Порівняльний аналіз номінативного поля "Зброя" у творах жанру фентезі
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Comparative Analysis of Nominative Field "Weapon" in Works of Fantasy Genre
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У статті здійснено порівняльний аналіз номінативного поля «Зброя» у творчості Дж. Р. Р. Толкіна та Джо Аберкромбі крізь призму когнітивної лінгвістики. Визначено основні характеристики концепту «простору-джерела» як важливого чинника у формуванні семантичної структури у фентезійному дискурсі. Проаналізовано культурно-міфологічні запозичення, що стали базисом для конструювання відповідних номінативних просторів. Особливу увагу приділено відмінностям у представленні магії та її впливу на семантичне навантаження зброї. Виділено ядро, медіальну зону та периферію номінативного поля.

Ключові слова*: номінативне поле, зброя, фентезі, простір-джерело, когнітивна лінгвістика, семантична структура, Толкін, Аберкромбі.*

The article provides a comparative analysis of the nominative field "Weapon" in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and Joe Abercrombie through the prism of cognitive linguistics. The key features of the "source space" concept are defined as crucial elements in the formation of semantic structures in fantasy discourse. Cultural and mythological borrowings that served as the foundation for constructing the respective nominative spaces are analyzed. Special attention is paid to the differences in the representation of magic and its impact on the semantic significance of weaponry. The core, median zone, and periphery of the nominative field are identified.

Keywords*: nominative field, weapon, fantasy, source space, cognitive linguistics, semantic structure, Tolkien, Abercrombie.*

Introduction

Fantasy literature has long transcended its role as mere escapism, establishing itself as a powerful medium for exploring cultural archetypes, social structures, and philosophical ideas. One of the central semiotic elements within fantasy narratives is weaponry, which not only functions as a

physical tool but also serves as a symbol of identity, power, destiny, and moral alignment. Weapons often embody the ethos of entire civilizations within fictional worlds, carrying profound cultural and conceptual meanings.

In this context, the nominative field "Weapon" becomes a key object of study. It represents a semantic system that reflects both the linguistic organization of meaning and the deeper cognitive structures underpinning the fictional universe. The present research focuses on a comparative analysis of how J.R.R. Tolkien and Joe Abercrombie construct this field in their respective works, taking into account the influence of external cultural source spaces.

Problem Statement

The formation of a nominative field within a literary text is not a random aggregation of lexemes but a structured phenomenon guided by cultural, historical, and cognitive factors. Authors of fantasy literature frequently draw upon real-world cultural models to imbue their fictional universes with depth and resonance. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of the "source space," whereby an existing conceptual domain informs the creation of new, fictional constructs.

Thus, the central problem addressed in this study is how Tolkien and Abercrombie employ cultural, mythological, and historical source spaces to construct the nominative field "Weapon" and how these constructions reflect broader cognitive and semiotic patterns. Furthermore, the study seeks to reveal the specific linguistic and conceptual strategies used by the authors to differentiate moral alignments through the depiction of weaponry and magic.

Analysis of recent research and publications

The study of nominative spaces and semantic fields has a rich and diverse theoretical background, deeply rooted in both Western linguistic traditions and post-Soviet cognitive frameworks.

In Western linguistics, the concept of the semantic field was extensively developed in the works of Trier (1931), Lyons (1977), and Cruse (1986). Jost Trier introduced the idea that words do not exist in isolation but form structured, interdependent systems where meanings are defined relationally. He emphasized that semantic change occurs not by altering isolated terms but by shifting entire semantic networks. John Lyons later built upon these ideas, defining semantic fields as sets of lexemes organized by paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Cruse further refined field theory, focusing on the nuanced relationships between lexical items and the mechanisms of meaning differentiation within a field.

The cognitive turn in linguistics, represented by scholars like George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), shifted attention toward the conceptual and embodied bases of meaning. Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphors posits that much of human understanding is metaphorical in nature, rooted in bodily experience and cultural models. Gilles Fauconnier (1985)

contributed significantly with his theory of mental spaces, suggesting that meaning construction involves dynamic mappings between different conceptual domains.

