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## “TREASURE” LEKSEMASINING ETIMOLOGIYASI VA SEMANTIK RIVOJLANISHI

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### **Annotatsiya**

Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidagi “treasure” leksemasining etimologik tahlili va semantik rivojlanish bosqichlari o‘rganiladi. Leksemaning yunoncha “thēsauros” dan lotin, fransuz tillari orqali ingliz tiliga o‘tishi va “to‘plangan boylik” ma’nosidan “qadrli inson” ma’nosigacha bo‘lgan semantik evolyutsiyasi yoritiladi. “Treasure trove” birikmasining etimologik tarkibi alohida tahlil qilinadi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** etimologiya, semantik rivojlanish, “treasure” leksemasi, leksikologiya, til tarixi, “treasure trove”

## ЭТИМОЛОГИЯ И СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ЛЕКСЕМЫ “TREASURE”

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### **Аннотация**

В данной статье исследуется этимологический анализ и этапы семантического развития лексемы “treasure” в английском языке. Рассматривается переход слова от греческого “thēsauros” через латынь и французский язык в английский, а также его семантическая эволюция от “накопленного богатства” до “дорогого человека”. Отдельно анализируется этимологический состав словосочетания “treasure trove”.

**Ключевые слова:** этимология, семантическое развитие, лексема “treasure”, лексикология, история языка, “treasure trove”

## ETYMOLOGY AND SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEXEME “TREASURE”

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the etymological analysis and semantic development stages of the English lexeme “treasure”. The word’s transition from Greek “thēsauros” through Latin and French into English, and its semantic evolution from “accumulated wealth” to “beloved person” are explored. The etymological composition of the compound “treasure trove” is separately analyzed.

**Keywords:** etymology, semantic development, “treasure” lexeme, lexicology, language history, “treasure trove”

In examining any lexeme, particular attention must be given to cognitive linguistics, as individuals assimilate new information about the world based upon their existing knowledge frameworks. As K. Holoborodko observes in her study on the linguistic status of the concept, the resulting information system constitutes a conceptual structure reflecting human understanding of reality [8]. Throughout this cognitive process, individuals function not as passive recipients

but as active interpreters of linguistic knowledge. Each language user embodies not merely a linguistic system but a comprehensive conceptual framework, wherein specific concepts have already received linguistic representation through signs, words, or equivalent analytical descriptions [8]. It is through the development of cognitive science that linguistics has incorporated the concept of the lexeme.

The lexical composition of a language system is a unique mirror of society's history, culture, and the development of human thought. Each word carries within itself centuries of accumulated semantic wealth, traces of contacts with different peoples, and the complex processes of human cognition. In the formation of the English vocabulary, the influence of Latin, French, and Germanic languages plays a significant role, and the lexeme "treasure" stands as a vivid example of such complex etymological processes.

In modern English, the word "treasure" is widely used both in the sense of material wealth and spiritual value. The aim of this research is to identify the etymological roots of the lexeme "treasure", conduct a comparative analysis of its forms in different languages, and systematically elucidate the stages of its semantic development. The object of the study is the lexeme "treasure" and its derivatives, employing etymological and comparative-historical methods.

Etymological analysis of the lexeme "treasure"

The earliest usage of the word "treasure" dates back to the Middle English period, approximately the mid-12th century. During this period, the word appeared in the forms "tresor" or "tresour", conveying meanings such as "accumulated money or precious stones, hoarded wealth, collected booty" [1]. The origin of the word traces back to the Old French "tresor", which in 11th-century French meant "treasure, collection of wealth" and evolved into modern French "trésor" [2].

This lexeme, which entered English through French, actually has even more ancient roots. According to scholars, "tresor" derives from the Gallo-Roman form "thesaurus", a phonetic variant of the Latin "thesaurus". Latin "thesaurus", in turn, originates from the Greek "thēsauros", meaning "storehouse, treasure, treasury".

The Greek "thēsauros" is connected to the verb "tithenai", meaning "to put, to place", which ultimately traces back to the Proto-Indo-European root "dhe-", conveying meanings such as "to put, to place", as well as "to create, to produce". Thus, the most ancient meaning of "treasure" is connected with the concept of "something placed or accumulated".

Interestingly, in Old English, other words were used to express the concept of "treasure" – "goldhord" ("gold hoard") and "maðm" ("valuable object"). This indicates that before the Norman Conquest, English had its own independent lexical units, but later, under French influence, a new word was borrowed [2].

