PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SPEECH ACTS IN OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

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In the context of present international and intercultural communication, the official communication plays a significant part since the settlement of all political, economical and social problems depends upon their appropriate and clear comprehension and interpretation. Many linguistic scholars along with other specialists express their interest to the official discourse as a scope of interdisciplinary research.

This paper presents the characteristics of speech acts of various communicative and semantic categories and their actualization in English-language documents, namely resolutions and recommendations of Parliamentary Assembly of European Council. In the scope of our research the main terms, namely pragmatic meaning, communicative intention, speech acts were given definitions. Besides, the consideration was given to the principal elements that create communicative situation, these elements are the following: addresser, addressee, communicative intention and communicative tasks. Subject to the results of the research, pragmatic meaning is realized within the category of address as well as speech acts of different communicative and semantic groups that were thoroughly studied. The most prevalent category of pragmatic meaning realization is the category of speech acts including vocatives, representatives, expressives, exercitives and directives with their pragmatically relevant units expressing pragmatic meaning. A great attention was also paid to the functioning and realization of aforementioned speech acts in the contexts of resolutions and recommendations of Parliamentary Assembly.

Key words: communicative and pragmatic characteristics, official style, pragmatic meaning, communicative intention, speech acts, pragmatically relevant units.

Introduction. In the scope of present international and intercultural communication official discourse plays a significant role while a great number of scholars take an active interest in linguistic units functioning in the process of communication, as well as human aspect, communicative and pragmatic approach. The last generates a great concern since it is applied to studying language units and a text in whole in the light of pragmatics that considers language units in the course of communication and their relations to extra linguistic situation. With reference to the definitions, suggested by linguistic scholar V. N. Komissarov [4, 5], pragmatic meaning of speech units can hardly be overestimated, since translation language aims at rendering original meaning and communicative intention. Accordingly, within official style of communication, the key objective of formal documents is to influence the target audience and have a pragmatic effect on particular recipient.

The **topicality** of present scientific paper is stipulated by the necessity to study the peculiarities of the official papers in the scope of linguo-cognitive and communicatively pragmatic aspects along with insufficient research of language units, namely speech acts, in the course of communication and their relations with extra linguistic situations.

The **objective** of this paper is to outline the main communicative and pragmatic characteristics of official papers and consider pragmatic aspect of speech acts translation.

The main **tasks** of present research are:

- to specify the meaning of key notions, namely "pragmatic meaning", "communicative intention", "speech acts", "performatives";
- to outline the principal components of text pragmatics;
- to consider the main types of speech acts;
- to distinguish the main communicative and semantic categories of speech acts;
- to review functional sub styles of official documents;
- to analyze the application of speech acts in the context of official documents.

The principal components of text pragmatics. In the scope of modern linguistics, the great attention is paid to communicative and pragmatic aspects of language that entails high interest in anthropocentricity and communicative direction of any discourse whereby the human being becomes a focal point of scientific theories and all language categories correlate with the point of view of their native speaker as well as human characteristics and behavior [7, p. 24].

Thus, language is considered as a particular tool aimed at making some effect on public consciousness while official texts are simultaneously understood both as main unit, process and result of communication between addresser and addressee [2, p. 395 – 397] In the context of communicative and pragmatic meanings, texts of official style are quite discontinuous. The subject of communication is mainly influenced by communicative goals whilst the subject itself, addressee and

communicative goal create pragmatic situation along with such components as communication content, relations between addresser and addressee [8, p. 33 – 39].

The principal components of official text pragmatics are addresser and addressee; however their pragmatic status can be non-identical. For instance, such texts of official style as orders, applications, invitations, and official letters can have common addresser but their pragmatic role and function are different and correspond to particular communicative situation. Communicative intention is another key element of effective communication since it requires a particular competence that relies on speaker's ability to be particular in speech and construct message in compliance with communicative goal and addressee's particular characteristics [6, p. 127 – 135].

