Methods of Hidden Meanings Verbalization in Russian Ethnoscience

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Abstract: This article discusses ways of representing propositions as part of a simple sentence on the example of Russian ethnoscience. Theoretical background of the current study is based on the functional grammar tenets, according to which the expression plane and the content plane are not always identical to the quantitative aspect. Thus, it is recognized that the prepositional-casal forms of nouns are able to represent implicitly a proposition, if this proposition has the semantics for causality. Further, article analyzes prepositional-casal forms of nouns used in Russian ethnoscience. Each of the identified forms is considered in order to analyze the specificity of use of word forms, the availability of synonymic variants and additional semantics.

Key words: Ethnoscience · Simple sentence · Proposition · Conditional consecutive semantics

INTRODUCTION

Functional grammar, exploring the relationship of language units and their specific functioning, is being developed since the 70s of the XX century (S. Dick [1] and T. Givon [2]). Particular attention in the framework of functional grammar is given to correlation in the language sentence between expression plane and content plane.

The question concerning the number of propositions in the sentence and the way of their expression is quite relevant since the propositions can be reduced, i.e. non revealed. According to N.D. Arutyunova, reduced proposition may be contained in some nouns having temporal semantics, denominating sound or light phenomena or certain events [3]. The same concerns to lexical items, denominating natural phenomena or objects of inanimate nature, such as sun, moon, sky, wind, rain, etc.

However, it must be clarified that the word forms before the rain, without dew, to the frost develop propositional meaning only in case if developed proposition matters conditions. Availability of semantic situation for these word forms is the main condition for the development of a proposition. For example, in the sentence Before the rain forest becomes silent a word form before the rain contains reduced proposition with the semantics for causality, because the sentence can be transformed as follows: Forest become silent (if, when, because) it will rain (before the rain).

Such monopredicative constructs can be polypropositional thanks to semantics for causality. Since the proposition suggests correlation with a certain situation or phenomenon of reality, then we can assume that reduced proposition can indirectly express the categories of time and modality. In the sentence Before the rain forest becomes silent (having the meaning If (when, because) it will rain, forest becomes silent) propositional name denominates an action, which is related to a future time and hence, is potentially possible.

This article will examine ways of representing conditional semantics in the framework of ethnoscience, presented in simple sentences.

Main Part: Folklore language is the subject of many studies (Demetrio [4], Dundes [5], Krappe [6] and Ward [7]).

Currently, disciples of the Kazan linguistic school extensively study the semantic-syntactic features of ethnoscience. We understand ethnoscience as “stable constructs, fixing pooled experiences of observations and predicting the results of interaction between man and nature” [8: 40].

Folk proverbs, performing cumulative function, show a relationship between two situations, i.e. are polypropositive. The most common representation way of conditional consecutive semantics is complex sentence with conditional clause.

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Conditional consecutive semantics is expressed by simple sentences as well. This statement allows us to explore ethnoscience in order to identify the ways of representing propositions, as well as the specifics of their function.

The results of current study allow determination of the structural and semantic composition of ethnoscience, as well as analysis of the ways of representing propositions.

Thus, the core of ethnoscience often consists of a three-part construct: name (expresses the conditional proposition), the predicate of prediction and name (expresses the consecutive proposition). In such constructs the function of predicate is performed by certain verbs.

In this construct the semantics of prediction is expressed explicitly, by means of the verbs of appropriate semantics: to predict, to herald, to prophesy, to promise, to signalize and to scent. For example, Thunder in September heralds the warm weather [9: 14].

The general meaning of this model is that "A predicts B". Such constructs may include optional components, indicating temporal or spatial denotation: Early lighting storm portends rainy summer [10: 89]; Thunder in June predicts good harvest. The models with indirect prediction can be attributed to this type of constructs. We separated several types of such constructs:

- Simple sentences, in which the verb performing the function of the predicate has in its lexical meaning the same of "prediction". This condition holds for the following verbs: to lead, to bring, to carry and to send. In such models consequence is characterized as something that is necessary, inevitably following from the condition, if the predicate verb has perfect form: Red morning dawn will bring rain [10: 85]; Rotten (southwest) wind will bring rain [11:122]. If the predicate verb is imperfect, then the consequence is represented as constant and repeated: Single frost does not bring winter [10: 94]; Crosswinds bring rain [10: 98].
- Simple sentences, whose predictive center is represented by verbs that indicate some change of viewed object, occurring under a certain condition: close, shrink, droop, spread and rise. Given verbs explicate the situation-consequence, as well as emphasize the relationship between cause and an effect: Squame of fir-cones coarcts before the rain [10: 104]; Cones thistles straighten hamus before the rain [10: 104].
- Simple sentences with a predicate, denoting process, development, or change: to be, to be changed, to occur, to appear, to advance, to turn around, etc.: We get rain or snow in the dark of the moon; Harsh winter does not happen when crop failure on the cones of spruce and pine [10: 110]. Categorical character of emergence of situation-consequence is emphasized by adverbs never and ever used with the imperfective verbs: The fifth day of the new moon almost always is a strong wind [10: 83].

Presented models of sentences are the basic ones in our analysis. Our thoughts are based on the typology of a simple Russian sentence, because nouns as part of a simple sentence implicitly represent proposition. We also have considered advanced representation of conventional-consecutive relationships: the situation-condition is in a preposition with regard to the situation-consequence. This order of propositions is the most typical for Russian ethnoscience.

According to our observations, in simple sentences, different aspects of reality can serve as situations-conditions or situations-consequences.

Situation-condition can be represented in the investigated constructs in several ways:

- by circumstantial determinants, expressed by prepositional-casal forms of nouns, the number of which is limited by their semantics. Such forms include a combination of prepositions in, at, on and over, used with a prepositional case, prepositions with and over, used with ablative case, prepositions with, without, from and against, used with a genitive case, prepositions on, under, through and in, used with the accusative case, etc.

Since prepositional-casal forms with independent meaning of condition hardly stand out, since the condition is always syncretic, we consider it appropriate to divide forms with conditional meaning in a simple sentence into two groups: 1) specialized and 2) unspecialized.

Specialized group includes prepositional-casal forms of Russian language.

Specialized and regular aptness-words to express the meaning of condition are prepositions at+prepositional case and without+genitive case that have common meaning of presence/absence of the condition under which the action of indeterminate part is implemented or not implemented.
The combination of a preposition at with the noun in the prepositional case is typical for scientific style. However, such constructs are frequent in ethnoscience as well and are used to express the situation-consequence: The weather is changing at the new moon and its outcome [10: 84]; We get rain or snow in the dark of the moon; [10: 84].

The combination of a preposition without with a noun in form of the genitive case is widely used in proverbs and ethnoscience. In the sentences, including such prepositional-casal form, the predicate is used with negation: Without the first thunder the land is not thawing [10: 356].

A special group consists of mononuclear impersonal sentences, where the predicate is expressed by a combination of words no with a noun in the genitive case. Such sentences also consist of determinant and nondeterminant parts. Determinant’s position determines actual sentence articulation. No rain without clouds; No custom without care; No smoke without fire. Additionally, in this case the refusal performs the ambivalent role. At the morphological level, we see only a negation, whereas at the semantic level a categorical statement of interrelationship between the two situations develops, where the particle not only augments existing conditionality of designated situations. This is confirmed also by academic pursuits of Sifiano M. [12] and A. Liddikut [13].

All sentences with determinant without+noun in the genitive case easily form synonymic rows with conjunctionless and complex sentences: No smoke without fire- Where the fire, there the smoke; Mushroom is not born without forest- No forest- no mushroom is born; and If there is no forest, then the mushroom is not born.

The next group of specialized and regular determinants is constituted by combinations, expressing conditional-temporary meaning: before+ablative case; after+genitive case; on+accusative case; in+prepositional case; with+genitive case; and from+genitive case.

Antonymic couple before+ablative case of noun - after+genitive case of noun. Preposition before indicates precedence, preposition after means sequence of one action or event after another. The temporal meaning in ethnoscience is complicated by conditional causal meaning. This complication is caused by the fact that conditional causal relationships between the propositions, presented in the sentence, are developed. Semantic accent in such sentences is focused not on the temporal sequence of actions in relation to each other, but on causality of one event by other.

