

VERBAL CONFLICT: SEMANTIC AND GRAMMAR DIMENSIONS

The article is devoted to considering intralinguistic conflictogenic factors of the verbal conflict as violation of the human communication process by means of the natural language. Communicative deformations of semantic, paradigmatic and syntagmatic language categories in the process of the verbal conflict generation are described and analysed; in particular, deformations in using grammar categories, such as non-distinction of the English nouns' gender, ignorance of rules of using a sentence grammar structure, grammar negligence, as well as deformations of a sign's meaning in onomasiological and semasiological aspects.

Keywords: linguistic pragmatics, intralinguistic factor, paradigmatic category, syntagmatic category, semantic category, sign deformation, verbal conflict.

Статтю присвячено розгляду інтралінгвістичних конфліктогенних чинників вербального конфлікту як порушення процесу людського спілкування за допомогою природної мови. Описуються й аналізуються комунікативні деформації семантичних, парадигматичних та синтагматичних мовних категорій в ситуації породження вербального конфлікту, зокрема, деформації в уживанні граматичних категорій — нерозрізнення роду англійських іменників, незнання правил вживання граматичної структури речення, граматична небачість, а також деформації значення знаку в ономазіологічному та семасіологічному аспектах.

Ключові слова: лінгвістична прагматика, інтралінгвістичний чинник, парадигматична категорія, синтагматична категорія, семантична категорія, знакова деформація, вербальний конфлікт.

Статья посвящена рассмотрению интралингвистических конфликтогенных факторов вербального конфликта как нарушения процесса человеческого общения с помощью естественного языка. Описываются и анализируются коммуникативные деформации семантических, парадигматических и синтагматических языковых категорий в ситуации порождения вербального конфликта, в частности, деформации в использовании грамматических категорий — неразличение рода английских существительных, незнание правил употребления грамматической структуры предложения, грамматическая небрежность, а также деформации значения знака в ономазиологическом и семасиологическом аспектах.

Ключевые слова: лингвистическая прагматика, интралингвистический фактор, парадигматическая категория, синтагматическая категория, семантическая категория, знаковая деформация, вербальный конфликт.

Problem statement in a general view and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks. We treat a verbal conflict as a verbal confrontation of people with the contrarily directed interests, ideas, positions, aims both as to a subject of speech and to the language signs as social and psychical markers which are used during speech interaction; violation of co-operation and collaboration norm of the verbal conflict are stated, the value orientations, differences of treating the aim of a certain activity and methods of achieving this aim, as well as mental incompatibility of communicators on the emotionally painted background are collided (Grishina, 2002; Vatslavik, 2000; Sheinov, 1996; Lup'yan, 1991).

Analysis of the latest researches and publications, in which the solution of this problem is founded and which the author bases on. Modern linguistics

considers a verbal conflict under different terminology labels such as: «referential conflict» (Kibrik, 1987, pp. 128–145), «performative failure» (Austin, 1986, pp. 22–129), «communicative failure» (Gorodetsky, 1985, pp. 64–78; Davidson, 1986, pp. 235–269; Yermakova, 1993, pp. 90–157; Austin, 1986, pp. 22–129), «conflict communication» (Kandinsky, 1985, pp. 72–81), «language conflict» (Kryuchkova, 1991), «a conflict type of speech communication» (Vinokur, 1989, pp. 361–370), «language noises and barriers» (Shansky, 1986), «communicative dissonance» (Martynova, 2000), etc. All these names are supposed to be different types of speech conflicts (which sometimes are founded on the aggression expressed by means of the language) (Gorelov, 1997, p. 132).

Similar terms are used in the English-language literature: *disputing* (D. Brenneys, H. Kothhoff), *adversative episode* (A. Eisenberg, K. Harvey), *conflict talk* (A. Grimshaw), *dialogical asymmetry* (G. Knoblauch), *verbal discord* (E. Kreiner), *oppositional argument* (D. Shiffrin) (Compton).

