Original Article

Speech Act of Approval/Disapproval in the Framework of Dialogical Discourse

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Abstract

Discourse, as a linguistic concept, has been the object of scientific discussions for many decades. His influence on the general reading of a text is unconditional. It is of interest for us from the point of view of a dialogue. Dialogic communication in mass media can exist both in the form of communication directly within real time, and through the means of support, to which we refer letters, messages, addresses, and so on. In this case, the time factor often fades into the background, since the Nth period of time can take place between an act of speech and a respondent's utterance of an addressee: for example, a politician addressing the potential voters will be able to receive an answer only at the time of vote counting, and this can also happen on a next day, and after a year, depending on the situation. In the dialogical discourse, an addressee of a message and an addresser change places constantly, in other words, a dialogue is characterized by a change in the role of communicants. The interaction of speech process participants ensures the creation of a single, an orderly and an integral text. As the part of our study, we tried to consider all these features of dialogical discourse in mass media, analyzing the acts of approval/disapproval and using the examples of selected material.

Key words: Verbal acts of approval, Disapproval, Intention, Mass media, Context, functional features of speech acts, Positive assessment, Pragmatics, Classification, Discourse, Dialogue

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of modern science, the communication process is of scientific interest for a wide range of researchers, the problems of speech acts are the subject of such discipline study as linguistics, pragmatics, psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. In 50-60-ies of the last century, the issues of verbal communication were limited to the study of spoken language problems. But the rapid development of pragmatic linguistics has given a new impetus and the problems of a communication act received a new interpretation. Consequently, the speech itself and communication, as a communication process, began to be viewed from a new perspective. Scientists drew attention to the factors that influence a speech act, revealed the intent of an addressee, appealed to the perlocutive effect, which evokes a concrete utterance from an addressee, started to consider the interpreting capabilities of an addressee, who acted already as an active participant of the speech process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In connection with the forced appeal to the theory of speech acts, the issues of their classification, we have reconsidered some of the provisions developed in the works of domestic and foreign researchers previously. The main problem of speech act classification is a diverse approach to the issue of the main classification criterion selection. We tried to identify the most comprehensive studies on the basis of which we built our own version of classification.

In order to solve the abovementioned tasks, we turned to the following methods of scientific research: theoretical method; descriptive method, including the methods of material selection, processing and interpretation; empirical method; the method of component analysis; the method of contextual and discursive analysis. The material of the study was an article published in 2017.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In 1960-ies and 1970-ies discourse was determined as an interrelated sequence of speech acts or sentences. For example, the works by V.A. Zvegintsev state that discourse is represented by two or more sentences that are in mutual semantic dependence [Zvegintsev 1976]. As we see, according to V.A. Zvegintsev's opinion, text and discourse are identical concepts. From the point of view of text linguistics, a text is defined as "any fragment of coherent speech, ranging from a simple utterance to a whole novel" (Rahmankulova 1976) or "a sequence of utterances with different objective content and subjective characteristics (but not necessarily) cemented by metatext relations" [Shmeleva 1988].

E. Benveniste's statement, who paid attention to a discourse nature, to its connection with a communicative act, contrasted the discourse with the system represented by the sentence: ". we leave the domain of language as a system of signs and enter another world, the world of language as an instrument of communication, the expression of which is discourse" [Benveniste 1974].

Linguistic pragmatics is addressed to the conditions of language use by the participants of speech acts, i.e. a language as a tool of communicants becomes the main subject of research [Bogdanov 1984]. There is a number of conditions that affect the course of a communicative act, we refer to them the factor of time and space, the level of communicant preparation, their goals, cultural baggage, the social status of each, psychological and biological characteristics, laws and norms of the society speech behavior to which communicants relate, and discourse of speech, in fact. According to Yu.S. Stepanov, the category of a subject is the central category of modern pragmatics [Stepanov 1981]. Therefore, we want to consider a discourse not only from the point of view of an addressee, but also as the factor influencing an addresser.

