

Typology of OLDNESS

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Lexical typology is a new and rapidly developing branch of general typology which deals with cross-linguistic universals and variation in lexical categorization of conceptual domains. The paper discusses categorization of OLDNESS within a broader project of Moscow Lexical Typology group (MLexT) aimed at cross-linguistic description of physical qualities, like sharp, hard, heavy, wet, quick, etc. The method of MLexT (combinatorial lexical typology) can be traced back to the early claim of the Moscow semantic school that even the closest synonyms have different collocation, and every word should be described with particular attention to its surroundings. Analyzing linguistic behavior of OLD-terms in about 100 languages of the world we are looking for typical situations (frames) of OLDNESS which are likely to be lexicalized in a language, cf. ‘old people’ – ‘old artifacts’. They are opposed by some parameters which are cognitively relevant and frequently reflected in lexical semantics. However, not all languages make lexical distinctions between such frames. The paper discusses strategies of co-lexification presented in our sample.