



**To the question of
allocation of verbs of
intellect activity in lexical
and semantic group**

TO THE QUESTION OF ALLOCATION OF VERBS OF INTELLECT ACTIVITY IN LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC GROUP

SOBRE LA CUESTIÓN DE LA ASIGNACIÓN DE LOS VERBOS DE LA ACTIVIDAD INTELLECTUAL EN EL GRUPO LÉXICO Y SEMÁNTICO

ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to justification of intellect activity verbs allocation in separate lexico-semantic group of verbs on the basis of semantic similarity, thematic unity, distributive uniformity and word-formation potential. The grammatical peculiarity of the verb requires special linguistic methods for its study. Relevance of the question considered in the article is caused by complexity of the lexical and grammatical nature of verbs of intellect activity, their frequency and prevalence in different functional styles of the speech, as well as by absence of their complex description accounting the last achievements of linguistics.

Key words: speech verbs, thought verbs, verbs of intellect activity, verb semantics, lexical and semantic group, classification of verbs.

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RESUMEN

Este artículo está dedicado a la justificación de la asignación de verbos de actividad intelectual en un grupo lexico-semántico separado de verbos sobre la base de similitud semántica, unidad temática, uniformidad distributiva y potencial de formación de palabras. La peculiaridad gramatical del verbo requiere métodos lingüísticos especiales para su estudio. La relevancia de la cuestión considerada en el artículo es causada por la complejidad de la naturaleza léxica y gramatical de los verbos de la actividad intelectual, su frecuencia y prevalencia en diferentes estilos funcionales del habla, así como por la ausencia de su descripción compleja que cuenta los últimos logros de lingüística.

Palabras clave: verbos de voz, verbos de pensamiento, verbos de actividad intelectual, semántica de verbos, grupo léxico y semántico, clasificación de verbos.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to Vinogradov, possessing specific system of grammatical categories (tense, case, inclination, etc.), the Russian verb “is the most difficult, grammatically organized, and at the same time the most vivid, i.e. directly reflecting reality, category of the Russian language” [Vinogradov, 1972: 511]. The grammatical originality of a verb also demands a special linguistic and methodical approach to it’s studying by foreigners.

Because of a number of features verbs of intellect activity are a subject of close attention of linguists for a long period of time. They are frequently used verbs, widely used in different spheres of communication, due to their morphological characteristics they are polysemantic; besides they possess a rich set of lexical meanings. In the article the question of allocation of lexico-semantic group of verbs of intellect activity in Russian is considered. The Russian verb is one of the most difficult phenomenon in linguistics: “The verbal word possesses complex semantic structure in which lexical, derivational, and grammatical meanings are united as in a single coil” [Tikhonov 1998 intertwined: 5]; “The verbal predicate is a structural and semantic center of the sentence. It not only defines the formal structure, but also expresses the general semantic features of the sentence” [Velichko, Tumanov, Chagin 1986: 10]. In linguistics there are a lot of verb definitions, because of the choice of approach to determine the part-of-speech meaning. Conditionally all interpretations of verbal meaning can be divided into several groups: semantic (N. S. Valgina, A.H. Vostokov, A.M. Zemsky); formal grammatical (S. I. Abakumov); lexical and grammatical (L.L. Bulanin; Grammar of the modern Russian literary language; The Russian language. Encyclopedia); those, including syntactic functions of a verb (T.A. Ladyzhenskaya, M. T. Baranov, L.T. Grigoryan, I.I. Kulibab, etc.).

