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OTHERNESS AS A PARAMETER OF COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTION

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Abstract. The purpose of the study is to identify the linguistic means of expressing the implicit category of otherness as a communicative parameter. The main methods of research are: descriptive, taxonomic, contextual and discursive analyses. Linguistic means of alterity as a parameter of real and fictional communication and their ecolinguistic impact are identified. The research results contribute to ecolinguistics, cognitive linguistics and theory of communication.

Keywords: alterity, implicit category, communicative parameter, linguistic manifestation of alterity, textual manifestation of alterity, (non)ecological impact of alterity

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ИНАКОСТЬ КАК ПАРАМЕТР КОММУНИКАТИВНОГО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ

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Аннотация. Цель данной статьи заключается в выявлении языковых средств объективации латентной категории инакости как параметра коммуникации. Рассмотрены англо- и русскоязычные примеры объективации инакости как параметра общения. При проведении исследования применены описательный и таксономический методы, а также методы контекстуального и дискурсивного анализа. Выявлены факторы, объективирующие имплицитную категорию инакости в процессе коммуникации, а также рассмотрены особенности реализации данной категории как параметра общения в реальной и художественной коммуникации и ее лингвоэкологические последствия. Результаты исследования вносят вклад в эколингвистику, когнитивную лингвистику и коммуникологию.

Ключевые слова: инакость, латентная категория, параметр коммуникации, языковая объективация инакости, текстовая объективация инакости, (не)экологичность инакости

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Introduction

The concept of *otherness* has already been fixed in modern humanitarian knowledge. The extensive theoretical base on this topic in philosophy, art history, sociology and psychology proves it [3; 5; 9]. Otherness (from Greek *heteros*, from Latin *alteritas*) is a term of Plato's philosophy. As any term, it performs an orienting and pragmatic functions [6. P. 32].

In any case, there are categories in the content of this concept. These categories are used in various scientific paradigms. The key features of the interaction of subjects are also reflected there and show the interpretation of the communicative activity of a speaker. The problem of otherness is multifaceted and presented in various forms. James N. Britton rightly notes that otherness exists at many levels in complex relationships of different representatives of human society [13. P. 570].

Theoretical comprehension of the content of this interdisciplinary category according to the phenomena of language and speech allowed us to adopt it in linguistics as one of the basic communicative categories. This category is understood as the category of relationship subject-subject and/or subject-object within the opposition "Me — Other" [4].

The formats of knowledge are understood as communicative categories in our research. They show certain cognitive-discursive patterns of using of linguistic units. As a result, such categories act as parameters for the description and interpretation of communicative processes [10; 11].

In particular, otherness can be a communicative parameter that objectifies the features of the communicative consciousness of participants of the discourse. First of all, it is noticeably in the aspect of the participants of communication, of their intentions and goals, of the changes of their communicative roles, of the using of appropriate communicative strategies and tactics, of fluctuations of the emotional-evaluative tonality etc. This relationship can be realized in the process of self-identification of the speaker and also in interpersonal, intergroup and intercultural communication.

Linguistic objectivation of the parameter of otherness

As a result of our research, it was determined that this parameter has mainly implicit nature in communication [4]. Nevertheless, the latent category of otherness is objectified because of certain geopolitical, social, psychological and communicative factors and leads to the transformation of the verbal and action-

al behavior of communicants — both with the same linguistic culture or different ones.

During the process of communication, the universal parameter of otherness can be explicated through the following features: *unity — plurality, identity — similarity, sameness — difference, normativity — nonnormativity, natural — unnatural, certainty — uncertainty, reality — hypothesis* [4].

The parameter of otherness may vary because of different communicative situations. As a result, the main categorical features can be supplemented and defined by a whole range of shades of meaning because of the plot-thematic correlation of the speaker with the situation of communication. This correlation defines the content of otherness. For example, such categorical features as *unification* and *dissent* are found in the media discourse and political discourse.

An interesting example is the present state of British society in connection with the Brexit which has led the country to a split. For several years, society is in a state of conflict. There is no constructive dialogue between generations: more progressive layers of the people do not support Britain's exit from the European Union, because it is the reason of many economic and political difficulties (for example, the situation with the border control between Ulster (as a part of the United Kingdom) and Ireland (as a member of the European Union)). Such a national-political and socio-economic situation, in which otherness becomes a recognized category, modifies the communication styles, strategies and tactics of the subjects of communication. In particular, the rhetoric of the authorities is changing. Their manipulative leverage is the topics about the most painful issues and problems of society.

