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Research article

Speech acts and Russian text-generating discourse

Said Abdelhamid¹, Nikolai F. Alefirenko², Irina I. Chumak-Zhun²✉¹*Ain Shams University, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt*²*Belgorod State National Research University, Belgorod, Russian Federation*✉ chumak@bsu.edu.ru

Abstract. The relevance of the study is determined by the hidden turbulence of such concepts often used in Russian studies as “speech activity”, “speech acts” and “discourse”. The aim of the work is to determine the genetic connections of this trinity and the functional purpose of each of the categories under consideration. The main research means is the authors’ method of discursive-modus analysis of artistic speech. The research materials were dictionary definitions from explanatory dictionaries of the Russian language, in particular from “Dictionary of expressive stable phrases of the Russian language” compiled by V.Ju. Melikyan, as well as utterances extracted from the Russian National Corpus. The authors found that the communicative-speech act is a synergistic combination of mental-psycho and speech activity. Mental-psycho activity involves mental acts – the thought processes of the communicant at the moment of his locative readiness to make a statement and psycho activity of searching for adequate ways to reflect a communicatively significant event in the discursive consciousness of the communicants. Mental-psycho activity encodes and decodes the semantic content of the author's intentions with the help of the means of the language system. Speech activity produces speech acts – functional units of speech communication embodying a purposeful speech action. In conclusion, the categorical essence of the speech act and discourse are generalized. The perspective of the research is the development of a cognitive-pragmatic theory of speech-thinking activity based on the material of the Russian language.

Keywords: communicative-speech activity, speech act, Russian discourse, utterance, thinking processes, communicative event

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Introduction

The problem of the correlation between discourse, speech act and utterance is topical for Russian language studies due to its latent turbulence. In spite of the active use of these concepts in modern linguistic research, their correlation has not been fully revealed. This is due to their complex genesis in the process of textual discourse formation as a communicative event (Van Dijk, 1981, 1983). The fact is that discourse as a communicative event is a complex unity of linguistic form, meaning and action, i.e. a communicatively meaningful event (the cognitive substratum of text-formation) and a speech-thought act (see: Hirvonen, Wiklund, 2021: 309). However, this definition refers not to a speech act, but to a communicative act. Unfortunately, these related notions often substitute each other, although for effective text analysis in the aspect of cognitive linguistics they should be distinguished. This is a challenge, since both notions are multidisciplinary. Fundamental work in this field is J. Austin's theory of speech acts, which clarifies the essence of speech action from the standpoint of analytical philosophy and lays the foundation for linguopragmatics (Austin, 1999). His ideas in the interpretation of indirect speech acts are developed by J.R. Searle (Searle, 1986), and in understanding the mechanisms of self-expression – by M. Witek (Witek, 2021). In modern Russian studies, this problem was closely approached by L.S. Gurevich who made an attempt to reveal the correlation between communicative and speech acts (Gurevich, 2007), E.V. Miloserdova who fruitfully examined the pragmatics of speech communication¹ and I.S. Shevchenko who proved the perspective of the research on the nature of speech acts in the aspect of cognitive and pragmatic theory of discourse (Shevchenko, 2007).

The scientific novelty of our study is determined by a comprehensive approach to identifying the genetic and functional interrelationships of discourse, speech act and utterance. **The aim of the study** is to show the cross-correlation of speech acts and utterances with the discursive-cognitive mechanisms of their generation, which allows to interpret their functional-genetic correlation.

Methods and materials

In order to achieve the aim of the research, the communicative-synergetic methodology for translating the horizontal (linear) context of the speech work into the vertical (nonlinear) context was used. The following methods and techniques are the most effective for implementing this methodological approach: (a) the method of discourse analysis of the text with elements of linguistic hermeneutics; (b) the method of the intent analysis with the techniques of linguocultural interpretation; the method is aimed at reconstructing the author's intention in the act of generating statements. The subtextual meaning (see: Chang, 2020: 3)

¹ Miloserdova, E.V. (2001). *Pragmatics of verbal communication: textbook*. Tambov: TSU named after G.R. Derzhavin Publ. (In Russ.)

