Object Combinability as a Means of Semantics
Actualization of the Deictic Verb Чувствовать (To Feel)\(^1\)

Lin Guo\(^2\), Vera A. Kosova\(^3\), & Chuncai Mei\(^4\)

Abstract
The article is devoted to a peculiar linguistic phenomenon – polyfunctional deictic verbs in the Russian language, one of which – the lexeme чувствовать (to feel) – is the object of this study. The purpose of this study is to determine the functional correspondence between situations described in a statement and the semantics of the lexical means that effectuate the object valency of the verb чувствовать. This goal is achieved through a contextual analysis of the corresponding text fragments available in the Russian National Corpus. A quantitative method is used to define the main lexico-semantic variant of this verb. We performed a semantic classification of the object expanders of the verb to summarize the observations on the ability of every one of its lexico-semantic variants to combine with the vocabulary of certain semantic categories. The conclusions are the following: the deictic nature of the verb чувствовать allows it to combine in an extensive and free way with nouns of various semantic groups that effectuate its object valency; this verb is polyfunctional as it is used to describe situations of various states (emotional, physical, subjective-mental) and to define some types of sensory perception and the capability of aesthetic perception. The experience of our study can serve as an example of an analysis of a row of analogous deictic verbs such as осознать (to sense), испытывать (to experience), воспринимать (to perceive), понимать (to understand) etc.

**Keywords:** Deictic Verb; Polyfunctionality; Object Combinability; Lexico-Semantic Variant; Lexico-Semantic Classification.

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1. Introduction

The notion of deixis, widely used in linguistics, is determined as follows: it is “an indication as a meaning or a function of a linguistic unit expressed by lexical and grammatical means. Deixis serves to actualize components of a speech situation and components of the denotative contents of a statement” (Jarceva, 1990). There are quite a number of theoretical works devoted to this linguistic category (Fillmore, 1971; Levinson, 1983; Kosko & Singh, 2019; Krylov, 1984, etc.).

It was determined that the class of deictic units of the Russian language is binary: “it is composed of juxtaposed and mutually opposed systems of non-verbal and verbal deictic words” (Shvedova, 2001). Alongside typical deictic units, such as personal and demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative particles, pronominal adverbs with locative and temporal semantics etc. (Apresjan, 2009), in recent years’ researchers’ interest is increasingly drawn to verbs of deictic nature (Shvedova, 2001; Moiseeva, 2003; Lewandowski, 2014; Wang, 2018).

The object of our study is the verb чувствовать, which was included by Shvedova (2001) into the list of deictic verbs that form lexico-semantic rows with the nuclear seme “to experience a state” and “perceive”. We share the idea of the deictic specifics of the verb чувствовать, since, being different from the completely content verb units, in particular, the verbs of motion (Sibgaeva et al., 2018; Gilazetdinova & Salakhova, 2018) and the postural verbs of putting (Trofimova et al., 2017) this lexeme is not a completely content word: in speech it only indicates a certain situation, the contents of which are disclosed, most significantly, through an object expander of the lexeme. The significance of the research of the verb чувствовать is furthermore determined by its polyfunctionality (for the semantic structure of the verb чувствовать (Go, 2018). Therefore, it is important to determine which elements of the context make it possible to differentiate between the meanings of this polyfunctional verb. The objective of this study is to establish the functional correspondence between the situations described in a statement and the semantics of the lexical means that effectuate the object valency of the verb чувствовать.

The combinability of the unit in question is analyzed based on the Dictionary of Collocations of the Russian Language edited by Denisov (2002) and Morkovin. This source gives 6 meanings of the verb чувствовать and lists its expanders corresponding to various syntactic-semantic positions of each lexico-semantic variant (hereinafter referred to as LSV), including those corresponding to a direct object (Denisova, 2002). This dictionary contains detailed lists of object expanders of this verb organized separately for each LSV, but these lexical rows are open, which is emphasized by ellipses at their ends, cf., e.g.: “1. Испытывать какое-л. внутреннее психическое состояние; испытывать какое-л. психофизическое ощущение. Чувствовать что: — голод, сытость, холод, озноб, тепло, боль, тошноту, сию, радость, облегчение, волнение, тревогу, любовь, злобу, ненависть, гордость, воодушевление, упадок сил, неловкость, тоску, страх, стыд, угрозы, совести,
отчаяние, усталость, изнеможение, какое-л. желание…” (Denisova, 2002; Bahrami Rad & Hosseini, 2016). (“1. To experience some internal mental state; to experience some psychophysical sensation. **Feel what:** hunger, fullness, cold, shiver, warmth, pain, sickness, strength, joy, alleviation, excitement, anxiety, love, rage, hatred, pride, enthusiasm, fatigue, awkwardness, melancholy, shame, remorse, despair, weariness, exhaustion, some desire…”). Obviously, these nouns have heterogeneous categorial-lexical semantics which implies the need of their lexico-semantic classification.