Dialogue communication within mass media can be carried out both in the form of direct communication in real time, and through auxiliary communication means, such as letters, messages, addresses, etc. In the second case, the time factor becomes a minor one, since the N-th amount of time can take place between an act of speech and a response. In the dialogical discourse, an addressee of a message and the addresser change places constantly, i.e. a dialogue is characterized by the change of communicant roles. The interaction of speech process participants ensures the creation of a single, orderly and an integral text. It is interesting that if a dialogic communication is transmitted through the media, then a dual targeting is created, which we can show in the following way:

Main Communicative Act
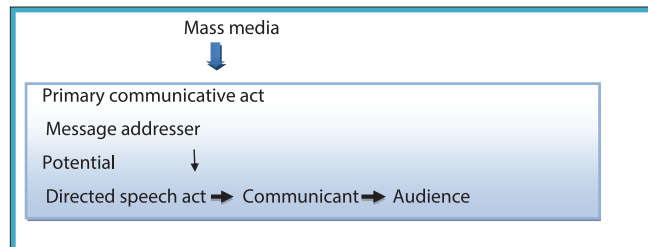
The first targeting is created on the basis of the primary communicative act that arises between direct participants of a dialogue, let's call them speakers, and the second one is created between a publication and its potential reader. The goals of addressees can vary depending on a discourse. Not always the intention of primary communication addressee coincides with the intention of the main communicative act addressee. In particular, the verbal acts of approval/disapproval can radically change their emotional and evaluative orientation, since these two communicative acts do not always belong to the same discourse. Thus, a speech act of approval, functioning in the framework of primary communication, can be an act of disapproval in the secondary one, etc.

Nowadays, researchers pay much attention to the first communicator's speech activity initiation, or to the response of the second one in the works devoted to the analysis of communication. We believe, analyzing the acts of approval/disapproval in mass media, that it is necessary to pay attention to utterances-stimuli and to utterances-reactions, since they are in a close interconnection, forming an inseparable dialogic connection (unity) or an "interactive unit (a simple interaction), which includes one speech move by each communicant" in the process of communicant speech activity [Suslonova 2004: 145].

A dialogue in mass media forms something more complex than just a question-and-answer structure. Due to the constant change of a message addressee and a message addresser, a special atmosphere is created, characterized by a constant dynamics and thus creating a whole. Each of act participants works on the "creation" of an act, since the derivation of meaning requires not only the implementation of a speech act by an addresser, but also the interpretation of its meaning by an addressee. That is speech communication is the interaction at the level of a deduced meaning, the world of a speaker and a hearer exists separately from each other. There is no identity between them and it can't exist. According to V.Z. Demyankov, the difference between understanding and a simple perception of signs is expressed [Demyankov 1983: 62]. An addressee of a message, performing a certain speech act, creates a certain construction, according to which an addressee should interpret speech. Thus, it turns out that a speaker calculates

listener's moves initially, trying to create the most convenient structure for perception that meets the requirements of intention. Before an act is reproduced, an addressee carries out a preliminary act, interprets it, evaluates it, and then realizes it at the level of a thinking space.

Thus, during the implementation of a speech act, an addressee must take into account the ability to understand an addressee, his preparedness, only after a statement is developed, an addresser is required to think up (in the case of indirect speech acts) and to interpret the speech of a communicant. The following construction is created:
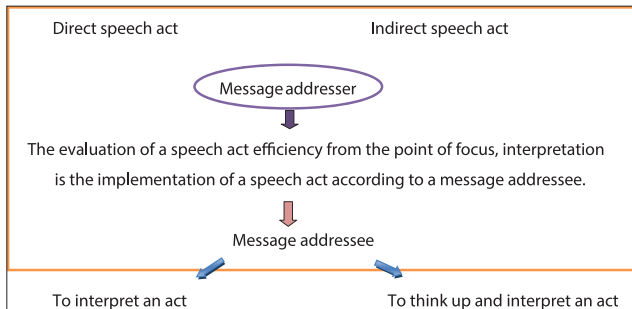

According to E.V. Miloserdova there are several kinds of interpretations, highly subjective in nature: first of all a speaker evaluates a concrete situation, wants to influence a listener as effectively as possible, and initially interprets a prepared speech act in his mind, approaching it under a certain foreshortening and using his purely individual meanings, which will be "interpreted" by an addressee in the future.

