



To summarize globalization continues to influence our world, language interaction will remain an important characteristic of linguistic landscapes. Technological improvements, more mobility, and evolving sociopolitical factors will all have an impact on language contact patterns. Artificial intelligence and machine learning advancements may have an impact on language contact via breakthroughs in translation technology, language learning platforms, and cross-linguistic communication tools. Language contact in the context of globalization is a complex and dynamic phenomena with far-reaching repercussions. It has an impact on language variation, identity negotiations, language policy, and intercultural communication. Recognizing the problems and potential of language contact can help us promote linguistic diversity, preserve minority languages, and develop inclusive and respectful language practices in our linked world.

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SEMANTICS OF PROBABILITY AND POSSIBILITY IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN

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Abstract

This article investigates the semantics of probability and possibility in both English and Russian languages, aiming to uncover the similarities and differences in how these concepts are expressed and interpreted across linguistic and cultural contexts. Drawing from the fields of semantics, pragmatics, and cross-linguistic analysis, the study examines the linguistic mechanisms employed to convey degrees of certainty and uncertainty in English and Russian. Through a comparative analysis of lexical items, grammatical constructions, and discourse strategies, the



article elucidates the semantic nuances and pragmatic implications associated with expressions of probability and possibility in each language. Furthermore, it explores the cultural and cognitive factors that shape speakers' conceptualizations of uncertainty and their linguistic manifestations. By providing insights into the semantic structures and communicative functions of expressions of probability and possibility, this research contributes to our understanding of how language reflects and influences speakers' perceptions of uncertainty, probability, and possibility in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Keywords: *Semantics, probability, possibility, cultural contexts, cognitive factors.*

The studies of native and foreign philosophers, psychologists and linguists confirm that the basis on which the diversity of languages is built is formed by the categories of thought, which were singled out by I. Kant as categories of reason. Although in different languages different means of expression can be used to express the categories of thought, these categories are universal mental phenomena appearing in the sphere of cognition.

Lee Wharf noted that many thought categories have their analogs in the sensual perception of the world, so the meaning of linguistic expressions correlate with human experience and orient these meanings to the experience demonstrated intersubjectively. This makes the content of the meaning of thought categories a unique starting point for the study of the problem of mapping cognitive processes in both substantive and formal-linguistic plans of various communication situations.

One of such universal categories is probability. The problem of expressing probability by means of verbal communication raises a number of important questions, first of all, philosophical in nature. The term “probability” has several meanings and is applied in various situations. Probability has a direct relation:

- to epistemological questions (e.g., are there statements about facts that can be considered absolutely probable?);
- to teleological questions (e.g., if our knowledge is probable, is this probability provided by revelation from above, or is it in principle no different from probability of the kind, for example, such as the probability of information about the back side of the moon);
- to ethical problems (does it make sense to regard certain actions as probably right and their results as probably useful; should we choose in our actions the most probable



alternative, the most useful or the alternative, the product of the probability of realization of which by its usefulness has the maximum value?);

- to metaphysical and ontological arguments.

Of all the interpretations of probability, already developed and being developed by modern scientists, the newest and most radical is its interpretation by S. Toulmin. He convincingly proved that one of the meanings of the expression “probably S” is the following: “Do not accuse me of lying if S turns out to be a lie”.

As N.D. Arutyunova writes, “Man is not omniscient. He cannot always make true judgments”. Therefore, he makes assumptions and guesses [Arutyunova, 1999: 830]. For this purpose in natural languages there is a lot of expressions, words and word combinations expressing probability; among them in Russian and English languages the word вероятность and a number of words and expressions close to them stand out. In general, the word probability and its synonyms in English and Russian languages are rather vague in meaning. In Russian these are, first of all, the words plausibility and credibility; in English they correspond to the nouns прилагательные вероятный, правдоподобный, достоверный (probable, likely, plausible).

Similarly, these nouns and adjectives can denote everything that is not fully certain and can serve to denote the most favorable alternative.

Those and others in statements can denote the degree of confirmed truth and the degree of confidence of the speaker in the truth of the statement (the degree of truth, confirmed on the basis of available facts and the degree of truth, established on the basis of some evidence). Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between probability judgments and probable judgments (evaluative interpretation of judgments). In the present study we will further discuss statements expressing probability as incomplete confirmation of truth. We denote these statements as non-categorical (NC). The analysis of English and Russian linguistic texts allows us to unite the statements in which the modal operator of possibility (probability) is represented into one general class - non-categorical statements.



