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## APPROXIMATORS & HEDGES: CORRELATION IN DISCOURSE

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The given paper addresses to two types of linguistic meaning – Lexical Semantic of adverbs (temporal, locative, degree, etc.) and functional semantic. The class of adverbs demonstrates a vast non-homogeneity as regards their semantic interpretation (Mykhaylenko, 2015). Semantically several domains of adverbs are differentiated, however, primarily there are three basic classes of adverbials with further sub-classifications (Erst, 2007). C. Maienborn and M. Schafer (2011) underline that each class has its own subgroups: (a) predicational, (b) participant oriented and (c) functional adverbials. Functional Semantics of adverbs reveals approximators, down-toners, amplifiers etc. It focuses attention on matching the meanings of the language unit and its context (situation).

The author's assumption is that the language unit actualizes the speaker's intention in the context only. The study provides insight into the broader view of semantics of adverbs which incorporates pragmatics (Kris Liu and Jean E. Fox, 2012). The outcomes of the semantic analysis – definitional analysis based on the dictionary entry of the given adverbs and the componential one based on the decomposition of their lexical meaning made the following assumptions possible: (1) the common component «approximation» is revealed in English adverbs likewise (2) the component «относительность» is a characteristic feature of the lexical meaning of Russian adverbs; (3) the results of both analyses helped to classify these adverbs into a separate semantic group or a semantic micro-field (domain) of «approximators» in L1 and L2. The analysis of the adverbs of approximation according to their semantic features in the language systems and their functional features in the discourse structure helps to match their linguistic meaning and use in context.

**Key words:** adverb, approximator, lexical semantics, functional semantics, speaker's intention, hedge, down-toner, truth-value, discourse.

**Михайленко В. В. «Апроксиматори» та «регулятори тональності»: кореляції в дискурсі.** У статті розглянуто два типи лінгвістичного значення – лексико-семантичне та функціонально-семантичне. Зосереджено увагу на узгодженні значень одиниці мови та її контексту (ситуації) на основі припущення, що мовна одиниця реалізує інтенцію мовця лише в контексті. Такий підхід забезпечує ширший погляд на семантику, яка включає і прагматику.

**Ключові слова:** прислівник, апроксиматор, лексична семантика, функціональна семантика, інтенція мовця, «регулятор тональності», «понижувач тональності», істинність, дискурс.

**Михайленко В. В. «Апроксиматоры» и «регуляторы тональности»: корреляции в дискурсе.** Данная статья рассматривает два типа лингвистического значения – лексико-семантическое и функционально-семантическое. Внимание сосредоточено на соответствии значений единицы языка и его контекста (ситуации) на основе предположения, что языковая единица реализует интенцию говорящего только в контексте. Такой подход обеспечивает более широкий взгляд на семантику, которая включает прагматику также.

**Ключевые слова:** наречие, апроксиматор, лексическая семантика, функциональная семантика, интенция говорящего, регулятор тональности, истинность, дискурс.

**Defining the problem and argumentation of the topicality of its consideration.** The class of adverbs demonstrates a vast non-homogeneity as regards their semantic interpretation [17, 19–21]. Semantically several domains of adverbs are differentiated, however, primarily there are three basic classes of adverbials with further sub-classifications [6, 1008]. C. Maienborn and M. Schafer underline that each class has its own subgroups: (a) predicational, (b) participant oriented and (c) functional adverbials [15, 1390–1420]. Predicational adverbs are further subcategorized into: (a) sentence adverbs and (b) verb-related adverbs. In the former category we can find: (a) subject oriented adverbs like *arrogantly*, (b) speaker-oriented adverbs like *honestly*, *intentionally* and *surprisingly*, and (c) domain of adverbs like *architecturally* and *mathematically*. Verb-related adverbs on the other hand include: (a) mental attitude adverbs like *reluctantly*, (b) manner adverbs like *skilfully* and *slowly*, and (c) degree adverbs like *deeply*.

The present paper is concerned with the differentiation of the meaning and use of the following adverbs: *approximately*, *roughly*, *almost*, *relatively*, *nearly*, *practically*, *somewhat*, *around* functioning in what we call the “para-legal” text represented by novel “The Associate” (John Grisham, 2009). Although they are generally regarded as synonyms, their meaning is not identical and they are not interchangeable in all contexts. The paper, therefore, attempts to determine the differences in the semantic content of the adverbs under study.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** David Crystal refers to adverbs as a “dust-bin” class for “displaced words in the English grammar stressing that if a researcher cannot define the part of speech meaning of the word due to its most divergent types then she can throw it to the word bank labeled “adverbs” [5, 211]. R. Quirk et al. [19, 438], for example, write: “Because of its great heterogeneity,

the adverb class is the most nebulous and puzzling of the traditional word classes. Indeed, it is tempting to say that the adverb is an item that does not fit the definitions of other word classes [19, 438].” According to their role in the clause structure, they are divided into four categories: adjuncts, subjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts [19]. Sylvia Chalker has a similar opinion; as she puts it, “adverbs have been described as” the least satisfactory of the traditional parts of speech. In fact, this word class is rather a rag-bag for words that will not fit anywhere else [8, 189]. T. Givón emphasizes that the heterogeneity of adverbs is displayed at all levels of analysis – in their morphology, syntax and semantics [8, 71]. As D. Biber et al. point out, “many adverbs have meanings that vary with context of use”. Some adverbs have both literal and more metaphorical meanings, other adverbs can be used with distinctively different meanings [2, 552, see also: 18, 247ff.].

