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## FUTURAL POTENTIAL OF THE PRESENT TENSE IN MODERN FRENCH

Об'єктом дослідження є форма *Présent de l'Indicatif* (теперішнє актуальне / неактуальне). Предметом наукової розвідки є семантичний потенціал і специфіка теперішнього часу, що полягають в репрезентації значення майбутнього. Мета дослідження передбачає визначення особливостей граматичної темпоральної структури теперішнього часу в сучасній французькій мові, яка здатна передавати два темпоральні значення – теперішнього та майбутнього. У ході дослідження були з'ясовані семантико-структурні аспекти, що пов'язані з реалізацією граматичного значення майбутнього часу в системі французької мови та мовлення.

Поставлені в дослідженні мета й завдання зумовили використання комплексу традиційних і новітніх методів. Метод лінгвістичного експерименту було застосовано для аналізу різних темпоральних варіантів футурального презенсу. Метод реконструкції фрагмента мовної системи був використаний для відтворення рекурсивного характеру категорії футуральності як антропоцентричного явища в системі французької мови.

Застосування вищезазначених методів дозволило простежити умови наявності та функціонування категорії футуральності в системі французької мови в теоретичних і практичних розділах дослідження з урахуванням потенційних здатностей сучасної французької мови. Футуральний презенс вживається для демонстрації *вірогідності* або *бажаності* настання дії за рахунок ментального, синтаксичного та семантичного зв'язку з моментом мовлення. Залучення методу лінгвістичного експерименту, що передбачав підстановку та трансформацію мовних елементів французької мови, зокрема адвербіальних модифікаторів, дало змогу простежити природу футурального презенсу – він є дискретним за своєю природою, та визначити обсяг футуральних значень кожного з варіантів. Футуральний презенс складається з чотирьох темпоральних інваріантів, що локалізовані в часових сферах минулого, теперішнього та майбутнього. Ці варіанти мають різний ступінь футурального потенціалу: 1) *теперішнє всезагальне*, що передає позачасові дії і чий футуральний потенціал необмежений в часі та просторі; 2) *релятивний презенс*, чий футуральний потенціал обмежений певними модифікаторами часу; 3) теперішній час, що передає *найближче майбутнє*; 4) *точкове теперішнє* є останнім за ступенем наявності футурального потенціалу.

Перші два типи мають необмежений футуральний потенціал, що може сягати безкінечності. Третій тип володіє другим за обсягом футуральний потенціал, його обсяг може бути виявлено за умови наявності адвербіальних модифікаторів часу, що маркують, посилюють та уточнюють футуральний презенс. Ці модифікатори здатні збільшувати футуральний потенціал речення та об'єктивувати системне значення форми *Présent*. Усі види футурального презенса розташовані в площині актуального та неактуального презенса в системі французької мови.

*Ключові слова:* футуральний презенс, майбутнє, адвербіальний модифікатор, теперішнє актуальне, теперішнє неактуальне, футуральний потенціал, лінгвістичний експеримент.

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## Introduction

The *Présent de l'Indicatif* form of the French language is semantically ambiguous by nature and is characterised by a functional originality. Some researchers call it a form of the present future [Wilmet, 1997, p. 365].

The first problematic issue in studying the ability of the present tense form to convey future action is its discrete nature. This depends on two factors: the context and the time markers in a particular utterance. Surely, the main systemic meaning of this form is the meaning of the present tense (actual/non-actual), but in speech, along with the forms of the simple future, there is a tendency to use the *Présent de l'Indicatif* form to convey a future action. Therefore, we can say that the *Présent* form of modern French has a futural potential.

Futurity is a functional and semantic category comprising a set of multi-level means of expression connected by the semantic commonality of the future. The germs of this category were “outlined” in classical Latin, which, being the primary source of modern Romance languages, although it did not have an extensive system of *Futūrum*, had a rather extensive system of ways that were semantically capable of conveying the idea of the future. [Кіркковська, 2020, p. 137]. In the majority of languages, the future tense forms can be classified into the following categories: those that are genetically derived from the present tense (a common feature of Slavic, Romance and Germanic languages) and those that are a combination of the infinitive with the verb “to have” [П’ятничка, Шилінська, 2018, pp. 29–30]. Consequently, in order to examine the potential of the *Présent de l'Indicatif* form in the future, we will utilise the term “futural present” (E. Shendels’ term) [Shendels, 1970].

The second problematic aspect of studying the futural present is its significance in the system of language and speech and its ability to convey modal relations. The concept of the future can be subject to different subjective awareness and acquire different modal connotations, and sometimes it is an expression of purely modal relations. In this regard, the main grammatical meanings of the *Futur Simple* can be conveyed by other grammatical forms in speech in *Indicatif* depending on the context. One such form is the *Présent de l'Indicatif*, which has the systemic meaning of present actual/non-actual. This form performs three functions in speech: it conveys the relation of an action to the moment of speech (present actual); it conveys the meaning of a timeless action related to the plan of the future (present non-actual); and it conveys the meaning of the future with a modal connotation (with modal verbs as auxiliaries, with adverbial time modifiers and with the help of verbs of motion).

Consequently, the initial hypothesis of the present study is that the *Présent* form in the French language system, in addition to the grammatical meaning of the present tense, is capable of acquiring the semantics of futurity in certain types of expressions.

## Aim and Objectives

*The object* of the study is the form *Présent de l'Indicatif* (present actual/non-actual).

