

Actional Verbs of Movement as Basic Means of the Actualization of Spatial Relationships in French

M Yu Nikitina¹, S I Garagulya¹

¹Belgorod State Technological University named after V.G. Shukhov, Kostyukov Str. 46, 308012 Belgorod, Russia

E-mail: ritanikitina@mail.ru, garagulya@mail.ru

Abstract. The article studies the lexical-semantic group of the French verbs of movement which is an integral part of the verbs denoting the dynamic spatial localization. Particular attention is focused on its variety of semantic structure and essential variability of forms. Different classifications of the lexical-semantic group are given according to the basic movement characteristics. The broad and the narrow meanings of movement are differentiated. The indicator determines the presence of the movement category in the semantic structure of a predicate. It defines the unique method of the requirements for the movement situation and reveals the main semantic qualities of the verbs of the group under study.

1. Introduction

The verb in all forms and meanings possesses the richest semantic, grammatical and stylistic potentials which have been historically attracted the attention of linguists. In modern semantics the verb is a language category of feature units with the predicative meaning. The verbal predicate in combination with the locative indicators are considered to be the main linguistic means of the description of spatial relationships [3, 5, 8, 12, 13]. The purpose of this paper is to study the lexical-semantic group of the verbs of movement which hold the central position in the expression of the movement category in French. In this regard, the study of this group of verbs is of particular interest because the language signs have multilateral linguistic occurrences expressing the universal phenomena of the objective world of movement.

2. Methodology

Focusing on a representative sample I have made analysis of different data from a wide range of dictionaries and literary sources of the French authors of the XIX-XXth centuries. In order to get reliable results I have applied different research methods: the continuous sampling method, the semantic and componential analysis, the combination of the quantitative and qualitative techniques. A great attention is paid to the application of methods of the contextual, situational analysis and structural-semantic modeling.

3. The study of the actional verbs of movement in French

Due to the description method of the locative relations the action verbs can be classified into two categories: stative and dynamic verbs [6]. According to N. D. Arutyunova, the predicate expresses the assessment of the static properties and dynamic manifestations of the real subject relations [1]. The

stative verbs usually refer to a state or a condition which is not changing or is going to change, for example: *Le magasin se trouve dans un nouveau quartier.*

Dynamic verbs usually describe the actions of an object or a subject in time: *Il va à sa place.* N. D. Arutyunova emphasizes that the verb relating to the dynamic predicates is "a cut-out shot from the life movie" which is compared with the changes of the context situations. Thus, the meaning of a predicate is formed by the division of the event stream into the separate dynamic fragments of the different phase [2].

The verbs of movement take the central place among the verbs of the dynamic spatial localization of an object or a subject. The key indicator causing the presence of the movement category in the semantic structure of verbs is connected with the word meaning of the activity. According to the definition given in the Petit Robert dictionary, it assumes the ability to the action, movement, influence (*faculté d'agir, de produire un effet* [18]). It also requires the presence of the movement actants, i.e. the subject, making movement and the object which this movement is directed to.

The verbs are divided into the object and subject ones based on their meanings of the activity. A.A. Ufimtseva stresses that this process is connected with the meaning focused on the action object or determined by the semantic relations with the subject [14].

The object verbs express the subject action in direction to the object which causes (or doesn't cause) certain changes [9]. According to V. G. Gak, there are four types of the object structures which denote: a) creation or destruction of the object, b) its change; c) its movement; d) its affection (the action affects the object) [4].

So, French object verbs of movement are:

2) movement actions directed to change the size, form, object, volume: *allonger, arrondir, augmenter, contracter, déchirer, diminuer, disperser, dissiper, étirer, fendre, grossir, gonfler, imprimer, presser, trancher, etc.;*

2) verbs of movement causation, displacement or change. They describe the situations in which the subject forces the object to move, to occupy the certain position in space or to change the initial one: *aplatir, arborer, atterrir, baisser, changer, coucher, déplacer, écarter, emporter, courber, jeter, incliner, mener, pencher, pousser, renverser, tirer, lancer, etc.;*

3) verbs of movement and displacement in space: *dépasser, franchir, passer, permuter, ramener, rapprocher, reculer, retirer, retourner, surmonter, sursauter, surpasser, transmettre, etc.;*

4) object affection: *choquer, effleurer, frapper, heurter, palper, tâter, tosse, toucher, etc.*

The most part of the subject verbs is presented by the verbs of motion containing the activity component in the semantic structure. They often express the movement change and the movement process. They are as follows:

1) verbs of movement and displacement in space: *aller, accoster, arriver, atteindre, avancer, cheminer, circuler, courir, fuir, flâner, grimper, marcher, manœuvrer, sauter, etc.;*

2) verbs which describe the movements in the same place: *bouilloner, frémir, frétiller, frissonner, grelotter, palpiter, papilloter, pivoter, trembler, vibrer, etc.*

So, the movement is a target, dependent component of the situation caused to change the place of a subject / an object. That's why it is necessary to define the types of the situations described by means of the verbs of this category taking into account the systematization and the classification of verbs of movement. According to L. Talmi, there is an abstract situation of the movement which has certain characteristics: "figure" that is the subject of the movement, "background" concerning the movement, "way" including initial and final points of the movement etc. Their positions are visually changed in space: having separated from a background, a figure describes a certain trajectory, the complex of mentally connected points in space in which there is a moving subject [19].