Types and groups of speech acts. In the scope of pragmatics one can also distinguish the process of generating utterances with their goals and intentions by the subject of communication as well as conceptual interpretation of a particular utterance by the object of communication. Conversation generates a particular communicative context where speech acts, in other words a particular purposeful verbal acts that have communicative effect on a particular interlocutor [7, p. 391] and are an important tool of pragmatic meaning communication. Thus, according to the speech act theory, suggested by one of the founders of linguistic philosophy John Austin [1], any speech act is considered in terms of three aspects:

1) as **locutionary** being represented as an utterance with its phonetic, lexico-grammatical and semantic structures as well as its meaning and reference to linguistic reality.

2) **illocutionary**, indicating not merely the meaning of expressed point of view but also communicative goal of a particular utterance.

3) **perlocutionary**, aimed at intentional impact on addressee's consciousness, his/her feelings, thoughts, behavior as well as generating new situation by means of a particular intention or goal [1, p. 101].

The most important constituent of official communication is illocutionary act that focuses on the appeal and intention of the subject of communication. It can be

actualized in the course of generating questions, giving answers, presenting information, announcing decision, pronouncing sentence, criticizing, assuring, claiming etc. The fulfillment of such pragmatic tasks that are performed by the communicators by means of official discourse entails realization of a great number of speech acts, classified by many scholars. Thus, according to general classification, offered by John Searle, speech acts can be of two types: informative, aimed at expressing proposition or acquiring particular information and non-informative, also phatic, intended for establishing and maintaining contact. Each of above mentioned types fall into particular communicative and semantic groups, namely:

Representatives – describing state of affairs and situation, presupposing expressing personal opinion. These are speech acts representing disapproval, forecasting, description, message, for example: *Our Company has recently signed the contract*.

Directives – aimed at inducing the subject of communication to particular actions. In this category one can distinguish acts of request, advice, prohibiting, order and other incentive acts, e.g: *Enter your state general sales taxes*.

Commissives are used by the speaker in order to commit oneself to do or not to do particular actions; they presuppose addresser to have relative intention. This group includes: promises, oaths, swears, warrants etc.: *The Purchaser guaranties and confirms that as from the date of signing hereto the below-mentioned submissions are upright and trustworthy.*

Performatives – speech acts representing the action itself, such as promise, announcement, greetings etc.: *I give and bequeath all my real estate to my daughter*.

Expressives – aimed at expressing mental state of the speaker (feeling of gratitude, happiness, regret etc.) as a response to the situation: *We express our gratitude for the kind wishes* [9].

Besides, another prevalent classification, suggested by John Austin [1] found its application as a derivative one from performative acts classification. This classification is considered to be derivative from classification of performative verbs, namely those that can function as core elements of explicit performative utterances

that in their turn can fall into five groups. These are: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, expositives.

Realization of speech acts in documents. According to present classification there can be five types of illocutive acts distinguished. The common characteristic for a great number of **verdictives** is the fact that they express actions, associated with making a verdict, giving either positive or negative estimation etc. For instance:

*A jury **charged him with** two-year suspended sentence.*

*I **treat** the project according your merits.*

Exercitive group comprises acts, whereby all functions are exerted due to certain power and authority and all subject rights as well as an authority (order, warning, prohibition, advice, delegating etc) are actualized:

*I **appoint** you my empowered and authorized representative*;

*I **give you a notice** of dismissal*;

*We **recommend** an item for inclusion in agenda.*

Commissives express promise and other liabilities, such as duties of the First Party in the process of signing agreement or in pronouncing military oath or Hippocratic oath etc:

*I **promise** to put this question to the vote.*

*I **do solemnly swear** that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.*

Behabitives are those speech acts that are associated with relations between people and their social behavior:

*We **express our congratulations** on Ph. D. defense.*

***Accept** our sincere apologies for any inconvenience we may have caused you.*

In expositives, speaker describes his/her part in discussion, argument, debate etc:

*I **grant** you the force of that agreement.*

*I **postulate** that principle of legal certainty should guarantee the stability of legal system.*

As shown in research results of other prominent linguists [3, p. 18], pragmatic performance and efficiency in communication substantially depends upon skillful application of communication rules as well as conversational maxims. Their functioning depends on a definite sub style of document according to a particular sphere of application, namely:

<u>Legislative</u> – associated with the operations of highest agencies of state powers and is actualized in the following genres: constitutions, law, state act, law code, order, statues etc. The prototypical example of this official sub style is Constitution of USA: *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America…*