is identified through explicating hidden cognitive and pragmatic markers in a specific discursive situation. The cognitive toolkit of related sciences was also used, expanding the horizons of exploratory scanning of meaning-generating origins of communicative-speech activity² (Gurevich, 2007; Zimnyaya, 2001; Kibrik, 1992; Klyuev, 2002). The material of the research included dictionary definitions from the explanatory dictionaries of the Russian language,³ in particular from the lexicographic work of V.J. Melikyan,⁴ as well as the statements extracted from the National Corpus of the Russian language.⁵

Results

As a result of analytical comprehension of the implicit communicative-speech activity in the artistic texts, the interrelation of speech and communicative acts in their connection with the statement was established.

Speech acts as dynamic units of integral nature (a combination of verbal and mental elements) reflect the discursive situation and pragmatic settings of communicators.

Communicative acts represent complex psycho-linguistic processes produced by various interlocutive forces with dominating pragmatic factors.

The communicative act includes statements and speech acts. The communicative-speech act is correlated with a discourse, generated by interaction of formal speech and sense-forming mechanisms, harmonizing mental and speech acts.

The identified properties of all components of communicative-speech activity are confirmed by a retrospective analysis of phraseoschemes and stable models of expressive set phrases of the Russian language.

Discussion

The status of discourse in communicative and speech activity

Discourse, based on centuries of accumulated experience of linguistic communication, contains a stream of linguistic representations as part of speech activity (cf.: Tiittula, 1993; Stubbs, 1983; Geißner, 1981). In other words, when attuning to text generation, the communicant relies on previously formed verbal representations: (a) in early childhood on the harmonious combination of auditory and motor images, (b) since school age also on visual images of words. Constructing in the mind a communicatively significant event with the help of the units of the thinking code (Pinker, 2004: 45–71), communicants simultaneously find cor-

² Miloserdova, E.V. (2001). *Pragmatics of verbal communication: Textbook*. Tambov: TSU named after G.R. Derzhavin Publ. (In Russ.)

³ Kuznetsov, S.A. (Comp. and Ed.). (1998). *The big explanatory dictionary of the Russian language*. St. Petersburg: Norint Publ.; Dmitriev, D.V. (Ed.). (2003). *The explanatory dictionary of the Russian language*. Moscow: Astril Publ., AST Publ.

⁴ Melikyan, V.J. (2016). *Dictionary of expressive stable phrases of the Russian language. Phraseoschemes and stable models*. Moscow: Flinta Publ.

⁵ National Corpus of the Russian language. Retrieved from <https://ruscorpora.ru/>

responding word images (see: Alefirenko, Nurtazina, 2018: 17–18) in their triune register: auditory, motor and visual-letter (as if they see what is written). This idea was expressed succinctly enough by V.E. Chernyavskaya: discourse is “a linguistic correlate of the extreme degree of communicative and linguistic activity, human consciousness and practice.”⁶ Sharing this point of view, we still think it is more correct to talk about discourse as a communicative-speech activity (act) of communicants, connected with various extra-linguistic factors.

The communicative-speech act is a complex process, both linguistically and psychologically, where various illocutionary forces interact, and the pragmatic component is dominant in the discourse⁷. The illocutionary force is understood as the pragmatic effect of the harmonization of the purpose of the subject generating the utterance and the presupposition, which includes verbal and situational contexts. The nature of these contexts is conditioned by the intentions of the subject generating the utterance.

The main purpose of the communicative-speech act is “not simply the mechanical construction of sounds, but the construction of meaning” (Searle, 1986: 151). Its essence is indicated in the definition *communicative* to the word *act* (Latin *communicare* – ‘to make common, bind, speak’ + act – ‘action’). Relying on the Searle definitions, we can conclude that the communicative-speech act is a synergistic combination of mental-psychic and speech activity (see: Mei, 2019: 50; Prozorov, 2021: 126).

