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## **FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF PARTICLES IN ENGLISH**

The article focuses on one of the topical issues of modern linguistics – particles in modern English and their functions. Particle has been out of attention for a long period simply because it was not considered to be a main part of speech. This view-point gradually changed and scientists fairly suggested that particle is semantically as powerful and polyfunctional as any other part of speech. During investigation, it became evident that there are two main trends of approaches concerning the status of English particles as part of speech:

1) foreign researchers who never accepted particles as a class of independent parts of speech and added them to the class of adverbs;

2) post-Soviet linguists, who, in their turn, used to allocate particles to the system of secondary parts of speech.

In the article both the approaches are considered and it is revealed that they have a common feature – particles implement such meanings as apposition, restriction, and complementation. As a result, it is suggested is that English particles are such units of language that are, firstly, directly related to the communicative goals of the speaker in a specific situation of communication and, consequently, secondly, have an extremely variable semantics, which is refined and completely varies depending on the context.

**Key words:** particle, focusing adverbial, polysemantic, polyfunctional.

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## **Ағылшын тіліндегі көмекші сөздерді функциональдық-семантикалық талдау**

Мақала осы заманғы лингвистикадағы өзекті мәселелердің бірі қазіргі ағылшын тіліндегі көмекші сөздерге және оның қызметіне арналған. Көмекші сөздер ұзақ уақыт бойы назардан тыс қалды, өйткені ол негізгі сөз табы ретінде саналмады. Бұл көзқарас бірте-бірте өзгере бастады, ғалымдар өзге де сөз таптары сияқты көмекші сөздердің де семантикалық тұрғыдан белсенді, қызметі жағынан жан-жақты екендігін дұрыс аңғара бастады. Олардың ағылшын тіліндегі көмекші сөздерді екі түрлі тәсілмен зерттегендігі белгілі болды:

1) Зерттеушілер ешқашан да көмекші сөздерді сөз табының қатарына қосқан жоқ, оларға үстеуіш ретінде ғана қарады;

2) Совет өкіметі құлағаннан кейін лингвистер көмекші сөздерді екінші дәрежелі сөз табы ретінде қарастырып, топтастырды.

Мақалада біз екі тәсілді де қарастырдық. Екі тәсілге де ортақ жайт – көмекші сөздердің байланыс, қатынас, шектеу, толықтыру мағыналарын беретіндігі. Біріншіден, ағылшын тіліндегі көмекші сөздер сөйлеушінің нақты қарым-қатынас жағдайына байланысты коммуникативтік мақсатта ғана қолданатын тілдік бірліктері екендігі анықталды. Екіншіден, олардың семантикалық варианттары аса көп, әр вариант мәтін ішінде айқындалады.

**Түйін сөздер:** көмекші сөздер, үстеудің икемділігі, көп мағыналық, көп функционалдық

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### Функционально-семантический анализ частиц в английском языке

Статья посвящена одной из актуальных проблем современной лингвистики – частицам современного английского языка и их функциям. Частица долгое время была вне внимания, потому что она не считалась основной частью речи. Эта точка зрения постепенно изменилась, и ученые справедливо предположили, что частица семантически сильна и полифункциональна, как и любая другая часть речи. В ходе исследования стало очевидным, что есть две основные тенденции подходов, касающихся статуса английских частиц как части речи:

1) исследователи, которые никогда не принимали частицы как класс независимых частей речи и относили их к классу наречий;

2) постсоветские лингвисты, которые, в свою очередь, относили частицы к системе вторичных частей речи.

В статье рассматриваются оба подхода, в результате выясняется, что они имеют общую особенность – частицы реализуют такие значения, как сношение, ограничение и дополнение. В результате предполагается, что английские частицы являются такими единицами языка, которые, во-первых, непосредственно связаны с коммуникативными целями говорящего в конкретной ситуации коммуникации, и, следовательно, во-вторых, имеют чрезвычайно вариационную семантику, которая уточнена и полностью варьируется в зависимости от контекста.

**Ключевые слова:** частица, фокусировка наречий, многозначный, полифункциональный.

## Introduction

Traditionally, it is considered that particles contradict the full-meaning words, that their lexical meaning conforms to their grammatical functions. Thus, they are recognized as «formless words», that is, the words that do not have morphological variants.