Within the post-Soviet linguistic tradition, notable contributions have been made by O.V. Zhabotynska and O.S. Kolesnyk. Zhabotynska emphasizes that nominative spaces are not mere lexical clusters but complex cognitive structures where cultural prototypes, evaluative attitudes, and pragmatic associations are deeply embedded. According to her, a nominative field reflects not only the systemic organization of lexemes but also the dynamic interaction between linguistic form and cultural cognition Source? Page number?. Kolesnyk (2010) highlights the role of cognitive categories and frame structures in organizing semantic fields, arguing that any nominative field functions as a fragment of the conceptual worldview of a linguistic community.

Research into nominative fields in literary texts shows that authors actively construct these spaces by selecting culturally salient elements from source spaces — historical, mythological, or ideological - and embedding them into fictional worlds. Gérard Genette's theory of transtextuality also supports this view by explaining how intertextual relationships and cultural borrowing shape new narrative structures.

Thus, the theoretical framework for studying the nominative field "Weapon" in fantasy literature must combine the insights of classical semantic field theory with modern cognitive and cultural approaches, recognizing the complex interplay between language, thought, and cultural memory.

The notion of the nominative field is closely tied to the broader concept of the nominative space, which reflects not merely the lexical inventory associated with a given concept but also the cognitive and cultural structures underpinning that inventory.

According to Zhabotynska (2004), a nominative space is "a fragment of a conceptual worldview represented in language by a system of lexemes, interconnected through associative, hierarchical, and categorical relations." It includes not only direct nominations of objects and phenomena but also evaluations, functional characteristics, emotional connotations, and symbolic associations.

The internal structure of a nominative field typically consists of three main zones:

— **The Core**:Lexemes that directly and unambiguously name the central concept and are most frequent in usage. In the case of the field "Weapon," examples would include *sword*, *spear*, *axe*, *shield*, and *bow*.

— **The Median Zone**:Terms that are slightly less central but closely related through functional or symbolic associations, such as *dagger*, *mace*, *staff*, or *crossbow*.

— **The Periphery**:Lexemes that are metaphorically or culturally linked to the central concept but are not weapons in the strict sense, for example, *knowledge* (as a weapon), *magic spells*, or even *deception*.

This zonal organization reflects not only linguistic frequency but also the cognitive salience and conceptual proximity to the central notion.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, the structure of nominative spaces is governed by frames, prototypes, and image schemas. Frames, as described by Fillmore (1982), provide structured mental templates that organize experience and language. Prototypes, according to Rosch (1978), represent the most typical members of a category — for example, a *sword* would serve as a prototypical weapon in many cultures.

Furthermore, the dynamics of semantic fields involve constant interaction between the language system and the cultural experience of speakers. This view aligns with Lakoff's (1987) theory that categorization is not strictly taxonomic but based on perceived similarities, experiential salience, and cultural models.

In the context of fantasy literature, nominative spaces such as "Weapon" are often enriched with symbolic and mythopoetic layers, reflecting not only functional categorizations but also ideological, ethical, and cosmological structures. The selection of particular weapons, their naming, description, and narrative role are deeply influenced by the cultural source spaces from which the authors draw.

Thus, understanding the structure and cognitive foundations of nominative fields allows a more nuanced analysis of how fantasy authors like Tolkien and Abercrombie construct their fictional worlds and imbue them with cultural resonance.

Research Objectives and Methodology

The main aim of this research is to compare the formation and structure of the nominative field "Weapon" in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and Joe Abercrombie, analyzing the influence of cultural source spaces and cognitive strategies on the semantic organization of weapon-related terminology.

The methodology applied in this study includes:

— **Predictive Modeling**:Establishing the probable structure of the nominative field based on theoretical and empirical analysis.

— **Corpus Analysis**:Extraction and classification of lexemes related to weapons from primary texts using corpus analysis tools (AntConc).

