

SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

TEMPORALITY OF VERBAL NAMES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Natalia Gorskaya (a)*, Vera Glyzina (b), Angelika Fedoryuk (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Irkutsk National Research Technical University, 83, Lermontova st., Irkutsk, Russia,
natgo2012@yandex.ru, 89025680932

(b) Baikal State University, 11, Lenin st., Irkutsk, Russia, vecotd@yandex.ru, 89025680387

(c) Irkutsk State University, 1, Karla Marxa st., Irkutsk, Russia, fedoryuk@rambler.ru, 89149503086

Abstract

The current paper presents the results of the research of the concept “time”, manifested in the semantics of verbal nouns. The relevance of the problem is determined by the fact that time, as a category of human cognition and the semantic basis of national culture, influences the formation of the language world picture. The study deals with the temporality of the English verbal names which have diverse and multiple characters. It is stated that the verbal names inherit semantic attributes due to the associative and paradigmatic relations between the words that contain the same root. The obtained data make it possible to determine the apparent time markers as well as verbal nouns in the function of temporal adverbials with the corresponding time prepositions and nouns in the plural form, representing the events which reoccur in time. The results are based on the analysis of lexical items from the English defining dictionaries. The research data confirms the assumption of researchers in the field of cognitive linguistics that a word attribute can have the prototypical nature, which is of undoubted interest for research in cognitive science. The results obtained are of great theoretical and practical importance. They broaden theoretical knowledge about a word, in particular, its semantic structure. It makes possible to use the received data in the teaching practice of the English language in the institutions of higher education, in lectures on lexical semantics, cognitive linguistics, as well as in textbook writing and training students for coursework and final paper.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Temporality, verbal names, conceptual structure, semantics.



1. Introduction

The subject of dissertation research on linguistics demonstrates a significantly growing interest in the study of the semantic component “time”. It is explained by the fact that time, as one of the forms of existence, is a category of human cognition and semantic basis of national culture. So, it provides a direct impact on the formation of the language picture of the world. Time as a social and psychological category is not only a form of existence but also a form of individual and collective consciousness, reflecting the process of social development. As time is abstract, we should view it in action and motion, i.e. in change and transition, thus, possessing a dimension. According to Gurevich (2007), at birth, a person lacks a sense of time and it is formed during the lifetime in the cultural environment he/she belongs to. Kazaryan (2003) suggests that time is closely connected with such fundamental human ideas as a human being, sense of life, cognitive and practical activity. By the linguistic aspect of time, scholars consider a model of real-time in language, consisting of relations within the linguistic and extralinguistic human activity. This model is based on the qualitative character of temporary relations (Naberezhnova, 2011). There is an opinion that temporary relations present one of the most complicated problems of English language semantics. In the scientific literature, the language expression of time is more often related to temporal and aspectual verbs, i.e. a verb denotes an action which develops over a period of time (present, future, past). While describing the language time, scholars focus on a verb, as linguistics gives priority to verbal forms. Numerous semantic classifications of predicate/verbs are aimed at making a distinction, based on the nature of the relationship with time, that has always been undoubted, as a verb has a dynamic semantic of process. It can be said that verbs provide a certain code of a part of the situation which is related to the ways of included objects being. While describing a verb in any situation, we present a definite scheme, based on the property of change in time. A verb interprets the relations between spatial and temporal changes of an object exactly at that moment when it moves or changes, leaving the movement pattern in the conceptual sphere of a verb in our thoughts. The conceptual sphere of the verb unites all the ideas about object interactions and their cause-sequence relationships. Dealing with the verb from the cognitive perspective, we observe the properties which express processual meaning and the way of an object being in time and space.

2. Problem Statement

Despite the fact that in the scientific literature on the problem of language time representation, it is more often said about temporal and aspectual properties of a verb, a verb denotes an action in the broad sense. Thus, to research time semantics of other parts of speech is of no less importance. There is a perception that nonverbal time expressions are secondary, compared with verbal ones. This idea of relations between different forms of a temporal semantics expression is supported by the scholars who focus on researching similarities, rather than differences between verbal and non-verbal means of expressing temporality. The research data makes it possible to conclude that all parts of speech, including adjectives and nouns, can contain the temporal meaning (Barebina, 2015a, 2015b; Kostyushkina & Egorova, 2017; Melgunova & Smetanina, 2012; Smetanina, 2016). This current paper deals with the semantic component of “time” in English verbal nouns, i.e. deverbatives,