Thus, the meaning of an adverb is often context-dependent. Dwight Bolinger admits that two or more words may be synonyms because they are close enough to allow the speaker a choice between them in a significant number of contexts [3, 123]. S. Ullmann conceives of synonymy as a case of multiple meaning, whereby several names have one sense. Further on, he claims that synonyms are “words identical in meaning and interchangeable in any context” [20, 46]. In this respect, D. Bolinger and Sears are less strict; they argue that synonyms are characteristically “close enough to allow the speaker a choice between them in a significant number of contexts” [3, 123].

Kris Liu and Jean E. Fox define the function of the given adverbs as that of hedges providing pragmatic cues about unreliability of information. The hedges have also positive effects and can make people appear more friendly and attractive [14, 892]. Hedges, according to A. Jucker, are markers of necessary information for the addressee. For example, *probably* and *I guess* are thought to indicate a speaker’s lack of certainty about information presented or to soften a speaker’s commitment to an utterance [13]. There are several categories of hedges, such as (1) vague quantifying expressions (*some, many*); (2) adverbs of frequency (*sometimes, usually*), adverbs of likelihood (probably, maybe); (3) approximators (*about, around*); (4) propositional attitudes (*I think, I dunno*); (5) and phrases *such as* or *something [like that]* which can also be expressing vagueness [13, 893]. A subgroup of approximators of the Source Language and the Target Language in the focus of semantic, contrastive and discourse types of analysis.

**The outline of the main research material.** According to R. Quirk et al. degree adverbs can operate in three different roles: (1) amplification – when they assert a generalized high degree, e.g. increasingly (2) diminution – when they assert a generalized low degree, e.g. a little (3) measure – when they do not imply that the degree is notably high or low, e.g. sufficiently [19, 485–486]. As for the classification of adverbs of degree there is little consistency in the classification of degree adverbs in various grammar books. D. Biber et al., for example, propose a two-fold division into: (1) amplifi-

ers/intensifiers – increase intensity, they indicate: (a) degrees on a scale (when used with gradable adjectives); (b) an endpoint on a scale (used with gradables and non-gradables); (2) diminishers / downtoners – scale down the effect of the modified item [2, 554–556]. However, R. Quirk et al. argue that the term „intensifier“ should not be regarded as always referring to an expression that operates an increase of intensification. Rather, an intensifier “indicates a point on an abstractly conceived intensity scale; and the point indicated may be relatively low or relatively high” [19, 589]. Therefore, while for Biber et al. the terms „intensifier“ and „amplifier“ are synonymous [2], R. Quirk et al. consider amplifiers (along with downtoners) a subgroup of intensifiers [19; see also: 4]. Moreover, M. Alexander [1, 139] opposes adverbs of degree to intensifiers. He argues that “while an adverb of degree normally weakens or limits the meaning of the word it modifies, an intensifier normally strengthens (or „intensifies“) the meaning” [1, 139]. For him, adverbs of degree are expressions such as *almost, a bit, barely, enough, fairly, hardly, nearly, quite, rather, somewhat, and too*. On the contrary, words like *very, pretty, jolly, extremely, really, awfully, and terribly* fall into the category of intensifiers (ibid. 139–140). Yet another (and more detailed) classification is provided by R. Huddleston and G. Pullum. They divide adverbs of degree into seven subgroups: maximal (e.g. *entirely, completely, absolutely, thoroughly*), multal (e.g. *greatly, profoundly*), moderate (e.g. *moderately, partially*), paucal (e.g. *a bit, a little*), minimal (e.g. *barely, hardly, scarcely*), approximating (e.g. *almost, nearly*), and relative (e.g. *enough, sufficiently*) [12, 21–724].

Downtoners, as discussed above, are a subclass of degree adverbs. They “have a generally lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm” [19, 445]. According to D. Biber et al., some of them “are related to hedges [...] i. e., they convey some sense that the use of the modified item is not precisely accurate” [see also: 6]. However, D. Biber et al. also point out that there is a distinction between the words that primarily modify intensity (degree adverbs) and words that primarily mark imprecision or estimation (hedges such as *kind of*) [2, 555–556].

This research presents definitions of the referred adverbs taken from the following five dictionaries: Oxford English Dictionary, Webster’s New World Dictionary of American English, New Collins Concise English Dictionary Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Roget’s Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases and Большой толковый словарь русского языка (С. А. Кузнецова); Толковый словарь русского языка (С. И. Ожегова); Толковый словарь живого великорусского языка (В. Даля), Большой синонимический словарь русского языка (А. Ю. Кожевникова).

