

# ЛЕКСИКОЛОГІЯ. СЕМАСІОЛОГІЯ. ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЯ

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## FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF COMPLEX SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

**Глотова О.В. Функціональний підхід до вивчення складних семантичних категорій.**

*У статті розглядаються питання теорії функціональної граматики, що посідають центральне місце в сучасному мовознавстві. Актуальність теми визначається першочерговими завданнями сучасної синтаксичної науки, яка шукає науково-методологічну основу дослідження фундаментальних семантичних категорій зі складною формально-змістовою структурою, що може бути реалізовано на основі функціонального підходу. Мета цієї розвідки – розглянути різні підходи до вивчення таких категорій в межах функціонального аналізу, з'ясувавши можливість розглядати в єдиній системі належні до різних мовних рівнів засоби на основі спільності їхніх семантичних функцій, та запропонувати алгоритм аналізу складних семантичних категорій. Видається не тільки можливим, а й потрібним і науково обгрунтованим синтетичне описування співвідношень між значенням і формою, що не знімає визнання провідної ролі напряму вивчення від семантики до засобів її оформлення як науково-методологічної вимоги функціонального аналізу. Таким чином, багатоаспектний функціональний аналіз складних семантичних категорій дозволяє виявити потенційну в мові й застосовувану в мовленні можливість оформляти певні семантичні відношення для задоволення потреб спілкування і відтворення семантичних відтінків висловлювань. У мові існують різні засоби вираження семантичного значення як на рівні складного речення (складнопірядного, складносурядного, безсполучникового), так і на рівні простого ускладненого речення (це приєднниково-іменникові утворення, речення з відокремленими членами речення (дієприкметниковими та прикметниковими зворотами, прикладками, прислівниками). Запропоновано алгоритм аналізу складних семантичних категорій, який складається з трьох етапів.*

**Ключові слова:** функціональний підхід, функціонально-синтаксичний аналіз, семантична категорія із складною формально-змістовою структурою, мовний рівень, алгоритм аналізу.

**Glotova O. Functional Approach to the Study of Complex Semantic Categories.** *The article deals with the problems of the theory of functional grammar, which occupy a central place in modern linguistics. Its topicality is determined by the priority tasks of modern syntax, having the purpose to find out a methodological foundation of the study of fundamental semantic categories with a complex formal-content structure, what can be achieved basing on functional approach. The objective is to focus on different views to studying such categories within the framework of functional analysis, and to find the possibility to analyze the means belonging to different language levels in a single system basing on the commonality of their semantic functions. There exist various means of expressing a definite semantic meaning both at the level of a composite sentence, and at the level of a simple sentence. An algorithm for the analysis of complex functional-semantic categories is proposed.*

**Key words:** functional approach, functional-syntactic analysis, semantic category with a complex formal-content structure, language level, an algorithm of analysis.

## **Introduction**

In the last decades functional approach is widely used in the study of syntactic phenomena. In modern linguistics, the application of functional approach to the study of syntax allows us to consider in a single system the means belonging to different language levels, basing on the commonality of their semantic functions. Its use is conditioned by the need to extend linguistic researches, in which, along with a level study of the language, an integrating multilevel analysis of language units based on the commonality of their functions has been carried out. Both of these areas are embraced by the philosophical principle of consistency. Understanding the system of language in semantic and grammatical, phonetic and word-building, stylistic and functional aspects is a primary task of modern linguistics.

The question arises about the logics of the development of the linguistic theory, directed both to the consideration of the interaction of elements of different levels on a functional basis, and the needs of active language learning which involves obtaining information about speech units expressing definite conceptual content. This is a question of the possibility of using functional-syntactic analysis for the study of fundamental semantic categories with a complex formal-content structure, such as categories of causality, condition, consequence, time, place, etc.

## **Research objectives**

The objective of this article is to prove the possibility of applying functional approach to the study of complex semantic categories and to propose an algorithm for studying complex semantic categories in a simple and complex sentence with subsequent systematization of the language units expressing definite semantics.

In modern linguistics functional approach to the study of syntactic phenomena is topical. It allows to study within a single system the syntactic units belonging to different language levels basing on the commonality of their semantic functions. Its application is conditioned by the need to expand linguistic researches, in which along with a unilevel study of the language, an integrating multilevel analysis of linguistic units (morphological, syntactic, word-building, lexical) could be accomplished. This multilevel analysis is based on the commonality of functions of these units. The possibility to apply both approaches is based on the philosophical principle of consistency, and this determines the systematic approach within each research area. Thus, understanding the system of the language in semantic and grammatical, phonetic and word-building, stylistic and functional aspects is the primary task of scholars.

## **Discussion and results**

In modern linguistics, the problems of the theory of functional grammar occupy a central place [Bondarko, 1983; Vihovanets, 1992; Halliday, 1976]. They have attracted the attention of the researchers of different language systems [Bondarko, 1983; Vihovanets, 1992; Doroshenko, 1980; Teoriya, 1987]. These problems are quite complex and multiaspectual. Such complexity is explained primarily by different understanding of the method of functional grammar. Some scholars [Bondarko, 1983; Teoriya, 1987], recognizing the undoubtedly dominant formal orientation of grammar, go in their researches from the original linguistic forms to understanding

their meanings. Such an approach is based on understanding language forms not as isolated ones, but as those functioning on the basis of their content. However, the critics of this approach see it as a narrow understanding of the method of functional grammar. They state that the contents side of the language does not exist in isolation, it is conditioned by speech activity which forms it and is used by it.