Since these units arise as a result of reflection and contain opinions, assumptions, O.A. Aleksandrova combines words and expressions used in them into the general category of deliberativity. Deliberativity is expressed by such words as perhaps, sometimes, somewhat, in general, in a sense, it seems, let us say, on the whole, so to speak [Aleksandrova, 1984]. The meaning of non-categoricity of the asserted can be expressed only in syntactic constructions, lexical-phraseological and structural-grammatical constituents of which are united into a single whole insofar as they express the result of evaluating the reported. The inclusion of one of the words or expressions of this category as a (subjective-modal) operator in the construction of an utterance can be accompanied by the activation of the grammatical form of the utterance.

The activation of the form occurs either due to the violation of its monolithic nature (by insertion), or in the case of inclusion, which leads to the complication of the member composition. Activation of the form of an utterance, represented by various formal indicators of subjunctive modality, leads to changes in the content of the corresponding statements. Statements of scientific texts expressing non-categorical judgments can be formally and structurally subdivided into two subclasses:

1. Statements with a modus placed beyond the boundaries of propositional content, for example:

“It seems odd not to be able to say that a word-form, for example, may be a sign ”.

2. Statements with modus included in the boundaries of propositional content of the propositional content, e.g.:

“Experiments have shown that the CMs used by authors to frame problems and dilemmas can have a profound impact on readers’ thought patterns ”

A special subgroup consists of statements in which the meaning of non-categorical is expressed by the verb predicate, in the meaning of which the subject semantics is expressed fused with the evaluative semantics, for example:

“... the experimental “logic” associated with the source domain of the metaphors tends to be preserved in the way the metaphor frames the target domain under discussion”



Structural-semantic differences between non-categorical utterances that include means of expressing the result of evaluating the reported thing according to the degree of its truth may consist in:

- in how detailed the verbal denotation of non-categoricity is. Let us compare, for example:

“On the other hand, frequent falsification may result in negative effect” and “So, it seems that activities that raise learner’s awareness of CM as well as activities that simply resuscitate the literal origin of figurative lexis can at least occasionally be beneficial for (aspects of) reading comprehension”.

The second statement differs from the first one by excessive means of expressing non-categoricity, which testifies to its extreme caution.

Differences between pairs of statements, one of which contains a marker of probabilistic evaluation, and the other - not, can affect the differentiation of events and facts, for example:

“Firstly, we may hypothesize that presenting elements of the L 2 as motivated can help learners reach a deeper understanding of these elements ...”;

“Having students categorize figuratively used words or expressions ... is believed to facilitate retention ...”

The prepositional content of categorical statements is a report of a fact, while that of non-categorical statements is a report of an event that could or might take place.

Differences between probabilistic judgments can consist in how close or far, in the author’s opinion, the asserted by him from the true state of affairs, for example:

“In my approach, cultural scenarios are defined as schematizations of social actiona and events”; “Apparently the capacity for human language phonology was emerging”

Statement (2) is perceived as more categorical than statement (1).

The data obtained concerning the structural-semantic characteristics of non-categorical utterances confirm the idea of constructive transformations as a source of meaning differentiation. Let us give an example:



Thus, to a greater extent that has been true of other approaches, CL- inspired pedagogy has been conceived to help learners ...” Thus, CL-inspired pedagogy has been conceived to help learners.

The conducted test for the omission of the insertion element *to a greater extent that has been true of other* approaches allows us to confirm that the presence/absence of constituents with modal meanings depends not on the structural completeness of the utterance, but on the interpretation of its meaning, i.e. the meaning of the whole utterance changes when modal constituents of constructions are re-duplicated.

According to S. Toulmin, the purpose of words denoting probability as a measure or degree of confirmation of truth (probability, reliability, plausibility of what is reported) is to serve as means of marking (markers) in statements *modal operator*.

When we express a given judgment directly, we rely categorically on its truth. By introducing an appropriate marker in the sentence, we move away from categoricity. Thus, by stating that something is probable (unlikely or improbable), we assert that we have knowledge that *probabilizes* this judgment (is the basis of the probability judgment). In complex sentences, the probabilistic meaning (i.e. non-categoricity) is conveyed by the main sentence, while the adjectival sentence expresses the proposition, the propositional content of the statement.

