



REVISTA INCLUSIONES

HOMENAJE A FRANCISCO JOSÉ
FRANCISCO CARRERA

Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales

Volumen 7 . Número 3

Julio / Septiembre

2020

ISSN 0719-4706

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**THE LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL MEANINGS OF THE RUSSIAN VERB
AND THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF CAUSATION**

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Fecha de Recepción: 12 de enero de 2020 – **Fecha Revisión:** 21 de abril de 2020

Fecha de Aceptación: 11 de mayo de 2020 – **Fecha de Publicación:** 01 de julio de 2020

Abstract

The article presents a theoretical analysis of the causal category of Russian verbs. It is proved that casual verbs have specific semantics that unite different situations. However, the complexity of the Russian language system studying is associated with the indefinite status of Russian verbs causation.

Keywords

Causation – Russian verb – Lexical and grammatical meaning

Para Citar este Artículo:

Gumara, Distanova; Vlada, Nikitina y Govozdeva, Elena. The lexical and grammatical meanings of the russian verb and the semantic field of causation. Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 num 3 (2020): 374-381.

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Introduction

One of the most difficult problems of the philosophy of language and linguistics in general is the determination of the ability of languages (language systems) to reflect complex and diverse phenomena of reality in speech.

Despite the presence of a significant number of typological studies of structural-semantic phenomena in the Russian language, in particular causative constructions (the work by such researchers as... and others), a number of issues related to purely theoretical aspects (for example, the definition of causality or as a holistic functional semantic category, which has its status, means of expression and demonstrating the systemic nature of manifestation, or as a function characterized by the absence of systemic manifestations), and definition of formal-semantic features of constructions with causative verbs and separate causative (incentive) verbs.

Development

The **objective** of this article is to clarify the conceptual structure of the causative structure, because the existing definition lacks consistency in identifying its structure-forming characteristics.

The concept of the verb. In the terminological sense, a *verb* is a calque from the Greek word (*speech, part of speech*). “A verb is a part of speech that denotes an action or condition and expresses these meanings in the grammatical categories of a species, voice, person, number, time, mood and the lexical and grammatical category of a gender (in the past tense and the subjunctive mood)”¹.

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The causality of speech

The semantic structure of the verb is more capacious and flexible than all other grammatical categories. The verbs clearly show the “intersection” of various semantic relations or the imposition of one of them on the other. As E.V. Kuznetsova noted, “it is precisely the “intersection” of lexical-semantic groups of words that differs from grammatical classes (parts of speech and categories), which are built on the principle of clear boundaries, only in some cases violated by transitional phenomena”². Thus, the verb ‘*тянет*’ in the structure ‘*Буксир тянет баржу*’ can be simultaneously considered as a verb of movement (a barge moves), a verb of physical impact (a tugboat physically acts on a barge) and a verb of motivation (a tugboat induces a barge to move). In this case, D.N. Shmelev speaks about the diffusivity of the Russian verb. Diffusion is a potential property of a word to simultaneously have several meanings in a text.

“The polysemy of a verb word is enhanced by the variety of living meanings of prefixes, their complex interaction with the meanings of words, differences in the morphological articulation of derivative homonyms. The verb has more diverse ways of combining and differentiating meanings than the names... The richness of the meanings of the verb is also due to the variety of its syntactic capabilities, its constructive, organizing power”³.

¹ A. A. Kholodovich, Problems of grammar theory (Leningrad, 1979), 52.

² M. Kuznetsov, Field. Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary. 1990, 99

³ D.N. Shmelev, Problems of semantic analysis of vocabulary (Moscow, 1973), 341.

In relation to the Russian verb, the concept of a functional-semantic field created in the theory of functional grammar is widely used. The system of verbal semantic fields determines (specifies) the meaning of each verb by comparison with other verbs of the same semantic series⁴. The field is interpreted as “a grouping of multilevel means of a given language, interacting on the basis of the commonality of their semantic functions and expressing variants of a particular semantic category”⁵. Such a representation does not contradict the definition of the field given by M. Kuznetsov: the field is “a set of linguistic units united by a common content... and reflecting the conceptual, objective or functional similarity of the designated phenomena”⁶.