Each of the approaches to the verb definition as a part of speech has the advantages and disadvantages. We, after N. M. Shansky, A.N. Tikhonov, L.L. Bulanin, define a verb as a part of speech designating process (process is meant as the various phenomenon: action, state, movement in space, speech and various sound phenomenon, manifestation and sign change; thought, perception, relationship between people, etc.) [Modern Russian of P.2. 1987: 150] and expressing this value in grammatical categories of Aspect and Voice, general for all verbal forms: infinitive, personal or conjugated forms, participle and adverbial participle [Bulanin 1976: 104]. Thus we will add that the verb is characterized by such domination connections as government at which “the use of nouns (pronouns) in the form of an indirect case (with or without a prepositin) is predetermined ... by the meaning of the main component ...” [The modern Russian literary language 1996: 287]; and an adjunction at which “ unchangeable words act as dependent words: the adverb, an unchangeable adjective, and also an infinitive, comparative or an adverbial participle”, also arise various relations (the filling, object, adverbial and attributive, attributive, etc.).

We decided it necessary to develop the definition of a verb as in other languages it possesses wider or narrower set of characteristics.

The speech and mental processes are distinctive characteristics of homosapiens among other live organisms. Despite the great number of linguistic works devoted to the research of verbal semantics there is no quite clear understanding of lexical grouping the verbs describing the principally important sphere of human activity.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this work we used the following methods of research: a descriptive and analytical method by means of which material selection, primary analysis and a statement of data are made; a method of the component analysis by means of which components of lexical meanings of verbs are established; the comparative method helping to build up the structure of lexical and semantic group.

3. MAIN PART

Within cognitive linguistics scientists scrupulously investigate concept's sphere of a language. Though these researches were devoted to a noun more often, verbs also became object of research. Linguists analyzed both separate verbs of thinking, and the whole groups. Results of these researches are presented in the Logical Analysis of Language magazine (1992; 1993; 1994; 1999). In lexical system of language the concept the lexico-semantic group (LSG) takes an important place. A lot of works of such researchers, as F.P. Filin (1966, 1993), L.M. Vasilyev (1981, 1990), M. Ya. Glovinskaya (1982, 2001), V.A. Kozyrev (2004), E.V. Kuznetsova (1978, 1989), Z.V. Nichman (1988), etc. are devoted to the description of LSG, their functioning in Russian. Lexico-semantic groups were studied not only in lexical aspect, but also in respect of interaction of lexicon with grammar and word formation. LSG are still insufficiently studied, though they represent a special unit in hierarchy of lexical system. According to D. N. Shmelyov, LSG is the group of words with uniform and comparable lexico-semantic variantns (meanings) of words allocated on the basis of the general semantic topic (the general seme, an integrated sign) [Shmelyov 1973]. V. G. Gak considers: "The structure of LSG is a set of words in those meanings where the corresponding categorial seme is presented" [Gak 1977: 154]. He writes: "The semantic structure of the word is a set of its meanings (lexico-semantic variantns) – is organized by the hierarchical principle, including the main and derivative, direct and figurative meanings. The structure of a separate word meaning is a set of semes forming it" [Gak 1977: 154]. In LSG all words have to be one part of speech and have one general element of meaning. Inclusion of words in LSG can be decided not only by the general element of meaning, but also by words with additional seme. The semantic structure of the word is reflected by a vertical axis, and structure of each separate meaning is reflected by a horizontal axis.

Absence of the standard understanding of the intellect activity verbs nature, ambiguity of approaches to determination of their meanings and functions complicate unambiguity in their perceptions by foreign students: 1) when determining a circle of the verbs possessing a community of these or those signs; 2) at identification of semantic

essence and morphological features for their studying in foreign audience; 3) at the organization of the lexical and grammatical material connected with features of structural-semantic potential of sentences with intellect activity verbs as well as with the selection of educational texts on the basis of which formation and development of communicative competence of foreign students is provided; 4) in the analysis of their functioning in the text as speech reality, etc.