Probability can be a criterion of emotional-rational evaluation in statements of different types: affirmative, interrogative and negative. The propositional content of such statements can be some object, event or state of affairs.

The semantic category of probability expressed at the text level corresponds to the semantic category of *probablization*. The meaning of the category of *probablication* can be considered on the example of generalization of the usual probabilistic connection of two events.

The relation of *probablization* can be formalized: it is possible to identify in it the property of gradability, with the help of which different degrees of *probablization* can be fixed in a statement: probable, very probable, just probable, more probable than improbable and quite probable. The value of *probablization* is expressed by the



estimations of the probability measure, determined by the authors on the basis of the calculation of possible alternatives. Here are examples of probabilistic statements in scientific texts in English:

“The Latin at seems to be a very close equivalent of the Russian a ...”;

“Obviously, each language has some additional lexical means, which allow expressing the meaning corresponding to different uses of a... ”

“The closest Russian correspondence of juxtaposition would be rather so-polozenie ”;

“These properties can be represented as follows ...” ;

“It may also mean: ‘the father and mother of this person have different and, in a sense, opposite professions:

“Hence, the prefix po- is in a certain sense quantificational...”
and in Russian:

“Особую привлекательность для лингвиста представляют, как мне кажется, альтернативные способы описания одного и того же, именно потому, что они возвращают нас к онтологически тождественным реалиям ...”

“По отношению к процессам номинации нам представляется особенно уместным использовать такое представление об осмыслении мира, которое можно охарактеризовать как его конструирование”;

“Сборка концептов в концептуальные структуры, предваряющая создание языкового знака, может быть весьма разной по своему характеру;

“Возможно, именно поэтому рунет отличается от других национальных сегментов интернета высоким процентом инвективной лексики ... ”;

“По-видимому, это связано с тем, что игровая функция языка — его имманентная сущность ...”

Given statements in which probability degree markers are placed *obviously, in a certain sense, can, seem, may, would be rather, по-видимому, возможно, может быть, кажется* like statements without them, express a fact or an event by their



propositional content. This is easily confirmed by the transformation of the omission of the corresponding marker:

“The aspectual differences between these verbs reflect, in a certain way, that EC nouns have some kind of limits” The aspectual differences between these verbs reflect that EC nouns have some kind of limits;

“Как правило, “воздействие” идет от Т-класса имени к компонентам толкования глагола, как у плыть или разбить ” “воздействие” идет от Т-класса имени к компонентам толкования глагола, как у плыть или разбить.

But between a probabilistic utterance and an utterance without this operator there is a significant difference in the thought itself, in the way of expressing the thought (epistemic aspect), and in the manner of the speaker, in his speech tactics (pragmatic aspect).

The epistemic purpose of probabilistic statements is realized, for example, in such cases:

“He argued that intentionality is (in general) the result of embedding under an attitude verb like try”;

а) *“Мы исходим, из того, что толкование не обязано (поскольку, скорее всего, и не может) быть исчерпывающим”* — в данных примерах выражается мысль о том, что содержание обсуждаемых понятий не имеет четко очерченных границ;

б) *“It is surely desirable to be able to say that derivation operates on form ...” ;*

“Вероятней всего, вопрос о культуре речи во многом определяется действующими в данном обществе социокультурными условиями ...”

In this case, the speaker is not sure that what he asserts takes place in all conditions. The information reported by him should be perceived as reliable, but cannot be regarded as absolute truth. Let’s consider a couple more examples:

а) *“On the other hand, frequent falsification may result in negative effect”* — в данном случае говорящий полагает, что между описываемыми явлениями имеется какая-то связь (либо временная, либо каузальная);

б) *“Многие из подобных названий чаще всего отражали идеологическую*



обстановку в стране или в конкретном регионе”;

“Direct objects are less uniform in their clustering of properties, probably because in some respects they are very similar to subjects ...”;

“Не так очевидно, почему не употребляются наречия, обозначающие интервал. Возможно, они относятся к границе E и R ”

In these cases, the speaker assumes that there is a weak causal relationship between the objects being described.

Some probabilistic statements do not explicate but implicate non-categoricity:

“In our paper we will refine the semantic description of the conjunction and try to propose an explanation of two interrelated facts ...”;

“The meanings of (17) and (18) are considerably different” ;

“Точное описание объекта не предполагает обязательным образом его детализированного, дробного представления”;

“Проекцию образа на действительность (Л. Витгенштейн) следовало бы определить как предпонимание ...”;

“И наконец, едва ли не самая большая трудность в анализе ЧР — определение их концептуальных основ ...”