Differentiating signs of the verb

The common features of the semantics of the verb made it possible to distinguish differentiating features in them. L.M. Vasiliev, analyzing the functional-semantic fields of the Russian verb, in “Semantics of the Russian verb” distinguishes between basic and peripheral semantic components. For example, the component ‘говорить’, i.e. ‘осуществлять речь’ in the meanings of the verbs *произносить*, *разговаривать*, *тараторить*, *мямлить*, etc. is basic, and the components ‘взаимный речевой контакт’, ‘быстро’, ‘медленно’ and others are peripheral. Basic components form an invariant, i.e. the constant meaning of this semantic class, “peripheral components can vary unlimitedly in its composition”⁷.

However, there is still no generally accepted classification of verbs by semantics, “and it is hardly possible, because any classification is determined by some principles and aspects, and they are determined by the goals and objectives of the study”⁸.

Academician V.V. Vinogradov in his monograph “The Russian Language” notes that the category of grammatical person “is based on the distinction between the speaking person, the interlocutor and the world of “third” parties and objects around them. The category of a person is one of the so-called “subject-object” categories, otherwise called predicate forms... The category of a person is soldered to the categories of time and mood, which are also determined by the point of view of the speaking person”⁹, i.e. implemented in causative verbs used in the framework of causative constructions, as well as the category of the species. Verbs of a perfect form “designate a process as the ultimate integral result into which the beginning, middle and end” of a process are generalized.

V.V. Vinogradov gave the following definition of the form: it is a lexical and grammatical category expressing a qualitatively limited process as preparation for achieving a goal, i.e. “to a holistic, cumulative result” (imperfective verbs). The value of the directedness / non-directedness of the subject's action on the object is implemented by the grammatical category of transitivity / intransitivity¹⁰. Naturally, the meaning of causality, which characterizes the verb system of the language from typological positions, will include transitional verbs, since predicate verbs that do not express the direction of the

⁴ “Typology of causative constructions” Morphological causative (Leningrad, 1990).

⁵ A. V. Bondarenko, Functional Grammar (Leningrad, 1984), 25.

⁶ M. Kuznetsov, Field. Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary (1990), 38

⁷ L. M. Vasiliev, Semantics of the Russian verb. Verbs of mental activity (Moscow, 1981), 27.

⁸ L. M. Vasiliev, Semantics of the Russian verb... 38.

⁹ V. V. Vinogradov, “Russian language. The grammatical doctrine of the wor” (Moscow, 1972), 179.

¹⁰ Vinogradov, V.V. “Russian language. The grammatical doctrine...”

process towards a direct object, do not need a direct complement, but are closed in the subject's sphere (intransitive) do not imply expressions of the basic meaning of causality – the impact on somebody, something (object of action). These provisions are directly related to the definition of causative verbs given by V.P. Nedialkov and G.G. Silnitskii: “All verbs that can play the role of a bunch of causative constructs (that is, express causation in its pure form or in combination with other constants) make up the class of causative verbs”¹¹. Object is a quite broad concept in grammar. It is a person, an object, and an abstract concept.

Transitive verbs convey a process that perceives or acquires, creates, changes or destroys a direct object: *чувствовать, видеть, слышать, понимать, коллекционировать, строить, сокращать, переделывать, пилить, разбивать, уничтожать, сжигать* etc.

A.A. Shakhmatov¹² defines a special group of indirectly transitive verbs that do not express a direct effect on the object, but only denote in a broad sense the expression of the will of the subject. They carry an indirect object – an indirect complement in all indirect cases either without or with a preposition (except for the accusative case without a pretext). An indirect object, like a direct one, makes up for the incompleteness of the meaning of a verb. An indirect object, like a direct one, makes up for the incompleteness of the meaning of a verb, but it does not directly participate in the process, it does not affect the process: *Он прицелился и прострелил мне [indirect object] фуражку [direct object]*. The values of the indirect object are diverse. Indirect objects most are often used with the verbs of:

a) desire, achievement, fear: *желать, жаждать, верить, достигать, касаться, искать, опасаться, избегать*;

b) possession, leadership: *владеть, располагать, командовать, руководить, управлять*;

c) assistance or opposition: *дружить, помогать, препятствовать, возражать, мешать* etc.