*The subject* of the article is the semantic potential and the specifics of the present tense to convey the meaning of the future tense.

*The aim* of the study is to determine the peculiarities of the grammatical temporal structure of the present tense in modern French, which is capable of conveying two tense meanings – present and past. The study focuses on the semantic and structural aspects related to the realising of the grammatical meaning of the future tense in the French language and speech system. This aim has predetermined the following objectives:

- a formulation of the problem of the discrete nature of the futural present in the French language system;
- a description of adverbial time modifiers with future semantics in *Présent de l'Indicatif*;
- a comprehensive study of the systemic meanings of the grammatical present in modern French;
- a description of the semantics of the futural present with modal meaning.

## Research methods

The aim and objectives of the study have led to the use of two methods: *the method of linguistic experiment* has been applied to analyse different temporal variants of futural present, and *the method of reconstructing a fragment of the linguistic system* has been used to reconstruct the recursive nature of the category of futurity as an anthropocentric phenomenon in the French language system. The study is carried out in two stages.

*At the first stage*, the method of linguistic experiment is to be applied, which, as a methodological technique within the framework of the given research, consists in deforming the source material and

artificially modelling the variants of utterances. This method aims to reveal the discrete nature of the futural present, determine the range of futural meanings of each of its variants, and analyse the role of time markers (hereinafter – adverbial time modifiers) in forming the semantics of the future tense.

*At the second stage*, the method of reconstructing the language system is applied to determine the language meanings of the grammatical present in relation to the moment of speech in French and to analyse the modal meanings of the futural present in the French language system.

### Literature review

The functional approach analyses the category of futurity as a multilevel unity, that includes means of expression belonging to the morphological, syntactic, lexical and lexico-grammatical levels. The core of the means of expression of this category in French are verb forms [Кіркoвська, 2020]. According to the followers of the functional approach [Wilmet, 1997, pp. 365–369; Guillaume, 1994, pp. 209–212], **the present is opposed to the future on the one hand and the past on the other**. According to the followers of the cognitive-philosophical approach [Brandt, Delepine, Walter, 2004; Jespersen, 1992], the present does not necessarily refer to the present moment, but can cover a much larger time space, aiming at the future or the present, affecting the realm of the past *Présent historique* in French [Dubois, 1994, p. 343; Кіркoвська, 2020, p. 160].

Researchers who study the ability of the *Présent* form to convey the idea of the future can be divided into three groups. The first group includes those scholars who believe that the present occupies a central place in the realm of past, present and future not only in the chronological aspect, but also because it is the tense against which all other tenses are oriented, in the perspective of which everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen is considered [Boone, Joly, 1986, pp. 332–333; Gak, 2000; Минкин, 2017; Попович, 2015; Guillaume, 1994]. According to these scholars, the moment of speech plays a central role in the correlation of all temporal localisations, just as the speaker plays a central role in all processes of speech communication, because one is inseparable from the other.

The second group includes those scholars who study the futural present under the general term *Présent prospectif* – present futural [Benveniste, 2005, p. 240; Boone, Joly, 1986, pp. 332–333], which overlaps with the semantics of the *Futur simple*.

The third group includes those who believe that the formation of the future present is a domain related to motion verbs and modal verbs [Gosselin, 2017; Helland, 1995; Do-Hurinville, Abouda, 2019].

The study of linguistic works on the peculiarities of the functioning of the tense form of *Présent* and the analysis of the French-language discourse fragments lead us to believe that the description of the potential possibilities of the grammatical forms of the French present tense for the realising objective reality would be incomplete without taking into account their ability to convey past and, above all, future events, by transferring them in the imagination to the level of universal present. In scientific literature this property of present structures is called “dramatic present”, “historical present”, “general present”, “descriptive present”, “actual present”, “atemporal present” [Попович, 2010, p. 36; Vuković, 1967, p. 44], and “futural present” [Shendels, 1970], but in our opinion these names do not convey the ability of the present tense form (*Présent de l’Indicatif*) to combine a double temporal perspective (historical and futural presents), as it concerns the syncretism of the present tense.

## Results

### Futural present

*Temporal Discreteness of Présent*. The usus of the futural present in French is at the intersection of two tense plans: the present and the future. In colloquial speech, we often observe the use of the present tense in the sense of the future. The difference that can be observed in the use of the present in the sense of the future is the effect of the semantic category of the subjective modality, namely the emphasis on the categorial and obligatory realization of this action. Verbs of motion are very actively used in this sense, which is a universal characteristic for all languages of the Central European Tense Standard. In addition, the forms of the futural present are accompanied by adverbial time modifiers with future semantics (demain, dans un an, etc.).

According to E. Benveniste and his numerous followers, the present tense, regardless of its expression (grammatical form of the verb or adverbs such as “today” or “now”), is always the moment of speech, or rather, it is a period, hypothetically very long, which covers the moment of speech [Benveniste, 2005, pp. 240–241].

Thus, the adverb “now” (French: *maintenant*) merges with the present tense, forming a single and indivisible temporal continuum with it. M. Popovych, following E. Benveniste, notes that the linguistic present tense is expressed, in addition to the corresponding grammatical form of the verb, by several adverbs, among which the adverb “*maintenant*” stands out for its philosophical universal meaning. Combined with all verb tenses, it always indicates the actuality of a certain action/event, which is perceived as simultaneous one with the mental and speech activity of the person who creates, perceives or narrates this event. The linguistic present tense, according to the scholar, is a continuous flow of “*maintenant*”, which is dismembered by human consciousness. This function of the adverb “*maintenant*” is consonant with the perception of the future by such philosophers as Augustine of Hippo and J. Deleuze [Святий Августин, 1999; Deleuze, Parnet, 1996]. According to them, “*maintenant*” is a representation of the process of dissection by an instrument that divides the temporal space into the present past (non-actual), the present actual and the present future (non-actual), which begins its course at this moment (constructions *maintenant* + future tenses or futural present) [Піддубська, 2000, pp. 52–59; Gosselin, 2005, pp. 80–81].

