

Materials of Conferences

MODALATION OF VERBAL ADVERBS
IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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The article provides a comprehensive description of the process and result of modalation of verbal adverbs with dependent words in the Russian language. It reveals the cause of this type of transposition, lying in the enhancement of the subjective factor in the language, the speaker's intention to give a multidimensional assessment to disclosures, identifying its authenticity / non-authenticity (by referring to the source); speaker's own attitude towards style of speech, way of expression of thought, its place in the discourse; assessing the speech in terms of adherence to various communicative features i.e. pureness, accuracy, simplicity, integrity, etc., as well as in the context of synchrony / diachrony, scope of use, etc. The authors draw attention to the fact that modalation of verbal adverbs causes the appearance of grammatical homonyms, which can be differentiated, on the one hand, by verbal adverbs and their verbal properties (adjunctive action, perfective/imperfective aspect, relative time and voice, function of the secondary predicate, etc.) and on the other hand – by modal words and their characteristics (semantics of subjective modality, function of parenthetical part, invariability, a certain degree of clause phraseologisation with verbal-adverb modalate, a special type of intonation characterised by falling tone and a more accelerated pace of speech, introductive relation with the utterance or its part, the ability to participate in the actual division of a sentence, pinpointing its comment or topic, the opportunity to use it in the informal conversation in comparison with sentences with verbal adverbs, etc.).

Among the transpositional processes occurring in the grammatical structure of the Russian language a special place is occupied by modalation of words belonging to different parts of speech: verbs in different grammatical forms – gerunds (*говоря, выражаясь* – *speaking, expressing*, etc.), infinitives (*знать, видеть, признаться* – *to know, to see, to admit oneself*, etc.), short participials (*видимо, не в обиду будет сказано* – *apparently, no offense meant*, etc.) and finite forms (*признаюсь, говорят, кажется* – *I confess, they speak, it seems*, etc.). Verbal adverbs, unlike other verbal forms, are transposed in the semantic-syntactic category of parenthetical-modal units only in combination with other words.

The reason for modalation of verbal adverbs within the parenthetical construction lies in the enhancement of the subjective factor in the language, the speaker's intention to give a multidimensional

assessment to disclosures, identifying its authenticity/non-authenticity by referring to the source (*судя по имеющимся у следствия доказательствам; говоря словами* – *judging by available evidences; putting it in the words of ...*); the speaker's attitude towards style of speech, way of expression of thought, its place in the discourse (*рассуждая философски, здраво; иначе говоря; кстати говоря* – *reasoning philosophically, maturely; otherwise speaking in other words; speaking of which*); assessing the speech in terms of adherence to various communicative features i.e. pureness, accuracy, accessibility, integrity, etc., as well as in the context of synchrony / diachrony, scope of use, etc. (*выражаясь правильно, грамотно; образно; точнее; популярно; грубо; современным языком; высказываясь кратко; изъясняясь проще* – *speaking accurately, properly, competently, metaphorically, more precisely, in lay terms, roughly; in modern language; speaking concisely; speaking in simple terms*).

The subject of the modus assesses the reported information from the point of view of a responsible / irresponsible approach to something; compliance / non-compliance with the laws of logic or life experience, awareness / ignorance about the real state of things, objective / subjective approach to something; in terms of any theory or anyone's opinion; taking into account official / unofficial nature of speech; in terms of the norms of ethics and morality, etc. (see also [1–2, 4–5]).

As a result of modalation verbal adverbs lose, except for rare cases (such as *Пользуясь случаем, хочу сказать* – *Relishing this opportunity I would like to say...*), basic grammatical properties of the verb – semantics of adjunctive action and means of its expression – aspect, relative time and voice, function of the secondary predicate, preserving, at the same time, syntactic relations with dependent words in an isolated structure and semantic relation with the source verb-predicate. Keeping some of the syntactic attributes of the verb, verbal adverbs in parenthetical-modal use lose their semantic relationship with the subject of dictum in the predicative nucleus of the utterance, not allowing to fulfill the verbal function of the secondary predicate.

As it is known, sentences in which verbal adverbs have no relation with real or potential subject, correlated with the position of logical subject, are on the verge or beyond the grammatical norms of modern Russian literary language. Cf.: **Проезжая по мосту, у меня слетела шляпа. *Riding through the bridge, I lost my hat*. It is hardly legitimate to discern a verbal adverb in impersonal sentences with parenthetical phrases such as *Говоря откровенно, его там вообще не было* – *Frankly speaking, he was not there at all*. Moreover, verbal-adverb modalates like *говоря* – *speaking*,

being uninformative as metatextual operators, can be removed without any damage to the general meaning of the statement. Cf.: (*Говоря*) *откровенно, его там вообще не было.* (*Speaking*) *honestly, he was not there at all.*

