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EGOCENTRIC PARTICIPANTS: SPEAKER, OBSERVER AND OTHERS

Subjectivity in language

“Language is so deeply permeated with subjectivity that it is a question whether, having been structured in a different way, it could still function as a language.” (Benveniste 1974: 295) “Language is structured in such a way that it allows every speaker, when (s)he identifies her/himself as a speaker, to **appropriate** language as a whole.” (Benveniste 1974: 296)

The speaker can fulfill all the range of its functions only in the context of a CANONICAL communicative situation, when the speaker is provided with a synchronous addressee which is in the same place and in his/her field of vision (. Lyons 1979: 637, Paducheva 1996: 259–261). There are two types of non-canonical communicative situations – narrative and hypotaxis.

Implicit speaker

- (1) Ivan *edva li* vernetsja ‘John will *hardly* return’ =
‘the speaker doubts that John will return’

EGOCENTRIC valence is a valence which, in the canonic situation, is filled, semantically, by the speaker. On the syntactic level it has a DEICTIC ZERO SIGN corresponding to it. Language is full of entities with egocentric valences semantically filled by the speaker. This is what **appropriation** stands for in Benveniste’s definition. A word with an egocentric valence is itself called EGOCENTRIC.

Roles that the speaker can play in the semantics of words, categories and constructions: subject of **perception**, subject of **consciousness**, subject of **speech** and a subject (or a reference point) of **deixis**.

Speaker as the subject of perception

Sentence (2) describes a situation in which, apart from the road and the rider, some syntactically non expressed person is present – the observer of the event.

- (2) Na doroge *pokazalsja* vsadnik (Apresjan 1986) ‘On the road *appeared* [came in sight] a rider’

It is natural to suppose that this person is the speaker. This supposition is confirmed by the deviance of (3):

- (3) *Na doroge *pokazalsja* ja ‘*On the road *appeared* me’

In a narrative or hypotactic context the 1st person subject of *pokazat’sja* is normal – in fact, now it is not the subject who is the observer of the event, but some other person:

- (4) . Ivan šel k morju. Neožidanno na doroge *pokazalsja* ja. ‘Ivan was going to the sea-shore. At some moment on the road *appeared* me’.

. Ivan videl, to v kakoj-to moment na doroge *pokazalsja* ja. ‘Ivan saw that at some moment on the road *appeared* me’.

This is the reason to believe that not the speaker is to be included into semantic decomposition of *pokazat’sja* but the OBSERVER, see 1986.

In a hypotactic context the role of the observer is usually played by the subject of the matrix sentence.

- (5) Fon Koren uže pomirilsja s mysl’ju, to emu segodnja ne uexat’, i sel igrat’ s Samojlenkom v šaxmaty; no kogda stemnelo, denš ik doložil, to na more *pokazalis’ ogni* i to videli raketu. [A.Chechov. Duel] ‘Von Koren got accustomed to the idea that he won’t be able to leave today and began a chess party with Samoilenko; but when it got dark the batman reported that some lights *appeared* on the sea and that some people saw a racket.’

The lights came into the field of vision of the batman. NB PROJECTION that takes place in case of a hypotactic context. So *pokazat'sja* is a word with an egocentric valence for the subject of perception. (The verb *see* has a non-egocentric valence for the subject of perception)

In a narrative, it is the character, salient in the episode, who takes the role of the observer (NARRATIVE projection – from the speaker to the character).

(6) Tut Ninka otko ȳla k zaboru, potomu to na doroge *pokazalas'* Krasavka, kotoraja galopom neslas' po derevne [V. Vojnovi . Soldier Ivan onkin] 'Ninka jumped to the fence because on the road *appeared* the goat Krasavka, who galloped across the village'.

In a 1st person narrative the speaker and the observer can be both present in the text as different entities:

(7) Menja doma ne bylo. Vanja i Tanja sideli na kuxne. Vdrug v okne *pokazalsja* elovek.

