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**COMPARATIVE AND CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS
OF SEMANTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSING
STABLE SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS
IN MODERN AMERICAN ENGLISH VS RUSSIAN****[*В.В. Черненко, К.Н. Симонова* Компаративно-контрастивный анализ
семантических средств выражения
статических пространственных отношений
в современном американском английском в сравнении с русским]**

The paper makes observations on semantic means of expressing stable spatial relationships in modern American English in contrast and comparison with Russian. The functional and semantic category of location is a universal language category. The similarities and differences in verbalizing location in the languages studied are described. The semantic groups of nouns locators almost coincide in both languages. As for the verbs used to express stable spatial relations, the analysis shows that the majority of semantic groups of verbs coincide. The verbs of positioning in space, existence, state etc. are commonly used. Meanwhile Russian gives preference to the verbs with more specific lexical meaning in contrast to American English. Prepositions of space and adverbs manifest the greatest differences between the languages. It is caused by the fact that prepositions express relationships between real objects in space while the process of comprehending reality can be different in spheres of concepts in different languages.

Key words: American English, Russian, comparative contrastive analysis, stable spatial relationships, semantic means.

Linguistic research of modern languages, especially languages with different structures like English and Russian, pays great attention to their contrastive and comparative study. We share V.Arakin's point of view who said that comparative approach to the study of languages aims at identifying some facts and phenomena in the languages compared, which possess similar functions and features. Such

features can serve as the basis for the typological characteristic of a language or a group of languages. Besides, such features can be used for the typological classification of languages, which is currently one of the most interesting problems of modern linguistics [2, c. 60]. The more practical aim of the research presented here is to help those who study American English or Russian avoid mistakes while verbalizing the ideas of location in space as different world images verbalize spatial relationships differently. All the examples were taken from J. Grisham's thrillers («the Firm», «the Testament», «the Broker», «Summons») and their official translations into Russian.

The concept of location has been extensively studied comparing and contrasting different languages [1, 4]. While comparing and contrasting languages it's impossible to take into account all possible linguistic peculiarities of languages. It's important to consider the specific structure of linguistic levels and to define accurately the main details which will serve as the ground for comparison and/or contrast [3, c. 10]. In our research we recognize linguistic means of modern American English, which are used to express the functional and semantic category of Location, as the ground for comparative and contrastive analysis. On the semantic level of linguistic structure of the American English language the noun PLACE expresses the concept of locator most explicitly. In the Russian language the noun МЕСТО performs the same functions. In English the noun PLACE is most commonly combined with preposition *at*, while in Russian preposition *в* is mainly used.

... Sandberg called Pratt and arranged a meeting at their favorite place, a college bar near Georgetown University.

... Сендберг позвонил Пратту и договорился о встрече в их излюбленном месте, баре колледжа возле Джорджтаунского университета.

In modern American English and in Russian the semantics of nouns used as locators for expressing stability of spatial relationships is practically identical. Geographical names such as names of towns, states, continents often serve as locators in both languages.

... he and his dear wife would spend a month in Tuscany.

..., что они с дрожайшей половиной проведут месяц в Тоскани.

Nouns naming public amenities like *café, restaurant, hospital, church, prison, nursing home* are widely used as locators in American English and in Russian.

Backman's mother's phone had been tapped in the nursing home in Oakland, and so far it had revealed nothing.

Телефон матери Бэкмана в доме для престарелых в Окленде прослушивался, и пока это ничего не дало.

That afternoon, they met again in the Presbyterian church in East Memphis to say farewell to Joseph M.Hodge.

В том же составе все встретились и после полудня в пресвитерианской церкви, где происходило прощание с Джозефом М.Ходжем.

To describe containers both languages also work similarly using typical nouns.

I woke up one morning in a small hotel room in Istanbul.

Я как-то проснулся утром в маленьком гостиничном номере в Стамбуле.

English nouns *right* and *left* are of special interest for our research. These nouns are commonly exploited to specify the idea of stable space relationships in English. These nouns refer to deictic words as the idea expressed by them totally depends on the location of a speaker. In English *right* and *left* collocate with prepositions *to* and *on*. Contrastively in the Russian language in similar situations adverbs *справа* and *слева* specified by prepositional nominal phrases are used.

My name is Josh Stafford, and I'm the attorney for Mr.Troy Phelan, seated here to my right.

