



CONCEPTUAL FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CATEGORY OF TAXIS

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: The article comprises the analysis of various standpoints on conceptual bases of taxis category in general linguistics, particularly in functional grammar. Different descriptions and definitions of available approaches towards the taxis phenomenon and their synthesis in language theory are also discussed in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

The category of universal logical-philosophical attitude is reflected in various linguistic categories. Taxis is considered a linguistic interpretation of the category of universal logical-philosophical attitude. Conceptual-logical (logical) categories are universal, and grammatical categories are optional.

Currently, although virtually all researchers allude to the definition initially provided by R.O.Jakobson, it is worth noting that it has not been prevalently accepted. In modern linguistics, taxis is sometimes interpreted in different ways. In particular, it can be observed that it is considered as follows: 1) a separate grammatical category of the verb attached to the morphological forms of a particular language; 2) one of the semantic categories reflecting the “general concept of time” (that is, describing a certain semantic constant separately from the means of expression in a concrete language); 3) the “technical” ability of the language, which is manifested in the modality, time and person relative relations of the predicative components of the expression and text.

Taxis exists in every language, but as a separate grammatical category distinct from tone and tense, it is valid only in those languages where there is a corresponding system of special grammatical forms. According to Y.S.Maslov, in many languages, taxis does not participate as a separate grammatical category, but is combined within a “combined” category, either with tense or mood [7]. Some forms of taxis appear in a number of languages (French, English, German, Bulgarian, etc.) through the forms of the relative tense, in particular, in the expression of the meaning of coming before (in the plusquamperfect forms, one of the functions of the perfect forms). In such forms, the aspectual functions, which historically take place before the representation of chronological relations between actions, can come to the fore [5].

In contemporary Germanic languages, particularly in English and German, the functional-semantic field of taxis is a polycentric field that belongs to the group of fields with an actional (predicative) core and communicates with fields that are part of this and other groups. Two microfields are distinguished in the structure of the functional-semantic field of taxis: subordinate taxis and independent taxis microfields.

The morphological concept of taxis was presented in XX century linguistics. This concept is the relationship between actions in time that is not taken into account at the time of speech as the main components of the content plan. The plan of expression emerges through the clearly defined morphological opposition "perfect : imperfect". The concept under discussion is reflected in A.I.Borodina's and M.M.Pozdeev's dissertational researches carried out on the materials of the German and English languages. Within this concept, along with the term "taxis" (like A.I.Smirnitsky, 1959), the synonymous term "Category of Temporal Reference" (in Russian "Категория временной соотносительности") is also applied to denote the current category.

Another coexisting concept of the taxis, mentioned in theoretical sources, which entitles taxis the status of an independent category, is called the functional-semantic concept. The main cases of this concept were first introduced by R.O.Jacobson. This concept was later adopted by representatives of the St. Petersburg functional grammar school; first of all, it was developed in the works of Y.S.Maslov, A.V.Bondarko, T.G.Akimova, N.A.Kozintseva (mainly on the Russian language material). The functional-semantic study of the category of taxis was much expanded by A.V.Bondarko; it is presented in series of works entitled "Theory of Functional Grammar".

The representation of taxis as a functional-semantic field (FSF) combines the formocentric approach with the functional-semantic approach. Forming the functional-semantic field (FSF) of a certain functional-semantic category (FSC) implies the description of all means of its expression and the definition of their hierarchy - core (center) and periphery. A morphological grammatical category can play the role of the core of FSF. The description of such a grammatical category using the formocentric approach is considered part of the formation of FSF in the implementation of the functional-semantic approach [8].

According to N.V.Semyonova, the conceptual foundations of taxis have a "temporal origin" and are formed as a result of the functional-semantic interaction of language units chosen by the speaker to reflect the chronological order of the events of real existence [4].

Due to its special conceptual basis, taxis has a special linguistic status and is considered a "high-ranking" (functional)-semantic category. First, it covers a whole semantic field related to the expression of various types of mutual relations of actions, and secondly, it is not attached in principle to any specific language tool, but implies a set of such tools.

Categorical signs of taxis are manifested in the following cases: a) time (temporal) connections of actions, their integrity is specific to a single time period determined by the perceptual activity of the subject; b) polypropositivity; c) characteristic of propositions with similar *modus-dictum* [1].

Taxis has the status of a functional-semantic category in many languages and reflects the speaker's interpretation of the "general idea of time" through various types of time (tense, temporal) communication-relations of actions expressed in polypropositive constructions. The sign of communication-relationships of actions is considered a conceptual sign of this category [10].

Consequently, functional grammar and cognitive linguistics are brought closer together by research methodology. Both of these directions of modern linguistics refer to modeling and creation of

certain constructs in the process of concrete analysis. Such constructions include “categorical situations” in functional grammar, and “frames” in cognitive linguistics [9].

The study of the laws of use of the constituents of the functional-semantic field of taxis in speech in many languages makes it possible to distinguish three types of categorical situations of taxis, namely: 1). categorical situations with the meaning of simultaneity; 2). categorical situations with different meanings; and 3). undifferentiated categorical situations. Also, taxis situations can be a one-time or multiple (repetitive).

The analysis of categorical situations entering into interaction or coming together shows that the interaction of the field of functional-semantic taxis with the fields belonging to different groups and forming different types is syntagmatic in nature.

The diversity of the constituents of the situation (the diversity of actions specific to the same denotative tense from the point of view of the moment of speech, the diversity of actions according to concreteness/generality (commonness, usualness, typicality)) and the signs of the integrity of the time period of their interaction-relationship serve as the main symptoms of taxis situations [2]. Only relations between situations that are not referentially the same (similar), that is, qualitatively different, are recognized as categorical [6].

In different languages, there is a distinction between distinguishable and non-differentiable tense relations, i.e., simultaneity / priority-posteriority. The basic semantics of taxis is the distinct simultaneity / non-simultaneity relationship. In this regard, within the research, mostly, a varied-taxis relationships are considered. Admittedly, the boundaries between distinguishable and non-differentiable types of taxis relations are not clear-cut.

Taxis relationships are limited by the range of expression. This refers to expressions that are equivalent to a sentence or an independent syntactic entity [11]. Taxis always consists of binary (dichotomous) relations. Taxis relationships are always combined and complicated with other semantic meanings. Several semantic meanings are collected in one syntactic pattern and cover the types of organized relations. This phenomenon is called syntactic syncretism in linguistics [3].

Syntactic syncretism is the representation of one or more types of syntactic relations in a particular syntactic unit. We call the coexistence of syntactic relations “syncretism of syntactic relations” or “syntactic syncretism”. In other words, more than one syntactic relationship between the same units within a syntactic device is syncretism. A syntactic relationship is an abstract syntactic meaning formed between connected language units. It has been determined that there are about forty syntactic relations in English. A language can express more than one syntactic relationship in one syntactic device [12].

In fact, the results of the analysis demonstrate that the taxis itself cannot exist in its “immaculate, pure” form, without the participation of any semantic and modal additional meanings. In this sense, it is known that the concept of syntactic syncretism applies also within the field of taxis. As an example, if we take a conjunction followed by time as one of the syntactic tools representing independent status, then in this syntactic unit there are two types of syntactic relations, that is, temporal and taxis relations (basically, the meaning of simultaneity). Or, if not, let’s parse sentences with a conditional clause, if we consider it as a syntactic unit, it also encompasses two syntactic relations, i.e. conditional and taxis relations (often the meaning of posteriority).

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