



ANALYSIS OF SOME PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the phraseological intensifiers considered as means of categorization of language intensity which is defined as the amount of illocutionary force that the utterance has, degree of strength of verbal expression of the speakers' intentionality. The paper reveals the pragmatic peculiarities of the phraseological intensifiers in conversation in which they serve as an instrument used by individuals in order to attain certain communicative goals, to convey the speaker pragmatic meaning. In argumentation, which is believed to be a macro speech act, having the illocutionary point to convince a reasonable critic of the acceptability of the standpoint and to resolve differences of opinion, the phraseological intensifier is used to increase the illocutionary force of the argument for and against the expressed standpoint.

KEYWORDS

Phraseological unit, pragmatics, linguistics, method, translation, lexicology.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years one persistent research area has been on the effects of intense language. In the review of important language variables the scholars J.J. Bradac,

J.W. Bowers and J.A. Courtright [1] reported that three variations in language have been demonstrated to influence receivers' responses; among these is



language intensity. Studies have shown the positive effects of language intensity on attitude change in communication. Early research conducted on language intensity was based around the widely accepted definition offered by John Waite Bowers, he defined language intensity as «the quality of language which indicates the degree to which the speaker's attitude toward a concept deviates from neutrality» [2]. Similarly, Burgoon, Jones and Stewart defined language intensity as «language indicating degree and direction of distance from neutrality» [3].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In terms of language pragmatics on which our research is based by intensity we mean a feature of the language conveyed on the one hand through the properties of illocutionary force of the utterance and on the other hand through the speaker's intentionality. Correspondingly language intensity in the paper is defined as the amount of illocutionary force that the utterance has, degree of strength of verbal expression of the speakers' intentionality. The subject matter under consideration is the phraseological means of categorization of language intensity, namely a phraseological intensifier.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our attempt at analyzing the pragmatic and functional peculiarities of the phraseological intensifier in the discourse could be classified on the one hand as functional which views discourse as language in use, the way in which the language is used and which presupposes that speakers use phraseological intensifiers in such a way as to communicate messages that would manage to change the hearers mentally or emotionally, thus modifying their knowledge, convictions or feelings and on the other hand as a pragmatic, which focuses on the speaker pragmatic meaning at the level of utterances or speech acts

situated in a discourse. Correspondingly by the discourse we mean the sequence of speech acts, each speech act having the propositional content and the illocutionary force, defined by J.R. Searle and D. Vanderveken as the degree of the speaker's intention in producing that utterance [5].

When analyzing the pragmatic peculiarities of the phraseological intensifier in the discourse of casual conversation we have found out that it serves as an instrument used by individuals in order to attain certain communicative goals, or in other words it conveys the speaker pragmatic meaning. According to D. Schiffrin, pragmatic meaning concerns the speaker's communicative intention, the direct (not implied) «message the speaker intends to convey in uttering the sentence» [6].

It is important to notice that the phraseological intensifiers are the signals of the illocutionary force of the utterance only in the conditions of the dialogue complementation, by which we mean the speech action aimed at hearer's structural and semantic completing the speaker's initial phrase. Let's consider the example in which the phraseological intensifier establishes the illocutionary force of an assertion, i.e. it commits the speaker to something being the case,

1. «Does your tooth hurt?»

«Like the dickens».

«So does mine. Cool!»

«Cool here too» (COCA).

The question «Does your tooth hurt?» in the example under consideration is not an utterance yet, it is just a stimulus going from the speaker and making the hearer produce the utterance. The reply, consisting of the phraseological intensifier «Like the dickens» which means «furiously;; very much» doesn't have the semantic independence apart from the question. The



illocutionary act reply is very tightly constrained by the question that precedes it; only being mutually complementary the question becomes the utterance with the proposition of inquiry about some information and the answer obtains the illocutionary meaning of assertion. Let's consider the second example:

2. « ...and suppose I do Mary and I get permission to broaden the scope of the research, would you come to work with me?»

«Like a shot», she said. «Equal pay for equal work»
(COCA).

In accordance with J. Searle's theory [5] every complete sentence, even a one-word sentence has some indicator of illocutionary force; in the example under consideration the speech act, consisting of the phraseological intensifier «like a shot» (very fast), has the illocutionary force of a promise, i.e. it commits the speaker to doing something in the future, namely, equal work for equal pay. As we can see the reply, containing the phraseological intensifier, is very tightly constrained by the speech act with the illocutionary force of request that precedes it as in question and answer sequences shown in the casual conversation in the first example. In both examples the phraseological intensifiers establish the illocutionary force of the utterances, they elicit attention from the hearer in conversation and establish rapport between interlocutors, i.e. they convey the speaker pragmatic meaning.

Our research has revealed that in the macro speech act of argumentation the phraseological intensifier is used to increase the illocutionary force of the argument for and against the expressed standpoint. Let's consider the example of the argumentative discourse, taken from the play «Penelope» by W.S. Maugham in which the phraseological intensifiers serve as a means of

increasing the illocutionary force of the arguments that were put forward to defend the standpoint.

[Dickie comes in with a little medicine glass, filled with a milky fluid.]

Dickie (D): Here it is. (Take it → the standpoint is expressed implicitly)

Penelope (P): Oh, no, Dickie, I'd much rather not.

D.: Don't be silly, darling. This'll pull you together like anything. → an argument

P: No, I think I'd rather lie down on this sofa. [She lies down on a sofa.]

D: Let's put this rug over your feet. There. Now take this medicine. ... There ...

P: Oh, no, Dickie. I'll take it after you've gone. I really will. I promise you I'll take it.

D: Why on earth can't you take it now? P: Well, I hate making faces before you. D: But I've often seen you make faces.

P: Yes, at you. That's quite a different thing.

D: Now take it like a good girl. → a standpoint

It'll make you feel better like one o'clock. → an argument

P: After you've gone.

D: [With great determination.] I'm not going to stir from this room till you've taken it.

P: [Resigned.] Give it me. Hold my nose, Dickie. [She swallows it and makes a face.] Oh, I wish I'd never married you, Dickie (W.S. Maugham «Penelope»).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it should be stressed that messages employing phraseological intensifiers as a means of high- intensity language consistently produced greater



attitude change than similar messages using low-intensity language. It follows that in the discourse the phraseological intensifier is the very phraseological unit that has specific pragmatic orientation. Due to the intensity which is the leading seme in their semantics, they are widely used in different discourses to affect the interlocutors strongly.

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