Mental-psychic activity encodes and decodes the semantic content of the author's intentions with the help of language. This activity combines (a) mental acts – the communicant's thinking processes at the moment of his locutionary readiness to produce a statement and (b) mental activity, searching for adequate ways of reflecting the communicatively significant event in the minds of communicators. Speech activity produces speech acts – functional units of speech communication, which embody a purposeful speech action (see: Ballmer, Brennstuhl, 1981; Geißner, 1981). In line with similar reflections, L.W. Borger calls the speech act (SA) an “elementary unit of speech” that is expressed in communication with the help of linguistic means (Borger, 2004: 7). Attention is drawn to the binarity of the speech act, which reflects (a) the communicative situation and (b) pragmatic attitudes of the communicators (Alefirenko, 2008). The features of the speech act are revealed in the following definition: (1) it is a unit of communication; (2) possessing dynamism and (3) constructed with linguistic means. The effectiveness of the SA depends on how adequately the addressee identifies the addresser's communicative intentions (see: Grigoreva, 2007).

So, the speech act appears to be the minimal unit of speech activity (its process and result), the separate act of speech, in normal cases represents dialogical

⁶ Chernyavskaya, V.E. (2014). *Linguistics of text. Linguistics of discourse: Textbook* (p. 34). Moscow: Flinta Publ., Nauka Publ. (In Russ.)

⁷ Miloserdova, E.V. (2001). *Pragmatics of verbal communication: Textbook*. Tambov: TSU named after G.R. Derzhavin Publ. (In Russ.)

process of text generation. This process is based on the inseparable unity of speaking and auditory perception (understanding the semantic content) of the produced text. Here we can draw a parallel with R.O. Jakobson's definition of the oral form of the speech act as “the set of speaking, listening, perception and understanding” (Jakobson, 1985). The recognized model of speech communication of R.O. Jakobson and the whole Prague functional school is developed in J. Austin's theory of speech acts. According to the concept of the British linguistic philosopher (Austin, 1999), the structure of the speech act includes the following phases of verbal actions manifestation: *locution* (the act of statement generation), *illocution* (the pragmatic component of the semantic content of the statement, reflecting the communicative purpose of the addresser) and *perlocution* (speech influence). In this three-level representation of SA, the basic mechanisms of communicative-pragmatic action were singled out. In line with the concept of the Moscow psycholinguistic school, speech activity is defined as a substantive, active, motivated and purposeful process of transferring an idea, formalized by means of language (Leontev, 2007; Zimnyaya, 2001). It consists of speech acts with the following main properties: (a) the intention of the addresser to inform, express or induce something; (b) the purposefulness of the statement (the intention to inform about something) and (c) the conventionality (conditionality).

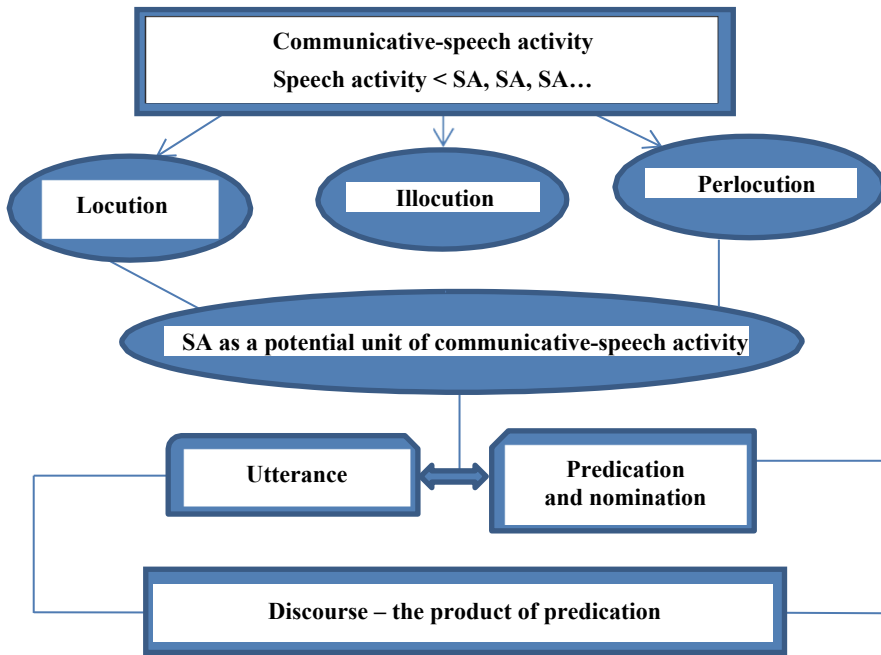
Therefore, we can conclude that to producing SA means to construct an utterance (see: Zhirova, 2020: 85), to make a reference (attribute the statement to the object of thought) and predication (attribute the content of the object of thought to reality). Such speech-thought coherence allows (a) to relate the statement to genuine realities, (b) to make the statement purposeful, (c) to make the addressee to react accordingly – something that serves (d) to create the integrity of the discourse.

