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English orientating constructions denoting location: classification and article use

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The paper singles out English orientating constructions which refer to constant coordinates meant to position situational changeable entities, e.g. *at eye level, on hand, in part, in detail*. The analysis of constructions denoting location reveals their entrenchment in mind in the basic – articleless – form representing situation coordinates on the superordinate categorization level. Orientating constructions have two discursive variants depending upon the article in their structure: definite and indefinite. The definite article refers to the reference points imposed by a particular situation which is signalled by the combination of orientating and extending constructions while the indefinite article points to the establishment of new coordinates.

Keywords: orientating construction, image schema, definite noun phrase, indefinite noun phrase, immediate construction, extended construction.

1. Introduction

The structure, meaning and functions of orientating constructions traditionally treated as prepositional phrases without articles have been analysed from varying perspectives. As for the structure, two elements draw scholars' attention: the use of prepositions (Contini-Morava & Tobin 2000) and absence of articles (Berezowski 2009) considered as inexplicable by some linguists (Lyons 1999: 51). As for the meaning, separate semantic groups of the phrases in question have been discussed: those indicating boundaries of typical human activity (Quirk et al. 1985: 280; Taylor 2007: 162), time (Reid 2004: 107) and state (Evans & Green 2003: 125, 188). As for the function, some of them – *in fact, in addition* – are treated as discourse markers (Schwenter & Traugott 2000; Lewis 2006; Aijmer 2007).

New perspectives on the analysis of prepositional articleless phrases are opened by their treatment in language teaching as lexical chunks, i.e. conventionalized form/function composites (Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992: 1), or in CxG as constructions viewed as pairings of form, meaning and function (Goldberg 2006: 209).

Lexical chunks and constructions seem similar in structure but different in function.

Structurally, chunks and constructions are considered to be ready-made linguistic units: the former include short phrases that function like ‘individual words, collocations, idioms, institutionalized expressions’ (Burrige & Stebbins 2016: 66), the latter consist of anything from a morphological element or lexical item to a complex and abstract syntactic pattern (Hilpert 2008: 14; Eckhoff 2011: 6). Both lexical chunks and constructions are treated as prefabricated linguistic units which need only minimal modification to be used in communication (Dąbrowska 2010: 203). Lexical chunks are considered to be stored in our memory banks as ready-made units (Burrige & Stebbins 2016: 66). Constructions are entrenched in long-term memory, i.e. ‘cognitively routinized due to frequent use’ (Zeschel 2009: 187).

Though both lexical chunks and constructions have a fixed structure they allow some transformations due to the slots available in their form, i.e. participant roles associated with a construction or a verb (Goldberg 1995: 49), determining certain syntactic transformations (Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992: 1, 8), differing from one use to the next (Goldberg 2006: 39, 90), cf. *at risk*, *at imminent risk*, *at the risk of delaying the negotiations*. As the cited examples suggest, the construction *at risk* has slots for the attribute *imminent* and for the definite article and the preposition *of* joining the extending construction.

The main difference between lexical chunks and constructions concerns their functioning. The chunks, studied at the surface level, are believed to facilitate speech fluency under real-time conditions (Wray 2002) in predictable contexts (Wible 2010: 165). The deeper – grammatical – study concentrates on constructions viewed from two perspectives: paradigmatic, concerning different levels of meaning generalization, and syntagmatic, focusing on their linear expansion. Paradigmatically, constructions are divided into item-based, lexicalized and grammaticalized (Tomasello 2000: 62). Even though ‘potentially decomposable’ into constituents item-based constructions are stored and used as single units, e.g. *You keep out of this* (Tomasello 2000: 62). Lexicalized constructions with islands of reliability, i.e. ‘relatively stable frames of reference in speech stream’ (Diehl et al. 1987: 564), are relatively abstract, e.g. *Let’s X it*, *There’s a X*. Grammaticalized constructions are highly abstract entities based on commonalities in the forms and functions of a whole host of different specific expressions, e.g. *negation constructions*; *motion construction* (Tomasello 2000: 62).

Syntagmatically, constructions fall into immediate, modified and extended. Immediate constructions consist of a word with dependent units joined on the left, e.g. *in hand*, *at national level*, or on the right, e.g. *in danger of ruin*. Immediate modified constructions admit additional elements expressed by adjectives, cf. *under pressure* vs *under constant pressure*, or pronouns, cf. *at risk* vs *at his risk*. Extended constructions combine two or more immediate ones, e.g. *For Arab Israelis, who make up 20 percent of the country’s population, the legislation strikes **at the heart** of their identity* (Newsweek: 02 June 2017). In the cited example, the immediate modified variant *at the heart*, derived from the articleless construction *at heart*, is extended by units *the legislation strikes* on the left and *of their identity* on the right.

Drawing on the suggested grammatical approach to prefabricated phrases this paper treats the prepositional articleless units like *in hand*, *on view*, *on top* as orientating con-

structions, i.e. a unity of form and meaning, meant to refer to constant coordinates positioning situational changeable entities. In this vein, fixed coordinates refer to components of a situation such as participants' state (*in love*), space (*on land*), time (*at night*), activity (*on trial*), its instruments (*by plane*) and parameters of objects (*in size*), while changeable entities located relative to these coordinates may be people (*child at risk*), physical objects (*handcuffs in particular*), emotions (*joyful at heart*), actions (*eat in space*) or its result (*no solution in sight*), abstract notions placed in space metaphorically (*the crisis at hand*).