During the Middle English period, the word sometimes appeared in variant forms such as "thresur" in attempts to imitate classical forms. The modern English form "treasure" stabilized around the 16th century.

Etymological analysis of the compound "treasure trove"

One of the significant issues related to the lexeme "treasure" is the etymological composition and semantics of the compound "treasure trove". This compound is often misinterpreted as having redundant meaning. In reality, the word "trove" does not have an independent meaning but, together with "treasure", forms a whole compound expressing a specific historical and legal concept.

The origin of the compound "treasure trove" traces back to the Latin phrase "thesaurus inventus" ("found treasure"). According to ancient Roman law, valuable items found hidden with no known owner were expressed by this concept. Roman law applied the principle of "finder keeps" to such discoveries, although the finder sometimes had to share with the landowner [7].

After the Norman Conquest of 1066, the Latin phrase “thesaurus inventus” was calqued (literally translated) into Anglo-Norman as “tresor trové”. Here, “trové” is the participial form of the Old French verb “trover” (“to find”). Later, English borrowed this phrase, transforming it into “treasure trove” [7].

Under English common law, “treasure trove” did not simply mean any found treasure, but specifically referred to wealth found hidden with no known owner. Such discoveries could be claimed as crown property [7].

Over time, the original meaning of “trove” as “found” was forgotten. Since “treasure trove” typically consisted of ancient gold or silver coins, the “valuable” meaning of the compound predominated, and it began to be used in metaphorical senses. Consequently, English speakers interpreted “trove” not as an adjective but as a noun, and it evolved into an independent lexical unit. The earliest usage of independent “trove” dates back to 1791, appearing in Charles Hamilton's translation of Islamic law [7].

#### Semantic development of the lexeme “treasure”

The semantic evolution of the word “treasure” can be divided into several stages: Initial meaning (12th century) – “accumulated money or precious stones, hoarded wealth, collected booty”. This was a concrete, material meaning, primarily referring to physical objects [3].

Metaphorical extension (circa 1200) – the meaning “anything valued” emerged. Initially, this was primarily used in religious and spiritual contexts. For example, the concept of “treasure in heaven” from biblical texts became widespread during this period [1, 7].

Application to persons (circa 1300) – the meaning “valued person, beloved individual” developed. This semantic shift is a vivid example of transition from abstract to concrete, from material to spiritual. Even today, expressions such as “He is a real treasure” are used in this sense [2, 1].

Verbal usage (late 14th century) – the verb form of “treasure”, “tresouren”, appeared in the late 14th century, conveying meanings such as “to accumulate wealth, to hoard treasure”, as well as “to value, to cherish in the heart”. This metaphorical meaning is clearly evident in the English poet Chapman's description of Homer as having a “deep and treasurous heart” [3].

Modern meanings – in contemporary English, “treasure” is used in the following primary senses: 1) accumulated wealth, valuable objects; 2) a cherished person; 3) to value, to cherish (as a verb) [1].

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the noun “treasure” occurs approximately 10 times per million words in modern English, indicating its active usage [4].

#### Forms in different languages

The forms of the lexeme “treasure” in various languages attest to its widespread distribution:

Spanish: tesoro

Italian: tesoro

French: trésor

Portuguese: tesouro

In all these languages, the word derives from Latin thesaurus, maintaining phonetically similar forms [3].

#### Lexical units related to “treasure”

Several compound words and expressions have been formed based on the lexeme “treasure”:

“Treasure hunt” – known since 1913 as a children's game

“Treasure-hunter” – in use since 1858

“Treasure trove” – analyzed above; in English Law: treasure (gold or silver, money, plate, or bullion) found hidden in the earth or other private place, the owner being unknown

“Treasurer” – known since the late 13th century

“Treasury” – a word sharing the same root as “treasure” [3].

#### Conclusion

The lexeme “treasure” is one of the significant units of the English language with a rich and complex etymological history. Its developmental path reflects a complex process of transition from Greek “thēsauros” through Latin and French into English. The word’s initial meaning of “accumulated wealth” gradually expanded, first encompassing “valued thing” and then “cherished person”. The analysis of the compound “treasure trove” demonstrates how linguistic units can be reinterpreted over the course of historical development.

The lexeme “treasure” and its derivatives remain actively used in modern English, playing an important role in enriching the language’s lexical resources and expressive capabilities. Its semantic development reflects the tendency of human thought to evolve from concrete to abstract, from material to spiritual values.

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