The predicate "Understand": the realization of its meanings

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Abstract. A strong interest in a problem of semantics has retained in modern linguistics due to the fact that this aspect is revealed through communicative nature of language and its content side. The aim of the scientific paper is to describe the impact of the sentence structure on the process of the realization of the predicate *understand* meanings in broad context.
[Anokhina S.P., Zyuzina I.A. **The predicate "Understand": the realization of its meanings.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(12s):526-530] (ISSN:1097-8135). http://www.lifesciencesite.com. 113

Key words: semantics, the context, the predicate *understand,* markers.

Introduction

This article refers to the analysis of the interaction of lexical and grammatical semantics in the sentence structure with the predicate *understand.* The focus of our work is the realization of its various meanings in wide context. The choice of the verb as the object of our research is not accidental, if compared with other parts of speech it's exactly its inherent ability to nominate in compressed form the complex structures of knowledge that have a great number of cognitive characteristics.

The lexical paradigm of the predicate *understand*, based on the English dictionary definitions, includes a dozen of different meanings. We'll briefly consider and identify those that are vividly reflected in the process of making the sense of speech product: *to understand* (to be able to explain oneself) - communicative (1); *to interpret, to understand* - mental (1); *to mean* - semiotic (2); *to make clear* - semiotic (3); *to hear, to know* - mental (2); *to be able to, to understand* - evaluative; *to assume, to guess* - semiotic (1); *to agree* - semiotic (4).

Note that except for the analysis of dictionary definitions, in the analysis of linguistic material we use the range of methods, including the method of contextual analysis, conceptual and interpretative analysis of the properties of the text, a schematic method to systematize the data. [1, 2, 3]

In our opinion, it's worthwhile to explore the realization of the cognitive structure of the predicate *understand* in its direct connection with the syntactical sentence structure with the finite verb "to understand" as the preliminary analysis of linguistic material has revealed their specific interdependence. [4]

Two meanings are implemented in the S + P (the direct object) structure:

1. Semiotic (2). The indicator of this meaning is a preceding context, i.e. you know what I mean: "... I am going to get you. Do you understand?"[5,146]

Semiotic meaning is implemented against the background of the previous context that contains an unusual object the properties of which can be understood by individuals in different ways: "But a boating costume it would be as well if all ladies would understand, ought to be a costume that can be worn in a boat..." [6, 57]

2. Semiotic (1) is the largest group; the indicator is also a context. It can be: a) a lexical meaning of the verb in the main clause, immediately followed by a proposal with the predicate *understand*: "And the pink shepherds and the yellow shepherdesses that we hand round now for all our friends so gush over and pretend, they understand, were the unvalued mantel ornament...."[6, 51];

b) a lexical meaning of a qualifier: "... the truth is, Harris was round here this morning ..." George said: "Say no more; I understand." [6, 207];

c) a denial: "Don't you get it. You lose." [5,724];

d) a denial + a subsequent micro-context: "You don't understand Mr. Kaufat," he said: " I was supposed to play a trick on Wilma Jerzyck, and I did." [5,257];

e) a specificator in the preceding micro-context + a denial to the predicate *understand*: "You're wrong", Polly said. "You don't understand!" [5,729];

f) an integral preceding context: "If you ever expect to find the key that unlocks the music box, you had better just shut your mouth and open your ears - do you understand, dear?" [5,648] She understood [5,648] "I'm not going to allow you to make a hysterical little boy's condition worse, no matter what is going on in your town." "I understand." [5,585] "You have this one little errand to do for me and then you can go home. Do you understand?" Netti understood. [5,266];

g) pre and post context: "Then she looked more closely at Myrtle's face ... and understood. "You too?" She asked in a low voice. [5,570] "After a few moments he remembered the movie with Jeff Bridges

and understood. Like the German VW Beetle and Chery Curvair, the Tucker's engine was back here." [5,415];

h) both contexts + a lexical meaning of one of the verbs in post context: "I'd let you see him if I could, Sheriff Pangborn, but I really can't. You understand, don't you? I mean, I know you have problems in your home tower, but this little boy is only seven."[5,670]

We can't but mention about communicative development of the discourse (the only example): "I got nothing against niggers, you understand, but the idea of a jig in the white House - the White House! - gives me the shiver." [5,449]

The following meanings of the predicate *understand* are implemented in the structure of S + P + O (the object is inanimate):