Intransitive verbs do not need a direct or indirect object. Forms of direct or indirect case of a name with the value of an object are impossible with them: *Он вспыхнул и дал мне пощёчину. ... в ту же ночь поехали мы драться*.

The main meanings of intransitive verbs are:

a) movement: *идти, ехать, бежать, мчаться, лезть*;

b) condition or symptom: *болеть, сидеть, лежать, вянуть, сохнуть, краснеть, синеть*;

c) being: *жить, быть, существовать, ночевать, благоденствовать*;

d) sound: *лаять, журчать, булькать, бормотать, ахать*;

e) professional occupation of a person: *работать, учительствовать, служить, слесарничать, хозяйствовать*.

¹¹ V. P. Nedialkov y G. G. Silnitskii, Typology of causative constructions. Typology of causative constructions. Morphological causative 8(Leningrad, 1969), 20

¹² Shakhmatov, A.A. “The syntax of the Russian language (Leningrad, 1941), 447.

From intransitive verbs expressing a state, causative transitive verbs with the meaning “bring someone or something into a certain state” are formed in a confix way: *спать – усыпить, сидеть – посадить, лежать – уложить, сохнуть – засушить, гнить – сгноить*:

Ребенок *сидел* в коляске. – *Ребенка посадили* в коляску.

Больной *спал* тревожно. – *Больного усыпили* перед операцией.

Thus, the lexical and grammatical categories of verbs in the Russian language, distinguished on the basis of a generalized idea of their semantics, form a rather complex system. Attempts to analyze the morphological categories of verb groups from the standpoint of their semantics turned out to be fruitful not only within the framework of traditional grammar, but also functional. A.V. Bondarenko notes the important role of the concept of “categorical situation” in determining the methodological approaches of functional grammar, referring to “based on a specific semantic category and corresponding field, a typical informative structure, which is one of the aspects conveyed by the statement of the “general situation”¹³. A.V. Bondarenko identifies these types of categorical situations: aspectual, taxis, personal, qualitative, locative, possessive, conditional, etc.

Semantic classes of verbs

From the standpoint of the structure of the language(s), the main semantic classes of verbs presented in many classifications “can be combined into two categories: 1) grammatical (causative, modal, phase, aspectual, temporal, circumstantial, taxis), 2) mode (speech, thought, memory, knowledge, emotions, sensations, perceptions; evaluative). Verbs are classified as grammatical, whose classification some can in principle be expressed by standard grammatical means: affixes, service words, etc.”¹⁴. Such a division of verbs into grammatical and mode verbs, as well as the presence of several classification words in the verb lexeme is very important for describing constructions with causative verbs.

The peculiarity of the Russian language in the transfer of the meaning of causality with the help of constructions with causative verbs lies in the fact that, according to many researchers, the semantics of causation as a logical and grammatical category is not represented in the Russian language as a systemic relationship, does not have regular formal indicators [See¹⁵]. Separating languages by the nature of the representation of causal semantics in them, V.B. Kasevich suggests introducing into scientific use such scientific definitions as “languages with a poorly presented category of causation” and, hypothetically possible, “languages with an unrepresented category of causation”¹⁶. Indeed, the Russian language for conveying causative semantics does not use various methods, like some other languages: affixes (agglutinative), both prefixes and suffixes, service words, and inner inflection.

¹³ A. V. Bondarenko, *Functional Grammar* (Leningrad, 1984), 26.

T. G. Khazagerov, “Causation: the status and evolution of means of expression in the Russian language”, *Philological Bulletin of Rostov State University*, num 2 (1998): 6

¹⁵ L. M. Vasiliev, *Semantics of the Russian verb. Verbs of mental activity* (Moscow, 1981).