3. Research Questions

In English, Vendler (1967) examined the semantic features of time in verbal predicates. He considered that all verbs have a time parameter. Using time schemata, he provided a classification of verbs, through which tenses of finite verbs are tied up. From the very beginning, the reference of time to verbal lexemes is not homogeneous. Among the basic criteria, the scholar distinguishes words with activity terms, for example: *running, pushing a car*; accomplishment terms, for example, *running a mile, drawing a circle*; achievement terms, for example: *reaching the top*; state terms, for example: *loving*. Thus, there are oppositions: “activity as such”, “activity with a phased accomplishment”, “activity taking place at a specific point in time”, “activity taking place at a specific time period, i.e. state”. The list of criteria is open, as, in our opinion, the temporality of a verbal name may also include termination/non-termination, duration, iteration and others which have been distinguished in the English grammar. With regard to the research of verbal nouns, it is important to emphasize the diversity and multiplicity of temporal properties of verbal lexemes, as they are not clearly distinguished. Thus, analyzing the concept of “seeing” from the perspective of its temporal structure, Vendler (1967) considers the concept not as a process or state, but rather accomplishment or achievement, similar to the concepts of “winning” and “race”. Analyzing the concept from the above-mentioned perspective, Vendler discovers the feature of achievement when the concept of “seeing” is tied up with the perception point of the situation, for example: *I saw him crossing the river = I spotted him crossing the river*, and the feature of state, while perceiving the action at a certain period of time, cf.: *I saw him cross the river* and *I spotted him cross the river*. Nonetheless, Vendler mentions two borderline cases of using the verb “see”: 1) he says about the indistinct feature of accomplishment to the question: “What are you doing?”, we answer: “I am seeing Carmen on TV” and 2) limited usage when “a seer” sees things, and now and then he is actually seeing ghosts or pink rats. In our opinion, such cases provide evidence on the fact that, to what extent the prototypical meaning of a name “seeing” has a periphery in addition to a core, the semantics of perception comes closer to the semantics of knowledge and understanding, on the one hand, and, observation and examination, on the other hand; temporal features “achievement”, “state”, “accomplishment” and even “activity” are engaged in different meaning of the verbal noun “seeing”.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to examine the semantics of time in verbal nouns irrespective the grammatical aspect, through human perception and understanding of time in communication.

5. Research Methods

In the current paper, we use the methodology of word semantic research with the help of electronic dictionaries, definition analysis, contextual analysis, as well as logical semantic analysis. The primary sources for research data include English dictionaries: Hornby – Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Contemporary English, Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, The Oxford English Dictionary, as well as fiction and non-fiction works of modern English and American literature.

6. Findings

Our research is based on psychological findings by Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976). In their view, time comprehension is divided into four basic categories: short time intervals (present moment), durable, point in time and with time perspective (past, present, and future). Drawing on this statement, we assume that time in the semantics of some names may fall in the above-mentioned categories. For example, *нодатель* [*podatel*] is a person whose action is considered as an act of short duration, but *раздатчик* [*razdatchik*] is a person who does a permanent action. It should be noted, when we speak of temporal, aspectual and other similar properties of a verbal name, we consider its semantic attributes, directly related to the semantics of a verb, i.e. action semantics, process and an event in the broad sense of a word. Verbal names inherit these semantic attributes due to the associative and paradigmatic relations between the words with the identical form of a stem. They influence the semantics and usage of tense-aspect forms of a verb, but it does not mean that tense-aspect forms influence the semantics of deverbatives. We hold the view that deverbatives contain the hidden “time-aspect and voice meanings”, *genetically inherent to the semantics of all verbs* (Akimova, Vyatkina, & Kazakov, 2008). The empirical research provides evidence that nominal groups of time semantics have the potential to express the concept of time. This group of names includes various time expressions which can denote a point in time, exact or approximate period of time. The most apparent markers of time are date and hour. (He ate at seven o'clock), frequency (He often goes to the movies), duration (I've known that for a long time), sequence (He reads before going to sleep). There is another hidden category which deals with the development process in time, namely, how it develops in its own time. The verbal nouns are used in temporary and adverbial expressions, like: during my work; during the last war, during the night, during the Falklands War, after the war. It should be noted that being a nomination of activity, they have time as well as space component in their semantics (as any action takes place at a certain time and place). As a result, there are adverbial phrases, allowing ambivalence in their interpretation, rather the different emphasis on this or that meaning, cf.: You walk away *from* (after) a *Chauvin Christmas dinner* slightly stupefied. We see each other all together *at* (during) *family funerals*. All these features belong to the verb stem but to a verbal noun as well, until it is semantically tied up with a verb. If die, according to Vendler (1967), is “achievement”, then the name “death” has the same features, denoting an action of short duration. The semantic features of deverbatives are likely taken for granted by native speakers and lexicographers, being seldom marked in dictionary definitions. This link is indicated by their usage with phrases, expressing exact or approximate time, as well as temporal adverbials and attributes, for example: *in last year's*, *in 1994*, *of May 12-14*, *a five-week-old* conflict; *a three-hour* drive down the escarpment, *a ten-year-old*, *Thirty Years* War, *a two-year* stretch. At the same time, the name, expressing time, may take the principal position in the sentence, while the name of the event has the dependent position, cf.: *three weeks of imports* instead of *imports during three weeks*; *four years of war* instead of *war during four years*; *44 years of work* instead of *work during 44 years*; *three weeks of air strikes* instead of *air strikes during three weeks*. It has been found out that verbal nouns are widely used in the function of temporal adverbs with the corresponding time prepositions: *during* congressional, Watergate impeachment *hearings*. The reoccurrence of action in time is marked by the plural form of a noun: repeated requests, claims, movements, strikes, etc. The prefix re-, widely used in word-formation, is not restricted by the semantics of a repeated action: reelection is not just “repeat election”, but “new election”,