The aim of the study is to explain the use of definite and indefinite articles within orientating constructions (OCs). Implementing the method of continuous sampling of orientating articleless constructions and their discursive variants from 730 online articles of *Newsweek* and *The Spectator* magazines we determine the use of definite/indefinite article within basically articleless OCs taking into account semantic groups of these units.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 defines the constructions under study; Section 3 suggests a corpus-based study of orientating constructions denoting location and their discursive – definite and indefinite – variants.

2. English orientating constructions: unity of form and meaning

The articleless units under study treated as orientating constructions since they denote fixed coordinates providing for positioning situational changeable entities can be specified with regard to the unity of form and meaning.

Structurally, the entrenched form of the OCs consists of a preposition and an articleless noun, e.g. *in space*, *on hand*. Like other constructions, the meaning of the units under study is 'maximally generalized with no redundant representation of specific examples of a given pattern' (Zeschel 2009: 187). OCs have discursive variants with definite or indefinite article within their structure.

The unity of the OC's form and meaning derives from the integrity of image schemas, i.e. recurring dynamic patterns of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give coherence and structure to our experience (Johnson 1987: xiv). The classification of OCs suggested in this paper rests on four types of image schemas: bodily, perceptual, moto-topological and dynamic (Potapenko 2016: 14).

The integration of form and meaning of somatic constructions derives from bodily schemas FAR – NEAR, UP – DOWN, FRONT – BACK, CENTER – PERIPHERY indicating 'the position of conceptualized objects relative to the human body' (Potapenko 2016: 14), e.g. *in front of*, *at hand*.

The interaction of form and meaning of perceptual constructions is based on the succession of schemas MASS – COLLECTION – COUNT – OBJECT capturing the visual 'transformations of the objects which are approached or perceived from distance' (Potapenko 2016: 14), for example, the phrases *in abundance*, indicating a large amount of objects, or *in part*, denoting a fragment of a referent.

The form and meaning unity of object-related constructions rests on moto-topological schemas OBJECT – SURFACE / CONTACT – CONTAINER – FULL / EMPTY repre-

sending a gradual motion into CONTAINER, being in it or getting out, e.g. *to school*, *in love*. In the latter example the preposition *in* represents the state of affection as a container.

The unity of form and meaning of dynamic constructions derives from the schemas which split into kinetic, ‘distinguishing the trajectories of moving objects’ (Potapenko 2016: 14) in terms of PATH (Johnson 1987: 113), e.g. *on course*, *to college*, VERTICALITY (Johnson 1987: xiv), e.g. *on top*, *at ground level*, and those for force which include ENABLEMENT / DISABLEMENT, ATTRACTION, BLOCKAGE, RESTRAINT, REMOVAL, DIVERSION, COMPULSION, COUNTERFORCE, (Johnson 1987: 42, 45-47), e.g. *in conflict*, *in opposition*, representing COUNTERFORCE.

The use of articles with OCs depends on three categorization levels: superordinate, basic and subordinate (Rosch 1978: 30-31). The superordinate level is characterized by abstract categories sharing only a few common attributes (Rosch 1978: 31), being ‘conceptually vague and undifferentiated’ (Taylor 1995: 50). Thus the nouns, denoting these categories, are articleless since they reflect relations of generalized nature and independent from the parameters of a particular situation. The basic categorization level mainly rests on perceptual attributes and common motor movements (Rosch 1978: 32-33) being signaled by the indefinite article, representing the establishment of relations from a participant’s point of view. The subordinate level encompasses objects which are very similar to each other and have both low identifying ability among other members of the category and low generalization (Rosch 1978: 35) which is signaled by the definite article.

- (1) *The WHO FCTC conference decisions, designed for implementation **at national level** by signatories, have a direct bearing on the nearly \$800 billion global tobacco industry* [Newsweek: November 01, 2016],
- (2) *Co-operation between the three left-wing parties in Berlin has raised interest in German politics due to the possibility of their pursuing a coalition **at a national level** [...]* [Newsweek: July 20, 2017],
- (3) *Advertising and marketing will be strictly regulated **at the national level**, as with tobacco. Trudeau’s bill sets a minimum purchase age of 18* [Newsweek: April 23, 2017].

In the cited examples, the articleless construction *at national level* (1) locates Indian tobacco industry against the background of the world-wide repercussions denoted by the adjective *global*. The indefinite noun phrase (NPh) *at a national level* in (2) indicates a collective view at which German politicians plan to build a coalition. The definite NPh *at the national level* in (3) subordinates the advertising regulating to the state level, revealed by the unit *bill*.

To sum up, it is due to image schemas that constructions with a fixed structure and meaning in their basic – articleless – form indicate constant coordinates positioning situational changeable entities. Our hypothesis is that the use of articles within these con-

structions is determined by the degree of dependence of the denoted coordinates on the event participants: the indefinite article signals establishing particular coordinates while definite variants of the articleless constructions refer to the situational coordinates providing for a particular state of things. Being most frequent, constructions denoting location indicate an entity's position in space at different distance from the body of an individual.