Secondly, an addressee, reading a statement addressed to him, relies on his own situational and encyclopedic knowledge, "his presuppositions and connotations, that is, interprets it in accordance with his inner world" [Miloserdova 2001: 39].

Here are some examples from S. Lavrov's interview to the National Interest magazine, which was published on March 29, 2017 on the website of Pravda.

P. Saunders and S. Lavrov performed a number of communicative acts that create a dialogue, suggest a certain discourse. P. Saunders aims to identify an attitude of the Russian Foreign Minister to the actions and the intentions of new US ruling forces. The first utterance by Saunders does not carry an act of questioning. It is built entirely on representatives. The author of the act reports that he begins to ask a question, then another representative act takes place that the media reports about an alleged meeting between S. Lavrov and US Secretary of State R. Tillerson. In fact, P. Saunders aimed to implement an act of an indirect question, accordingly we believe that he wanted Lavrov to interpret the statement as an act of the question and began to report about the forthcoming meeting in details. S. Lavrov reacted in the following way: "I heard about this". That is, it was an ordinary representative, which had no information value for P. Saunders. Lavrov's act is an example of a great difference between the thinking of an addressee and an addresser. Given the experience of his behavior during other interviews, the nature and individual characteristics of RF Minister of Foreign Affairs, we believe that the illocutionary goal of the communicant was understood by him, but the wide possibilities of interpretation provided him the opportunity not to answer the communicant's indirect question. Thus, in the response, we see not just an attempt to get away from an answer, but also an act of the opposite side act evaluation. Lavrov did not approve Saunders actions, which relied on unreliable information taken from unknown sources. An act of latent disapproval was recognized and interpreted by an addressee correctly, so his next question is the response to Lavrov's act. In this case Saunders acts both as an addressee and an addresser at the same time. His reaction to Lavrov's answer defines him as an addressee, from whom a reply is required, and his question, which carries a new illocutionary goal, puts him on the position of an addressee. P. Saunders performs a specific act of question, aimed at S. Lavrov's attitude revealing, which is a modified form of the first indirect question. That is the same question is posed in fact, a communicative failure takes place in the first case: an addresser does not achieve the goals, the answer is received, but it does not meet the requirements of an addresser, does not have an estimate, and therefore does not have information value. Further, analyzing the communicant's expressions, P. Saunders formulates his thought again, which he exercises in the form of a question act. We believe that the reformulation of an issue is P. Saunders' reaction, which proves the communicative success of S. Lavrov's act. Thus, Lavrov did not just make a response, but he created a new act, which has its own hidden goals (i.e. the disapproval of Saunders' actions). Thus, we can create the following dialogue scheme:
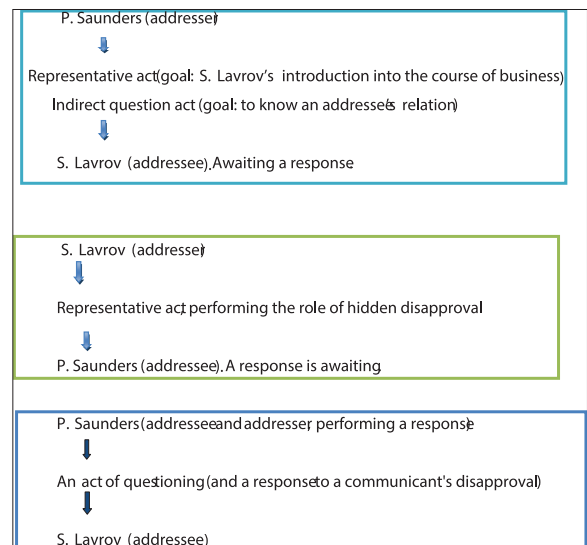
S. Lavrov's response to the question from Saunders assesses the actions by V. Putin and D. Trump as follows: "They had a good talk". The author of the speech act used the markers (the expression "good") in order to show his assessment. Here we do not see Lavrov's personal attitude, emotions, he assesses, or rather approves, the conversation and the way this conversation went from the position of an authorized person. Further, in order to consolidate his position, he resorts to representations, through which he communicates the situation to the communicant. This is the response, i.e. the answer to the question about the meeting, and an ancillary act that strengthens the positions of an approval act.

