

Introduction

Введение

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A linguistic study today is impossible without semantic data. However, after over a century of research on semantics, the issue of the origin of meaning still remains a wide area of investigation. Following the structuralist period, new linguistic approaches are trying to take into consideration linguistic facts in the context of their actual usage. Initially viewed as a lexical characteristic, semantics now is conceived not only in relation to syntax but also in relation to context and situation, which leads us to pragmatics. Moreover, some consider semantics as a representation of national identity (cf. Wierzbicka 1992; Zaliznjak, Levontina and Šmelev 2005, 2012).

Nevertheless, despite various semantic approaches, syntax remains the main purpose of linguistic research. Owing to the rise of cognitive theories, the study of the relationship between semantics and syntax entered a new era. The recently developed theory of Construction Grammar (cf. Fillmore and Kay 1993; Goldberg 1995; Raxilina 2010) claims that constructions have their own semantics which goes against the principle of componentiality and opens up a new perspective on grammatical facts. In this context, with the emergence of electronic corpora, the work on the revision of grammar has already begun.

The articles compiled in this volume reflect new approaches to linguistic meaning in the domain of verbs (M. Ovsjannikova, T. Bottineau and R. Roudet), numerals (I. Mikaelian,

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V. Nakonetchnaja-Lalanne), sentences (J. Kuznetsova, K. Van de Cruys), and of linguistic systems in their totality (Anna A. Zalizniak). While their theoretical bases are different (cognitive, enunciative, typological or descriptive), they are all trying to find out what determines linguistic meaning.

This volume includes a selection of papers presented during the 6th International Meeting of the Slavic Linguistics Society (SLS) (<http://www.slaviclinguistics.org>) which took place in Aix-en-Provence, France, in September of 2011.¹

The opening article is devoted to semantics as an ethnocultural phenomenon which is unique to the linguistic system of a single language. The author, Anna A. Zalizniak, revisits the term *jazykovaja kartina mira* ‘linguistic model of the world’ and its usefulness for intercultural communication and demonstrates on examples of Russian and other European languages that it represents an excellent way of describing semantic systems of different languages.

Discussions of argument structure and aspect represent the focal points of the following papers on verbal semantics. Maria Ovsjannikova provides a semantic and syntactic analysis of the argument structure of a particular verbal class—verbs of anger like *zlit’sja* ‘be angry’, *obižat’sja* ‘feel offended’, *dosadovat’* ‘be annoyed’. She points out semantic distinctions between the two kinds of the stimulus argument (cause-like and goal-like) encoded by the preposition *na* + *accusative*. The author demonstrates a semantic similarity between verbs of anger and verbs of speech acts such as *kričat’* ‘shout’, *žalovat’sja* ‘complain’, *otvečat’* ‘answer’: both classes represent experienced events.

In their contribution, Tatiana Bottineau and Robert Roudet analyze the issue of semantic compatibility between the perfective verb in the past tense and adverbs of iterativity such as *často* ‘often’. Using data from a corpus of contemporary texts, they distinguish between three kinds of iterativity and conclude that the usage of a perfective verb with an iterative adverb cannot be considered an anomaly because the perfective verb does not change its semantics of a singular action. Therefore, it is the larger context and the adverb that create an iterative situation.

Questions dealing with the semantics of sentences are explored on examples of sentences with predicate nominatives and concessive clauses. In response to Krasovitsky et al. (2008), who claim that the nominative construction (NomC) is almost out of use nowadays, Julia Kuznetsova reconsiders the question of the distribution of constructions with the predicate nominative and those with the instrumental case (InsC) by using a large corpus of data. The study comes to the conclusion that preferences between NomC and InsC depend on their semantics: NomC attracts inanimate nouns and is used with the present tense copula which describes the most stable relations, while InsC is preferred with animate nouns in non-present contexts which undergo changes and create contrastive contexts.

The contrastive criterion appears to be important for universal concessive conditionals with subclauses like *čto by to ni bylo* ‘anyway’. For the first time Karen Van de Cruys focuses on the main clause of these sentences, and demonstrates that the semantics of contrast is based not only on lexical (adverbs) and syntactic (conjunctions) markers that have been frequently mentioned (e.g. Xrakovskij 1999), but also on morphological, such as aspect and comparatives, as well as prosodic ones, such as focus.

The last two articles are devoted to the semantics of numerals (cardinals and collectives), a subject currently enjoying a revival of interest (cf. RES 2011). Irina Mikaelian’s contribution examines Russian constructions with cardinal numerals and develops a systematic cognitive

¹The meeting’s proceedings representing a greater selection of articles devoted to all Slavic languages, including Russian, will be published by Presses Universitaires de Provence (PUP) in 2013.

organization with center and periphery based on the criterion of animacy. For verbs and nouns used with numeral constructions the author proposes a hierarchical scale of criteria which determine the choice between animate and inanimate constructions.

Finally, Victoria Nakonetchnaja-Lalanne compares collective numerals like *dvoe* ‘two/both’ with the cardinal *dva* ‘two’ and considers them within a larger context. The study based on the enunciative approach proposed by Culioli (1990) concludes that the usage of collective numerals is determined by a dual vision of represented elements: individualization of each element within its actualization and, at the same time, a vision of their totality. The author describes three possible ways of actualization of enumerated elements: by context, by lexical semantics, and by situation. Here semantic studies meet their natural extension in the bordering domain of pragmatics.

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