In our study the specifics of the object combinability of each of the LSV of the verb чувствовать that we found, is determined by contextual analysis based on the texts from the RNC (Russian National Corpus) (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) from the period of 2005-2014. Taking into consideration the large volume of the language corpus, we selected chronologically relevant texts recorded in the RNC during the last ten years, except literary ones that allow non-typical, individual author’s uses.

The conducted analysis allowed us to establish correlations between each of the LSV of the polyfunctional verb чувствовать and specific lexical means of effectuation of its object valency; based on the data on the number of uses of each LSV in the RNC, we revealed the main LSV of the verb in question which possesses a special type of semantic structure.

The experience of our research devoted to the polyfunctional deictic verb чувствовать can serve as an example for an analysis of a row of analogous verbal units such as ощущать (to sense), испытывать (to experience), воспринимать (to perceive), понимать (to understand) etc.

**2. Methods**

In order to study the object valency of the deictic verb чувствовать, we performed a contextual analysis of the corresponding materials available in the RNC. As pointed out by Levinson, “Deixis belongs within the domain of pragmatics, because it directly concerns the relationship between the structure of language and the contexts in which they are used” (Levinson, 1983).

Our semantic classification of the object expanders of the verb makes it possible to summarize the research of the ability of each of the LSV to combine with vocabulary of certain semantic categories. To determine the main LSV of the verb чувствовать we used the results of a quantitative analysis.

**3. Results and Discussion**

During our research we established the following:

1. When describing the situation ‘to experience some physical or physiological
sensation or state’ (52 records in the RNC), the object combinability of the lexeme чувствовать is effectuated with the help of the following linguistic units:

1) words and collocations naming physiological sensations and states (32 records) which can be divided into three groups, according to the presence of an evaluative-connotative seme:

- those defining negatively evaluated sensations and states of a man or an animal, primarily involving pain or sickness: боль, изнеможение, ломота, тахикардия, голод, звон в ушах (pain, exhaustion, aches, tachycardia, hunger; ear buzzing) etc. (19 records), e.g.: С этого времени она чувствовала сильные боли и ломоту в теле (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (Since then she had been feeling severe pains and aches in her body);

- those not possessing evaluating tone, with the potential for contextual expression of a positive or a negative evaluation in a given statement: тепло, теплота, жар (warmth, heat) etc. (11 records), e.g.: Беременность вы пока чувствовать не можете, еще даже имплантация скорее всего не произошла (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (You cannot feel your pregnancy yet, most probably, even the implantation has not occurred yet);

- those denoting positively evaluated sensations and states: сытость, насыщение и прилив сил (fullness, saturation and energy surge) (3 records), e.g.: Когда мы видим, что пища в тарелке кончается, то и чувствуем сытость (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (When we see that food there is little food left on our plate, then we feel full);

2) nouns, usually verbal ones, that in a compact form describe situations that cause physical sensations: вибрация, вращение, напряжение (vibration, spinning, tension) etc. (5 records), e.g.: Я в таком случае как раз от рулетки бы отказался. С ней собака постоянно чувствует напряжение поводка (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (In such a case I would not use the flex lead. It makes the dog always feel the tension of the leash);

3) somatisms: рука, нога, пальцы and шея (arm, leg, fingers and neck) (3 records), e.g.: Потом рука заболела, потом вся шея, и уже второй день правую руку плохо чувствовать, шею тоже и голову повернуть не могу ... (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (Then my arm started aching, then my whole neck, and now for two days already I have not been able to feel my right arm well, neither my neck, nor I can turn my head...);

