

DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS AND DEICTIC MEANS OF FRENCH BENEVOLENCES AND CURSES

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Abstract. Benevolences and curses, integral and authentic part of the discourse, most clearly reflect the culture of people. The use of these expressions in the communication space of different languages indicates the need for their study from the standpoint of linguistics, folklore, stylistics, rhetoric, psychology, cultural studies and other sciences. This article provides diachronic analysis and examines the deictic means of French benevolences and curses in the French language. The material for the study was the texts of the Bible, French epic poems, medieval legends, ballads, tales, and fiction. When considering this topic, the author used both general and special scientific methods and techniques: a historical-etymological method, a descriptive method that includes methods for observing, comparing, interpreting and classifying the material being studied; semantic identification method; distribution method. Comparing the medieval French discourse with the modern French language, the author examined the grammatical and semantic evolution, which underwent benevolences and curses.

Keywords: French language; benevolence; curse; diachronic; deictic

The current state of any language is a product of a long historical development, which reflects the cultural and anthropological conditions of language communities.

Culture and language, being semiotic systems, exist in a constant tandem from the moment of its inception. In the system of any national language, there are certain images and symbols formed under the influence of people's attitude.

Well wishes and curses, as an integral and authentic part of the discourse, most clearly reflect the culture of a people that has developed over millennia, permeate the entire communication system of the ethnic group and are applicable to many life situations.

The usage of these expressions in the communication space of different languages indicates the need for their study from the standpoint of linguistics, folklore, stylistics, rhetoric, psychology, cultural studies and other sciences.

The research methodology is predetermined by the tasks set, for the solution of which both general and special scientific methods and techniques were used: historical

and etymological method, descriptive method, semantic identification method, which serves to identify the meaning of the studied expressions; distribution method.

Comparing medieval French discourse with modern French, we observe the grammatical and semantic evolution that the word has undergone. Since the key words of our study are benevolence and curses, let us consider what changes were made to the verbs derived from these words, in particular “bénir” and “maudire”.

According to the “Roberts Historical Dictionary of the French Language”, the verb “bénir” was first mentioned in written sources in 1080 (Rey 1994, 207).

This verb originally had the form *beneïr* (from which *maleïr* – “maudir”) from *benedicere* was supposed to have the form **bendire*, as “dire” and maybe **ben* (d) *istre*, for the texts are already at the turn between the 11th and 12th centuries give *beneïstre* c book e in intertonics. But already in the “Song of Roland” this verb shows the *beneissent* form, that is, it goes into the group with –iss.

The verb *bénir* and its derivatives *béni*, *bénédiction* are used:

– in biblical benevolence: *Toutes les nations de la terre seront bénies en ta postérité, parce que tu as obéi à ma voix* (La Bible 1972, 457);

– in the medieval epic: *Deus li otreit seinte beneïçon !* (La Chanson 2019a);

– in medieval tales: *Primaute, Diex beneïe vos, Fet Renart, et bon jor aiez* (Renard, 2019);

– in 18th century French literature: *Je dirai à celui qui éternue «Dieu vous bénisse»* (Beaumarchais 2019).

The verb “maudire” originally, until 1080, looked like “maldire”, from 1170 it began to be used as “maudire” (Guiraud 1961, 120). It comes from the Latin *maledicere*, from *male* (mal) and *dicere* (dire) – “speak evil, curse”. This verb also had other forms popular among the people: *maleïr*, *malir* (XII century). As a result of semantic evolution, namely, the expansion of meaning, the word has acquired a broader meaning: “desire evil out loud; show your hatred by pronouncing curses”.

The text of the curse in the “Song of Roland” uses the toponym metaphor *Tere Major*: «*Tere Major, Mahummet te maldie ! (старофранц.) – Terre des Aïeux, Mahomet te maudisse ! (франц.)* (La Chanson 2019b) – French land, be damned by Mohammed. “Tere Major here means “ancestral land,” in other words, France. In modern French, the word *majeur* is no longer used in this sense, now it means “adult.”

Let’s consider some grammatical features of the text “Songs of Roland.” The definite article developed from the Latin demonstrative pronoun *ille* and in the Old French had the following case forms in masculine gender:

Case	singular	plural
Direct	li	li
Indirect	le	les

In the feminine gender, there were only two forms of the definite article: *la* in the singular and *les* in the plural.

On the role of this part of the language in Old French V.M. Shishmarev writes the following: “A certain member in the old language that has become a modern grammar in the grammar companion of a noun was really a defining, better specifying particle. When a noun is understood in a general, indefinite or abstract sense, it does not carry a specific member; the presence of the latter concretizes it or connects it with a certain, expressed or implied situation” (Shishmarev 1952, 49).

Let’s consider the use of *ille* on the materials of our study: «*Ami Rollant, Deus metet t’anme en flors, En pareïs, entre les glorius !*» (old form.) - «*Ami Roland, que Dieu mette ton âme dans les fleurs, en paradis, entre les glorieux*» (La Chanson 2019c) (French) – “May God let you into paradise Roland, give you a place among the holy flowers.”