The morphemic structure of verbal-adverb modalates such as (*собственно*) *говоря* (*properly*) *speaking* has an “obscure” character, hindering the identification of separate morphemes, in particular the formative suffix *-я/ya*: it loses grammatical function, i.e. the ability to express the relative temporal values of simultaneity (adjunctive action with basic action), turning into an “empty” morpheme, a structural component of the word stem. A similar picture can be observed when the functional predication of short passive participles occurs in impersonal statements, such as *Ни одного письма еще не отправлено* – *Not a single letter has been sent so far* where flexion *-o* has lost grammatical meaning of neuter gender, singular and was transformed in a nonsemantic, structural element of the word, similar to some extent to the suffix *-o* in short passive participles involved in the transpositional processes of functional adjectivation and predication in such contexts as *В купе не убрано, не проветрено* – *The compartment is not cleaned, not aired* (about two combined types of transposition of short passive participles – adjectivation and predication see [3]).

Modalation of verbal adverbs in the Russian language, which has a purely grammatical character, nevertheless, occurs in the framework of the source verbal lexemes, without violating the semantic identity of the word. As a result of this type of transposition of linguistic units grammatical (not lexical!) homonyms appear such as *выражаясь* – *swearing* (verbal adverb) (1a) – *loosely speaking* (modalate) (1b):

(1) (a) *Он размахивал руками, грубо выражаясь при этом в адрес собеседника* *He was gesticulating and at the same time swearing at his opponent* (verbal adverb from the verb to express oneself);

(б) *Иди ты, грубо выражаясь, подальше...* *Get, loosely speaking, lost* (verbal-adverb modalate, functioning within verb lexeme *выражаться* – *to express oneself*).

It is important to underscore that along with verbal-adverb modalates Russian language speakers also use verbal adverbs that cause appearance of those modalates. This means that, for example, the existence of modalates *говоря, выражаясь, рассуждая, мысля, судя* – *speaking, expressing oneself, reasoning, thinking, judging* in the position of parenthetics does not exclude the existence of verbal adverbs *говоря, выражаясь, рассуждая, мысля, судя* – *speaking, expressing oneself, reasoning, thinking, judging* that function as secondary predicate and/or modifier. To differentiate them, one can apply to, on the one hand, verbal adverbs and their verbal properties and on the other hand –

modal words and their characteristics (semantics of subjective modality, function of parenthetic part, invariability, (cf. the forms of active and passive voice of verbal adverbs: *судя по...* / *будучи судимы по...* *judging by / being judged on...*), a certain degree of clause phraseologisation with verbal-adverb modalate, a special type of intonation characterised by falling tone and a more accelerated pace of speech, introductive relation with the utterance or its part, the ability to participate in the actual division of a sentence highlighting its comment and topic, the opportunity to use it in informal conversation in comparison with sentences with verbal adverbs, etc.].

The absence in the analysed word form the most important semantic-grammatical characteristics of the verb, such as the semantics of adjunctive action and means of its expression – aspect, relative time and voice; function of the secondary predicate and the presence of the main characteristics of modalates – subjective modal meaning expressing the subject of modus’ attitude to what is said, the function of parenthetics, etc. speak for its parenthetic-modal nature, i.e., that before us is a specific parenthetic-modal type of using word-forms such as (*честно*) *говоря, (грубо) выражаясь, судя (по всему)* – (*honestly*) *speaking, (roughly) speaking, judging (by everything)*. Verbal adverbs and verbal-adverbs modalates are similar in distinctive features such as the identity of the lexical meaning; the ability to collocate with objective and adverbial modifiers; to be part of unattached phrase which is enclosed in commas, or – less often – hyphenated; the presence of condition-effect relationships between the unattached clause and predicative nucleus of the utterance. Cf.:

(2) (a) *Честно говоря, он не ожидал такого развития событий* (\approx ‘Если говорить честно, он не ожидал такого развития событий’) *Honestly speaking, he did not expect such an outcome* (\sim To speak honestly, he did not expect such an outcome);

(б) *Честно говоря о случившемся, он вряд ли мог бы рассчитывать на снисхождение* (\approx ‘Если бы он говорил честно, то вряд ли мог бы рассчитывать на снисхождение’). *Telling the truth about the occurrence, he would hardly have counted on indulgence* (\sim If he told the truth he would hardly have counted on indulgence).

The difference between condition-effect relations in the above statements is that in one of them the condition is linked with the position of the speaker – the subject of modus (2a) and in the other with the potential implementation of adjunctive, secondary action (2b).

Based on what has been said it follows that the process of modalation of verbal adverbs occurring within the parenthetic constructions is related to significant reduction of verbal characteristics and enhancement of subjective-modal principle, allowing the speaker (the subject of the modus) to assess the information or its part from different angles.

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