The tense form of *Présent* in the structure of the category of futurity in French has rather broad semantics. The tense of a verb expressed by the present tense can contain both elements of the past and the future. The present tense form can also denote actions that take place timelessly [Gak, 2000; Могіла, 2011; Pellat, 2017].

E. Koseriu’s concept is based on the distinction between “internal” time and “external” time in the philosophical works of M. Heidegger. In contrast to external (static) time, in internal (dynamic), “experienced” time, the three classical times are superimposed on each other, events continuously change their location relative to the reference points. The description of such a time in the language implies the speaker’s participation in what is being described (“discursive” time), this time – as opposed to external – is subjective [Koseriu, 2001; Heidegger, 2010]. The modal meaning of the forms of the future is related to the conceptualization of the realm of the future as a certain “screen” on which a person projects various modalized concepts: expression of will, obligation, possibility, uncertainty, which are in the present. G. Guillaume understands the concept of “internal time” in a slightly different way: for him, it is, first of all, the time of formation of the linguistic units in the language, which is connected with the “internal history of the language” (G. Guillaume’s term), it cannot be transferred, because this is the time of the birth of the language form.

According to J. Vuković, the present tense is heterogeneous, it consists of: a) the present in the narrow sense of the word, unarticulated; b) the present in the broader sense of the word, relating to the present, articulated; and c) the present in the broadest sense of the word, unarticulated [Vuković, 1967, p. 147]. According to Z. Chahayan, the moment of speech is the main, but not the only point of reference for the grammatical present tense. The grammatical present conveys simultaneity with the perceptual present [Чагаян, 1982, p. 12]. Thus, the relative perceptual present can be “localized” in the temporal spheres of both the epistemological past and the epistemological future. Let us examine these variants of present tense in more detail using these examples:

(1) *Mon ami se promène dans la rue* (Мій друг прогулюється на вулиці).

(2) *Mon ami part pour Paris (maintenant dans deux jours / dans un an probablement / peut-être)* (Мій друг їде до Парижу (зараз, за два дні/вірогідно, за рік/можливо)).

While the utterance (1) conveys a simultaneous action that is going on now, at the moment of speaking, and will obviously come to an end, utterance (3) conveys the *Présent historique* in French and refers to an “eternal” action that has lasted before us and will continue after us [Gak, 2000, p. 347; Gosselin, 2005, pp. 205–207; Revaz, 1998, p. 45].

The utterance (1) is in contrast to the others on the principle of pointed/non-pointed action. Notably, the semantics of *Présent* rarely conveys a short, single action. Depending on the type of present the speaker has in mind when conveying the facts of reality: a moment, a minute, tomorrow, next year, the mental model of the time axis can cover segments of greater or lesser length (see Fig. 1).

(3) *Les planètes tournent autour du Soleil* (Планети обертаються навколо сонця).

(4) *Mon ami chante à l’Opéra* (Мій друг співає в опері).

The utterance (4) is actually a “variety” of the example (3), which is close in its temporal content to it, but differs in the probable uncertainty of the temporal scope of the action in the past and future – only the present moment is certain.

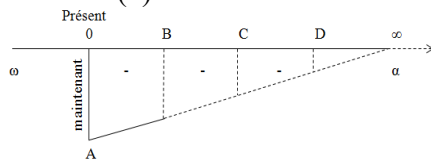
Several grammarians qualify the present tense of the latter pattern, following J. Vuković, as a syntactic relative (utterances 3, 4). J. Vukovic interprets it differently: “Thus, any action that is conveyed by the imperfect present, which refers to the present in the broadest sense of the word as to the all-time, has its absolute meaning of the present tense. Any present that uses the imperfect present as its main form uses this form as its absolute, not as its relative, because it does not denote the present itself” [Vuković, 1967, p. 370]. We should add that such an absolute present (utterances 3, 4) is of interest for us in terms of the presence of a probably significant or negligible future particle in it, which utterance (1) does not contain. All we know is that the action of utterance (3) is absolute in its semantics, since the action is supposed to last forever, and the action of utterance (4) is, in our opinion, a manifestation of the relative present, since such an action is smaller in scope in terms of its semantic potential.

Clearly, the utterance (2) is of interest for the purpose of identifying the futural present. If the simple future tense of French (*Futur simple*) is non-membered, non-discrete, monolithic in its imaginary content, the present *Présent* is able to convey “internal time” according to Heidegger’s understanding, and E. Koseriu followed him, which, unlike the non-discrete *Futur simple*, conveys the process of unfolding a future action and is semantically segmented. Since the future tense is only planned, but not yet present, it cannot be divided, and that is why its function is sometimes performed by the relative present imperfect (utterance 2).