All this is represented in I.A. Bunin's poem *In the Hot Gold of the Pyramid Sunset*, where “*Along the Nile, amusing the foreigners, / Sailing boats are shining in silk into the water / And a white Luxor steamship is running.*” The author is gazing into the lilac distances: “*There, in the south, / In the Nubian wild south, they are cloudy, sultry / And still so alien to the world, reserved, / As they were under Khufu, under Cambyses... From there, I have brought / A bow and a green and honey quiver, / A shield of hippo skin, a slender dart, / Panther fur, a chain of the chainmail, / But why I need all these things, I don't know.*”

The author objectifies SAs in statements, at the same time relating them to the purposeful reproduction of Egyptian realities (*the* deserted *Nubian south* – the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea hills; under *Khufu* – the son of Pharaoh Sneferu; the name of *Kambiz*, the eldest son of Cyrus II the Great, is associated with the era of Persian domination in Egypt). This kind of discursive predication, associated with the author's feelings, cannot but evoke a corresponding emotional response from the readers. Here we see the inclusion of SA in the event discourse of the poem.

Thus, the SA is realized in the utterance. Through utterances SA as a potential unit of communicative and speech activity forms the discourse. In this context, a distinction is made between a potential and a real utterance. The potential utterance is a category of psychology of speech. It emerges at the stage of internal programming as a basis for producing a speech utterance (see: Leontev, 2007). According to A.A. Leontev's concept, the initial stimulus for generating an utterance is the motive for communicative intention, which leads to the inner speech intention, when the theme, the topic of the statement, and the rheme (what exactly the author is going to say about the given object of thought) are identified. After establishing the connection between the presupposition (~ theme) and the target (~ rheme), the processes of predication and nomination start, and the real speech utterance is formed. Discourse serves as the speech-thought mechanism for utterance generation. The purpose of discourse is to establish semantic links between the acts of predication and nomination forming a discursive model (~ structural scheme) of the utterance.

At the same time, the utterance does not leave the limits of discoursion. It remains one of the important components of its product – discourse, and the SA itself has the status of communicative-speech formation. Being included in the discourse or in one of its fragments, the utterance becomes their integral component (Figure).



Communicative-speech activity and discourse

The speech act and communicative-speech activity

As the figure shows, the communicative-speech activity is a psycholinguistic phenomenon, which, combining the act of generation and the act of perception of the utterance, performs complex interlocutive functions. This definition

contains the quintessence of human intellectual activity, notes its integral (verbal-mental) nature.

Speech acts as purposeful actions, which are carried out according to the principles of communication in the given linguistic culture, are the means of embodiment of communicative and speech activity. According to J. Austin's theory, SAs are not so much units of speech communication as units of speech behaviour (Austin, 1999). SAs contain the capacity and ability to communicate. Its essence is in the potentially presented information about how exactly the communicants can interact, based on the knowledge, intentions and mental attitudes of the communicant intending to make an utterance (Frank, 1999; on the pragmatics of discourse see: Gruber, 1996). SA is a unit that participates in discourse through an utterance, i.e., it forms a text-forming discourse.

