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Specificity of studying of diasystemic variability of language in historical retrospective (Based on Old French)

Abstract

The article aims to examine types and kinds of diasystemic variability of language in historical retrospective. Based on the material of the Old French language, the paper explains the need to distinguish and take into account three types of diasystemic variability in diachronic linguistic research: real, supposed and non-diasystemic. The real diasystemic variability of the Old French language is determined by the peculiarities of the evolution of the Latin language in different locations of the Romance language area during the formation of Romance languages and their diatopic variants (dialects, or idioms). The supposed diasystemic variability of the Old French language is determined by the peculiarities of the general evolution of the French language, presumably taking place in the Old French period and causing the coexistence of diachronic and diatopic variant forms. The real diasystemic variability of the Old French language determines all the diasystemic features of the French scripta, the supposed ones are only diatopic and only for the scripta of the XII–XIV centuries. The non-diasystemic, purely graphical variability of the Old written French, handwritten usage, characteristic for all handwritten texts and scripta in general, reflects only the instability and heterogeneity of the written usage as a whole in the absence of unified orthography.

Keywords: variability, diasystem, historical linguistics, history of the French language, dialect, scripta

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For citation: Stanovaïa, L. A. (2024). Spetsifika izucheniya diasistemnoy variativnosti yazyka v istoricheskoy restrospektive (na materiale starofrantsuzskogo yazyka) [Specificity of studying of diasystemic variability of language in historical retrospective (Based on Old French)]. *Teoreticheskaya i prikladnaya lingvistika [Theoretical and Applied Linguistics]*, 10 (3), 144–167. <https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190-2024-10-3-144>