For example, for a long time one of the most effective means of propaganda for Britain's exit from the European Union was the Brexit Bus. The Brexit Bus is a double-decker bus with the slogan which offers to send £350 million (that Britain pays to the EU every week) to support the National Health System, and also to return control over the situation to the state, as it was when the country was a colonial empire. Despite the fact that there is a partial privatization of the healthcare system in the country, the idea of leaving the European Union attracted the middle-aged and senior citizens.

This contingent won the referendum with a small margin. It is explained by the successful attempt of the authorities to appeal to colonial values that unite senior citizens, but separate them from more tolerant young people who are used to coexisting with representatives of other nationalities and cultures who have

the opportunity to live in the country thanks to the European Union. So young people who understand it and speak out seem differently minded as compared to senior citizens¹.

In this communicative and emotional situation, the parameter of otherness is reflected at the verbal level in the following linguistic means — political slang, blending and neologisms: Brexiters, remoaners (supporters of Brexit) / Brexiteers, remainers (supporters of the European Union), Hard Brexit (it has serious geopolitical consequences and means complete British independence from the European Union and strict limits and customs control) / Soft Brexit (nominal Brexit), Brexiety (anxiety about Brexit), Brexodus (This is a reference to the Biblical exodus of Jews from Egypt in this blending — Exodus means mass migrations of the non-British population outside Britain as a result of Brexit), the Will of the People (linguistic euphemism nominates the main strategy of the authorities), Brussels bureaucrats, etc.

Britain's exit from the Eurozone had not only significant political and economic consequences, but also changes at the language level. The political sphere has been enriched by a number of terms, which have been published by the Library of the House of Commons in the form of a glossary of *Brexit related terms*². These terms indicate completely new processes which are taking place in politics. For example, *Blind Brexit* — Britain was leaving the EU with no clarity on the terms of a future trade deal. So, negotiators from Britain and from the European Union had time to sign a future trade deal until December 31, 2020, during which Britain practically was a member of the EU, but without voting rights. The words, which are related to a certain political topic and have limited use in time, social and local aspects, have become the main terms in political communication [8. P. 233].

There is another example: the medical term *COVID* and its derivatives became new political words. This term attracts attention and has an emotional impact because it is connected with life and health. The functioning of its derivatives is caused by social conditions. The wide use of this term indicates the process of intellectualization of the language [1. P. 48]. In our opinion, it is a “linguistic imprint” of the mental picture that exists in peoples' minds. This medical term is a manipulator in politicians' hands: “COVID-19 infection is used to intimidate, to make us obedient in front of the global elite, who wished dramatically expand control over our lives...” It may be used as a metaphor and “realizes a whole range of functions. For, example, it can actualize cognitive function in its nominative-evaluative variety” [2].

Features of the realization of the parameter of otherness in text communication

The communicative parameter of otherness is determined by the feature of the use of communicative strategies and tactics, generalized in the hyperstrategies of confirmation and disproof [7]. These strategies and tactics allow to realize the conscious or unconscious organization of communicative interaction (same status: subject-subject (confirmative) and different status: subject-object (disproving).

Confirmative and disproving strategies and tactics are integral components of the communicative consciousness of speakers and manifest in various communicative situations: the ability of native speakers to use various scripts of communicative behavior, taking into account the prescriptions, attitudes and communication rules which are included in the content of otherness as a parameter of communication.

In addition, this parameter includes such a communicative feature as the Other-image of the interlocutor/interactant. This Other-image is a variable, situational image of the communicative partner. This feature is a significant component of the communicative act because it determines the process of forming of a unified communication center of interaction.

For example: an extract from the novel *The Taxi-driver's Daughter* written by the modern British writer Julia Darling demonstrates a quarrel between the father and the daughter as a result of the father's unsuccessful attempt to influence the behavior of his child. For an obvious reason the father is interested in what his daughter is doing but this interest is the reason of the teenage girl's rejection. So, it leads to a conflict. These speech partners begin to form new, negative ideas about each other (*The idea of Mac in George's house is so horrible*). The neutral tone of the communication changes to an aggressive one. First of all, it is reflected at the non-verbal level (*sneers, sobs, shouts, bursts into tear*).

Such a communicative structure of interaction is explained by the fact that a different, strange for the father Me of the daughter is realized, it means that the Other-image of his daughter has not yet been formed in his communicative consciousness. Fifteen-year-old Caris, whose mother goes to prison, is too vulnerable and weak to firmly accept new circumstances. Caris estranges from her family. She has left school and begun a new life in the world which was previously strange and inaccessible for her — the world of love affairs, easy money, irresponsible actions. This situation has changed her attitude towards her relatives and towards life in general. Her former Me has become

latent and is replaced by an aggressive, non-contact Me, which causes communicative failures and complicates the relationship with others. Her father realizes that his daughter's inner world has changed, so he draws her attention to it (*You can't look after yourself; Look at you!*). This phrase of her father is an introductory indication for the following implicit meaning which is derived from the context — “you are different, it's difficult for me, and sometimes even impossible to build a relationship with you” [3. P. 51].

