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# VERBS OF PERCEPTION IN WESTERN ROMANIC LANGUAGES AND PHENOMENON OF DEIXIS

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## ABSTRACT

This article considers the verbs of perception in the three Western Romanic languages: French, Italian and Spanish. In the present paper the bond between deixis and verbs of perception is being investigated. The research has revealed a fundamental difference between a field of indication and a symbolic field, which refers to cognitive, emotional, axiological moduses derived from the modus of perception. The analysis of the material has given grounds to introduce correlative notions of primary and secondary deixis. Depending on the conduct of agential, time and spatial coordinates in the discourse they form primary and secondary deixis of the deictic-field and primary and secondary deixis of the symbolic field.

**Key words:** verbs of perception, deixis, deictic-field, field of indication, symbolic field, correlative notions, spatial coordinates

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Behavior of verbs of perception should be studied not in system only, but also in specific oral practice as well, in syntagmatics, taking into account an important role of speaking individuals in organization of speech, role of situation in the usage and interpretation of grammar phenomena [1, 10]. With such approach one should refer to the concept of functional interpretation of semantic field (SF), which allows connecting syntagmatic and paradigmatic features of units and to discover their interconditionality. In syntagmatic aspect functional hierarchy *nexus – center – periphery* in SF is manifested in limitation of usage of units that belong to field of fixed, sometimes, "stuff" combinability; while in paradigmatic context it is manifested by complexing paradigmatic structure [2, 48].

## 2. METHODS

This work uses systematic-centric and anthropocentric approaches as fundamental ones. Search of common and different traits in studied languages are performed with application of the following methods: comparative-typological one, contrastive one, component and valence ones.

## 3. THE MAIN PART

Verbs in their functional and semantic aspect are divided into nominative and demonstrative (deictic) ones. In the system of verbs of perception (VP) one may not omit deictic compound, since in SF of perception division of sensory and cognitive moduses is closely connected with the theory of deixis, which refers to common-linguistic notions, actual for many modalities and trends. There is a deictic theory of reference [3], there have been developed terminological definitions of role deixis [4, 5], deictic information, deictic marks [6], deicticity [7]. Recently new terms have appeared, such as communicative deixis, situational deixis, quantity-estimative deixis etc. However, connection of deixis with the field theory in "field" research literature hasn't been studied. K. Bühler's Theory of two fields – deictic and symbolic ones – was left beyond the attention of modern "feldeologists". There is an essential notion in Bühler's theory that states that there is only one demonstrative field in the language, and semantic filling of the mentioned words is connected with perceived demonstrative means, which don't go without them or their equivalents [8].

The aim of this article is to study the connection of deixis with verbs of perception in three West Romanic languages: French, Spanish and Italian. VP denote the first voluntary and involuntary contact of the person with objective world. Their abstracter is represented by functions of five sense organs: vision, hearing, smelling, touch and taste.

Verbs of perception represent a special group of lexical units, where the seme "perception" is found in etymons of the majority of signed words. Verbs of vision denote the sphere of the visible [8, 41]. Thus, Russian word *OKHO* (a window) is derivatively connected with the word *OKO* (an eye) through the seme "to see". For investigation and description of VP the theory of two fields (deictic and symbolic ones) have a fundamental meaning, favouring division of "proper perceptive" meaning of VP and their "non-proper perceptive" ones that relate to other moduses: cognitional, emotional and axiological, which are derivatives from perception modus. K. Bühler makes fundamental difference between the field of denomination in the language, where marks performing deictic function exist, and a symbolic field, formed by denominative words, which are situationally independent. Here it is the case of autonomous functions of direct demonstration and perceptual situation. Symbolic field is connected with imaginary (mental perception, according to K. Bühler), and deictic one is directly connected with the perceived information. K. Bühler, while considering these fields, notes three means of denomination:

- 1) demonstrative one (*ad oculus*), i.e. direct denomination with the help of gestures or denominative words that relate to sensually perceived specific objects;
- 2) anaphoric one – denomination with the help of verbal means within the limits of deictic field or text;
- 3) "deixis to the imaginary" (*deixis ad phantasma*), i.e. denomination of abstract place, which is located in the deep layers of memory [10]. The first method is encountered in directly perceived situation (let us call it

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"binocular principle"). The second one is encountered at repeated pointing at the denoted object. For explication of the third one K. Bühler uses the language of pantomime [9, 77]. Perceptive and deictic acts have common and different traits. Deictic act is possible only in the process of perception, while in perceptive act perception and nomination may coincide. Denotation of deictic field (DF) is represented by deictic marks "marks that have referents, but don't have designators" [10]: *je, voici, voilà* and others – denotation of symbolic field is semantic context, formed by denominative words. Sensory verbs refer to denominative words, these are the verbs of vision: fr. *voir, regarder*, esp. *ver*, it. *vedere, guardare*; hearing: fr. *entendre, écouter*, esp. *oir, escuchar*, it. *udire, ascoltare* and others.

