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The Aspect of Perspectiveness of the English Verbs

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Abstract

The category of perspectiveness has long been the subject for research of many scientists. It is defined as the concept of an action that has to happen in the near future and it reflects understanding of action inevitability. In the given paper the author describes the category of perspectiveness linguistically using onomasiological approach. Since linguistic expression allows to distinguish between several shades of action, we can say that the category of perspectiveness is represented by a number of separate conceptual situations, including the "intention" ("intentionality"), "willingness to join the action", "approximation to the entry into action", "inevitability". These four features make up the structure of the linguistic category under analysis. In the course of investigation it was discovered that each logical stage of the perspectiveness category is associated with particular linguistic expressive means. The observed means were selected and analyzed according to each phase of perspectiveness in the context. The works of literature used in the research were "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by O. Wilde and "The Lady of the Camellias" by A. Dumas (son). This analysis stated the frequency of these verbal means use in linguistic discourse with the help of ranking method.

Keywords: perspectiveness, linguistic discourse, future, hypothetical, probability, intentionality, verbal means.

Introduction

Considering the category of "perspectiveness" it should be noted that this course of action requires a search of methods that allow one to see both general and specific features of knowledge and ideas reflected in actions or processes. In this connection it is appropriate to use onomasiological approach – "from content to form" while investigating the modes of action. In this paper we provided an attempt to describe a way of action – perspectiveness (prospective/prospecting), which is considered consistent from the position of its conceptual content, and then - linguistic expression. The analysis of perspectiveness as a conceptual category allows determining the conceptual range of situations and then comparing linguistic possibilities of their expression in English. Analysis of category of perspectiveness with its stages reveals circle of synonymous lexical units of the given mode of action. The term "prospective" is associated with the designation of an action that is an expected entry into a certain situation or phase preceding accession of the process, in other words, the concept of an



action that has to happen in the near future and reflects understanding of the inevitability of the coming situation [5]. Characteristics of prospective actions reflect different ideas about this concept, united by the idea of future [1], [2], [3], intentionality or phasic [4].

Category of perspectiveness has long been the subject for research of many scientists. Among them an outstanding contribution was made by British, French and Russian linguists. In particular, the problem of prospective has received significant development in the works of V. N. Yartsev, E.V. Hulyhy, E.I. Shendels who indicated that future tenses in Romanic and Germanic languages transmit certain states regarding the modality of action and tone of each stage of prospecting action.

The studies of these and other scientists (E. M. Ryanska, R.V. Fedorov) are dedicated to the stages of this category and its components.

The social relevance of the study of perspectiveness led to the choice of research topic which is "The aspect of perspectiveness of the English verbs".

The object of the research is the category of perspectiveness.

The subject of the investigation is the structure, means of expression and phases of the perspective category.

The aim of the paper is an integrated analysis of the means of expression of prospective category in the English language on the basis of authentic literature materials (O. Wilde "The Picture of Dorian Gray", Alexander Dumas (son) "The Lady of the Camellias").

According to the object, subject and the aim of paper were the following research objectives:

- 1) analyze the ideas about perspectiveness in linguistic studies;
- 2) clarify the nature and content of perspectiveness;
- 3) identify the structure of the category under investigation;
- 4) explore possibilities of language expressions of the perspective category in the English authentic materials in literature (O. Wilde "The Picture of Dorian Gray", Alexander Dumas (son) "The Lady of the Camellias").

The category of perspectiveness in scientific and linguistic discourse

Means of expressing the future in relation to the past (prospective) taken together form a system the function of which is to provide prospective value [1], [4]. Its components are: the combination to be + infinitive, the construction to be going + infinitive, the combination to be about + infinitive.



The unifying issue for all these means is their meaning – referring to future actions in relation to the past. It should be also specified that all these means are united by the hypothetical meaning inherent to the very concept of the future as a category of probability. The meaning of perspectiveness for the subjects under investigation is considered as a generalized grammatical meaning, which appears clearly and unequivocally in the realization of some means, in other cases, prospective values are presented in connection with other values.

The question of the interpretation of these combinations has a special place in the theory of grammar, and is the subject of continuing controversy. The issue of interpretation of the studied means is closely connected with the problem of the future time as a conceptual category.

According to N.A. Slyusarev, “focus on the future in a very large extent determined by the speaker depends on his choice and on his intention to present a future fact as a reality that no matter what conditions will occur or fact-dependent phenomena, or, finally, as predictable, desirable fact” [5, p. 70].

The concept of the future tense is seen as more abstract than the concept of the present and past tense, thus closely associated with modal values of desirability or foreseen need for future actions. Moreover, the very concept of the future is seen as “probabilistic category”, peculiar modality, potentiality, hypothetical action.