The compatibility of speech and thinking verbs with constructions with the direct and the indirect speech, existence of the instruction on the content of activity, distributive characteristics, etc. set thinking on expediency of association of verbs of the speech and thought in one lexico-semantic group. We will address directly to verbs of intellect activity. This group of verbs for many years was an object of attention of linguists and methodologists owing to a number of features:

1) verbs of intellect activity are presented by a large number of units;

2) in any language they are among the most common, entering into the fixed dictionary assets, and their importance is confirmed by spheres of the use;

3) existence of etiquette forms: «Скажите, пожалуйста...» ("Tell me please..."), «Не могли бы Вы подсказать...» ("Couldn't you prompt ..."), «Что бы Вы посоветовали...» ("What would you advise ..."), «Разрешите поблагодарить Вас...» ("Allow to thank you ..."), «Сожалею, что...» ("I regret that ..."), etc.;

4) existence of the constructions entering someone's speech: «Премьер министр заявил...» ("The prime minister declared ..."), «Лидер партии демократов обратился к...» ("The party leader of democrats addressed to ..."), «Минздрав предупреждает...» ("Ministry of Health warns ..."), etc.;

5) existence of the constructions indicating information source: «Вчера мне сказали...» ("Yesterday I was told ..."), «Недавно я прочитал...» ("Recently I've read ..."), «Мы узнали, что...» ("We learned that ..."), «Обдумав ситуацию, мы решили...»

(“Having considered the situation, we solved ...”), etc.;

6) existence of the constructions used in official style: «Сообщаю Вам...» (“I inform you ...”), «Прошу Вас...» (“I ask you ...”), «УВЕДОМЛЯЮ Вас...» (“I notify you ...”), etc.;

7) existence of the sentences transferring information on any action of the subject: «Я написал...» (“I wrote ...”), «Каждый человек мечтает...» (“Each person dreams ...”), «Он громко кричал...» (“He shouted loudly ...”), etc.;

8) existence of the constructions which are the structure-forming center of the text-meditation: «Я думаю, что..., потому что...» (“I think that ... because ...”), «Мы считаем, что ..., потому что...» (“We consider that ..., because ...”), etc.;

9) these verbs provide daily people communication since they designate “the most important sphere of activity of the person – the speech – indirectly reflecting all other types of his activity. Through the speech a person carries out communicative, gnoseological, pragmatical, cognitive and other functions” [Crolles 1969: 21];

10) these verbs are a necessary component of the professional speech in many branches of life, and, therefore, are important when training foreign students of professional communication, for example, constructions: «ЧТО + выражает + ЧТО» (“WHAT + expresses + WHAT”), «ЧТО + объясняется + ЧЕМ» (“WHAT is explained by WHAT”), «ЧТО + обуславливает + ЧТО» (“WHAT + causes + WHAT”), «ЧТО + доказывает + ЧТО» (“WHAT + proves + WHAT”), «обжаловать + ЧТО» (“to appeal + WHAT”), «оспорить + ЧТО» (“to challenge + WHAT”), etc.

Despite of considerable achievements in the field of speech and thinking verbs studying (Yu.D. Apresyan, I.P. Bondar, L.M. Vasilyev, V. I. Kodukhov, E.V. Kuznetsova, L.G. Mikhedova, V.P. Moskvin, G. A. Pak, etc.) there is still no their unique classification in the Russian language, and the question of the structure of this group remains unresolved.

In modern linguistics these verbs are considered as groups of verbs of speaking (speech) and mental verbs (verbs of thought, thinking) separate from each other. Such linguists as I.P. Bondar, T.N. Nedyalkova, etc., allocated the verbs of speaking defined on the basis of lexical meaning community [the Cooper 1969; Nedyalkova 1961]. Thus only the verbs designating speech process in its pure form were under the studying. At allocation of groups of verbs L.M. Vasilyev, Yu.K. Lekomtsev, G. A. Pak, etc. considered not only semantics, but also grammatical features (the instruction on subject of action, on the addressee of action, on contents of the speech, etc.) and interrelation of lexical and grammatical compatibility of a verb with its lexical meaning. Analyzing verbs of speaking, L.M. Vasilyev noted such a typical feature of these verbs as their functioning in constructions with the direct speech, as well as the ability of some verbs of thinking, feelings and perception to function in the same constructions. Along with this, verbs with the meaning of the mutually directed communication not allowing combinations with constructions with the direct speech he also related to verbs of speaking [Vasilyev 1971: 29]. According to E.M. Nabokina’s classification the group of verbs of speaking includes the units in the meaning of which the pointing at speech combined with the pointing at the kind of activity realized in speech is present [Nabokina 1985].