In this connection, we suggest using a better term «*verbal conflict*», which today has obtained considerable distribution neither in Ukraine nor abroad yet. In a chronologic order this term (meaning a form of expression, but not a sense of a concept) was used by V. V. Borisevich (Borisevich, 2003, pp. 186–190), A. A. Romanov (Romanov, 2006), O. G. Polikarpova (Polikarpova, 2008, pp. 51–57) and L. V. Chayka (Chayka, 2009, pp. 65–72; Chayka, 2010, pp. 89–96; Chayka, 2011a, pp. 288–295; Chayka, 2011b, pp. 197–205; Chayka, 2011c, pp. 145–152). A. A. Romanov uses the non-terminological word-combination «*verbal conflict*» only in the title of the article; actually, the content of the article orients the readers toward the analysis of logical argumentation within the «*playing conception of a conflict*» in general and makes no provision for considering the language system phenomena as conflictogenic factors. O. G. Polikarpova also uses the word-combination «*verbal conflict*» only in the heading, the article itself is devoted to the psychological problems of interpretation in the cross-cultural communication, and the «*verbal conflict*» cannot be considered as a term designation in this context. From the methodological point of view an attempt of terminological specialisation of the verbal conflict concept which belongs to V. V. Borisevich deserves a greater attention, as the author includes it to the situational context (actually, the mentioned article is devoted to this subject), however the analysis of such a context from socially-psychological positions rather than from the linguistic ones exclusively is carried out. Nevertheless, there is neither definition nor terminological specialisation of the «*verbal conflict*» concept in his paper as well.

Highlighting the parts of a general issue which were not studied before and which the article in question is dedicated to. Except for single cases, the Ukrainian and foreign linguistics describes and analyses the communication process from the position of «*positive*» knowledge. The factors of the language activity successfulness, equilibrium of sequences of the communicative act participants, reasonableness of actualization of language signs in communication are studied. On this ground the models of «*an ideal addresser*» and «*an ideal addressee*» are created, they take the part of the components of the communication symmetric act's model,

in which they almost completely coincide. However, actually in communication, the communicative act asymmetry is its first and only condition and the whole communicative act is directed to its removal in order to achieve the mutual understanding between the participants of communication and to realize their communicative intentions. For this reason, we postulate a necessity to study the peripheral types of communication, which are no less widespread than «complete understanding». The verbal conflict belongs to them.

Formulation of the article objectives (stating the task). In accordance with the problem in question a special attention is paid to the intralinguistic conflictogenic factors, since under certain circumstances they can be treated exactly as self-valuable communicative failures, marking the extra-linguistic signs of communicators by the language means, executing the task of verbalization of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic reasons of generating verbal conflicts: disparity of a constructive instrument chosen by an addresser to an addressee's expectation is perceived by the latter as a sign deformation and it is potentially able to generate the verbal conflict.

Statement of the basic research material with the complete ground of the obtained scientific results. One of the cardinal concepts of the verbal conflict theory is a concept of a conflictogenic factor, *i.e.* the factor generating a verbal conflict. The verbal conflict feature is that communicators never — or almost never — adequately realize either a subject or an object of the conflict; the reflection of a conflict progress in the communicators' psychology rarely corresponds to the real situation. As a rule, they substitute the real speech or sociable conflict by the psychological conflict (Grishina, 2002, p. 23). It is related to the fact that the subjects of speech do not clash in a conflict themselves (we eliminate physical and such extreme forms of a conflict display as wars, terrorist acts, etc.). In the written or oral forms of the language communication differences in the subjects' intensions, their stereotype reactions and ideas about the communicative norms, motivation for a certain type of speech behavior and realization of communicative intention show up and clash, that, actually, becomes the cause of generation and development of the conflict (Komalova, 2008, pp. 117–126). Therefore, people, *i.e.* subjects of speech, are the only sources of verbal conflicts because namely they carry out the process of communication.

Deformations of a sign meaning take place after changing its ideal side, thus, they are already connected not with a subsign level (as in the case of exponential deformations), but with a whole sign, as the language sign meaning is simultaneous and indiscrete. The deformations of this kind can have different appreciations of language meanings by the communicators with the unchanging «body of sign» as their factor.