The movement situation includes the following oppositions: 1) a subject – many subjects; 2) a way – a movement manner; 3) an environment – features of the environment; 4) a speed – a rate; 5) a direction – a trajectory; 6) an action – actional motives. Any movement situation is characterized by these parameters which are accented and expressed by the verbal lexemes of various languages.

E.S. Kubryakova points out that the movement forms a special type of the representation in our brain – the movement scheme or the program, its mentally restored "trace". As soon as the matter is perceived as a moving substance, the movement which is obvious to an eye creates a movement image of its orientation, trajectory, trace which are the schemes of implementation. One or several components of the general semantic structure of a verb (compact, compressing) can be replaced by the metonymy. The full form of the movement designation is an expanded sentence which describes the purpose, result or characteristics of the movement. But there is often an incomplete designation of the movement situation when one component can be defined by another one or all situation of the movement is presented by one of its components [11].

The verbs of movement are in the origins of the system of the physical actions carried out by the person. They take a special place in the system of the French verb and are characterized by a variety of semantic structure, essential variability of forms. This group of verbs has already been studied from the point of their lexico-semantic organization and their grammatical features. However there is no consensus on the principles of the allocation, differentiation of the verbs and there is no stability in their terminology, too.

Analyzing the semantic groups of lexical structure of language Sh. Balli opposed "movement" to the concept "rest". The verbs of movement are various verbs which designate that a subject / an object isn't at rest: *saisir* – 'to catch', *casser* – 'to break', *vibrer* 'to shiver', *frotter* – 'to rub', etc. The verbs describing the movement direction are: *vêtir* – 'to dress', *ouvrir* – 'to open', *meler* – 'to mix' etc. [15].

Considering five French verbs: *marcher*, *courir*, *sauter*, *danser*, *remuer*, B. Potye describes their semantic space by means of the following signs: "movement in space"; "vertical position of movement"; "movement regularity"; "movement speed", "movement" (in general)". So, in this system the meaning of the verb *marcher* can have the following characteristics: + - + - + where the sign "plus" corresponds to positive, and "minus" is a negative meaning of a sign, i.e. the verb defines "slow, regular, horizontal movement in space" [17].

N. V. Kovalenko emphasizes that the French verbs *aller*, *se rendre*, *se diriger*, *marcher* define the process-based, directed movement; the verbs *s'en aller*, *partir* denote the leaving, removal; the verbs *venir*, *arriver* designate the arrival [10].

V. G. Gak gives the detailed description of the verbs of movement. According to his opinion, the broad and the narrow meanings of movement are differentiated. The broad meaning of the movement is the opposition to any kind of the rest. The narrow meaning of the category is the movement, change, location of the object. The lexico-semantic group of movement consists of the verbs indicating the space movement to a greater or lesser extent.

The basic characteristics of the movement are as follows: 1) independence / dependence of movement (A); 2) movement direction (B); 3) a way of movement (C). They are the most common semantic components which can be regarded as the semantic categories [6].

1. The category independence / dependence of movement (A) expresses the action attitude towards the subject, it forms opposition of two subcategories: 1) A1 designates that substance moves independently; 2) A2 shows that the movement is a result of the influence of other substance.

The component A is expressed by: a) radical morphemes: *courir* 'to run' (A1) – *mener* 'messages' (A2); b) reflexive form of the verb: *déplacer* 'to transit' (A2) – *se déplacer* 'to be in transit' (A1).

The distinction between A1 and A2 can be expressed without the verb by the following constructions: a) transitive use of a verb: *la balle sursaute* (A1) – *faire sursauter la balle* (A2); b) causative constructions: *sortir* 'to leave' (A1) – *faire sortir* 'to banish'; c) analytical verbal phrases as the suppletive means of the deficiency compensating the word-formation and the morphological means: *s'enfuir* 'to run away' (A1), *mettre en fuite* 'to put to flight' (A2).

In French the category of independence can be expressed syntactically by means of the intransitive verbs: *monter* 'to lift, rise'; *descendre*, *rouler*, *avancer*, *approcher*, *reculer*, *remonter*, *rentrer*, *retourner*.

