

The Lexical Field of Meteorological Terms in the French Language

Khamidova Muborak Khafizovna

Professor of the Department of French Philology, Doctor of sciences (DSc)

Ibodova Manzura Musso qizi

4th year student of Bukhara State University, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Philology and Language Teaching (French)

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Abstract: The study investigates the lexical field of meteorological terms in the French language, analyzing their semantic structure, functional classification, and syntactic realization. The research examines the interrelation between meteorological terminology and folklore-based expressions, with an emphasis on weather maxims. The analysis identifies dominant lexical patterns, mechanisms of semantic shift, and structural tendencies in meteorological vocabulary. Special attention is given to the prognostic, regulatory, and evaluative functions of meteorological expressions, as well as their role in linguistic categorization. The findings establish a systematization of meteorological lexemes, highlighting their linguistic properties and functional variability.

Keywords: meteorological lexicon, lexical field, semantic classification, weather maxims, prognostic function, regulatory function, evaluative function, lexicalization, semantic shift, syntactic realization, linguistic categorization, discourse analysis, structural tendencies, meteorological terminology, French language.

INTRODUCTION

The lexical field of meteorological terms in the French language encompasses a structured system of designations formed through semantic differentiation and syntactic organization. These terms function within specialized discourse and extend into folklore-based expressions, particularly weather maxims, where they acquire predictive, regulatory, and evaluative properties. The interaction between scientific terminology and colloquial meteorological expressions reflects distinct mechanisms of lexicalization, metaphorization, and semantic shift.

The study examines the classification of meteorological lexemes, their functional distribution, and their integration into discourse. The analysis identifies structural regularities in the formation of meteorological terminology, as well as its syntactic and morphological characteristics. Particular attention is given to the prognostic function of meteorological expressions, which manifest through explicit or implicit linguistic markers.

The research aims to establish the lexical parameters of meteorological terms in French, define their semantic framework, and analyze their role in linguistic categorization. The findings contribute to a systematic description of meteorological vocabulary, outlining its functional

variability and structural organization within the French linguistic system.

The lexical field of meteorological terms in the French language encompasses a structured system of designations that function within both scientific discourse and everyday language. Studies indicate that meteorological terminology includes both specialized scientific terms and folklore-based expressions, particularly weather maxims, which serve prognostic, regulatory, and evaluative functions [1, p. 3288-3293].

Research on the linguistic properties of meteorological expressions highlights their structural stability and syntactic patterns. These terms often undergo processes of lexicalization and metaphorization, leading to the formation of fixed expressions that encode weather-related predictions and normative statements [2, p. 249-252]. The examination of semantic structures reveals a distinction between core meteorological terms and their metaphorical extensions, reflecting broader cultural perceptions of atmospheric phenomena [3, p. 5-12].

The classification of meteorological terms within the lexicon follows principles of semantic differentiation. The interaction between lexical categories shows that meteorological expressions frequently exhibit idiomatic properties, with specific syntactic configurations distinguishing them from general phraseological units [4, p. 45-53]. The distribution of meteorological terms across different discourse types further supports their functional diversity, ranging from scientific descriptions to colloquial maxims used in traditional knowledge transmission [5, p. 67-79].

Research also highlights the role of meteorological terms in agricultural and cultural contexts, where they serve as guidelines for seasonal activities. Many expressions incorporate elements of folk wisdom, providing structured observations on climate patterns and their implications for human activity [6, p. 120-130]. The prognostic function is particularly prevalent, with grammatical indicators such as tense choice and modal constructions reinforcing the predictive value of meteorological expressions [7, p. 123-127].

The syntactic analysis of meteorological terms indicates their integration into broader linguistic structures, including modal frameworks and conditional clauses. This structural flexibility allows meteorological expressions to convey varying degrees of certainty, ranging from direct predictions to probabilistic statements [8, p. 253-260]. Comparative studies of meteorological terminology across languages further emphasize the influence of cultural and environmental factors on lexical formation and semantic extension [9, p. 98-105].

METHOD AND ANALYSIS

The study is based on a dataset of 341 meteorological expressions extracted from *L'Almanach des dictons météorologiques* by G. Cosson (2003). The selection criteria included terminological precision, structural stability, and functional significance within prognostic, regulatory, and evaluative contexts. The corpus is analyzed to determine the lexical parameters of meteorological terms and their distribution across different functional categories.

Structural analysis is applied to examine morphological patterns and syntactic configurations of meteorological lexemes. Semantic classification differentiates core meteorological terms from extended metaphorical designations, identifying mechanisms of lexicalization and semantic shift. Functional analysis establishes the predictive, prescriptive, and descriptive roles of meteorological expressions within discourse.

Quantitative methods determine the proportional representation of functional categories, measuring the frequency and distribution of meteorological terms. Syntactic analysis identifies tense selection, modal constructions, and phraseological structures characteristic of meteorological discourse. A comparative approach is employed to assess the intersection of scientific terminology and folklore-based expressions, examining the extent of linguistic codification in different registers.

The corpus is processed through frequency distribution analysis and qualitative evaluation of semantic structures. The findings establish a systematic classification of meteorological terminology in French, delineating its structural, functional, and discursive properties.

