

Pragmatic Function of Linguistic Units



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ABSTRACT: The article is devoted to the theoretical analysis of a number of works of domestic and foreign linguists in which approaches to language learning in a pragmatic aspect are defined. As a result of generalization of various approaches of researchers, the author revealed the main task of pragmatics, which consists in establishing the patterns of the use of linguistic means for the purpose of directed influence on the addressee in the communication process. Within the framework of P. Grice's theory, implicatures are considered as conversational or communicative, as well as conventional. At the same time, the metaphorical interpretation is analyzed within the framework of the theory of speech acts. The role of euphemistic units involved in the formation of a certain, predetermined by the addressee, evaluative opinion is shown. The article reveals the potential of the study of precedent phenomena in a pragmatic aspect. The key problems of linguopragmatics are analyzed: connotations and additional (background) information as a necessary component of communication.

KEY WORDS: sender, addressee, newspaper text, meaning, lexical units, linguistics, new words, oppositions, pragmatics, function, euphemisms, speech etiquette, metaphor, ironic statement, pragmatic function.

INTRODUCTION

The process of the emergence of new lexical units is directly related to their pragmatic function. Pragmatics considers mainly those linguistic means, their properties and patterns of language that are used in society by a group of individuals or individuals to influence the addressee's consciousness and, as a consequence, his behavior. That is, pragmatics studies the process of applying lexical units in speech, and what the speaker means. In addition, the field of study of pragmatics is numerous phenomena related to the addressee. Interactions between communicants also lie in the field of studying pragmatics. Russian and foreign linguists hold different points of view on what the pragmatic meaning of the word really is.

B. Russell, C. Stevenson, R. Hare, F. Kiefer, H. Grice, J. Austin were the first to explore pragmatics in linguistics in their works. It was also the object of research in the works of D.D. Katz, E.M. Ulenbeck, D.T. Langendowen, N.D. Arutyunova, V.Z. Demyankov, Yu.S. Stepanov, Yu.D. Apresyan, L.V. Babitova, V.A. Golets, etc.

Respectively, "... in order to learn a foreign language well, one usually needs to know something about the culture of the speakers of that language. Communication that lacks appropriate cultural content often leads to humorous incidents or, even worse, is a source of serious misunderstandings and incomprehension" [24, p. 3738]. The same can be told concerning the knowledge of pragmatic meaning, which allows a language learner to capture all the beauty of word meaning in a target language.

THE MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Let's consider the approaches of some linguists to the study of language in a pragmatic aspect. Yu.D. Apresyan considers it relevant within the framework of pragmatics to investigate "the speaker's attitude to reality, to the content of the message, to the addressee fixed in the linguistic unit (lexeme, affix, grammeme, syntactic construction)" [1, p. 136]. At the same time, the category of the subject, according to the scientist, should be considered as the main category of modern pragmatics.

We can wholly agree with Yu.D. Apresyan that the subject puts its position in relation to any fragment of reality into the pragmatic meaning of the word. The pragmatic meaning includes a positive or negative attitude to any phenomenon, process or phenomenon. The pragmatic meaning contains an element of subjectivity of perception of the accompanying situation, the emotions of the speaker, his/her attitude to reality at the moment of the act of communication.

E.V. Paducheva believes that the task of pragmatics is to identify the relationship between the speaker and language units and considers it superfluous to draw a strict boundary between the pragmatic and semantic meaning of language units. The researcher considers pragmatics as "a certain area of semantics, <...> which studies linguistic elements, <...> in the semantics of which reference to the speaker plays a key role". In addition, she believes that "linguistic meanings are pragmatic in principle: it is not any specially highlighted expressive elements that are associated with a person, with a speech situation in the language, but in general the meaning of the vast majority of words and grammatical units" [2, p. 223].

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From the points of view presented above on the essence of the pragmatics of lexical elements, two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, pragmatics cannot act in opposition to the semantics of linguistic units. Pragmatics is considered as its variety, representing the anthropocentric nature of linguistic units. Secondly, pragmatics depends on a system of extra-linguistic relations and meanings (connotations), as a result of which it is necessary to analyze the proper pragmatic and connotative meanings at the moment of the act of communication.

