

Проведений аналіз засвідчує, що гендерно-нейтральні займенники *they/them* у сучасній англійській мові сприяють формуванню більш чутливого до різноманітності мовного простору. Отже, гендерно-нейтральні займенники *they/them* можна розглядати не лише як граматичне явище, а і як інструмент соціальної інклюзії, який відображає взаємодію мови, культури та суспільних трансформацій. Попри це, використання *they/them* супроводжується певними труднощами, зокрема граматичними суперечками (узгодження множини з одністю), неприйняттям частиною суспільства та варіативністю норм. Проте більшість досліджень підтверджує, що вони поступово закріплюються як нова мовна норма, виконуючи інклюзивну функцію у сучасному комунікативному середовищі. Подальші дослідження можуть бути спрямовані на аналіз їх функціонування в різних дискурсивних середовищах, зокрема в освітньому, медійному та цифровому комунікативному просторі, а також на вивчення ставлення мовців до використання гендерно-нейтральних мовних форм.

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**Редьква Анастасія**

*здобувач першого рівня вищої освіти,  
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет імені Володимира Гнатюка  
Науковий керівник: Гарасим Т.О., кандидат філологічних наук,  
доцент кафедри англійської філології та методики навчання англійської мови*

#### LEXICAL FIELDS OF CRIME-RELATED VOCABULARY IN THE SHORT STORIES BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

The significance of Edgar Allan Poe’s detective stories is crucial, because, as Lauren Jones states “Edgar Allan Poe laid the groundwork for modern detective fiction through his creation of C. Auguste Dupin, the analytical protagonist of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, widely regarded as the first true detective story” [2]. Due to his input in literature, we can enjoy detective narratives nowadays and contemplate other authors like Émile Gaboriau, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Agatha Christie, who followed his writing style.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the crime-related vocabulary in Edgar Allan Poe’s short stories through the framework of semantic and lexical fields, and to

determine how these lexical elements contribute to the creation of a tense, mysterious atmosphere and the development of the detective narrative.

C. Hugh Holman in “A Handbook to Literature” defines a detective story “as a novel or short story in which a crime, usually a murder – the identity of the perpetrator unknown – is solved by a detective through a logical assembling and interpretation of palpable evidence, known as clues” [1, p.149]. One of the features of the detective genre is that the crime has to be impressive and worthy of readers’ attention. Moreover, the detective needs to be a remarkable one, unusually clever, sharp-witted and extremely observant. In addition to a mind-blowing detective, there has also to be a corresponding villain or puzzling crime because solving cannot be easy. Furthermore, all hints available to the detective must also be accessible to the audience, so the reader sees the solving of the story as a possible and coherent one. The vocabulary of the detective genre fulfils a key pragmatic function by constructing an atmosphere of intellectual tension, mystery and logical pursuit of truth.

The short stories by Edgar Allan Poe demonstrate an extremely well-structured use of crime-related vocabulary, which is instrumental in establishing the dark, suspenseful atmosphere characteristic of his literary works. Thus, the framework of lexical fields offers a productive tool for examining the semantic organisation of the detective text.

A. Nikolenko defines a semantic field as “a closely knit sector of vocabulary characterized by a common concept (e.g. in the semantic field of space when we find nouns (expanse, extent, surface); verbs (extend, spread, span); adjectives (spacious, roomy, vast, broad)). The members of the semantic fields are not synonymous, but all of them are joined by some common semantic component” [3, p. 238]. D. Stringer implies that a lexical field is “one of the most important concepts in semantic relations is that of the lexical field, which is a grouping of lexical items that have a general conceptual association, either in terms of an area of knowledge or regular co-occurrence in real-world situations” [5, p. 183].

The semantic field of crime-related vocabulary in E.A. Poe’s stories can be divided into several interconnected lexical fields, each reflecting a particular aspect of criminal activity – from people and objects to motives and investigation procedures. These fields, when reunited together, contribute to the formation of a coherent detective narrative and enhance the text’s perceptual depth.

The lexical field related to **people** consists of lexemes that denote participants in criminal circumstances and include such words as *murderer* [4, p. 41], *killer* [4, p. 41], *policeman* [4, p. 42], *madman* [4, p. 57]. These words are used throughout the entire story “The murders in the Rue Morgue”, and with their help we can understand which characters are present in the narrative.

The lexical fields linked with **objects, body liquids/state and places** include lexemes that refer to materials, remains of the victims and settings correspondingly, for example, *knife* [4, p. 47], *body* [4, p. 47], *blood* [4, p. 56], *head* [4, p. 56], *bones* [4, p. 70], *skin* [4, p. 56], *nail* [4, p. 54], *house* [4, p. 44], *street* [4, p. 39], *room* [4, p. 43], *vault* [4, p. 71], *floor* [4, p. 43], *dark deep marks* [4, p. 43]. In such stories as “The murders in the Rue Morgue”, “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “The Cask of

Amontillado”, such vocabulary helps the readers visualise the circumstances described in the narration and perceive the story more vividly.

The lexical fields connected to **emotions, actions, secrecy and concealment** include expressions denoting affective and psychological states, for example, *the dark silence* [4, p. 66], *terrible* [4, p. 42], *fear* [4, p. 66], *terror* [4, p. 63], *fearful* [4, p. 45] at the same time it also contains verbs and verbal constructions that are standing for criminal and violent actions namely: *kill* [4, p. 65], *revenge* [4, p. 68] *murder* [4, p. 49], *hunting* [4, p. 43], *cut through* [4, p. 43], *cut off* [4, p. 66].

The lexical units referring to **secrecy** and **concealment** are particularly noteworthy as they operate not only as isolated words but also as full narrative constructions like phrases and sentences that perform a concealment function within the story. For instance, *the Evil Eye* [4, p. 65], the clause “*You should have seen how careful I was to put the body where no one could find it*” [4, p. 66] which directly means the act of hiding, *hide* [4, p. 62]. Moreover, an emotionally charged expression “*My heart grew sick*” [4, p. 72] shows the narrator’s feeling of guilt. These examples demonstrate that concealment in E.A. Poe’s texts operates across different levels of language, from individual lexemes to full utterances and thus such units are essential to the atmosphere of any detective narrative.

Having investigated the crime-related vocabulary in E.A. Poe’s short stories, we conclude that the word choice matters in building his detective narratives. The lexical fields under analysis in the crime-related semantic field – people, objects, places, emotions, actions, secrecy and concealment – perform their own functions in the text. These fields are interconnected and cannot exist separately. Viewing them together, we come to the conclusion that they are helpful in creating mysterious and tense atmosphere the detective genre is known for. Moreover, crime-related vocabulary shapes how the reader feels and thinks while reading.

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