Pragmatic Possibilities of Lexis in Modern Linguistics

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Abstract: The article analyzes the features of linguistic pragmatics. The author explores how lexical pragmatics is revealed when comparing words of different functional and stylistic layers. The article analyzes the pragmatic possibilities of vocabulary at the sentence level in the context of general modality. The author examines the modal characteristics of the utterance as a result of the interaction of various modal meanings. The study reveals that the pragmatic features of communication units carry socially meaningful information.

Keywords: pragmatics, pragmatics of the word, signs of pragmatics, pragmatic possibilities of lexis, pragmatic individualization, modal meanings.

Pragmatics covers the semiotic and linguistic field, where "the functioning of linguistic signs in speech is studied" [N.D. Arutyunova 1990: 389]. Despite the fact that research in this area has a tendency to intensify and expand the range of problems, it has still not acquired any sufficiently defined contours and does not fully and systematically convey "the features of the conceptual approach to the object under study" [S.T. Zolyan 2009: 3].

Thus, according to the already established tradition, for example, linguistic pragmatics "includes a set of issues related to the speaking subject, the addressee, their interaction in communication, the communication situation" [N.D. Arutyunova 1990: 390].

The diversity of aspects considered in this case is evidenced by the special terminology that has been formed by now, covering the interpretation from a pragmatic perspective of information, competence, reference, presupposition, situation, stylistics, functions of language and coordinates of actualization of language at various levels.

At the same time, in any case, "pragmatic content reflects the correlation of the reflected fact with a given speech act and its components – participants in communication, time and place of the speech act; it includes expressive ("emotional", "affective"), appellative ("conative"), social ("stylistic"), deictic ("indexical"), informative ("logical"), factual, metalinguistic and aesthetic ("poetic") layers of information" [T.V. Bulygina, S.A. Krylov 1990: 385-386].

In connection with the above, the pragmatics of the word is of interest. The existence of the category of "pragmatics of the word" is entirely legitimate, despite the habit of classifying pragmatics as "sentence-text" categories.

Therefore, it would be fair to object to the definition of the true semantic content of a word as a characteristic that appears only in speech, since the modification of the meaning of a word occurs only on the basis of socially determined stable semantics, i.e., which is common to all native speakers [S. Eggins 2004: 212].

Let us consider some approaches to identifying signs of pragmatism in the lexical content of words of various categories, based on the following linguo-philosophical generalization: "Each individual reflects the surrounding world of objects in his consciousness, passing it through the prism of personal experience" [T.A. Bushuy 2021: 40].

"But this personal becomes public when a person enters into relationships with other people. And in all forms of relationships with the surrounding world, language plays a huge role. The entire spiritual life

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of a person is reflected in language; it is in it that the experience of mankind is accumulated and passed on from generation to generation" [T.A. Bushuy 2022: 7].

Thus, when defining a negative evaluative component in the semantic structure of a word, it is noted that the presence of this component is indicated not by the markedness of the word, but by its definition (cp. in German *lügen* "to lie"; *stehlen* "to steal" [T.A. Bushuy 2023: 10]), the negative evaluativeness forms the core, the most significant seme. The lower on the axiological scale the actions and features of objects, called pejorative, the greater the number of synonyms it has.

The presence of synonyms in the literary language and common usage are mandatory features of pejorative, their stylistic polyfunctionality and historical variability are also noted.

If we turn to the interpretation of opposite evaluative components in the semantics of one word, it becomes obvious that the evaluative opposition in the semantics of designators arises:

1) as a consequence of a conceptual shift in the original meaning, which entails a change in the evaluative component (like D+positiv → D+super+negativ: *ein frommer Eifer* "quiet zeal" [T. Bushuy, K. Khayrullaev 2022: 19]);

2) as a consequence of the development of two evaluatively opposite meanings based on one, evaluatively neutral one (like D → D+positiv and D+negative: *eine alte Wahrheit* "an old truth"; *ein alter Witz* "an old wit").

Moreover, evaluatively conditioned opposites in the meaning of designators exist both at the level of language and at the level of speech.

The analysis of pejorative word formation (i.e. possessing a negative expressive-emotional-evaluative connotation) in the functional-stylistic aspect allows us to note the presence in the language of morphemes and stems that regularly form derivative words with a "critical" meaning – words are created according to typological models that have a certain degree of generalization. The meaning of the negative feature of the denotate is formed and recorded as follows:

1) it can be inherited from the base (*Feigling* "coward");

2) it is created due to the metaphorical semantics of the morpheme or serial component (*Boulevardblatt* "tabloid newspaper", *Schmutzliteratur* "waste paper"); etc.

Derivative pejoratives that do not record a negative feature are speech, occasional assessments.

Based on the study of the stylistic aspects of melioration (covering vocabulary with a positive expressive-emotional-evaluative coloring), two types of melioration substitutions related to high style can be distinguished:

1) the phenomenon of euphemization – a taboo or non-prestigious word is replaced by another, identical in the axiological sense, but distinguished by a higher stylistic coloring (*Tod* "death" – *Ableben* "end");

2) the phenomenon of melioration itself – a word neutral in terms of evaluative and stylistics is replaced by a lexeme related to a higher style, which is due to considerations of prestige and linguistic snobbery.