Modality, hypothetical ideas are common to all future means of expression, and also the future in relation to the past – a prospective, as the notion of the future includes a problematic nature, uncertainty.

Thus, according to L.S. Barkhudarov and D.A. Shtellinh the specific modal character of Future is that it always makes the utterance, to some extent, possible, problematic; something what is said is regarded as entirely feasible, but still it does not exist in reality, it is only expected or anticipated. The speaker cannot be confident in the future because he is confident in the past or present, and therefore “any anticipation modality tinged” [6, p. 169]. Similar observations are considered in several other studies.

E.V. Hulyha and E.I. Shendels ascribe future to the field of irrelevant events, i.e. events that have not occurred yet, they are in future and, thus, combined with probability and hypothetical meaning. E.I. Shendels specifies the modality of the future tense and he calls it the modality of unimplemented action – “... futurum in its main importance is “unrealized action” [8, p. 51]. It follows that the implementation of any action that belongs to the scope of the future is hypothetical, possible.

V.N. Yartseva says that referring future time to the modality “is semantically possible because it is explained by the shade of uncertainty which is inherent in the concept of future itself” [7, p. 15].



The means of expression of prospective value in addition to the basic values, unifying value of modality and hypothetical value, have also secondary values resulting from the implementation of these means in certain linguistic conditions.

Based on the views of B. Trnk on the implementation of these values to some extent affects the context, which is understood as "a set of formal conditions under which the content of a certain linguistic unit appears clearly" [9, p. 49].

The scientist also emphasizes that the transferring of prospective value takes place with the sign of modality and hypothetical value. The meaning of intention is realized by using the construction to be going + infinitive.

The modal value of necessity can also be considered as one which is contextually conditioned and it can be expressed by a combination to be + infinitive, which can be used in the meaning of necessity caused by prior arrangement, plan or recommendation.

The means of expressing prospective function can be observed well in various structural and semantic combinations. Thus, the combination would + infinitive and should + infinitive are used in complex sentences as indication of indirect speech, perception and emotions, as well as in improper direct speech, which is a stylistic device, a characteristic of fiction in which the author conveys the thoughts and feelings of the character as "stream of consciousness". Other means (to be going + infinitive, to be + infinitive, to be about + infinitive) are used in the meaning of perspective not only in various types of complex sentences, but also simple and compound sentences (E.g.: They were not going to waste another bullet).

Thus, bringing together a total value for these verbs is prospective value. However, prospective means of expression differ in different shades of meaning, scope of use, frequency. The notion of Future as well as Future in-the-past possesses modality and hypothetical meaning.

The structure of the perspective category

Having defined the category of perspectiveness, we can consider in more detail and constructively the given mode of action. Since linguistic expression allows to distinguish between several shades of action, we can say that the category of perspectiveness is represented by a number of separate conceptual situations, including the "intention" ("intentionality"), "willingness to join the action", "approximation to the entry into action", "inevitability". As a generalization of these values we can consider the concept "mode of action" that "allows us to give an idea of the total characteristics of a certain event, including the characteristics of interpretative nature" [3, p. 141]. In linguistic discourse the described perspective situations correspond to various designation "temporary reference to the future" [5, p. 102], "intentionality" or "future intention" [5,



p. 89], "approximation" [12, p. 43], "future event" [3, p. 10], "pre-start" [7, p. 182], etc.

It is known that in some languages future action, which is expressed by constructions with verbs of motion, has received the status of a temporary form of immediate future. We believe that the meaning of immediate future must be attributed to aspectual characteristic and we include this conceptual category into the category of perspectiveness.

In order to understand the essence of aspectual characteristic of an action, it is necessary to consider and evaluate the linguistic projection of these conceptual situations on the imaginary time axis. According to John Lakoff, the movement can be represented in the form of shaped circuit consisting of structural elements such as the "starting point", "source", "path", "end point", "goal" [4, p. 174]. If we imagine time axis here in the form of such a structure, the order of the prospective situations will be formed starting with the intention to enter into action up to reaching a point beyond which begins a new situation.

Intention and expectation of entry into a new situation corresponds to the phase of "desire", in other words, open perspectives. "The possibility and impossibility of entry into action could include a commitment to implement actions and spatio-temporal proximity to it, and the position of proximity to the new situation can be interpreted as inevitable entry into action" [11, p. 94].

