

CONSTRUCTIONS OF NON-CATEGORICAL STATEMENTS IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN (COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS)

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative analysis of non-categorical statement constructions in English and Russian. Non-categorical statements—those expressing uncertainty, probability, or subjectivity—play a vital role in nuanced communication and reflect the speaker's attitude toward the information conveyed. The study explores structural, lexical, and grammatical means used to construct such statements in both languages, with particular attention to modal verbs, particles, introductory phrases, and syntactic patterns. By examining parallel examples, the analysis identifies both convergences and divergences in how English and Russian express non-categorical meanings. Findings suggest that while both languages employ similar communicative strategies, they differ in the frequency and stylistic preference for certain constructions, often reflecting broader typological distinctions and cultural attitudes toward epistemic modality.

Keywords: Non-categoric statements, Modality, English-Russian comparison, Epistemic expressions, Modal verbs, Subjectivity in language, Comparative linguistics, Syntax and modality, Cross-linguistic analysis, Uncertainty in communication.

Introduction

The studies of domestic 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. B. Lee Wharf noted that many

thought categories have their analogs in the sensual perception of the world, so the meaning of linguistic expressions to 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, primarily philosophical in nature. The term “probability” has several meanings and is used 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 correct 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 probability 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 reliability; in English they correspond to the

nouns versimilitude, likelihood, plausibility and adjectives probable, likely, plausible (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. These 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. Alexandrova unites 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*. 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 modus placed outside the boundaries of the propositional content, e.g.:

“It seems odd not to be able to say that a word-form, for example, may be a sign” (Кажется странным не иметь возможности сказать, что слово-форма, например, может быть знаком).

2. Statements with modus included in the boundaries of 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-categoricity 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 "

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.

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