In this example, the *les* is retained in modern French. What can not be said about the definite article of the masculine: the old French *li* in the modern language has turned into *le*: «*Al Jhesu e al mien !*» – *Et le roi dit*: «*Allez, par le congé de Jésus et par le mien*» (La Chanson, 2019d) - The king replied: “God and I are with you”

The enclitic forms inherent in the Old French language were as follows:

Masculine gender Feminine gender

al as *a la as*

del des *de la des*

el es *en la es*

For example: *E dist al rei* : «*Salvez seiez de Deu !* – «Храни вас бог! – он королю сказал. In modern French, *al* turns to *au*: “*Salut de par Dieu!*” *Dit-il au roi*.

It should be noted that some forms of personal pronouns, namely the atonic forms of *me*, *tu*, *te*, are stored in the same form in modern French. Let’s compare the old French and modern versions of the texts:

Dist al paien : «*Damnesdeus mal te duinst !* – *Il dit au paien* : «*Dieu te maudisse !*» - He said to the gentile: "God curses you!"

«*Dist al paien* : «*Deus tut mal te tramette !*» – *Il dit au paien* : «*Que Dieu t’envoie tous les maux !*» – He said to the gentile: “May God send you all troubles!”

«*Deus tut mal te consente !*» – «*Que Dieu t’octroie tous les maux !*» “God will punish you”.

«*Paien, mal aies tu !*» – «*Païen, maudit sois-tu !*» – “Damn you, Gentile!”

As for the pronouns *jo*, *mei*, *tei*, they are no longer used in this form: «*Ami Rollant, de tei ait Deus mercit ! L’anme de tei seit mise en pareïs !*» – «*Ami Roland, que Dieu te fasse merci ! Que ton âme soit mise en paradis !*» – “Friend Roland, may God save you, and your soul will go to heaven!” (La Chanson 2019e).

The tonic forms of possessive pronouns in plural form in the old French were as follows: singular - *nostre*, *vostre*; plural – *nostres*, *noz*, *vostres*, *voz*.

It should be separately noted the role of relative pronouns that were used in Old French texts and which continue to be used in modern discourse.

In the Middle Ages, the role and forms of relative pronouns were carefully worked out. Later, colloquial speech began to penetrate the book language, thereby introducing certain corrections into it. This was reflected in relative pronouns. The relative pronouns *qui*, *que*, existing in modern French, are also found in Old French texts. But if *que* exists in the same form: «*Par ceste barbe que veez blancheier, Li duze per mar i serunt jugez !*» (*La Chanson* 2019f)

It is known that benevolences and curses are used mainly in the imperative mood. It is known that the French language inherited from Latin an indicative, subjunctive and imperative mood. The indicative mood expresses reality, the imperative expresses a request or order, while the subjunctive mood, corresponding to the Greek subjunctive and desirable mood at the same time, expresses conceived, opportunity and desire. As a consequence of the semantic duality of the subjunctive mood, it was used to express orders, motives, that is, as imperative, as well as to express the future tense.

Since subordinate clauses were often introduced in Old French with the help of the *que* conjunction, this conjunction became an integral sign of the subjunctive mood and in grammar it was strengthened in the subjunctive paradigm. Thus, such expressions can be explained in modern French: «*Que Dieu t'envoie tous les maux !*». In the original «*Song of Roland*»: «*Deus tut mal te tramette !*» (*La Chanson*, 2019g) – “May God send you all troubles!”

In modern French: «*Que Dieu t'octroie tous les maux !*». In the original «*Song of Roland*»: «*Deus tut mal te consente !*» – “God will punish you!”. In the above examples, we see the displacement of some positions of the subjunctive mood by the indicative.

First of all, it should be noted that the present tense form in both Old French and modern French expresses a beginning, lasting, repeating action. It can be found in colloquial speech, it can have a gnomic, that is, instructive character, as, for example, in the expression *l'homme est mortel*.

In the present-day system of modern French, there is an imperfect that is very rare in Old French. For example, in the “*Song of Roland*” the first 500 verses account for only 3 cases of the use of imperfect (verse 10, 203, 383). It can be said that in Old French, imperfect was preferred to perfection, which denoted simply an accomplished fact: «*Carles li reis, nostre emperere magnes, Set anz tuz pleins ad estet en Espagne : Tresqu'en la mer cunquist la tere altaigne*». (Alessio 1947, 18).

The organizing component of any discourse is indicative words that distinguish between the speaker and the listener, indicating time and place. As such indicative signs, both verbal and non-verbal means are always used, which play a role in the communication process. C.S. Pearce believes that pointing is a universal property of the linguistic system as a whole and no problem can be posed without involving some sign that performs the function of pointing (Pierce 2000, 94).

Thus, deixis is understood as “an indication of the personality of the speaker and addressee, the place and time of utterance. In other words, deixis is an indication of the person, time and place of the speech situation” (Srebryanskaya 2003, 8).