Based on the foregoing the structure of the category of perspectiveness on the time axis can be schematically represented as follows (Fig. 1):

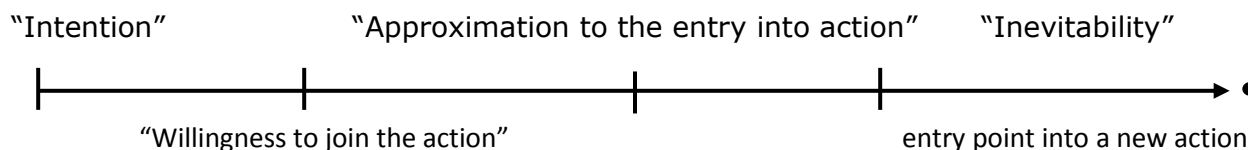


Fig.1 The structure of the category of perspectiveness

Let us consider the possibilities of linguistic expression of the described phases. The concept of "transition to action" was also discussed in antiquity. For example, in Latin, there were a number of forms that were able to assign shades of an intention, expected actions or readiness for implementation (start).

"Semantic differences could be associated with certain verbal formations; ... gerund was characterized by the meaning of obligation, participle that ends with - **turus** - intention or readiness. Another, equally important trend is the ability of some verbs in



Latin to act as a word with universal meanings that allows expression of aspectual characteristic of action" [10, p. 89].

A. Meillet said that the stems of Indo-European verbs expressed not the time but mode, which is an aspect. "The nomination of time on the forefront among the concepts which are expressed by verbal bases – is an innovation, which is a characteristic of German, Italian and Celtic"– writes the scientist. "Unlike Latin, where within each of the main bases of the verb there is an opposition of three tenses – present, past and future ... German doesn't have expression of future time. Subsequently, the process of development of Germanic languages has not created a clear future tense" [6, p. 90-91].

Time perception of an individual, according to B. Pottier is connected with three basic concepts: that what happened placed in memory and corresponds to the "knowledge"; the state within the implementation of the action corresponds to the "vision, sense"; coming time is associated with the "intention" or "desire" [16, p. 199-200].

So, having considered the possibility of expressing prospective characteristics of an action, we are convinced that this phasic category itself is a complex, multi-layered structure that includes at least four conceptual situations: "intention", "willingness to join the action" "approximation to the entry into action", "inevitability".

Linguistic possibilities of expressing the category of perspectiveness in English

Generalization of existing descriptions and linguistic material of the English language allowed identifying the following conceptual situation that conveys the idea of phasic perspectiveness:

- 1) "Intention to" implement actions,
- 2) "Readiness" to implement actions,
- 3) "Movement" to implement actions,
- 4) "Proximity" to the entry into action,
- 5) "Inevitability" of action implementation.

Based on the indicated phases of prospective category let us consider the linguistic possibilities of expressing the described situations on the material of English.

The investigated verbal means of perspectiveness expression were reflected in the works of literature through the analysis and selection of these means of expression in context. As a result the following authentic works of English literature were selected: O. Wilde "The Picture of Dorian Gray", Alexander Dumas (son) "The Lady of the Camellias".



1) "Intention to" implement actions

The situation "intention to implement action" has a wide range of linguistic means to express modal meaning of intentions to implement the actions, including modal verbs and constructions with aspectual meaning of perspectiveness: to want + infinitive, to wish + infinitive, to desire + infinitive, to intend (to plan) + infinitive, to have an intention + infinitive, to be (feel) inclined + infinitive, to determine + infinitive, to make up one's mind + infinitive, will (do something) soon, to be bound + infinitive, to have + infinitive, to be ought + infinitive, to be + infinitive:

E.g. I want to go out too, for a minute [19, p. 56].

I desire to interpolate here that I am an artist [19, p.157].

He had made up his mind not to try any more experiments [19, p. 134].

I know I shall outrage the feelings of my friend Henry, but I am bound to confess it would not surprise me to learn that he possessed powers by which he was able to do things seemingly miraculous [19, p. 45].

I ought to do it at once [19, p. 87].

2) "Readiness" to implement actions

One of the component of prospective meaning in English is "readiness" to implement acts or entry into a situation. In English, this situation is transmitted by the infinitive combinations like: to be ready + infinitive, to decide + infinitive, to determine + infinitive, to be (feel) prepared + infinitive.

E.g.: I'm almost ready to give it up [19, p. 90].

I had decided that, on the way up country, we would make a ten - day stop at a town [19, p. 12].

I am quite prepared to bear out this statement [19, p. 203].

He was determined to find out Basil Hallward's mystery [19, p.156].

3) "Movement" to implement actions

The idea of movement in an accepted structure of perspectiveness reflects the space-time image of the near future. "This use of verbs of motion is caused by the basic properties of such language units the use of which in the expression of aspectual performance characteristics is observed in the history development of Germanic and Romanic languages" [7, p. 104-106]. The projection of the future through metaphorical images "movement" and spatio-temporal orientation can be well observed in English.



In modern English the situation of movement to the implementation of the action is expressed by to be going + infinitive, to set (out) + infinitive, to set forward + infinitive, to set about + infinitive.