Pragmatic meanings in linguistics can be considered in lexical, word-formation and grammatical aspects. The reference to consciousness in the speaker's speech communication is the content of the concept of linguistic egocentrism. Thus, the essence of the pragmatics of language signs is to reflect the egocentrism of the speaker with an unconditional anthropocentric component in the semantic system of language and speech. Often the pragmatic functions of units do not coincide with the pragmatics of speech acts. As Yu.D. Apresyan notes, often the illocutionary function is not marked specifically, it is decoded by the addressee on the basis of an extra-linguistic situation [1, p. 136].

As it was noted above, linguistic pragmatics stands apart in the group of linguistic disciplines, focusing its attention on non-linguistic categories. Linguistic pragmatics aims to study the individual in a society as a subject of communication. Taking into account the above, it becomes extremely difficult to determine the subject of linguistic pragmatics. Different researchers of pragmatology hold different opinions on this issue. For example, J. Leech believed that pragmatics differs from semantics that the object of pragmatic research is the study of the meaning of a word in its relation to the conditions of a communicative situation [3].

Researcher V.V. Bogdanov believes that the subject of linguopragmatics is in the circumstances of the use of all language resources in the process of communication (the act of speech communication) under certain conditions. In order to achieve this, he suggests the succinct term "context". The main fundamental directions in linguistic pragmatics V.V. Bogdanov considers a) the doctrine of speech acts, b) the study of rules and conventions of speech communication; c) the study of the nature of knowledge and information needs of communicants [4, pp. 268-275].

N.D. Arutyunova considers the subject, object and their interaction in a speech situation to be the subject of pragmatics. When studying the subject of speech, linguists are interested in the explicit and hidden goals of the utterance, here we mean a question, an order, advice, greeting, complaint; speech tactics and types of speech behavior; rules of conversation subordinated to the principle of cooperation; attitudes and references of the speaker, pragmatic presuppositions, introduction to the focus of interest.

N.D. Arutyunova puts the process of addressing an addressee on the center of the interpretation of speech, the impact on the addressee and the types of speech response. In the relations between communicants, there can be explored the forms of speech communication, the relations between the participants of communication. The author notes the close connection of pragmatics with the general theory of activity, psycholinguistics and other branches of applied linguistics [5].

It should be borne in mind that the inclusion of pragmatics in linguistics is not recognized by all researchers. An acceptable definition of pragmatics in this aspect is given by I.P. Susov, defining pragmatics as "an independent interdisciplinary field of knowledge, closely adjacent to linguistics" [6, p. 21].

There operates the following categories in pragmatics: subject, object, subject of communication and communicative attitude. The object of pragmatics is the relationship between linguistic units and the conditions of their application in a specific communicative and pragmatic space. The task of pragmatics is to establish the regularities of the use of linguistic means in order to direct influence on the addressee. According to N.D. Arutyunova and E.V. Paducheva, there is a gradual blurring of the boundaries between linguistics and related disciplines – psychology, sociology and ethnography. In this regard, the relations of the sections of the science of language – semantics and stylistics – are undergoing changes [5].

In modern linguistics, there are two approaches to the study of language in a pragmatic aspect. Representatives of the first approach (J. Searle, K.Ya. Segal, Ye.Ye. Anisimova) investigate the pragmatic potential of linguistic units on the border of semantics and pragmatics, learning language meanings, believing the latter part of the theory of action (J. Searle, J. Leech), or in philosophy of language (J. Austin and J. Searle), etc.