4) subordinate clauses (чувствовать, как / что... (feel that...)) in an extended form describing situations of physical state (12 records), e.g.: Переночевать и чувствуешь, как у тебя ноют и пухнут суставы (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (You spend a night and feel that your joints ache and swell);

2. In cases when the verb чувствовать describes the situation ‘to experience some emotion, feeling, mental state’ (89 records in the RNC), the position of its object is
occupied by nouns of the following groups:

1) words defining feelings, emotional states (68 records). Depending on the expressed evaluation, such nominations can be divided into two groups:
- names of negative feelings and emotional states: вина, огорчение, отчаяние, одиночество, гнев (guilt, sadness, despair, loneliness, rage) etc. (44 records), e.g.: Ты чувствующий боль, отчаяние, досаду. Ты сбита с толку (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (You feel pain, despair, annoyance. You are disoriented);
- names of positive feelings and emotional states: радость, удовольствие, счастье, гордость, возбуждение (joy, pleasure, happiness, pride, excitement) etc. (24 records), e.g.: Вы вот спрашиваете, чувствую ли я радость от того, что у меня скоро появится мальчик? (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (You are asking if I feel joy because I am going to have a baby soon?);

2) nouns with modal-existential semantics: ответственность, обязанность, желание, увлечение (responsibility, obligation, devotion) etc. (21 records), e.g.: В нашей компании практикуется принцип многофункциональности – это когда каждый работник чувствует свою личную, индивидуальную ответственность за конечный результат (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (In our company we practice the principle of multifunctionality – it is when every employee feels his/her personal individual responsibility for the final result);

3. The verb чувствовать regularly describes situations of various types of sensory perception (35 records in the RNC):
1) when describing tactile sense (15 records), the verb is used in combination with object nominations of the following groups:
- actions denoting tactile contact: удар, движение, нажатие, укол (stroke, movement, pressure, prick) etc. (6 records), e.g.: Я чувствовала нажатие пальцев, словно кто-то меня ущипнул. Но сильной боли не было (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (I felt the pressure of fingers as if someone pinched me. But I felt no severe pain);
- phenomena related to the movement of the air: ветер, сквозняк (wind, draught) etc. (3 records), e.g.: С гудением штурмовиков они пронеслись в нескольких сантиметрах от меня, так что я даже чувствовал ветерок от их крыльев (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (Buzzing like strike-fighters they flew several centimeters from me so I even felt the small wind created by their wings);
- body and its parts: пальцы, рука (fingers, hand) etc. (2 records), e.g.: ..., как какой-то ночной путник, случайно склонившийся над озером, вдруг чувствует на своей шее холодные пальцы русалки... (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (..., as a night traveler accidentally bending over a lake suddenly feels cold fingers of a mermaid on his neck,...);
- specific items with which the subject of perception contacts: элемент управления (control element) (1 record): Однако куда приятнее чувствовать под пальцами
многие, сжимающиеся элементы управления, рассудили японцы и претворили свою идею в жизнь (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (However it is much more pleasant to feel soft, squeezable control elements in your fingers, decided the Japanese and put their idea into life);
- temperature feature of perceived objects: жар, теплота (heat, warmth) etc. (3 records), e.g.: И девушка почему-то перестала чувствовать жар от его руки (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (And for some reason the girl stopped feeling the heat of his hand).
2) The function of description of olfactory perception is usually performed by the analyzed verb through the use of nouns of the semantic group ‘запах’ (‘smell’): the hypernym запах (smell), and its hyponyms аромат, смрад (aroma, stench) etc. (13 records), e.g.: В результате даже на 12-м этаже постоянно чувствуется смрад и слышны рев моторов (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (As a result, even on the 12th floor you constantly feel the stench and hear motors roaring). A nomination defining the source of a perceived smell (in our case represented by the pronoun которые (which)) also serves as an object expander, cf.: Возможно, следует искать аналогии с воздействием парфюмерных веществ и феромонов, которые животные способны чувствовать в ничтожно малых концентрациях (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (One should probably look for analogies with the impact of odorous materials and pheromones which animals can feel in trace concentrations).
3) The description of gustatory perception (1 record) is realized through the combination of the verb with the lexeme вкус (flavour): У «Хэлси фуд» есть даже специальный тренинг (пока только для компаний), который среди прочих принципов здорового образа жизни позволяет научиться чувствовать и ценить натуральный вкус еды, не усиленный никакими добавками (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (“Healthy Food” even have a special training (for now only for companies) which among the principles of healthy lifestyle makes it possible to learn how to feel and appreciate the natural flavour of food not enhanced by any additives). We have also found in the RNC a text from a different period of time in which the object of gustatory perception is expressed by the prefixal derivative привкус (off-flavour), cf.: “Вы не чувствуете привкуса крови во рту?” (В. Шишков. «Утрюм-река» (1913-1932)) (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (“Don’t you feel the off-flavour of blood in your mouth?”) (V. Shishkov. «Gloomy river» (1913-1932).
4) In the analyzed materials there are no records where the verb чувствовать would describe a situation of acoustic perception. The combination of this verb with the lexeme звук (sound) exists only in one text that dates back to the 18th century, cf.: Он не только чувствует звук удараения вещей, но различает его совершенно (В. Золотницкий. «Рассуждение о бессмертии человеческой души» (1768) (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (Not only he feels the sound of things banging but he
distinguishes it perfectly) (V. Zolotnitsky. «The argument about the immortality of the human soul» (1768)).