Members of such oppositions can also differ in shades of meaning and distribution.

Lexical pragmatics is also revealed when comparing words from different functional-stylistic layers. For example, a comparison of colloquial and journalistic lexis shows that colloquial units in the newspaper style clearly embody the function of influence.

The specificity of these nominations arises as a result of: journalistic rethinking (*die Maulkorbpolitik* "bridle"); journalistic word-formation modifications (*das Kriegsgeschwätz* "military hype").

Most of the newly formed units are characterized by regional significance. Moreover, word composition is the main type of formation of these units. They necessarily contain a journalistic

marker and a colloquially colored component, the frequency of which is determined by the degree of its deviation from the norm.

The pragmatic possibilities of lexis can also be traced at the sentence level in the context of general modality. Here, the status of the subject of the sentence is considered as the main criterion of the category of modality. The choice of this criterion is determined by the role that the opposition of "I" – "not-I" plays in the development of human self-awareness.

Moreover, such an analysis does not distinguish between the concepts of objective and subjective modality, since "the discreteness of modal objects (meanings) is largely conditional; they clearly demonstrate the unity of discreteness and indivisibility, which philosophy considers one of the main properties of matter" [E.V. Miloserdova: 1991: 5]. Hence, any modal relation is the relation of a specific subject (speaker) to the content of the utterance. This is the reason that modality as a category is entirely permeated with pragmatics.

The modal characteristic of an utterance is considered as a result of the interaction of the following modal meanings:

1) the modality of the communicative type of the sentence;

2) the modality of the predicate, i.e. the expression of the relationship of an action (state, feature, etc.) to reality from the point of view of the speaker, expressed by the mood of the predicate verb;

3) the characteristics of a sentence in terms of its affirmativeness/negativity;

4) the meanings of various shades of doubt, confidence, assumption, etc. (traditionally united by the concept of "subjective modality");

5) the modal meanings arising between the subject of the sentence and the action (the meanings of possibility, desirability, necessity, etc.).

In this case, E. V. Miloserdova [1991: 42], proceeding from the fact that "the starting point of the development of language was the phase of complete fusion of linguistic and extralinguistic means, the phase of indivisibility of ideas", considers the semantic-grammatical form of the imperative to be especially significant in the system of modal relations. Tracing the history of the development of this system in the German language, E. V. Miloserdova names the following stages:

1) the emergence of modal words,

2) the development of a secondary function in modal verbs and

3) the emergence of the meaning of assumption in futurum I and II.

In the Early Modern High German period these linguistic forms were further developed, which continues intensively at the present time. It is noted that this coincided with the heyday of the Middle Ages, which opened up new facets of the problem of the "I" and the concept of personality.

The language seemed to have recorded the individual's final rejection of a monopolistic view of the world with the above-mentioned forms: the development of the modality system of the German language followed the path of

1) differentiation in the expression of modal meanings;

2) intensive use of particles as a class of words (which helps to include the unspoken in speech) and

3) expanding transposition of communicative types of sentences.

Thus, an interrogative sentence can perform an incentive function (*Können Sie mir Salz reichen?* "Could you pass me the salt") and an affirmative one (*Bin ich ein Feigling? – Ich bin kein Feigling.* – "Am I a coward?" – "I am not a coward").

The main components of the modal semantics of an utterance are:

1) the categories of mood and time (it is not important how these categories are considered: as one conjugated grammatical category or as two independent ones; the deep connection of temporal and modal meanings is fundamentally important);

2) modal verbs as one of the components of the semantics of the whole;

3) the communicative type of sentence;

4) modal words;

5) modal particles.

For linguopragmatics, the semantics of moods is important here (for example, in German). Moreover, it is advisable to consider the meaning of indicative sentences not as a fact obvious to communicants, but as an expression of a certain modal attitude of the speaker to the situation he observes (surprise, censure, etc.).

The subjunctive, as a younger form of mood, exhibits greater variability in use than the indicative, greater dependence on the pragmatic situation, on the one hand, and greater subjectivity, on the other. Under the influence of the pragmatic factor [St. C. Levinson 2000: 97], the semantics of verbs that are most frequently used in the subjunctive forms also begins to transform. For example, these are the forms *ich möchte* and *ich hätte gern* "I would like", which in modern German are already semantically different from the forms *ich mag* "I love, I prefer" and *ich habe gern* "I love".

In the semantics of a narrative sentence, two planes are distinguished:

1) the plane of information: grammatical categories in a narrative sentence retain their primary functions (the preterite reports a fact in the past, and the futuroum – in the future);

2) the plane of communication: the use of a narrative sentence is justified only under the following conditions:

a) the novelty of what is reported for the listener;

b) the modal assessment of the situation by the speaker.