A broad understanding of functional approach to grammar foresees the direction of the analysis not from content to form, but from mental activity (thought) to the linguistic means that form it. This method of explaining linguistic phenomena is comprehensive, and that is why it is valuable in the study of new features of the language system. Indeed, if we take into account the fact, that cognitive, that is, mental abilities of humans (in particular, their basic mechanisms) are independent of the specific languages, then there appears a natural need for the identification of universal semantic categorization. This will lead to a typological, and then to a universal approach to semantics. Thus, the following scheme of functional description can be applied: from universal semantic categories to different ways of grammaticalisation in a definite language. In this case it is not necessary to oppose the direction of research methods: from form to content or from content to form. Both methods are valuable as techniques, the application of which is dictated by the aims of the analysis and the material studied. It can be conditioned by mutual verification of the reliability of the results obtained. This, in any way, does not contradict functional approach to the study of syntactic phenomena and does not reject its scientific value.

It should be noted that the ideas of such study of linguistic phenomena are not new. The fact is that a functional approach to the description and interpretation of linguistic facts was repeatedly proclaimed by various linguistic schools and directions. Although their views on understanding the essence of functional approach to the study of language were different, they were united by the belief that language should be studied in the light of its role in human communication. In this case, the language was seen as a system of human communication, and not as an infinite flow of structural features of sentences. An important role in the unification of different views on functionalism belongs, first and foremost, to O.O. Potebnya, who proceeded from the mental contents to the language categorization, and later to O.O. Shakhmatov, who, as it is well-known, began his “Syntax of the Russian language” with the analysis of the structure of communication.

Modern scholars, basing on the ideas of their prominent predecessors and taking into account the results of the researches of the last decades, see the prospect of functional approach in a profound study of semantic categorization, which opens the horizons of typological studies in relation to different languages [Zahnitko, 2007; Zolotova, 2005; Halliday, 1976; Hawkins, 1988]. Functional grammar is aimed at studying and describing the functioning of these units at different language levels. It means that grammar of this type studies language units belonging to different language levels, but having the same semantic functions. As far as the description of the language material is concerned, the approach “from semantics to its formal expression” as the main one that defines the structure of grammar, should

be used parallel to the approach “from form to semantics” [Teoriya, 1987]. This approach helps to overcome the artificial difficulties generated by the analytical methodology of description, the starting point of which were language forms.

Positively evaluating the desire to overcome the shortcomings of the analytical methodology of descriptions, some exaggeration of the approach “from semantics to form” should be mentioned [Levitsky, 2005; Mirchenko, 2001]. The synthetic description of the relations between meaning and form is not only possible but also necessary and scientifically grounded, not reducing the leading role of the researches directed from semantics to the means of its expression as the main scientific and methodological requirement of functional analysis.

The basic requirement of functional analysis is the study of the function implemented in the utterance. Under the function of linguistic units we understand their ability to fulfill a certain purpose and, accordingly, to function in speech, on the one hand. On the other hand, the function is also the result, the realized intention, presented in speech. According to this assumption it is necessary to distinguish between two aspects in understanding the function and its intention, namely: the potential aspect and the resultative aspect. The function in the potential aspect is the ability (inherent in a unit of the language system) to perform a specific purpose and to function properly. The function in the resultative aspect is a consequence of functioning this unit in interaction with the environmental units, that is, the purpose achieved in the language. Structural language units can be viewed both in the potential aspect and in the resultative aspect. The distinction between these aspects enables not only to identify the potential of the language to express certain semantics, that is to trace structural elements having such semantics, but also to consider their ability to function in different spheres according to the need to convey the shades of meanings in a particular situation.

As it has already been mentioned the requirement of functional approach in the study of syntactic phenomena comprises the analysis of multilevel linguistic means, which makes it possible to combine units of different language levels into functional semantic fields. Under the functional-semantic field we understand a system of multilevel means of a single language, which interact through the commonality of their functions and are based on a certain semantic category [Lingvicheskiy, 1990].

This means that a certain semantic category, that is, the semantic invariant, which unites the heterogeneous linguistic units and determines their interaction, forms the basis of each functional-semantic field. In other words, the functional-semantic field is a set of different means of formal expression of a semantic category. Semantic categories are distinguished on the basis of their regular representation in the content of the statement, in the meanings of the linguistic units and their various combinations.

Thus, a multispectual functional analysis of complex semantic categories can reveal the potential in the language and used in speech ability of these categories to form certain semantic relations to meet the needs of communication and reproduction of the semantic shades of utterances.

We propose an algorithm for studying complex semantic categories in a simple and complex sentence with subsequent systematization of the language units expressing definite semantics:

- 1) determine linguistic means rendering certain semantic relations at the level of complex and simple sentences;
- 2) identify central and peripheral linguistic units as structural components of the functional-semantic field of the semantic category;
- 3) build the hierarchy of the language units: syntactic structures, grammatical forms of words and lexemes as means of rendering certain semantics.

#### Conclusions

The validity of such an approach to the analysis of language units is based on the belief that the study of the syntactical level as a higher one which synthesizes elements of other levels, reveals new features of semantics and functioning of complex semantic categories.

We see the prospects for further researches in solving important problems of functional syntax, in particular: to distinguish between semantic-syntactic and formally-syntactical functions of syntactic units that express complex functional-semantic categories, to identify the features of their functional-semantic fields. Hierarchical grouping of linguistic means of expressing certain functional-semantic categories may serve as a model for their comparative and typological description in both related and non-related languages.

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