5) We found specific situations of perception in a general sense (not through a particular sensory organ) described by the verb in combination with words and collocations defining objects and natural phenomena: природа, мир, лес, электрическое поле Земли (nature, world, forest, Earth’s electric field) etc. (6 records), e.g.: Человек не чувствует электрического поля Земли, так как его тело – хороший проводник (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (The man does not feel the Earth’s electric field because his body is a good conductor); Том мир, который он видит, чувствует, воспринимает ежедневно как твердое, жидкое, газообразное, этого не оплывает (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (The world that he sees, feels, “perceives” every day as something hard, liquid, gaseous does not cancel that).

4. When describing mental situations ‘to understand smth.’ (485 records in the RNC) the verb чувствовать effectuates its object valency in combination with words and expressions that define:

1) circumstances, events: происходящее, приближение (чего-л.), угроза, изменение, улучшение, поддержка, проблема (something happening, approach (of smth.), threat, change, improvement, support, problem) etc. (67 records), e.g.: В ответном слове Святейший Патриарх, в частности, сказал: «Я чувствую огромную поддержку общества – и не только церковных людей» (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (In response His Holiness the Patriarch said among other things: “I feel the great support of the society – and not only of the church people”);

2) nature and properties of events, circumstances (including their modality and evaluation): важность, необходимость, ценность, острая проблемы, вкус горьких плодов терактов (importance, necessity, value, severity of a problem, taste of the bitter fruits of terroristic acts) etc. (34 records), e.g.: Остроту этой проблемы чувствую с первых же дней пребывания в США (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (You feel the severity of this problem since your first days in the USA);