Although the grammatical present tense is characterized by an abstract reflection of perceptual time, it cannot accurately fixate on the duration of perceptual time that the speaker has in mind – a moment, a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, etc. However, the grammatical present tense can convey an action that encompasses time intervals from a moment to infinity. In modern French, actions expressed by the grammatical present tense “start” from the perceptual present and can cover larger and smaller segments in the direction of the future, but only in one stylistic sense do they encompass the zone of the infinite past.

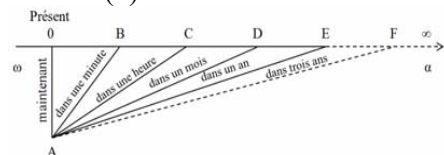
The duration of the grammatical *Présent* in the conceptual space can be illustrated by the following schemes with examples of utterances (1, 2, 3, 4), where point 0 denotes the reference point (perceptual present, *Présent*), letter A denotes the moment of speech, symbol  $\omega$  denotes the past, and symbol  $\alpha$  denotes the future. Symbol  $\infty$  represents infinity, while the letters A, B, C, D, E, and F represent segments of length conveyed by the *Présent de l’Indicatif* (see Fig. 1).

Utterance (1)



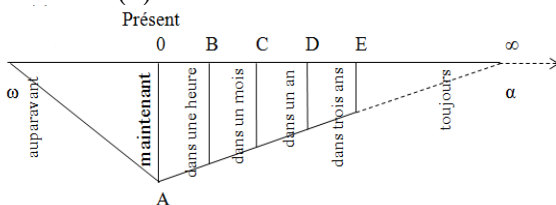
*Mon ami se promène dans la rue*

Utterance (2)



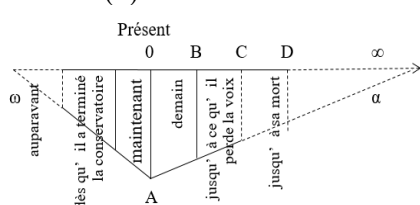
*Mon ami part pour Paris*

Utterance (3)



*Les planètes tournent autour du Soleil*

Utterance (4)



*Mon ami chante à l’Opéra*

Fig. 1. Model of the present tense axis



However, it is important to note the limitations of the futural present, which is mostly used in prospective internal dialogue of a character, for example:

(5) *Un jour, je me réveillerai, je passerai ma journée comme j'ai toujours voulu et je serai tout à fait heureux* (Одного дня, я **проснуся**, я **проведу** цей день, як я завжди хотів, і я **буду** абсолютно щасливим).

This meaning is conveyed mostly by the timeless *Présent*. Let us compare:

(6) *Un jour, je me réveille, je passe ma journée comme j'ai toujours voulu et je serai tout à fait heureux* (Одного дня, я **проснуся**, я **проведу** цей день, як я завжди хотів, і я **буду** абсолютно щасливим).

In the given example, both utterances retained their meaning despite the change in tense from *Futur simple* to *Présent*, semantically, utterance (6) is more acceptable in terms of the French language stylistics. The only unchanged component is the subordinate clause verb “*je serai heureux*”, as it serves a different function – expressing intentional future (= *j'ai l'intention, je veux être heureux*). This is expressed by the verb of being ‘être’, which describes a desired state in the prospective future. When translated into Ukrainian, the present tense form is rendered by the future.

Therefore, the discrete nature of the future present, being the temporal division of the perceptual present, requires, on the one hand, the analysis of its semantics, based on the presence of modal markers and adverbial modifiers of time to finally establish its status as a means of modality or prospection, informing, or intention, and on the other hand, to investigate its internal structure, internal time of the future present in terms of prospective action.

**Markers of the future in the *Présent de l'Indicatif*.** The presence of future markers is an integral feature of the futural present in French. These markers are *the adverbial time modifiers* with the semantics of the future, modal verbs that convey the intensional meaning of *Présent* in terms of the future perspective, and adverbs with the meaning of probability/likelihood. The main issue that arises in the course of the analysis of future markers is the question of the semantic identity of utterances that convey future action in the *Présent de l'Indicatif*.

The formation of the semantics of futurity is significantly influenced by the use of adverbial time modifiers. In utterances such as “*Tu viens souvent?*” (*Ти часто приходиш?*) and “*Tu viens ce soir?*” (*Ти прийдеш сьогодні увечорі?*), the present tense is used to indicate both the present iterative and the future, respectively. The role of adverbial time modifiers with future semantics in the realisation of the meanings of the tense forms of the futural present is of great importance. This is based on the semantic coordination between the verb form and the adverbial modifier. The adverbial time modifier, which is more specific in its meaning, “transfers” the tense sense to the verb form, which is more mobile in terms of its semantic characteristics. For example: *Demain, je rentre tard*; «*Je reste et je fonctionne*» - *dit-il* (Завтра, я повертаюсь пізно; «Я залишусь і буду працювати», – сказав він) (Vian, 1962, p. 140). This is an example of an action in the future.

We assume that the category of localisation/non-localisation is not identical to the temporal localisation of an action. Temporal localisation occurs at the level of the text, while the category of localisation/non-localisation of action contains a special aspect of the connection between the “internal time” of action in the language system and the “external time”, which becomes important during the transition from language to speech. This connection is an undirected relation to the unidirectional flow of time [Weinrich, 1994]. Thus, temporal localisation is manifested at the level of the text, and localisation/non-localisation in terms of time is manifested at the level of the sentence-utterance in the system of language and speech. In order to verify the potential ability of present to convey a localised futural meaning in a certain segment of the time axis, we will use the method of linguistic experiment.

Consider the possible differences using the examples of simulated utterances.