What have you been up to, Caris?’ says Mac.

‘I was with a friend.’

‘George?’

Caris shrugs. <...>

‘I don't want you seeing that George again,’ he tells her. ‘I've been round. I've told his parents.’

‘What are you talking about?’ sneers Caris.

‘I told you. I've been to his house.’

‘What did you do that for?’

The idea of Mac in George's house is so horrible that Caris bursts into tears.

‘Why don't you leave me alone?’ she sobs. ‘I don't want you messing in my life.’

‘You can't look after yourself,’ shouts Mac. ‘Look at you!’⁴.

Ecological factor of the parameter of otherness

The parameter of otherness is one of the important points in the determination of the mode of ecological and non-ecological model of communication, because the intersection of the spheres (Me and Other) can affect the emotional space of communicants in different communicative situations [12].

For example:

I shouldered my way through the crowd, I was almost past it when I heard someone shout: “Hey, stalker!” Well, that had nothing to do with me, so I went on... Someone caught up with me and took me by the sleeve...

— *Hold it, stalker...Just two questions...*

I looked up at him. It was Captain Quarterblad...

— *Ah, greetings, captain. How's the liver?*

— *Don't try to talk your way out of this, stalker...*

— *Were you calling me, captain?... You were calling some stalker...*

— *Are you trying to tell me that you're not a stalker?*

— *Once the time I spent thanks to you was over, I went straight...*

— *Forgive me, Schuhart. I didn't expect it of you... I'm glad to see that my advice wasn't wasted on you...*

— *Well, I'm glad I met you, Honest Mr. Schuhart⁵.*

This extract reflects the process of reappraisal of personality: the ex-offender as a reformed citizen

meets the prosecutor. As a result, the communicative structure of their interaction has changed: the strict accusing communicative style of the captain changes to the encouragement and to the glorification, and the ex-offender takes an equal position of the interlocutor in the described situation, so the strategies of confirmation begin to dominate [4].

The communicative mode of ecological and non-ecological model of communication is determined by the method of creation Other-image of the interlocutor: adequate, wrong, incomplete. Both the effective communicative interaction, in which communicative risks are prevented, and ineffective communication take place depending on the situationally conditioned Other-image.

For example, the following situation is described in the novel *Possession* by A. S. Bayette: two philologists from different British universities, examine the work of two poets (Christabel LaMotte and Randolph Henry Ash). During their research they visit the manor that belongs to the poetess LaMotte. The residents of this manor are the descendants of LaMotte. They lead a lonely life and do not want to receive guests, especially unexpected visitors who are interested in the life of a famous person. Their philistine consciousness does not allow them to correctly and adequately understand the attempts of others to know better the situation in which the poetess worked. The owner of the house says:

We had a sort of poet in this house once. I expect you'd think nothing to her. Terrible sentimental stuff about God and Death and the dew and fairies.

Nauseating ... Funny old bird. Lately we get people round asking if we've got any of her stuff. I send them packing. We keep ourselves to ourselves, Joan and I. There was a frightful nosy American in the summer who just turned up out of the blue and told us how honoured we must be, having the old bat's relics up here. Covered with paint and jangling jewellery, a real mess, she was. Wouldn't go when I asked her politely. Had to wave a gun at her. Wanted to sit in Joan's winter garden. To remember Christabel. Such rot⁶.

This example shows that the appearance of these people and their curiosity have formed a misconception of the Other-image of the interlocutor. It turns into hostile behavior of the owner (*Had to wave a gun at her*).

Thus, the parameter of otherness has top-priority importance. It determines the success/failure of communication, satisfaction/dissatisfaction by one's own communicative behavior. As a result it can influence psycho-emotional health and a person's life in general.

Conclusion

The research and its results lead to the conclusion that otherness is an important parameter of communication, and it influences the communicative structure of interpersonal interaction.

This parameter is important for both Russian- and English-speaking communicative consciousness and it has its own defined categorical features which are variable, concretized and supplemented in various communicative situations.

The parameter of otherness is interconnected directly with the communicative norm. During communication the parameter of otherness have an impact on the choice of communication strategies and tactics and linguistic tools that implement them. The communicative parameter of otherness also determines the mode of ecological and non-ecological model of communication, its effectiveness/inefficiency. So, the theoretical understanding of the content of the parameter of otherness is necessary for the implementation of the applied aspect of communicology, which consists in the possible prevention of communicative risks in the process of communication.

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