3. Corpus-based study: orientating constructions denoting location

Since unity of form and meaning of the discussed units is based on image schemas underlying human orientation in the environs (Potapenko 2016: 14), OCs denoting location fall into four groups: somatic, referring to space around an individual's body, e.g. *in sight*, *on hand*; perceptual, indicating referent conceptualisation from varying distance, e.g. *in bulk*, *in part*; dynamic, pointing to reference points providing for motion, e.g. *on course*, *in retreat*; and vertical, indicating upright coordinates, e.g. *on top*, *at ground level*.

3.1. Somatic constructions name referent arrangement relative to different parts of human body from three perspectives: central, connected with the heart, e.g. *at heart*; frontal, setting the visual field, e.g. *on view*; and lateral, locating fixed coordinates on the conceptualizer's left or right sides, e.g. *at hand*.

The OC *at heart* manifests **central localization** in two forms: articleless and definite.

The articleless construction *at heart* hinges on the CENTER image schema indicating the midmost coordinate due to the conceptual metaphor mapping the organ in the centre of the chest to the innermost part of a person in which his/her deepest feelings are located (MWD). The superordinate status of this immediate construction is underscored by the existential verbs *be* and *remain* indicating the location of the most basic characteristic of a person in (4).

- (4) (...) *he* (Obama) *cares about domestic policy but has no passion even for a war he insists is a necessity. Middle East expert Fouad Ajami put it this way: "He fights the war with Republican support, but his constituency remains isolationist at heart"* [Newsweek: January 06, 2011].

In example (4) the articleless immediate OC *at heart* reflects the deepest – isolationist – characteristic of a group of voters metonymically denoted by the collective noun *constituency*.

The definite variants of the analysed articleless construction are represented by two prepositions indicating situational coordinates: *at the heart* and *in the heart*. As a result of metaphorical mapping the definite NPh *at the heart* locates referents in the centre of an entity due to the preposition *at* (Tyler & Evans 2003: 178), e.g. *at the heart of the town*, *at the heart of the continent*, while the definite NPh *in the heart* with the preposition *in* places referents in the centre of a three-dimensional space (Drozdowicz 2001: 35), e.g. *in the heart of Paris*.

Both variants possess the definite articles due to the extending constructions joined by the preposition *of* to denote the background for the indicated centre. However, the definite NPh *at the heart* indicates the centre of a physical or abstract space. The physical space is represented by the combination of *at the heart* construction with those naming various territories or places (*at the heart of the town*, *at the heart of the North London destination*) as in (5) where the definite NPh *at the heart* locates a country in the centre of *Europe*.

- (5) *What do you call the country that sits **at the heart** of Europe, which is its biggest and strongest economy, and which increasingly calls the tune in the European Union?* [Newsweek: October 06, 2014].

The abstract space is represented by the extending *of*-constructions denoting particular political or economic spaces: *at the heart of the crisis*, *at the heart of liberty*, *at the heart of modernity*, *at the heart of the strategy*. In (6) the definite NPh *at the heart* places Russia in the center of global politics.

- (6) *Far from putting Russia **at the heart** of world politics, Putin is, in fact, increasingly isolating his country* [The Spectator: March 22, 2018].

By contrast, the definite NPh *in the heart* indicates a referent in the centre of a physical space represented by particular squares (*in the heart of Times Square*), cities (*in the heart of London*, *in the heart of the Dutch capital*), provinces (*in the heart of Texas*), countries (*in the heart of India*).

- (7) *As commuters **in the heart** of Nairobi hustle past one another at the end of a recent workday, young men are buying machetes in a hardware shop before boarding a bus* [Newsweek: June 02, 2017].

In (7) the definite NPh *in the heart* locates *commuters* in the centre of Kenya's capital, *Nairobi*, by the *of*-phrase which connects it with a particular space bringing about the use of the definite article.

OCs indicating **frontal orientation** encompass two subgroups: inclusive, establishing the boundaries of a visual scene (*in sight*, *in full view*) and panoramic, including all the viewed objects (*on view*).

The frontal inclusive OCs *in sight* and *in full view*, setting the limits to the visual field, are always articleless as they denote a three-dimensional backdrop with fixed boundaries for locating different objects. Consequently, the immediate construction *in sight* denoting a fixed visual field combines with preceding nouns or pronouns indicating people (*policemen in sight*, *everyone in sight*) or objects (*everything in sight*). In (8) the articleless OC *in sight* indicates a visual field for locating oak trees.

- (8) *There were few oak trees **in sight*** [The Spectator: May 24, 2017].

The OC *out of sight* with the meaning opposite to the one analyzed above indicates the inaccessibility of the visual field as well as the entities it includes. As a result, in (9) *a plastic black binder* with its contents turns out to be invisible.

- (9) *Tucked **out of sight** on a shelf in the former station-master's office, a plastic black binder contains details and photographs of what became known locally as The New Year's Day Tragedy* [Newsweek: November 21, 2014].

An overall-inclusive localization is construed by the modified construction *in plain sight* with the adjective *plain* underscoring a free field of vision providing for the perception of entities with negative connotation: illegal (*conspiracy hiding in plain sight*), dangerous (*the biggest threat breeding in plain sight*) or unpleasant (*an inconvenient truth in plain sight*). The articleless construction *in plain sight* in (10) underscores crimes placing them in an unobstructed visual field and making them visible to everyone, while the adjective *greatest* emphasises their unique nature.