E.g.: I set out to find them [19, p. 10].

I'm going to say a prayer for you tonight! [19, p.83].

4) "Proximity" to the entry into action

The concept of "proximity" of entry into a new situation is a common conceptual basis, where the immediate future is concerned with notions of movement, this conceptual situation is based on the spatio-temporal images which are expressed primarily by means of spatial or temporal parameters.

One way of expressing spatial relations in the temporary context is a transmission of the desired value using nouns, since there are no special spatial morphemes in English. Despite this, the lexical potential of language is rich and varied enough in order to describe the spatial and temporal relations.

A verb can be considered as one means of spatial and temporal relations description. Thus, in the semantics of English verbs there is such an important spatial characteristic as the location of the object.

In English, the phase approximation to implementation of the action is specified by means of spatial preposition in construction to be about + infinitive. T.A. Maysak, having considered the construction to be about + infinitive, writes: "The construction of the prospective value is often interpreted as "located at limits of implementation" [12, p. 21]. Karl Brunner says that "sustainable combination of type "I am about to do something" with the use of the present form is a descriptive construction to express future actions" [6, p. 277].

In English the phase approximation to the implementation of the action can also be transmitted by means of adverbs in combinations to be near – "about; close (the place or time)" [14, p. 207] and to be close – "be about" [23, p. 144]. For example: to be near at hand; He came near to punching him (equivalent to almost punched him); The exams are close! - Do not worry! The summer is close [1, p. 87].

5) "Inevitability" of action implementation

In English, the connotation of inevitability of the action can be expressed using the paraphrase *to be on the point of* in a combination of progressive verb and *to be almost* and a combination of progressive verb.

E.g. I'm almost giving it up [19, p. 90].



Similar to the value of paraphrase *to be on the point of* acts the combination *to be on the brink of*, this is quite a rare case in fiction

E.g. There he paused for a moment, feeling that he was on the brink of a discovery that would either make or mar his life [14].

The linguistic means of expressing the category of perspectiveness were selected and analyzed according to each phase of perspectiveness. The selection of examples and the frequency of their use were carried out by means of thorough analysis of literature works by O. Wilde "The Picture of Dorian Gray", A. Dumas (son) "The Lady of the Camellias". The following results were obtained using the method of ranking.

Based on the results we made a table that reflects the most frequently used linguistic means of expressing the category of perspectiveness in English (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency use of linguistic means of expressing the category of perspectiveness

| No | Linguistic means of expressing the category of perspectiveness | Frequency,% |
|-----|--|-------------|
| 1. | to be going + infinitive | 25% |
| 2. | to decide + infinitive | 15,6% |
| 3. | to wish + infinitive | 13% |
| 4. | to be ready + infinitive | 9,4% |
| 5. | to want + infinitive | 9% |
| 6. | to set (out) + infinitive | 8% |
| 7. | to be about + infinitive | 7,9% |
| 8. | to be near + adverb | 7,6% |
| 9. | be on the point of + participle | 3,5% |
| 10. | to be almost + participle | 1% |

Summarizing the analysis of linguistic material, we can say that almost all shades of perspectiveness found linguistic expression in English. We can assume the specialization of language means participating in an objectification of perspectiveness as the phasic category, in detailization of conceptual situations within its structure. The results indicate a universal trend in English to the conceptualization of space-time and subjective attitude to perception of the nature of the (process) or event.

Conclusion

After having completed the research investigation we can affirm that the objectives are fulfilled and the aim is achieved. The views of scientists on the "perspectiveness" in linguistic studies were analyzed. It was found that the unifying for all the means of expressing perspectiveness is their meaning – referring to future actions in relation to



the past. It should also be specified that all these means possess hypothetical meaning which is an inherent value in the very concept of the future as a category of probability.

In the course of research we have also defined the essence and the content of the perspectiveness category. "Prospecting" includes the concept of action that should occur in the near future and reflect the idea of the inevitability of the coming situation.

The structure of the category of perspectiveness is revealed. The category of "prospective" is presented by several conceptual situations, such as: "intention" ("intentionality"), "willingness to join the action" (readiness), "approximation to the entry into action", "inevitability".

The linguistic means of expressing the category of perspectiveness in English were studied on the basis of authentic materials of literature. Generalization of existing descriptions and linguistic material of the English language allowed identifying the following conceptual situations that convey the idea of the gradual (phasic) implementation of perspectiveness: 1) "intention" to implement actions 2) "readiness" to implement actions 3) "movement" to implementation of action 4) "proximity" to the entry into action 5) "inevitability" of implementation of action.

Through analysis of the chosen works of literature, we have selected linguistic units that correspond to each phase of the category of perspectiveness and we have considered the frequency of their use with the help of ranking.

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