Different interpretations of terms that are especially conflictogenic result in misunderstanding and can even cause court claims. Our experience testifies that, in particular, interpretation of the term «*income*» from the field of audit accounting is the prime example of complications occurring while transferring from American into English accounting systems. The British version of the «*income*» word meaning is a profit as an element of financial statement which characterizes the results of

activity of a company, at the same time the word combination *comprehensive income* means not an *aggregate profit*, but a *gross income* (a loanword from the American standards of 2017), and translation of the word «*comprehensive*» will be more adequate by means of using the «gross» lexeme, but not «complex» or «combined». The extra-linguistic aspect of using the lexeme of «income» relates to an accounting necessity of differentiating the firm's income and the income of the firm proprietors that does not allow groundlessly promoting effectiveness of economic activity of the firm in the face of persons, who are interested in such results.

According to the data of psycholinguistic experiment carried out by R. Piotrovsky the Russian native speakers differently mark the sense of the Russian words *ночь, утро, день, вечер* on the 24-hour scale (Semchyns'ky, 1988, p. 137). In an interlingual aspect, Charles Osgood carried out a similar experiment by the method of semantic differential (Osgood, 1957; Osgood, 1972, p. 291; *Osnovy teorii rechevoi deyatel'nosti*, 1974, pp. 228–229). The inequality of semantic differential for the representatives of different languages and different cultural associations can also be a likely reason of the verbal conflict generation.

Local semantic spaces built for a certain social group or a certain individual do not have a cross-cultural invariance, but possess differential psychical signs only. For example, in this dialogue:

Then Lady Cicely says to Sir John, «You are going out?» — «Yes, immediately.» — «To the House, I suppose.» — This is very impressive. It doesn't mean, as you might think, the Workhouse, or the White House, or the Station House, or the Bon Marche. It is the name given by people of Lady Cicely's class to the House of Commons, —

individual semantic differential of the word **House** carries not only verbal and conflictogenic potencies in itself but it is also called to underline a lady's own meaningfulness (as a lord's wife, but not as an etiquette addressing form) and put herself on a higher stage of a social scale in relation to the other communicator.

Lacking distinction of free and constrained meanings of words causes curious amusing incidents and misunderstanding that in its extreme display is remarkably illustrated by the following anecdotic situation, in which it is especially underlined that a «blonde» aimed to prove her own intelligence:

A blonde decided one day that she was sick and tired of all the blonde jokes and how all blonde-haired women are perceived as stupid, so she decided to show her husband that blondes really are smart. While her husband was off at work, she took it upon herself to paint a couple of rooms in the house. The next day, right after her husband left for work, she got down to the task at hand. Her husband arrived home at 5:30 and smelt the distinctive smell of paint. He walked into the living room only to find his wife lying on the floor in a pool of sweat. He noticed that she was wearing both a ski jacket and a fur coat at the same time. Going over to her, he asked her if she was OK. Yes, she replied, so he asks what she was doing. She replied that she wanted to prove to him that not all blonde women are dumb and she wanted to do it by painting the house. He then asked her why she had both a ski jacket and a fur coat on. Then she replied that she was reading the directions on the paint can and it had said, for best results, put on two coats,

however, she literally understood a phrase from the instruction «*For a better result apply two coats (of paint)*» as «*put on two coats*».

We can observe a speaker's negative attitude toward an addressee, expressed by means of lexical attraction, in the following illustration:

I feel like an animal. A pig or rabbit or a dog. [...] But it wasn't the real me. I'm not that hateful, beastly, lustful woman. I disown her. It wasn't me that lay on that bed panting for you when my husband was hardly cold in his grave and your wife had been so kind to me, so indescribably kind. It was only the animal in me, dark and fearful like an evil spirit, and I disown, and hate and despise it (W. S. Maugham).

