is used to link the story to make sure that the listeners are following the story and understand everything:

o   *So there I was right, middle of the night,* **right***, and this guy came up to me...*

In addition to a large number of all of the listed lexical meanings and hypersemes acquired by the lexeme *"right"*, we have detected the fact that *"right"* acts as a verb presenting the hyperseme "to correct, to edit":

o   *And now we are poised to carry out Sauniure's legacy and right a terrible wrong." (Brown, 2003).*

From our point of view, in the given variants, the lexeme acquires the status of a predicate.

Conclusion

We studied and analysed in detail the functional features of the polystatus lexical item *"right"* in modern English, which presents different meanings and semantic messages in different combinatorics variants. The analysis results identified grammatical combinations with the adjectival lexeme *"right"* and categories that determine the options for cognitive orientation and the semantic meaning of each given statement and the group as a whole. We

also presented the combinatorics features of the lexeme *"right"* which demonstrate a change in its statuses, based on its syntactical context. We found out that the lexical item *"right"* is capable of acquiring the status of an attribute, predicative, adjunct, disjunct, conjunct, object, subject and predicate. Based on the research conducted it can be precisely stated that the lexeme *"right"* is polystatus and has the ability to polysemy which determines its broad compatibility in the syntagmatic sense. Theoretical statements and research results obtained in this work can be useful in further consideration of a problem of the polystatus and eurysemy of adjective lexical units.

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