Supporters of the second approach (E.S. Aznaurova, E.G. Belyaevskaya, Yu.V. Korshunov, V.I. Zabolotkina, I.M. Kobozeva) investigate the interaction in the speech process: a variant of the theory of speech activity (I.M. Kobozeva) or part of the meaning (V.I. Zabolotkina). It should be borne in mind that the second direction traditionally intersects with the theory of speech acts of J. Austin. The main unit under study is a "speech act", a certain unit of speech. The speech act contains an illocutionary component, that is, it reflects the intention of the speaker. According to the theory of speech acts, "the minimum unit of human communication is not a sentence or another expression, but an action (the commission of certain acts), such as a *statement, question, order, description, explanation, apology, gratitude, congratulations*, etc." [7, p. 45].

Many researchers consider speech acts, correlating them simultaneously with both pragmatics and semantics. Often the pragmatic component is equated with the connotative component. For example, L.A. Novikov insists on the need to define a pragmatic component, which is formed due to the speaker's direct attitude to the subject. In such cases, an evaluative connotation is involved. According to L.A. Novikov, the essence of pragmatics is in evaluation. The pragmatic aspect of meaning (pragmatic

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meaning as a meaningful substance) is, in lexical semantics, a specific linguistic expression of the evaluation of the evaluative emotional, stylistically characterizing component of lexical meaning denoted with the help of labeled units.

L.A. Novikov considers the pragmatic meaning (or the pragmatic aspect of lexical meaning) as the attitude of speakers to the signs used and the corresponding effect of signs on people fixed in language practice [8, pp. 99-101].

At the same time, researchers such as V.I. Zobotkina, E.G. Belyaevskaya, expand the pragmatics of the unit by adding extralinguistic features to it. V.I. Zobotkina interprets pragmatics as part of the meaning, distinguishing semantic and pragmatic parts in the meaning of the word, considering that the pragmatics of the word correlates with factors of two different orders – external and internal. In the aspect of pragmatics proper, the external conditions of the functioning of the word are studied, and in the aspect of internal pragmatics, the pragmatic components of the word encoding the main parameters of the contexts of its use are studied [9, p. 87; 10, p. 41-43].

Different pragmatic components can be combined in one word. At the same time, the relationship between them can be either optional or obligatory. So, if there is an evaluative component in the pragmatic spectrum of a word, it often also assumes the presence of a component of informal tonality and symmetrical role relations. The presence of an informal tonality component indicates the possible presence of gender, age, ethnicity in the meaning of the word. Conversely, the presence of components in a word that prescribe restrictions on the use of this word by the parameter of gender, age, ethnicity, suggests the presence of a marker of unofficial tonality.

The essence of the pragmatics of a new word lies in its dynamic nature. As it is conventionalized, there can occur changes in the composition of pragmatic components and may occur in the future [11, p. 87].

In the light of the consideration of new units in the media in the pragmalinguistic aspect, it is advisable to mention the theory of implicatures suggested by P. Gries, which explores the principles of interaction of communicants and the rules for the use of these units [12].

Implicature is understood as a non-literal part of the meaning of the text when the information is presented in a hidden, implicit form. A certain conclusion is understood, which is derived on the basis of background knowledge. According to P. Grice, the full meaning of the text consists of “what is said” and “what was meant”. That is, the speaker reports much more than the literal meaning of a phrase or a whole sentence. At the same time, a whole complex of contextual and connotative messages, called implicatures, is transmitted. Implicatures are considered as conversational or communicative, as well as conventional. Conversational (communicative), implicatures are connected with the linguistic content of the utterance only indirectly. These include metaphorical interpretation, indirect speech acts, anaphoric reference, statement of tautologies and contradictions.

Conventional, as their name implies, come from the usual meaning of the words used. The features of non-conventional implicatures are often illustrated in metaphorical and ironic statements.

A metaphorical utterance is regarded by P. Grice as an indirect speech act expressed allegorically using comparisons and transfer of characteristics of subjects. The process of recognizing metaphorical utterances happen through taking into account the extralinguistic factors. A metaphorical utterance carries a double meaning, since it contains both an explicature and an implicature. There is a correlation between what is said and what is meant. Thus, the speaker and the listener must have a common context and background knowledge.