<u>Diplomatic</u> – serves international official relations, sphere of politics, economics, culture etc and finds its application in the following genres: international agreements, international conventions, notes, declarations, communiqués, memorandum, resolution, recommendation etc. The Declaration of Independence of USA can serve an example of diplomatic sub style:

The Declaration of Independence

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

<u>Judicial</u> – is used in legal studies (judicial proceedings, investigations, arbitrage etc.) for settlement juridical and conflict relations on different levels. This sub style is usually actualized in acts, statements of complaint, protocols, agreements etc.: *All changes and attachments to hereto are performed in written form and notarially certificated. In case one Party fails to perform the contractual*

conditions, the agreement may be terminated at request of another Party by court decision.

Administrative regulates specific types of official communication, namely executive orders, business correspondence, relations between particular subjects in the scope of law. This type of official style is realized in such genres as acts, instructions, regulations, orders, agreements, business letters, application forms, autobiographies, receipts, letters of explanations etc. [7, p. 286].

In the context of official style of communication, diplomatic sub style is of great importance since it has a specific communicative intention that manifests in its pragmatic attitude, correlation of positions between addresser and addressee, pragmatic presupposition, including situation [2]. Speech structure is also influenced by the specific features of its communicative tasks. Thus, among communicative tasks, solved by diplomatic documents, one can distinguish the following: (1) representing information; (2) establishing partnership relations; (3) creating atmosphere of trust and cooperation aimed at solving difficult and controversial problems; (4) inducing or committing to particular actions etc. Being a functional component of official discourse, any official component is a particular act with its verbal and non-verbal elements, regulated both by extra linguistic rules or principles and conventional rules of communication.

Thus, having analyzed official documents, namely resolutions and recommendations of Parliamentary Assembly of European Council, it may be deduced that the most frequently used category of speech acts is the group of vocatives, expessives and representatives. It may be also concluded that less frequently used group of speech acts is the group of exercitives and directives. It should be noted that such an occurrence is stipulated by the scope of authority of the subject of speech, namely Parliamentary Assembly. According to the competence of Parliamentary Assembly, it is observed that **representatives** are used to emphasize the importance of international problems, to express viewpoint, to outline important facts, to recall principal information etc. These tasks presuppose application of the following pragmatically relevant verbs: *note, underline, point out, recall, stipulate,*

consider, highlight, indicate, recognize, support, reconfirm, observe, draw attention, underscore, reaffirm, see, announce, reiterate, to be of the opinion, object to, emphasize, insist on, believe, stress, remind, acknowledge, commend, hold, underline, endorse. Representatives bind speakers to bear responsibility for the truth of utterance, preserve this responsibility, outline action state and make claims. For instance:

*The Assembly **notes** the fact that the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic has now returned to Syria.*

*The Parliamentary Assembly **stresses** the paramount importance of strengthening the fight against corruption, which is a major threat to the rule of law.*

*The Assembly **underlines** that the process of major reforms is taking place against an extremely complex background in both domestic and external terms.*

Another strongly marked group of speech acts, actualized in the context of Parliamentary Assembly documents is group of **vocatives**. Due to its recommendatory, this category is realized for the purpose of inducing addressees to particular actions:

*The Assembly **calls on** the Council of Europe member States to ensure the accessibility of health-care facilities and health professionals throughout the territory.*

*The Assembly **invites** the Monitoring Committee to consider setting up an investigative sub-committee.*

In the scope of the class of vocative, the following pragmatically relevant verbs are central: *call on, encourage, urge, invite, call for, ask* etc:

*The Assembly **urges** the competent authorities of those member States to take specific measures to ensure the effective independence of the judiciary and speedily and comprehensively execute the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.*

It is worthy to note that the group of **expressives** also plays an important role in documents, since their main function is to express psychological state of the

subject (expressing admiration, gladness, satisfaction, appraisal, gratitude, regret etc.) Although one of the features of official style is the lack of expressivity and emotionality, it was observed that the group of expressives is significantly expressed in official discourse. These speech acts are mainly introduced by the following pragmatically relevant units: *to welcome, to be appalled by, to hope, to expect, to deplore, note with satisfaction, to be disappointed with, to be pleased, to regret, to express concern, to be worried about, to be shocked by:*