In the 60th years of the XX century the concept of verbal intension gained its popularity: action proceeds from somewhere (or doesn’t proceed from anywhere) and goes to somewhere (or doesn’t go to anywhere) which is the cornerstone of the verb valency and is reflected in it. R. Mrazek noted that verbs of speaking open places for one determinant “at the left” and for two “on the right”. Mrazek’s ideas gained development in Ch. Fillmore’s [Fillmore 1968], Cheyf’s [Cheyf 1975], Yu.D. Apresyan’s [Apresyan 1974], works, etc.

According to Yu.D. Apresyan, A.K. Zholkovsky, I.A. Melchuk, V.P. Moskvin, etc., the system organization of lexicon occurs on the basis of integrated features: a) semantic, b) distributive (syntagmatic) – model of government. The distributive and semantic classes allocated with them represent associations of semantically close lexico-semantic variants of feature semantics with identical syntactic and standard lexical compatibility [Moskvin 1993:

8] which form larger and more generalized structures. The distributive and transformational principle of classification of verbs applied by Yu.D. Apresyan showed that it is inexpedient to consider a word meaning as it is done by traditional semantics, as there is a two-way communication between syntactic and semantic properties of language, between semantics and syntagmatic, which is revealed in the fact that "language expressions with similar syntactic properties have close meanings and vice versa, language expressions with close meanings have similar syntactic properties" [Apresyan 1967: 228]. Distributive and semantic classes are in a contact arrangement and are even crossed within one semantic space (the semantic space is meant as a semantical and syntactical field – the association of lexicon consisting of several distributive and semantic classes close in the semantic relation, but thus they can belong to various parts of speech). "Each word of language is included into a certain lexical and semantic paradigm, and most often, because of its polysemy, not only into one" [Mednikova 1974: 48]. The word polysemy testifies to interrelation of lexical and semantic groups [Kuznetsova 1982: 380 – 381]. Variability of syntactic compatibility can be a sign of a contact arrangement of distributive and semantic classes within one semantic space. For example, the verb *говорить* (to speak) belongs to two distributive and semantic classes: *сообщение* (message) and *беседа* (talk) which fall within one semantic scope of verbs of the speech. Therefore in Russian the verb *говорить* has two variants of syntactic compatibility: а) *говорить / сказать кому что о чем*; (tell whom what about what); б) *говорить с кем о чем* б) to speak with whom about what [Moskvin 1993: 10–14]. Such variability proves general semantics of verbs of the distributive and semantic classes «беседа» / «сообщение» ("conversation" / "message"). The facts of similar variability are observed concerning distributive and semantic classes «совет» / «выведывание», «выведывание» / «требование», «обсуждение» / «спрос», «сообщение» / «клевета», «сообщение» / «жалоба и донос», «признание» / «покаяние», «сообщение» / «покаяние и признание», «обличение» / «критика», «сообщение» / «критика» ("advice" / "scouting", "scouting" / "requirement", "discussion" / "demand" "message" / "slander", "message / complaint and denunciation", "confession / repentance", "the message" / "repentance and

confession," "conviction" / "criticism", "the message" / "criticism"), entering a semantical and syntactical field of the speech.

Considering verb from the point of view of semantic synthesis, V. I. Inozemtseva relays verbs of speaking to a class of bidirectional, emphasizing an action orientation of speaking verbs both on object, and on subject [Inozemtseva 1968]. O. V. Bulankova relays verbs of speaking to the group of units designating an action of transformation and having two obligatory valencies without which the construction isn't complete [Bulankova 1971].