The contrastive study of the given adverbs brought about semantic correlation pairs of adverbs IN L 1 (English) and L 2 (Russian):

1. *approximately: close to; roughly* ↔ *примерно*;
2. *roughly “without being exact or fully authenticated”* ↔ *приблизительно*;

3. *almost* "very nearly but not completely" ↔ *почти*;
4. *comparatively* "approximately, relatively" ↔ *относительно*;
5. *relatively* "comparatively, rather, somewhat" ↔ *сравнительно, относительно*;
6. *barely*: "hardly, only just; no more than" ↔ *едва*;
7. *nearly* "practically, about, almost, near" ↔ *почти*;
8. *practically* "virtually; almost" ↔ *фактически, почти*;
9. *somewhat* "not absolutely" ↔ *относительно*;
10. *generally* "usually, commonly, typically, regularly" ↔ *вобщем, неточно*;
11. *around* "nearby" ↔ *около*;
12. *thereabout*: near that number, amount, degree ↔ *приблизительно*.

The outcomes of the semantic analysis – definitional analysis based on the dictionary entry of the given adverbs and the componential one based on the decomposition of their lexical meaning made the following assumptions possible: (1) the common component "approximation" is revealed in the given English adverbs and serves as a basis of their grouping, likewise (2) the component "относительность" is a characteristic feature of the lexical meaning of the Russian adverbs;

(3) the results of the both analysis helped to classify these adverbs into a separate semantic group or a semantic micro-field (domain) in the language systems of L 1 and L 2.

In the process of the discourse analysis we shall attempt to consider the context (situation) factors and the author's intention influencing the realization of a definite meaning:

1. *Kyle could barely breathe.* «Кайл едва дышал».

The young man feels uncomfortable under the pressure of the evidence the functions of the adverb *barely* are those of 'approximator', 'down-toner', 'deminutive' or 'amplifier'. The translator conveys the author's true intentional meaning encoded in the adverb.

2. *It was at least twenty feet from the front door.* «Камера лежала по меньшей мере в двенадцати футах от входной двери».

The adverb *at least* underlines the indefiniteness or approximation of the distance which in this case is not significant, in case of disagreement in the process of investigation the approximation and unreliability of the adverbs lexical meaning it can be a hook for the trial parties.

3. *For the next few days they would review some crucial documents, billing at least eight hours a day at \$300 an hour.* «Примерно через неделю они будут вчитываться в высшей степени серьёзные документы, покрывая счетами не менее восьми часов в день, по триста долларов».

In this case the adverb actualizes the unit the absence of the working hours limit for the associates in the company. And the translator retains that pragmatically marked meaning.

4. *Elaine says she woke up several hours later, around three in the morning.* «Если верить словам Илейн, она проснулась через несколько часов, около трёх часов утра».

The adverbs *several* and *around* realize the components of 'approximation' and 'vagueness' of the victim's evidence which are retained in the translation.

5. *When an editor of the Yale Law Journal takes a low-paying job with legal services, he is a hero to those on his side and to most of the faculty.* «Когда редактор «Юридического вестника Йельского университета» соглашается занять ничего в материальном плане не сулящую должность консультанта благотворительной организации в глазах большинства однокурсников и почти всех профессоров он становится героем».

The traditional adverb of degree actualizes the components of 'approximation', 'undefined value' and 'vagueness' to underline the ordinary feature of the event or the tradition of the community. The English degree adverb is substituted by the noun in the Russian translation to stress the tradition of the community. Note: the translator used the approximator *почти* to stress the majority of the faculty.

6. *English was not his first language, though there was almost no trace of his native tongue.* «Английский явно не был родным языком Райта, однако определить принадлежность акцента Кайл не сумел».

The adverb *almost* in combination with the negative pronoun actualizes the component 'feasibility' which draws the interlocutor's attention and makes him be on the alert. The translator paraphrases phrase *almost + no trace of his native tongue* with the help the loan word *акцент* to emphasize that English was a foreign language or the speaker.

7. *The restaurant was almost empty, and Bruce Springsteen was rocking through the sound system.* «Зал был пуст, из скрытых за портьерами динамиков приглушенно доносился голос Брюса Спрингстина».

The character's perception was vague and approximate being fully absorbed by the event and the adverb *almost* intensifies the young man's state which is not retained in the translation.

The analysis of the adverbs of approximation according to their semantic features in the language systems and their functional features in the discourse structure helps to match their linguistic meaning and use in context. The approaches of different researchers to studying of these verbs' semantics are described. In addition, the synthesis of two processes: generation (Speaker's meaning) and cognition (Addressee's meaning) is described within this group of adverbs.

**Conclusions and perspectives of further research in this field.** This heuristic analysis seeks to incorporate semantic and pragmatic information of the linguistic unit in use. The choice of the term depends on the researcher and the school she belongs to. In our opinion, the adverbs under study belong to the domain of approximators as the componential analysis reveals a common semantic component which in their context may realize additional components of limitation, reduction, amplifying, intensifier, unreliability marker, diminisher, hedge, subjective modality marker etc. This heuristic analysis seeks to incorporate semantic and pragmatic information of the linguistic unit in use.



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