'I was not at home. Vanja and Tanja were sitting in the kitchen. Suddenly a man *appeared* in the window' [The man appeared in the field of vision of Vanja and Tanja, not mine]

An example of an egocentric observer distinct from the speaker in a hypotactic context; the role of the observer of *pokazalsja* in (8) cannot be played by the speaker who, evidently, hadn't seen the ship; it can be played by the people who rushed to the right or by somebody else whom they were in contact with:

(8) Ja ponjal, to sprava *pokazalsja* korabl', potomu to vse brosilis' k pravomu bortu. 'I realized that a ship *appeared* on the right, because everybody rushed to the right'

The rule of DEICTIC projection (Lyons 1979: 579). In the context of a question speaker-oriented deixis can be transformed into addressee-oriented one.

(9) . – Na doroge *pokazalsja* vsadnik <v moem pole zrenija> 'On the road *appeared* a rider <in my field of vision>;

. – Nu to, on tak i ne *pokazalsja*? <v tvoem pole zrenija> 'So he hadn't yet appeared? <in your field of vision>.

Other examples of verbs (and verb usages) with the egocentric valence for the object of perception: *vozniknut'*, *okazat'sja*, *pojavit'sja*, *pokazat'sja*, *is eznut'*, *propast'*; *prostupit'*, *vystupat'*, *vygljadyvat'*, *vysovyvat'sja*, *progljadyvat'*, *proskol'znut'*, *promel'knut'*, *mel'kat'*; *paxnut'*, *vonjat'*, *zvu at'*, *poslyšat'sja*, *razdat'sja*, *donosit'sja* (Zvu it kolokol, i *donositsja* penie iz sobora), *svetit'sja*, *blestet'*, *mercat'*; *razverznut'sja*, *raskinut'sja*, *rasstilat'sja*; (Paducheva 2004: 210-214); *maja it'* (translation for the English *to lurk* described by Fillmore); *vyisit'sja*, *tor at'*; *rejat'* (Bulygina 1982: 29); *belet'*, *ernet'* (Apresjan 1986).

Verbs, discovered by Ju.D.Apresjan (1980), which in some contexts imply a MOVING observer: *kon at'sja*, *na inat'sja*, *podnimat'sja*, *povora ivat'* and many others:

Tropinka *kon alas' u reki* [Ipfv] 'the path ended at the river'

Posle mosta doroga *povora ivala* na jug [Ipfv] = 'after the bridge *I turned* to the south, following the road'.

The verb changes its meaning and DIATHESIS: the road becomes the subject; the walker goes **off stage**. This diathetic shift can take place both in the perfective and imperfective aspect.

Translations of verbs in the "observer-diathesis" from Russian into English (examples from Meshcherjakova 2008): the translator tends to reveal the implicit observer.

(10) Kustarnik skoro sovsem *okon ilsja*. (A.Kuprin. Olesja) 'Before long *I came out* of the brushwood'.

(11) Byla uže temnaja no ', kogda Ol'sen vyexal iz goroda. *Doroga šla* beregom morja. (A.Beljaev. Man-amphibia) 'It was dark by the time Olsen had cleared the city and *taken the road* that skirted the beach.'

Many verbs have a valence for the observer in grammatically derived diatheses: *vydelit'sja*, *vyiskat'sja*, *vyrazit'sja*, *vyjavit'sja*, *zadevat'sja*, *zapropastit'sja*, *zape atlet'sja*, *zaslonit'sja*,

zaterjat'sja, izobrazit'sja, najtis', obnažit'sja, obnaruzit'sja, obozna it'sja, otobrazit'sja, poterjat'sja, projasnit'sja, razyskat'sja, skryt'sja, utait'sja; progljadyvat'sja, prosmatrvat'sja, razli at'sja, smotret'sja, ulavlivat'sja, usmatrvat'sja; oš uš at'sja, po uvstvovat'sja, uvstvovat'sja.

- (12) a. Ja *obnaruzil* u mal' ika neaurjadnuju èrudiciju 'I *discovered* a remarkable erudition of the boy';
 b. Mal' ik *obnaruzil* neaurjadnuju èrudiciju. 'The boy *showed* a remarkable erudition'.