According to C. Bühler, there are three types of indications:

– ad oculus, – direct indication using gestures or index words related to sensually perceived specific objects;

– anaphora, – an indication using verbal means within a deictic field or text;

– deixis ad phantasma, – an indication of an abstract place (or symbolic field), which is located in the deep layers of memory (Paducheva 2003, 22).

A.A. Kibrik relates such words to egocentric deictic centers, to which the participants of the communicative act are guided (Kibrik 2006, 138).

Many deictic tools are associated to a communicative act and speech situation through situational reference: they show the circumstances of speech activity (Alferov 2001, 23).

The deictic elements are associated to the proposition of the utterance, in particular to the modality, which is a characteristic feature of benevolences and curses.

Since deixis is an indication of the person, time and place of a speech situation, we will separately consider all these types of indications in French benevolences and curses.

First of all, consider the French benevolences and curses on the subject of the person.

In many languages, the use of deictic means is more self-centered.

“Actually, egocentrism is one of the most important signs of deixis, along with situationality, subjectivity, instantaneousness and ephemerality of meaning ... egocentrism implies a constant relevance of the semantics of a word to the subject of speech” (Katznelson 2010, 11 – 13).

L.Yu. Ivanov distinguishes between “exclusive” and “inclusive deixis” (Ivanov 2003, 45). Exclusive deixis is expressed on behalf of the first person, inclusive deixis is not formally marked.

It can be argued that in French benevolences and curses, the marked first-person pronoun as a separate lexical unit is very little involved, it is used, as a rule, only with the verb *souhaiter*: *Je vous souhaite une longue vie* and even less so with *maudire*: *Je maudis l’heure où je suis né*.

Most French benevolences and curses have personalization of the addressee, and the wish can be sent to a second person.

Only a few cases with impersonal constructions in curse texts were recorded: *Honni soit qui manque à votre appel !*

Let’s consider cases of spatial deixis.

In the dictionary of linguistic terms, spatial deixis is defined as “the shifter orientation of an object or situation, an indication of the position in space or time relative to the deictic center associated with the speech act” (Zherebilo 2010).

Spatial deixis indicates the location of the object relative to the speaker. Many researchers note the importance of spatial deixis as a “symbiosis of language and consciousness” (Shikhaliyeva 2008, 236).

In the texts of French benevolences and curses, spatial deixis is expressed mainly by the dialects of the place. These elements of the language carry out a reference, i.e. the ratio of linguistic expressions with extralinguistic objects and situations serves to identify the space through their relationship to the speech situation:

– ici: *Que Dieu soit ici avec vous ! - dit-il.* (Roman 2019)

– au-dessus: *L'étranger qui sera au milieu de toi s'élèvera toujours plus au-dessus de toi, et toi, tu descendras toujours plus bas.* (Deutéronome 2019a, 28:43)

Consider cases of temporary deixis. E. Benvenist believes that “temporality arises in the act of utterance and through utterance” (Benvenist 1974, 315). Therefore, the definition of the reference of temporary deixis is associated with the identification of the subject responsible for the communicative act, and its relationship to the reported.

Temporary deixis in the texts of French benevolence and curses is manifested in grammatical time and in temporary localizers.

Future simple is used as grammatical tense: *Tu seras béni plus que tous les peuples; il n'y aura chez toi ni homme ni femme stérile, ni bête stérile parmi tes troupeaux*»;

«*Je bénirai ceux qui te béniront, et je maudirai ceux qui te maudiront; et toutes les familles de la terre seront bénies en toi*».

As temporary localizers are often used year, month, day, hour, minute, second.

A sufficiently definite time in benevolences is the time period “year”, which is usually tied to the beginning of the calendar year:

Bonne année (et) bonne santé! Bonne journée! Que l'année 2019 vous donne à réaliser, selon vos espérances, ce que vous désirez, tant pour vous que pour vos proches! (un texto) (les voeux pour le Nouvel An).

Que maudite soit l'heure que vous avez choisi ce grigou! (Molière 2019)

To transmit a constant time, for which there are no time limits, constructions such as are used:

– toute sa vie: *Maudit soit-il toute sa vie durant !*

– à jamais: *Béni soit à jamais son nom glorieux !*

One of the new types of deixis is emotional deixis, which V.I. Shakhovskiy and V.V. Zhura define as “the initial emotional position of the speaker, acting as the basis for the implementation of emotional speech activity” (Shakhovskiy 2002, 38).

The system of values of a linguistic personality is determined by its individual deixis, of which its internal emotional world is a component. In each specific case that happens to a person, he evaluates this or that event in his own way and has his own point of view, expressed in some kind of emotions. This point of view is formed on the basis of the speaker's background knowledge, his psychological personality and emotional experience.

The emotional deixis of a linguistic personality is the result of a complex system of its relationship with the outside world and is determined by a number of factors, namely: psychological and intellectual characteristics, worldview, knowledge, upbringing and the general level of culture.

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that deictic means play a role in organizing the texts of French benevolences and curses.

The various kinds of indicators of person, time and space used in these texts help to determine its address orientation, the degree of proximity or remoteness of the expressed desire, and emotional deixis determines the model of verbal behavior of a person in emotional communication.

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