

The Category of Indefiniteness in the Interpretation of the Theory of Orientation and Within the Framework of the Functional-Semantic Approach

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Annotation:

This article deals with the category of indefiniteness in the interpretation of the theory of orientation and within the framework of the functional-semantic approach. The interpretation is the act or result of explaining or interpreting something; the way something is explained or understood.

Keywords: Indefiniteness, interpretation, theory of reference, framework, functional-semantic approach, the act, the result, understand.

Introduction

The study of the category of indefiniteness in the referential aspect also goes back to the clutter of language and philosophy. The basic requirements of situation as a theory were laid down in the works of B. Russell and G. Frege [1, P.820-821].

According to the theory of actualization founded by S. Bally, which speaks about the use of language tools in speech, most lexical signs evoke only “virtual concepts” in the mind - and only when used in speech does identification with the speaker’s real idea occur. Reference is the relationship of an actualized name to an object of reality. Or, in the words of Lyons, reference is associated with the relationship of an expression to what this expression denotes in a specific utterance [2,174].

Referent is the object of reference, or the one to whom (to what) the utterance refers. The category of indefiniteness in the theory of reference is considered as based on the opposition of the general and the particular. Indefiniteness here means the non-isolation of an object from other objects.

The grammatical meaning of the indefinite article, as O. V. Yemelyanova writes, is to indicate the meaning of the general (as opposed to indicating the particular) [3, 39-44].

The category of indefiniteness is associated with the communicative aspect of language. In this capacity, the category of indefiniteness cannot be revealed without referring to the process of speech communication, to the issue of the interlocutors' awareness. Definiteness or indefiniteness, therefore, are not properties of the object itself, but arise in the context of the message and are aimed at achieving mutual understanding. Its functioning is ensured by the attitude of the participants in the act of communication to the objects of reality: the speaker characterizes the object as known or unknown to the listener, taking into account the degree of his awareness (information already known to him). The category of indefiniteness is primarily focused on the participants of the communicative situation, on the general fund of knowledge of the speaker and listener about the communication situation, as well as on their linguistic competence. Correct reading of reference - including in relation to certainty-indefiniteness - is a condition for successful communication.

A functional-semantic category is a "system of heterogeneous linguistic means capable of interacting to perform certain semantic functions"[4,8]. In other words, a functional-semantic category groups linguistic means of different levels that have a certain semantic community - a semantic invariant. A functional-semantic category has a content plane - a general semantic invariant - and an expression plane - linguistic means of different levels and aspects of language. The relationships between these planes are of interest in comparative research. From the point of view of the structure of a functional-semantic category, it is organized as a field - this, according to A.V.Bondarko, justifies the "parallel use" of the terms functional-semantic category and functional-semantic field.

A functional-semantic field is usually characterized by the following features:

1. it is divided into a center, or core, and a periphery;
2. the interaction of its means is based on the content plane, therefore, often "heterogeneous" units of language are semantically connected;
3. The elements of the field can "intersect", and the functional-semantic field itself can also "intersect" with other fields.

Thus, the functional-semantic field of indefiniteness intersects with the functional-semantic field of default, modality, quantity, and etc. due to the semantic connections of their different elements. A. V. Bondarko writes about the functional-semantic field of the category of definiteness-indefiniteness that in Russian it can be considered as potentially "coreless" [5, 24].

The reason for this is the absence of a morphological core, which in English and many other languages is the article. At the same time, V. Gladrov calls this functional-semantic field in Russian possessing a "multi-stage structure" and "weakly centered", with two unequal centers: linear-intonational and pronominal [6, 232-266].

Methodology

The methodology of this study follows a functional-semantic approach to analyze the category of indefiniteness within the framework of reference theory. The research relies on a combination of theoretical analysis and comparative linguistic methods. It draws on the works of prominent scholars, including Russell, Frege, and Bally, to establish the foundation for understanding

indefiniteness in language. By examining the referential function of lexical units, the study explores how indefiniteness manifests through linguistic structures, particularly in relation to definiteness-indefiniteness opposition. The functional-semantic field model is employed to categorize different forms of indefiniteness, incorporating core-periphery structures and semantic microfields such as unknown, ambiguity, and vagueness. Comparative linguistic analysis is conducted to assess the expression of indefiniteness across different languages, with a focus on the role of articles and other grammatical markers. Additionally, reference theory is applied to explore how speakers use indefinite expressions in communication, emphasizing the role of interlocutors' awareness and contextual factors. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives and linguistic data, this study aims to provide a structured analysis of indefiniteness, its semantic characteristics, and its functional implications within discourse.

Results and Discussion

In linguistics, researchers generally describe indefiniteness both as part of the opposition of the category of definiteness-indefiniteness (V. Gladrov, A. D. Shmelev, O. G. Revzina, T. M. Nikolaeva,) [6, 244] and as an independent category (E. M. Galkina-Fedoruk, I. V. Voronovskaya, N. D. Arutyunova). [7, 44]. It can be noted that the first interpretation often relies on the tradition of studying the category using article languages, where definiteness-indefiniteness is formalized as a separate grammatical category. I. V. Voronovskaya, in her study of indefiniteness as a functional-semantic category, identifies such a semantic invariant as the complex of “possibility of choice” and “non-identity” — and 6 paradigmatic microfields in which this invariant is concretized, arranged “in descending order of indefiniteness”:

1. proper indefiniteness;
2. indefiniteness-interrogative;
3. indefiniteness-generalization;
4. indefiniteness-hypotheticality;
5. indefiniteness-approximation;
6. Indefiniteness-unnamability [8, 158-231].

All of them have both features of meaning and specific means of expression. M. B. Yasinskaya, analyzing the semantics of indefiniteness in the prose of A. P. Chekhov, distinguishes the following four microfields of indefiniteness: unknown, ambiguity, incompleteness, indefiniteness (partly corresponds to hypotheticality in I. V. Voronovskaya).

In the framework of this study, we will consider the organization of the functional-semantic field of indefiniteness based on both existing classifications and the content of the material. Like M.B.Yasinskaya, we will distinguish the microfields of unknown, ambiguity and indefiniteness.

The first two intersect with the field of “proper indefiniteness” identified by I. V. Voronovskaya. However, there is a significant semantic difference between them. If the unknown microfield expresses indefiniteness associated with the absence of information, then ambiguity expresses indefiniteness associated with the incomprehensibility of some elements of the situation. Singling out indefiniteness as a microfield whose semantic invariant is the absence of information, we should also single out the microfield whose means convey the absence of precision of expression in those cases when it is impossible to speak of the absence of information. Let us designate it as the functional-semantic microfield of vagueness. The microfield of indefiniteness is associated with the absence of confidence, the speaker's doubt in the reliability or assessment of information [9 , C.158-231.].

Indefiniteness-uncertainty, therefore, is distinguished by the fact that it is especially tied to the communicative act.

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