Speaker as the subject of consciousness

Semantic decomposition of the verb *voobražat'* in one of its meanings (after Frege 1977).

voobražat', to 'X *imagines that P*' = 'X believes that some P pleasant for him takes place; the speaker doesn't believe that P takes place'.

The subject of the opposite belief is syntactically non-expressible; the implied subject of belief is the speaker:

- (13) Ee muž *voobražat* sebja geniem 'Her husband *imagines* himself to be a genius' = 'Her husband *believes* himself to be a genius; the speaker doesn't think so'

In a hypotactic context the role of the subject of the opposite belief is played by the subject of the matrix sentence.

- (14) Marija znaet, to ee muž *voobražat* sebja geniem 'Maria knows that her husband *imagines* himself to be a genius'

Observer and Subject of consciousness are different roles. Only Observer generates anomaly in the context of the 1st person subject, as in example (3), where the object and the subject of perception coincide. An observer is an **external** observer, and this is the source of anomaly in example (3).

The subject of consciousness may have itself as an object, as in example (13).

In example (15) words *kon ilsja* <les> and *na alis'* <bolota> presuppose the walker; supposedly, (s)he is the subject of consciousness for *unexpectedly*.

- (15) Za ozerom mestnost' *neožidanno* izmenilas' xvojnyj les kon ilsja, na alis' bolota.
 [V.Bykov. The swamp] After the lake the landscape *unexpectedly* changed – the forest ended, swamps began.

Many stative predicatives imply, by default, the 1st person subject: *bol'no, veselo, vidno, vozmožno, vidimo, zametno, interesno, žutko, gorestno, dosadno, prijatno, xorošo, važno, bezrazli no, ljubopytno, legko, tošno, nelovko, zabavno, interesno, žarko, dušno, obidno, radostno, sku no, grustno, strašno, trudno, legko, jasno, poxože; plevat', len', žal', žal'ko, xorošo, oxota, neoxota*; reflexive verbs, such as *xo etsja, pridetsja, ostaetsja*, and many others.

Prijatno tebja slyшат' 'it is nice to hear from you' [= 'nice for me']

Many adjectives have a valence for the subject of consciousness which is by default filled by the speaker: *priemlemyj; nepostižimyj, nerazrešimyj; važnyj, glavnyj; neponjatnyj, strannyj* (examples from Kustova 2003).

Thus, in a canonic context the speaker fulfills the role of the subject of consciousness, i.e. knowledge and belief, non-definiteness, evaluation (Paducheva 1985: 141), similarity, expectation and unexpectedness (Paducheva 1996: 281), interpretation (2004), etc.

Subject of consciousness in non-canonic contexts

Example 1. Semantic decomposition of *ošibat'sja* 'to be wrong' after Apresjan 2004:

ošibaetsja, dumaja = '1) X thinks that P; 2) the speaker believes or knows that not P; 3) the speaker believes that X thinks so because (s)he doesn't know or doesn't understand the facts'

The verb *ošibat'sja* presupposes the speaker as the subject of consciousness. In (1a), in

the canonic communicative situation, the speaker is the bearer of the opposite opinion, while in (1b) hypotactic projection takes place, so the bearer of the opposite opinion is Maria:

- (1) . Ivan *ošibaetsja, dumaja* ⊃ ‘the speaker believes that not ’;
. Marija uverena, to Ivan *ošibaetsja, dumaja* ⊃ ‘Maria believes that not ’.

What happens if the subject of *ošibat’sja* is the 1st person:

- (2) Vpro em, ja o en’ malo znaju Venu i, byt’ možet, *ošibajus’*, voobražaja ee zimu xolodnoj.
[P.I.Chaikovskij] ‘I know Vienna very little, and, perhaps, I *am mistaken* imagining her winter to be cold’

In this case the speaker is substituted for X, so that the two contradicting beliefs belong to one and the same person. This contradiction doesn’t generate anomaly in (2) because the two opinions are separated by a hedge *byt’ možet* ‘perhaps’.