- (10) *But some of the greatest crimes have been committed **in plain sight*** [Newsweek: February 14, 2017].

Synonymic constructions *in full view* and *on view* with the noun *view*, indicating an entity's visibility, portray referents from two perspectives determined by the prepositions with the articleless form denoting supersituational categorization. The all-inclusive OC *in full view* places referents inside the visual field with the adjective *full* underscoring the perception of all available contents.

- (11) [...] *the wrought-iron Metal Wine Cage can keep a dozen vintages **in full view** while safeguarding them under lock and key* [Newsweek: December 10, 2009].

In contrast to two frontal inclusive constructions, the panoramic OC *on view* sets the background for art exhibitions by the preposition *on* locating one object on the outer surface of the other (Goddard 2002: 283) with artefacts placed on the horizontal or vertical plane accessible to the public. The supersituational OC *on view* is extended by nouns emphasizing availability of exhibits to viewers: they denote artworks (*Susan Morris's "Motion Capture Drawing..." on view in Venice*) or places of display (*on view in the museum, on view at the art gallery*).

- (12) *An early score of Orfeo is held in Venice's Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana and will be **on view** in London this fall as part of a loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum's "Opera: Passion, Power and Politics" exhibition* [Newsweek: April 21, 2017].

The lateral OCs locating entities relative to hands include three prepositions: *at*, indicating a point; *on*, locating an object on the surface; *in*, construing hands as three-dimensional spaces. Due to metaphoric mappings, these OCs reveal successive stages of

object's accessibility: its attainability, i.e. easy reach (*at hand*); its availability, i.e. being in full view (*on hand*); its possession due to construing a hand as three-dimensional space (*in hand*).

The meaning of referent's attainability, expressed by the OC *at hand*, results from a short distance between the hand and an object with the latter being located very near (Collins) at an arm's length, rendered by the image schema NEAR (Johnson 2005: 20) while the linguistic generalization of two hands into a unity results in the absence of the article. The extended constructions signal an object's attainability in space or in time: *workshops at hand*, *the job at hand*, *the dictionary at hand*. The OC *at hand* in (13) locates *a clavichord* close enough for the person to play it.

- (13) *Enter Beckmesser with his lute, except that he doesn't have one, but a clavichord is **at hand**, which he plays* [The Spectator: July 09, 2017].

In (14) the combination of the articleless construction *at hand* with the noun *task* reflects a temporal imminence of a military strike.

- (14) *In any pre-emption scenario now, the U.S. would try to keep the strike limited to the task **at hand**; at the same time, Washington would signal in any way it could – probably via the North's ally in Beijing – that it did not seek a wider war* [Newsweek: April 25, 2017].

The articleless construction *on hand* implies the generalized availability of an object placed on a palm schematized as a surface indicating the outer part on which entities are easily affordable (*money on hand*, *a GPS unit on hand*) which is the case in (15).

- (15) *Cook's Apple has \$237 billion in cash **on hand**, and could single-handedly fund some new way to produce and market great journalism from now until the first news bureau opens on Mars* [Newsweek: February 06, 2017].

The OC *in hand* locates objects inside a palm perceived as a CONTAINER with the independence of size determining an articleless form as in (16).

- (16) *These things were true before Huffington came down the mountain, artisanally hewn revelatory tablets **in hand*** [Newsweek: January 05, 2017].

The OC *in hand* is extended by nouns denoting abstract entities especially in the business or medicine sphere (*deal in hand*, *information in hand*). In (17) the articleless construction *in hand* denotes scientists' possession of a genetic signature enabling further treatment of patients.

- (17) *But a new study has uncovered a particular genetic signature that indicates the one-third of intermediate-risk prostate cancers bound to be problematic. With this*

signature in hand, identifying patients who need rigorous treatment up front – as well as those who do not – is now within reach [Newsweek: January 18, 2017].

To sum up, somatic constructions indicate universal coordinates represented by parts of human body such as the heart, the eyes or hands. The somatic OCs reflecting the fixed background for locating objects are articleless in combination with nouns naming people, objects, concepts, while the definite NPhs denote situational coordinates due to collocation with *of*-phrases referring to three-dimensional spaces in case of central coordinates.

3.2. OCs denoting perceptual localization indicate coordinates of an object perceived from a varying distance as a result of visual transformation of a single homogeneous mass into a cluster of objects and the reverse procedure brought about by the motion of our gaze back and forth relative to our bodies (Johnson 1987: 26). The constructions of this group are used with no article since they indicate generalized mental operations universal for all language users. The four subgroups of the named OCs, based on perceptual image schemas, include the following: schematic (*in total*), multiple objects' perception (*in abundance*), quantitative (*on average*) and meronymic (*in part*).

The **schematic** OCs *in general* and *in total* evoke the mental operation of correlating a separate object with their group taken as a whole, when the entity is conceptualized as an indivisible MASS. The difference between the two OCs consists in the level of schematization revealed by the extending units: qualitative (*in general*) and quantitative (*in total*).

The OC *in general* sets the perception of objects as a mass indicated by the extending nouns naming bodily conditions (*health in general*), collective nouns representing a group of people (*public in general, community in general*) or indicating various establishments (*non-governmental organizations in general*), as well as units denoting phenomena (*innovation in general, discrimination in general*). In (18) the articleless OC *in general* indicates a typical operation of qualitative schematization of *innovation* as a universal phenomenon.