It is mentioned that almost all particles can coincide with adjectives, adverbs, pronouns and other parts of speech according to their external composition. This is why, it is important not to confuse them with other parts of speech. The main difference between particles and other (main) parts of speech is that they do not indicate such characteristics as action, quality, and indication as adverbs. Particles do not express signs of other phenomena, their properties or qualities as adjectives. Particles do not point to objects or signs as pronouns. Consequently, the problems arise not only with the translation of particles into different languages, but also with their correct usage and understanding within the frames of the language under investigation.

By glancing at different post-Soviet and foreign scientists' approaches concerning the particle either a secondary, or a main part of speech, or focusing adverbial, we infer that these view-points are strongly based on functions particles take in a concrete context. According to the examples analysed, it became obvious that in English the particle is a polyfunctional grammatical unit

which fulfills nominative, emotional-expressive, alternating, coordinating, modificatory, elucidating, identifying and restricting functions.

English particles are not given sufficient attention in grammar as well as in the theory of translation. The term «particle» is not met so often in English grammars: «Particle is . . . something of an «escape (or cop-out) category» for grammarians. If it's small and you don't know what to call it, call it a particle» seems to be the practice; and a very useful practice, as it avoids pushing words into categories in which they do not properly belong (Hurford, 1994: 1).

Particles are considered to be one of the most disputable parts of speech. There are two points of view concerning the status of English particles as a part of speech.

1. Foreign researchers do not accept particles as a class of independent parts of speech and add them to the class of adverbs.

2. In post-Soviet linguistics, scientists, in their turn, allocated particles to the system of secondary parts of speech.

## Experiment

We shall consider both of the approaches in the solution of the problem. British and American researchers include particle into the class of adverbs, calling them «adverbials» or «focusing adverbials». In the broader sense, «adverbial» is the unit which accepts the function of a free modifier in relation to the modified, occupying a

secondary position. The term «focusing adverbial» means «free modifier that belongs to the class of focusing adverbs.» Thus, foreign linguists, without recognizing independent part-of-speech status of the particles, copulate them with adverbs, emphasizing the «non-adverbial» character first.

Some researchers of modern English differentiate ranges of particles with in the system of secondary parts of speech. I. Ivanova suggests that nominative function is not inherent to particles as all the words of the secondary parts of speech. They (particles) transmit a differentiated emotional, evaluative attitude of the speaker not to the whole utterance but to one of its elements. The desire is, in any case, to highlight this element, to give it a special meaning (Ivanova: 1981, 6)

Ivanova points out that particle being a secondary part speech, holds the function which elucidates the meaning of the members to which they are related, but in some cases the function of significant alternation in the total meaning of the utterance.

Zhigadlo also suggests similar definition, «Particles are irreplaceable words that clarify the meaning of other words, imparting modal or emotionally expressive shades to other words or groups of words» (Zhigadlo, 1956: 7). His definition is identical with Kobrina's, «Particle is a part of speech the meaning of which is difficult to define. It either emphasizes or limits the meaning of another word or phrase or clause» (Cobrina, 2009: 8).

There are various types of classification of the English particles. The functional-semantic classification of particles finds it rather difficult from the standpoint of polyfunctionality concerning many of them. Traditionally, emphatic (even, yet, still, all, just, simply, never, merely), restrictive (even, only, merely, solely, just, but, alone) and identifying (namely, just, *here is, there is, here's, there's, here are, there are*) particles are differentiated.

In addition, Minchenkov suggests that many particles, for example, «oh», «just» can express variety of emotions, or an emotive component can be layered onto the main meaning of the particle (Minchenkov, 2004: 4). Some particles, expressing meaning, can at the same time, perform the function of connectors, the role traditionally inherent in conjunctions, for example, «after all», «anyway», «actually».

According to the main shade of meaning, to which the particles attach words or groups of words, Zhigadlo divides them into 4 groups:

1) Particles that clarify the semantic shades of meaning of words in speech. To this group the scientist relates the following particles:

a) restrictive – «only»:

*It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about* (Minchenkov, 2004: 3)

b) alternative – intensifying – «even»:

*Now you don't even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect* (Minchenkov, 2004: 94)

c) explanatory – «exactly», «certainly»:

*It was with an almost cruel joy – and perhaps in nearly every joy, as certainly in every pleasure, cruelty has its place – that he used to read the latter part of the book, with its really tragic, if somewhat overemphasized, account of the sorrow and despair of one who had himself lost what in others, and in the world, he had most valued* (Minchenkov, 2004:158)

d) complementary – «else»:

*Oh, the obvious one. Taking someone else's admirer when one loses one's own. In good society that always whitewashes a woman* (Minchenkov, 2004:117)