Determinant before+ablative case can be situated both in a preposition, interposition or postposition. This determinant is often situated in preposition with regard to nondeterminant part of the sentence: Before foul weather, tench begins to worry [10: 102]; Before foul weather spiders hide in cracks [10: 102]; Before the rain stars shine in blue [10: 84].

Postpositive use is stipulated by the special actual division of a sentence. It is the order of the sentence parts that foregrounds either condition or consequence. The part of a statement (sentence), which is in the postposition, is foregrounded most frequently: Gadflies are especially evil before the rain [10: 102]; Strong wirlwind happens before the rain pelting [10: 103].

Prepositional-casal form after+genitive case is situated in preposition: After the storm fish are biting well [10: 103].

Division into two parts may be expressed by using a particle and or a dash. Latest sentences are close to the transitive complex- simple sentences: After foul weather a bucket appears [11: 6]; After foul weather the sun rises [11: 6] (If/when/as it is foul weather, expect the sun); After the lighting storm - bucket appears [11: 6] (If/when/as there is a lighting storm, expect a bucket); After the lighting storm expect the rain, after the bucket, expect the storm [11: 6].

Prepositional-casal synonymous forms on+accusative case of noun / in+ prepositional case of noun are used very broadly in ethnoscience in terms of conditional-temporal meaning. Such omens indicate the time of the action, indicated in the indeterminate part of the sentence.

In the Russian language such a determinant form is situated in preposition, pointing out either the specific day, or the day associated with a particular saint, or a specific month.

Indication of the time limit for a particular condition, expressed by indeterminate part of the sentence, is carried out by using prepositional-casal forms with+genitive case of noun; till+ genitive case of noun; and after+genitive case of noun. Sentences with determinant with+genitive case contain a reference to a certain period of time, which is a condition for the implementation of action, identified in the main part of the sentence: Cold appears with the appearance of the moon [11: 292].
Constructs before+genitive case indicate a time limit, which restricts the condition on the beginning of a certain action: Prior to the first thunder (lighting storm) frogs do not croak [10: 87].

We consider synonymous pair to+dative case/on+accusative case as specialized and regular form of expression of syncretic conditional causal relationships.

Prepositional-casal form on+accusative case of noun is widely used in ethnoscience, at that having a meaning of prediction. Predictive form usually is situated in a preposition: On storm pine tinkles [10: 111].

Prepositional- casal form to+dative case of noun is situated both in a preposition, in interposition or postposition. At postpositive location of conditional unit regarding consecutive unit a kind of "reverse perspective" is created, which changes natural order of events on reverse order, i.e. when the condition precedes the effect. In this case the constructs are usually verbless: To warm spell the sky is dim and blind [11: 34]. Post-positional location of the consecutive unit complicates the sentence not only semantically, but also structurally; therefore it is typical for transitional and complicated constructs: Bird shrinks to foul weather- If the bird shrinks- that’s to foul weather - Bird shrinks- that’s to foul weather [10: 103].

Conditional-causal-spatial meaning have determinants, expressed by unspecialized prepositional-casal combinations over+ablative case; in+prepositional case; over+dative case; under+ablative case; etc. In the Russian country saying language there is almost no ethnoscience that is built based on a combination of conditional-causal-spatial determinant and a main part, which contains an action or state, whose implementation depends on the condition, implemented in a certain space: Over the forest rain falls twice [10: 96] Crawfish comes ashore before the foul weather and rain [10: 102].

CONCLUSION

Analysis of Russian ethnoscience, presented by simple sentences, leads to several conclusions. The undisputed fact is that prepositional-casal form is capable to represent reduced proposition only in the presence of prepositional semantics. This use of the nominative vocabulary is quite typical for ethnoscience, where the due situation on the formal level is expressed by a noun in a particular case form. These forms can be presented simply by casal form of a noun or prepositional-casal form of a noun.

Noun without a preposition is used in the case when the predicate is expressed by verb, directly or indirectly transmitting predictions semantics. Prepositional-casal forms of nouns are used in case if a verb of such semantics is missing. Most of these forms are in a preposition and indicate the situation-consequence. Some of these forms have synonymous variants. The cases of post position are also available (to+dative case of noun).

Thus, this study proves that the Russian ethnoscience contains not just the reduced propositions, but has established forms of their representation.

REFERENCES