- (18) [...] *he steps outside to observe the construction that is transforming his former restaurant into elBulli 1846, a research lab and exhibition space* [...] “*It’s about innovation in general. Gastronomy is just the platform we’re using to explore innovation*” (Newsweek: April 22, 2017).

The schematic construction *in total* evokes the mental operation of quantitative generalization which consists in summing up entities denoted by numerals (*40 people in total, 12 million in total, dropped to one fifth in total*) or adjectives in the comparative degree (*take home less in total*). In (19) the articleless form of the immediate OC *in total* combines with the extending adjective *less* generalizing on the amount of women’s earnings.

- (19) *As a result, they may earn more each hour than men but still take home less in total* [The Spectator: July 23, 2017].

OCs *in abundance* and *in bulk*, pointing to the mental operation of **perceiving multiple objects**, indicate grouping large amounts of entities named by collective or plural nouns. The articleless constructions of this subgroup differ in the way the perceived objects are portrayed. Being extended by nouns the OC *in abundance* represents clusters of objects as MASS with a conceptualizer unable to differentiate separate entities because of their large quantity. In (20) the articleless construction *in abundance* triggers a universal operation of generalization representing an ample quantity of energy denoted by the noun *stamina*.

- (20) *We all knew from his victories in the Hennessy Gold Cup and the Welsh Grand National that Native River possesses stamina **in abundance*** [The Spectator: February 17, 2017].

Being extended by nouns in the plural the OC *in bulk* points to the mental generalization of uniting a large amount of objects perceived as COLLECTION. In (21) the articleless OC *in bulk* indicates the perception of *emails* as a collection available online.

- (21) *I'm a party member and also received a similar message. It's very easy to personalise emails sent **in bulk** (...)* [The Spectator: December 27, 2016].

The third type of constructions – the **quantitative** OC *on average* – indicates the operation of counting which results in obtaining the mean number of perceived objects. Their amount can be expressed by percentage (*on average the price has hovered around 30 percent*), even numbers (*on average, every 85 days*) or fractions (*on average two third of the group*) generalized by the fusion of two image schemas: COUNT representing calculation in number and VERTICALITY underlying the conceptualisation in terms of increase or decrease (Johnson 1987: xv).

- (22) *Branded drugs are, **on average**, 32 times more expensive than generics* [Newsweek: February 03, 2017].

In (22) the articleless OC *on average* points to the operation of calculating the price of drugs with its increase rendered by the extending construction *32 times*.

The unity of form and meaning of **meronymic OCs**, denoting part of the whole with objects perceived from a close distance and thus correlating with the first element of the PART-WHOLE image schema (Johnson 1987: 126), is named by three constructions: partitive (*in part*), specifying (*in detail*) and focal (*in particular*).

The **partitive construction** *in part* points to the universal operation of fragmentation. This OC is extended by the nouns indicating fragmentary referent representation, portraying only some segment or piece of it (*substantial parliamentary majority is achieved in part by populist votes; they were being enticed, in part, by suggestions*), verbs denoting focalization (*revitalising Jewish life, in part by focusing on cultural issues*) or causal prepositions *due to*, *thanks to* and conjunction *because* (*the economy sputters, in part due to Western sanctions; xenophobia is growing, in part due to fake news*). The article-

less OC *in part* in (23) points to the universal operation of fragmenting a described situation of supporting choices in public education.

- (23) *The group's goal is "supporting quality choices in public education for all Michigan students," in part by shaming public education* [Newsweek: January 10, 2017].

The OC *in part* forms a modified construction *in large part* indicating an operation of singling out a larger component of a particular entity as in (24).

- (24) *And up to 17 percent of global methane emissions come from rice cultivation. In large part, that's because the warm, waterlogged soil in rice paddies provides ideal conditions for the growth of a particular kind of bacteria known as methanogens* [Newsweek: February 10, 2016].

The *specifying* OC *in detail* designates the process of zooming-in on an object. The articleless form draws attention to aspects of recommendation (*consider the recommendations in detail*), planning (*the plan reviewed in detail*) or communication, both oral (*discuss in detail, speak in detail*) and written (*document in detail, set out in detail*). Example (25) illustrates the use of OC *in detail* singling out the state of the narrator expressed by the abstract noun *discontent*.

- (25) *She writes of the "sandy congestion and wind-blown boredom" she witnessed upon arriving at the camp, describing in detail the discontent that led to the Manzanar Riot* [Newsweek: February 15, 2017].

The focal construction – *in particular* – refers to the result of the zooming-in when a prominent aspect of an entity is evoked. The articleless OC *in particular* singles out a specific feature of an entity represented by nouns denoting: people (*in particular the younger hip-hop artists, low-income families in particular*), countries (*China in particular*), human activities (*the casting of the show in particular, laughter and singing in particular*), artefacts (*in particular the official printed version*), etc.

- (26) *In the weeks since Donald Trump was elected president, the behavior of U.S. financial markets – and of the stock market in particular – has represented the triumph of hope over common sense* (Newsweek: January 09, 2017).

In sum, perceptual OCs evoke universal mental operations of schematizing, fragmenting, specifying or focalizing which result in the articleless form of immediate constructions extended by nouns and numerals naming entities the mental representations of which undergo those operations or by verbs indicating focalization of actions.