The content of deictic mark changes when communicative situation changes, while semantics of VP doesn't change – no matter if we observe the river, forest or sky through binocular – but deictic words and VP are combined with one and the same psycho-physiological channel: the common "field of vision" of the speaking person and listening person. However, we should emphasize that here we refer to "proper perceptive" VP, when they actualize the same "to perceive something", disengaging them from "non-proper perceptive" ones (cognitive, emotional etc). Thus, deictic field of VP is SF, in which proper perceptive meanings of the verbs are realized, which are conditioned by referent connection with situation of perception *hic et nunc*. Let us note that there are various secondary meanings of VP, when the seme "to perceive by the sense body" is either not actualized, being substituted by new meanings, or is mixed with mental, emotional and other ones, which are distributed through other types of FS moduses. Further development of the notion of deixis lies in introduction of correlative notions of primary and secondary deixis. In case "live" situation of communication is called primary deixis, then any other one that is not combined with perception, is called secondary deixis [11], or anaphoric one [12, 13]. Deixis of perception has the following coordinates:

- a) actantial one, when we distinct between the one who perceives (the agent of perceptive act) and the one who is perceived (the object of perceptive act);
- b) temporary one: in regard to the point of reference on time axis of narration (simultaneity, precedence and following);
- c) spatial one: common or independent stay of actants (here, there).

Actant coordinate: VP, which enter into perceptive acts, have "the observer" (narrator). He exists beyond subject-predicate structure of expression, his position is connected with the notion of "point of reference". Depending in the number and character of actants in speech act, they are divided into elocutive (which do not have the receiver), allocutive (which include the receiver) and delocutive. The first two organize narration from the first-person perspective, and the third one represents narration from the third person perspective. Here is an example of elocutive act: fr. *Ester – J'étais bête à manger du foin et j'étais heureuse d'un bonheur stupide. Je ne veux plus être bête. Je veux penser, regarder, juger* (Cocteau). Depending in time axis, delocutive acts may be connected with secondary deixis. For example: : fr. (1) *Je regarde la rue.* (2) *Il regarde la rue.* (3) *La rue est vue de tous les côtés.* In the first sentence all three persons coincide (personal deixis); in the second example the subject of perception action and narrator are different acting persons (temporal deixis). In the third sentence the object of perception represents subject, while the subject of perception and narrator stay unexpressed (spatial one). All perceived data that come to the person stay within some sequence, in system of reference that is denoted by deictics of "here", "now", "me". They represent the centre of system of reference, in which stay all sensual data that come to a person. Thus, denominative field is directly connected with perceptive act. Deixis includes the concept of speaking person of sender of speech. Personal deixis points at the role of the participants in narration. The category of the first person is grammaticalization of the reference of the speaking person on himself, the second person is a reference one and more receivers, and the third person is a reference to persons or objects, which are neither speaking part nor a receiver. Such denominative words symbolize personal, spatial and temporal deixis and are the center of the system of reference [13, 106-115]. Denominative field is directly connected with perceptive act, and perceptive seme plays the role of basic distinctive feature of lexemes that exist in DF. The main features of deictic elements are their pragmaticity [14] and non-transparency. The content of symbolic field are polysemic VP + secondary deixis: deixis of retelling, narrative deixis [11, 24]. Let us consider the following example: fr. *Tu avais l'air si gentil de me présenter à tout le monde* (F. Sagan). In this sentence we can observe secondary deixis: non-coincidence of place of the narrator with spatial reference point. Thus, object of DF is presented in formula "perception + speech", where speech reflects the situation of perception and gives information about its actants, about narrator's attitude to it. For instance: fr. *Mais quand elle le vit entrer chez elle, trapu, le visage coloré sous les cheveux en brosse, elle se dit, que la noix serait assez dure à briser* (A. Maurois). This example describes the situation, where the narrator and the perceiving person – the agent of perceptive action – do not coincide.