The dependent movement in French is often expressed by the causal construction. The causal construction with the verb *laisser* corresponds to the series of the Russian verbs founded from 'puskat'

and the construction with *faire* which derives from the verb 'vesti'. The Russian verb prefixes correspond to the French infinitive: *faire entrer* 'vvesti' – *laisser entrer* 'vpustit'; *faire sortir* 'vyivesti' – *laisser sortir* 'vyipustit'; *faire passer* 'provesti' – *laisser passer* 'propustit'; *faire approcher* 'podvesti' – *laisser approcher* 'podpustit'.

The same situation is often described in French by the verb of the dependent movement (A2) while in Russian it is expressed by the verb of the independent movement (A1). Such correspondence is often occurred when the following verbs are used in the phrase: *mener, amener, emmener, ramener*:

Je vous emmènerai en Bretagne l'été prochaine [16] - 'Sleduyuschim letom ya vas povezu v Bretan'. In this example the verb of the dependent movement *emmener* is translated into Russian by means of the verb of the independent movement. There is a tendency to use the direct transitive forms in similar cases in French.

2. The category of the movement direction (B) is often considered as the main semantic component of the verbs of movement. To define the direction of the movement means to point the situation in space of a moving subject *X* concerning the other subject *Y*. A number of aspects can be differentiated in this category.

The aspect B1 is a general orientation or non-orientation of the movement. It is expressed by the opposition of verbal lexemes *aller/marcher* in French.

The aspect B2 denotes the direction change. It is possible to define the following subcategories: 1) to go forward: *s'avancer* – 'to move ahead'; 2) to go aside: *tourner* – 'to turn'; 3) to go around: *se disperser* – 'to extend'; 4) to go back: *retourner* – 'to come back' (the French prefix *re-*).

The aspect B3 describes the direction of the movement from the point of view of the observer i.e. the speaker or other person who gets the action. It is expressed by the opposition of root morphemes of the verbs *aller* and *venir* in French.

The aspect B4 underlines the spatial relations between two moving subjects. It includes the following subcategories: *se réunir* – 'to connect'; *se séparer* – 'to separate'; *suivre* – 'to follow'; *précéder* – 'to be ahead'; *accompagner* – 'to go nearby, to accompany'. The verbs *suivre* and *accompagner* often show non-relative positioning of two moving substances and the fact of joint movement, for example: *On pouvait les suivre à la trace* [16].

The aspect B5 is a movement direction in relation to *Y* which is considered to be immovable, it is expressed by the root morphemes or verbal prefixes. There are the subcategories in this aspect: *entourer* – 'to surround'; *contourner* – 'to turn'; *enjamber* – 'to step'; *traverser* – 'to cross'; *longer* – 'to go lengthways'; *entrer* – 'to enter'; *sortir* – 'to leave'; *monter* – 'to rise'; *descendre* – 'to go down'; *arriver* – 'to arrive'; *s'approcher* – 'to approach'; *s'éloigner* – 'to be removed'; *s'enfoncer* – 'to go deep'; *atteindre* – 'to reach' etc.

3. The category of the way of movement (C) forms a multilayered number of the aspects and subcategories. It characterizes the movement which depends on the area in which it takes place, the nature of the moving object /subject, its role in the movement, the continuity / the discontinuity of the movement, the natural features of the moving objects / subjects etc.

The aspect of the intensity C1 is related to the category of the way of movement C: *s'élancer, se précipiter, to accélérer*, etc. V. G. Gak also differentiates the aspect C2 which describes the movement directed to overcome obstacles. This kind of movement differs greatly from the advanced direct movement because special additional efforts and increased physical tension are used. This category is expressed by the opposition of the verbs of movement which describes the presence or the absence of a barrier on the way of the subject or the object: *aller - traverser; passer – franchir; monter – gravir; entrer – pénétrer; sortir – s'échapper* [7].

4. Conclusion

Finally, the analysis of the actional verbs of movement in French has shown that the semantic categories "orientation / non-orientation of movement", "way of movement", "dependence / independence of movement" being the certain aspects of the real situations of movement are the main features of the structure of the lexico-semantic group under study. It is worth mentioning that besides the general

parameters of the movement there are also additional characteristics which consist of private semantic components. The feature "movement quality" for example includes the components denoting the movement difficulties (*se traîner*), importance (*démarcher*), movement ease (*glisser, voltiger*), special movement manner (*galoper*), indirection (*se balader, flâner*), haste (*se démener, s'agiter*), movement with sound (*claquer, talocher, piétiner*), special way to displace feet (*boiter, clopiner*) and the movement made by the weight (*couler, tomber*).

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