Thus, speech acts (actions of speech production, realizing the proposition (referencing and predication), actions embodying the author's intentions) are the constituents of communicative-speech activity, which, in addition to SA, also includes mechanisms of thought verbalization. By virtue of this, communicative-speech activity serves as a platform for “the interaction between the sender and the receiver, which is based on the message” (Pocheptsov, 1986: 84). So we can conclude that communicators, committing communicative-speech acts, simultaneously perform acts of speech (cf.: Klyuev, 2002). This idea is clarified by A.E. Kibrik, who believes that the speech act as a “discretely allocated tact of discourse” is one of the components of the communicative act. Its other components, according to the author, are: (a) discourse, (b) the communicative (external) situation determining the topic of communication, and (c) the situation (the subject environment of the participants of speech communication) (see: Kibrik, 1992: 289). In order to adequately understand this judgment, it is necessary to emphasize the difference and the correlation of communicative acts and speech acts, as their correlations with discourse depend on this. It was established that SA is a constructive unit of discourse (see: Shevchenko, 2007: 69), which itself turns out to be a component of the communicative act. This is explained by the dialectical essence of SA, its diametrically opposite and at the same time interrelated hypostases. One of them refers to the communicative situation, the second – to the communicative event (the cognitive substratum of discourse).

In this context, it is important to adequately understand what makes SA a “discretely distinguishable tact of discourse.” In our opinion, it is possible thanks to those units that are generated in the speech act. Such units, as we already noted, are utterances. However, in order to agree with this judgment, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by an utterance, since this concept has received an ambivalent interpretation in the theory of speech acts and in the doctrine of coherent speech organization. Such ambivalence of an utterance is due to its correlation both with the speech act, and with its derivative – a speech work (the thought expressed by words). In the communicative-speech aspect, the main syntactic unit is the utterance – a speech correlate of a sentence – a construct with an ab-

stract, impersonal, typical meaning, while an utterance has a situational, personal semantic content. Utterances are usually understood as statement fragments of a speech stream. Speech acts, as we defined earlier, are units of speech communication, so we cannot identify them with the fragments of the speech stream, i.e. with the segment units of speech construction. In simple words, in the paradigm of cognitive linguistic poetics, the utterance is not exclusively a correlate of the reproduced sentence, because it often turns out to be larger than the sentence. The point is that the formation of coherent speech includes a semantic unfolding of the utterance not into a separate sentence, but into a chain of sentences combined in a single denotative space. Thus, in N. Gumilev's poem *Egypt*, the semantic content of the utterance unfolds into a stanza depicting a whole discursive situation from a non-event perspective: “*The sphinx lies down on the guard of the sanctuary / And with a smile looks down, / Waiting for guests from the desert, / Of whom you know nothing.*”

The cultureme “Egypt” contains various linguistic images, which appear “*Like a picture from an ancient book, which illuminated... evenings*” of the poet. It is realized in speech acts consisting of complex multi-stage actions (locution, illocution and perlocution), purposefully produced by the poet in order to affect the addressee not only emotionally, but also intellectually. By creating in this way a unified denotative space with the reader, the author selects in his lexicon individual means of expressing his intentions (see: Witek, 2021: 326): moods, feelings, evaluations and personal attitude towards the communicative event.

Thus, the process of utterance generation (see: Chumak-Zhun, 2017: 56) is a complex speech-thought activity that simultaneously activates the mental and linguistic code in their constant interdependent intertwining.

Conclusion

Speech act, being an elementary unit of speech communication, (a) reflects the communicative situation and (b) pragmatic settings of the participants of communication. Further research of speech acts will allow to penetrate into their categorical features as (1) units of communication; (2) possessing dynamism and (3) constructed not only by explicit, but also by implicit linguistic means.

The speech act should not be identified with physical speech, from which it differs in its integral nature: a combination of verbal and mental components. This is its categorical specificity: being a psycho-linguistic unit, the speech act is a potential unit of speech communication. It contains the possibility and ability to communicate.

Speech acts are speech actions. In this, speech acts differ from communicative acts. Communicative acts present the interaction of the sender and the receiver, which is based on the message. By performing communicative acts, speech acts are also performed at the same time. Thus, speech acts with the help of utterances turn out to be connected with discourse, acting as their modelling links.