The study of the metaphor problem in the pragmatic aspect is presented in the works of J. Searle, P. Grice, D. Vanderveken, S.V. Ageev, V.V. Yuneev, O.G. Ananchenko, A.A. Saifa, S.B. Tsaloeva (2019), etc.

Statements of an ironic nature are of particular interest to pragmatists. Irony, as a rule, refers to an act of speech that carries the exact opposite of the literal meaning. When analyzing ironic statements, it is necessary to keep in mind the intentional violation of the Quality Postulate of the Principle of Cooperation by the speaker [12, p. 230], as in the case of metaphorical statements, taking into account the context as well. At the same time, the implicature and explicature interact at the level of a joke, mockery, and sarcasm. Thus, conversational implicatures are realized in the form of metaphorical and ironic statements.

The key issue for linguopragmatics is the problem of connotation, including additional or background information that is not explicitly reflected in the text.

A linguistic unit that has both a denotation and a signification reflects in its meaning the object that it calls. In this regard, the pragmatic meaning of the word stands apart, since it carries the information that the speaker has put into it. The content of the unit is characterized by an extra-linguistic situation, the context existing at the moment of communication. Researchers call the connotative component as part of the pragmatic meaning.

In his research I.E. Gerasimenko sees the main cause of the connotation in the process of secondary nomination [13]. Based on the description of the connotative semantics of the word, I.E. Gerasimenko showed the process of formation of a new meaning in nominative units in the conditions of a certain linguistic and cultural community and the existing connection between connotation as a special complex component of meaning and subtext having a similar nature. E.I. Gerasimenko believes that the process of secondary nomination is the main factor influencing the formation of connotations (the nature of a linguistic sign, its polyfunctionality), in which, under the influence of diverse linguistic and extralinguistic factors (including the influence of the speaker's personality), language units acquire referential connotations having emotional-figurative and emotional-evaluative

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components. Currently, scientists consider several types of connotative component, noting the importance of the participation of connotations in the formation of new meanings of words: rational and emotional [13, p. 25].

The performance of the nominative function remains an important task of new lexical units. However, within the framework of pragmatics, it should be noted that this function is the main one only in texts of a purely informative nature.

In newspaper articles, where the position of the author, editor and their attitude to the information event is more evident, the nominative function is on the background. This is because often new words are initially stylistically labeled, that is, they can realize other pragmatic goals. At the same time, the function of attracting the addressee's attention is of particular importance, which is also used to highlight the features of various groups of people [14].

The media are the main channel of communication in society and the formation of public opinion, therefore, effective impact is associated with taking into account the perception of information by a particular audience. In order to retain their target audience and carry out their activities, the media take into account the needs, motives, values and attitudes of the addressees. New words are the lexical means that keep the audience waiting for new content issued by newspapers, more precisely, their electronic versions. Since the functional and stylistic aspect of the new units is expressed quite clearly, the pragmatic function is manifested in order to convey some information to attract attention.

Very often, due to the fact that new units initially have a stylistic load associated with background knowledge, units become precedent phenomena. As Yu.V. Vedeneva notes, "precedent phenomena form the basis of background knowledge of communicants" [15, p. 37]. Often, precedent phenomena appear in those areas where there is a public demand for solving social problems and correlate with whole intellectual and emotional blocks. Y.N. Karaulov proposed the term "precedent text" [16, pp. 105-123].

Subsequently, with the development of science, there arose so-called "fellow terms" [17, p. 83], such as "precedent situation", "precedent name", "precedent statement", "precedent text". Currently, linguists have come to another broad interpretation of the term with the definition of "precedent" – "precedent world".

The pragmatic function of precedent phenomena is connected with the problem of their perception by their recipients within the framework of the "mine-not mine" opposition, since precedent phenomena affect the deep associations of addressees. Precedent phenomena are a powerful means of influence, and often manipulations determine a set of values and characterize the way of life, while transmitting emotional and evaluative information to readers.