1) mental (to interpret, to understand) is verified by the possibility of replacing the predicate *understand* with "to explain". "I didn't understand the business at all myself. [6, 85] He hadn't the slightest idea what "place" and "show" meant but "win" he understood very well." [5, 206] "As a girl, she never understood dressing." [6,333] "I don't like to go back to the shop. I cannot understand the thing at all." [6,256];

2) mental + semiotic is verified by the possibility of substitution with the predicates "to explain" and "to guess". "The weather is a fling that is beyond me altogether. I never can understand if."[6, 41-42] "It must have been a fearful battle, so far as we could understand Harris's account of it."[5,132];

3) mental + communicative (to be able to explain oneself): "Yet, when I come abroad hardly anybody understand a word I say." [6,311] Due to misunderstanding the communication was unsuccessful;

4) semiotic is verified by the replacement of the predicate *understand* for " to guess": "You have never heard Harris sing a comic song, or you would understand the service I had rendered to mankind." [6,68] "Alan didn't know what the boy was afraid of, but he understood one thin - his magic..." [5,491] "He began to understand the sufferings of the Babes in the wood." [6,131] "Mr. Gaunt seemed to understand her discomfort." [5,299] Underlined verbs indicate only partial object cognition that causes this semiotic significance;

5) evaluative (pragmatic). The markers are: a denial; an object - the name of the subject, artifact: "People talk like that who understand nothing about machines."[6,203];

6) evaluative + mental +semiotic. The markers are: a generalized subject (mental and semiotic), a denial (evaluative) and an object – an

abstract name (semiotic): "But a woman never understand satire."[6,190];

7) communicative (1). The marker is the direct object with the meaning "a foreign language", sometimes a denial or a qualifier in the function of the adverbial modifier: "I don't understand German myself." [6, 69] "The disadvantage is that outside Hanover, ...nobody understands this best German." [6,237] "They talked French that nobody could understand." [6,258] "I understand Scotch fairly well ..." [6,261];

8) emotionally evaluated (don't understand jokes): "The German policeman does not understand a joke ..." [6,277] "Can't you fellows understand a joke?" [6,265] "He only knew it was exactly the sort of trick Mr. Gaunt would understand, and he wanted it with him now."[5,685].

The structure of S + P + O (the object clause) reveals the next meanings of the predicate *understand*:

1) mental (1). The markers are: the substitution of the predicate "to explain", as the subordinate proposition is cause-and-effect relations. "Someone else who sees the danger, who understands what they are up to."[5,611] "... and in a sudden flash of insight she understood what that nightmare was." [5,711]. We may note that the predicate *understand* is often combined with the modal verb "can" or its equivalent: "I could not at the time, I cannot now, understand why the top boy's summary was not sufficient."[6,234] "And he felt he could understand perfectly why smoking was now off - limits in the public areas of every hospital in America." [5,307] "Then, in July, everything had crashed. Ace still didn't really understand how it could have happened..." [5,361] "Why we waste time in teaching French according to this method I have never been able to understand."[6,240];

2) mental + semiotic. A subordinate proposition admits another interpretation in contrast to the subject's view of the predicate *understand* in the main clause that causes the layering of the semiotic significance. "The world is full of needy people who don't understand that everything, everything, is for sale...if you're willing to pay the price."[5, 82] "...but he did not understand how deeply the concept of church - supported gaming enraged and offended the Baptist preacher."[5,641] "She had heard what had happened to Lester, understood that she had somehow been to blame..." [5,715];

3) mental + communicative. The last caused by the subordinate proposition: the situation of direct communication: "I'm sure as hell don't understand how you're acting, Danford." [5,104] "He did understand what she was saying, and he also understood that she meant it." [5,471-472] In the

second part of the communication we observe the semiotic meaning.

4) communicative (the situation of direct communication)+ mental (1) (a subordinate proposition) + semiotic (2) (the verb "to mean" in the subordinate clause): "In Germany I found that nobody understood what I meant by it." [6,312] ("by it" means the word Kirche in its pronunciation) "But I think you understand what I mean, Ace. Don't you? "[5,636];

5) semiotic (1) + semiotic (2). The direct speech addressing to an interlocutor leads to semiotic (2), and the ambiguity of the subordinate proposition causes semiotic (1): "I understand there was bad feeling between the two women, and that the one on top already of fed someone."[5,319]