(7) *Il va probablement recevoir demain deux ou trois lettres* (Ймовірно, що завтра він отримає два чи три листа).

(8) *On construit probablement trop dans ce pays* (Ймовірно, в цій країні будують багато).

(9) *Notre admirable poète part demain pour l'Italie* (Обожнюваний нами поет завтра іде до Італії).

Utterance (7) contains three future tense markers, namely: *Futur immédiat*, the adverb with the meaning of probability/hypotheticality *probablement* and the adverbial time modifier for the future *demain*.

The form *Futur immédiat* is a link between the present and the future, it realises an action that will take place in the near future, it is like a preparatory stage on the part of the speaker. The key to such a close action is the verb *aller*, which, by conveying the meaning of movement, desemanticises and creates a dynamic semantics. Let us compare utterance (7) with and without the use of *Futur immédiat*:

(7.1) *Il reçoit <probablement / peut-être> та <demain> deux ou trois lettres. (<Ймовірно/можливо>, що він отримає <завтра> два або три листи).*

The semantics of the utterance has not changed, both utterances (7 and 7.1) convey a hypothetical/probable action in the future according to the speaker, and thus have intensional semantics. When translated into Ukrainian, this did not change the form of the future tense. Instead, the semantics of the expression will change if we remove the adverbial time modifier *demain* and keep *probablement*, compare:

(7.2) *Il reçoit probablement / peut-être deux ou trois lettres (Ймовірно/можливо він отримає два або три листи).*

The semantics of the utterance (7.2) has undergone a significant change; it still conveys the connotation of being hypothetical, which is derived from the speaker's intention, and also produces a semantics of uncertainty about the past, present or future. As we can see, the meaning of the past is added to the temporal meaning of the present and future, which can arise when it comes to the description of a process or phenomenon in the historical past, and therefore it is about the historical present. Note that the meaning of the historical past is more likely to be with the subject of the third person, when it is about the description, and not about the internal monologue of the character. Obviously, the main point of this change is the gap of the adverbial time modifiers *demain*, which conveys an incomprehensible time interval.

Let us now attempt to remove the two previous components, namely *Futur immédiat* and *probablement/peut-être*, and examine the remaining element, namely the word *demain*. This will enable us to compare the resulting structure with the original.

(7.3) *Je reçois demain / bientôt deux ou trois lettres (Завтра я отримую два чи три листи).*

It can be observed that, despite the absence of a verb of motion and an adverb with the meaning of near-term perspective or probability, utterance (7.3), which has only one tense modifier, conveys a prospective meaning in *Présent*. An intriguing shift in the sentence's semantics is observed. While utterances (7.1) and (7.2) conveyed the speaker's intention, utterance (7.3) conveys information about a moment in the future, with (*demain*) or without (*demain*) the qualifier "in the speaker's opinion".

Another example is the utterance with the modal verb *penser* plus an adverb, as in (8.1). While the utterance itself does not convey a future perspective, it does record the immediate opinion of the speaker about the phenomenon in question. In essence, the semantics of this utterance are identical to those of an analogous sentence without the inclusion of probability, as illustrated by the following example:

(8.1) *Je pense qu'on construit probablement trop dans ce pays (Я думаю, що, ймовірно, в цій країні будують багато). = Je pense qu'on construit trop dans ce pays (Я думаю, що в цій країні будують багато).*

The utterance (9) is characterised by the adverbial modifier *demain*, which serves to clarify the meaning of the utterance. However, the utterance remains fundamentally unchanged in terms of its semantic content. The translation introduces the subjective modal verb *penser*, which is identical in meaning to the adverb *probablement*. This is exemplified by the following comparison:

(9.1) *Notre admirable poète part pour l'Italie.*

In contrast to utterance (9), utterance (9.1) preserves the semantics of the futural present by using the verb of movement *partir*, the duration of which is unknown in the future. Both utterances are informative in their semantics.

It can be concluded that the irrelevant meanings of the futural present can be divided into two categories: marked and unmarked meanings. Marked meanings are those conveyed by the adverbial time modifier (*bientôt, demain, etc.*), whereas unmarked meanings are conveyed by other means, such as the verbal periphrase *Futur immédiat*, the verb of motion, the verb + *probablement* and *peut-être*, or the modal verbs *penser, croire, etc.* The most significant means that reinforce and clarify the meaning of the futural present are the adverbial time modifiers present in the semantics of informing *Présent*. This feature is a linguistic universal that objectifies not only the systemic meaning of *Présent* in French, but also others, in particular the prospective modality. The adverbs of hypotheticality inherent in the intensional present add the meaning of the subject's future. Verbs of motion, which are diachronic in nature and directed to the future, are able to preserve the semantics of the futural present without the need for additional markers. Modal verbs (*croire, penser, etc.*) can serve as verbs of *hypothetical meaning*, which, in addition to the meaning of hypotheticality, convey the semantics of "intention" about the future.

### Reconstructing the future plan for the French language and speech system

*The Systemic (Language) Meanings of the Grammatical Present Tense.* The analysis of the systemic meanings of the present tense in modern French shows that the opposition of actuality/non-actuality is an additional semantic-stylistic feature for *Présent* [Revaz, 1998, pp. 46–47]. This issue is interpreted differently in linguistics. Sometimes this opposition is interpreted as aspectual, and sometimes linguists oppose actual actions to non-actual ones, which are conveyed by grammatical past and future tenses.