Меня зовут Джош Стэффорд, я поверенный в делах мистера Троя Филана, который сидит здесь, справа от меня.

To his right was a lobby area with some chairs and a few travel magazines strewn over a wide coffee table. To his left was a small empty phone room with its door open, then another room that was not empty.

Справа холл, стулья и широкий кофейный столик с туристическими журналами. Слева, за открытой дверью, пустая маленькая комната для телефонных переговоров, за ней еще одна, вовсе не пустая, там сидел Марко за маленьким столиком под настенным телефонным аппаратом, открытая синяя сумка на столике перед ним.

Thus, after inspecting the group of nouns-locators it is possible to conclude that the difference between American English and Russian is quite subtle. Prepositions of space is another semantic group under the analysis. Prepositions are a functional part of speech which nominate the relationship between two words in a sentence, usually a noun and some other words. Meanwhile, prepositions reflect how a lan-

guage understands the environment around, particularly space prepositions which express the co-existence and relationship of objects in space. Therefore, spatial prepositions are of a particular interest for our study as physical reality is comprehended and expressed in different ways by different peoples.

Names of places are used with similar prepositions in American English and in Russian.

Have you spent much time in Italy?

Вы довольно долго жили когда-то в Италии?

Similar prepositions are also used to describe landscapes.

She parked illegally on the hill nearest the apartment and walked two blocks.

В нарушении правил она опять-таки припарковала машину на склоне; до дома ей нужно было пройти пару кварталов.

The difference between the languages in choosing space prepositions is registered in describing space relationships with the locator naming islands. American English sometimes uses preposition **in** with the names of islands, like the Bahamas, while the Russian language gives preference to the preposition **на**. We presume that American English considers the Bahamas as the state, while the Russian language understands the Bahamas as islands, a dry land surrounded by the sea.

Her friends had beach houses nestled in quiet coves in the Bahamas...

У ее друзей дома в тихих бухтах на Багамах, у самого моря ...

*Similar tendencies are registered in both languages expressing the spatial relationships using space prepositions and nouns naming containers. In American English prepositions **in** and **inside** are used, while in Russian prepositions **в** and **внутри** are exploited.*

Okay, my father was killed in the coal mines when I was seven years old.

Ну так слушайте. Отец погиб в угольной шахте, когда мне было семь лет.

A car door slammed and the dog pointed inside the house.

Хлопнула дверца автомобиля, пес в доме встрепенулся.

As for the differences in the languages under analysis, to describe the spatial relationships with cardinal points as locators American English uses preposition **in** and the Russian language uses preposition **на**.

The news never changed: trouble in the Middle East, trouble in Ireland; scandals in Congress; the markets were up then down .

Studies in the United States – yes, somewhere in the Midwest.

Учился в Соединенных Штатах – да, где-то на Среднем Западе.

На востоке стемнело.

Names of various institutions in American English are used with preposition **at**, in Russian with preposition **в**.

You'll spend two weeks next winter in Washington at the American Tax Institute.

Зимой следующего года вы проведете пару недель в Вашингтоне, в институте налогообложения.

Nouns naming means of transport, particularly a train, are used with absolutely different prepositions in the languages contrasted: English uses **on** and Russian uses **в**.

Greenlaw, the fine-looking lady, and two other members of the team, were on a train leaving London and headed for Paris.

Гринлоу, хорошенькая женщина и два других члена команды ехали в поезде Лондон-Париж.

One more difference in using space prepositions is registered in collocations with noun *orbit/орбита*. American English tends to use **in**, while the Russian language uses **на**.

... but also allowed Neptune to jam many of the navigation, communications, and reconnaissance satellites already in orbit.

... но и позволяла ему чинить помехи навигационным, разведывательным и коммуникационным спутникам, находящимся на орбите.

It is important to mention the specific phrases **down the street** and **up the street** which are commonly used in American English: **down the street** stresses the idea of *along or toward the far end of something* [5, с. 302], **up the street** means *in or to a place that is further along something such as a road or path* [5, с. 1107]. In the Russian linguistic world image both phrases **down the street** and **up the street** have one and the same equivalent **по улице**.

The classroom is just down the street.

Классная комната чуть дальше по этой улице.

Stability of space relationships is often described in American English with the preposition **near**. In Russian similar situations require more detailed specification that is why Russian adverb *неподалеку* and a specifying nominal phrase with preposition **от** are used.