Example 2. The verb *pridirat’sja*:

pridiraetsja k Y-u ‘X finds fault with smb /seizes upon smb’ = ‘ expresses discontent with Y on different occasions; the speaker believes that the discontent of is groundless or superfluous’

The subject of consciousness obeys the rule of hypotactic projection:

- (a) Na al’stvo k Vase *pridiraetsja* ‘the director finds faults with Vasja’ [canonic situation; the subject of consciousness = the speaker]
(b) Vasja s itaet, to na al’stvo k nemu *pridiraetsja* ‘Vasja believes that the director finds faults with him [hypotactic context; the subject of consciousness = the subject of the matrix sentence]

Example 3. (from Apresjan V. 2004). Words *xotja by* and *xot’* [= ‘at least’ + the idea of wish] got in NOSS a semantic decomposition that includes the speaker.

xotja by = ‘the speaker S realizes that it is impossible to reach ’ which S would like to have and is ready to have P which is less than ’ but more real’

Sentences (1a)–(1d) seem to contradict this definition – the speaker is not required by the meaning of *xotja by*, *xot’* in these contexts:

- (1) . Maša xotela vzgljanut’ na geroja *xotja by* izdali ‘Mary wanted to look at the hero *at least* from afar’
b. Katja rešila pospat’ *xotja by* pol asa ‘Kate decided to have a sleep for *at least* half an hour’
c. Maša prosiť, toby ty ej *xotja by* pozvonil ‘Mary asks you *at least* to call her up’
d. Šofer vel mašinu medlenno, toby soldaty *xot’* nemnogo otdoxnuli ‘the driver drove slowly to give the soldiers *at least* a little rest’

We can substitute “person X” for “the speaker” in the decomposition from NOSS and get an adequate meaning definition for (1a)–(1d).

xotja by = ‘person X realizes that it is impossible to reach ’ which X would like to have and is ready to have P which is less than ’ but more real’

There are two components in this decomposition: a wish of person X to have something (it can be something concerning another person Y, as in (1d)) and readiness of X to have less than what is wished. In both components X may be any person.

This definition is successfully applied to (1b):

- (1b) Katja rešila pospat’ *xotja by* pol asa ‘Kate decided to sleep for at least half an hour’ = ‘Kate realized that it is impossible to reach ’ (= to sleep for several hours) and was ready to have P (= to sleep for half an hour) which is less than ’ but more real’

In particular, person X can be a speaker:

- (2) Xorošo by pospat’ *xotja by* polchasa ‘It would be nice to sleep for at least half an hour’ = ‘the speaker S realizes that it is impossible to reach ’ (= to sleep for several hours) and is ready to have P (= to sleep for half an hour) which is less than ’ but more real’

Hypotactic projection

Still, the fact that meaning explications of sentences (1a) – (1d) do NOT mention the speaker does not repudiate NOSS's decomposition of *xotja by*, which presupposes the speaker: in examples (1a) – (1d) *xotja by* occurs in a hypotactic context, so its subject **undergoes hypotactic projection**. Note that in (1b) the speaker is the unique subject of concession.

The speaker is the unique subject of concession also in (3):

- (3) Xorošo, to Maša *xot'* raz v god priezžat v Moskvu 'it is fine that Masha comes to Moscow *at least* once a year' = 'the speaker S realizes that , which S really wishes, is impossible (that Masha would come more frequently) and is ready to be satisfied by P (that Masha comes once a year)

In fact, about Masha's state of mind we know nothing: it can be the case that Masha feels the same as the speaker, but it is also possible that Masha is not at all happy with this limitation or that once a year is more than enough for her.

In (4) two consciousnesses are at work – that of the speaker and of non-egocentric subject:

- (4) Xorošo, to Maše udaetsja *xot'* raz v god priezžat' v Moskvu 'it is fine that Masha manages to come to Moscow *at least* once a year'.