Analyzing verb semantic environment, G. A. Pak offered lexics and situational classification. He acknowledges that as speech communication assumes existence of at least two persons, and in verb lexical meaning the action orientation is hidden, verbs are divided into those denoting mutually directed communication, the unidirectional action, purposeful action [Pak 1975].

Thinking verbs has been the object of studying of linguists for a long time (T.V. Bulygina, L.M. Vasilyev, G. I. Kustova, M. V. Pimenova, N. M. Yakubova, etc.). L.M. Vasilyev offers semantic classification of verbs of thinking and feeling [Vasilyev 1971; 1981]. He determines ten semantic classes in their structure. While classifying the verbs L.M. Vasilyev considers extralinguistic factors, relies on intuition of the researcher, his knowledge of world around; according to what the area of thought is connected with three classes of verbs: 1) thinking, 2) knowledge, 3) memories on the basis of the thematic principle [Vasilyev 1981: 43]. They are united by the attitude towards thought, to cerebration, but in the first class the thought is presented in the course of its formation, in the second – in its relation to reflection process by consciousness of objective reality or information about it, in the third – in its attitude towards consciousness as to the keeper of knowledge and experience. On the basis of the thematic principle, as well as the principles of paradigmatic and a syntagmatic relations, L.M. Vasilyev distributes thinking verbs into three subclasses: 1) the verbs designating intellectual properties and conditions of the person; 2) the verbs with meaning of implementation of thought process including а) the verbs designating processes as a result

of which any objects are created, b) the verbs designating mental processes as a result of which nothing is created; 3) the verbs with meaning of result of thought process or the act designating thought as a reality. The class of verbs of knowledge is divided into two subclasses: 1) the verbs designating possession of knowledge; 2) the verbs designating acquisition of knowledge. M. V. Pimenova considers semantic, morphological and syntactic characteristics of mental verbs of the Russian and English languages and allocates fourteen groups general for the Russian and English verbs: 1) knowledge verbs; 2) understanding verbs; 3) memory verbs; 4) thinking verbs; 5) mental condition verbs; 6) opinion verbs; 7) assessment verbs; 8) mental relation verbs; 9) imagination verbs; 10) belief verbs; 11) mental abilities verbs; 12) decision verbs; 13) assumption verbs; 14) residual group [Pimenova 1995].

Verbs of intellect activity possess high word-formation potential, being top of word-formation chains both in the literary language, and in its dialect variants. Studying of semantics and functioning of verbs in general and verbs of intellect activity in particular is carried out in close connection with studying of features of the sentence, superphrase unity and the text. Studying of the verb from this point of view presents a special interest.

4. CONCLUSION

Combination of words in LSG within one part of speech happens on the basis of semantic similarity, thematic unity, and distributive uniformity. Therefore, allocating LSG of verbs of intellect activity, we included verbs of the speech and verbs of thought into this group and defined them as the following: verbs of intellect activity is the lexical and semantic group of verbs including lexical and grammatical units which semantics reflects and describes the main stages of the process of speech production: transition of the internal mental processes hidden from a human eye to external oral or written language (speech verbs), and internal mental processes themselves (thought verbs). Thus, within this LSG we united such verbs, as *говорить* (to speak), *рассказывать* (to tell), *шутить* (to joke), *агитировать* (to agitate), *думать* (to think), *мечтать* (to dream), *размышлять* (to meditate), *помнить* (to remember), *знать* (to know), *писать* (to write), *подчеркивать* (to

emphasize), *печатать* (to print) etc. In this case the term “group” is understood by us in the broadest sense, i.e. any lexical and semantic group of words, whether it is a field, a sub-field, group, etc.

Relevance of the question considered in the article is caused by complexity of the lexical and grammatical nature of verbs of intellect activity, their frequency and prevalence in different functional styles of the speech, as well as by absence of their complex description accounting the last achievements of linguistics and, as a result, by insufficient preparedness of the educational complexes directed on formation of communicative competence of the foreign students learning Russian. 

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