In such a case, when the speaker is certain that he/she is reporting true-false information, the use of the possibility/validity marker of the reported information is excluded and the utterance is interpreted as categorical:

“Summarizing is a common strategy in reading, writing and talking, both within our second/foreign language classrooms and without”;

“Квантификационный, или количественный аспект референции СГ и выражаемых ими пропозиций имеет две стороны” in this case, the statements assert that the described phenomena actually take place - regardless of any circumstances.

The pragmatic purpose of words and expressions expressing the meaning of the modal operator of probability is that they give the speaker's actions the character of caution, prudence or uncertainty in the truth of what is said:



“We also wish to avoid the problem of conceptualizing word formation”; -

“Высказывается мнение, что подобные полушутливые издевательства над английским языком — это “способ борьбы с американизацией в Сети ...”

The use of the modal operator in such cases, when the speaker/writer wishes to absolve himself of responsibility for the truth of his statements, can be regarded as a special speech strategy/tactic. In ordinary colloquial dialogic speech, this tactic can be expressed as follows explicitly - by referring to the unpredictable* nature of the development of events (“do not judge me if you assumed that events would develop according to another scenario, I did not want to deceive you”).

The speaker/writer, using this tactic, can also reason in this way: “... if I hadn’t said it wasn’t the truth in the last instance (or if I hadn’t said that it happened inadvertently, suddenly), I would have given a reason for condemnation, but after all, I warned ...”.

Comparing the examples extracted from scientific texts with the examples of non-categorical statements appearing in the texts of fiction allows us to note the following. The author of a scientific text uses

The author of a scientific text uses the corresponding marker of the modal operator in the case when he characterizes the subject on the basis of probabilistic knowledge obtained by him personally (including new knowledge), or eliminates the assertion of the truth of this knowledge:

“So, it seems that activities that raise learner’s awareness of CM as well as activities that simply resuscitate the literal origin of figurative lexis can at least occasionally be beneficial for (aspects of) reading comprehension”:

“Finally, it may be neutral and carry plain information about the professions- of the person ‘s parents ” ;

“The difference between the conjunctions a-and no can be formulated in-a more general way”;

“В Мельчук 1974: 134 говорится: “актанты ситуации задаются ... толкованием соответствующего слова”; точнее было бы сказать, что они задаются



толкованием”;

“Как правило, “воздействие” идет’ от Т-класса имени к компонентам толкования глагола, каку плыть или разбить”.

“В’принципе можно было бы говорить и здесь о разных направлениях в истолковании ЧР ...”;

“Отсюда, и довольно неожиданный вывода о том, что онтологические моменты “сами по себе недостаточны ...”

In the text of a work of fiction, probability markers* occur much more frequently, but they are mainly used for pragmatic purposes, including as references to characters’ words, author’s comments^ means of modal-expressive evaluation:

“But this Myra seems to be a sensible, level-headed girl ...”;

“There was a kind of power in such- ugliness, Hood thought, but the man turned on his heels and was gone ...”;

“В отношении меня этот прием наделен, пожалуй, глубоким смыслом”;

“Сюда, по предположению Марка и по словам разведчиков, движется основная сила немецких ударных войск”.

Categoricity of the author/character means that he/she is sure that the event, about which he/she reports, really¹ takes place: non-categoricity means either lack of certainty or evasion from characterization of the reported in terms of its truth. Such evasion can lead to an incorrect interpretation of the meaning, which, in turn, can be both undesirable and desirable for the speaker/writer. In a literary text, the basis for explication/indirect indication or implication of the category of probability is cognitive knowledge, personal or collective experience of the author/characters. These factors influence the formation of opinion. In a scientific text, the truth of the statement is expressed after its establishment, i.e. as a result of a preliminary analytical procedure of evaluating what is supposed to be reported in an article, monograph or report as knowledge. Probability in a scientific text can act as one of the forms of knowledge, and as an expression of opinion. In scientific speech, the attempt to relieve oneself of responsibility for possible failures in the interpretation of the meaning of the recipient



of the message is inappropriate if he was first given reliable empirical evidence of the truth of the reported (factuality). In such a case, markers of non-categoricity are also inappropriate.