One of the significant pragmatic functions of new words in newspapers is the function of euphemization. At the beginning of the XXI century, political correctness is one of the central phenomena in newspaper material. S.G. Ter-Minasova believes that the political correctness of language is expressed in the desire to find new ways of linguistic expression instead of those that hurt the feelings and dignity of an individual, infringe on his/her human rights by habitual linguistic straightforwardness in relation to race and gender, age, health status, social status, appearance, etc. [18, p. 216]. As noted by O.G. Chuprina, "political correctness, from a linguistic point of view, is a particular manifestation of euphemism, because it is based on the replacement of words and expressions, which are perceived by the society as abusive and unacceptable within major social groups, linguistic units that do not cause a negative or discriminatory treatment towards the indicated subject" [19, p. 76].

Researchers have sufficiently studied the issue of pragmatics of euphemisms. For example, in American newspapers they are represented by units that are used instead of names of frightening or unpleasant phenomena, events, objects and processes that semantically acquire fuzzy and implicit characteristics.

A euphemism is a word or expression replacing another word or expression that appears to the speaker undesirable in linguocultural or social terms (*elderly* instead of *old*, *au pair* instead of *housekeeper*, *stagnation* instead of *standstill*) <=> dysphemism [20].

Euphemisms, including euphemisms-phrases, are characteristic of newspaper texts and, with their complex structure, mask the real problematic essence of any phenomena denoting the specifics of the activities of some state institutions. Euphemisms are often used to overcome gender discrimination and strengthen the social position of gender minorities.

As V.N. Yartseva notes [21], "euphemistic units are used for the purpose of "distorting or masking the true essence of the signified". Speaking about the newspaper-journalistic style, we can conclude that the main role of euphemistic units in such texts is not so much in softening as in masking reality and manipulating the mass audience.

Considering the pragmatics of euphemisms, it is worthy to take into account the conclusions of N.A. Vanyushina, which are as follows:

- euphemistic units in the media are one of the ways to camouflage reality and perform the function of manipulating readers' consciousness;
- metaphor is one of the ways to form euphemisms;
- euphemistic units are directly involved in the formation of a certain evaluative opinion, provided in advance by the addressee [22, p. 7-11].

To indicate the connection between euphemism and pragmatics, we will give the definition of euphemism formulated by M.L. Kovshova, in which euphemism is understood as a linguistic unit that replaces undesirable, in the opinion of the speaker, or

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rude expressions that would violate the norms of etiquette and make a communicative act unsuccessful [23, p. 7]. It should be borne in mind that there is an unspoken, but explicit euphemistic collusion of the addressee and the sender, in which the first one consciously encodes the message, and the second consciously decodes [23, p. 44]. Decoding of information often takes place taking into account the current context, general background knowledge.

The euphemism assumes an implicational defined for the audience, through which the illocutionary and perlocutionary components of the utterance are realized. At the same time, pragmatic information is not nominatively expressed, but is clearly implied.

In euphemisms, the illocutionary component is realized by consciously softening a harsh utterance that the speaker sees as unacceptable, and the perlocutionary one is realized through the effect of emotional or ideological rapprochement with the interlocutor.

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CONCLUSION

We suggest the following as the result of the analysis of various approaches of linguists to the study of language in a pragmatic aspect:

- definition of the main task of pragmatics, which consists in establishing the patterns of the use of linguistic means for the purpose of directed influence on the addressee;
- disclosure of the pragmatic function of lexical units in newspaper texts and identification of their special role in the speech of the speaker and the perceiver: the pragmatic component is formed from the speaker's direct relationship to the subject with the use of evaluative connotation (L.A. Novikov);
- consideration of linguistic units in the media in the pragmlinguistic aspect predetermined the creation of the theory of implicatures for the study of the principles of interaction of communicants (P. Grice);
- the main role of euphemistic units is to mask the real problematic essence of any phenomena and deliberately soften a harsh statement that the speaker sees as unacceptable.

As can be seen from the discussions above, the problem of identifying the pragmatic function of lexical units has been and remains an urgent and promising topic for linguists-researchers.

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