2) Modal particles:

a) negative particle – «not»:

*Indeed, the probabilities are that the more insincere the man is, more purely intellectual will the idea be, as in that case it will not be colored by either his wants, his desires, or his prejudices* (Minchenkov, 2004:15)

b) negative-intensifying – «never», «not»:

*How extraordinary! I thought you would never care for anything but your painting, – your art, I should say. Art sounds better, doesn't it?* (Minchenkov, 2004: 15)

3) Particles that impart emotional-expressive shades to speech – intensifying particles: «simply»:

*Dorian Gray is merely to me a motive in art. He is never more present in my work than when no image of him is there. He is simply a suggestion, as I have said, of a new manner* (Minchenkov, 2004:17)

4) Particle that performs the form-building function – «to»:

*Dorian took the note up and read it carefully. Then he rang the bell, and gave it to his valet, with orders to return as soon as possible, and to bring the things with him.* (Minchenkov, 2004: 226)

Some of the particles are polysemantic and therefore, belong to different groups. This type of particles is: «just», «but», «only» and «not». Particle «just» along with its main specifying meaning, creates restrictive and intensifying meanings. «But» and «only» act as restrictive-alternative and as intensifying particles; «not» usually performs the function of negative particle, but it can also be a negative-intensifying particle. It

should be noted that this classification is the so-called «semantic» classification, widely accepted in post-Soviet linguistics.

In foreign Anglicistics, there are also attempts to classify this class of words into the so-called «focusing adverbs». For example, Jakobson divides all the particles into 2 groups: (Jakobson, 1985: 12)

1) Asyndetic:

a) restrictive – «only», «just», «entirely», «fully», «completely», «merely»:

«Am I really like that?»

«Yes; you are just like that.»

«How wonderful, Basil!» (Minchenkov, 2004: 46)

*There are only two kinds of women, the plain and the colored. The plain women are very useful. If you want to gain a reputation for respectability, you have merely to take them down to supper.* (Minchenkov, 2004: 54)

*'Dorian, this is horrible! Something has changed you completely. You look exactly the same wonderful boy who used to come down to my studio, day after day, to sit for his picture.* (Minchenkov, 2004: 126).

b) specifying – «exactly», «precisely», «especially», «just», «particularly», «chiefly», «mainly»:

*You remind me of a story Harry told me about a certain philanthropist who spent twenty years of his life in trying to get some grievance redressed, or some unjust law altered, – I forget exactly what it was* (Minchenkov, 2004: 129)

*Sometimes this was the effect of art, and chiefly of the art of literature, which dealt immediately with the passions and the intellect* (Minchenkov, 2004: 70)

2) Syndetic – by natural apposition.

König is also confined to these two groups: (König, 1991: 33)

1) exclusive – «only», «just», «alone»:

*My dear boy, people who only love once in their lives are really shallow people* (Minchenkov, 2004: 56)

*He is the best of fellows, but he seems to me to be just a bit of a Philistine* (Minchenkov, 2004: 67)

2) inclusive – «also», «too», «even», «either»:

*Yes, she will. She has not merely art, consummate art – instinct, in her, but she has personality also; and you have often told me that it is personalities, not principles, that move the age* (Minchenkov, 2004: 66)

*What matters what the cost was? One could never pay too high a price for any sensation.* (Minchenkov, 2004: 69)

*What they call their loyalty, and their fidelity, I call either the lethargy of custom or the lack of imagination* (Minchenkov, 2004: 56)

*Even those that are born in England become foreigners after a time, don't they? It is so clever of them, and such a compliment to art.* (Minchenkov, 2004: 51).

## Conclusion

Thus, we observe that all the viewed classifications have common features. According to researchers, particles realize such meanings as apposition, restriction and complementation. It should be mentioned that they are contextually conventional. Particles can yield additional meanings, potentially possessed by their semantic structure. According to this fact, we can infer that functional semantics of this class of words is rather complex, and therefore, it is necessary to take into account the implementation of the main and additional meanings transmitted by particles when used in speech.

Analysis of the linguistic literature reflects two opposite points of view. Post-Soviet researchers of English distinguish execution of particles in the system of main parts of speech, while foreign linguists refer them to the category of adverbs. At the same time, both classifications have common features – particles implement such meanings as apposition, restriction, and complementation.

Thus, illocutionary particles are such units of language that are directly related to the communicative goals of the speaker in a specific situation of communication. Consequently, English particles have an extremely variable semantics, which is refined and completely varies depending on the context.

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