To produce SA means (a) to construct a statement factually, (b) to make predication: to correlate the utterances with reality, (c) to make it purposeful, (d) to cause the appropriate reaction of the addressee. The procedural nature of the speech act means that they are embodied in utterances.

The in-depth research of speech act structure (three phases of speech activity: locution – producing the utterance, illocution – expressing the pragmatic purposes of the utterance, and perlocution – the act of influence) will show fine borders of functional and genetic coincidence of all components of the communicative-speech activity.

Discourse is a correlate of communicative-speech activity: a complex psycholinguistic process, produced by various interlocutive forces with dominating pragmatic factors. Its elements are utterances and speech acts. Their consideration through the prism of text-generating function of discourse opens the way to comprehension of coherence of formal-speech and sense-generating mechanisms harmonizing mental and speech acts.

The global perspective of the research is the creation of a cognitive and pragmatic theory of speech-thought activity.

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Bio notes:

Said Ahmed Mohamed Abdelhamid, Candidate of Philology, lecturer, Russian Language Department, Al-Asun Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ain Shams University, Al Khalifa Al Mamun St, Abbasiya, Cairo, 11566, Arab Republic of Egypt. *Research interests*: text and discourse, language picture of the world, indirect nomination. ORCID: 0000-0002-8363-3326, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 7473-0587, AuthorID: 249802. E-mail: said_abdelhameed@alsun.asu.edu.eg

Nikolai F. Alefirenko, Doctor of Philology, Professor, Professor of the Department of Russian Language and Russian Literature, Belgorod State National Research University, 85 Pobedy St, Belgorod, 308015, Russian Federation. *Research interests*: cultural linguistics, cognitive theory of discourse, pragmalinguistics, indirect nomination. ORCID: 0000-0002-4083-4486, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 7473-0587, AuthorID: 249802. E-mail: alefirenko@bsu.edu.ru

Irina I. Chumak-Zhun, Doctor of Philology, Head of the Department of Russian Language and Russian Literature, Belgorod State National Research University, 85 Pobedy St, Belgorod, 308015, Russian Federation. *Research interests:* text, poetic discourse, pragmalinguistics. ORCID: 0000-0001-6790-1418, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 6428-2587, AuthorID: 603186. E-mail: chumak@bsu.edu.ru

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Научная статья

Речевые акты и русский текстопорождающий дискурс

С. Абдельхамид¹, Н.Ф. Алефиренко², И.И. Чумак-Жунь²✉

¹Айн-Шамский университет, Каир, Арабская Республика Египет

²Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет,
Белгород, Российская Федерация

✉ chumak@bsu.edu.ru

Аннотация. Актуальность исследования определяется скрытой турбулентностью таких часто используемых в русистике понятий, как «речевая деятельность», «речевые акты» и «дискурс». Цель работы – определение генетических связей этого триединства и функционального предназначения каждой из рассматриваемых категорий. Основной инструментарий исследования – авторский метод дискурсивно-модусного анализа художественной речи. Материалами исследования послужили словарные дефиниции из толковых словарей русского языка, в частности из «Словаря экспрессивных устойчивых фраз русского языка» В.Ю. Меликяна, а также высказывания, извлеченные из Национального корпуса русского языка. Установлено, что коммуникативно-речевой акт представляет собой синергичное сочетание ментально-психической и речевой деятельности. В ментально-психической деятельности сопряжены ментальные акты – мыслительные процессы коммуниканта в момент его локутивной готовности производить высказывание и психическая деятельность, ведущая поиск адекватных способов отражения коммуникативно значимого события в дискурсивном сознании общающихся. Ментально-психическая деятельность с помощью средств языковой системы кодирует и декодирует смысловое содержание авторских интенций. Речевая деятельность производит речевые акты – функциональные единицы речевого общения, которые воплощают целенаправленное речевое действие. Даны обобщения категориальной сущности речевого акта и дискурса. Перспективой исследования является разработка на материалах русского языка когнитивно-прагматической теории речемыслительной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативно-речевая деятельность, русский дискурс, высказывание, мыслительные процессы, коммуникативное событие

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