Confusing homonymous word meanings can also be conflictogenic, for example:

— *Hello, are you there?* — *Yes, who are you, please?* — *Watt.* — *What's your name?* — *Watt's my name.* — *Yes, what is your name?* — *My name is John Watt.* — *John what?* — *Yes.* — *???? I'll call you again.* — *All right. Are you Jones?* — *No, I'm Knott.* — *Will you tell me your name then?* — *Will Knott.* — *Why not?* — *My name's Knott.* — *Not what?* — *Not Watt, Knott!* — *What...*

Let us consider a similar situation at the graphic level: an emigrant from Russia teaches, accordingly, Russian to Americans and answers a student's question: «How shall I write in Russian "MY COP" something like that "The same, only in one word"».

In general, a pun is one of the major catalysts of the verbal conflict, as it provides for the unconventional use of language signs and is the result of «playing the game on the verge of the language» and quite often, it does not have linguistic, social, ethnic and political limits:

A man's voice said: «Mr. Mason?»

Surprised, Mason said, «Yes. Who is it?»

The voice said crisply: «You are talking with Cash.»

Mason sat up in bed, bolstering himself against the pillow. «That's nice,» he said. «How's Carry?»

For a moment, the voice was puzzled. «Carrie?» it asked. «I don't know to whom you refer.»

«Come, come,» Mason said amiably. «If you're Cash, you must know Carry.»

«Oh, a pun,» the voice said with the offended dignity of a man who has no sense of humor. «I didn't understand at first.»

The syntagmatically justified sequence of units «**Cash**» and «**Carry**» so frankly addresses the known brand of «Cash & Carry», that the hero of Erle Stanley Gardner, an intellectual person and a popular lawyer Perry Mason just cannot help using the pun, which, by the way, offends the second communicator, his client Cash by the last name. After realization of punning and humorous character of Mason's words the second communicator grows rather relaxed, the verbal conflict situation becomes more or less smooth, however, the offense remains.

The title of the novel by Victor Pelevin «The Burning Bush' Operation» is simultaneously associated both to the English phraseological unit of **burning**

bush — and to the last name of the American president *George Bush*, who is, actually, meant.

In the following example, a word misunderstanding causes a verbal conflict with the further ceasing of communication: *Husband and wife were enjoying a quiet evening by their fireside, he deep in a book and she in a crossword puzzle. Suddenly she questioned him: «Darling, what is a female sheep?» — «Ewe [ju:],» he replied. His further explanations hardly soothed her.*

Accordingly, we will mark the authorial neologisms: *In the same way it was I who brought word to the Wilhelmstrasse of the _rapprochement_ between England and Russia in Persia.*

«What did you find?» asked the Chancellor as I laid aside the Russian disguise in which I had travelled. — «A _Rapprochement!» I said. He groaned. — «They seem to get all the best words,» he said. (Stephen Leacock)

Creating of the new word denoting mutual relations of rapprochement between Russia and England at the beginning of the First World war causes an evaluative verbal conflict, a communicative failure, related to the addressee (his comment: *«They seem to get all the best words»*).

The English journalists of The Guardian newspaper formed a destructive verb from the last name of the known Russian footballer Kerzhakov — *to kerzhakov*: *«who turned and **Kerzhakoved** a volley wide from six yards out»* — in football to denote a kick on the ball from a short distance which does not hit the mark, although it was simpler to hit it than not to hit (Kerzhakov) — the Russian forward Alexander Kerzhakov set the anti-record of the Euro championships, during the match against Czech Republic he broke through seven times and did not even get in the gate's range (as a whole in matches he broke through twelve times, striking only once).

Our next step will be considering paradigmatic and syntagmatic deformations, related to the aggregate of sign relations in the language system itself, as they seem to communicators who are in the verbal conflict situation.

In paradigmatics grammar categories can become deformed. We observe misunderstanding with the reaction of the metalanguage control over an utterance in case of non-distinction of the English nouns' gender (and distinction of pronouns):

When Sean asked her to the pictures, she said no, since she was having a friend from Dublin. She had to stay at home on Saturday and get things ready. — «A friend from Dublin!» Sean sniffed. «And might we know her name?» — «It's a him, not a her», Benny said mulishly (M. Binchy);

There is non-distinction of the English nouns' gender as the verbal conflict factor in dialogic interaction from a short story *«Equality of rights»* (World's Shortest Stories of Love and Death, p. 101).