— **Semantic Zonation**:Dividing the nominative field into three zones: core, median, and periphery, according to the frequency, centrality, and symbolic value of terms.

— **Cognitive Mapping**:Visualizing conceptual relations between lexemes to uncover underlying cultural models and metaphorical structures.

— **Contextual Analysis**:Analyzing the use of magical elements associated with weapons and their narrative functions to understand the moral and ideological coding within the texts.

The combination of these approaches allows for a comprehensive examination of the nominative field as both a linguistic and cognitive phenomenon in fantasy discourse.

Research Results

The theoretical model of the nominative field "Weapon," with its core, median, and peripheral zones, finds vivid realization in the fictional worlds created by J.R.R. Tolkien and Joe Abercrombie. Each author constructs a distinct semantic and cognitive environment, shaped by different cultural source spaces, mythological influences, and ideological perspectives.

Tolkien's Perspective

In Tolkien's legendarium, magic is tightly woven into the moral fabric of the universe. It is a tool that, depending on its wielder and intent, can either support the forces of good or serve evil purposes. Magical artifacts - such as swords that glow near orcs (*Sting*), enchanted phials (*Phial of Galadriel*), and even rings of power - are critical elements within the nominative field "Weapon." I wonder whether anything here is written by you? God forbid you have not read at least the LOTR trilogy.

Importantly, Tolkien distinguishes between different types of magical weaponry:

- Positive magical weapons: Artifacts used for protection, healing, and the maintenance of cosmic balance. For example, *Andúril* is not just a sword but a symbol of rightful kingship and hope.

- Corrupt magical weapons: Items that seduce, enslave, or destroy, such as the *One Ring*, which serves as both a literal and metaphorical weapon of domination.

- What about these ". It is a tool that, depending on its wielder and intent, can either support the forces of good or serve evil purposes"?

This moral dualism ensures that magic within Tolkien's world maintains a structured and ethically oriented place within the nominative field. Magical artifacts are typically embedded within traditional heroic quests and mythopoetic frameworks, where their use reflects broader cosmological battles between good and evil.

Thus, in Tolkien's nominative field "Weapon," magic operates not as an autonomous system but as an extension of moral order, integrated into the core and median zones according to its ethical valence.

Abercrombie's Perspective

Joe Abercrombie, by contrast, presents magic as an inherently destabilizing and morally ambiguous force. In his First Law trilogy and related works, magic is portrayed as dangerous, corrupt, and often hidden behind layers of manipulation and secrecy.

Magical weapons and artifacts do exist in Abercrombie's world; however, they lack the clear moral dichotomy seen in Tolkien. Practitioners of the "High Art" — sorcerers such as Bayaz or Khalul — wield magic primarily for personal gain, political advantage, or survival. Magic is frequently depicted as a form of power that inevitably leads to corruption, alienation, and societal destabilization.

Examples include:

- Sorcerous interventions that alter political outcomes through covert manipulation rather than open conflict.
- Forbidden knowledge and ancient artifacts whose use results in widespread devastation without regard to ethical considerations.

In Abercrombie's nominative field "Weapon," magic occupies a peripheral but influential zone, interacting with physical weapons and political cunning to form a complex, amoral system of power. Unlike Tolkien, Abercrombie does not grant magic the aura of sacred duty or cosmic justice; instead, he treats it as one more tool in a fundamentally self-interested world.

Thus, while Tolkien's treatment of magical weaponry reinforces the mythological and ethical structure of his universe, Abercrombie's portrayal dismantles traditional moral categories, portraying magic as an instrument of pragmatic, and often cynical, power politics.