3.3. Orientating constructions providing for kinetic localization name supersituational fixed coordinates of trajectory and direction.

The trajectory as a kinetic coordinate is evoked by the OCs *on track* and *on course* which indicate varying degrees of entity's vicinity to the target denoting unintended or planned results respectively which is reflected by extending constructions. These OCs acquire localization meaning due to the preposition *on* which brings forth the idea of surface (Balaga 2004: 24) as an aspect of space in which objects can be placed.

The metaphoric meaning of the OC *on track* is based on the projection of the source domain indicating a contact with surface underlying the trajectory onto the target domain of 'following a course that is likely to result in success' (Collins; Oxforddictionaries). The immediate OC *on track* is extended by the verbs denoting sticking to the same direction (*remains on track, keep its agenda on track*) or return to the previous state (*get their finances back on track, get right back on track*). In (27) the immediate OC *on track* extended by the construction *get their finances back* designates return to the previous position, while the generalised meaning of the OC results in the absence of the article.

- (27) *Indeed, given the level of trauma that victims are having to deal with, it can't just be about helping women get their finances back **on track*** [The Spectator: January 16, 2018].

The OC *on track* portrays achieving unplanned results extended by infinitives denoting different targets (*on track to top next week's general election, on track to win the Democratic nomination, on track to build just 12GW by 2030, on track to make a billion dollars*). In (28) the extended construction *on track to make a billion dollars* indicates nearing a lucrative aim of making a billion dollars.

- (28) *Al Gore is a Pied Piper who the New York Times has estimated is **on track** to make a billion dollars from global warming* [The Spectator: September 22, 2017].

The closeness of the final point is indicated by the OC *on course* extended by *for*-constructions referring to achievements (*on course for reelection, on course for victory*) or high office (*on course for Downing Street*). These accomplishments are intensified by adjectives evaluating success (*on course for a resounding victory, on course for a crushing majority*) or ordinal numerals underscoring a prominent result (*on course for its first gay prime minister*). In (29) the extended construction *on course for a comfortable victory* reflects Macron's closeness to an anticipated win without detailed specification.

- (29) *The data leak emerged as polls predicted Macron, a former investment banker and economy minister, was **on course** for a comfortable victory over far-right leader Marine Le Pen in Sunday's election, with the last surveys showing his lead widening to around 62 percent to 38* [Newsweek: May 06, 2017].

The OC *in retreat* designates *backward motion* 'away from the enemy after being defeated in battle' (LDOCE: 1213) when the mental operation of generalizing the act of moving back results in the use of the articleless form of the immediate construction as in (30).

- (30) *Why are we helping ISIS when they are **in retreat**? It's clear to anyone with an IQ of triple digits that we are supporting ISIS to destabilise the area so why wouldn't they lie about Assad and Russia gassing children to start a war?* [The Spectator: April 12, 2017].

More frequent is the metaphoric use of the discussed OC representing a state of 'withdrawal from what is difficult or dangerous' (MWD). In this case, the preposition *in* imparts the articleless construction *in retreat* with the meaning of CONTAINER which underscores being in a certain state rather than motion. The articleless OC *in retreat* is extended by constructions with nouns, naming groups of people literally (*his opponents in headlong retreat*, *Germans in retreat*), or metonymically (*government in retreat*, *Old Europe is in full retreat*) to indicate withdrawal from a difficult or disagreeable position. In (31) the articleless OC *in retreat* designates the state of retirement from a complicated diplomatic situation abroad facing Russia, while two other supersituational constructions – *in chaos* and *at home* – underscore the generalized representation of the situation.

- (31) *That he's [Putin] even in a position to try to pull all that off is remarkable, given where Russia was on January 1, 2000: in chaos at home and **in retreat** abroad* [Newsweek: May 18, 2017].

The articleless OC *in retreat* extended by *from*-constructions with names of actions (*in retreat from accusations*), agreements (*in retreat from agreed obligations*) or viewpoints (*in retreat from its ideal*) indicates the starting point of relinquishing a certain activity as in (32) where gods withdraw from interfering into the affairs of men and the link-verb *are* points to a static perception of the situation.

- (32) *The gods are **in retreat** from active intervention in the affairs of men* [The Spectator: May 27, 2017].

To recap, the OCs indicating dynamic localization are articleless as they indicate kinetic coordinates serving as a background for representing two types of achievement: unintended or planned. The OC *in retreat* refers to the coordinate providing for the metaphoric withdrawal from a hazardous or unpleasant situation.

3.4. Orientating constructions providing for vertical localization derive the unity of their form and meaning from the VERTICALITY image schema which as a variant of PATH emerging 'from our tendency to employ an UP-DOWN orientation in picking out meaningful structures of our experience' (Johnson 1987: xiv). In this case DOWN and TOP coordinates correspond to the starting and final points of a trajectory. OCs singled out from the analysed corpus represent coordinates that reflect levels of PHYSICAL, EDUCATIONAL and POLITICAL VERTICALITY.

The OCs indicate two types of coordinates on the PHYSICAL VERTICALITY schema named by extending constructions: spatial and object-related.

The OCs designating *spatial* PHYSICAL VERTICALITY locate objects at two levels: terrestrial, serving as a background for the regular human activity (*at ground level*), and outer spatial, opposed to the former (*in space*).

