

# THEORETICAL BASES OF STUDYING THE VOCABULARY OF SENSORY PERCEPTION IN THE SYSTEM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

(ON THE MATERIAL OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING V. NABOKOV'S PROSE)

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## Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The aim of the article is the analysis of vocabulary, which is verbalizing the sensory perception in the novels of Vladimir Nabokov, as a symbolic representation of the Russian linguistic culture.

**Methodology:** Vocabulary, naming different human senses, is certainly culturally significant, and forms a cultural phenomenon. The study of semantic features of the lexicon representing perception by sense organs in V. Nabokov's prose within cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology assumes the reference to a problem of psychological, philosophical, linguistic and psycholinguistic understanding of the nature of the specified concepts. The theoretical basis of the research is the works devoted to categorization, conceptualization, and linguoculturology.

**Results:** The study confirmed the fact that Vladimir Nabokov is a "seeing" writer. The practical value of this work is due to the possibility of using the materials and results of the study in the development of Russian language stylistics courses, special seminars on the analysis of the literary text, as well as special courses on the works of writers of the XX century.

**Applications of this study:** This research can be used for the universities, teachers, and students.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** In this research, the model of the theoretical bases of studying the vocabulary of sensory perception in the system of scientific research is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

**Keywords:** *Russian, language, linguistics, text, vocabulary, perception.*

## INTRODUCTION

The understanding that language as a human creativeness "cannot be understood and explained without its connection with the Creator and the user" ([Kravchenko, 1996, p. 6](#)), stimulated in linguistics the process of changing the system-structural paradigm to the anthropocentric one. Cognitive linguistics develops within the framework of the concept of anthropocentrism, the prerequisites for the emergence of its were formulated in the works of I. A. Boduen de Courtene, who claimed that from the language thinking it is possible to identify the whole peculiar of knowledge in different spheres: facts and fiction, manifestations of the material world and individual psychological consciousness, and the social mentality ([Boduehe de Kurtene, 1963, p. 312](#)). The common feature of all research works in the field of cognitive linguistics is their central object of attention, which, according To N. K. Ryabtseva, is "the relationship of knowledge, inherent in the language, and the subject of perception; cognition and thinking; behavior and practice; refraction of the real world – his vision, understanding and structuring – in the creation of the subject and fixing it in the language in the form of subject (and ethnic) - oriented concepts, representations, images, concepts and models" ([Ryabceva, 2000, p.3](#)).

It is worth noting another important fact, applicable in the framework of our study, which is the existence of cultural linguistics – the branch of linguistics, which considers "the manifestation of the culture of the people, which are reflected and fixed in the language" ([Maslova, 2001, p. 9](#)). Issues of cultural linguistics are actively discussed in the researches of the Kazan scientists. Naming units of different human senses is certainly culturally significant and forms a cultural phenomenon. The study was based on the works of scholars from Kazan Federal University devoted to cultural linguistics [Marat and Liliya, 2014](#); [Mubarakshina, et al. 2016](#); [Sadikova, et al. 2016](#); [Takhtarova, 2015](#) and [Shamsutdinova, et al. 2017](#), etc.

The study of semantic features of the vocabulary representing perception by sense organs in V. Nabokov's prose, within the framework of cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies, suggests an appeal to the problem of psychological, philosophical, linguistic and psycholinguistic understanding of the nature of these concepts.

## METHODS

The study of language as a certain system of representation of knowledge is directly related to the classification of its typologies, format, structural design, as well as generative principles and mechanisms of correlation of cognitive and linguistic structures from the standpoint of the main cognitive processes – conceptualization and categorization. The analysis of the latest works in this field States that the research in cognitive linguistics is carried out in two directions, offering its typology of the conceptual system components.

The first direction considers a wide range of ways to broadcast the conceptual content, more precisely, different formats of knowledge: cognitive models, figurative schemes, frames, matrices, scenarios, categories, and others The second branch of research is based on the content specifics and the area of definition of the conceptual system units. In this regard, there are

cultural, ethnic, territorial, linguistic concepts that capture different types of knowledge about the realities of reality, about the inner world of man, the actual language knowledge.