Thus, the logical-philosophical concept of probability as a universal graded category of thinking (category of reason) in language corresponds to the logical-sense epistemic (epistemological) modality. Participants of communication are guided by the concept of probability when making statements in different situations - both in oral everyday speech and in written language - scientific and artistic. In ordinary and scientific real-life communication, probabilistic statements can be based both on empirical knowledge and on the logic and experience of scientific research. In a scientific text, a judgment about probability is made on the basis of researched facts, on the study of objective reality, and a probabilistic (non-categorical) judgment is made in the absence of the speaker's/writer's confidence in the truth of what is being said. In the semantic model of a probabilistic statement, epistemological modality is expressed by the modal operator, which in statements corresponds to morphological, lexical and lexical-phraseological units of both languages being compared, which are united according to the principle of functional-semantic field as "true", "probable", "reliable", "provable", "refutable".

The extra-linguistic factor determining the use of lexical and structural-grammatical units to express the category of probability in a statement is the motive (desire) of the author to confirm his authorship, to express the evaluation of the reported information and to influence the acceptance and interpretation of the reported information. In English-language utterances for this purpose, various modifiers, modal and propositional verbs, syntactic constructions and other means that formalize reasoning are introduced. These are separate words and phrases expressing opinion, reflection, doubt and assumption, knowledge and ignorance, factual and general axiological evaluation: seemingly, maybe, it appears, it looks as if, in a way, etc. The same can be observed in Russian. The same can be observed in the Russian-language text: *кажется, представляется, вероятно, несомненно, в каком-то смысле,*



можно считать, в некотором смысле O.V. Aleksandrova includes such units in the general category of deliberativity and considers them within the framework of the theory of expressive syntax [Aleksandrova,;1984]. -

The speaker's confidence in the truth of what is being expressed determines the design of the statement about the properties of the denotation as an established fact. The measure, or the degree of conformity of statements about the properties of the denotate to the facts in the language is expressed by the category of modality. Statements about facts characterized by the presence of semantic features expressing the truth of a judgment are categorical. The markers of the modal meaning of probability signal the insufficiency of grounds for a categorical statement. Thus, non-categoricity is "closely related to the modal values expressing the truth of a judgment" [Arutyunova, ;1999]. The labeling of one of the modal values - the value of probability - ensures the adequacy of the judgment about the properties of the denotate to the probabilistic representation (knowledge) about it of the speaker. In the Russian Academic Grammar under the rubric of subjective modality the means of expressing the meaning of probability are combined with semantic operators signaling the half-ness or uncertainty of the existing phenomenon. The basis for their unification was their ability to enter as means of semantic modification. The categorical meaning of probability corresponds to a semantic operator represented in both compared languages by units of different levels and complexity. The meaning of probability at the lexical level is expressed, for example, by modal verbs:

"They reported they felt the author was against giving prolonged state subsidies, since bailing out a boat can only be a temporary solution ..."; adverbs: "Perhaps a few are innate while others are emergent"

According to D. Taggi, the expression of probabilistic meanings can be related to the vagueness or schematization of the signified referents. This author, refers to the semantic proximity of concepts and words *probability*, *ambiguity* и *vagueness*. Consequently, these expressions contribute to the weakening of categoricity, or contain implicit non-categoricity.



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CHALLENGES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND POSSIBLE WAYS OF OVERCOMING THESE OBSTACLES

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Abstract

Teaching foreign languages to non-native students can present various challenges. This article delves into the obstacles that may arise in such situations, including linguistic barriers, cultural differences, limited exposure outside the classroom, lack of motivation, and difficulties in assessing progress. These factors can impede the effectiveness of foreign language instruction and impact learners' overall language proficiency. To address these challenges, this article explores potential solutions and best practices. These include implementing learner-centered approaches that focus on communicative competence, incorporating cultural context into language instruction, providing ample opportunities for language practice and exposure, and utilizing effective assessment methods that measure both linguistic and communicative skills. Overcoming these challenges is essential for improving language acquisition outcomes and fostering global communication. By implementing effective strategies and best practices, educators can help non-native students achieve their foreign language learning goals and become proficient communicators in multiple languages.

Key words: linguistic barrier, cultural diversity, limited exposure, lack of motivation, assessing progress, learner-centered approach, language practice, effective assessment.