The articleless form of the terrestrial OCs, indicating the level by the preposition *at*, refers to three parameters of PHYSICAL VERTICALITY constant for any situation – surficial (*at ground level*), visual (*at eye level*) or aquatic (*above sea level*). The OCs, referring to surface, locate objects on land as the most fundamental reference point (Tyler & Evans 2003: 108). In (33) the immediate OC *at ground level* is extended by the phrasal verb *stick around* to characterise the spread of *pollution*.

- (33) *The pollution then tends to stick around **at ground level** because it's sheltered by mountains so there isn't much wind* [Newsweek: March 02, 2017].

The articleless construction *at eye level*, referring to the universal visual coordinate, locates perceived objects at the level of an observer's eyes which is illustrated by (34) where the OC under discussion places the entity denoted by the word combination *an oak limb*.

- (34) *A red-winged blackbird appeared suddenly, alighting on an oak limb **at eye level** less than six feet away* [Newsweek: May 15, 2016].

The OC *above sea level*, indicating the aquatic coordinate, points to an entity's position above the average level of the oceanic surface being extended by numeric constructions specifying vertical parameters (*4,000 meters above sea level*, *3,500 feet above sea level*).

- (35) *A portion of the Scenic Highway in Pensacola, which runs along a bluff 80 to 100-feet **above sea level**, collapsed in two places, dropping a car and a truck about 40 feet* [Newsweek: April 30, 2014].

The articleless constructions *in orbit* and *in space* referring to outer space denote the highest possible points of PHYSICAL VERTICALITY. The universal as well as inaccessible character of the coordinates results in its articleless form. With respect to physical orientation the OCs *in orbit* and *in space* locate in outer space different entities such as means of communication (*a communications-relay system in orbit*), instruments (*telescopes in orbit*), objects of research (*plants in orbit*).

- (36) *Besides, a hit on a 15-ton spy satellite would more than double the amount of space debris currently **in orbit*** [Newsweek: March 13, 2009].

In (36) the articleless construction *in orbit* names a universal coordinate locating moving *space debris*.

OCs *in orbit* and *in space* are extended by the verbs naming different kinds of activities: specialised (*do the repairs in orbit*, *fly in space*) or everyday (*eat in space*).

- (37) *Gordon says his students are emailing daily with NASA engineers about the issue, readying a prototype solution to test **in space*** [Newsweek: April 29, 2017].

Constructions denoting object-related VERTICALITY refer to the lower and upper coordinates structuring various physical entities: pieces of furniture, buildings and their parts, natural elevations on the earth's surface, etc.

The articleless OC *at bottom*, indicating to the lowest point of the PHYSICAL VERTICALITY, designates the real nature of an entity as in (38).

- (38) ***At bottom** the objection to Trump may be less substantive than aesthetic* [The Spectator: May 31, 2017].

The definite NPh *at the bottom* combines with *of*-phrases to refer to the lowest point of a number of phenomena: a particular upright object (*at the bottom of a vast canyon, at the bottom of an ancient Athenian well*), an imaginary entity (*at the bottom of long waiting lists*), social hierarchy (*at the bottom of the ladder*) or economic process (*at the bottom of recession*). In (39) the definite NPh *at the bottom* extended by the *of*-phrase *of the ocean* indicates the lowest point of a water body.

- (39) *In particular, methanogens buried deep inside of rocks eat hydrogen. So do those living in hydrothermal vents **at the bottom** of the ocean* [Newsweek: April 13, 2017].

The upper part of the object-related PHYSICAL VERTICALITY is designated by the articleless OC *on top* with the preposition *on* indicating the uppermost point which prevents any further advance with its absolute nature determining the articleless form of the construction. The OC *on top* is extended by the verbs naming the motion to the uppermost edge of a physical object (*climb on top of the kitchen table, put on top of the bowl*) or economic entities (*get on top of the deficit*). In (40) the extended construction *climb on top of the box* portrays people ascending to upper surface of a container for further activity, i.e. participation in a show.

- (40) *Every morning, everyone on set, from actors to background artists, claps their hands, says "box, box, box" and gathers around an empty apple box. [...] People climb **on top** of the box and share things about themselves or their experience on the show* [Newsweek: May 06, 2017].

The impossibility of further motion is underscored by extended constructions with static verbs (*keep on top of their workload, stay on top of your balance*) as in (41).

- (41) *You only have to stand **on top** of the ruined towers of ancient Troy, on the western shores of Turkey* [The Spectator: February 16, 2018].

Vertical situational orientation is indicated by two definite object-based NPhs with the prepositions *to* and *at*. The definite NPh *to the top* implies motion to the highest – but not final – point in combination with nouns naming the trajectory (*way to the top*) or the verbs denoting motion (*ascend to the top, mount to the top, rise to the top*). In (42) the definite variant *to the top* in conjunction with the noun *climb* represents motion up the status ladder with no definite end.

- (42) *His climb back to the top* [of his father’s company] *has been swift and surprising, astute and ruthless* [Newsweek: December 19, 2016].

In its turn, the definite NPh *at the top* locates a referent at the highest possible point of a particular entity indicated by the extending *of*-construction. In (43) the extended construction *at the top of their list* designates the highest point on the agenda while the pronoun *their* reflects a situational status of the denoted uppermost coordinate.