Further, the journalist proceeds to a hidden form of speech action: formally addressing S. Lavrov's response, he commits an act of disapproval in respect of the opponent's actions, which mentioned about the improvement of relations. That is it turns out that, using the expression "the improvement of relations" Lavrov made an act of past ties evaluation. P. Saunders asks a new question in the response to a negative assessment, which is aimed at a more detailed identification of S. Lavrov's position. The answer of the Minister of RF Foreign Policy has no longer an approval/a disapproval, but a personal negative attitude, dictated by the experience of meetings. The representative, in which the qualities of the "abnormal" relations are listed, is ended with the following expression: "so characteristic for Obama's administration". Lavrov gives his negative assessment through an act of a blame. A blame has its own direction: an object of a blame is a person who performs or committed the action, and an object is an action in the acts of disapproval. Assessing Obama's administration negatively, S. Lavrov carried out an act of condemnation, which is confirmed by the first part of the communicative construction, namely, by the enumeration of everything that should not have been committed. Within the framework of the following sentence (They were obsessed with their exclusivity, their leading role) another act of a blame takes place, which points to the growing emotional tension of a dialogue. Further, the actions of Obama administration are countered by the actions of the founders of America, in the course of which the actions of the latter are approved: "They never suggested that the US would impose its values on others, including by force", concealed under a representative. That is it seems that Lavrov simply informs how they acted, but in fact he commits an indirect speech act, whose illocutionary goal is to express an act of approval to those whom he opposes to Obama's administration. Further in order to strengthen his position, S. Lavrov gives the examples from personal experience, when Obama's administration acted "in an improper way." A negative evaluation, expressed in the form of a latent act of disapproval, the addressee of the message explains by the negative results of their actions: "what happened happened." Here, a reference is made to the crisis situation around Ukraine, whose culprits, according to S. Lavrov, are the advocates of Obama's policy. That is in the framework of a response utterance S. Lavrov commits the acts of approval, disapproval, accusations, reports on a certain state of affairs. They all have an individual illocutionary goal, but on the contextual aspect they all serve as a single intention, namely the expression of an act of disapproval, which in this case acts as a key act.

The author of a speech act sums up everything that was said, wishing the general conclusion: "It turns out that the people from Obama's team considered the situation as normal when they can dictate their conditions anywhere." Here we see not just a result, but a duplicated negative assessment - an act of implicit accusation against Obama's team. At the end of the utterance, we see an individual assessment by S. Lavrov, based on his emotions: "In my opinion, this is absolutely not normal." The key marker is the phrase "in my opinion." The author of the question, which provoked Lavrov to express personal emotions and personal experience, reached its goal, which means that the communicative act, which was unsuccessful during the first attempt, was finally carried out successfully.

CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, for the lack of opportunity to be in that environment and at the moment when this article reaches its potential reader (which are US residents), we can not fully and reliably interpret the entire text from the point of view of the publication. We can not reveal the extralinguistic factors, the factor of place and time, the factor of potential reader's attitude to S. Lavrov in particular and to Russia as a whole, so the illocutionary goal of the mass media remains unsolved for us. We can suggest that an addressee wants to acquaint a reader with S. Lavrov's point of view, but hidden intentions, which are often the main goals, can not be disclosed by us objectively and accurately. And our subjective assumptions do not have any scientific value.

SUMMARY

Thus, we see that within the framework of a dialogue, a response can act both as a reaction of an addressee to an addresser's act, and act as a new speech act aimed at a communicant and having certain goals. That is in the framework of a dialogical discourse, speech acts can manifest their polyfunctionality. Formal representations can be disclosed as directives, expressive-emotional and indirect speech acts in a context. Within a dialogue, a communicant

can perform several different communicative acts that have different illocutionary goals. But among these acts one should highlight a key one, which is the dominant. In order to achieve an illocutionary goal invested in this act a communicant resorts to other speech acts. In our case, this is the use of approval acts by S. Lavrov, the reports and the accusations to strengthen the position of a disapproval act by the actions of Obama's team.

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