In order to ascertain the actual and non-actual meanings of the French *Présent de l'Indicatif*, it is necessary to turn to the scientific heritage of Gustave Guillaume, the author of the theory of psychosystematics and psychomechanics. This allows us to reconstruct a fragment of the French language system. The method, introduced by Guillaume, allows us to trace how the grammatical meaning of the present tense is transformed in speech. G. Guillaume argued that every word is formed according to a certain operating system before it enters speech. In linguistic structures, one can always find such sequences of formation operations that correspond to the linguistic operations that take place in the linguistic consciousness before speech begins. Each of the discourse segments hides the genesis of the word with the whole complex of operational moments. In the process of speech, during the transition from potential speech to realized speech, the actual moment of forming appears as a carrier of the entire genesis of the verbal form, consisting of a more or less long chain of operational moments [Guillaume, 1994, pp. 50–51].

In the *Futur simple* form of "il chantera" we can see the realization of the following mental operations that precede its appearance, in particular: a) choice of state, b) choice of kind, c) choice of method, d) choice of time, e) choice of person. However, it should be noted that speakers of Indo-European languages notice the time of phrase formation, not the time of word formation. Phrasal (external, discursive) time is perceived as corresponding to the moment of speech, but not to consecutive segments of time intervals. In other words, the speaker is able to chronologize discursive time, i.e., the time of phrase formation, but is not able to chronologize the time of formation of a potential unit of language, i.e., a word or a sentence.

For instance, the existence of the conditions for using the *Futur simple* or *Présent* to denote an action in the future indicates their certain functional and semantic proximity on the scale of real future tenses. This enables us to speak of synonymy, or rather quasi-synonymy, of these forms. The future action in French can be expressed as follows:

(10) *Demain Jacques arrive (Завтра Жак приходит/ приїжджає).*

or

(11) *Demain Jacques arrivera (Завтра Жак прийде/ приїде).*



Both phrases may seem to be grammatically correct at first.

Exploring the relationship between time, which is realized and correlated with the moment of speech, G. Guillaume notes the need to distinguish between the “idea” of time and the expression of time. The former is a fact of the conceptual sphere and, as a result, concerns language, while the latter is a fact of speech.

In our opinion, it would be impossible to perceive the future tense as one of the systemic components of the present tense flow if it were not for its oppositional pair in the sphere of the past – future (present) in the past (*Futur dans le passé / Imparfait*). The continuity of the tense category as a relevant feature of the French language system is conveyed only in the presence of such opposition in the French language system. In Ukrainian, for example, there is no such opposition:

(12) *Nous remarquons qu'il se promène dans la rue* (Ми помічаємо, що він прогулюється вулицею).

(12.1) *Nous avons remarqué qu'il se promenait dans la rue* (Ми помітили, що він прогулюється вулицею).

Consequently, the tense change is exclusive to the main clause, yet absent in the subordinate clause when translating the utterance into Ukrainian. Utterance (12) conveys a present, actualised point that has meaning only at the moment of speech, whereas utterance (12.1) is its mirror image in the aspect of the past and does not alter its instantaneous meaning.

(13) *Il dit qu'il chante/chantera à l'Opéra demain* (Він каже, що завтра буде співати в опері).

(13.1) *(Hier) Il a dit qu'il chantait / chanterait à l'Opéra aujourd'hui* (Вчора, він сказав, що буде співати в опері сьогодні).

The utterance (13.1) conveys information that is non-actual in the present aspect but is actual in the past aspect and requires not only a change of tense from *Présent* to *Imparfait / Futur dans le passé*, but also a change or addition of the adverbial modifiers of time: *demain* → *hier, aujourd'hui* with respect to the past (utterance 13.1). Utterance (13.1) does not change its relation to the moment of speech – the relation is that of sequence – but it differs in the realization of the projected action – it is as actualised as the utterance (13), but unlike it, it also has a precise result – we know whether he has performed at the opera today or not. That is why the future action conveyed by *Futur dans le passé* is considered the most accurate future.

*Modal meaning of the futural present.* *Présent* can take on the meaning of future action with a modal connotation in several cases. The situation itself can indicate that the action belongs to a different time frame. In the phrase *Quand est-ce que je te vois? (Коли я тебе побачу?)* the situation makes it clear that it is the future.

The semantic structure of the verb form includes basic (differential) and potential semes. When the grammatical form is transferred to another tense, potential semes are realised in speech, so that additional modal or referential shades of meaning can be realised. Here are the main ones:

1). The distinction between finite and non-finite verbs is of great importance. *Présent* of non-finite verbs is typically used to express the present tense, such as *Je mange (Я їм)*. In contrast, the present of finite verbs often indicates a future action, as exemplified by *J'arrive! (Я прийду)*.

2). The present tense contains the differential seme of the present tense and the potential seme of the certainty of action. When transferred to the future plan, the *Présent de l'Indicatif* acquires the meaning of a stated future (*Je viens demain – Я прийду завтра*) or an inevitable future (*Tais-toi, ou je t'assomme! – Закрий рота, або я тебе вб'ю!*).

3). In contrast, the future tense carries with it a potential seme of uncertainty, which is expressed when transferred to the present or past. This is evident in the forms of the future tense, which can be used to make assumptions. As exemplified by *Futur simple – Ella aura vingt ans (Вірогідно, їй виповниться 20 років)*; *Futur antérieur – J'aurai égaré mon cahier, je ne le vois pas sur la table (Вірогідно, я загубив свій зошит, я не бачу його на столі)*. Both forms of the *Futur simple* and *Futur antérieur*, which convey assumptions when translated into Ukrainian, require the use of an additional means (the adverb *вірогідно / ймовірно*) to convey the tone of uncertainty of the action.