It's in the northeast part of Italy, near Alps.

Это на северо-востоке Италии, неподалеку от Альп.

It is worth mentioning that preposition *in front of* is a frequent means of expressing stability of space relationship. In Russian similar relationships are described using not direct equivalent *напротив*, but spatial preposition *у*.

They had walked only a few steps when Luigi stopped in front of the Albergo Campeol.

Они прошли всего несколько шагов, и Луиджи остановился у входа в Альберто Кампеоль.

Luigi stopped in front of the Trattoria del Monte.

Луиджи остановился у кафе «Траттория дель Монто».

Inside and *outside* are space prepositions which describe stable space relationships in American English. The Russian language employs space adverbs and a specifying nominal phrase with a space preposition.

... die as a real patriot, and be buried on his Thoroughbred farm just outside Lexington, Kentucky.

...достойно умереть истинным патриотом и быть похороненным на своей ферме в Торобреде, что неподалеку от Ленсингтона, штат Кентукки.

Comparing and contrasting space adverbs in American English and Russian it is essential to note that both languages show similarities and differences in the ways of expressing stable space relationships.

English adverb *outside* is used to describe such space relationships which in Russian are described with the help of prepositional and nominal phrase *на улице*.

They walked the hallways of the courthouse, waiting. They smoked outside by the front doors.

В ожидании окончания встречи они мерили шагами коридоры суда, нервно курили на улице перед входом, ...

Deictic adverbs of place *here/there* and *здесь/там* are used to describe the same spatial situations, so both languages use the same linguistic means.

I'm sitting here to prove to the world that I am of sufficient mental capacity to make a new will.

Я сижу здесь, чтобы доказать всему миру, что нахожусь в прекрасной интеллектуальной форме и в состоянии подписать новое завещание.

However modern American English often uses a combination of adverbs *down there* while Russian exploits a deictic adverb *там* to describe the same spatial situation.

Don't they have cannibals down there?

А каннибалов там нет?

Another peculiarity of American English is a combination of two adverbs **far away** to verbalize an idea of location at a great distance. In Russian only one adverb **далеко** is used to express the same idea.

But Backman was far away with the distance growing every minute.

В это время Бэкман был далеко и с каждой минутой удалялся все дальше.

When adverb **away** is used individually it corresponds to the Russian adverbs **далеко, вдали** combined with specifying nominal phrase with a spatial preposition.

Their children were away in boarding schools out of the way, Ramble was in the basement and wouldn't come out.

Их дети учились вдали от них, в закрытых частных школах, и нисколько не мешали им, а Рэмбл постоянно торчал рядом в доме, на первом этаже.

English adverbs meaning cardinal points are also frequently used. The Russian language uses nominal phrases with nouns denoting cardinal points to describe similar situations.

Nate O'Riley was a partner a twenty-three-year man who was, at the moment, locked away in a rehab unit in the Blue Ridge Mountains west to D.C.

В течении двадцати трех лет Нейт О'Рейли был одним из партнеров фирмы. В настоящее время пребывал в реабилитационной клинике в Блу-Ридж-Маунтинз, к западу от Ду-Си.

As for the verbs which are commonly used to express the idea of stable spatial relationships in American English and Russian, the major part of the semantic groups of verbs coincide in both languages. Most frequent semantic groups include verbs of position in space, existence, state, etc.

Although Russian tends to specify position in space, while in American English it is enough to use **to be** verb.

At one end of the table is a large digital screen which will broadcast the proceedings.

В дальнем конце стола установлен большой цифровой монитор, с его помощью можно будет следить за процедурой освидетельствования.

Directly across from me are three shrinks – one hired by each family.

Прямо напротив меня расположились три психиатра – по одному от каждой семьи.

To sum up, both languages show similarities and differences in the process of verbalizing stable spatial relationships. Semantic groups of nouns used as locators and semantic groups of verbs mostly coincide in American English and in Russian. The choice of American English prepositions of space quite often differs from their Russian equivalents in expressing stable spatial relationships. The most frequent spatial prepositions are *in, on* and *at* in American English and *в* in Russian. As for adverbs, American English and Russian tend to use them differently but for deictic adverbs *here/there* and *здесь/там*. So, prepositions and adverbs demonstrate the biggest difference between the languages. It is, probably, caused by the fact that prepositions express the idea of relationships between the objects in reality, logics of existing, which can be differently interpreted by different world images.

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