3) properties and states of a person, their evaluation: значимость, слабость, робость, сила лидера, безнаказанность, несостоятельность, беспомощность, боль (importance, weakness, shyness, leader’s strength, impunity, unsoundness, helplessness, pain) etc. (38 records), e.g.: Вижу эти сверкающие глаза, этот режущий взгляд, серые нависшие брови, чувствую его неуверенность и стремительность, и мне жутко (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (I see these piercing eyes, this cutting look, these gray heavy brows, I feel his fierceness and precipitance and I am terrified). The combination of the expressions of this semantic group with the verb чувствовать is often used in the construction чувствовать в ком что / кого (to feel something / someone in oneself), cf.: Когда я был молод, я чувствовал в себе Меркурио (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (When I was young
I felt Mercutio in myself);
4) relations and connections between events, items, persons: разница, родство, превосходство, связь, принадлежность, непричастность (difference, affinity, superiority, connection, identity, non-involvement) etc. (36 records), e.g.: Они всегда чувствовали свое превосходство над сверстниками, учились легко, не напрягаясь (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (They had always felt their superiority over their peers, they studied easily, without effort);
5) abstract concepts related to arts, intellectual activity and culture; their properties and evaluation: язык, Пушкин, Dao, ленинградский стиль, сила и красота (нения) (language, Pushkin, Dao, Leningrad style, strength and beauty (of singing)) etc. (17 records), e.g.: Даже сейчас, рассматривая их, чувствуется сурово ленинградский стиль — строгий, суховатый, подчеркнуто грамотный (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (Even now contemplating them, one feels specifically Leningrad style – austere, somewhat dry, emphatically literate);
Alongside the characterized lexical units, the verb чувствовать is most frequently combined with subordinate clauses of the complement type (286 records) where it is used to express personal opinion and subjective understanding. E.g.: С другой стороны, что бы там ни говорили, я чувствую, что последние несколько лет отношение власти к этим организациям меняется в лучшую сторону (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (On the other hand, whatever the appearances, I feel that during the last years the government’s attitude towards these organizations has been changing for the better). When performing this function, the lexeme чувствовать is also used in the model of sentence чувствовать что / кого чем / кем (to feel something / somebody as if they were something / somebody); чувствовать что/ кого каким (to feel that something / somebody is like); чувствовать что как что (to feel as if something were something) (7 records), cf.: – Вы еще не чувствуете его своим ребенком? (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (Don’t you feel as if he were your baby yet?).
5. When defining the typical situation ‘to be capable of keen and deep understanding’ the verb чувствовать is used in combination with vocabulary naming items and phenomena of culture, arts, intellectual activity and their properties: искусство, прекрасное, цвет, цветовые оттенки, вззвиная в музыке, гармония (art, the beautiful, colour, colour shades, music trends, harmony) etc. (19 records). It is noteworthy that in the contexts of situations of this type one can frequently encounter adverbs of extent and degree: прекрасно, слишком хорошо, тонко (excellent, too good, fine) etc. E.g.: Оба августейших супруга были художественно одаренными людьми, тонко чувствовали прекрасное и готовы были служить ему (RNC – “Russian National Corpus) (Both august spouses were artistically gifted people, they had a fine appreciation of the beautiful and were eager to serve it).
When such situations are defined, in the RNC there are also text records in which the verb чувствовать is combined with a denomination of a person and their state:
хозяин, партнер, больной, команда, настроение хозяина, тревога и напряжение взрослых (host, partner, a sick person, team, host’s mood, anxiety and tension of adults) etc. (18 records). Such cases reflect special relationships between the subject of the described situation and the object (or something that usually has an object) such as a teacher – a student, a psychiatrist – a patient, a pet – an owner, children – adults etc., e.g.: Будет набрасываться – писать из пульверизатора водой. A вообще кошки чувствуют хозяев (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (If it attacks you, spray it with water from the sprinkler. Anyway, cats feel who the host is); Если у вас семья нерелигиозная, то вы ведь можете сказать то, что именно вы чувствуете и как думаете. Дети чувствуют тревогу и напряжение взрослых (RNC – “Russian National Corpus”) (If your family is not religious, you can say exactly what you feel and think. Children feel the anxiety and tension of adults).

4. Summary

The deictic nature of the verb чувствовать allows it to combine in an extensive and free way with the lexemes of various semantic groups. We enlarged the lists of words and expressions available in the collocations dictionary using the latest linguistic material; we determined and grouped the lexico-semantic means of effectuation of the object combinability of this verb; established the functional correspondence of these means to the various situations described with the use of them, which are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Types of Situations Described with the Use of the Verb чувствовать and the Number of Corresponding Text Records in the RNC (yrs. 2005-2014)

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<tr>
<th>T-category</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of described situations</td>
<td>Mental state</td>
<td>Emotional state</td>
<td>Physiological state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of records in RNC</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
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It results from Table 1 that the lexeme чувствовать is indeed polyfunctional, and is most frequently used to indicate a particular state. The use of the verb чувствовать in the descriptions of mental state (when expressing a subject’s personal
understanding and opinion) prevails over the descriptions of situations of emotional and physiological state. Moreover, this word is used to define sensory perception and capability of keen and deep understanding of certain substances.

5. Conclusions

Thus, it stands to reason that the class of deictic verbs, as one of important linguistic phenomena, is the object of scientific interest. Deictic verbal units should be analyzed primarily in the sphere of pragmatics, specifically in terms of their syntagmatic features (in our case, taking into consideration the grammatical transitivity of the verb чувствовать, we are speaking of its object valency).

The result of our study, confirmed by numerous textual illustrations, is a solid argument for the polyfunctionality of the deictic verbal unit чувствовать.

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