Title: Toward the study of poetics of Anton Chekhov: the case of contextual synonyms.
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In the paper, a semantics-based approach to the study of contextual synonyms in Anton Chekhov's texts is introduced which can serve as a sound foothold for the interdisciplinary study of the language personality of the writer. It will be claimed that the study of such seemingly linguistic phenomenon as contextual synonymy can shed light on the author's perception of reality and is thus linguistically and poetically valuable. The complete corpus of texts by Chekhov in the original has been employed for the purposes of study. The research has been implemented within the framework of componential analysis which has made it possible to view semantic structure of each lexical component as a dynamic core-periphery type construct of semantic elements interacting with each other during the formation of contextual-synonymic relations. First, the theoretical principles of the approach are described: the analysis is object-based and problem focused; as opposed to standard synonymy, contextual synonymy is a specific phenomenon which requires a separate framework. Second, two principal semantic mechanisms of the formation contextual synonymy in Chekhov's texts are described and discussed. The two mechanisms capture the difference in the generation of a contextual meaning in a lexical unit in relation to its standard, traditional definition. Third, metaphorical functions of contextual synonymy in Chekhov's idiostyle are investigated. In particular, cases of metaphorization of contextual relations and the functions of metaphors with zoomorphic meaning are approached. Forth, the perspectives of developing a dictionary of contextual synonyms of Chekhov's language are outlined. The work has started several years ago, and currently the dictionary has a form of a database of entries with linguistic descriptions and illustrations from original texts. Finally, the relevance of contextual synonymy to the study of Chekhov's idiostyle is discussed.