*The Assembly **regrets** that the democratic changes and political developments in Ukraine have been overshadowed by the developments in Crimea.*

*The Assembly **is particularly concerned** by the position taken by the members of both Chambers of the Russian Parliament at different stages of the process of annexation.*

The least frequently used group of speech act is a group of **exercitives** that entails application of acts aimed at exercising mere function in the scope of authority of the subject, specifically the Parliamentary Assembly. Since the recommendations are within the limits of competence and authority of Parliamentary Assembly, all function of the subject of communication are actualized by means of such communicatively relevant units as *"recommend", "decide", "resolve":*

*The Assembly **recommends** that sports betting operators contribute a proportion of their profits towards financing the setting up and operation of supervisory bodies.*

*The Assembly **resolves** to strengthen inter parliamentary dimension of the fight against corruption.*

Conclusions. Thus, it may be concluded that the research of communicative and pragmatic characteristics of speech acts of different communicatively semantic groups in context of official documents is stipulated by varied communicative tasks, provided by subjects of communication. Being the principal component of communicative and pragmatic situation the addresser of communication acts as the main subject of communicative relations expressing its communicative intention oriented towards the addressee. Official documents have a high level of pragmatic

meaning as well as inducing functions. Documents represented by different genres can initiate communication, respond to other documents or register the result of communication.

The pragmatic power of the documents is actualized by particular means of pragmatic meaning, namely speech acts of different communicative and semantic categories. Having analyzed the most accepted speech acts classifications, offered by John Austin and John Searle and their application in documents of Parliamentary Assembly of European Council it was determined that the most prevalent category of speech acts is the category of performatives, since they are the core elements of explicit performative expressions.

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Т. В. Батюта. Прагматичні характеристики мовленнєвих актів в офіційно-ділових документах.

Дана стаття присвячена розгляду прагматичних характеристик мовних актів різних комунікативно-семантичних груп та їх реалізації в документах різних жанрів, зокрема резолюція та рекомендація. Приділено увагу основним лінгвістичним поняттям, зокрема, було надано визначення таким поняттям як: прагматичне значення, комунікативна інтенція, мовленнєві акти. Крім цього, розглянуто основні елементи, які створюють комунікативну ситуацію, а саме адресат та адресант комунікації, комунікативна інтенція та комунікативні завдання. Розглянуто також типи мовних актів і основні підходи до їх класифікацій та поділу на комунікативно-семантичні групи, а саме репрезентативи, експресиви, вокативи та екзерсетиви. Визначено основні прагматично-значущі одиниці висловлювання, в яких закладено прагматичний потенціал мовних актів. Основну увагу приділено функціонуванню вищезазначених мовних актів в документах резолюцій та рекомендацій Парламентської Асамблеї Ради Європи.

Ключові слова: прагматичне значення, комунікативная інтенція, офіційно-діловий стиль, мовленнєві акти, комунікативно-значущі одиниці.

Т. В. Батюта. Прагматические характеристики речевых актов в официально-деловых документах.

В данной статье рассматриваются прагматические характеристики речевых актов разных коммуникативно-семантических групп и их реализация в документах, в частности в резолюциях и рекомендациях. Определены основные понятия, а именно: прагматическое значение, коммуникативная интенция, речевые акты. Кроме этого, рассмотрено основные составляющие коммуникативной ситуации, в частности адресат, адресант, коммуникативная интенция, коммуникативные задания. Рассмотрено также типы речевых актов, основные подходы к их классификации и разделения на коммуникативно-семантические группы, а именно: репрезентативы, экспрессивы, вокативы и экзерсетивы. Определены главные прагматически-значимые единицы выражения, в каких заложен прагматический потенциал речевых актов. Основное внимание уделено функционированию вышеупомянутых речевых актов в документах резолюций и рекомендаций Парламентской Ассамблеи Совета Европы.

Ключевые слова: прагматическое значение, коммуникативное намерение, официально-деловой стиль, речевые акты, коммуникативно-значимые единицы.