In this way, the sentence's relation to reality is conveyed, which is fully explainable from the standpoint of the theory of predicativity, which distinguishes the sentence (as a communicative unit) from nominative units (words and phrases).

V. V. Vinogradov [1975: 227] defines predicativity as "the relation of the expressed content to reality, grammatically expressed in the categories (syntactic, and not only morphological) of modality (mood), tense and person", as "the relation of the expressed content to reality, manifested in the totality of such grammatical categories that determine and establish the nature of the sentence as the basic and at the same time primary grammatically organized unit of speech communication, expressing the speaker's attitude to reality and embodying a relatively complete thought" [1975: 264].

And further V. V. Vinogradov [1975: 268] correlates modality (as a particular category) with predicativity [as a general category] as follows: "The relationship of the message contained in the sentence to reality is, first of all, a modal relationship."

Moreover, modality, in his opinion, is often presented as a continuation and detailing of predicativity: "Apparently, the most direct, constant and immediate expression of the category of predicativity is the modality of the sentence. If predicativity expresses the general relation of speech to reality or the correlation of speech with reality…, then the category of modality dissects and differentiates this general function of the sentence, designating the specific quality of the relationship to reality – on the part of the speaker" [1975: 269].

A special role is given here to the semantics of modal words (*vielleicht* "maybe", *wahrscheinlich* "probably", *wohl* "apparently", etc.). Their main specificity is that "they do not simply represent

hidden sentences, but that the subject of these sentences will always be only the first person singular, i.e. the speaker" [E.V. Miloserdova 1991: 108].

Thus, autocentricity is already inherent in the semantics of modal words. "Being included in a sentence whose subject is another first person singular pronoun, modal words create not only a polypredicative, but also a polysubjective structure" [E.V. Miloserdova 1991: 109]: Ramlow war ja damals wahrscheinlich noch nicht volljährig – Ich (der Sprecher) vermute, dass Ramlow damals noch nicht volljährig war "Ramlov was still a minor at the time – I (the speaker) assume that Ramlov was still a minor at the time".

In statements with a subject – the speaker, the semantic structure becomes more complex, since the subject finds himself in the position of an observer in relation to himself, i.e., "I" turns into a reflective "I".

Here, modal particles (*ja, doch* "after all", etc.) are not simply lexemes with weakened semantics, but contain much more important information that goes beyond the semantics of the sentence, and merges with the "background knowledge" of the communicants, i.e., pragmatic presupposition [A.L. Streadbeck 2008: 329].

Pragmatic individualization of a linguistic unit is also found in the inter-level perspective. For example, this is the expression of the semantics of interpersonal actions by means of periphrastic causatives (i.e. causative constructions in which causation is expressed by a combination of words) and lexical causatives (i.e. causatives expressed by one lexical unit) as semantically and syntactically different units.

Depending on the degree of influence of the causative agent on the state or action (starting with uncontrolled, mediated causation), a group of causative verbs in periphrastic causatives is subject to identification: verbs of uncontrolled causation (like *cause* "to cause"), direct controlled causation and mediated control causation (like the English *have* in the modal meaning) – for example: I caused her to lose her balance (by losing my balance and tripping her) – "Because of me, she lost her balance (since I lost my balance, and she tripped over me)". I made her lose her balance (by deliberately rushing over and tripping her). I had her lose her balance (by sending John over to trip her).

Of course, the greatest complexity of the pragmatism of the word is in the complexity of inter-level relationships.

For example, this is the pragmatic aspect of the utterance in constructions with thematic speech, where in the object position with the verbs of speech there are subordinate clauses, words and phrases that convey the theme of someone else's utterance. Cp.: The related what happened at judge's chamber [A.V. Faleeva 2022: 70].

Since, when conveying someone else's utterance, its pragmatic aspect (purposefulness, illocutionary force, perlocutionary effect, etc.] is expressed in verbs of speech, here we should first of all highlight verbs of information (*acknowledge, announce, say, speak,* etc.), performative-evaluative [*accuse, apology, reject,* etc.] and verbs of motivation [*beg, advise, insist,* etc.].

Especially frequent are non-specialized verbs of information: *say, talk, tell*. In statements with thematic speech (with a polypredicative phrase), performative-evaluative verbs are most commonly used. The pragmatic aspect of the statement is more diversely manifested in thematic speech constructions, where a non-objective noun is played up. They are combined with all types of speech verbs. Cp.: They argued about property [A.V. Faleeva 2023: 540].

An examination of the semantic aspects of modality allows us to note that the semantics of an utterance presents both the objective properties of a situation and its subjective perception by the speaker. At the same time, the selection of a linguistic form for expressing this situation is dictated at the syntactic level not by the free will of the speaker, but by strict rules of compatibility of linguistic signs.

In general, the pragmatic features of communication units carry socially meaningful information (= communicative meaning). This task is solved on the basis of the communicative approach to language.

In this way, the relationship between the semantics and structure of communicatively oriented units is revealed. The goal of communication is to influence communication partners, which is defined as such a sphere of human activity where the ontological unity of language and text is revealed.

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