



LINGUISTIC PECULIARITIES OF QUALITATIVE AND RELATIVE ADJECTIVES IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Annotation: The aim of the article is to study linguistic peculiarities of qualitative and relative adjectives in modern English. An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun by describing, identifying, or quantifying words. This article reflects modern trends in linguistics and we hope it would serve as a good information for those who wants to master modern English language.

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We are going to investigate one of the important parts of speech in modern English. An adjective is an independent part of speech that indicates a feature of a person, object or concept and answers the question "Which one?", What kind? In English, they do not have a category of gender and number, so they do not change their form. Adjectives are most often used with nouns and in sentences act as a definition or a nominal part of a compound predicate. In English, there are qualitative and relative adjectives. The concept "relative adjectives" is widely used in domestic linguistics, but as Raskin and Nierenburg rightly note, the term is mostly a stranger to English grammars because much, if not the majority, of what relative adjectives do in other languages is done by nouns standing in preposition to another noun.[1.p.23] However the adjectives in English were and still are the subject of serious attention by linguists, and English relative adjectives are regarded by scholars as denominative, non-predicate denoting non-gradable, non-linguistic characteristic and even pseudo-adjectives. Considering relative denominative adjectives of English, many of the mentioned authors devoted their studies to identifying the relationship between the original noun and the derived adjective. At the same time, it is necessary to describe not only the process of transposition of one part of speech into another, but also the models of semantic modification of a word due to acquisition of the characteristic meaning. Besides, it is important to identify the regularities of updating the components of the value and direction of semantic processes. In this case, it makes sense to turn to the historical aspect of semantic development. The technique of generating a generalized lexicographic meaning is used on the basis of data of several dictionaries and corpora to analyze the semantics of linguistic units. The





analysis of adjective meaning patterns is mainly based on the Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles and the generalization of lexicographic data from online dictionaries of modern English.[2.] Qualitative adjectives denote a property inherent in the subject itself or revealed in it. The core of this category consists of adjectives, the basis of which denotes a feature not through a relation to the subject. This includes words that name such properties and qualities that are perceived by the senses: color (white, red, dark), spatial (fragrance, rich), temporal (long, short, narrow), physical and other qualifying signs, qualities of character and mental disposition [3, p.186]. Such signs include:

- colour ;(red, yellow, blue, pink);
- size; (big, large, tall, high, small, low);
- form; (round, square, triangular);
- subjective assessment;(round, square, triangular);
- feelings;(tasty, pleasant, cold, hot);
- emotions;(happy, sad, thoughtful, indifferent).

L.A.Kulikovskaya defines what should be called a relative adjective, and gives a brief semantic description of this lexico-grammatical category of words.[4.p.209] V.V.Vinogradov says that "in all relative adjectives there is potentially a shade of quality, which is often revealed and develops into a series of independent meanings" [5.p. 205].Relative adjectives in their meaning can be mainly divided into the following groups:

- a) adjectives denoting signs of objects through their relation to the material from which they are made: a wooden table; a glass door. (Note: The word glass can be translated as a noun or an adjective according to the Oxford Dictionary)
- b) adjectives denoting signs of objects through relation to time: a monthly / weekly magazine; daily program
- c) adjectives denoting signs through relation to nationality or location: European countries; urban life
- d) adjectives denoting signs through relation to the field of activity, occupation: scientific progress
- e) adjectives denoting signs through relation to the nature of the social system: communist society, socialist ideology, capitalist countries.[6.p.208]

1. Most qualitative adjectives have degrees of comparison:

Big	bigger	(the) biggest
interesting	more interesting	(the) most interesting





Some qualitative adjectives such as greenish, darkish, incurable, unsuitable, chief, principal, have no degrees of comparison.

2. They have certain typical suffixes, such as -ful, -less, -ous, -ent, -able, -y, -ish: careful, careless, dangerous, convenient, comfortable, silvery, watery, whitish, shortish.

3. From most of them adverbs can be formed by the suffix -ly:
graceful — gracefully; gay — gaily

4. Most qualitative adjectives can be used as attributes and predicatives.

How lovely the little river is, with its dark, changing wavelets! (Eliot)
(ATTRIBUTES)

1. Relative adjectives have no degrees of comparison.

2. They do not form adverbs with the suffix -ly.

3. They have certain typical suffixes, such as -en, -an, -ist, -ic, -ical: wooden, Italian, socialist, synthetic, analytical.

4. Relative adjectives are chiefly used as attributes. ...she was a fair example of the middle American class... (Dreiser)

Morphological, syntactic and structural criteria are important for differentiation between relative and qualitative adjectives, however, these criteria only reflect the main semantic features of lexical-grammatical categories. The methodological framework of the research includes researches of V. Vinogradov, E. Wolf, A. Memetov and other scientists. In the course of writing this article we have applied the method of description. We emphasize that besides grammatical features, it is important to consider lexical-grammatical features in the course of differentiation between qualitative and relative adjectives. We discover that each adjective already has potential meaning of quality which is also a factor of transformation of relative adjectives into qualitative adjectives. The general implicit lexico-grammatical meaning of qualitiveness (qualitative and relative);

The grammatical category of comparison: positive – comparative – superlative (big – bigger – the biggest; handsome – more/ the most handsome); the specific suffixal form derivation: some suffixes are found only with the adjectives: -ous (tremendous);

Adjectival functions in the sentence: attribute to a noun, e.g., the beautiful painting; adjectival predicative: a) subject compliment: She is pretty. b) object compliment: He made his wife happy. Verbless adjective clause: e.g., Long and untidy, his hair played in the breeze.

The Adjective- Semantic Features:





Relative / qualitative: qualitative adjectives denote size, form, colour, age, e.g. a smart boy;

relative adjectives denote qualities which characterize an object through its relations to another objects, e.g., a wooden face.

Gradable / non-gradable: gradability includes comparison, e.g.: tall – taller – the tallest; non-gradable adj.: atomic (scientist), British (tradition). Inherent/non-

inherent: e.g.: a big mouse – a big fool

In conclusion we can say, that comparing different lexical and grammatical categories of adjectives from the point of view of their connotative possibilities, it can be noted that qualitative adjectives are richer in connotations than relative ones with the same root: glassy, gold, golden, and so on. Relative adjectives do not change by degrees of comparison. Relative adjectives can only appear in an attribute function: an iron bridge; a silver watch.

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