The subject of concession is Masha; the speaker just evaluates the situation.

The two consciousnesses must be in agreement – the speaker should empathize with the subject of concession; in fact, sentence (5) is deviant:

- (5) *Zhal', to Maše udaetsja *xot'* raz v god priezžat' v Moskvu 'it's a pity that Masha manages to come to Moscow *at least* once a year'.

Example 4. Implicit subjects of the parenthetical *okazyvaetsja*.

In a canonical situation *okazyvaetsja P* 'it turns out that P' =

- (a) the speaker has learned <from Z> that P;
 - (b) the speaker is astonished that P.
- (1) Ivan, *okazyvaetsja*, davno vernulsja 'John, it turns out, returned long ago' =
- (a) the speaker has learned that John returned long ago;
 - (b) the speaker is astonished by the fact that John returned long ago.

Free indirect discourse (FID)

Parenthetical *okazyvaetsja* can be used to introduce FID: P is what was told the speaker by some Z; the speaker hasn't accepted the information as his knowledge; in the speaker's consciousness P is just an opinion of Z, which causes perplexity.

- (2) – Ja vam skažu. Xotite otkrovenno? Ja davno zame aju za Vami, Dima. – I tut ona ponesla takoj nemyslimyj i ošelomljajuš ij vzdor, to Glebov onemel ot izumlenija. *Okazyvaetsja*, on s kakim-to osobennym vnimaniem vseгда osmatrivaet ix kvartiru, na kuxne ego interesovali xolodil'nik pod oknom i dver' gruzovogo lifta. Odnadždy on podrobno rassprašival <...> (Ju.Trifonov) [Glebov rents an apartment. The owner of the apartment suspects that the guest is going to rob her]

The associated proposition of *okazyvaetsja* represents not the speaker's state of mind but the belief of Z.

Another example.

- (3) No menja i bez politiki sxar it' raz desjat' xoteli. Xorošo eš e, to ja bespartijnj, to p'janicu mne priš'jut, to, *okazyvaetsja*, ja babnik. [V. Grossman. Life and destiny] 'Many times they wanted to destroy me [lit. "to eat me"] on non-political grounds. Luckily, I am not a party member – once upon a time they declare me a drunkard, then *it turns out* that I am a philanderer.'

In (4) it is not the case that the speaker doubts the received information; the fact is that it is important not for the speaker but for somebody else.

(5) Vizit prepodobnogo vzvolnoval vsju bol'nicu. *Okazyvaetsja*, v našix krajax est' svjaš enniki! I oni ispovedujut želajuš ix! V samoj bol'šoj palate bol'ni noj <...> govorili tol'ko ob ispovedi teti Poli. [V. .Shalamov. Kolyma stories] 'A visit of the priest excited the hospital. *It turns out* that there are priests in the zone! And they can confess those who want it. In the biggest sickroom of the hospital they talked only about confession of aunt Poly.'

Conclusion 1

Several classes of words were revealed that presuppose an egocentric participant of the situation. In a canonical speech situation this egocentric participant is the speaker, conveyed by a deictic zero sign only. It is demonstrated that a general rule exists for detecting the performer of the role of the implicit subject in a non-canonical speech situation, namely, in a hypotactic context. It is called the **RULE OF HYPOTACTIC PROJECTION**. Two different roles of the implied subject were investigated – the role of the subject of **PERCEPTION** and the subject of **CONSCIOUSNESS**. Other kinds of projection are of interest.

Conclusion 2

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that with deictic words, such as *segodnja* 'today' hypotactic projection doesn't work –

(4) On *v era* skazal mne, *to segodnja* zanjat 'He told me *yesterday* that he is busy *today*'

In (4) the word *segodnja* cannot mean 'yesterday', which would be the case if hypotactic projection were possible. i.e. if the subject of the higher clause could be the bearer of the present tense. The only possible "subject" for deictic *segodnja*, even in hypotactic position, is the speaker.

Here lies the difference between primary and secondary egocentricity.

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