Tolkien's Approach to the Nominative Field "Weapon"

J.R.R. Tolkien's construction of the nominative field "Weapon" in his legendarium is deeply rooted in multiple cultural and mythological source spaces:

— **Celtic Mythology and Worldview**: The weapons of the Elves, such as finely crafted swords and ethereal bows, reflect a sacred and aesthetic approach to combat. These weapons are often described as light, shining, and imbued with natural or divine properties, emphasizing harmony with nature and elevated spiritual status. Examples

— **Anglo-Saxon Literary Tradition**: The culture of Rohan, modeled closely on Anglo-Saxon England, features weaponry like spears, swords, and shields, characterized by loyalty, honor, and heroic individualism. The depiction draws clear parallels to the martial ethos found in *Beowulf*. Examples

— **Norse Cultural Models**: Dwarvish weaponry — axes, hammers, heavy armor — embodies the Norse cultural attitude towards craftsmanship, durability, and brute strength. These weapons are practical, robust, and symbolic of resistance and resilience. Examples

— In Tolkien's narrative, weapons often bear names (*Andúril*, *Glamdring*, *Orcrist*) and histories, becoming almost sentient artifacts that carry legacy and destiny. The nominative field's **core** includes terms like sword, bow, axe, spear, shield, dagger, and staff.

An essential feature of Tolkien's treatment is the dichotomy between "good" and "evil" magic related to weapons:

- Good magic (e.g., Galadriel's gifts, Gandalf's staff) protects and heals.
- Evil magic (e.g., the One Ring) corrupts and dominates.

This moral polarization is tightly interwoven into the semantic network surrounding weaponry, reinforcing the ethical structures of Middle-earth.

Abercrombie's Approach to the Nominative Field "Weapon"

Joe Abercrombie's portrayal of weaponry deviates sharply from Tolkien's idealized models, reflecting a grimdark, postmodern reimagining of fantasy tropes.

Abercrombie draws from diverse cultural source spaces:

— **Orientalist** **Stereotypes**:

The Gurkish Empire evokes a distorted, exoticized view of Islamic cultures, featuring curved swords, scimitars, and the association of weaponry with cruelty and decadence.

— **European** **Enlightenment** **Models**:

The Union reflects 18th-century European military structures: standardized armies, muskets, cannons, and a bureaucratic view of warfare, where personal valor is often subordinated to systemic violence.

— **Scandinavian-Scottish** **Fusion**:

The North presents a brutal, chaotic combat culture blending Norse and Highland Scottish elements: axes, broadswords, rough iron weapons.

Weapons in Abercrombie's world are primarily tools for personal survival and political ambition rather than noble symbols. Unlike Tolkien, Abercrombie seldom names weapons or attributes them mythical qualities; instead, weapons are presented realistically — worn, practical, and brutal.

The core of the nominative field includes swords, axes, daggers, bows, crossbows, cannons, and — metaphorically — knowledge and political cunning as instruments of power.

Magic in Abercrombie's universe is depicted as inherently corruptive, with no clear moral dichotomy. Practitioners of the "High Art" wield destructive powers for self-serving purposes, blurring the lines between heroism and villainy.

Conclusions The comparative study of the nominative field "Weapon" in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and Joe Abercrombie reveals the profound role of cultural source spaces, cognitive structures, and ideological frameworks in the construction of fictional semantic fields.

Tolkien's legendarium exemplifies a mythopoetic approach where weapons are deeply embedded in the moral, historical, and cosmological fabric of Middle-earth. The core elements of his nominative field - swords, bows, axes - carry symbolic meanings tied to heritage, destiny, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. Magic, integrated into the weapon field, reinforces the dualistic ethical vision, distinguishing clearly between positive and corrupt artifacts.

Abercrombie, conversely, presents a cynical, deconstructed vision of the nominative field "Weapon." In his universe, weapons are tools of survival and domination, stripped of transcendent significance. Magic, instead of upholding cosmic order, serves as a corrupting, pragmatic force wielded for personal or political gain. Abercrombie's peripheral expansion of the field — incorporating manipulation, knowledge, and betrayal as metaphorical weapons — reflects the grimdark ethos of his narratives.

Thus, the nominative field "Weapon" operates not merely as a lexical cluster but as a cognitive and cultural construct reflecting each author's worldview. The application of cognitive linguistic theories, semantic field modeling, and cultural analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding of how fictional worlds are linguistically and conceptually structured.

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