The semiotic markers are: a) the ambiguity of interpretation of the subordinate proposition: "He understood he probably could not put an end to the thing..." [5, 725] "... like him who understood that a monstrous conspiracy was a foot."[5, 567]; b) a qualifier to the predicate *understand*: "He said he didn't very well understand how George was going to sleep any more than he did now ..." [6, 16] "... and she knew that, if he really understood how bad the pain was this time, he would grow more insistent still."[5, 173] "Suddenly Alan understood what she was driving at ..." [5, 177] "The Sheriff took half a step backward. Gaunt understood at once what had happened. " [5, 233] "Her cheeks, which had gone as pall, as milk when she finally understood what had happened here ..." [5, 284]; c) a denial: "I don't understand what you're getting at."[5, 192] "You men never can understand", continued Ethelbertha "that, however fond a woman may be of a man, there are times, when he palls upon her." [6, 189]; d) the verb "to hope" in the main clause with the predicate understand in the preceding subordinate clause; followed by a subordinate object: "... but I hope you'll understand that such a meeting would have been very unwise ..." [5, 687] "And I added that I hoped she understood that if had nothing to do with me." [6, 33]. Here is the view of "I - the subject" on the subordinate proposition after the predicate understand that could be evaluated differently.

In the structure of S+P+O (the object is animate) we can observe the following meanings:

1) mental (1). As an object is the same denotation as the subject, therefore the substitution of the predicate "to explain" and other verbs is possible: "I can hardly understand myself at times." [6, 188] The adverbial modifier *at times* enhances this meaning.

2) communicative (1). Its markers are: a) a context the proposition of which is a speech act, speech or discourse; b) a denial, i.e. markers of unsuccessful communication or the question in the

direct speech, that is, "you know what I'm saying?": "Do you understand me? "[5, 104] "Now then, you girls", "come along, you've got to wash up!" "They didn't understand him at first." [6, 59] "In every town in Europe there must be people going about talking this sort of thing." "Maybe, I replied; 'but fortunately nobody understands them." [6, 208] "As for the rest, you don't know what you are talking about, and they wouldn't understand you if you did. You talk German." [6, 246] "He sighed and tried another (language - CA), which somehow recalled to me forgotten memories. But again nobody understood him." [6, 310]

3) semiotic (1) context: "If you always apt for the third choice, and trouble will never find you. Do you understand me?"[5, 420]

4) attitude + semiotic (2); there is no such context as in the previous one, but the classifier specifies the relationship: "Put another way, those who marry in waste often live to repent in leisure." "I don't understand you."(semiotic) "I know you don't. You'll understand me better (attitude + semiotic (2)) Polly after you check your mail." [5, 482] "Polly, I'm not understanding you."[5, 513]

Here is the context that encourages the recipient to share the viewpoint of the addresser and thus to express his positive attitude: "And don't you tell your mother I let you understand me?" - "Yes sir" Billi said... "I understand you perfect."[5, 522] "Those are not letter-boxes, they bird's nests. You must understand this nation. The German loves birds, but he likes tidy birds." [6, 248] "I shall be glad to get back, and yet I am sorry it is over, if you understand me." [6, 334] "Listen to me! Understand me! Alan, it's not just your life, can't you see?" [5, 712]

5) communicative (1) + attitude; the markers of this meaning are: communication, a denial + a qualifier (communication) and the object is an attitude: She said "If you get it, will you go?" "I did not quite understand her at first, and she repeated it." [6, 255]

In passive structure we can emphasize the following meanings:

1) mental (1); the marker is the predicate "to explain" substitution: "By custom, certain privileges are permitted to him, but even those are strictly limited and clearly understood." [6, 281];

2) semiotic (2); the marker is the meaning of the subject: "It does not make a man drunk as the word drunk is understood in England." [6, 321]

There is another example of semiotic (2) where the marker is an ambiguous context, the impersonal passive: "One talks like that when one is bargaining it is understood." [6, 332]

3) communicative (1) "I don't pretend to speak German Huntley, but I can generally make myself understood with a little effort." [6, 254]

The set of the entire predicate *understand* meanings can be represented in the tabular form:

Table 1. The set of the predicate "understand" meanings

	The meaning of the predicate *understand*	S +P	S+P +O	S+P +O	S +P+O	P assive
1	Semiotic (1): to assume, to guess	+	+	+	+	
2	Semiotic (2): to mean					+
3	Communicative (2)	+				
4	Mental (1)			+	+	+
5	Mentally(1)-semiotic(1): to assume		+	+		
6	Evaluative		+			
7	Evaluative + mental (1) + semiotic (1): to assume		+			
8	Emotionally - evaluated		+			
9	Mental(1)+communicative (1)			+		
10	Communicative (1)+ mental (1)+ semiotic (1)			+		
11	Mental + communicative (1)		+			
12	Communicative (1)		+		+	+
13	Semiotic (1)+ Semiotic (2)			+		
14	Attitude + semiotic (2)				+	
15	Attitude				+	
16	Communicative (1) + attitude				+	
	Total	**2**	**8**	**6**	**6**	**3**

Following the table we can explain that semiotic (3), semiotic (4) and mental (2) meanings don't occur in the texts; there is a single case of communicative (2) (it's shown in the dictionary). Consequence of this is the disappearance of some meanings in speech practice and the emergence of new ones, i.e. the dynamics, the evolution of cognitive predicate structures instead of a word. The lack of mental (2) in the structure S + P is rather natural as we can interpret only what is available, that is to say for this meaning a denotative object is a necessity. The validity of this judgment confirms the absence of semiotic (1) meaning in passive structures, for the realization of which a denotative – a recipient is required. Most passive constructions realize mental (1) meaning as they have a denotative object - a grammatical subject. Also a distinctive passive feature is the realization of semiotic (2) meaning, in the constructions with such components that indicate the universality of the situation (in England) or its typicality (bargaining), i.e. those that involve either the indefinite personal subject or apart - personal subject. [7]

Thus, the cognitive structure of the predicate *understand* is directly correlated with the denotatively – subjective signifies of the objective structure of the proposition, which in its turn is the result of the structure interaction and the semantics of the members of the sentence with the finite verb "to understand".

The need for denotational inanimate object or situation for the realization of the mental (1) meaning talks about contamination of it with other meanings that can be observed only in such structures. Thus, we can conclude that mental meaning (1) is a quasi-universal because it is realized in all the structures.

Another quasi-universal meaning of the predicate *understand* is the semiotic (1), which can be viewed directly derived from the mental (1), as it is an assumption or a conjecture that can be considered a variant of proper interpretation. It is no coincidence that in contaminations it is found only in coexistence with the mental meaning, except item 13 (see the table), that can be defined as the actual contamination, and the previous case as a diffusion. It is not accidentally that this contamination is found in the extended syntactic form (the term given by Kostrova) and in the register of the direct speech, which causes the realization of the cognitive (semiotic) structure of the predicate *understand*. [8] Besides this meaning, there are another two specific realizations: item 9 and 10 (see the table). But the greatest number of particular realizations is presented in the structure with the direct object - inanimate - five of eight therefore it is the most prominent individual structure. It seems that such a high degree of peculiarity is due to the semantics of the direct object. [9]

This argument does not contradict the fact that this meaning is not realized in syntactically formal identical structure, but with semantically another object clause- animate, where the specific meaning of interpersonal relationships is realized. This meaning individualizes the structure almost in the same extent as the parallel to it; three of six differential characteristics.

A clear tendency to unambiguity characterizes the structure S + P: only two meanings of the predicate *understand* are realized in it. One of them - the communicative in the function of the discourse development is its specific feature. Being the only case of the realization of this meaning, it allocates this structure amid the others; moreover, it is the basis for this tendency.

Few realizations of the predicate understand meanings can be observed in passive structures (3). The hallmark of them is the realization of semiotic (2) meaning –"to mean" that we've mentioned in detail above.

In general, according to the table, none of the given predicate *understand* meanings is realized in all structures, that is, there is no integral sign between them. Qualitative differences are presented in the

structures of S + P + O (the object clause) and S + P + O (animated subordinate clause) on the background of their quantitative similarity.

Quantitative indicators of the realization of the predicate *understand* meanings allow us to come to the important conclusion that characterizes this process qualitatively: the fuller the block diagram of this logical - grammatical type (the subject- predicate-object relations in syntactic terms, and in its original type - the active voice) the richer is the range of its meanings. The grammatical meaning of the direct object is an auxiliary factor here that is, the semantic factor comes into force due to invariant meaning of the verb "to understand" – "to interpret" that makes the syntax "classical" a model realization of the subject- predicate- object relations.

Conclusion

Thus the process of the realization of the predicate *understand* meanings has a linear nature that basically distinguishes it from the realization of the predicate *verstehen* meanings in German [10]. This fundamental difference is likely due to the distinctions in the cognitive structure of these predicates.

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7/30/2014

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