¹⁶ Kasevich, V.B. “Arabic verbs and systemic relations of the semantics of causation. Africa: societies, cultures, languages (Moscow, 1998), 23-26

A productive word-building type can be considered, according to V.B. Kasevich, the line of prefix-suffixal method of forming causative (causating) verbs with the meaning 'deprive of any attribute', formed from motivating names (adjectives or nouns) in parallel with causative verbs corresponding to them in semantics (for example: *отрезвить и отрезветь, обезлюдить и обезлюдеть*, etc.)¹⁷.

A special group of verbs, called causative or motivating, is distinguished by the fact that three components are distinguished in their semantics: 1) the stimulus or goal that condition the implementation of the subject's action, 2) the action itself, and 3) the change in the state or response of the object as a target and the probable result of the actions of the subject. An analysis of the interpretation of the meanings of many causative verbs confirms this idea, for example: *будить* (mean.) – '*заставлять проснуться*', *валить* (1 mean.) – '*заставлять падать*'; *душить* (2 mean.) – '*лишать возможности дышать*'; *воскрешать* – '*делать так, чтобы кто-либо воскрес*'; *гасить* – '*делать так, чтобы что-либо гасло*' etc.

Consequently, the group of causative verbs includes full-meaning verbs with the meaning of the action (i.e., actional). The category of transitivity / intransitivity, and therefore, transience / intransience is directly connected with the causative situation.

A group of causative verbs can only conditionally be called "lexical-semantic", its originality is revealed when compared with typical lexical-semantic groups of verb vocabulary (verbs of speech, thought, familiarization of an object, movement, feeling, etc.). Some scientists attribute causative verbs to verb action methods, functional-semantic categories, and other lexical-grammatical groups. Other authors, given the peculiarities of causative verbs, do not use any general term for their characterization. "Causative verbs, unlike lexical-semantic groups, are united not by the uniformity of the actions they designate, but by the uniformity of the way these actions are represented"¹⁸.

A significant role in determining the semantic features of causative verbs is played by "verb categories with interpretative content", distinguished in the modern Russian language (voice, predicativity/attribution, personality/impersonality)¹⁹. They usually do not introduce additional nominative values into the semantic structure of the verb, but their semantic function is associated with the subjective interpretation of the meaning of the whole statement by the speaker. The unity of the semantic basis and the interpretative component of the categorial situation is the essence of the linguistic interpretation of the categorial situation. "Transition in the narrow sense means some impact on an object (often its creation), which does not record changes in the internal state of the object: *Он написал письмо; Она родила дочку; Он увидел дом; Она знает правду*. Causation either involves the activation of the object, or stimulates a change in its properties, qualities, characteristics, etc.: *Она сушит белье; Он закрыл дверь; Она учит сына музыке*"²⁰. However, the nature of the categorial meaning directly depends on such parameters of the verb lexeme as transitivity itself and causation. Often these parameters

¹⁷ V. B. Kasevich, Arabic verbs and systemic relations of the semantics of causation. Africa: societies, cultures, languages (Moscow, 1998), 18

¹⁸ "The modern Russian language". Edited by P.A. Lekant (Moscow, 2001). "The modern Russian language". Edited by P.A. Lekant (Moscow, 2001), 28

¹⁹ I. S. Ulukhanov, Verb. The Russian language: encyclopedi. (1979), 310

²⁰ I. S. Ulukhanov, Verb. The Russian language...

do not differentiate, since causative verbs are usually transitive, and accordingly there are many causative verbs among transitive ones.

Conclusions

Having studied numerous theoretical studies, we came to the conclusion that the concept of causality and its narrower representation - categories of causation - have always been an actual component of the logical-grammatical system of the Russian language.

The causative verb has specific semantics, which allows combining two situations into one frame, i.e. it is a kind of logical-semantic "brace", containing the semes of the left or right side of the structure.

All verbs with the semantic attribute "cause", i.e. the direction of the action to change the object of causation, regardless of whether it is the only attribute or verb has additional semantic attributes characterizing the purpose and means of action, are included in the semantic group of causative verbs.

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Funding

*The publication has been with the support of the “RUDN University Program 5-100”

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