

The paper presents a corpus study of certain aspects of the semantic attribute of FRONTNESS in the Russian language. According to (Fillmore 1969) and (Apresjan 1974), frontness characterizes concrete nouns. Frontness encodes spatial orientation of objects relative to potential landmarks. Following the terminology in Levinson 1993, this orientation can be *absolute*, or *relative*, or deictic. The former means that the orientation is intrinsic to the landmark and thus the position of the object is determined irrespectively of the position of the observer. The latter means that the position of the object is determined with regard to the position of the observer. Diagnostic contexts are spatial prepositions, such as *pered* 'in front of', *za* 'behind'. In the context of nouns that contain the semantic indication of 'frontness' (such as *divan* 'sofa'), the location of the observer is immaterial: the phrase *mjach za divanom* 'the ball is behind the sofa' allows one to determine the location of the ball without any further clarification. In the context of nouns negative for 'frontness', one needs to know the position of the observer: *mjach za derevom* 'the ball is behind the tree' is an insufficient description. Interestingly, animate landmarks are usually positive for frontness: *pered sobakoj stojala miska* 'in front of the dog there was a bowl' (before the dog's muzzle). Natural objects are usually negative for frontness: *pered goroj bylo ozero* 'in front of the mountain there was a lake' (the lake was between the observer and the mountain). Artifacts are the most diverse group of nouns in this respect. They can be neutral for frontness (*tort* 'cake'), positive for 'frontness' (*shkaf* 'closet'), negative for frontness (*kolonna* 'column'). They can also encode significantly more complex types of orientation, depending on their function. We extend the number of diagnostic contexts and conduct a corpus study of different semantic classes of concrete nouns (the total of 4000 nouns). This allows us to elaborate the very notion of frontness and describe many previously unknown types of frontness, such as relative-absolute orientation (*poezd* 'train', which can behave either as positive or negative for 'frontness'), double-frontedness (*dver* 'door', *okno* 'window', *prilavok* 'counter' – nouns denoting objects with two "facades", which display different interpretations with spatial prepositions, depending on contextual clues) and some others.