Within the framework of the cognitive paradigm of linguistic research, language is studied as a representation of the result of the conceptualization and categorization processes occurring in the human consciousness in the development of reality. The essence of these processes is reduced to the processing of empirical data coming to the human brain from the environment, and the formation of interrelated concepts and concepts. One of the ways of cognition in the development of the real world is the perception, which is a mental process, during which there are analysis and understanding of the information received through the senses about the world, providing a reflection of objective reality in the consciousness and orientation in the world.

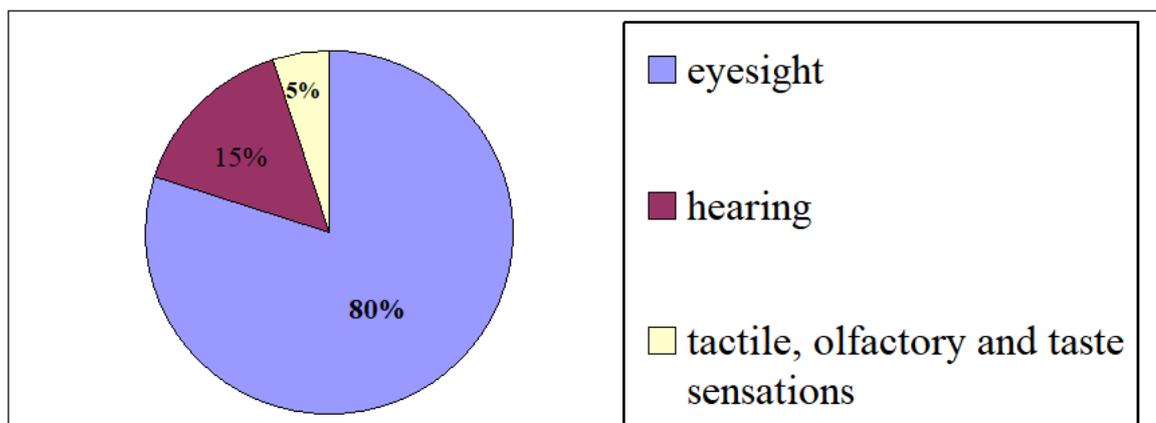
Cognitive-semantic studies of language help to detect in the semantics of the language unit's perceptive component, indicating a particular way to display reality in our consciousness. The explanation for this can be found in the theory of two-level categorization of knowledge in language ([Kravchenko, 1996, p. 56](#)).

The first level is a sensual acquaintance with the world, which is non-verbal, situational and psychological. At the second level, the conceptualization, categorization, and verbalization of the acquired perceptual knowledge are carried out, which leads to the formation of a conceptual model of reality. S. L. Rubinstein emphasizes that sensual images are the basis of the whole process of cognition, even in its abstract forms ([Rubinshtejn, 2003, p. 65](#)).

The reflection of sensory perception in language generates perceptivity as a linguistic category ([Murav'eva, 2008](#)). In linguistic works, perceptivity is defined as the presence in the semantics of linguistic units of reference to a certain perceptual modality. Perceptual modality, in turn, is a psychophysiological category defined as belonging of a sensation or signal to a certain sensory system: visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory or taste. The modality of perception indicates the channel through which a person receives information from the outside world. In psychology, it is customary to distinguish three main modalities: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Words referring to a particular modality, indicating a perceptive channel, involved by the speaker, are called sensory (or perceptive) predicates ([Karakuc-Borodina, 2000](#)).

## RESULTS

Human perceptual sensations are unequal in terms of their role in the conceptualization of reality. They form a certain hierarchy. Traditionally, it is believed that due to eyesight we get at least 80% of information about the world, the share of hearing is 15%, the remaining 5% share tactile, olfactory and taste sensations. This relationship can be illustrated by figure 1.