- (43) *Many in industry were unhappy with the agreement. The “majority of the livestock, mining and energy industries bitterly opposed it and have put it at the top of their list to reverse that,” Suckling says* [Newsweek: January 12, 2017].

As for educational verticality, OCs refer to its three levels: primary (*at elementary level*), secondary (*at school level*) and higher (*at college level, at university level*), while OCs structuring the political hierarchy indicate two levels: regional (*at local level*) and state (*at national level*).

The articleless OCs structuring the educational verticality are extended by the verbs denoting routine activity (*teach at university level*) or by the nouns naming academic subjects taught in different institutions (*courses at college level*). In (44) the OC *at university level* extends the predicative construction *teaches all courses* to locate academic disciplines on the highest level of education.

- (44) *Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, Oklahoma City: A state-funded residential high school that teaches all courses at university level* [Newsweek: May 18, 2008].

Definite variants of the constructions under analysis imply the dependence of the named education levels on particular circumstances indicated by extending constructions: noun groups naming particular roles (*a head coach at the university level, learning-disabled students at the college level*) or institutions (*at the university level in Oxford*). In (45) the definite construction *at the elementary level* indicates the stage selected for separation of learners of different races.

- (45) *At the same time, Haikala acceded to Gardendale’s wishes by allowing for a separation [black and white pupils] that would begin at the elementary level and take place over three years. She will supposedly monitor the process to make sure Gardendale commits to desegregation* [Newsweek: May 02, 2017].

The indefinite NPhs refer to education levels established by speaker which is indicated by the verbs naming mental (*think, believe*) or speech activity (*say, tell*).

- (46) *“Some things don’t happen **at a school level**, and someone needs to do those,” says Gary Richmond [Newsweek: August 26, 2010].*

As for the political verticality, articleless constructions structure the political hierarchy into regional or national levels to locate politicians (*president, prime minister*) or results of their activity (*a law, a plan*). In (47) the immediate OC *at national level* relates plans to improve health insurance to the highest level of political hierarchy in the USA while the predicate *would be a plan* implies a future representation of the situation.

- (47) *At **national level** there would be a plan that small businesses and individuals could join, and a national insurance exchange or “connector” for access to private plans that passed tests of quality and did not rate people by their health status [Newsweek: July 01, 2008].*

Definite NPhs point to the situational coordinates of particular political events. In (48) the definite phrase *at the state level* locates problems with a ban on lead-based ammunition and fishing tackle, affecting particular groups of people at a local level.

- (48) *At **the state level**, many were upset – and even off ended – that the Obama administration took top-down action without consulting local authorities across the country, and thus breached a long tradition [Newsweek: May 31, 2017].*

Indefinite variants of the OCs structuring the political hierarchy indicate the creation of particular levels by units which intensify the process of constructing a personal hierarchy: verbs with the meaning of planning (*plans innovations at a federal level*) or individual desires (*pursuing a coalition at a national level*). In (49) the indefinite construction *at a national level* refers to the hierarchy level desired by the former British prime minister which is underscored by the verb *wants*.

- (49) *Cameron has broadly outlined areas in which he wants to win reform from the EU, such as migration controls, retaining lawmaking powers **at a national level**, and cutting red-tape for businesses [Newsweek: October 20, 2014].*

In sum, the analysed articleless OCs structuring verticalities indicate three types of coordinates constant for any situation: physical, providing for terrestrial and outer space orientation; educational, naming various levels of studying and teaching; political, differentiating the level of state hierarchy. Their definite variants provide for the situational level of orientation while their indefinite phrases construe hierarchy levels from a speaker’s point of view.

4. Conclusion

The units under study, traditionally viewed as prepositional phrases without articles, are treated in the paper as orientating constructions since they denote fixed coordinates providing for positioning situational changeable entities. The supersituational status of constructions contributes to their articleless form to reflect universal points that help an individual to determine his/her position or an object's location in the surrounds. As coordinates are independent from the communicative situation, the articleless constructions, designating them, have a generalized meaning underscored by extending constructions which include nouns indicating people and their groups literally or metonymically, objects, entities with negative connotation, artworks or places for their display, existential verbs or those, denoting focalization of actions or various targets.

Definite variants denote coordinates locating a particular event on the situational level by extending constructions represented by *of*-phrases naming various places or entities. Indefinite variants establish new reference points or interpret them in collocation with verbs designating mental or communicative activity.

Drawing on the analysis of the database of the online articles of *Newsweek* and *The Spectator* magazines we claim that due to the unity of form and meaning the locating OCs refer to four spatial coordinates – somatic, perceptual, dynamic and vertical. Perceptual OCs, indicating coordinates of object perception from a varying distance, and dynamic constructions, naming coordinates represented by trajectory and a state of withdrawal, are only articleless due to their entrenchment in speakers' mind as a result of repeated use for denoting mental operations. Somatic OCs, indicating coordinates represented by parts of human body such as the heart, the eyes or hands, have definite variants specified by extending *of*-phrases to represent the background for situational coordinates. Articleless constructions, designating coordinates for vertical localization, have two discursive definite and indefinite variants as it is possible to specify the particular event by the definite article or build a new hierarchy from the perspective of the event participants by the indefinite construction.

Finally, let us signal the issue that deserves exploration, namely orientating constructions indicating such coordinates as temporal (*at night, to date*) and force (*under attack, in opposition*).

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