Speech formation may represent perceptive act in present, past or inform us about suggested acts in future: fr. *Le passé était le passé, n'est-ce pas? Si on conservait de la rancune après des neuf ans et des dix ans, on finirait par ne plus voir personne* (E. Zola). The action takes place in the past, but the character's suggestion, expressed in pronoun "on" refer to the future, while perceptive verb *voir* is used not in its primal meaning, but rather in the secondary one – *to meet each other*. Principle of correlation of two types of moduses (perceptive and speech one) lies at the heart of studying "behavior" of this group of verbs in various types of speech, when there is a difference between: perception as a real fact, consistent with speech (descriptive act of speech); perception as a real fact, not consistent with speech (broadcast), witnessing and narration: imagination. The first one is included into primary deixis, while the other ones are included into secondary one. If the narration happens in the form of the first and second person (I/you), narrator and subject coincide. They don't coincide in case narration is performed in the form of the third person. In its ontological features narrative and perceptive types of activity, being manifestations of activity of human's functional systems, coincide, but they do not appear by themselves: perceptive actions are reaction on external stimuli, on speech message, and a large number of transmitted information results from the fact of perception. We may suppose that sphere of functioning of VP is rather a symbolic field, and it's just the place where verbs of perception demonstrate the blossom of polysemy; VP according to "principle of binocular" are used much more rarely. Thus, we may mark out primary and secondary deixis of DF, and, as a study has shown, there is a primary and secondary deixis of symbolic field.

I. Primary deixis of DF is reflected in the following examples: fr. (1) *Relevant les yeux, on constate qu'il est maintenant debout devant la porte, face à celle-ci, c'est-à-dire toujours tournant le dos à la salle.* (Robbe-Grillet). Apparent narrator, describing one's perceptive act, is at the same time a perceiver (2) *Un bruit violent attire l'attention à l'autre extrémité*

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de la pièce (Robbe-Grillet). Impersonal narrator describes acts of visual and hearing perception, Time of perception coincides with the time of narration.

II. Secondary deixis of DF is reflected in the following example: (3) *En le voyant avec sa femme, j'ai compris pourquoi dans le quartier on disait qu'il était distinguée* (Camus). In this example the perceiver's action is directed into the past. 4) *Tu avais l'air si gêné de me présenter à tout le monde* (Sagan). In this example we may see non-coincidence of place of the speaker with point of reference.

III. Primary deixis of symbolic field is reflected in the phrase: fr. *Je ne sens pas une unanimité dans le pays sur ce sujet*. Multivalent VP *sentir* actualizes the meaning; the sentence reflects cognitive act.. fr. *Je vois d'ici la page de mon dossier*. In this context *voir* ("to see") shows the meaning "to imagine, to visualize". This is a deixis to the imagined.

IV. Secondary deixis of symbolic field: *J'ai vu mourir des centaines de blessés*. The verb *voir* is used in the first person, singular, past tense (non-coincidence of narrator's place with spatial and temporal points of reference). The meaning "to see" is obliterated; it acquires the meaning "to recollect". GF in the following phrase represents the name of the will act. it. *Vedi di farcela da solo* is equivalent to French *Tâche de te débrouiller tout seul*.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Lexical system of the language is not only structured combination of separate words, but the system of interconnected and intersecting classes of words. In this article at study of the connection of deixis with the verbs of perception we have detected fundamental difference between the field of denomination and symbolic field. SF of the verbs of sensual perception is connected with semantic fields that serve the systems of intellectual, emotional and evaluative activity and other actions that relate to corresponding spheres of language.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

Verbs of perception in perceptive and non-perceptive meanings, connected with the theory of deictic and symbolic fields, they relate to intentional and modal logics, respectively. Quantitative analysis has detected that primary deixis of deictic and symbolic fields is used much more rarely than secondary one. Material of the study has also shown that verbs of visual perception in visual acts are much more often used in non-perceptive meanings.

As it can be seen from the above, we have presented some results of studying VP, which is formed by cognitive mechanisms of perceptive activity of human. We should note that VP are not isolated class in language system. Lexical-semantic field of VP is connected with semantic fields that serve the system of evaluative activity, emotional system, as well as the systems of various actions; however, this connection to the fullest extent is expressed with regards to the system of intellectual activity.

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