**Figure 1:** The ratio of the received information and the channels of perception

The unequal value of sensations is reflected in the vocabulary of the language. According to the observation of linguists, the most numerous and diverse is the vocabulary of visual perception. The second-largest is the vocabulary of auditory perception. The explanation for this can be the psychological fact that these types of sensory perception are the most closely related to thinking. Vision and hearing to a greater degree than the sense of touch, smell and taste are independent of physiology, bodily, sensory characteristics of human life and addressed to the intellect. In the individual lexicon, the percentage of sensory predicates varies due to the fact that each person can be identified as the main modality that plays a decisive role in its interaction with the surrounding world. For one person the world is, first of all, what he sees, for another the world is filled with sounds, for the third the world consists of smells, etc.

Research of perception using the technique of conceptual analysis suggests that sensory perception is comprehended as a situation and is reflected in the consciousness in the form of a concept frame, which includes the following components: *the subject of perception + the act of perception + the object of perception*. Along with nuclear slots, the frame "sensory perception" may include such optional slots as the instrument of perceptive action, the characteristic of action (temporary, quantitative, qualitative), the purpose of action, the quality of the object of perception, etc. ([Kolesov, 2008](#)).

Taking into account the purely linguistic factor in the perceptual vocabulary, we can distinguish such types of predicates as intramodal, polymodal and crossmodal, as well as perceptual hyperonyms.

Intramodal predicates are lexemes whose scope is limited to single perceptual modus. For example, "red" refers to the color modus, and "loud» refers to the sound intensity modus. Multimodal predicates are called lexemes are associated with multiple modes. For example, the adjective "smooth" means a surface quality that is perceived both by touch and vision and sweet can be both taste and smell. Cross-modal predicates include lexemes corresponding to a certain modality in its direct meaning, but metaphorically transferable to another modal sphere. For example, in the phrase "soft voice", the kinesthetic predicate "soft" is metaphorically used to characterize the auditory quality of the voice, speaking in this context as an auditory predicate. Perceptual hyperonyms are words that contain in their semantics an indication of the sphere of sensory perception in General without the specification of the sensory channel, such as "perceive", "feel", etc.

Special attention should be paid to the perceptiveness in the study of the work of art, in which it can be used by the author as a means of encoding meaning through symbolization, as a tool in the construction of an artistic model of reality. When analyzing this category, the text reveals the attitude of the author: "seeing" the writer (Vladimir Nabokov), a writer with "a sensitive ear" (I. A. Bunin), etc. [Karakuc-Borodina, 2000](#).

## DISCUSSION

In our research, we turned to the works of V. V. Nabokov, not by chance. His figure – one of the largest in the literature of the XX century, in particular the Russian language – is extremely relevant for the modern cultural context. In Nabokov's texts the language itself is the object of special attention. The prose of Nabokov is eminently autobiographical, that has allowed calling all his prose part one "metanovel", and their heroes – the galaxy of Nabokov's counterparts. This indicates a minimum distance between the biographical and the novel "I", which allows minimizing the distortion of the "portrait" of the linguistic personality, inevitable for the researcher, who has only an array of written texts of the individual. Nabokov is the author of a "new type"; hence, the reading of his texts should be carried out in the direction of "from language to ideas". Therefore, it is reasonable to expand the study of the linguistic personality in this direction: from vocabulary to pragmatics. At a cursory acquaintance Vladimir Nabokov, author of non-classical type, gives the impression of the author of soulless, cold, and his prose-completely devoid of ethical moment, a solid aesthetic exercise. With a closer look, ethics reveals its presence. The starting point of the research is the writer's close attention to the sensual world.

The world acts at Nabokov first of all as the object of human perception (first of all – sight). Man is both a spiritual essence and a bodily certainty: at the peak of the tradition of Russian literature, this writer pays great attention to the physically perfect man ([Karakuc-Borodina, 2000](#)).

Nabokov is inherent in the dualism of the visible world and the "real"; "stupid" here and unattainable "there". Despite the great attraction "out there" for the author and characters, Nabokov gives his sympathy to the phenomenon that is directly perceived here and now, as an attempt to understand the "out there", looking for a visible, fatal to humans. Nabokov's ethics are built on the awareness of the greatness of man, the only way to resist the cold hostile world is the ability to aesthetic perception and fixation of reality.