4). The past tense (*Passé composé*) is characterised by a sense of completion, which is then actualised in the future when the form is transferred to the present-future plan: *J'ai fini dans un instant (Я закінчу за мить)* [Gak, 2000, p. 347].

5). *Présent* can express a certain action, order, instruction, or recommendation for the future: *Vous suivez le chemin et à deux cents mètres, vous prenez la rue qui vous conduit jusqu'à la gare. Ви йдете стежкою, а за двісті метрів ви йдете вулицею, яка веде вас до вокзалу.*

6). In the hypothetical phrase, after the conjunction *si*, in the alternative relation after *ou*, the present tense functions as the future tense and expresses a causal relationship, conveying different semantic meanings – a promise, a threat, an inevitable consequence: *Si tu pars, je me jette à la mer! (Якщо ти підеш, я кинусь в море); Va-t-en ou je t'étrangle (Йди геть, або я задушу тебе); Un pas de plus, il tombe (Ще крок і він впаде); Si j'ai le temps, je viendrai; (Якщо в мене буде час, я прийду) Si vous n'obéissez pas, il se passera quelque chose de terrible (Якщо ви не будете слухатись, – відбудеться щось жахливе)* [Romains, 1965, p. 77].

7). In both parts of the conditional sentence, *Présent* can be used to refer to an action that is in the future: *Si tu bouges, je te jette par la fenêtre (Якщо ти поворухнешся, я викину тебе у вікно); Si, en connaissance de cause, vous souhaitez toujours mener l'enquête, alors je me tiens à votre entière disposition (Якщо, знаючи суть справи, ви все ще бажаєте провести розслідування, то я у вашому повному розпорядженні)* [Sharp, 1992, p. 60]; *Si tu as la frousse, tu n'as qu'à rentrer chez toi (Якщо тобі страшно, тобі потрібно просто йти додому)* [Molnar, 1988, p. 110]; *Si Monsieur Thiers vole nos canons, il faut nous défendre, et contre nos propres compatriotes (Якщо пан Тьер викраде наші гармати, ми повинні будемо захищати себе і від наших власних співвітчизників)* [Bigot, 1990, p. 40].

8). Concurrently, *Présent* in terms of the future can be used to express an action that is desired or expected in the future, for example: *Je vais prendre mes cigarettes et mon briquet Dupont sur notre table, je sors dans la nuit dance, je marche jusqu'à une fontaine (Я візьму свої сигарети та свою запальничку Dupont з нашого столу, я піду на вечір танців, я дійду до фонтану)* [Japrisot, 1977, p. 244]. Цей відтінок нерідко зреалізовано в питальних реченнях: *Je l'appelle? (Мені покликати його?) Qu'est-ce que je fais ensuite? (А що я потім буду робити?)*

In speech, the *Présent de l'Indicatif* is the most frequently used form, particularly when there is no need to express referential or modal connotations. When the time plan is already marked with an adverbial time modifier, the narration is often conducted in *Présent*. This is an economy in the organisation of speech: instead of marked forms that are complicated by additional semes, the unmarked, simplest form of the verb in terms of semantics and morphological composition is used.

## Conclusions

The present tense is the reference point in the French tense system that connects the future and the past. As it is closely related to both, it can express actions that relate to both the past and the future. Consequently, the main meanings of the future can be conveyed by other grammatical forms in speech in *Indicatif*, depending on the context.

Two methods were employed during the study: *the method of linguistic experiment* and *the method of reconstruction of a fragment of the language system*. The application of these methods enabled us to corroborate the primary hypothesis that the *Présent de l'Indicatif* form in the French language system has a futural potential and its structure is heterogeneous in nature. In Modern French, actions expressed by the grammatical present tense originate from the perceptual present and can extend to encompass larger or smaller segments of the future than the *Futur simple*, contingent on the presence or absence of lexical markers. The future tense exists as the **projection of person's intentions**, which has certain modal shades, and therefore can be represented in the form of discrete parts. Consequently, the grammatical meaning of "*futur – present*" is equivalent to that of the future tense, *Futur simple*, within the French language system. The correlation with the moment of speech, the peculiarity of the context and the temporal discreteness of the present tense determine the equal use of the *Futur simple* and the *Présent* in speech.

In the field of speech, a distinction is made between the concept of time and the manner in which it is expressed. The concept of time is a fundamental aspect of the conceptual sphere and, as a result, is related to language. In contrast, the manner in which time is expressed is a fact of speech and discursive reality.

The temporal meaning in the utterances containing the *Présent de l'Indicatif* form, which semantically belong to the future plan, is actualised through a special type of connection that is present in the transition from "internal time" to "external time". This transition is transmitted through the relation of posteriority to the moment of speech, which is carried out by the speaker, while the modal meaning is actualised through coincidence with the present moment in a softened form.

Applying the method of linguistic experiment, which involved the substitution and transformation of linguistic elements of the French language, in particular, adverbial modifiers, made it possible to trace the grammatical temporal structure of the futural present and determine the scope of futural meanings of each of its variants.