Ignorance of rules of using a sentence grammar structure can also lead to the verbal conflict: *«I did not quite understand your letter to me, Mr. Ridgeway. You seemed to be under the impression that the late Mrs. Harter's will was in our keeping.» — Charles stared at him. «But surely — I've heard my aunt say as much.» — «Oh, quite so, quite so. It was in our keeping.» — «Was?» — «That is what I*

said. Mrs. Harter wrote to us, asking that it might be forwarded to her on Tuesday last» (A. Christie).

A tendency to grammatical simplification which is inherent in the American English speakers is the main reason why the British consider them to be careless in relation to the language. Americans use the *Simple* tense verb forms forgetting about *Perfect*, at least in the colloquial speech, they use verbal converse terms more frequently (*to research* — *a research*), the form of *shall* becomes exceptionally a modal verb and it can be substituted by *will* or *gonna* (a reduction of *going to*), accordingly plenty of irregular verbs becomes regular verbs (for example, *to spoil*), the adverbs *slowly* and *really* are shortened to *slow* and *real*.

Syntagmatic sign deformations are determined by the linear character of signs location in a speech chain. For instance, violation of formally-syntactic simple sentence structure is inherent in them: availability of certain lexical inclusions can result in misunderstanding or ambiguity (Piantadosi, 2012, pp. 280–291) and on this basis it can generate a verbal conflict: *When she entered the room? Betty saw a lot of people*, in which it is impossible to understand how the words are connected at the formal level. The sort of such sign deformations is the so-called reference conflict that emerges, «if another referent which differs from the regular one can be confronted to a chosen nomination» (Kibrik, 1987, p. 129). The reference conflict is compensated both by employment of referents-competitors and accordance to the propositional context (Kibrik, 1987; Kibrik, 2011).

Violation of the text coherence definitely causes the verbal conflict: *There's whatdoyoucallhim out of. How do you? Doesn't see. Chap you know just to salute bit of a bore. His back is like that Norwegian captain's. Wonder if I'll meet him today. Watering cart. To provoke the rain. On earth as it is in heaven. A cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly. Grey. Far.* (James Joyce). In this passage, the author aims to express something that belongs to the internal speech at the expense of the loss of formally-grammar and semantic integrity of the utterance, which complicates understanding greatly.

A stream of consciousness is an artistic method, however, its understanding requires considerable efforts of a reader as the second communicator, for example, the text: *Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting to that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he thought he had a great leg of and she never left us a farthing all for masses for herself and her soul greatest miser ever was actually afraid to lay out 4d for her methylated spirit telling me all her ailments she had too much old chat in her about politics and earthquakes and the end of the world let us have a bit of fun first God help the world if all the women were her sort down on bathing-suits and lownecks of course nobody wanted her to wear I suppose she was pious because no man would look at her twice I hope I'll never be like her....* requires the reconstruction of punctuation structure for realization of segmentation into sentences and supra-phrasal unities. On the other hand, such a text «acquires its own senses» in the artistic work.

Senseless linguistic text can also be encountered in Joyce's novel: «*The natural grammatical transition by inversion involving no alteration of sense of an aorist preterite proposition (parsed as masculine subject, monosyllabic onomatopoeic transitive verb with direct feminine object) from the active voice into its correlative aorist preterite proposition (parsed as feminine subject, auxiliary verb and quasimonosyllabic onomatopoeic past participle with complimentary masculine agent) in the passive voice*», where combination of words is stipulated only by terminology, *i.e.* through attributing the text to the certain (linguistic) sphere of activity.

Conclusions of this research and perspectives of further studies in this direction. Thus, any language markers of communicators, up to the intonation and timbre of voice, accent and word order, originality of syntactic construction and specificity of using lexemes, thematically oriented, *etc.* can become conflictogenic factors, or conflictogenes, that provoke a verbal conflict — *i.e.* potentially everything that distinguishes a speaker among the others grows a conflictogenic factor in communication.

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