## SUMMARY

Summing up the results of consideration of the vocabulary of sensory perception in the artistic prose of V. Nabokov, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. We have selected about 500 contexts in which the vocabulary of sensory perception of three perceptual modes, as well as the vocabulary of synesthetic (complex) perception, is realized;
2. We note that when considering the percentage of vocabulary differentiated by the principle of the perceptual channel, which receives information from the outside world, the following statistics were compiled:

\*Visual perception – 71 %,

\*Auditory perception – 14, 4 %,

\*Tactile perception – 11, 4 %,

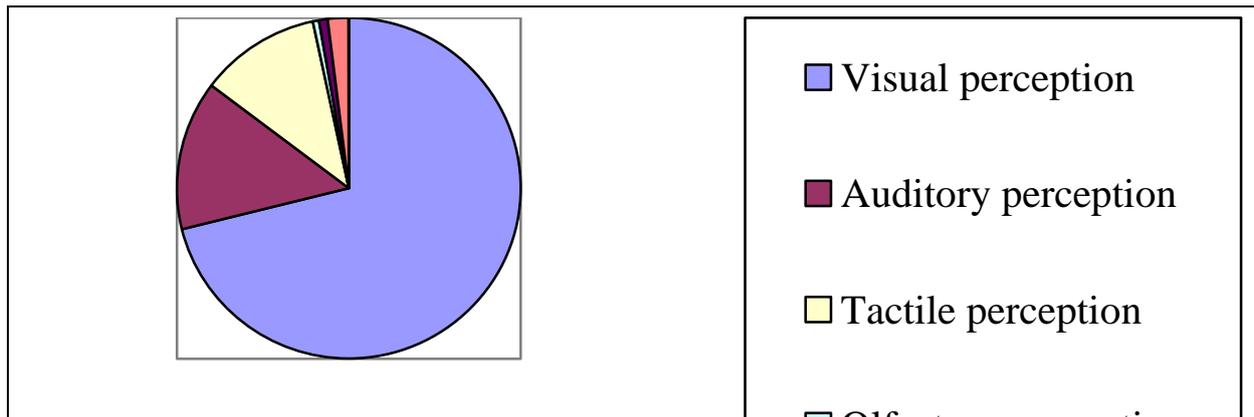
\*Olfactory perception – 0, 3 %,

\*Taste perception – 0, 9 %,

\*Mixed perception – 2 %;

This relationship can be illustrated in figure 2.

This ratio proves once again that Vladimir Nabokov is a writer who first of all draws the optical world in his works in order to make it easier for the reader to reproduce it in his consciousness.



**Figure 2:** Vocabulary of sensory perception in the novels of V. Nabokov

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, at the present stage of development of humanitarian science, in its various branches, the leading place is occupied by the anthropocentric concept, in which the person, his mental and mental properties act as the main object of research of a number of Sciences, in particular, cognitive linguistics, the prerequisites for the emergence of which were formulated in the works of I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay.

In the framework of cognitive linguistics in General, as well as in one of its areas, linguoculturology, it becomes relevant to study the scope of human perception of reality through the senses, as well as its verbalization in the Russian language.

The analysis showed that the sensory vocabulary is an integral element of the artistic system of Vladimir Nabokov because in many ways it is the individual characteristics of its use due to the high degree of aesthetic and emotional impact of the author's works on the reader. Nabokov's ethics are built on the awareness of the greatness of man; the only way to resist the cold hostile world is the ability to aesthetic perception and fixation of reality.

At the same time, thanks to the characteristic for the individual style of Nabokov association in a single microcontext set of lexemes nominating visual, auditory, tactile, as well as complex, synthetic sensations in the mind of the reader projected image of a kind of information avalanche, which involves the reader in the artistic space of the novel. It is this goal, in our opinion, reaches Vladimir Nabokov due to the vocabulary of sensory perception.

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