The futural present is characterised by a discrete nature, comprising four temporal invariants that are localised in the temporal spheres of past, present and future. These variants have varying degrees of futural potential. The *present universal*, which transmits timeless actions and whose futural potential is unlimited in time and space, and the *relational present*, whose futural potential is limited by certain time modifiers, exhibit unlimited futural potential that can extend to infinity. The present tense, which conveys the *near future*, has the second largest futural potential. This can be revealed by the presence of adverbial time modifiers that mark, reinforce and clarify the futural present. These modifiers increase the futural potential of the utterance and objectify the systemic meaning of the *Présent* form. The point present is the last in terms of futural potential. All types of futural present are situated within the plane of the actual and irrelevant present in the French language system.

The *Présent de l'Indicatif* form has the capacity to convey a distinctive, timeless mode of communication that simultaneously localises the action in multiple temporal frameworks (present, past, and future). Its scope is more expansive than the perceptual simultaneity of the moment of speech. The futural present is situated at the nexus of two temporal planes (present and future) within the French language system and simultaneously in three temporal planes (past, present, and future) in speech. It is only the speaker who divides the continuous, timeless present in the flow of his speech, thereby actualising its true meaning.

The futural present is employed for expressive purposes to demonstrate the probability or desirability of an action occurring due to the mental, syntactic and semantic connection with the moment of speech. Consequently, the *Présent* remains the most productive form for conveying futural modal connotations in the French language system.

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#### FUTURAL POTENTIAL OF THE PRESENT TENSE IN MODERN FRENCH

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**Key words:** *futural present, future, adverbial time modifier, actual present, nonactual present, futural potential, linguistic experiment.*

The present tense is the reference point in the French tense system that connects the future and the past. As it is closely related to both, it can express actions that relate to both the past and the future. Consequently, the primary meanings of the future can be conveyed by other grammatical forms in speech in *Indicatif*, depending on the context.

The object of the study is the form of *Présent de l'Indicatif* (present actual/nonactual). The *subject* of the article is the semantic potential and the specifics of the present tense to convey the meaning of the future tense. The *aim* of the study is to determine the particularities of the grammatical temporal structure of the present tense in modern French, which is capable of conveying two meaning's tense – present and past. The study focuses on the semantic and structural aspects related to the realising of the grammatical meaning of the future tense in the French language and speech system.

*Two methods were employed in the course of the study: the method of linguistic experiment and the method of reconstruction of a fragment of the language system.* The application of these methods enabled us to confirm the primary hypothesis that the *Présent de l'Indicatif* form in the French language system has a futural potential and its structure is heterogeneous in nature. In contemporary French, actions conveyed by the grammatical present tense originate from the perceptual present and can extend to encompass larger and smaller segments in the direction of the future than the *Futur simple* form, contingent on the

presence or absence of lexical markers. The grammatical meaning of “*futur – present*” is equivalent to the meaning of the future tense *Futur simple* in the French language system. The correlation between the moment of speech and the context determines the equal use of the *Futur simple* and the *Présent* in speech.

In speech, a distinction is made between the concept of time and the manner in which it is expressed. The concept of time is a fundamental aspect of the conceptual sphere and, as a result, is related to language. In contrast, the manner in which time is expressed is a fundamental aspect of speech and discursive reality.

The temporal meaning of utterances containing the form *Présent de l'Indicatif*, which belong semantically to the future plan, is actualised by a special type of connection present in the transition from “internal time” to “external time”. This transition is conveyed by the relation of posteriority to the moment of utterance, which is carried out by the speaker, while the modal meaning is actualised by the coincidence with the present moment in a softened form.

The use of the method of linguistic experimentation, which involves the substitution and transformation of linguistic elements of the French language, in particular adverbial modifiers, made it possible to trace the grammatical temporal structure of the futural present and to determine the range of futural meanings of each of its variants.

The futural present is discrete in nature, consisting of 4 temporal invariants located in the past, present and future. These variants have different degrees of future potential: 1) *the present universal*, which conveys timeless actions and whose future potential is unlimited in time and space; 2) *relative present*, whose future potential is limited by certain time modifiers; 3) the present tense, which conveys *the near future*; 4) *the point present* is the last in terms of the degree of future potential.

The first two types have unlimited future potential that can stretch to infinity. The third type has the second largest future potential, its scope can be revealed if there are adverbial **time modifiers that mark, strengthen and specify the future present**. These modifiers are able to increase the future potential of the sentence and objectify the systemic meaning of the *Présent* form.

The *Présent de l'Indicatif* form has the capacity to convey a particular timeless mode of communication that locates the action simultaneously in multiple temporal planes (present, past and future). Its scope is semantically greater than the meaning of the perceptual simultaneity of the moment of speech. The futural present is located at the intersection of two temporal plans (present and future) in the French language system and simultaneously in three temporal plans in speech (past, present and future). And it is only the speaker who divides the continuous timeless *Présent* in the flow of their speech, thus actualising its true meaning.

The modal connotation of *Présent + probablement*, equivalent to the connotation of *Futur simple*, conveys a complete modal shift of the tense form – the tense meaning of *Présent* (connection with the present) is completely erased and the modal connotation of the assumption of the future action becomes significant. The modal connotation of *Présent + probablement* is defined in the same context as the *Futur simple*.

The futural present is used to demonstrate the *probability or desirability* of an action occurring due to the mental, syntactic, and semantic connection with the moment of speech.

When the grammatical form is transferred to another tense in speech, potential semes are activated so that additional modal or referential shades of meaning can be realised. Thus, the *Présent* remains the most productive form for conveying the modal shades of meanings of the *futurum* in the French language system.

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