reappointment is not just “repeat appointment” but “confirmation of appointment”, reexamination is not just “repeat examination”, but also “new examination”.

7. Conclusion

Overall, we find it possible to conclude that the meaning of a name contains the semantic component of “time” which may be manifested in the following way: temporality includes four basis parameters (“point/moment», “period/interval”, “rhythm/time”, distributing in past, present and/or future. The dependence of a noun on its semantics is a cause for a variety of features manifestation in nouns. For example, functional, dependable names and names of a person are closely tied up with the semantics of time due to the ontological properties of the referents, they denote. If to consider the other cases, the time semantics is expressed when a name is combined with a time marker in a sentence, i.e. exact date, temporal adverbials, adjectives of temporal perspective, change predicates, transformation predicates, etc. It has been found out that verbal names contain a wider variety of semantic attributes than previously thought. It is proved that the nature of time semantics can be studied from various linguistic perspectives. It has been determined that a noun in the compound nominal predicate possesses a predicative meaning which indicates the subject its time attribute. These meanings have a special link with time because their semantics is dominated by a temporal feature, being more closely connected with time than the meaning of a determiner. Thus, it makes possible to state that temporal meaning is inherent to any verbal name. However, it should be stressed that temporal semantics is not homogeneous due to its diversity and multiplicity.

References

- Akimova, G. N., Vyatkina, S. V., & Kazakov, V. P. (2008). *Syntax of the contemporary Russian language*. St. Petersburg, SPbSU.
- Barebina, N. S. (2015a). Methods of communication in scientific search in contemporary linguistic research. *New science: From idea to result*, 6-3, 21–25.
- Barebina, N. S. (2015b). Role of linguistic research in the context of distributed cognition in the cognitive analysis of language. *Cognitive language research*, 23, 73–81.
- Gurevich, A. Ya. (2007). *Selected works Medieval world*. St Petersburg, SPbSU.
- Kazaryan, V. P. (2003). *Philosophy of science. Part I*. Moscow: Max Press.
- Kostyushkina, G. M., & Egorova, Z. V. (2017). Categorization of emotions in Russian language consciousness. *Vestnik of “North-Eastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov*, 5(61), 99–107.
- Melgunova, A. G., & Smetanina, T. V. (2012). Verbs as a means for ontological metaphor (English verbs of resistance and verbs of spatial orientation as an example). *Izvestiya of Irkutsk State Economic Academy*, 2, 223–227.
- Miller, G. A., & Johnson-Laird, Ph. N. (1976). *Language & Perception*. Cambridge: Mass., CUP.
- Naberezhnova, Z. G. (2011). Category of time as one of the elements of the language picture of the world. *Almanakh of modern science and culture*, 10, 146–148.
- Smetanina, T. V. (2016). Categorization of the spatial location of animate non-human objects: verb lie. *Translation and comparative linguistics*, 12, 59–62.
- Vendler, Z. (1967). *Linguistics in Philosophy*. Athaca; New York: Cornell UP.