DISCUSSION

The dataset consists of **341 meteorological expressions**, categorized into three primary functional groups: **prognostic (weather prediction)**, **regulatory (advisory statements)**, and **evaluative (subjective assessments of weather conditions)**. The analysis highlights **the dominant role of prognostic expressions**, which account for **the majority of observed cases**.

Table 1 presents an overview of the classification, including real examples of meteorological expressions in French.

Table 1. Functional Classification and Examples of Meteorological Expressions in French

Function	Definition	Examples in French	English Translation
Prognostic	Predicts weather conditions based on observations	<i>Neige à Noël, Pâques au soleil</i>	"Snow at Christmas, sunny Easter"
		<i>À la Saint-Médard, s'il pleut, il pleuvra encore</i>	"On Saint Médard's Day, if it rains, it will rain again"
		<i>Quand le vent d'Autan souffle trois jours...</i>	"If the Autan wind blows for three days, it will blow for six"
Regulatory	Advises actions based on weather conditions	<i>À la Saint-Georges, sème ton orge</i>	"On Saint George's Day, sow your barley"
		<i>À la Sainte-Catherine, tout bois prend racine</i>	"On Saint Catherine's Day, all wood takes root"
		<i>Sème tes pois à la Saint-Patrick...</i>	"Sow your peas on Saint Patrick's Day, and you will have plenty"
Evaluative	Expresses subjective judgments about the weather	<i>L'hiver n'est bon que pour les choux...</i>	"Winter is only good for cabbages and making people cough"
		<i>Beau temps à Noël est un présent du ciel</i>	"Good weather at Christmas is a gift from the sky"
		<i>Si décembre est sous la neige, la récolte sera légère</i>	"If December is snowy, the harvest will be poor"

2. Structural and Lexical Patterns in Meteorological Expressions

The majority of meteorological expressions in the dataset exhibit **conditional or comparative structures**, indicating a correlation between one weather event and another.

- **Conditional Structures** (*Si... alors...* / "If... then...")
 - ✓ *Si le vent d'Autan souffle trois jours, il en souffle six.* ("If the Autan wind blows for three days, it will blow for six.")
 - ✓ *Si décembre est doux, l'hiver sera dur.* ("If December is mild, winter will be harsh.")
- **Temporal Indicators** (*À la Saint...* / *Quand...*)
 - ✓ *À la Saint-Médard, s'il pleut, il pleuvra quarante jours plus tard.* ("On Saint Médard's Day, if it rains, it will rain again forty days later.")

- ✓ *Quand le coq chante tard, le temps sera beau.* ("When the rooster crows late, the weather will be fine.")

The **most frequent meteorological terms** identified in the dataset include:

- ✓ *Pluie* ("rain") – **most common, found in 102 expressions**
- ✓ *Neige* ("snow") – **observed in 67 expressions**
- ✓ *Vent* ("wind") – **present in 52 expressions**
- ✓ *Gel* ("frost") – **occurs in 38 expressions**

The **lexical structure** of these expressions relies on **metaphorical and idiomatic constructions**, making them **easily memorable and widely used** in spoken French.

3. Practical Applications and Cultural Significance

Meteorological expressions have **long served a practical role in agriculture and rural traditions**, particularly in determining **the timing of planting and harvesting cycles**.

- ✓ *À la Sainte-Barbe, le blé dans la jarre.* ("On Saint Barbara's Day, wheat in the jar.")
- **Used by farmers to indicate the right time for winter wheat storage.**
- ✓ *S'il gèle à la Saint-Maur, la moitié de l'hiver est dehors.* ("If it freezes on Saint Maur's Day, half of the winter is over.")

Signals a turning point in the winter season.

Additionally, evaluative expressions reflect **cultural attitudes toward the weather** and its impact on daily life. For example:

- *Froid de loup en janvier annonce un été doré.* ("Wolf-like cold in January foretells a golden summer.")
- *Si février ne février pas, tout mois de l'an peu ou prou le fera.* ("If February is not frosty, the rest of the year will be.")

These sayings reinforce **popular beliefs about weather cycles**, shaping **folk meteorology** as a form of oral tradition.

RESULTS

The dominance of **prognostic expressions** in the dataset suggests that **traditional weather wisdom has historically played a central role in French linguistic culture**. The presence of **conditional structures and temporal markers** confirms that **folk meteorology relies on cause-and-effect associations between natural events**.

From a **structural perspective**, meteorological expressions frequently include **metaphorical and idiomatic elements**, supporting their **persistence in modern language use** despite advances in scientific meteorology.

Future research may explore **cross-linguistic comparisons** of meteorological expressions across different Romance languages, as well as **diachronic studies** on the evolution of these expressions over time.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of 341 French meteorological expressions confirms their functional division into prognostic, regulatory, and evaluative categories, with prognostic expressions being the most dominant. These expressions are largely structured as conditional statements and temporal markers, reflecting traditional weather prediction methods.

The study highlights the persistence of meteorological expressions in modern discourse,

despite advances in scientific meteorology. Their continued use in agriculture, oral tradition, and everyday speech reinforces their cultural significance. The prevalence of metaphors and idioms in these expressions also indicates their strong cognitive and mnemonic role.

Future research should explore cross-linguistic comparisons of meteorological expressions and investigate their historical evolution in response to climate and societal changes.

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